

May 7th - May 20th, 2021

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information & inspiration

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See Our Listings Inside this edition...
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Tourism

*Bronco Bustin',
Bus Boycotts, and
Seasoned Folks
Festival...Hope
You're Curious!...*
May is here and so
are the events filling
up the Athens-
Limestone Tourism
calendar...
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BB Perrins Sports Grille Of Decatur: *Definitely Worth The Drive*

By Ali Elizabeth Turner

In 1988, Decatur AL football great Benny Perrin and his brother Braxton opened BB Perrins Sports Grille just off of 6th Avenue and Holly Street in Decatur. It has kept right on go-

Continued on page 15



Clean, Green & Beautiful

*Sparky (And KALB)
-- Back In The
Classroom!...*
One of my favorite
things to do here
at Keep Athens-
Limestone Beautiful
is to go into
classrooms to teach
students about
littering, recycling...
Page 12



Cooking With Anna

*Do April Showers
Really Bring May
Flowers?...*

Most of us have heard
the saying -- "April
showers bring May
flowers." I didn't realize
until last week that the
saying can be traced...
Page 13



Where Is The Ammo?

By Brad Reasonover

Have you tried buying ammo lately? Finding a box of 9mm ammo has been like looking for a rare beanie baby in the '90s. Why is this? As a gun store owner of over 33 years, with many connections nationwide, I'll share my thoughts on the shortage, and when I believe it will return to normal.

The 2020 pandemic created a "perfe-

Continued on page 17



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Publisher's Point

The Letter Keeper And The Hero's Heart

There are few things that thrill my heart more than when a man lets his hero's heart come roaring to the surface. For 25 years I have been married to a man who has no problem intervening when someone is in danger or need, and it is one of the things I love most about him. I encountered soldiers who had that heart when I was in Iraq, and I run into them here all the time here in Alabama.

Last August I wrote a Publisher's Point about

a book written by New York Times best-selling author Charles Martin entitled, *The Water Keeper*. It is a work of fiction that is based on the brutal fact that human trafficking is slavery, and there are more slaves in the world right now than in the history of the planet. The hero who puts his heart and life on the line to rescue women from trafficking is named Murph Shepherd, and this is his second saga. It is called *The Letter Keeper* - A

Murph Shepherd Novel. It comes out on June 8, and can be purchased at all of the major online stores. Here is an excerpt from the press release:

Combining heart-wrenching emotion with edge-of-your-seat tension, Charles Martin explores the true power of sacrificial love.

He shows up when all is lost. Murphy Shepherd has made a career of finding those no one else could-survivors of human trafficking. His life's mission is helping others find freedom. But then the nightmare strikes too close to home. When his new wife, her daughter, and two other teenage girls are stolen, Murph is left questioning all he has thought to be true. With more dead ends than leads, he has no idea how to find those he loves. After everything is stripped away, love is what remains. Hope feels lost, but Murphy is willing to expend his last breath trying to bring them home.

In the past year through the beauty of Zoom, I have had the privilege of hearing Charles Martin interviewed twice and teach at a prayer breakfast on the subject of fatherlessness, both horizontal and vertical. He is married, is the father of three sons, and his interest in this dark subject of trafficking came about

through a chance encounter with a trafficker. That set him on a path of wrestling with the depravity of man with the fiercest weapon of all -- a hero's heart. In a word, Charles tells the "Murph" stories because he can do no other.

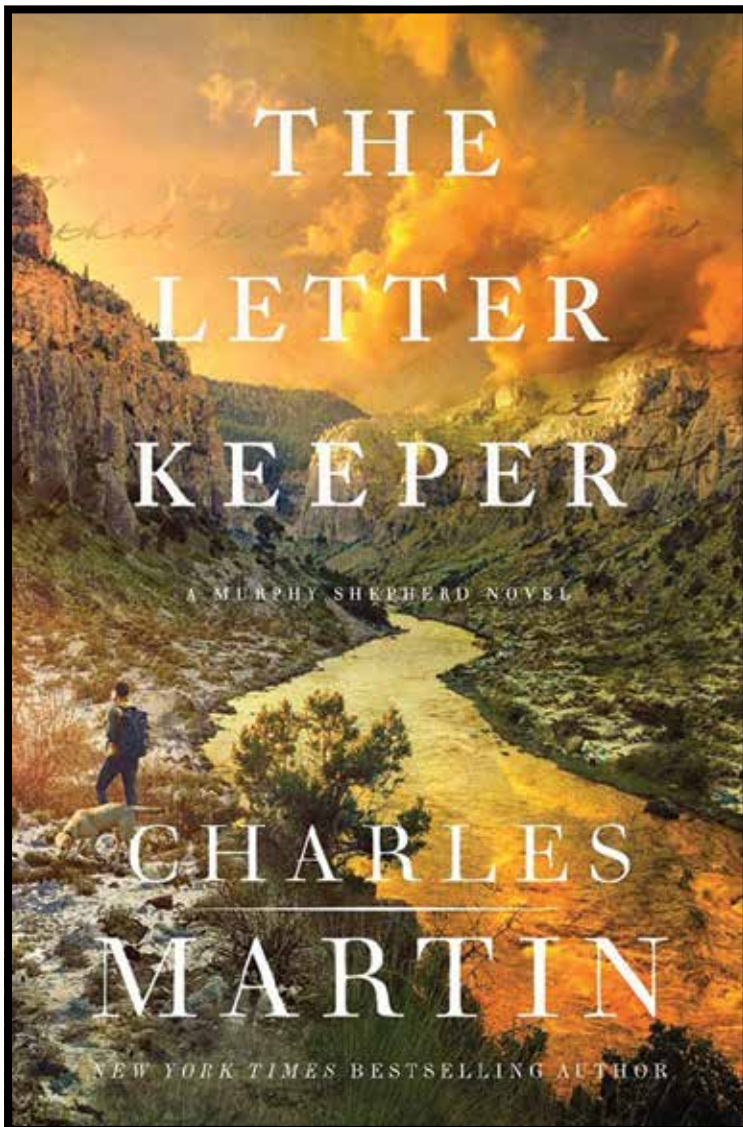
One reviewer reflected my own sentiments as I have read just a bit of *The Letter Keeper*:

"I don't know how he does what he does. It sounds rhetorical at this point because I find myself saying the same thing after every book. I flip the last page over (usually after having read it multiple times to prolong the ending) and then say, usually out loud to myself, 'How the h-e-double-hockey-stick did he just pull that off?'"
This book is no exception. It is unequivocally, hands down, a remarkable read. It's everything you want (and a whole lot more) from a sequel."

Let your hero's heart burn with ferocity and devour The Letter Keeper the moment it comes out. It may just keep you up, but it will be sleep lost for a most worthy cause.

Ali Elizabeth Turner

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Doc Felker And The Forgiveness Factor

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



Over the years, I have been pretty transparent with regard to a former, intense season of idiocy in my life that was relatively common in the '60s and '70s with respect to looking on soldiers as a "lesser life form." It was one of the themes of my book, *A Ballad For Baghdad: An Ex-Hippie Chick Vietnam War Protestor's Three Years in Iraq*. And most folks who know me are aware that I went to Iraq and lived in a combat zone for the purposes of saying, "Thank you," and "I am so sorry" to soldiers young and old for being such a jerk 50 years ago.

But it is not often that I get to have a chance to spend an afternoon with someone who had been on the "business end" of my academia-acquired-and-inspired-abuse-and-disrespect, and just recently I had the chance to personally say, "Thank you" and "I'm sorry," to Jimmy "Doc" Felker, who served as a medic in Vietnam.

Jimmy hails from Minor Hill, TN, and enlisted in 1967, having been kicked out of high school two weeks before graduation. "Going to Vietnam was easier than facing going home," he told me, so he signed up for Medical Care and Treatment School and saw some horrific stuff during his tour in 'Nam. What was worse, though, was that Doc is literally one of those that had feces thrown at him when he came home. My firm belief is that this kind of behavior on the part of those with whom I used to identify is responsible for huge damage to our culture, as well

as to the men of our nation who are still grappling with it a half-century later. Being able to look him in the eye, truly repent, and then having him regale me with all kinds of hilarious stories made for an afternoon I will never forget.

Besides experiencing having poop pitched at him, life was not easy for Doc when he got home. He married, had three kids, and his marriage eventually broke up. He prefers to live at the end of a cul-de-sac because it feels less vulnerable to possible negative situations. His kids have learned to warn him ahead of time if they are going to make any sudden moves or unexpected loud noises. Don't get me wrong; he successfully worked for the USPS for decades and retired, and has had a number of adventures

both here and abroad. His kids turned out okay, and he received a lot of unplanned healing through raising animals, which at various times included Tennessee walking horses, chickens, goats, and more. He knew nothing about animal therapy—it just happened. He faced down cancer and beat it. But most importantly, he developed standup comedy routines as a way of getting through all of it, and has made a point of giving back to vets by making them laugh at things about the life that only they would really understand.

One of the biggest influences in his life was his mom, and she spent a great deal of time painting as well as in the garden. Both avenues of creativity served as her sanctuary. When she used to write letters to him in 'Nam,

her descriptions of her garden were so real, he said, that "it was just like I was there."

Jimmy has done a good deal of therapeutic writing, and I am honored to have been given copies of his work by his sister, Judy Vaughn. We have decided to include a poem he wrote about his mother in honor of Mother's Day, which is in a couple of days. We hope you enjoy it, and Doc, we honor you. Thank you both for your service as well as your forgiveness. As he introduces his tribute to his mother, Doc said, "As I live the Autumn of the Journey of Life, I ponder the many years of learning-- I learned more from Mother than anyone else." There can be no more poignant tribute to the woman who no doubt wore out heaven on behalf of her son.

As I live the Autumn of the Journey of Life, I ponder the many years of learning-- I learned more from Mother than anyone else

*Mother was an Artist
She painted a masterpiece for each of the five of her children*

My masterpiece is my greatest treasure

Each masterpiece made possible

By Mother's Loving Hands

Mother didn't care for T.V. or radio

With her wonderful voice there was no need

In the spring of my journey as a child

I heard her sing many times

As she did her daily chores

*From Mother's Loving Hands
I learned more than just the words*

What A Friend We Have In Jesus

Mother was a sculptor

She sculpted five beautiful souls

When the spirit was angered

The soul would endeavor to persevere

Perseverance that quailed the spirit

All because of Mother's Loving Hands

As I prepare for the winter years in the Journey of Life

I can walk in harmony with nature

*At peace with my fellow man
All thanks to Mother's Loving Hands*



Doc Felker's most prized possession: a painting created by his Mother just for him



Special Feature

Athens Relay Team fishes for a cure at annual fundraiser tournament

by Holly Hollman - City of Athens Communications Specialist

Those who fished at Saturday's City of Athens Relay for Life Bass Fishing Tournament enjoyed a sunny day on the Tennessee River and supported efforts to "fish for a cure" for cancer.

The tournament raises money for the American Cancer Society, which supports programs such as lodging, transportation grants and research grants locally, statewide and throughout the U.S. For example, last fall ACS supported \$25,000 in grants for Huntsville area cancer treatment centers to help patients with transportation needs. Saturday's tournament at Ingalls Harbor in Decatur raised about \$9,000.

"What touches us each year are the stories we hear from fishermen about the impact cancer has had on them," said Team Captain Holly Hollman. "One fisherman who registered early called to let us know he couldn't make it because his child got sick. He told us to keep his registration fee as a donation because he had a family member who recently died from cancer."

Team members Jennifer White and Kathy Cothren, who are breast cancer survivors, presented the winners with their prize money. Cothren said seeing the support of the fishermen and volunteers brought a tear to her eye.

"You get overwhelmed by the support when you see so many working together for one event," Cothren

said.

Harry Smith caught the big Fish which weighed 6.31 pounds.

Dale Gist and Charlie Hodge won first place with bass weighing in at 15.92 pounds. They won \$2,000 in prize money and a set of Relay for Life rods custom-made and donated by Grassy Custom Rods & Tackle.

The other prize winners were:

- Second place, Todd Clem and Jeremiah Shackelford, 15.77 pounds
- Third place, Patrick Minor and Eric White, 15.74 pounds
- Fourth place, Jeremy Tomlin and Briley Tomlin, 15.26 pounds
- Fifth place, Jeff Stafford and Jody Schrimsher, 15.10 pounds
- Sixth place, Zach Lemmond and Lavoyd Lemmond, 14.80 pounds
- Seventh place, Craig Livingston and Tim James, 14.72 pounds
- Eighth place, Marty Kobeck and Jason Cannon, 14.64 pounds
- Ninth place, John England and Joey Smith, 14.50 pounds
- 10th place, Bradley Cross and Thorne Tapp, 14.26 pounds

Thank you to the tournament's major sponsors for supporting our efforts: Athens Gas Department, Athens Utilities, Wesco and Cahaba Pressure Treated Forest Products.



First place: Charlie Hodge and Dale Gist with bass weighing in at 15.92 pounds. They won \$2,000 in prize money and a set of Relay for Life rods custom-made and donated by Grassy Custom Rods & Tackle.



Second place, Todd Clem and Jeremiah Shackelford, 15.77 pounds



Third place, Patrick Minor and Eric White, 15.74 pounds

Calendar of Events

Heel and Crank Duathlon

May 8

Historic Mooresville Alabama with the Team Rocket Triathlon Club with all proceeds benefitting ALSA in memory of local triathlete, Darin Kruse. This race is a beginner-friendly event as well as a good sprint for the veterans starting at 6:00AM with Packet Pickup at Mooresville Brick Church and race start at 8:00AM followed by music, hot food and cold drinks from 9:30AM-11:00AM and awards at 10:30AM. This race is not USAT sanctioned as Team Rocket are trying to reduce costs to beginners and allow recumbent cyclists. No Day of Registration. No refunds. More information at: www.teamrockettri.org/heelandcrank

Mooresville Community Plant Sale

May 8

Dogwood & Magnolia Bakery. 25062 North Street in Mooresville. 8:00AM-12:00PM. Bring Mom for a sweet treat and take home something for her garden too.

Mrs. Laverne's Clean My Block Party

May 8

Lincoln Bridgeforth Park. 815 Westview Avenue in Athens. 8:30AM-12:00PM with Oasis Christ Church of Athens. Come together and attack the trash and have a good time doing it. There will be a community cook-out to celebrate Mrs. Laverne and her passion for Keeping Athens-Limestone Beautiful. Enjoy free food, games, music and more. Free to the public.

Sunset Cruise aboard the Nautical Wheeler

May 9

Wheeler Lake Scenic Cruise setting sail from Joe Wheeler State Park Marina (4405 McLean Drive in Rogersville) at 6:15PM for a 1.5 hour cruise including the beautiful scenery of Joe Wheeler State Park and a close up look at Wheeler dam with highlights of local history and wildlife from Captain Steve. Seats range from \$15.00-\$25.00. For more info, call/text 256-335-2187.

Ask A Master Gardener

May 11

Athens-Limestone Public Library. 603 South Jefferson Street in Athens. 10:15AM-2:15PM with the Athens-Limestone Master Gardeners. For more information about the Master Gardeners, you can contact them at limestonemg@yahoo.com.

Street Dance and Fashion Show

May 11

With Cast Products, Inc. on the Limestone County Courthouse Square (150 South Marion Street in Athens) featuring live music with Tomcat and Bark the Dawg Band, line dancing and western wear fashion show starting at 6:00PM. Free.

Seasoned Folks Dance and Health Festival

May 13

Big Spring Memorial Park. 100 North Beaty Street in Athens. 9:00AM-2:00PM with King Medicare Specialist and Athens-Limestone Tourism and sponsors Aetna Medicare Solutions, Foundation on Aging, and Christy Cares. Seniors are invited for a day of line dancing, food, giveaways and more. Guest speaker topics include Understanding Alzheimer's; Covid 19 Vaccines; and Medicare Fraud 101. Chances at raffles, \$10.00 Horse and Carriage Rides; Funnel Cakes, Aging Actively vendors and live music by The Athens Dulcimers Club. Bring a lawn chair and a friend.

Swamp John's Dinner Fundraiser

May 13

Elkmont Fire Department. 19667 Sandlin Road in Elkmont. 4:00PM-7:00PM featuring plates of catfish filet, chicken tenders, shrimp or combinations plus french fries, slaw, hush puppies, onion, pickle spear and glass of tea (sweet/unsweet) for \$12.00. Carryout or dine-in with social distancing. Advanced tickets can be purchased with any member of Elkmont Fire Department or by calling/texting Susan Pylant 256-431-0277.

Tupperware Bingo

May 13

With Kala's Tupperware at the Meeting Room of the Athens-Limestone Visitors Center (100 North Beaty Street in Athens - enter through side door at the park) starting at 6:00PM. This is a free event plus everyone gets something special for coming. For more information: 256-762-9703.

Andrew Lloyd Webber's Greatest Hits

May 13

With Athena Performing Art Series at Swan Creek Park. 100 U.S. Highway 31N in Athens. Starting at 7:00PM featuring favorites from CATS, Evita, Phantom of the Opera and more. Bring your lawn chair/blanks, have dinner from the food trucks and enjoy this family-friendly event. Happi Pappi Beignets, Get Loaded and Soul on Wheels will be on-site. Free to the public.



For the health and safety of our volunteers and the public, we regret that the VVA Spaghetti Day has been canceled until further notice.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

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Planning For Planapalooza

by Ali Elizabeth Turner



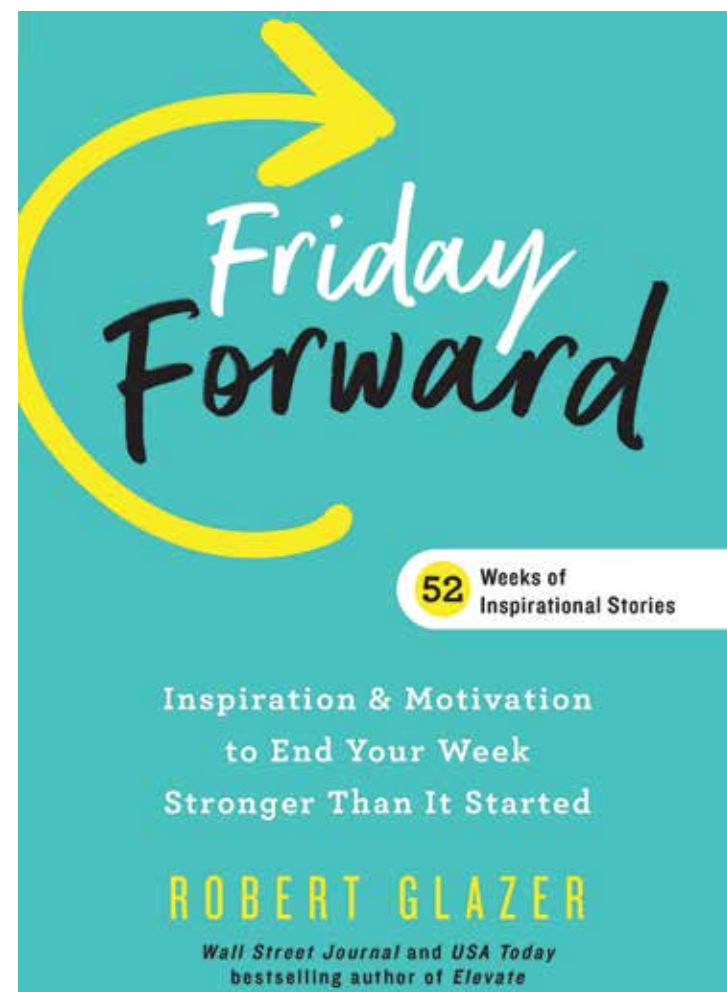
Storms had rolled in and were rolling out, which is totally normal for this part of the year, and we had just passed the 10-year anniversary of the worst storms in Alabama history. What a time that was, and we remembered how our community came together to help each other get through it. Mayor Ronnie, our new city planner Lakeisha Johnson, and I talked enthusiastically about the upcoming Planapalooza event as part of the Athens 2040 city and county focus on a comprehensive and careful approach to growth.

Planapalooza will be held in the Center for Lifelong

Learning from May 15-May 19 and the public is strongly encouraged to participate and let their voices be heard. The purpose is to bring all of Athens together with skilled urban planners who appreciate our town and want it to be able to hang on to its “Athensness” while we grow well. There had been a successful kick-off meeting on April 22, which had been attended in person as well as online, and the same will be the format for the May event. Lakeisha will be facilitating Planapalooza, and mentioned that she was glad that the planners noticed how vibrant our

downtown core is, which in her experience has not been the case with other projects. Mayor Ronnie mentioned that he had “great hope” about the project, and that this really is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to have a lasting impact on our city. For my part, I felt that the April 22nd meeting was the best one I had attended in all my years here. For more information and to register for the online event, go to www.athens2040.com.

We moved on to a tougher subject, that of homelessness. Mayor Ronnie had been on Zoom and the phone in a seminar and with some fellow mayors who are members of the Southeastern League of Municipalities, and together they had been trying to find a way through that takes in all the factors and considers public safety and quality of life when it comes to homelessness. “There are so many things to consider—drugs, mental illness, drugs AND mental



illness, and the fact is that some people honestly don't want to have a permanent place to live,” he said. “We are talking to churches and others, and we don't have answers...yet,” he added. No one wants to be hard of heart, and no one wants to have to have the taxpayers have to pay for washing human waste off the streets because the homeless don't want to use facilities designated for daily elimination.

We always include an aspect of the book we are reading, and this comes from page 47 of Friday Forward. It talks about Dwight Eisenhower and how he had to deal with the difference between urgent and important. Ike had to contend with those distinctions on a level that few of

us can imagine, and Mayor Ronnie read to us the following:

According to this principle, our tasks will typically fall into one of four quadrants. We also tend to complete them in this order:

1. Urgent and important
2. Urgent and not important
3. Important and not urgent
4. Not urgent and not important

Mayor Ronnie, Lakeisha, and I all owned the fact that we are all so prone to solving problems out of order, and we prayed for ourselves as well as the mayor. And then it was time for Lakeisha, as well as Ronnie to roll.

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Athens Comprehensive Plan Update

PLANAPALOOZA™

Planapalooza™ is completely open to the public, and all events are in person or online so everyone can safely and conveniently participate!

Saturday

May 15th

3:30PM - 5:30PM

Opening Presentation & Online Workshop

In Person

City Hall - Council Chambers
200 W Hobbs St,
Athens AL 35612

Online

To register for the online presentation please visit
Athens2040.com

Sunday

May 16th

9:00AM - 7:00PM

Open Studio
(Open to Public)

In Person

Center for Lifelong Learning
121 S Marion St,
Athens AL 35611

Online

To register for the online open studio please visit
Athens2040.com

2:30PM - 5:00PM

Focus Meetings

In Person

Center for Lifelong Learning
121 S Marion St,
Athens AL 35611

Online

To register for the online meetings please visit
Athens2040.com

2:30PM - 3:30PM

Focus Meeting #1
Arts/Culture/History/
Heritage

4:00PM - 5:00PM

Focus Meeting #2
All Things Green

Monday

May 17th

9:00AM - 7:00PM

Open Studio
(Open to Public)

In Person

Center for Lifelong Learning
121 S Marion St,
Athens AL 35611

Online

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10:30AM - 5:00PM

Focus Meetings

In Person

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121 S Marion St,
Athens AL 35611

Online

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10:30AM - 11:30AM

Focus Meeting #3
Conservation/Growth/
Development

1:00PM - 2:00PM

Focus Meeting #4
Moving Around Athens

2:30PM - 3:30PM

Focus Meeting #5
Living in Athens:
Neighborhood & Housing

4:00PM - 5:00PM

Focus Meeting #6
Economic & Business
Development

Tuesday

May 18th

9:00AM - 7:00PM

Open Studio
(Open to Public)

In Person

Center for Lifelong Learning
121 S Marion St,
Athens AL 35611

Online

To register for the online open studio please visit
Athens2040.com

Wednesday

May 19th

9:00AM - 1:00PM

Open Studio
(Open to Public)

In Person

Center for Lifelong Learning
121 S Marion St,
Athens AL 35611

Online

To register for the online open studio please visit
Athens2040.com

5:30PM - 7:30PM

Work-In Progress
Presentation

In Person

City Hall - Council Chambers
200 W Hobbs St,
Athens AL 35612

Online

To register for the online presentation please visit
Athens2040.com

All online meetings require registration, so stop by the project website soon to sign up and learn more! While you're there, make sure to check out all of the online tools and share your thoughts about the future of Athens.

Athens2040
PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE



Visit the project website at **ATHENS2040.COM**



Tourism

Bronco Bustin', Bus Boycotts, and Seasoned Folks Festival...Hope You're Curious!

by Cayce Lee

Social Media Specialist, Athens-Limestone County Tourism Association

May is here and so are the events filling up the Athens-Limestone Tourism calendar, and hopefully yours too. There's a lot for the family to enjoy...

Greatest Show on Dirt returns...

The Limestone County Sheriff's Rodeo week includes a parade, free pony ride for kids, street dance, and fashion show, plus all the traditional rodeo events. Learn more about this annual rodeo and its events at visita-thensal.com/limestone-co-sheriff-rodeo.html

May 8, 2021 -- Limestone County Sheriff's Rodeo Parade

May 10, 2021 -- Kick-in' Into Rodeo Week with Limestone County Rodeo Queen Committee

May 11, 2021 -- Rodeo Dance and Fashion Show on the Square with Cast Products, Inc.

May 13, 2021 -- Rodeo Slack Day

May 14 & 15, 2021 -- The Greatest Show on Dirt

"Women of the Montgomery Bus Boycott" Display comes to Athens...

Join the Athens-Limestone Public Library (603 South Jefferson Street in Athens) for the "Women of the Montgomery Boycott" display which can be enjoyed Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The display will feature the heroic stories of Jo Ann Robinson, Aurelia Browder, Claudette Colvin, Mary Louise Smith, and Lucille Times as well as the efforts of the Women's Political Council, which was integral in organizing the Montgomery Bus Boycott. For more information, call 256-232-1233

Make plans to be on the Square May 21...

Make plans to come early to the Square at 2 p.m. as ARCY, renowned street artist, starts creating a tribute mural to Limestone County's own Grammy-winning, singer-songwriter Britany Howard in Merchants Alley. You can watch the mural unfold throughout the evening until 8 p.m.



Fridays After Five kicks off with Athens Main Street at 5 p.m. with food trucks, area stores staying open late just for your perusing, and a variety of eateries offering inside and outside dining options.

Get ready for an evening of music at the Summer Concert Series: Singing on the Square kicks off with the Athens-Limestone Tourism from 7-9 p.m. with DEAN. Local favorite wife-husband duo, Briana and Garrett Dean, will be perform-

ing for you. Bring a lawn chair and tap your toes or get up and dance!

Seasoned Folks Festival...

Seniors are invited for a day of line dancing, food, giveaways, and more on May 13 with King Medicare Specialist and Athens-Limestone Tourism and sponsors Aetna Medicare Solutions, Foundation on Aging, and Christy-Care from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Guest speaker topics in-

clude *Understanding Alzheimer's*; *Covid-19 Vaccines*; and *Medicare Fraud 101*. There will be chances at raffles, \$10 horse and carriage rides; funnel cakes, aging actively vendors, and live music by The Athens Dulcimers Club. Bring a lawn chair and a friend.

Fill your calendar with our calendar....

Get the details for these events and more from the VisitAthensAL.com event calendar

May 8 - Mommy & Me Unicorn Painting Time

May 8 - Athens Truck Invasion Cruise-In

May 13 - Swamp John's Dinner Fundraiser with Elkmont Fire Dept.

May 13 - Tupperware Bingo with Kala's Tupperware

May 13 - Andrew Lloyd Webber's Greatest Hits

May 15 & 16, 2021 - Rustic Willow Market Days

May 22 - Fish Diversity at Joe Wheeler State Park

May 22 - John McCutcheon: Untold - Small Miracles in Everyday Life Livestream Event with Athens Storytelling Festival

May 22 - "Junior Historian" Walking Tour with the Town of Mooresville

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Slinkard On Success

What Does Your Effort Say About You?

by D. A. Slinkard

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

I was recently listening to my daughters practice the piano and began reflecting on what the sounds were like when they first started playing the piano compared to that day. It was night-and-day difference between the sounds of the beginning days compared to the sounds that developed after countless hours that had been practiced since then. The level of difficulty in the songs being performed has steadily advanced as they have worked on their playing skills. Their fingers move much faster on the keyboard compared to the early days. I love listening to the sounds as they play their piano, and I cannot help but feel pride as I listen to my daughters make beautiful melodies.

As I was thinking back over the time that has passed, all the time they have put into their musical capabilities, it got me to thinking about life in general. I started thinking about the time and effort each daughter has put forth regarding their practice, and then realized immediately I had an article topic perfect for the *Athens Now* paper. When it comes to life, how much effort are you putting in to guarantee your success? I think back to the times in my life when I have struggled, and I understand I was not putting forth the needed effort.

Putting it point blank to you – what does your

effort say about you when it comes to how you have been living your life? Are you happy with your life, or do you wish you could make some changes and do things differently? I remember back to my sports days and the coaches pounding in the idea: “You are going to play the way you practice.” If you practice at half-speed when it comes to the game, you are only going to be able to perform at the speed at which you practiced.

Too many people are going about life barely giving enough effort to survive let alone being able to thrive. If you want to find success, it is going to happen by going the extra mile. You must be willing to do what others are not willing to do; and when this happens, you will find a difference in your life. When you are going the extra mile, you will no longer have to worry about what kind of effort you are giving because the effort will be there. When it comes to your career, when was the last time you did something (effort) that would increase your skills?

**Hard work is
a two way
street.
You get back
exactly what
you put in.**

I have seen too often where people work hard to get to a certain level, and once they achieve whatever level they have deemed necessary in their mind, their lives hit a plateau; and they never get better. Have you plateaued in your life? Going up in life takes effort, just like climbing to the top of the mountain top. Too many people, though, focus on climbing just enough to get to the smooth area; then their lives plateau and eventually so does their

effort. The ones who reach the mountaintops do so because they have the right tenacity and the right effort to keep on climbing. They are willing to do what others are not willing to do in order to achieve the success which puts them on top.

Putting forth effort, having the right enthusiasm (last article), is a mental challenge, but life is a mental challenge for everyone. Every day you must make the mental decision to put forth the necessary effort required

to achieve your goals. Every day you must make the mental decision to take the necessary actions required to achieve your goals. Every day you must make the mental decision to move forward. When you make these decisions on effort, on actions to take, on the decision to move forward, you will move the needle on your effort level.

Moving this needle is what we need to change the outcome of our lives. Becoming a better version of yourself is going to require discipline and the constant decision-making process that you will take the necessary efforts. When it comes to the piano, if my daughters decide not to practice the piano, they should not be surprised if the notes they play sound flat. Your life is no different in that if you decide not to put forth the effort, do not be surprised if the life you want escapes your grasp. Be willing to put in the time and effort, you will get the desired results thus changing your life.



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Clean, Green And Beautiful

Sparky (And KALB) -- Back In The Classroom!

by Leigh Patterson - Executive Director - Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful

One of my favorite things to do here at Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful is to go into classrooms to teach students about littering, recycling, and environmental issues. Over the last year, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, this has not been possible. On April 29 and 30, we were finally able to get back into a couple of classrooms!

Sparky, the KALB mascot, and I visited Little Tots Preschool on the dates above. It was a great feeling to be back in the classroom! We spoke to the children about littering -- what litter is, how it is harmful, and what they can do to help prevent it. They enjoyed meeting Sparky and playing the "Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down" game with him. In this game, they are shown different pictures and must give a thumbs up if the picture shows something beautiful or a thumbs down if the picture shows litter. Then, they were "sworn in" as Student Litter Patrol Officers, promising to help keep Athens clean and beautiful by sharing the

message to "Never Litter" with friends and family.

Education is a very important part of our mission at KALB. We offer several different programs and classroom presentations for students of all ages, adults included! Some of the presentations that we offer are described below.

The Talking Tree

The Talking Tree is available to speak to preschool through first grade students. The main topic is discussion on why trees are important to the planet, to people, and to animals, in a language that young children can understand. We talk about trees providing animal habitats, shade, fuel, food, cooling effect, building materials, and more. Once the students better understand the role trees play in our world, we explain why recycling paper is so important. This is an interactive lesson, and teachers receive coloring pages for their students to continue the lesson.

Student Litter Patrol Officers

Another program that is geared toward preschool

through first grade students is our Student Litter Patrol Officer presentation, as was talked about earlier. Sparky and a member of the KALB team will talk with your students about the dangers of litter in our community. The students are then offered the opportunity to become official Litter Patrol Officers. Students are "sworn in" and then receive an official ID card and other goodies. A letter is also given to the students to be taken home to parents, informing them of their child's new responsibilities and asking them to support their child by being a good example.

Hands-On Litter Awareness

This program can be geared toward almost all grade levels. Students are broken up into small groups and given a bag of 10 clean litter items. They are asked as a group to list the items from most dangerous to least dangerous taking into consideration people, wildlife, and the environment. There are no wrong answers. This is an exercise that allows students to take time to think about



the consequences of littering.

Environmental Jeopardy

This is a realistic game of Jeopardy with all answers relating to the environment. The questions and answers can be geared toward any age group with general or more specific information, depending on the needs of the class. A short presentation is given covering several of the topics included in the game. Students are then broken up into teams to compete for points.

Recycling Into the Future

A KALB team member will educate your students about the importance of recycling. The questions "Why should we recycle?", "What will happen if we don't recycle?", "How does recycling work?", and "What is

made from recycled materials?" will be answered. The students will be shown fun items made from recycled materials, such as clothing and carpeting, made from plastic bottles, plastic wood, and other items. This program is developed based on age group.

We know that the best way to change the world's views on littering, recycling, and environmental issues is through educating our youth. If you are interested in having someone from KALB present a lesson or program to your student or adult groups, please reach out to us. If you have a topic in mind that is not listed above, just ask us. We will be happy to work with you to ensure that the program will fit your needs!



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Cooking with Anna

Do April Showers Really Bring May Flowers?

by Anna Hamilton

Most of us have heard the saying -- "April showers bring May flowers." I didn't realize until last week that the saying can be traced all the way back to the Canterbury Tales. Even then, people were able to tell that the weather began to shift from a wet, cold pattern to a warm, sunny one in May causing new life to spring forth from the earth.

Have you ever felt like your life was a constant April shower? All downpours, gray skies, gloom and doom. It's hard to know when the flowers in your life are going to bloom. It's easy to turn your focus to only the bad that seems to be happening in your life. When you only see the gray skies, you can't see the beautiful life developing inside of you.

God uses the gray skies of life to not only help develop newness in our lives, but also to help lead others around us by our examples. We are given the tasks as Christians to develop our faith. God takes the valleys, the downpours of life, and uses them to help the most beautiful flowers

bloom. Without the rain, you aren't able to nourish and grow flowers. Without the trials in your life, you will not be able to enjoy and appreciate the beautiful parts of your life. So enjoy the rain, let it pour down, and praise God for it. The rain will bring forth beauty in your life.

This week's recipe is a salad that eats like a full meal! It is packed with edamame and loaded with protein. If you like, feel free to add shredded chicken or shrimp to this delicious salad.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." Philippians 4:6-8

Edamame Salad with Cilantro Lime Dressing

Ingredients:

*2 cups shelled edamame
2 cups frozen corn kernels
1 red bell pepper
1/2 cup finely chopped red onion
1/3 cup chopped green onion
Cilantro for garnish*

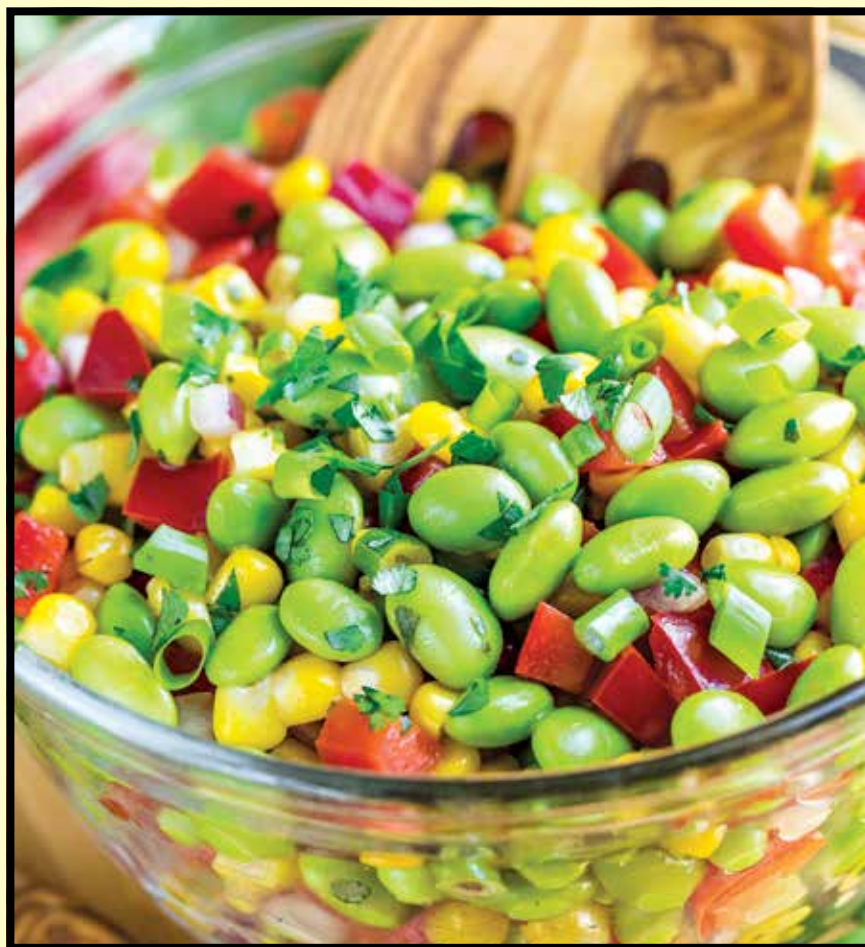
Cilantro Lime Dressing

*3 Tbsp. lime juice
1/4 cup olive oil
1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves plus extra for topping
2 tsp. honey
Salt and pepper to taste
1/8 tsp. cumin*

Directions:

Cook edamame per package instructions. While your edamame boils, cook corn by steaming or sautéing. Chop your bell pepper, red onion, and green onion and combine with edamame and corn.

To make the cilantro lime vinaigrette, combine all the above



ingredients in a small mason jar and shake well. Pour over salad and toss to combine. Add a little extra cilantro to garnish. Salad may be chilled before serving or served immediately, it's great either way.

Advice To A Friend

by Steve Leland

I have a friend that is struggling with some parts of his relationship with his wife and he asked the question "Where do I go from here?"

I answered him with my opinion and, upon reflection, decided to share it here in case it might speak to anyone in one way or another.

"Where do you go from here? Build your relationship with the Almighty.

Become the man that He dreams that you could be. What we have been taught is to become our best selves and do things for Him and the Kingdom. But we have been bought with a price, we are servants of the Most High. Servants, like employees, aren't to be the masters of

their service. We need to find His desires and serve them.

Whether she comes along, follows from a distance, or rejects the path entirely, He is your focus. He is your world. Whether or not she is won by your walk is ultimately her choice, but how you walk will affect her.

You love her greatly, that's huge. Too many have to be reminded to love their wives. But she isn't to be the center of your life, your Master is. Just as she should make you her master, but don't be holding your breath over that eventuality.

Your focus doesn't need to be other pursuits at this point. It needs to be the Kingdom and His righ-

teousness. In His timing those other pursuits can be added.

I know, it's a hard saying. But you've got to lay the foundation before you can build your dreams. And if the Kingdom isn't your foundation, it is doomed before you start.

You are a brilliant and highly educated man, but don't let your knowledge come between you and your Creator. All things decently and in order. Focus on your Boss, she either will or will not follow. The choice will be hers.

Another thought soup, as you called it. But hopefully you can find something in there to chew on.

BTW: I'm preaching to all of us, especially the guy in my mirror."



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BB Perrins Sports Grille Of Decatur: *Definitely Worth The Drive*

by Ali Elizabeth Turner

continued from page 1

ing, despite the crises “curve balls” of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) and more recently, COVID 19. Benny Perrin was a Decatur High sports legend, and graduated from the University of Alabama. He played in the 1978 and 1979 National Championship seasons, and also received the game ball in Coach Bear Bryant’s 315th win in the 1981 Iron Bowl game against Auburn. That win made Bear the winningest coach in college football history. Benny was also part of the St. Louis Cardinals NFL team for four years. Braxton was an avid golfer. Benny and Braxton founded BB Perrins Sports Grille together, and they learned many BBQ secrets from the legendary Big John of Dreamland BBQ fame.

Sadly, Benny battled the effects of head injuries suffered while playing the game he loved for several years until he passed away in 2017. He loved life, people, his family, God, sports, and the restaurant. I have been told everyone loved him, and in honor of all he built and was, his family, restaurant family, and community have continued what he and his brother began. Braxton recently passed away due to complications from COVID-19.

What Benny, Braxton, and their crew successfully started was Decatur’s version of *Cheers*, and the combination of “*where everybody knows your name*,” along with truly sumptuous Southern sports fare has served to make BB Perrins the best sports grille in Decatur. They are most famous for their ribs, sandwiches, pizzas, burgers, and desserts, but I could spend



the rest of this advertorial talking about their wings. Hands down, and I am not being paid to say this, the wings at BB Perrins are the best I have ever had. *EVER!*

Taylor Jones, who is the manager, told me that back in the day, Benny would only serve his signature slow-smoked wings on game days, but the demand was so great that eventually they decided to make them a permanent part of the menu. While I knew that no one would or should spill the trade secrets, this much I can tell you: the undisclosed ingredients of the rub, combined with a brief flash fry just before they are taken out to the table, and finished with handmade dipping sauces whose flavors include sweet heat, honey mustard, bleu cheese, ranch, and BBQ are what seal the deal. It didn’t hurt at all that the celery was fresh and crisp. My fingers were a happy mess, the resulting pile of bones was impressive, and I thoroughly used the napkins and the moistened towelette to “destroy the evidence” without a smackerel of shame. Best. Wings. *EVER!*

For the business crowd, BB Perrins serves lunch specials every Monday through Friday



between 11a.m. and 2 p.m., and they include a smaller version of the chef salad, a smaller bowl of their award-winning gumbo, a rib special, chicken tenders with fries, and a pork loin special.

BB Perrins gets their produce from local sources, and the freshness serves to enhance the flavor experience. They serve a lot of salads, and they are huge. They have several desserts for which they are well known, and like the salads, the sizes are such that the desserts are shareable. Their best seller is the PB fudge pie, and the menu describes it as, “Our signature dessert! A layer of fudge topped with light and creamy peanut butter and topped with chocolate syrup.” They also have freshly made key lime pie and a brownie sundae. They do catering as well, and for that specialized



menu they will include their homemade banana pudding.

Taylor told me about how they coped well during COVID as a result of some decisions they made which truly paid off. He said, “We kept the same hours because we really wanted people to know that we were still here. People would come in to get their to-go orders, and even though they couldn’t stay except for a minute, they were greeted just like they always had been. They tipped the girls well, and we did not lose one employee. Then, when we were able to open back up, people realized that nothing had really changed except that now they could come and sit down and enjoy what they had always enjoyed.”

BB Perrins is full of sports memorabilia of all kinds, and the tables have news-

paper clippings of Benny’s sports career beginning in high school as part of the décor. Taylor is a golf pro, having won the US Hickory Open two times. “It feels really good to have my trophies here next to Benny’s,” he said. I have watched Taylor with customers as well as staff, and I think Benny and Braxton would be proud to see that what they started is still going strong. Come, see, and taste for yourself that truly, “the legend lives on.”

**BB Perrins
Sports Grille**

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Back To Basics – Honey

by Nick Thomas, owner of Prime Performance Training, and Certified Sports Nutritionist

Almost everyone has a sweet tooth, and it always seems to strike hardest when a healthier eating path has been chosen. There are ways to naturally combat this issue and not destroy the goals which have been set. Honey is a fantastic natural sweetener and actually has some great health benefits as well.

Honey is a wonderful source of simple carbohydrates. Bees add enzymes to the nectar itself which is made up of mainly sucrose and water. When the enzymes are added, chemical compounds invert the sucrose into fructose and glucose which ultimately evaporates the majority of the water. This is actually what helps honey not spoil. The high level of fructose also makes honey sweeter than table sugar.

Many minerals and vitamins can be found in honey as well. They work together helping metabolize the undesirable cholesterol and fatty acid on the organs and tissues into the system, which helps prevent obesity and promote better overall health. A great way to gain the full benefit of this property found in honey is to have a cup of lukewarm water with honey and lemon juice each morning. This will promote weight loss and help flush the toxins and waste from the body.

Honey has a great glycemic index, which means that the sugars it contains can be gradually absorbed into the bloodstream so better digestion is achieved. This is much better than choosing foods with an excessively high glycemic index which prompt an elevated insulin release in the body to metabolize the sudden surge of glucose in the blood as a result of the pancreas being stimulated. For this reason, honey can be an excellent option for diabetics who struggle with keeping blood sugar regulated. Honey makes a wonderful food sweetener without the danger of an intense sugar spike.

For athletes struggling with muscle fatigue, honey is a simple solution to help endurance levels. Due to the combination of glucose and fructose being slowly absorbed, it sustains energy over performance time. Honey can increase energy levels as well because it contains the natural sugars which give a calorie surge. When feeling that mid-afternoon drag and sweet tooth, grab a cup of hot tea and add some honey. This will solve both issues. This same cup of tea will also act as a natural cough suppressant. Honey not only will soothe the throat, it has potent an-

tibacterial properties which help kill bacteria that can lead to infections such as strep throat.

Finally, honey can even prove to be an effective sleep aid. If falling asleep seems to be a struggle, it could be due

to the body being a bit chemically unbalanced. Honey is a type of carbohydrate that is fat digestible which allows tryptophan to enter your brain causing the stimulation of insulin release. The tryptophan triggers the tired feeling which brings on sleep.

Incorporating honey in a daily routine clearly has several benefits. Choosing a local honey can even help the body become more immune to the allergens in the surrounding area diminishing allergy symptoms over time.



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Where Is The Ammo?

by Brad Reasonover

continued from page 1

ct storm” causing a national shortage of some guns and nearly all ammo. First, the *pandemic* slammed the brakes on normal cycles of manufacturing. Ammo manufacturers usually load certain calibers for only a few cycles throughout the year. It’s timely and costly to continuously switch over the assembly lines from caliber to caliber even under normal circumstances. This is why we’ve seen a shortage of even the non-surplus ammo (hunting and specialty calibers). It simply wasn’t being produced as rapidly. Moreover, the supply chain has been dramatically altered due to COVID. Less workers and more safety protocols led to slower output.

Additionally, 2020 was an *election year*. Election years not only amplify sales on its own, but they can also bring uncertainty to the industry. Why would a manufacturer in the industry invest heavily in itself just to be slammed with costly regulations from the gun control advocates in government? Because of this uncertainty in the industry, many big box stores began to order double and triple their normal quantities with the hopes of getting priority orders over smaller shops. The increase in nationwide demand squeezed the supply chain and created a race among



dealers to get their hands on the most and best goods. At times, we had to pay higher prices just to ensure we had product to sell. Still, we remained competitive, and we rarely ran out of popular ammo or firearms.

Finally, the firearm industry is as *popular* as we’ve ever seen it. There was a record number of new gun owners in 2020 (as many as 8 million new gun owners). Combine that stat with 2020 also being a record year in terms of total guns sold and it’s easy to see why ammo is so scarce. We believe there are three main reasons for the increase in popularity: (1) civil unrest, (2) social distancing, and (3) the ‘fear of missing out’ (“fomo”) buyers.

First, anxiety over the civil unrest in 2020 led to more folks deciding they were not going to allow themselves to become a victim. Gun and ammo sales erupted once news of increased crime and civil unrest grew nationwide.

Americans demanded security in their homes and in their community. Responsible gun owners have peace of mind that they can defend themselves. We definitely saw an increase in first-time buyers. And it’s not just conservatives who are buying guns – those who identify as liberal are also buying. The first-time buyers are a more diverse group now than ever, which is what makes this surge different – this surge will last until there is sense of security again.

Second, gun and ammo sales are soaring because hunting was one of the few socially distanced things we were ‘allowed’ to do last year. More people are getting back to hunting or are beginning to hunt as a hobby. We couldn’t attend sporting events in person like ‘normal’ last year. Vacations were put on hold. But many still safely enjoyed the great outdoors with friends at the shooting range or at the hunting camp.



Bradford's is a three generation family affair. From left Luke Hart, and his Mom Beth Reasonover Hart

Third, the “fomo” crowd boosted demand in 2020. Americans are concerned over what the current president will do with gun control. Those on the fence about whether to buy a modern sporting rifle (AR-15) are now entering the market. Biden has demonstrated he will use every tragic event to criminalize lawful gun owners. As such, Biden and the gun control advocates in Congress are fanning the flame of gun sales.

So, when will we see ammo availability and prices return to ‘normal’ levels? Not anytime soon is our best guess. For now, we have as good a selection of guns and ammo at Bradford’s as we’ve had since the pandemic began. It’s not the volume we’d like,

but it is getting better every week. The pandemic brought us new trends, such as a higher demand for premium guns and more accessories - which we are stocking more of now. Our suppliers are the same suppliers we have done business with for decades and those relationships give us an advantage we can pass on to the customer.

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Learning As A Lifestyle

Happy Anniversary / Summer Camps

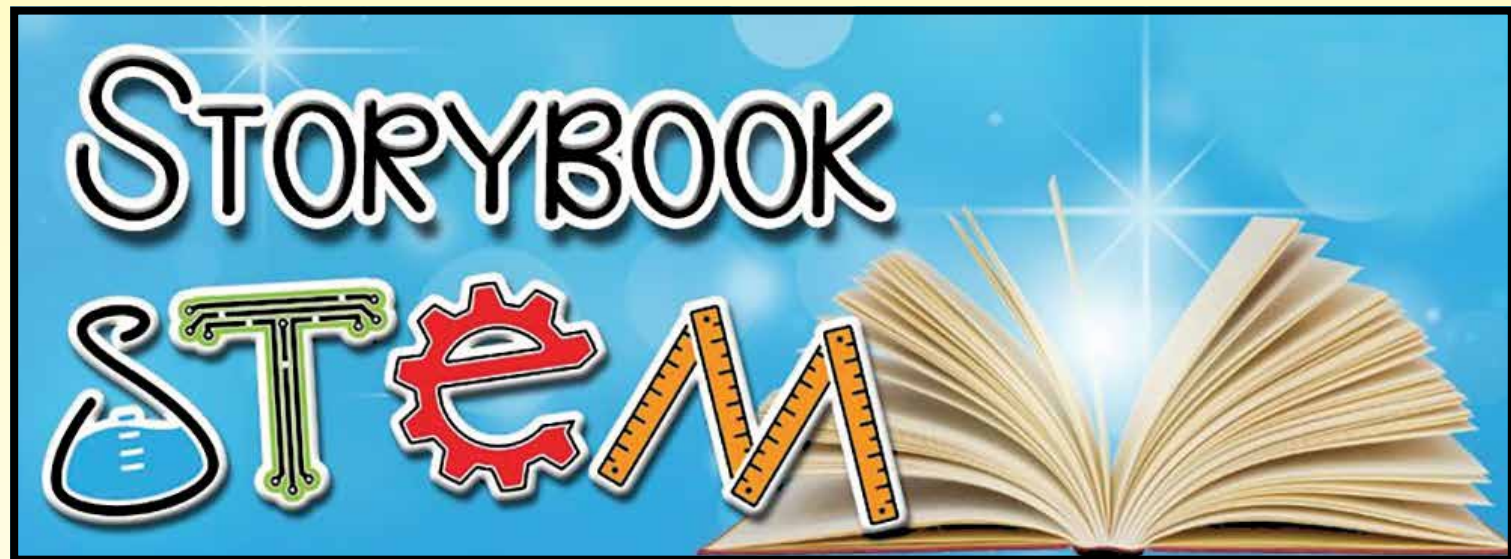
by Wanda Campbell

Center for Lifelong Learning - 121 South Marion Street, Athens, AL 35611 - 256-233-8262

It is hard to believe the Center for Lifelong Learning is celebrating its 10th anniversary. We opened our doors on April 26, 2011.

Many events have happened at the Center. We have had book signings and writers' conferences as well as art classes and computer classes for seniors. We held the Women's Symposiums and Leadership Conferences, as well as Microsoft Office classes and the Community Breakfasts.

While the COVID rules have been difficult, we are happy to get back to work with Summer Camps. For 2021, the Center of-



fers 14 STEAM Camps for youth ages 6-12. All camps are located at the Center for Lifelong Learning, 121 South Marion Street on the eastside of the Courthouse Square in Athens. Camps will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Monday through Friday. Camp cost is \$129 per week and space is limited to 15 children per camp.

Camps start on June 7 with **Storybook Stem** for ages 6-8 and **Environmental Engineers**

for ages 9-12.

In **Storybook Stem**, there is a STEM Camp full of interesting books and fun STEM challenges. During this great week, campers will learn the steps of the STEM design process, participate

in literary adventures, and engineer awesome STEM challenges based on the stories we read.

In **Environmental Engineers**, go green and bring STEM concepts to life! Learn how to renew energy by investigating Mother Earth's beating heart, farming the wind, collecting the power of the sun, exploring planet water, harnessing hydropower, and engineering an energized future. Get ready to get renewed!

Other camps include **Kids Coding Camp**, **Superhero Camp**, **Exploring the 3rd Rock**, **Theme Park Imagination**, **smArt Camp**, and **Stop Motion Camp**. And that is just our June Camps.

For more information about all of our camps, check out the website at www.athens.edu/CLL - or call us at 256-233-8260.



That Old Woman

by Jerry Barksdale

www.jerrybarksdale.com

fb.com/jerry.barksdale.7



It was 1935, smack dab in the middle of the Great Depression, when she showed up in the East Limestone community and occupied an abandoned sharecropper's shack near our house. I was 10 years old at the time, but I remember it well. No one knew her, nor any of her folks, nor where she came from. She just appeared one day with a pack of cur dogs. She didn't attend church, didn't associate with neighbors and didn't appear to have a source of sustenance. She didn't even have a name so far as anyone knew. Folks just called her "that old woman."

Mama worried that she didn't have enough to eat. Daddy was bent over the breakfast table sopping up "Hoover gravy" with a biscuit while Mama poured coffee. "I hate to see anybody go hungry," she said.

"Lot of folks are hungry these days," Daddy said. "I've eat so much Hoover gravy my socks slide down my legs."

"Well, at least we have something to eat."

"If it don't hurry up and rain we'll all starve to death," Daddy said. "There won't be enough cotton to plow under."

Mama examined the calendar hanging on a nail on the wall and flipped the pages. "My word! It's been two months since we've had a drop of rain."

Daddy stirred molasses in his coffee to sweeten it and took a sip. "Didn't that old woman show up about two months ago?" he asked.

After breakfast Daddy

hitched up the mules to our wagon and headed off to cut firewood for the cook stove. Mama scooped cornmeal from the bin into a paper bag, then we went to the garden and picked a mess of peas, squash, okra and tomatoes.

"Com'on Punk'n let's take this to that poor old woman up yonder," she said.

It was July 3rd and scorching hot. The cotton plants were drooping in the heat and little clouds of dust rose from our footsteps. The sharecropper shack was tiny with a rusty tin roof and tar paper siding and sat on a foundation of stacked rocks. No one had lived there in years and weeds had grown waist high.

We walked up to the front porch and Mama called out: "YOO HOO! ANYBODY HOME?"

A pack of hounds scrambled from beneath the shack, barking and snarling. After sniffing us, they backed off. The old woman, wearing a ragged black dress, pushed open the torn screen door and looked us up and down. She was bent over with age like a crooked old tree. Her eyes were black as tar; curly hairs grew on her pointed chin and nose, and long gray hair fell past her hunched shoulders.

I moved closer to Mama and I clutched her arm.

"What'che want?" The old woman demanded.

Mama held out the sack of cornmeal and vegetables. "We've got plenty and I hate to see food go to waste," she said. "Cornbread sure would taste good with fried okra and squash."

The old woman eyed us with

suspicion.

"Here, please take it," Mama said.

The old woman inched out onto the front porch and snatched the sack and disappeared inside the house without a word.

The next day it came a gully-washer rain. Mama rejoiced and said the Lord sent rain because we had been kind to the old woman. The same day, Bossy, for no apparent reason, didn't give any milk. The cotton crop was saved, such as it was, but we had no milk to drink.

When the rain stopped, Army worms came marching across our cotton patch eating the squares that would eventually develop into cotton bolls. Bossy, didn't give enough milk for Daddy's coffee. Our neighbor's cow also stopped giving milk. "It's that old woman, I tell ya," Daddy said. "Our problems started when she showed up."

Later I was fishing in Johnson Branch when she appeared out of the woods and offered me a hunk of cornbread. "It's mighty good," she said. I refused it and ran home.

One of the Smith children, who lived nearby, went missing. The following month another child disappeared. They were never seen again.

Late one night I woke when I heard Bossy bawling at the barn. Daddy fumbled around in the dark, slipped on his overalls, and went out the back door holding a lantern. I snuck from my bed and peeped out the window where a quarter moon illuminated the landscape. When Daddy neared the barn, I

saw a pack of hounds run off. Later that night I overheard Mama and Daddy whispering. "My word!" Mama exclaimed. "Don't dare tell that young'n what you saw. It would scare 'em to death."

The following week the old woman was spotted near Fairmount School on Nick Davis Road talking to children walking home. She was seen giving a hunk of cornbread to Sally Turner. Sally was a beautiful child with blue eyes and red hair, but the other children made fun of her because she had a terrible limp. A kicking mule broke her femur which wasn't properly set. Little Sally disappeared and was never seen again.

Later, Bossy woke me bawling. Daddy dressed and loaded his 22 rifle and slipped out the back door. The moon was full. I saw Daddy shoulder the 22. POW-POW-POW. Dogs scattered. One dragged off in the bushes and disappeared. Again, I overheard Mama and Daddy whispering. "Them dogs have been sucking Bossy dry," Daddy said. "That's why we don't have any milk."

"My word! I've never heard of such a thing," Mama whispered.

"Yeah, and there's more dogs than before," Daddy said.

"Where you reckon they come from?" Mama whispered.

"I don't know, but there's one less. I shot 'em in the hind quarter."

Several weeks later, hunters discovered the old woman's body in the woods. The coroner determined that she died from "natural causes."

No family ever came forward and the investigation ended. Afterwards, Bossy began giving milk and no more children disappeared.

Years later, I stopped at Vinson's store on Nick Davis Road to drink a Coke and catch up on local news from the "spit and whittle" club who were sitting on the front porch. They were discussing the drought – it hadn't rained in over a month – and boll weevils were eating the cotton crop.

"It got just like this back in nineteen thirty-five," a fellow said.

Abner Allen said his cow had quit giving milk.

"That's odd, mine too," another fellow said.

Shortly, a middle-aged, blue eyed, red headed woman, followed by a pack of cur dogs, limped up and went inside the store.

"I'll swear," Abner said. "If I didn't know better, I'd say that's Sally Turner who disappeared forty year ago."

"Reckon who she is?" someone asked.

The woman emerged carrying a sack of cornmeal. An alarm went off in my head. Somewhere in my memory... yes – yes! Now, I remembered. Fear shot through me and the hair on the back of my neck extended like a wire brush. That old woman was back.

"For God's sake," I said, "Never – never take cornbread from her or you'll end up on all fours and scratching fleas."

I don't accept cornbread from strangers. And neither should you.

Puppy Found

by Joel Allen



Hello, folks! A very interesting thing happened to me on the night of April 22. Houston and I had been out visiting some friends, and we returned home close to midnight. It was light before we left, so I did not think to turn on the porch lights. I pulled into my driveway and it was dark. Houston and I got out and he was doing his usual “gotta-pee-on-everything-Daddy-because-I-know-something-else-has-marked-over-my-area” running around. As we both approached the front porch, we were met with a growl and a puppy bark letting us know we were not to approach. I called out to the unknown puppy and said, “This is my house and you are not going to tell me I can’t go in!” I still eased up on the porch where I was being growled at thinking how ironic it was that another dog was telling me that I could not enter my own home. By the sound alone, the puppy was scared and I told Houston to stay back. His giant size was enough to upset anything, especially in the dark.

Well, I finally got the front door opened without the puppy getting more fearful and called Houston in. I turned on the porch light, and there huddled off to the side was a mostly white puppy with a big patch of light brown on its back. At first look, I would have guessed it to be three months old. It was obviously well cared for but had either been dumped or lost. At first, she was not letting me near her, which I respected. But when I brought her food and water, she melted and

began whining as puppies do. She came to me, and when I saw she had no collar on her, I called my family and asked for someone to take her. I ended up making a midnight run to my sister’s house. I wrapped the puppy in a blanket, and for the whole ride she rode in my lap and did not want to move.

At my sister’s place, she took right up with the family immediately, and my nephews wanted to keep her. I told my sister to let them know that if they did not treat her right, I would come back and get her. I also informed them that if someone should claim the puppy, they might not be able to keep her. Well, I put a notice and her picture on the Nextdoor app. No one responded/claimed her. I even stated that if she be-

longed to whomever, they would have to prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Now, I have to tell everyone, this puppy has wiggled her way into the hearts of that household she is in. She has taken a liking to all the kids and follows them everywhere. She has stolen my brother-in-law’s hammer and loves on him. I think she is a smart one because she has played everyone’s heart strings like a fiddle. I had planned on taking her to the shelter until this happened. I believe that’s how God played a role in this. She certainly has some kind of protection about her because my place is not safe due to coyotes in my area, and she obviously had been on my porch for a while.

Anyways, I speculate that she was probably dumped,

and if that is the case, I pray the Lord punishes the person who did this. To anyone who would abandon a puppy or animal, I hope they never get the chance to do that to another animal again. They lost out on a blessing and got a curse instead. God sees everything we do.

When something like this happens, we all have choices. We can take in the puppy/dog or try and ignore the problem. I cannot ignore this, and would hope others would not either. Let me leave everyone with a bit of advice should this happen to another puppy and they have the means to help. I would suggest calling your local animal shelter; the number to the Limestone Animal shelter is 256-771-7889. They will take the puppy and check it for a mi-

crochip to see if someone owns the puppy. In most cases, the puppy is cleaned up, examined, and placed in the care of the shelter until placed in foster care or adopted out.

Some people do not deserve a dog, and I pray that they don’t have kids because in my opinion they would be a callous parent. In saying that, I hope everyone enjoys their month of May. Be safe and hug your dogs.

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

**Joel Allen
256-651-2211**



Overcoming Avoidance

by Lisa Philippart,
Licensed Professional Counselor

***"You cannot find
peace by avoiding
life."***

- Virginia Woolf

One of my areas of expertise is anxiety. I am a master at it! I have used my own struggles and challenges with anxiety, stress, worry, fear, apprehension, concern, unease ... whatever you want to call it, as examples to help my clients. It has taken me a while to figure out that overcoming my anxiety has required learning to face the situations which I would normally avoid. Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) calls it Opposite Action. Opposite Action is an emotion regulation skill that is a deliberate attempt to act opposite of your emotion urge. For example, if you feel sad, rather than isolating yourself from others, you would choose to get out and do something to keep yourself busy. My favorite strategy involves an acronym to help you remember the steps. FACE stands for Find, Action, Coping, Evaluate. Let's take a look at each of these steps in detail.

If you tend to be an anxious person, you may have noticed that you get caught up in the cycle of anxiety. This cycle begins with anxious thoughts and feelings. The cognitive behavior therapist would attempt to convince you that your thoughts or beliefs initiate your feelings. In other words, how

you think about someone or something determines how you feel about that someone or something. For example, if I see a dog running toward me, my belief will determine how I feel about the dog. If I have been bitten by a dog before, my thought would be that this dog will bite me and, therefore, I will be afraid. If this dog reminds me of my own dog, my thought would be that this dog is friendly and I will be happy. When I experience anxiety, my go-to action is to avoid the situation or person. This is when Opposite Action can step in to divert this process. Otherwise, I go from anxiety to avoidance to leading a restricted life, which makes me feel even worse. And feeling worse make me anxious! And round we go again.

By using FACE, I have been able to work toward overcoming some of my fears and tendencies to hide and escape. F stands for *find*. Find and identify what you would like to be able to FACE, rather than avoid. Begin by writing a list of several targets to face, then choose one that is not too distressing. For example, I would like to be able to feel less anxious when presenting to a group of people. Fear of public speaking is common. And if you are like me, you go through all the "what ifs".....what if I trip on the way to the podium, what if I stumble over my words, what if someone asks me a question I can't answer, etc. A stands for *action*. Decide on the steps you need to take. I find it helpful to break it down into manageable

chunks, like steps on a ladder. Start with step one on the bottom rung and list the clear movements needed to reach the top of the ladder. In my example, before a presentation, I put together a detailed plan for what I want to say and how I want to say it...and then I practice my presentation over and over. Each rung is a step in the process. C stands for *coping*. Write down all your coping strategies and use those that are going to be the most useful for that situation. What are your coping skills? It helps to have a master list of skills and ideas. In my example of public speaking, one of my most effective coping strategies is using aromatherapy to ground me and calm me down before I present. And finally, E stands for

evaluate. After you have taken all the steps, review how things went. What worked? What didn't go so well? What could you do differently next time?

The goal of FACE is to learn to overcome your anxiety by decreasing your tendency to avoid, leading to a more full and purposeful life. Give it a try!

P.S. May is Mental Health Awareness Month. What are you doing to take care of your mental and emotional health?

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

FACE Fear & Avoidance



FIND YOUR GOAL

ACTION TO TAKE

COPING STRATEGIES

EVALUATE

The Alternative Approach

A Healthy Mind Is the First Step

by Lana E. Woody



Health Starts in the Mind, Not Just the Body



What if I told you that your health starts in your mind and not your body? I know it sounds far-fetched, but sometimes the truth is just that. What does our mind have to do with our health? It has everything to do with our health. Our mind is like a muscle that needs to be trained and exercised just like our bodies. Our mind needs just as much love and nourishment as our body does. There are factors that contribute to our mind's downfall. Sometimes it is stress, sometimes it is poor nutrition, sometimes it is what we allow into it.

There are many studies that show and people who strongly believe that what you think about affects your reality. When you think about something, you are allowing it into your reality. Your reality shapes your experience in your life. If you surround yourself with negative people who are unhealthy in their mind and body, it is inevitable that you will feel the effects of their reality. Who we choose to be in our life can literally shape our lives, our reality, and our health. Some people are strong enough

not to let other people derail their health and their life choices, but the fact remains the same -- our reality can be molded by those we are around.

Our thoughts and prayers are powerful as well, so be careful what your internal dialogue is. If you feel you are not good enough, you give off a vibration which can impact your overall results. You can work out, eat right, take the right supplements, and if you think you're fat, your body and your mind will reflect that. It will literally give you what it thinks you want. Before you hit the gym or take your health supplements, remember where your health begins; it's in your mind.

Your health begins in your mind, which is why the placebo effect actually works. This is a very interesting concept and if you don't believe it's possible, you are running on a treadmill, which in turn

is getting you nowhere and you are making little progress. This is where other people come into play. It is really hard for most people to believe in themselves when they have someone putting negative self-talk about them in their head. "How do I get them to hush?" you ask. You don't. You rise above it by giving yourself a pep talk. Your pep talk shouldn't be, "If I do this then they will see." It has to be authentic. It would be like going to an authentic Italian restaurant and expecting to get an American-style pizza.

When you work out, you cannot "bring it" if you are expecting something to happen that can't happen because of bad self-talk. You haven't properly trained your mind to reject doubts. These doubts are what stops your progress and makes all of your efforts worthless. You will soon give

up if you think, "I will show them." Even your wife, husband, or partner does not share the same exact experience you do. So why would you let their experience bring you down? My point is that you don't have to. You can fake it till you make it, if you don't give up the first time someone, including yourself, sends doubt your way. If someone tells you, "I did that and it didn't work," remind yourself that it is their experience not yours. You will never know unless you try.

Mother Theresa's infinite wisdom is, "It was never between you and them, it really is between you and God." It really is between you yourself and God because you have the choice of whether to make it about you, or about what others want you to think. Why would others want me to fail? Some people do not know any better and are not capable of

seeing how they are affecting their own reality or how to stop manipulating someone else's.

You can choose to rise above the negative and surround yourself with more positive people or you can just remove their doubt from your mind. This concept is the reason mainstream society, pharmaceutical companies, and people who don't have your best interest at heart don't want you to believe the truth. The truth is that you can believe in yourself, you can find your own definition or true health, and you can heal yourself from afflictions simply by believing you can. It is the first step at least, and no treatment is effective unless you believe it will work. In closing, if someone asked me if MSM+C works or is it that I believe it does, I would say it's both because I believe that it works. I have seen what it does for others, and I know that this is the manifestation of positive thought, a great product, and like-minded people who believe that healing oneself and being healthy is possible.

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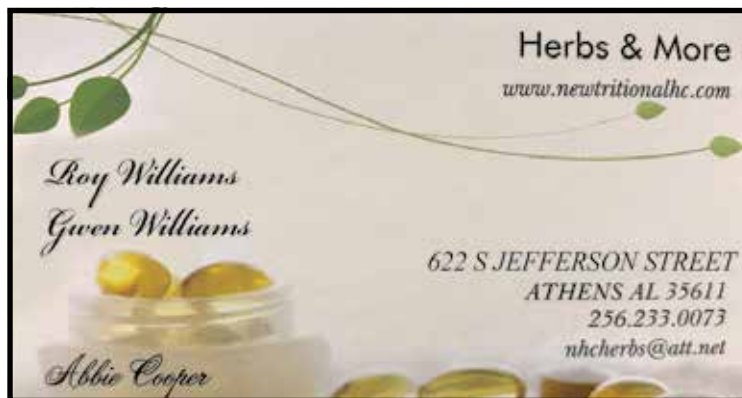
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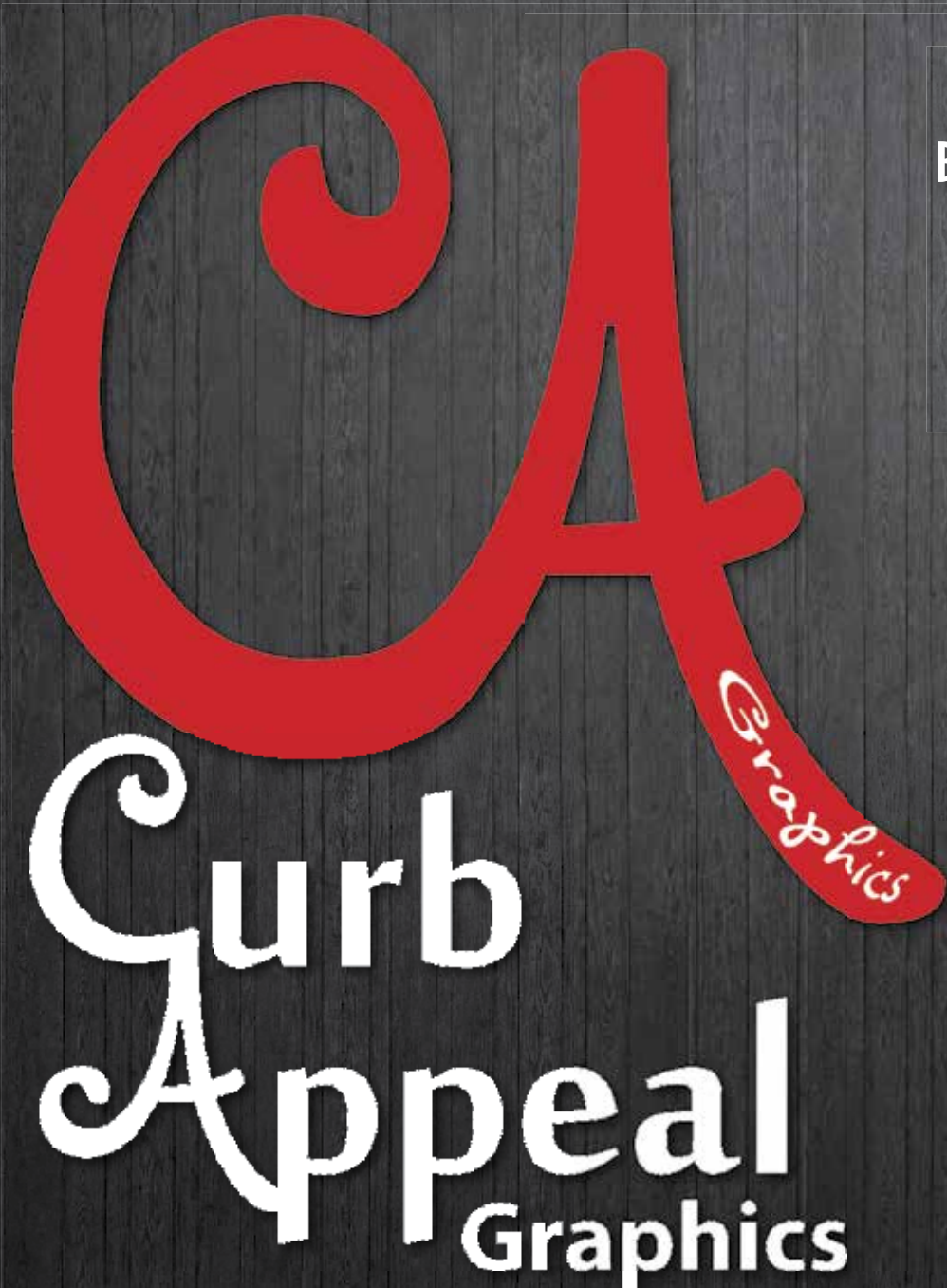
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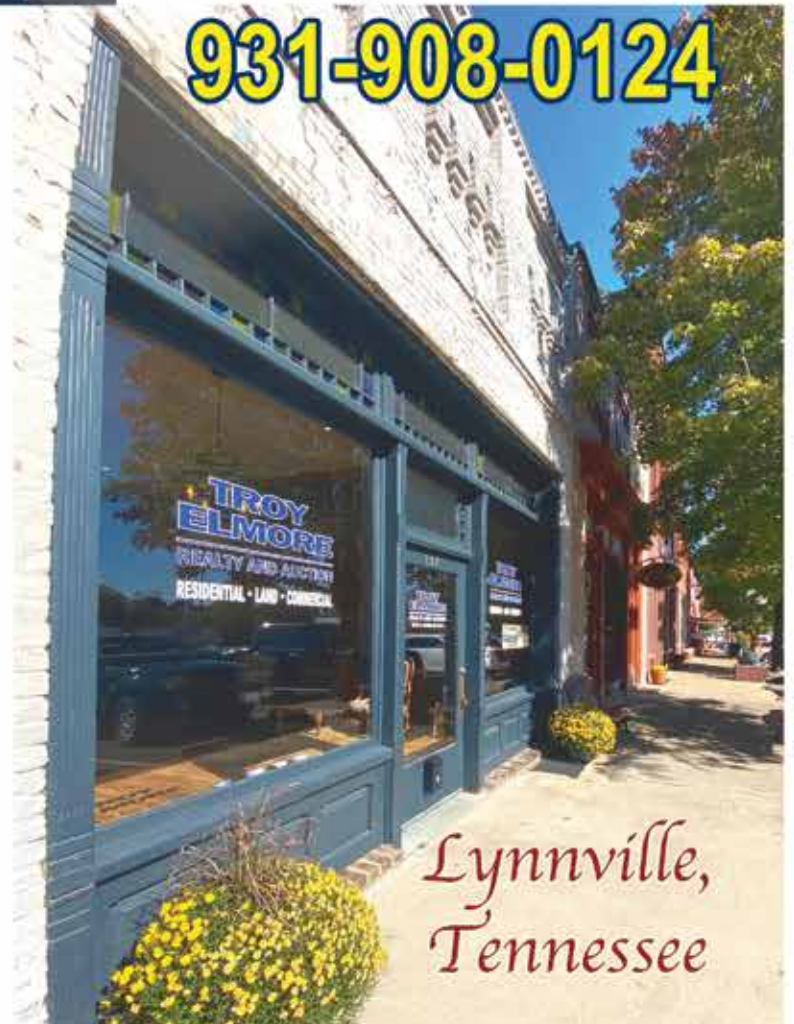
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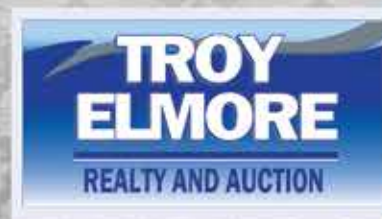
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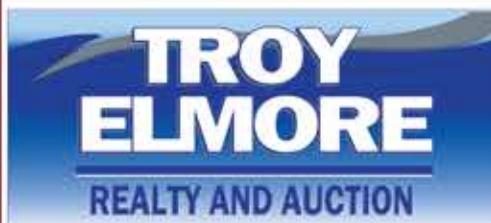
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