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Cullman's Monday Newspaper

Andrew Siegenthaler: A View On Grace PAGE 2
CHS Students Embark on First Film PAGE 7
PLUS Local Comics, Game Reviews, and More! LOOK INSIDE

CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS

A Day in the Life of...A Christmas Tree Farmer

By: Meghan Nelson
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qrnews/mnelson

Although many people in these modern times deck their halls with collapsible trees conveniently unfolded from a box, several merrymakers, myself included, remain dedicated to the traditional Christmas tree hunt. While most of us don't wander through the wild forest searching for a mysteriously symmetrical and well-shaped cedar (although my father did that one year), we do journey to the local Christmas tree farms in an effort to obtain 'just the right tree' for our homes.



Fields must be kept clear of impediments such as tall grass and old trees. *Photos by: Emily Durden*



Jim Glasscock works throughout the year to prepare trees for Christmas.

Never falling prey to the ease of a fake tree, my family has steadfastly visited a tree farm almost every Christmas, determinedly sawing down a fifteen-footer, manhandling it onto the truck, and carefully anchoring it safely within our living room. We often find ourselves mildly ruing the choice of such an overwhelmingly large tree as we try to stuff it through our doorway, but we never regret the sharp, piney scent, prickly-soft texture, or natural elegance of our Christmas tree.

Due to my live tree dedication, I was naturally thrilled to have the recent opportunity of learning a bit more about the tree-farming art from local Christmas Tree Farmer, Jim Glasscock. As I drove to Jim's Christmas tree farm, located on County Road 1212 in Vinemont, I excitedly prepared myself for the tree-filled day with an overdose of Christmas music and a long list of questions.

Pulling into the tree farm's driveway, I noted the nostalgic vista with a smile. The sun was shining on gently rolling slopes of grass and several dark green Christmas tree triangles dotted the hills. A bright red barn sat in one corner while Jim stood in front, welcoming me with a wave. Dressed in a jacket, work pants, glasses, and a cap, Jim quickly remembered me from Christmas-tree expeditions past and even recalled the size and type of tree my family had purchased the previous year.

Impressed with Jim's memory, I asked him how he had originally joined the Christmas tree business. Jim shared that he bought the farm with his wife about twenty-five years ago. Both retired teachers, they had read an article about Christmas tree farming in Southern Living Magazine and were inspired to start their own Christmastime business. After his wife passed away, Jim continued to run the farm, with three daughters, a son, seven grandchildren, and an impressive four great-grandchildren, he has no shortage of help during the busy Christmas Season.

With my novice perspective I had always assumed that the business of selling Christmas trees was largely a seasonal occupation. However, I quickly discovered from Jim how inaccurate that supposition truly was.

"You can find something to do anytime you come out," he said, looking at the field of trees.

As we walked along the muddy tire tracks that mark the path through the field, Jim explained that Christmas tree farming is a year-round occupation and requires a respectable amount of patience. Each year he takes cuttings from his trees and roots them using a rooting medium. The cuttings begin in a small bed and are then moved to gallon pots. After about a year in the pots, Jim plants the young trees in his field using a gas-powered auger. The trees must then grow in the field for another four to five years before they are finally ready to adorn someone's home.

Jim's current Christmas tree plot includes about three acres and he plants around two-hundred trees each year. Trekking through the pleasantly pungent field we found trees ranging from one foot to more than fifteen feet tall. According to Jim, a five-foot tree might be the same age as a ten-footer since their growth largely depends on their positions in the field and their inherent genetics.

Jim primarily grows Leyland Cypresses, although he does offer pre-cut Frasier Firs from North Carolina. He shared that Leylands are a highly drought resistant tree and hold their needles better than other varieties of Christmas trees. In fact, Jim revealed that tests at Auburn University have shown that when kept in water the Leyland Cypress will last from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day without losing a significant amount of needles.

Faithfully followed by one of Jim's four Miniature Dachshunds, named Betsy, we continued our walk through the trees. Jim explained that the field must be mowed periodically and kept free of sizable clumps of grass and overly large trees. If not, the trees will grow around the impediments, which will create holes in their appearances.

Running his hand across a few of the branches, Jim informed me that each tree must also be individually sheared throughout the year to maintain its signature triangular shape. Jim uses a backpack with an eight-foot sickle blade for most of the work but resorts to a pair of hand-held loping shears for the especially large branches. Although he enjoys the peacefulness of his work, Jim shared that shearing trees during the hot summer months is certainly not his favorite part of the job.

I, of course, promptly asked what he did enjoy the most about tree farming,

See Page 11



Customers bring their selections to the farm's barn so that each tree can be shaken, drilled, and netted.

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Religion

Andrew Siegenthaler: A View On Grace

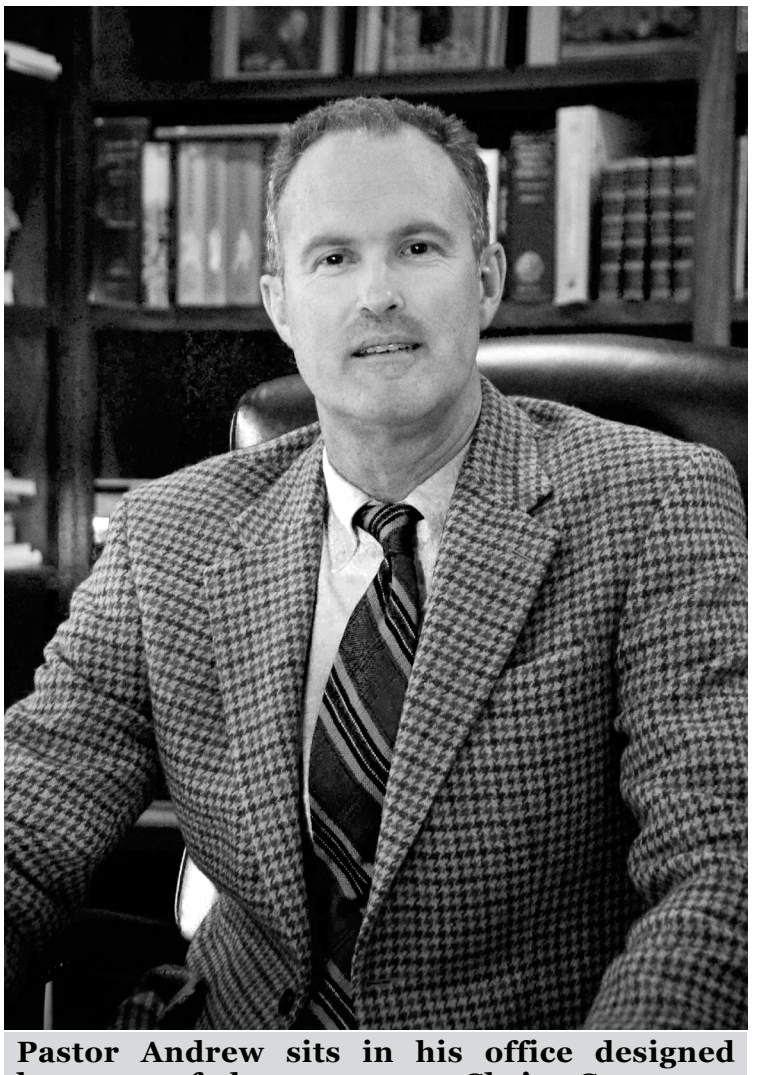
By: Dawn Owens
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Christ Covenant Church pastor Andrew Siegenthaler enjoys riding motorcycles, growing heirloom tomatoes, reading biographies but most of all he enjoys sharing God's grace with others.

A native of northern Alabama, Siegenthaler grew up a pastor's kid in Tuscumbia. "I know there are all these stereotypes about preacher's kids that they are just the worst," he said laughing, "and maybe that's the case. As a parent there are particular challenges that a pastor faces. You don't want to put pharisaical burdens on your children to make them think or act a certain way."

His dad never did that. Instead, he instilled a great love for God's people and an understanding of how churches work. "I have always had a desire and love for the church. I just love the daily rhythms of the church."

Siegenthaler explained that the rhythms of the church are: the regular preaching of the Word, fellowship of God's people, celebration of the sacraments such as baptism and the Lord's supper, and the ministry to the children.



Pastor Andrew sits in his office designed by some of the women at Christ Covenant.
Photo by: Emily Durden

As a graduate of Covenant Theological Seminary, Siegenthaler's first pastoral position was as an Associate Pastor at Marco Presbyterian Church in Marco Island, FL.

"Before I left seminary I had a very wise man encourage me not to go looking for a Senior Pastor position right away, but to rather seek an Associate Pastor role under a Sr. Pastor that could mentor me. It was great advice."

After four years at Marco Presbyterian he was ready to head back home to Northern Alabama. A friend from seminary, who was pastoring a church in Decatur, called him about the Christ Covenant position. "It was the perfect opportunity for my family to get back to northern Alabama. Christ Covenant was a place where I felt my gifts would best be used and I loved the idea of a small church in a small town. Though he had other offers in Baltimore, Maryland and Florida, he knew Alabama is where he wanted to be.

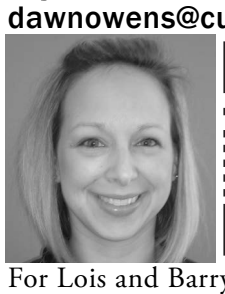
Fifteen years later Siegenthaler is still enjoying ministering in the local church. His desire for Christ Covenant is that they are a church that proclaims the grace of God in Jesus Christ. "I hope that we are a church that proclaims and demonstrates the grace of God in Jesus Christ. We do not bring anything to our salvation but our sinfulness, and that we don't in any innate way come to God or choose God. We are brought to God through His grace. That it's through his theology of grace that we choose to treat each other in the body, that we treat each other like family."

That is all revealed through an emphasis on Christ-centered worship. As a church they have a long term commitment to a time of fellowship within their covenant groups, also referred

See Page 9

Daystar Church Explains the Path to Real Recovery

By: Dawn Owens
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qrnews/dowens

For Lois and Barry Gatlin, founders of Real Recovery, a ministry at Daystar Church in Good Hope, they've learned there is more to breaking free from an addiction than just getting clean.

Both of the Gatlins are in their 6th year of recovery. "We wanted to reach out and help people where we once were. Not just for drug addictions but any addiction, hurt, habits and hang-ups. Drug, porn, same-sex identity, eating, shopping, you name it, whatever you have an addiction to, you are welcome here."

The Gatlins explained that when you have an addiction to something you are trying to change what is going on in the inside. But you can't do it because you are trying to fill it with whatever you are addicted to.

Barry was going through a secular recovery program when he realized, even though he was clean, he was just as miserable on the inside as when he was high.

"It wasn't until I walked into Dodge City Daystar and found a real relationship with Jesus," stated Barry. "It's not about a religion, about just sitting your butt in a seat every Sunday. It's about a real relationship with our Savior."

Lois talked about how every person attending Real Recovery has a story, everyone one of them has overcome something.

Lois continued on to say that a woman at the ministry who was once a drug addict and in a lesbian relationship served as a mentor to another woman in her small group.

Because of that they are going to be able to minister to that type of situation in the future. "We are a group of people who will love you and stick beside you until you can love yourself and find who you are."

This ministry is not just for someone who is recovering but also for people who may have a member of their family going through it. There are dependency groups for men and for women, codependency groups for men and for women, teen groups and groups for the children.

The ministry currently has active volunteers working with the different groups. However, they are currently in need of volunteers who feel called to work with the children. You do not need to attend Daystar Church to be a volunteer.

"It's important for people to know that God has a plan for every single one of us, even the ones that are smoking the pipe right now", said Barry. "Jeremiah 29:11 says, 'For I know the plans I for you', declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' God has a plan for them. He can forgive them and set them free."

"We don't care what their background is, their theological beliefs, or where they go to church. All are welcome here."

There are people from all walks of life attending their meeting. "Doctors, nurses, lawyers, court referrals, laborers, you name it, we've seen it. When we are here we are all equal. "

The group meets every Tuesday at 6:00 pm and have a large group meeting afterwards. Most of the time someone will share their testimony, followed by a lesson from the Bible.

Sometimes they'll have a drama or meet in small groups. The meeting usually goes until about 8:00 pm. The meeting room is in the back entrance of the building so make sure you park around the back. On December 21st, the group will meet at Berkeley Bob's rather than at the church.

"What's important to us is what you want to do about your problem right now," shares Barry. "That's where the ministry can take over. After the first night, the newcomers can go through Newcomers 101. It allows them to know what the program is all about."

Lois explained that the smaller groups give attendees an opportunity to create accountability partners, create relationships, hear openly about what's going on with you, be real. "We are not here to fix nobody, we are here to support them. Jesus does the fixin'. We just want you to keep on coming."

Lois encourages people who may be concerned about failing. "I was afraid, what if I don't make it, what if I fail. Then I got to the point where I thought, "Well, what if I did, then what would I do."

For more information about Real Recovery, call Barry at 221-6153. The Good Hope campus has three service times each week: Saturday evening at 6:00 pm or Sunday at 9:30 am and 11:15 am. At their Harstelle campus service begins at 10:00 am on Sunday.

For more information about Daystar go to www.daystarchurch.tv or you can find them on Facebook at Daystar Church.

DAYSTARCHURCH.TV

Socially Stunted

By: Noah Chandler
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qrnews/nchandler

As we continue to find new avenues to express ourselves, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc., many of the manners taught to us as children have slowly eroded away, stripping down the basic foundation of social interaction.

This has become more evident since CS launched in December, 2010 as I slowly drifted off into the world that is the social disconnect.

My job requires that I be in front of a 17 inch computer screen anywhere from 12-20 hours each day, six days a week, therefore most of my interaction with friends/family is done through these social networking sources.

Over the past few months it has come to my attention that my own social skills have been stunted simply because I prefer to text someone instead of calling them. What can be said for a man who would rather hear the slow hum from a cellphone vibrating opposed to the voices of the people I love the most?

It may seem a bit cold but think for a bit how many times have you opted not to answer your phone only to text the person as soon as the call ceased?

I'm guessing that quite a few of you tend to be like myself, opting to allow the call to go voice mail before shooting off a text or e-mail letting them know you are indisposed, but if it is important then they can text you back.

This is what we do nowadays and it only appears that this de-evolution will only hasten as quicker, less-personal forms of communication are made available. Eventually I could see us sitting across the table from one another texting instead of speaking.

Oh wait, that happened last Thanksgiving. See, it already invaded the table!
So what is the solution to our social interaction problem?

Well, for me it is answering my phone at least once every five calls from family and friends -- I always answer calls from clients or readers on the first call -- and try not to be so short with those closest to me once I answer.

As of last week I have begun not answering texts during any family time or dinner, in order to ensure that those who I am with are my focus. With Facebook it is a bit tougher.

The first step is to admit you have a problem, which I don't (it is called denial), then make a conscious effort to call the people on your friends list and listen to what they have to say.

You remember audible words, right?

Okay, well the second step requires you to call someone, plan a time to meet up and just relax with someone who genuinely cares about your life opposed to several hundred (if not thousands) of people who don't have a clue who you are.

Once that is achieved, sit back, converse, and thank God that a screen is not preventing you from seeing someone you love, cherish, or even worse-are related to.

These are just my simple observations mixed in with a few thoughts on how to remedy the constant social disconnect that we seem to be experiencing. I hope this helps and if not just shoot me a text and we can converse.

About Us

CullmanSense is a weekly print publication based out of Cullman, Alabama. The online site, CullmanSense.com, is a six-day a week publication, which includes arrest and incident reports from Cullman City Police and the Cullman County Sheriff's Office, Obituaries, and other timely information. The site is completely free and does include stories not found in our print edition.

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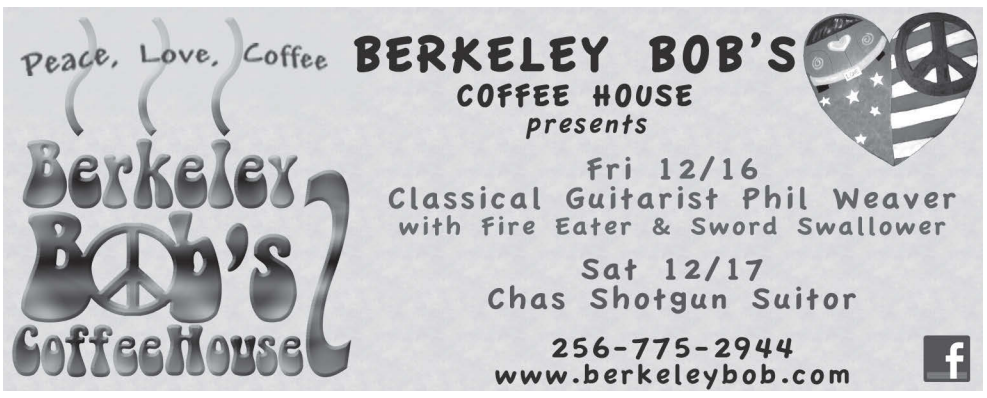
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Weather

Source: NWS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Hi: 55	Hi: 57	Hi: 60	Hi: 60
Lo: 37	Lo: 40	Lo: 44	

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 55.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 37.

Tuesday: A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 57.

Tuesday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 40.

Wednesday: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 60.

Wednesday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 44.

Thursday: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 60.

Check CullmanSense.com for the latest weather forecast.

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Sports

Autograph Collecting 101

By: Josh McBrayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com



qrnews/jmcbrayer

Being a sports reporter has its advantages. Aside from the obvious of getting to see some fantastic competition, it also puts me in close proximity to some stellar athletes. To many who have a favorite athlete, team, or sport in general, going to the game cannot only be thrilling but can also be a chance to bring home that ultimate souvenir: THE AUTOGRAPH

I have always been interested in autographs but over the last three years it has really become a hobby and obsession. Over that span I have amassed over 400 autographs from some of the greatest sports figures in history. Of course like anything in life there are going to be thrills (getting a signature from someone you never thought possible) and disappointments (getting turned down from your favorite athlete). Along the way I have learned how to better my chances and I am going to pass these pointers along to you, the reader.

There are three main ways of collecting autographs: In person -- where you meet the athlete yourself, TTM -- (through the mail) where you send something to the athlete in hopes that they will sign it, and secondary market -- when you purchase an autograph from a third party that has met the athlete.

The most common and the only way you can assure your autograph is 100% authentic is obtaining it in person. Although this is the most tried and true way, it can also be very time consuming and frustrating. It requires arriving at events 3 to 5 hours before the gates open and knowing where the players enter the building.

There is usually a crowd which is a good indicator. If it is a public signing, i.e. the Atlanta Braves do a caravan every year that stops in different locations throughout the Southeast, you need to arrive even earlier as the crowd will be much larger than the typical "autograph hound" that waits at the venue. Here are two examples of a failure and a success to help you to know what to expect.

Opening Day 2010 at Turner Field in Atlanta, GA., a group of autograph collectors, including myself, were waiting by the player's parking lot in hopes of getting some signatures. The autograph that everyone wanted was rookie phenom Jason Heyward. He did come out the back entrance of the stadium and waved to the fans, but much to our dismay did not sign any autographs. This was understandable seeing as how this was his first MLB game and being from Georgia he had family in town.

The same day all-star catcher, and my favorite player, Brian McCann had just caught all 9 innings of the first game of the season in 90 degree weather. When he exited the stadium with his wife, she went to the car and he came directly to the fence to begin signing autographs for about 40 of us fans that were standing there.

The thing you have to remember collecting autographs in person is: Star athletes are human and have bad days just like you and me. An athlete can be willing to sign one day and not the next. Never be rude to anyone just because they didn't sign an autograph for you.

The second way of collecting is TTM or through the mail. This form of collecting involves sending the item to your favorite athlete with a letter and a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope for return) to their home stadium in hopes that they will sign it. This is a great way of collecting if your favorite athlete or team is from a different state than you.

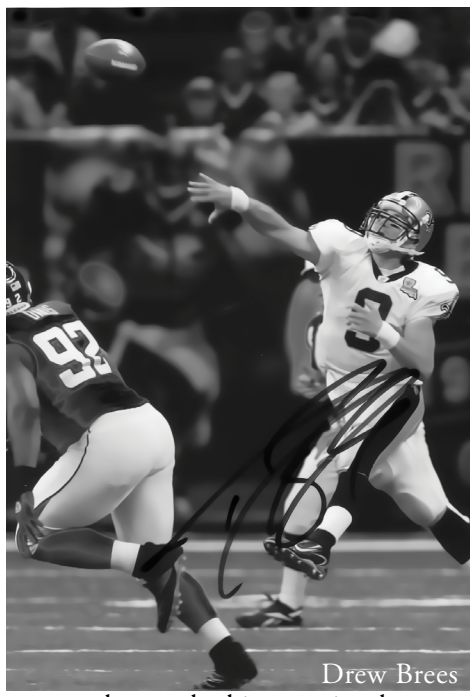
Keep in mind, this method takes a ton of patience. I have received autographs from stars in as little as a week and as long as a year and a half. It is also harder to obtain "superstars" this way, i.e. Ryan Howard, LeBron James, Sam Bradford etc. Like anything else there are exceptions to the rule. Mariano Rivera, Dirk Nowitzki and Peyton Manning are all great signers through the mail, but this does not guarantee a success.

This method of collecting is about luck. For example, I received a card signed by Ndamukong Suh a year and a half after I sent it and other collectors I know have not heard back from him. The reverse has happened to me also. The best advice is to drop your request in the mail and BE PATIENT.

The third, and in my opinion, the most risky way of collecting is the secondary market. This is simply buying your autograph from someone who claims it is authentic. There are two types of these autographs, cards and memorabilia put out by companies such as: Tri-Star, Upper Deck and Topps. These always come with a Certificate of Authenticity (COA) telling you that it certified authentic by the company. The second type is an autograph someone claims to have obtained in person. Unless you know with 100% certainty the autograph is real, make sure it has a COA from a reputable authentication service such as PSA/DNA or JSA.

Lastly there is a list of **DO's** and **DONT's** that will help you on your way to collecting like a pro.

DO : Be polite even if you get turned down. You never know when you will meet the athlete again and you do not want to leave a bad impression because they may sign for you the next time.



Drew Brees

DO : Say sir, ma'am, please and thank you. Politeness goes a long way.

DO : Send a self-addressed stamped envelop if sending TTM. Make it as easy a possible for the athlete to sign your item.

DO : Make sure that what you are buying is beyond a reasonable doubt, authentic. Don't get stuck with an expensive paperweight.

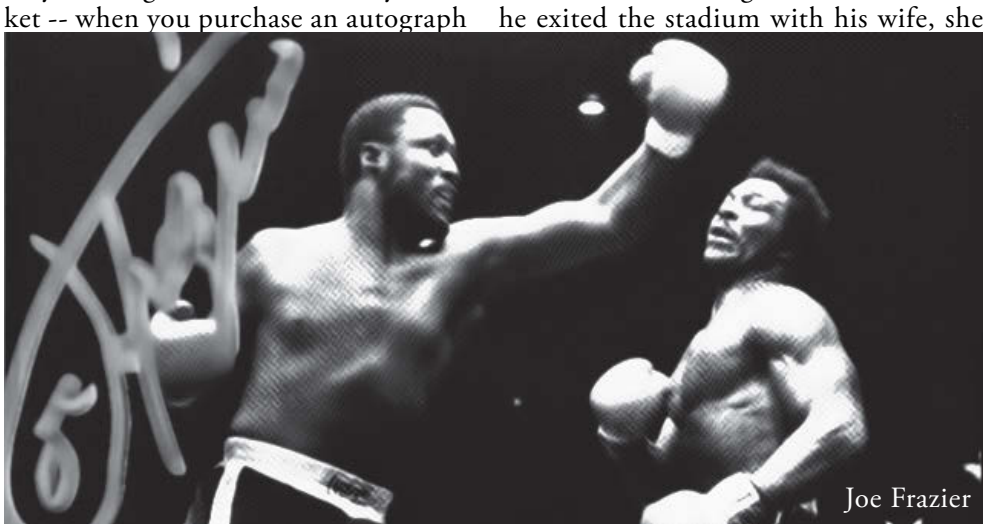
DON'T : Bother an athlete while they are eating or out with their family. Although sometimes it will pay off (I have learned from experience) it is better to approach an athlete when they are "on the job" so to speak.

DON'T : Think an athlete owes you something because you watch them or buy a ticket.

DON'T : Expect to hear back from a "superstar". They receive more mail and more requests for autographs than most. That doesn't mean don't try. In this hobby, you just never know.

DON'T : Get discouraged. You are going to have days where you don't get an autograph, especially TTM. Just keep trying and it will pay off in the long run. There have been days where I have only gotten one or two IP autographs. On the upside of that a friend and I were able to obtain 68 wrestling autographs in a four hour span. Just stay positive.

If you are interested in the hobby of autograph collecting, following these simple "rules" will have you collecting in no time.



Joe Frazier

Cullman County High School Basketball Schedule

Monday, December 12, 2011

Sumiton Christian @ Cold Springs Girls Only

Cullman @ Arab Boys & Girls

St. Bernard @ Gaston Boys & Girls

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Cold Springs @ Hanceville Boys & Girls

Lindsay Lane @ Cullman Christian Boys & Girls

Holly Pond @ Fairview Boys & Girls

Good Hope @ Vinemont Boys & Girls

West Point @ Brewer Boys & Girls

Friday, December 16, 2011

American Christian Academy @ Cold Springs Boys & Girls

Mt. View @ Cullman Christian Boys Game

West Point @ Cullman Boys & Girls

Fairview @ Vinemont Boys & Girls

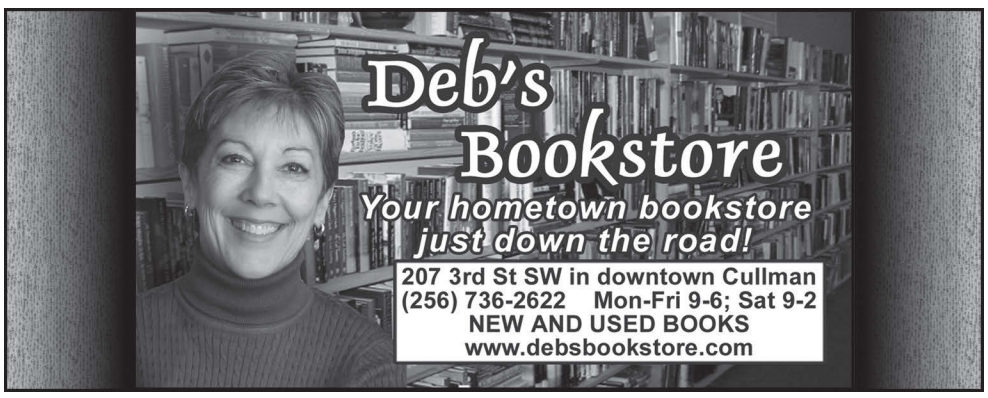
Jordan @ Hanceville Boys & Girls

Winston County @ Holly Pond Boys & Girls

St. Bernard @ Appalachian Boys & Girls

Saturday, December 17, 2011

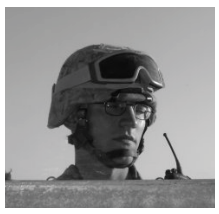
St. Bernard @ Gaston Boys & Girls



Game and Movie Reviews

Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception

By: Dustin McSpadden
dustinmcspadden@cullmansense.com



qrnews/dmcspadden

Now that I've hit the recent major releases, I'm attacking my backlog of games with vim and vigor.

At the beginning of November, Naughty Dog Entertainment released Uncharted 3, which as many of you can probably guess follows after Uncharted and Uncharted 2. (My readers are so smart.) In all three games the visuals have been stunning, which surprises no one.

Since the game only exists on the PS3, the development team didn't have to spend extra time writing code for multiple systems and could focus on the overall product.

Uncharted blends a cover based shooting style with an Arkham Asylum-esque hand-to-hand combat system, which works surprisingly well.

In Uncharted 2, multiplayer was introduced and while it is fun, the teeth of the series have always been the single player campaign and that has been my focus.

While the locations are beautiful, there is very little room to navigate outside of the nearly linear plot line.

The only reason for exploration is to find all of the hidden treasures; well that and to see the beautiful locations before they burn them all to the ground.

I think that there was two parts to the development team; one in charge of building the locations and making them feel as real and alive as possible, and the other in charge of destroying them in whichever fashion they choose. Although, they seemed to prefer fire.

I said that Link was temperamental last week and if that is the case then Drake is downright anal. If you don't hit his jumps just right he will stubbornly fall to his death. Unlike Link, he will actually die.

He will then restart from the last auto-save, but the game auto-saves after every minor obstacle it seems. Which is good, since you will fall. A LOT. And then fall some more.

Unlike Assassin's Creed, where you can hold down one button and run/jump over and off of everything, you must press the jump button every time.

This becomes tiring during all of the chase scenes when even a fraction of a second of delay will cause you to start back at the last auto-save, but since it auto-saves every time you successfully complete a portion of the run, it doesn't set you back too far.

While I'm on the chase scenes, the camera angle is downright epileptic. It moves about spastically: sometimes in front, sometimes behind or above or below and moving the camera on your own isn't possible.

Not being able to tell where you are going when being chased by a bevy of spiders or the hungry tongues of flame as the 2nd dev team played bully and pushed over the 1st dev team's tower of blocks is not a real delight either.

I know I keep coming back to them destroying the area, but it just got repetitive. My 11-year-old sister could easily predict when and where the floor/wall/ceiling/entire world would fall on Drake's face.

The only thing more predictable than the falling scenery is the stream of profanity they uttered whenever it happened.

There was one moment where something started to fall and Drake said, "This whole place is coming down!" His companion replied, "Kid if I had a nickel for every time you said that I wouldn't have to be searching for treasure."

I'd like to thank the folks at Blockbuster for once again providing me with the game, and I'd like to invite you all back next week when I take a look at Batman: Arkham City.

"Conan the Barbarian" - Blood, Battles, and...well...Barbarians

By: Meghan Nelson
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3/5

Barbarians

"Conan the Barbarian" is overwhelmingly, seam-burstingly packed with blood, battle scenes, and scantily-clad (or unclad) women. Really, though, what else were you expecting? Conan is a movie about barbarians. You know, the guys known for pillaging, plundering, and other unsavory activities. One can hardly compare such a film with, say, a story about a high-class English gentleman harboring a kind heart and good intentions.

Feeling that I had no burning desire to watch a big-screen beheading, I pragmatically decided to skip experiencing the violent viewing pleasure of 'Conan' in theaters and instead chose to wait for its DVD release on November 22 – a decision that I did not regret after watching the film.

For those of you who have seen Arnold Schwarzenegger's portrayal of "Conan the Barbarian" (which I have), this version has almost no similarities aside from the fact that it's about a barbarian named Conan. For those of you who have read Robert E. Howard's original sword and sorcery tales regarding said barbarian (which I haven't), I hope you enjoy a spirited comparison of the two, but not by me.

The most recent installation of "Conan" begins quite graphically as a baby barbarian is born onto a chaotic battlefield and proclaimed to be 'Conan' by his dying mother. Of course, the ick-inducing caesarean section performed seconds earlier by Conan's father leaves the viewer so startlingly aghast as to almost miss his mother's last words.

As baby Conan is held by his father in classic "Lion King" style, the movie changes scenes, and we are next presented with a child version of Conan, played by Leo Howard (who was, ironically enough, one of the better actors in the film). Young Conan basically rocks the barbarian world as he gruesomely defeats four warriors from a rival tribe, all while gently holding a small egg in his mouth. Logically, his ability not to break the egg somehow proves his manhood, and his father forges Conan's first sword.

Unfortunately for the Cimmerian warrior's tribe, Khalar Zym (played by Stephen Lang) shortly thereafter invades their village in an effort to acquire the last piece of an ancient, powerful, and oddly knobbly mask. Khalar Zym and his mystical, steely-manicured daughter manage to find the missing mask piece that Conan's father had been protecting. They also succeed in slaughtering the entire village, burning all of the huts, and leaving Conan to watch his father die. Of course, the boy warrior lives, and a vendetta (as well as a movie plot) is born.

The story then transitions into the life of adult Conan, whom we can now safely assume has fully embraced his barbarian lifestyle. Played by Jason Momoa, adult Conan is respectably muscular and is an admittedly refreshing male role after the recent assortment of pasty, yet sparklingly brilliant, vampires that have managed to invade the movies.

At first, Conan seems to be an ethical character as he heroically adds slave-freeing to his list of barbarian-esque talents. However, after he and his warrior buddies raucously invite all of the female slaves back to their boat, the viewer realizes that Conan's morals are, after all, those of a typical barbarian.

Conan seems to be motivated not only by revenge for the injustices done to his father and his tribe but also by women and general rabble rousing. He sums up his life philosophy in a direct statement that likely describes the view of any barbarian warrior one might meet while pillaging a village, "I live, I love, I slay, and I am content."

As Conan searches for Khalar Zym and Zym's daughter, Marique (creepily portrayed by Rose McGowan), he coincidentally manages to save Tamara (Rachel Nichols) from Khalar Zym, who wants her for her pure blood that will magically activate his enchanted mask. Zym's search seems a bit delayed, as he did, after all, complete the mask some ten years earlier, and it forces the viewer to wonder exactly what kind of evil shenanigans were so important to Zym that he couldn't find a way to activate his mask a bit sooner.

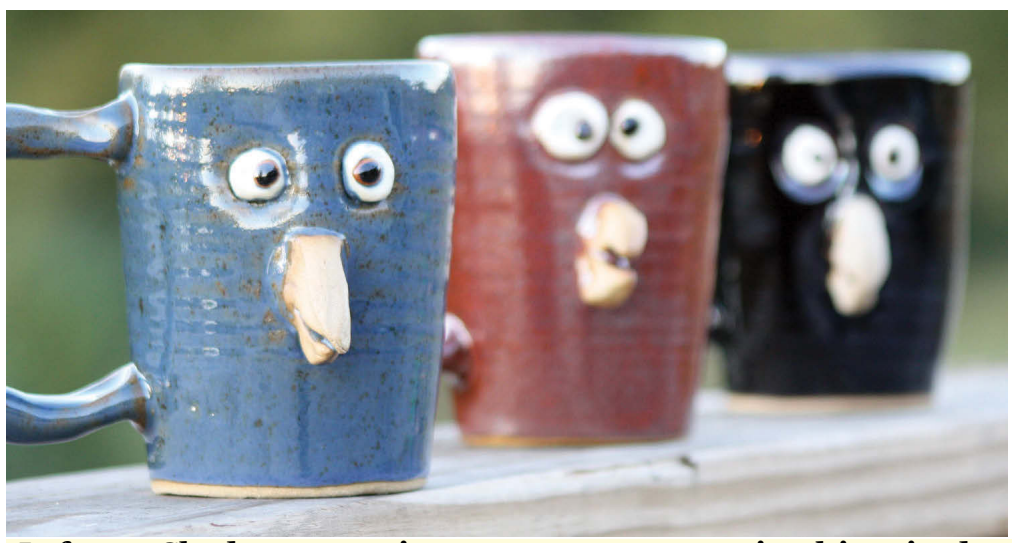
After multiple battle scenes and more scantily-clad women, Conan finally confronts Khalar Zym and Marique as they prepare to perform a dark and surprisingly not-too-bloody mask-activating ritual on Tamara. After a particularly delicate battle on an enormous sacrificial wheel and a few moments of highly-dialogued suspension on a bridge, Conan ultimately defeats Zym and Marique, deposits Tamara in her homeland, then wanders away to likely enjoy a little bicep building followed by a tad of debauchery.

While the plot was predictable and the acting rather uncomfortable at times, I must admit that I enjoyed "Conan the Barbarian" and felt it was certainly worth its two-dollar rental from Blockbuster. The film is gory by default, though not even close to the stomach-churning nastiness of shows like "Walking Dead". It is also inherently lacking in high moral standards since it is, as I explained earlier, about barbarians. However, it features a roguishly attractive male lead, a female heroine who at least attempts to wield a sword, and plenty of victorious, sword-slinging, satisfyingly barbarian moments. While I would deem it completely inappropriate for children, "Conan the Barbarian" did make for a fun post-Thanksgiving, date-night flick. If you like barbarians, rent it. If you are more the English gentleman or shiny vampire type, this movie's probably not for you.

Lifestyle

Chad Nelson: A Fresh Perspective on Pottery

By: Meghan Nelson
meghannelson@cullmansense.com





Left: Chad sometimes creates animal-inspired mugs, such as this trio of birds. Right: Local potter, Chad Nelson
Photos by: Meghan Nelson

While some people view pottery as an old-school art form created by reclusive, long-bearded mountain men, local potter and business owner Chad Nelson presents quite a different picture. Dressed in jeans, sneakers, and an ironic T-Shirt, he's not quite the old or mountainous type.

In fact, Chad graduated from Auburn University only four years ago, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Studio Fine Arts with concentrations in Ceramics and Printmaking. A native of Cullman, Chad moved back to his hometown after college, and in 2008 he founded Nelson Studio for the Arts, where he teaches classes and creates his own artwork.

Chad has also developed his own line of mugs and other functional pottery called 'Ug-Chugs', which he sells online and at art shows. These pieces are Chad's take on traditional Southern 'ugly jugs', and they possess a decidedly unique quality. As Chad describes them, "Ug-Chugs are funny and expressive... each individual piece has its own personality."

Chad was recently able to sit down with me and discuss what inspires him, how his process works, and the ups and downs of life as an artist.

CullmanSense: When did you become interested in art?
Chad: I was always interested in art as a child, sculpture in particular. My interest stuck with me through high school and college. Here I am now, just doing what I like to do.

CullmanSense: What is your preferred medium?
Chad: Definitely clay. I have a very direct approach with any material that I use. With clay you can always add and take away material. I feel sort of confined when I use other materials. I have a hard time finishing drawings and paintings because I overwork them.

CullmanSense: How did you make art your full-time career?
Chad: I started Nelson Studio for the Arts in June of 2008 with the goal of making a living as an artist. I began with three students (one of them being my mother), and it just slowly grew from there. My wife, Meghan, joined forces with me in the spring of 2009. By our powers combined, we began teaching classes to kids in all kinds of different mediums. We have had ups and downs and learned to live on a tight budget. Every year we grow a little. I wouldn't have it any other way.

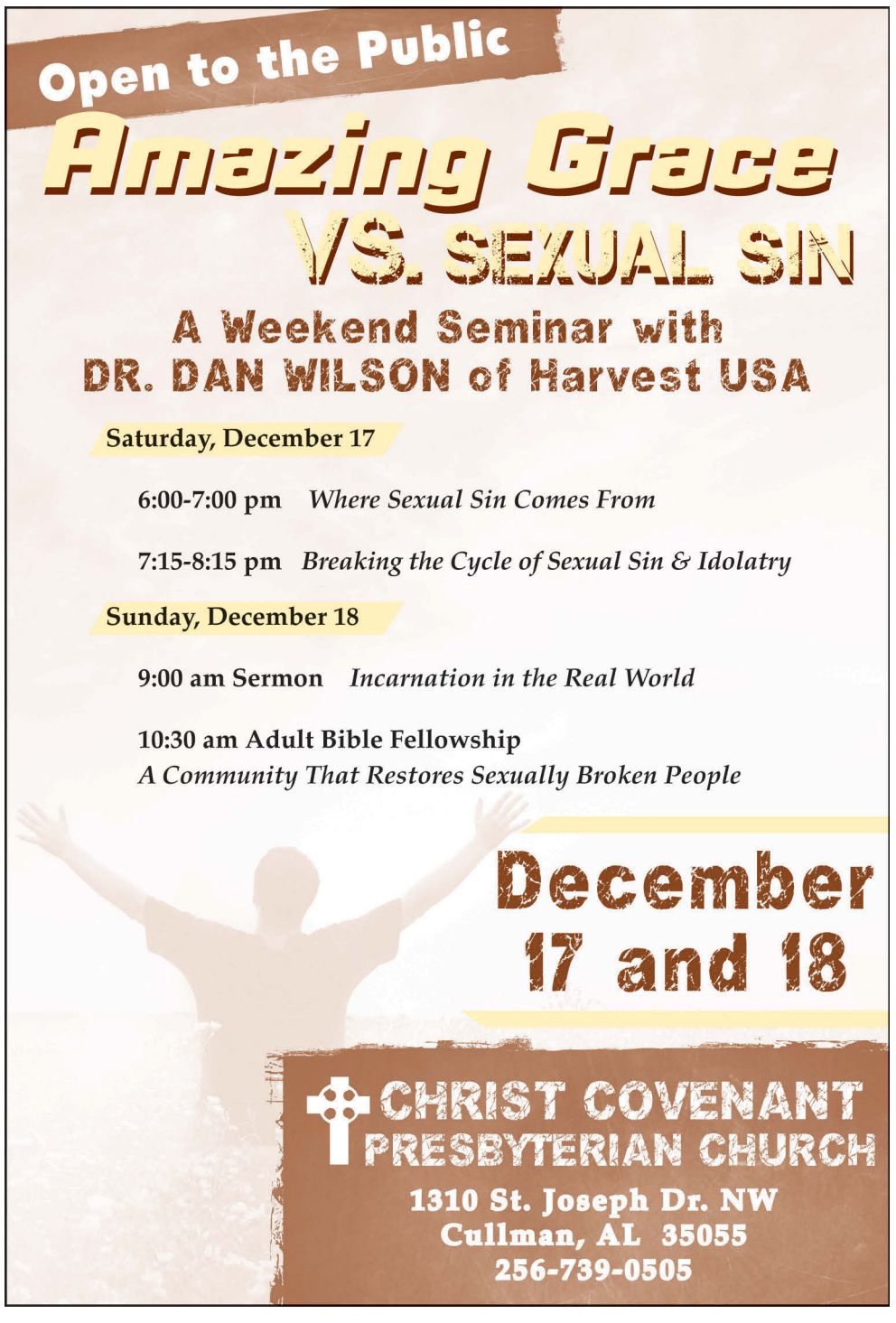
CullmanSense: What type of classes does Nelson Studio currently offer?
Chad: Currently we are only offering kid's classes in which we do all kinds of art. We do ceramics, drawing, sculpture, animation, and pretty much any kind of visual art. We now offer classes after school at both St. Paul's Elementary and Fairview Elementary. We also have classes at our studio during the after-work time slot.

CullmanSense: How did you develop your Ug-Chug line of pottery and what is the concept behind it?
Chad: I started making Ug-Chugs as a side project in the beginning. My work used to revolve around all these all-too-serious concepts like the facades that people wear and emotional connections between individuals. I honestly just got tired of trying to put some kind of grand meaning behind my work. Ug-Chugs exist simply to make people smile and as a tool to help the folks around them to lighten up and maybe share that smile and a lighthearted conversation.

CullmanSense: You sell much of your work at art shows...how would you describe that experience?
Chad: I have had great shows, and I have had TERRIBLE shows. Even the same show a year later can be drastically different. It is mostly a tiring experience for me because I'm not really a crowd person (or a good salesman for that matter). It is, however, nice to see

See Page 9

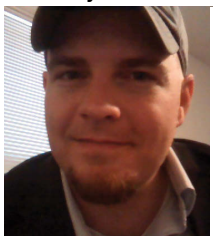
Chad carefully waxes the eyes, teeth, and bottoms of each mug.



Entertainment

CHS Students Embark on First Film

By: Wesley Smith
wesleysmith@cullmansense.com





Karen "Red" Lee (Head Cinematographer) films a battle scene. *Photos by: Wesley Smith*

My alarm clock went off at 4:45 am on Monday morning. I peeled myself out of bed and got ready for the day. I met the CHS Theater Director Dillon Lee, then it was time to load the truck. When the truck was loaded and strapped down, it was full of potato crates, wagon wheels, old rocks and a rocking chair. Everything you could possibly need to film a movie set in the 15th century.

As many of you may have read in CullmanSense two weeks ago, the CHS Fine Arts Department has decided to make a movie instead of doing a winter play. Monday was their first day on a film set. While making a movie is much different than doing a stage production, Dillon Lee and company looked like old pros.

We arrived at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery at 8:00 am. Dillon Lee and Head Cinematographer, Karen "Red" Lee, already had locations at ASF picked out for filming. The student actors and crew got off the bus and got right to work.

According to the production schedule, there was a lot of filming to get done in a short time. Different actors and different crews split up and got to work. It was impressive how responsible and professional the entire group of forty students handled their duties.

The movie is called "Joan- Maiden, Martyr, Warrior, Witch". Four actresses are cast as the different takes on Joan of Arc. When they arrived on set, the four "Joans" went their separate directions and prepared for filming. Lacy Trelles is cast as "Joan- the Warrior". Sadie Freeman is cast as "Joan- the Martyr". Erica Harris is cast as "Joan- the Witch". Abby Adams was originally cast as "Joan- the Warrior" but had to drop due to illness. Julia Neal stepped into the role with no problem.

Becca Donnelley (Crew Manager) made sure each scene was set up and ready when it was time to film. Haylie Horsley (Associate Producer) probably ran ten miles making sure each film location remained in communication with one another. Erica Harris (Lead Make-up Artist/ Actress) split duties between playing "Joan- the Witch" and prepping actors and actresses with the proper make-up.

Keillian and Noah Carpenter also split duties. Noah worked as a Crew Manager while also playing a part in the movie. Keillian was the Associate Producer and is also playing the King in the movie. He was also the recipient of one of the very finest costumes The Alabama Shakespeare Festival has on site. Scott Merrill (ASF Liaison) was gracious enough to find this great costume when there was a mishap with the original.

When it came to the actual filming portion of the day, Karen "Red" Lee was all over the place. As Head Cinematographer, she was climbing buildings, lying on the ground and doing whatever was needed to get the right shot.

She was assisted by Jordan Johnson (Student Cinematographer). It was hard to tell Jordan was a student, as he looked like a seasoned professional behind the camera. She was also assisted by award winning Cinematographer, AJ Roach. Mr. Roach came from Birmingham just to help out and even skipped breakfast and lunch to assist with the filming.

There are countless other folks that deserve to be mentioned but there just isn't enough space here. I am very excited for everyone involved with the film after seeing this well oiled machine. I have no doubt this film is going to be something special. Keep an eye on CullmanSense for frequent updates on "Joan- Maiden, Martyr, Warrior, Witch".



AJ Roach (Cinematographer), Jordan Johnson (Student Cinematographer) and Dillon Lee (Director) prepare a battle scene.



The cast and crew prepare a shot.

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Mirroring History

Looking Back: Exploring Historic Cullman at Klein Dairy

Circa 1947-51



Contributed by Cullman County Museum

2011



Photo by: Jessica Norrell

Pottery - Continued



A load of mugs emerges from the kiln ready to be glazed.

people smile and react when they view my work. The feeling of leaving a great show is awesome.

CullmanSense: Describe the pottery process...what is involved in making one of your mugs?
Chad: I start out by mixing my clay body from various types of dry clay. It is made to facilitate workability on both the pottery wheel and for modifying the pieces by hand. After mixing the clay, I put it through a machine that removes any air that might be trapped within the clay. Air pockets not only make the clay hard to work with but can also cause problems later on in the firing process.

Next, I use the pottery wheel to make a batch of pieces. I typically make about 25 pieces per batch. Pieces thrown, I start the hand-building part of the process. I make eyes and teeth out of a different type of stoneware clay that becomes white after firing. I hand-make each mug from start to finish, so while some share similar features, they are all unique individuals. After the face is added I attach a handle and stamp it with my signature. Each piece also receives his or her name at this point. Yes, they all have names.

Next comes the firing process, which starts by thoroughly drying each piece. The piece is then bisque fired to 1828 degrees Fahrenheit. Once cooled and out of the kiln, the eyes, teeth, and bottom of each piece is carefully painted with wax to keep that area from absorbing glaze. The piece is then dipped in various colored glazes and given a once-over for quality control.

In the final firing, the kiln reaches 2345 degrees. When the kiln is cool and unloaded the piece is done!

CullmanSense: What people or experiences have influenced your artwork?
Chad: My first experience with ceramic art was at CHS in Mr. Caretti's class. I guess you could say that it sparked my interest in ceramics. My wife and my family have always been very supportive of my decision to be an artist. Without their support I doubt I would be where I am today.

CullmanSense: How have you grown as an artist over the years?
Chad: Tough question. Pass? It's hard to look back and say specifically what inspired me to do certain things, or inspired me to change my way of thinking. It is reactive process. Make something, react, make something, decide it's crap, throw it away, make something awesome, try to sell it, throw it away when nobody likes it. No matter how difficult things seem to get I just can't stop. It is a constant desire to streamline the process and to make better art. It slowly evolves and gets bigger.

CullmanSense: Who is your favorite artist(s)?
Chad: I enjoy all different kinds of art, and it is hard to choose. Off the top of my head I'd say Dali. I enjoy things that are a little off, or in his case a lotta' off. Or maybe it's just the epic mustache?

FUN FACTS

What do you like on your pizza?
Ham and Pineapple
What's music's on your playlist right now?
I am actually listening to a fantasy novel at the moment. When I'm not listening to a book I just turn on the radio.
What's your favorite ice cream flavor?
Butter pecan or Butterfinger
If you could have a super hero power what would it be?
I would have the power to have all powers.

Siegenthaler - Continued

to as life groups. "Everyone is placed in a life group, which allows opportunity to get into people's lives to care and love them." Seigenthaler continued to explain that what flows out of their worship expresses itself in their lives through the body (the local church).

Christ Covenant is located at 1310 St. Joseph Drive NW in Cullman, which is the location of the old Higdon Funeral Home. Renovated only 5 years ago, the building is now able to accommodate the 350 members, "the little bitty souls all the way up to the older souls" that attend each week along with their newest residents, East Baptist Church.

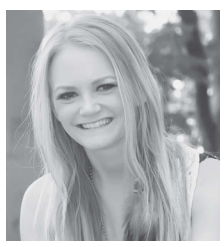
"We've got this perfect partnership with Eastside Baptist using the church since the tornado," shared Siegenthaler with a smile. "Their worship service has always been at 10:30am so they have Sunday school while we are in worship and then they have their worship service while we are in Sunday school. I am just so enjoying having them share the building with us."

Siegenthaler is also husband to Allison and dad to Adrienne(19), Eliza(16), and Will(14).

If you are unable to catch this pastor in his garden or on the motorcycle, you can catch him on Sunday mornings at the 9:00 am worship service at Christ Covenant or their 10:30 am Sunday school classes. You can learn more about Christ Covenant online at www.christcovenantcullman.org.

Live Nativity in Dodge City

By: Natalie Bonner
nataliebonner@cullmansense.com



qrnews/nbonner

Dodge City Park was recently home to a live nativity scene orchestrated by City on a Hill Church. The live actors and animals helped to illustrate the unforgettable Christmas story.

Wayne and Robin Cook of Cullman, started the brand-new Southern Baptist church under Jack Collins from the West Cullman Baptist Association.

The church's geographical goal is to be in Dodge City and to bring people together and showcase the true meaning of Christmas in a different way.

"It's a way to tell folks in the community what we are doing and who we are as an outreach effort," Wayne Cook said.

The church has two important goals: one, to introduce Jesus Christ to those who don't know Him; and two, to establish themselves in the Dodge City community.

Patti Ward, a member of City on a Hill Church, said, "I'm on the church planning committee, and Wayne asked me to script [the show], but I can't take too much credit for this story because it's already been written."

City on a Hill Church currently meets at the West Cullman Baptist Association located at 601 Cleveland Ave. SW, Cullman, AL. Service begins at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings.





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Puzzles and Comics

THIS WEEK'S WORD SEARCH TOPIC IS: HOLIDAYS

BY: DUSTIN ISOM







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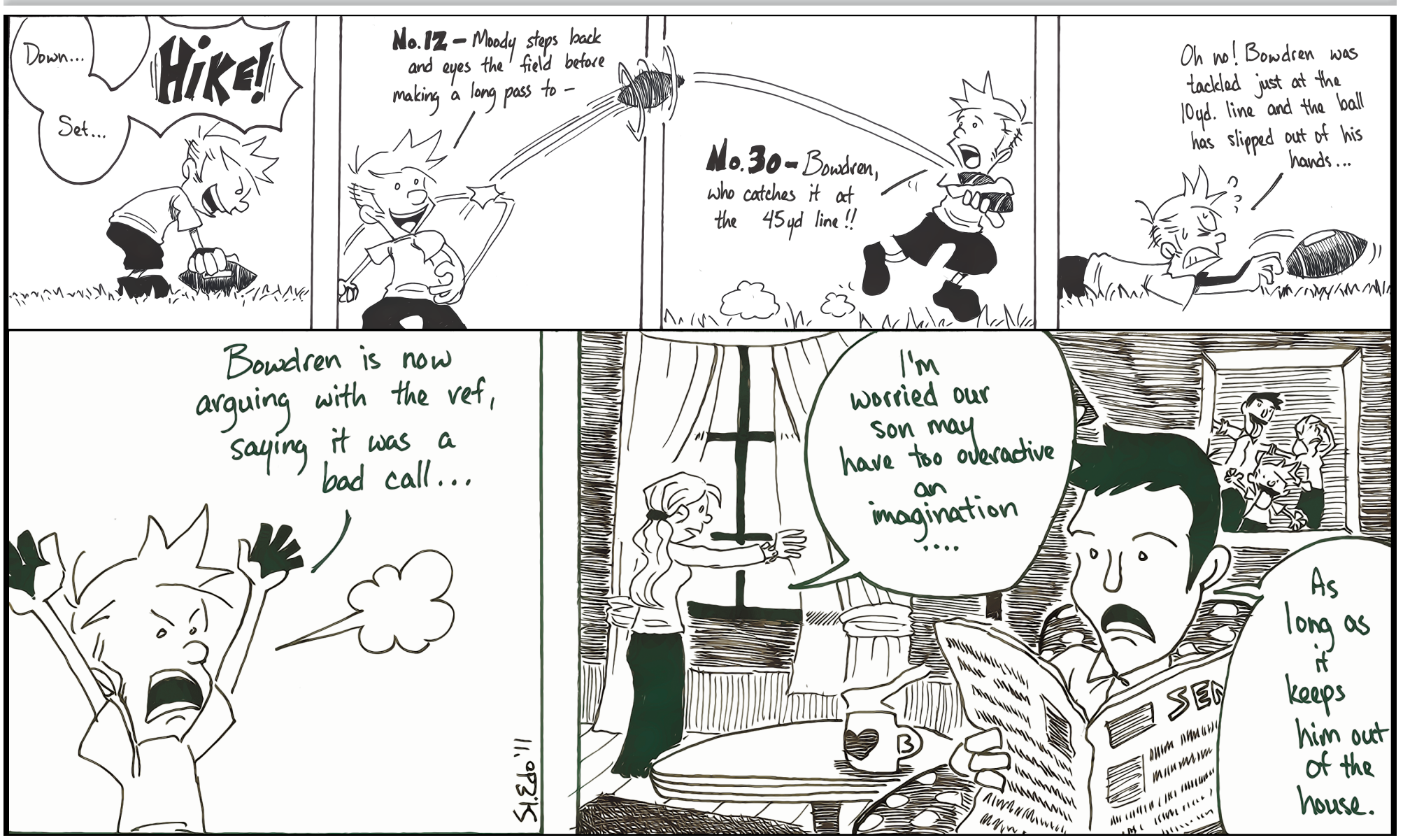




bells
chimney
Dasher
family
holly
miracle
Santa
Blitzen
Christmas
decorations
gifts
Jerusalem
mistletoe
sleigh
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Comet
Donner
gingerbread man
jingle
praise
stockings
candy cane
Cupid
dreidel
Hanukkah
jolly
Prancer
tree
carollers
Dancer
elves
Ho Ho Ho
menorah
Rudolph
Vixen



Comics by St. Edo **Anthony Saint** **st.edo@cullmansense.com**



Tree - Continued

to which he laughingly replied, "Selling trees!"

Selling roughly three to four hundred trees during the Christmas Season, it's good that Jim enjoys it. In fact, he's sold so many trees for such a long time



Jim leans against a netter, which applies a plastic net to Christmas trees before they are taken home



Patrons can cut their own trees using a bow saw or they can ask Jim and his grandsons for assistance

that several of his original clients are now bringing their grandchildren to find a tree, making them the third generation to enjoy Jim's farm.

Nearing the end of the path we found ourselves inside the farm's big, red barn. Stocked with plenty of pre-cut Frasier Firs (which Jim describes as the classic Charlie Brown tree) and several bow saws, the barn is where Christmas tree hunters bring their discoveries to be prepared for the trip home.

Jim and his helpers – usually two of his grandsons, Jake and Michael – first put each tree on a shaker to remove any loose needles or debris. They then drill the trunk with a tapered bit that corresponds to the spindle inside of several varieties of tree stands (which they conveniently sell at the farm) and push the tree through the netter, a device that neatly inserts the tree into a plastic net. The Christmas tree is then ready to be loaded up, driven home, and decorated.

Handily parked near the barn is Jim's RV, which he affectionately dubs his 'Christmas Office.' During the slower weekdays he stays warm by setting up camp inside with his four dogs. While Christmas tree farming, like most other occupations, certainly includes some times that are less busy than others, Jim states, "If you do it right, it'll keep you busy."

However, he adds than owning a tree farm does offer more flexibility than a typical nine-to-five job. As he says, "If you want to go fishing, then you can let things ride for a day."

Around Christmas, the Glasscock Christmas Tree Farm is open on Sunday through Friday from noon to dark and all day on Saturday. While the first two weekends in December are generally Jim's busiest days, he welcomes several families after school during the weekdays. Upon request, he or one of his grandsons even help bow-saw-inhibited customers cut down their selections with a conveniently efficient chainsaw. Although some tree farmers ask for as much as $7 per foot of tree, Jim prices his trees at $4.50 per foot, and his pre-cut firs cost between $55 and $110 each, depending on size.

Sipping a peppermint mocha after my chilly day outdoors, I reflected that Jim's tree farm represents twenty-five years of hard work and care. He has tended most of the trees on his farm for at least five years and in many cases, much longer than that. Each one is individually planted, shaped, cultivated, and finally, sold to a Christmas-minded customer. After my time at the Glasscock Christmas Tree Farm, whenever I see a live Christmas tree, whether it be in a public park or my own home, I will hopefully remember the time, thought, and skill put into each one of them by a dedicated tree farmer like Jim.



Local Events

Send your Events to:
calendar@cullmansense.com

Monday, December 12, 2011

Community Band Concert Tonight

The Cullman Community Band will entertain everyone at the Cullman McGukin Civic Center beginning at 7:00 pm. Everyone is invited to come out and enjoy the free musical evening and support local band members. Complimentary refreshments will be served. For more information call Garry Taylor at 256-636-2754.

Winter Wonderland Light Display

Animated Christmas Light Display at Sportsman Lake Park December 1-23 at 5:00 to 9:00 pm, weather permitting. The attraction will be closed on the 5th, 6th, 12th, and 13th.

Admission charge is $5 per vehicle. Santa will be on location every night serving hot cocoa and candy canes. Victorian horse & carriage rides will be available for $4 person and train rides around the lake will cost $3 person. For more information, call 256-734-3052

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

'Real Recovery'

Daystar Church is offering a faith-based program, 'Real Recovery', for those in need of recovery from real addictions. Meetings are held every Tuesday night, with food and fellowship at 6:00 pm followed by the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Anyone who is struggling with addictions of any sort themselves or someone who may have loved ones in trouble are invited to attend these helpful sessions. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Church office at 256-737-0800 or check the website at www.daystarchurch.tv.

Country Dance at VFW Post 2214

A country music dance will be held at the VFW Hall sponsored by the VFW Post 2214 Ladies' Auxiliary. The dancing will begin at 7:00 pm, admission is $5.00 per person and concessions are available during the evening. Everyone is invited to attend this weekly dance full of great music and fellowship

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Free Community Meal by Living Waters Ministries

A free community meal is offered each Wednesday evening beginning at 5:00 pm, hosted by Living Waters Ministries. Everyone is invited to participate in this weekly gathering at the organization's location in East Park Plaza on Highway 278 East, across from Dollar General.

Please contact James Moore at 256-338-9145 for further information. Donations are gladly accepted

Thursday, December 15, 2011

Soup Kitchen Open

Desperation Church opens the doors to its Soup Kitchen, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, and everyone is welcome to come have a warm meal and share fellowship with others. For those who are homebound, volunteers will deliver meals to them once they have contacted Desperation Church to sign up for this special service. For further information on this project, please contact Crystal Herc at 256-739-4116.

Volunteers are welcome to help out each week, and food donations of non-perishable items are gladly accepted for this special ministry. This is a weekly event which takes place every Thursday at Desperation Church.

CRMC Jewelry and Handbag Sale

There will be a special sale of jewelry and handbags at Cullman Regional Medical Center in POB II, from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm. Come check out some last minute gifts for that 'special someone' on your shopping list.

Friday, December 16, 2011

CRMC Jewelry and Handbag Sale
This is the second day of one of CRMC's best Jewelry and Handbag sales. The sale is open from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm. Everyone is invited to come see what can be purchased for holiday gift giving, even if it is only for yourself.

Sunday, December 18, 2011

"The Gift Goes On"
The Bethsadia Baptist Church will present "The Gift Goes On" Christmas Cantata on Sunday Evening, December 18th at 5:00 pm.

SALE

"We fill Santa's list for tires."

"Santa gets his gifts from College Tire."

College Tire



10% OFF All Tires
(excluding new tires)
Through December 31st

Fill your families stockings with a gift certificate from us.

Gift Certificate
College Tire
Name: John Doe
Date: 12-25-2011
Amount: $200

...in that we were yet sinners Christ died for us.
Romans 5:8

College Tire



We'll **MEET** or **BEAT** Any
Competitor's Price on Comparable Tires

Hanceville
Hwy 31& 91 Intersection
256-352-2221

BILINGUAL & INTERPRETATION SERVICE AVAILABLE