Variety Show Auditions • Cullman Art Guild Gets Less Boring

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Cullman's Monday Newspaper

CULLMANSENSE

Community Matters

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Christmas Tour of Homes

By: Micheal Bryant
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CULLMAN – This past Sunday, the Haiti's Eden Project held their Christmas Tour of Homes in Cullman in hopes to raise money for the project. The Haiti's Eden Project has a partnership with a pastor in Haiti that was started about a year ago.

"We make two trips a year, and when we go we hold medical clinics," said Kim Campbell who helps out with the project and its mission. "We are also in the process of building a multi-purpose building so that they will be able to hold church services as well as a place to hold our clinics out of."

Campbell, who has been to Haiti on three separate occasions, says that the first experience was an eye opener for her.

"When you go over there, and you see the need that the people have for basic necessities, a place to worship, and to be able to get some medicine you cannot come back and be the same," said Campbell. "We have been doing fundraising ever since."

Campbell and a group of others started spreading the word about the project as soon as they came back. The group has started a website which you can find at HaitisEden.org or you can life their official page on Facebook.

"This Tour of Homes just happened to be one of the fundraiser ideas that came up," she said, "and all of our proceeds that we make from

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Photos by Noah Chandler

Brandin' a New Location

By: Noah Chandler
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Brandin' Iron Steakhouse breaking ground in Fairview

FAIRVIEW – On Friday members of the Fairview City Council, Cullman County Economic Development, and Cullman County Commission joined together in Fairview for the groundbreaking ceremony of the town's newest restaurant, the Brandin' Iron.

"I believe there is a great opportunity here and I believe there will be great growth in the community. The community has been very supportive thus far and we look forward to becoming a part of everyone's life here," said Brandin' Iron owner Brian Stricklin shortly before the groundbreaking. "I will be honest I couldn't do it without my employees and the people who make up the Brandin' Iron and my wife has always supported me. Of course God has always taken care of our needs."

With the groundbreaking out of the way Stricklin is looking at a tentative time table which should have the new location operational in the mid part of the second quarter of 2013. The location will offer a wide area for parking, whether it is car, truck, or bus.

"The construction timeline is 4-6 months and that's pending weather. We would like to shoot for opening at the end of May," he said. "It will be the same menu, same theme. There will be a lot more room for parking.

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WSCC Vocal Jazz Ensemble serve as living Christmas Cards p. 6

Weekly Basketball Wrap-Up

By: Josh McBrayer
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With the basketball season in full swing, it is time for the CullmanSense basketball wrap-up. The week was full of action so let's jump right in.

Hanceville vs. Cordova
By: Micheal Bryant

HANCEVILLE – Coming off tournament week, the Hanceville Bulldogs' basketball teams were ready to hit the hardwood again Tuesday night at Wallace State to take on the Cordova Blue Devils. The Lady Bulldogs lost a heartbreaker of a game 63-24, but the varsity boys took care of business 57-30.

Varsity Girls

Cordova would strike first getting two points from Morgan Martin, before Hanceville would answer with four of their own, with Taylor Hollingsworth and Karrah Johnson each hitting a shot. That's when Cordova would get off seven straight points to end the quarter with Kelsey Straener getting five of them.

To start the second quarter, Hanceville would hit a shot to cut the lead nine to six, but Cordova would go on a huge run of fourteen straight points, getting five from Jess Willingham and Alexis Cooper a piece. Hollingsworth would put an end to that, but Cordova would get the last shot of the half.

The two teams traded buckets to start the third period, and then Willingham and Kelsey Straener would get three each. Mariah Twitty, who had all of her eight points in the quarter, would hit a lay-up. The two teams traded two points again then Hanceville went on a five to nothing run, before Willingham hit another shot. Cordova would close the quarter on an

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In Brief

Options for adopted children and their birth parents are unlike those in most other states

By: Reginald Strickland
Contributor

MONTGOMERY – For the past 12 years, persons born in Alabama who have been adopted and their birth parents have had options they did not previously have and which are available in only a few other states.

The Alabama Legislature amended the vital records law in 2000, to allow birth parents to complete contact information and family medical history forms and have those forms placed in the sealed file of a child he or she put up for adoption.

In addition, the law allows adult adoptees, aged 19 or over, to make requests for informational copies of the contents of their sealed birth files.

The contact preference form is considered a private communication from the birth parent to the child, is kept in a sealed envelope, and copies of the form are only given to the adoptee.

The medical history form asks birth parents to provide known information about whether they or their family members have had any of more than 30 conditions listed and provides space for comments.

The adult adoptee who applies will receive copies of all documents in the sealed file which often include the legal documents from the court where the adoption took place as well as the original birth certificate.

If a contact preference form or family medical history form is in the sealed file at the time the adult adoptee requests the contents of his or her sealed file, that will be sent to the adult adoptee.

"Only 225 birth parents have placed contact or medical information in a sealed file while over 5,000 individuals have requested copies of the contents of their sealed files," Cathy Molchan Donald, state registrar and director of the Center for Health Statistics, said. "We want to make sure birth parents and adult adoptees are aware they have this avenue available."

A nonrefundable search fee of $25 is charged for placing a contact preference form and family medical history form in a sealed file. The same nonrefundable search fee is charged to adult adoptees seeking copies of the contents of their sealed files.

Information and forms are available at adph.org/vitalrecords/.

In addition, adopted children and birth parents may call 334- 206-5426 to obtain the forms or send a letter that includes their mailing address and daytime telephone number to request forms. Requests for forms should be sent to Vital Records-Adoptions Section, P.O. Box 5625, Montgomery, AL, 36103-5625. For additional information call 334-206-5426.

Bownes Memorial For Kid's Sake Variety Show

By: Lindsey Dossey
CRMC Contributor

CULLMAN – The 2013 Bownes Memorial For Kid's Sake Variety Show Auditions will be held on Monday, December 17 from 5:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the Colonel Cullmann Room in Cullman Regional Medical Center's Professional Office Building II – 1912 AL Highway 157, POB 2, Cullman, AL 35058.

The auditions are open to children age 4 through 20.

Vocalists, dancers, twirlers, instrumentalists, and groups/ensembles are invited to audition. Judging is based on audience appeal and family entertainment value.

Audition length is two minutes for solo performers and three minutes for groups of 2 or more. There is a $30 tax-deductible donation for individual performers and $60 tax-deductible donation for groups of 2 or more performers.

Those interested in auditioning should bring a completed "Entry and Audition" form to the Colonel Cullmann Room at CRMC between 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Monday, December 17.

You can get an "Entry and Audition" form online at www.crmchospital.com/FKS, by contacting the Foundation office at (256) 737-2604, or forms will be available at the registration table the evening of the auditions.

Performers auditioning should remember that the Variety Show features talent for family entertainment, not competition, and that the same talent performed during auditions must be performed at the For Kid's Sake Show on February 16, 2013.

All performers are encouraged to make sure all attire and performances are age appropriate and outfits worn for auditions should be the same as the ones worn in the performance on February 16, 2013.

Any participants that require music for their audition must bring a CD for their audition and performance. If any participant requires a keyboard for your audition, please notify the CRMC Foundation office by no later than Thursday, December 13.

The 2013 Bownes Memorial For Kid's Sake Variety Show will be held on Saturday, February 16 in the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre located in the Student Center at Wallace State Community College.

For additional information on the For Kids' Sake event, contact the CRMC Foundation Office at 256-737-2604 or 256-737-2565.

The CRMC Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible as allowed by IRS rules.

All proceeds from this event benefit the nursery and pediatric care at Cullman Regional Medical Center.



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Bentley Appoints Oden to Public Service Commission

By: Noah Chandler
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MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Friday announced the appointment of Jeremy Oden to the Alabama Public Service Commission, effective Monday, December 3, 2012.

Since 1998, Oden has served as State Representative for House District 11, covering portions of Cullman, Blount and Morgan Counties. Oden will resign from his District 11 seat prior to assuming his new role.

"I've known Jeremy for many years, and I know him to be a dedicated public servant who wants the best for the people of Alabama," Governor Bentley said. "I approached him about serving as a commissioner because of that dedication to public service. He will represent the needs of consumers in a fair and responsible manner. People across the state will benefit from his service on the commission."

Oden's appointment as a commissioner fills the vacancy created by the November 6 election of Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh to the presidency of the Public Service Commission. Oden will complete the two years remaining on Cavanaugh's commissioner term.

"It has been an honor to serve the people of District 11 for the past 14 years," Oden said. "They have supported me, and I did my best to represent them in Montgomery. I thank them for their support, and I look forward to continuing to serve them in this statewide office. I also want to thank Governor Bentley for the confidence he has in me to serve in this new role. I look forward to serving all the people of Alabama and protecting their interests on the Public Service Commission."

Oden's professional experience includes having served as a branch manager and vice president for Eva Bank in Cullman County. He is also an ordained minister and served as a business owner for several years.

Governor Bentley will call a special election to fill the District 11 seat in the House of Representatives. An election timeline will be announced as soon as it is finalized.

Governor's Mansion to Open for Christmas Open House

From the Desk of
Governor Bentley

MONTGOMERY – Governor and Mrs. Robert Bentley announced Friday the Governor's Mansion will be open to members of the public for Christmas Open House tours from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Monday, December 3; Monday, December 10; and Monday, December 17.

Decorators from across the state have volunteered their time to adorn the Governor's Mansion and the neighboring Hill House in Christmas splendor for the tours.

"The Governor's Mansion belongs to the people of Alabama, and we want to share it with them during this wonderful Christmas season," First Lady Dianne Bentley said. Patricia "Sister" Schubert will sign copies of the new Alabama Tourism Department book Alabama Food at the tour on Monday, December 3. Other signings of Alabama Food by contributing editors Brian S. Jones and Marilyn Jones Stamps will take place on December 10 and 17.

Tickets for the tours are available free of charge at the Governor's Mansion gift shop prior to the tours each day. The Governor's Mansion gift shop is located at 30 Finley Avenue, across the street from the side entrance of the mansion.

The Governor's Mansion is a 1907 Colonial Revival house located at 1142 South Perry Street in Montgomery and has served as the official residence for governors of Alabama since 1951. The neighboring Hill House became part of the Governor's Mansion complex in 2003 and will also be open for the tours.

Fairview awarded economic development grant

Jim Plott
Contributor

MONTGOMERY— Gov. Robert Bentley has awarded a $300,000 grant to help the town of Fairview make road improvements and create new jobs. The Community Development Block Grant will fund road projects to facilitate construction of a new restaurant in the community and provide safe access for an existing retail business. The two establishments will employ an additional 38 people.

"Jobs are vital to our state and my administration is committed to assisting businesses and industries seeking to build or expand in Alabama," Bentley said. "Good, safe roads not only encourage development, they also prevent crashes and protect lives, which gives added value to this grant." The grant will enable Fairview to construct an access road off Alabama Highway 69 to Hoppers Family Market and Pharmacy, a growing business that is adding three employees to its existing 33-person staff. A portion of the grant will help fund construction of a turning lane and access road off Welcome Road making it possible for Brandon Iron Steakhouse to construct a restaurant at the location

Bentley awarded the grant from funds made available to the state by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grant. ADECA administers a wide range of programs that support law enforcement, economic development, workforce development, recreation, energy conservation, and water resource management. Bentley notified Fairview Mayor Dale Seals that funding had been approved. The town has pledged $148,000 in local funds for the project.

No(ah)-It-All: : Society is texting itself into idiocy

By: Noah Chandler

noahchandler@cullmansense.com

Nothing is more refreshing to know than that if someone needs to get in contact all they have to do is pick up their cellphone and dial, or in most cases, text. Lately the number of texts being sent and received has tripled due to a larger work load. As wonderful as it is to have a message instantly sent to you in a condensed format, the perverted use of the English language that generally accompanies the digital message has pushed me to the limit.

You know what I mean? Those who feel the need to put the letter 'K' in place of the word okay? Yes people it is indeed not okay to use a single letter to describe any emotion, thought, or idea. It instead makes you seem digitally lazy, so use the full range of motion in your digits and properly spell the word. Don't be worried if you can't spell because autocorrect knows that we as intelligent human beings have difficulty spelling the most confusing of words or phrases such as okay, later, or see you later.

Now that we're on the subject of abbreviations for text messages let me address the use of numbers for words. Later does not have a numerical balance and as cute as you may think it is to spell it L8R, it in fact appears as if you have a serious issue with the comprehension of your chosen form of language. Yeah, I said it.

Of course nothing drives me more insane then those who feel the need to send random questions at odd hours of the morning. Once I received a text at 3:47 a.m. stating, "I hope you're sleeping well. Know how much you need your sleep." Really!? Yes, indeed someone actually texted me to see if I was sleeping well. At this moment I knew that all hope for humanity was completely lost, yet somehow the questions or statements get worse.

For some reason people think I'm a phonebook because I get regular texts asking for phone numbers or address for businesses. Honestly, this one baffles even my simple mind. I may just start texting them early in the morning using this new form of Neanderthal text language to find out where the center of Cheerios go when the cereal is done being made.

Now with any good thing you must accept the bad therefore I must just accept – forcibly – the fact that people just like asking weird stuff. For those who manage to formulate an important question or statement they generally fall into another social detrimental trap. The ole' "text a question but never reply" is one of those flaws which torments my soul.

You know the types of people who will send five texts, two phone calls, a few Facebook messages, and even an email in the span of two minutes. Of course, since it appears they really need the information quickly, I'll reply with haste to find they are apparently too busy to give a simple, "thanks" or a "that's what I needed to know." Instead they opt to ignore any and all replies until they need your services or mental aptitude again at a later date.

So what to do with those who will hassle you but can't be bothered when you need them? Hmmm…well lately I've been replying with information that is completely irrelevant to what they are asking. Oh you need to know when I can make it out to your event. Well, I think Thanksgiving is an overlooked holiday too. Yes, in fact that transmission actually occurred this past summer. It is just my little way of giving back to those who feel I need to give back to them.

I know a lot of times it is difficult to understand when I'm being sarcastic – which is generally 90% of the time – but for the most part I say it in jest because being hateful for the sake of being hateful is not my style. That's reserved for that other place in town. Me, well I use humor and sarcasm as way to bring topics to the surface that need to be addressed.

Most may think texting etiquette is insane, preposterous, or ridiculous but to you I ask did you not have to go over phone etiquette as a child? I remember this was something taught to me in school by the second grade, which was then reinforced by my mom. If I was not perfect when answering the phone or giving my salutations then I was not permitted to use the phone.

The most common excuse for why this practice no longer takes place in most homes is because the parents don't have the time or they don't see the purpose. Well, for you too busy parents just give your child a call each day and help them correct their etiquette that way. For those of you who think texting etiquette is not important then go ask some of the English teachers inside of this county how they feel it is progressing, or shall I say digressing. Find out from them how many students turn in reports, papers, or essays using text abbreviations. Then, I implore you to sit down and read one of these sad examples of the English language in use.

Now some may think I'm being harsh with these assessments. Frankly, I took it easy. If you want to see something harsh then read through your text log because I'll bet you find many more errors, misspellings, and more punctuation errors than you'll find in any news publication. Why is that important? Simply because if you see and accept errors every day from friends or family then eventually you'll fall into the cycle and a hundred years from now we'll all being speaking in groans and grunts. Wait, history does repeat itself!

The Cullman Art Guild is Gearing Up

By: Laura Walker

Community Contributor

The Cullman Art Guild is changing things up this year. We will no longer be having business meetings – boring – so from now on our gatherings will be times for artists to socialize and do art oriented activities together.

This week we are taking art donations to the Chamber of Commerce for the Art Auction to benefit charities. The Chamber's event will be happening December 11th.

For this year, we are not charging any membership dues.

We want to invite artist of all sorts of mediums (traditional, photography, music, wood, metal, jewelry, etc.) from the hobby artist to professionals to come visit with other Cullman artists at our different gatherings.

To be added to the Guild email list, please send your email to Laura Walker at lostlaw95@yahoo.com.

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Obituaries must be sent from the funeral home either by e-mail or fax.
This online service is free, just request it from your funeral home of choice.

From the Mouth of Micheal – Bama Fans

By: Micheal Bryant

michealbryant@cullmansense.com

This past Saturday the University of Alabama won the SEC Championship and guaranteed their spot in the National Championship game to face Notre Dame. Immediately afterward my Facebook was flooded with posts by Alabama fans celebrating the victory, and that is perfectly acceptable, but that is not what this column is about.

My column this week is about the hypocrisy I see among them. I am no doubt going to get plenty of mail for this topic, but hopefully it is a mature and educated response and not a long diatribe of misspelled words ending with "Roll Tide," because I assure you, that is not a valid argument.

So you may be asking, what hypocrisy do I speak of? Well, let us start with a little incident in 2009. That was the year Alabama was the best team in college football.

I will even admit that. With the exception of the Iron Bowl, they pretty much steamrolled through every single one of their opponents. Then they faced Florida in the SEC Championship game.

Alabama fans remember that game dearly. I hear about it all the time, because that was the game that Alabama made Tim Tebow cry. The ridicule they hurled at him was fine at the time. It is okay to rag on rival teams, however when you rag on rival teams you should have thick enough skin to be able to handle getting ragged back.

See, every time the Crimson Tide loses a game, the camera pans to a fan, normally a grown man, with tears streaming down their face. If you make a joke about this you will be met with accusations of having Little Brother Syndrome.

You will be told that it is okay, because fans are passionate about their sports and they get emotionally invested into them. There lies the hypocrisy. Yes, Tim Tebow cried on national television after experiencing a loss, but the difference between him and the Alabama fans that cry is that he was in the game.

He went onto the field and put everything he had into winning not just for himself, but for his team, his fans, and his coaches, and he came up short. That is being invested emotionally. A person paying one hundred dollars for a ticket, sitting in the stadium, munching on a pickle, and waving a pom-pom is not being invested emotionally into the game.

Alabama fans don't fight and claw and grind for sixty minutes, but they will act like they do. They will act like they had a hand in that victory, but they did not, and they certainly shouldn't cry over a football game.

Speaking of Little Brother Syndrome, for those of you who don't know what that is, that is when a team accomplishes something, but instead of the fans focusing it on the team they root for, they will use it to down another fan base. I have seen it numerous times on Facebook and message boards, and Saturday was no exception. Alabama fans were not writing things like "YAY! ROLL TIDE" or "WE'RE GOING TO MIAMI, BABY."

Instead I saw statuses that said "suck it Auburn," Okay, what did Auburn have to do with the SEC Championship game? Another example of Alabama Little Brother Syndrome has to do with them actually playing for the National Championship.

Alabama fans seem to think because they are from this state, Auburn fans should root for them and root for the national title to stay in-state, but were Alabama fans rooting for Auburn in 2010? Were they rooting for Auburn as they wore their yellow and green scripted "A" t-shirts? No they were not.

Look, I have nothing against Alabama fans. In fact I tip my hat and say congratulations on lucking back into the National Title game.

You lost a game you shouldn't have and once again everything that needed to happen for you to get back and defend your title happened. Celebrate that, but don't be a hypocrite about it.

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SPORTS

CullmanSense's Weekly Basketball Wrap-Up (Continued from Front)

eight to two run, getting three from Hanna McLemore.

The fourth quarter was all Cordova as they would outscore the Lady Bulldogs 18 to 1.

Hanceville's Mariah Twitty led the bulldogs with eight points, while Cordova's Willingham and Kelsey Straener each had twelve.

Varsity Boys

The Hanceville Boys were coming off of their win Friday and looking to continue that trend. Cordova's Jamaal Cooper would hit the first shot to give the Blue Devils the early lead, but Hanceville would score six straight with Brontae Harris starting them off with a long three pointer. Cooper would answer and his teammate would Will Taft would add two more to tie the game at six, but Hanceville would close out the quarter on a eight to two run, with Harris scoring six.

Hanceville continued to stay hot as Chris Smith hit the first two buckets in the second quarter. The two teams traded buckets, before Cordova's Taft and Cooper hit back to back threes. After trading buckets again, Hanceville went on a 13 to 4 run to close out the half, with Harris putting in nine more to give him eighteen in the first half.

The Bulldogs came out strong in the third quarter. After a two pointer from Smith, Harris put in five more.

The Blue Devils answered with a two pointer, but that would be their only points in the quarter. Hanceville would close the quarter out on a seven to nothing run, with Dont'e Reese scoring the last three.

The Bulldogs would hit on their first two buckets of the fourth quarter to take a thirty point lead and get the officials to call for a running clock. Cordova would close the final five minutes on an 8-4 run, with Cooper getting six of those.

Brontae Harris led all scorers with twenty-five points, while Cordova's leading scorer was Jamaal Cooper with twelve.

The Bulldogs will host Vinemont Friday night at Wallace State, as Cordova will travel to Sumiton Christian.

Good Hope vs Priceville
By: Johnny Thornton

Varsity Girls

GOOD HOPE - No longer in the same classification hasn't stopped the Good Hope-Priceville basketball rivalry.

The encounter this evening was tight for the first half with Good Hope clinging to a 23-17 halftime lead.

Star forward Kayla Tillman got her fourth foul early in the third period that sent her to the sidelines. Kacy Thomas took up the scoring slack with a field goal, three point play, and a free throw in the third period while the Good Hope defense held Priceville without a made basket in the process.

The Lady Raiders carried a 33-20 lead into the final period of play.

Senior forward Darcie Wilson picked up the scoring in the final stanza for Michael Oldacre's ball club with eight points and finished the game leading Good Hope with 15.

Cara Goodwin added 12, Thomas scored six, Tillman was held to only four on the night, Kaitlyn Bishop and Savanah Fendley also netted four, Kayla Scott had three, Kami Calvert two, and Alanah Henke one.

Leading Priceville was McKenzie Parker with 11 and Jada Beverly eight.

Varsity Boys

The Bulldogs went on a 12-4 run in the final 3:00 of the first period to turn a 13-9 lead into a 25-13 advantage at the end of one period.

Priceville allowed the Raiders only five second period points and headed to the locker room with a 35-18 halftime cushion.

Good Hope managed to keep the game close, trailing 44-29 following the third period and got within 11 points before the Bulldogs finished on another surge to put the game out of arms' length and drop the Raiders to 1-6 on the season.

Jacob Crow came off the bench to deliver 11 for the Bulldogs with starters Hayden Prentice and Kaleb Barker scoring 10.

For the Raiders, Andrew Cofer tossed in 14, Alex Cofer had 10, Zac Sloan seven, and Eli Marty six.

Vinemont vs. Fairview
By: Josh McBrayer

VINEMONT – The Fairview Aggies made the short trip to Vinemont High School to take on the Vinemont Eagles in a pair of varsity matchups. The girls took to the floor first to get the action going.

Varsity Girls

On a night where Jordan Melton was honored for eclipsing the 1,000 point mark earlier in the season, she looked to continue her scoring ways and help the Lady Eagles to a victory.

Things got started off on the right foot for Vinemont, going on a 4-1 run 1:20 into the game prompting a time-out from Fairview head coach Cheryl Mangum. Coming out of the time-out the next points belonged to the Lady Aggies when Marlana Johnson buried a three from the left corner and tied the game at four each and starting a 14-1 run for Fairview that would last the rest of the first, allowing the Lady Aggies to open up a 15-5 lead.

Fairview continued their hot shooting, thanks in part to six points by Anna Cox, but the second belonged to the Lady Eagles. Vinemont found their range from three-point land. Melton drained two of the Lady Eagles' three trifectas in the second. Vinemont quickly cut the double digit deficit in half and closed out the second quarter on a 9-0 run for a 12 point swing. The Lady Eagles were able flip the momentum and take a two point lead to halftime.

After scoring 22 points in the second quarter, Vinemont followed it up with just 10 but the Lady Eagles defense held Fairview to just six. Melton kept the hot hand scoring six in the quarter including another three point bucket helping Vinemont to a 37-31 score heading to the last quarter.

Four minutes into the fourth quarter, only six points total had been scored. Fairview changed that coming out of the time-out by scoring four lighting quick points and cutting the Lady Eagle lead in half. Vinemont took a time-out to slow down the action but Fairview responded with a steal out of the break and trimmed Vinemont's lead to a mere two points with 2:10 left on the clock. With time running out, Fairview was forced to foul. Savannah McAlpine was the first Lady Eagle to head to the line and she hit the front end of a one and one. Mekena Butts cut the Vinemont lead to one with a bucket in the paint. Melton was sent to the line next for Vinemont and she drained both shots, pushing it back to three. Fairview had a shot at the end of the game but could not get a clear look at the basket and time ran out with Vinemont on top 46-43.

Leading Vinemont and all scorers was Jordan Melton with 17. Mekena Butts led Fairview with 12. These were the only two ladies in double figures for either team.

Varsity Boys

Fairview opened the game with a flurry of offense scoring six points before Blake Jones scored the first two for Vinemont. The Aggies then scored five more before Jones put in a free throw. Fairview closed out the quarter with the last two points on a pair of free throws by Peter Kessler and went up by a score of 17-5.

Vinemont found their range midway through the second, outscoring Fairview 18-14 in the second thanks to the hot shooting of Lance Stanley who had 10 of Vinemont's 18 second quarter points. Vinemont had cut the deficit to five before a big three point bucket by Andy Hendrix right before the half. Fairview went into the locker room down by eight, 31-23. Hendrix, like Stanley, had 10 of his team's second quarter points.

The halftime break did not seem to cool off Stanley's hot hand. He scored five of the Eagle's first six. Fairview, however, had an answer from inside with Blake Parker and outside with Hendrix. They combined for nine in the quarter and the Aggies kept an eight point lead heading to the fourth.

Fairview continued to run the floor well and pick up points in transition, pushing their lead to 11 with two minutes left in the game. The run and gun of the Aggies prevailed by a 56-41 score.

Leading Fairview and all scorers was Andy Hendrix with 22. He was followed by Luke Bailey and Peter Kessler both with 10.

The lone Eagle in double digits was Lance Stanley with 15.

Walker vs. Cullman
By: Johnny Thornton

Varsity Boys

JASPER – Cullman coach Bobby Meyer got what he wanted from his Bearcats in the fourth quarter of a 51-40 victory at Walker. It was a total team effort in which the Bearcats broke a 2-game losing streak and continuing to dominate the Vikings regardless what sport the two are involved in.

Cullman scored on the offensive side, got good defensive play, and forced several turnovers in the final period, turning a 40-35 lead heading into the fourth into a double-digit victory.

The Bearcats kept Walker from hitting a field goal until they scored two with less than a minute remaining. At that time, the Bearcats were ahead by 13 points and on their way of getting a win for the first time in a week when they knocked off Vinemont in the semifinals of the Holly Pond Thanksgiving Tournament 63-43.

Momentum was on the Cullman side by the end of the third period. Lee Mattox scored a couple of baskets, including a three-pointer from the right wing with time running out to send the Bearcats to a 40-35 lead, outscoring the Vikings during the third stanza, 19-9.

Leading 43-36, the Bearcats were helped in a series of plays that allowed the advantage to grow. Troy Forrest tipped in a missed shot to make it 45-36, seconds later, Houston Turner blocked a shot near midcourt, picked up the ball, and took it in for a layup and a 47-36 lead.

Then point guard Lawson Schaffer got a steal and went the length of the floor for a reverse layup that excited the Cullman crowd and the visitors were ahead 49-36 with 3:19 remaining as Walker burned a much needed timeout.

Schaffer was the lone scorer for the Bearcats in double digits with 18. He was seven of nine from the foul line. Turner tossed in eight in his second start after finishing up football seven days earlier in the 5A quarterfinals at McAdory.

Lane Donaldson joined Mattox and Seth Swalve with five apiece, Forrest and Keaton Dean scored four, and Austin Neal hit two.

Walker dropped to 1-4. No one for the Vikings reached double digits as Chatman tossed in nine points and Bridges scored eight.

Varsity Girls

The first win of the season for the Lady Bearcats came Friday with senior Morgan Smith scoring five field goals in the first half to carry her team to a 29-15 halftime lead. She drove to the basket and scored late in the second period that gave Cullman its largest lead at that time of 26-9.

Smith hit a short range jumper during the third period that continued the Cullman momentum in building the lead to 43-20.

With 6:00 remaining, the Lady Bearcats extended the margin to 49-20 and were on the verge of having the new rule of a continuous running clock if they had gained a 30-point lead. That didn't happen and Walker went on an 11-2 run in a span of 3:00 to close the deficit to 51-31. Then the Lady 'Cats went back to work and finished off a strong performance, scoring 29 points in both halves to earn their first win of the season and one-sided losses to 5A state champion Brewer and 3A contender Holly Pond.

Smith led the Lady 'Cats with 22 points, Hayden Short tossed in 10, Elli Dixon scored eight, Baylee Johnson seven, Oakleigh White four, Emily Tucker three, and Blair Nall two.

Leading Walker was AC Harris with 12 and Morgan Hood with nine.

West Point vs. East Limestone
By: Michael Bryant

WEST POINT – It was basketball homecoming at West Point as the East Limestone Indians traveled to take on the Warriors. While the crowning festivities happened at halftime it wasn't very festive on the court as the West Point Warriors lost two heartbreaking varsity games. The Lady Warriors fell 53-51 and the Varsity Boys lost 56-54.

Varsity Girls

The Lady Indians got on the board first with two point shot from Bailey Speer. West Point's Madison Rusk answered back to tie it up, before East Limestone got a bucket from Brennan Crabtree and a free throw from Tess Vessels. The two teams would get their next points on free throws, and then Julianne Parrott hit a two to cut the Lady Indians' lead 7-5. That's when East Limestone would go on a ten point run including eight of those from Paige Pettigrew. Rusk would add a shot for West Point and her teammate, Mallory Walker would get the last shot, a three pointer to end the quarter.

Crabtree would open with two points for East Limestone, and then West Point would go on a nine point run, getting six from Rusk. Crabtree would extend the Lady Indians' lead to three, but a free throw by Walker and a two point lay-up from Rusk would tie it at 22. East Limestone would break the tie with eight straight, getting five from Rachael Diamond. The two teams would trade points to end the half.

Diamond would open the third period with a pair of free throws, before West Point would score eight more unanswered to take the lead. Jay Johnson's next four points would give the lead back to East Limestone, but a three pointer from Rachel Persall would have the score tied up at the end of three.

The two teams would trade baskets to start the fourth quarter, and then it would be a battle of number twelves. East Limestone's Crabtree would score two, and West Point's Rusk would answer with three. Crabtree would get six unanswered before Rusk would add two more. The two girls would trade baskets, and then Courtney Walker would hit a pair of free throws to be the first person without the number twelve to score in the last four minutes and tie the score back up. In the final two minutes only one shot would be made by Vonelece Richardson to give East Limestone a two point lead. West Point

CullmanSense's Weekly Basketball Wrap-Up (Continued)

had a chance to tie, but the shot fell short.

Varsity Boys

The East Limestone boys' team would get the first points, before West Point's Josh Looney would tie it up. It would be two minutes before West Point would get on the board again as the Indians would score eight straight, including four from Adam Saylor. West Point's Nick Nuss would get an old fashioned three and his teammate Jordan McKenzie would get one from behind the arc. That's when the Indians' Jordan Gandy would run the inbound down the court and slam it home, causing even the Warrior fans to rise to their feet at the marvel. The teams would trade shots to end the quarter, with East Limestone having the lead.

Nuss would open the second period with a lay-up, and East Limestone would answer with three. West Point would then go on an eight to nothing run with Ryder Jones and McKenzie each getting three. Saylor would hit a three for East Limestone, and the Warriors would answer again, this time scoring five straight. The Indians would end the half with five unanswered, but the Warriors would go into the locker room with a seven point lead.

That lead didn't last long as the Indians opened the second half with five straight points, getting three from Gandy. West Point's Wesley Smith would get a layup, but the Indians would respond with shots from Gandy and Nick Walsh. West Point's Kris Keller would stop the bleeding momentarily with a jump shot, but Limestone would score five unanswered, getting four from Saylor. After a West Point free throw, East Limestone's Gandy would have another jaw dropping moment, taking an alley oop from Blake Tucker and slamming it home. McKenzie would hit another pair of free throws, but East Limestone would get the final four points of the quarter to have a seven point lead of their own.

The Warriors opened the final period with four points from McKenzie and Smith. East Limestone would hit another shot to extend their lead back to five, but a three pointer and two free throws by McKenzie would tie it up. The two teams would trade shots to tie it up once more with less than two minutes left. The tie would be broken by a Gandy jumper and free throw. West Point's McKenzie would cut the lead to one, but Devin Davis of the Indians would extend the lead to two. Like the Lady Warriors, the boys had a chance to tie it up, but their shot bounced off the rim as the buzzer sounded.

Vinemont vs. Hanceville
By: Josh McBrayer

HANCEVILLE – The Hanceville Bulldogs looked to take a "bite" out of the Vinemont Eagles Friday night at Tom Drake Coliseum. The JV Lady Bulldogs prevailed over the JV girls from Vinemont by a score of 30-5. The Vinemont JV boys got some revenge for their female counterparts, winning 54-33. The Varsity squads hit the floor next.

Junior Varsity Girls

The Lady Bulldogs of Hanceville got things going, scoring the first bucket of Friday night's contest but it was the Lady Eagles that took early control of the game. After the first two Hanceville points, Vinemont went on a 9-2 run with every point being put in by Jordan Melton including a pair of three pointers. She would drain her third trey in a row following a Hanceville time-out before the Lady 'Dawgs would score again. Vinemont would end quarter number one with a 21-10 lead. Melton had 14 in the quarter including going 4 of 5 from three point land.

Masee Hollis of Hanceville was in the "hip pocket" of Melton in quarter two, not letting her get a look from three point range. This helped the Lady Bulldogs cut Vinemont's lead to five but Melton was not going to be denied. She hit a bucket in the paint then immediately stole the ball, scoring four points in less than 10 seconds and putting Vinemont up by nine. The Lady Eagles pushed their lead to 15 with a 37-22. Melton finished the first half with a staggering 22 points.

The third quarter was evenly matched, with Vinemont gaining a slight advantage 10-8 and taking a 17 point lead to the fourth.

The final quarter belonged to Vinemont. The Lady Eagles outscored the Lady Bulldogs 14-1 on their way to a 61-31 victory and a 4-6 record early into the 2012-13 basketball season.

Vinemont was led by Jordan Melton who also led all scorers with 29 followed by Katie Fuller with seven.

Taylor Hollingsworth led the Lady Bulldogs with 15 followed by Mariah Twitty with six.

Junior Varsity Boys

Game two saw the "run 'n gun" of Hanceville against the long range shooting of the Vinemont Eagles. The action was back and forth in the first quarter with both teams trying to establish a lead and worked hard to get shots to fall.

The first quarter was like the first round of a heavy-weight boxing match, a feeling out process. Vinemont landed the last "blow" of the first quarter on a Garrett Sipe free throw to take a slim 13-12 lead.

The second quarter was just as evenly matched as the first with both teams playing playing good defense and hitting the open looks they got at the basket. Hanceville took the lead for the first time since the opening minute of the game on a three point basket by Matt Burns with a minute left in the second. Brontae Harris scored the next, which turned out to be the last, four points of the second quarter to give Hanceville a six point lead heading to halftime. This was the largest lead for either team in the first half.

Vinemont pulled from within early in the third, going on a 7-2 run to open the quarter. Extending the run to 10-3, the Eagles got back to even with 2:44 left in the third before a Vinemont time-out. A three point basket by Burns put Hanceville back up by three heading to the final eight minutes.

Harris quickly doubled the Bulldog lead when he drained a three pointer from the wing. Vinemont cut the lead in half with a free throw by Lance Stanley and a two point basket by Ty Jones. Riley Foust drained the front and back end of a one and one to bring Vinemont to within one then buried a three to give Vinemont the lead for the first time in the second half. With 43 seconds left and down by one, Hanceville got the steal they were looking for but lost the ball out of bounds on the drive to the basket and gave the ball back to the Eagles with 31.4 seconds left in the game. Forced to foul, Hanceville put Stanley on the line. He dropped in both halves of the one and one to put Vinemont up by three with 23.6 seconds left to go. In need of a three, Harris gave the Bulldogs just that when he knocked the bottom out of a three point basket with 8.3 seconds left. Vinemont got a good look but could not get the shot to fall, nor was the offensive put back and the fans of both teams were treated to a free foru minutes of basketball.

Hanceville took a four point lead very early in the overtime frame but Foust hit a three from the corner to get the Eagles back to within one with 1:16 left in the extra frame. With Vinemont looking to drive to the basket and tie the game, Sheldon "Debo" Lewis forced a turnover, knocking the ball loose. It was picked up by Harris who the Eagles immediately fouled an put on the line. He hit both and Hanceville went up by four with 21 seconds left. Harris went to the line again, hitting one. This gave Vinemont 12.5 seconds to score three points and force another overtime period.

The Eagles had a look inside, which Sipe converted but failed to draw the foul and Vinemont fell 50-49.

Leading all scorers with 30 was Brontae Harris. Following him was Matt Burns with nine. Vinemont was led by Garrett Sipe with 11 and Lance Stanley with 10.

There you go folks. CullmanSense's first hand coverage of Cullman County basketball. Stay glued to CullmanSense, your #1 source for LOCAL sports coverage.



Bartlett Plastering & XI Drywall Inc. would like to thank all that participated in the Soldier Care package fund drive.

With your help we were able to ship 70+ care packages overseas to Soldiers.

Special thanks to: Tim Compton, Joey Robinson, Latisha Gonzales, Billy Barnett, Chorba Contracting, Frisch & Assoc., Jason Stricklin, R&M Equipment, Portia & Joe Smith, Scott Barnett, Ricky Peak, Robert Lee, Christian Book Store, Dryvit Inc., Sto Corp., Darryl, Deanna, Tyler Bartlett, Haley Price, Alex Jones, and Big Lots. All the above either donated money, time, or discounts for products.

This will surely brighten their days with the Bibles, food, candy, cards, blankets, reading & writing materials, Hot Hands, games, and puzzles.

Thanks and God bless each of you.

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Community Matters

Decorating for the Holiday at the Agriplex

By: Micheal Bryant
michealbryant@cullmansense.com

VINEMONT – Over ten years ago, several community leaders and members of the Cullman Chamber of Commerce Agriculture Commission had a vision of a facility that would showcase the importance of agriculture to the community and to future generations and they formed the North Alabama Agriplex.

"The Agriplex is a state agency that started about ten years ago and we started our Heritage Center last year. Our goal is to promote agriculture and agriculture education, along with our heritage throughout North Alabama," said Rachel Dawsey, who is the Coordinator for the North Alabama Agriplex.

The Agriplex is a separate entity that partners with the Peinhardt Farm to organize events for their Farm Kid's Club program which was started in February of 2012.

"Peinhardt Farm originally belonged to my granddad Carl Peinhardt and was about one hundred acres that was diversified. He turned that into a dairy farm with Guernsey cattle. He retired in the nineteen-eighties, and when he passed away in 1992 and then my grandma passed away in 1993, the siblings all took over the farm and turned it into a living history farm," said Dawsey. "In October of every year they have schoolchildren, mainly third graders, and then they have a public day where they have about two thousand people where they teach what farm life was like in the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties. We are the North Alabama Agriplex that is a separate entity and we partner together on programming."

Saturday was the traditional December classic on how to "Decorate for the Holidays."

"This is a part of our Farm Kid's Club and we meet once a month where we do a different topic each month," said Dawsey. "Today we are doing a 'wreathe making program' which is a parent-child program, or grandparent-child program for elementary age kids. We do different topics. We've talked about goats, sheep, chickens, harvest, corn, and all sorts of different things."

About twenty children and their parents gathered to decorate their wreathes, some of them for the first time, while others have been in the program for a while.

"No, it's not (our first time here. We have been here several times. My children are homeschooled and we are very into the 4-H program. So 4-H kind of goes hand in hand with what Peinhardt and their programs put out," said Cherie Barrett, who was with her daughter Sophie.

"We learn so much. Rachel always makes it very educated. We've learned about all different kinds of farm animals. We learned when to start seeds for planting in the spring. We learned about recycling and composting. Just about anything that is agriculture or farm related."

Sophie agreed that she had learned a lot from the program and enjoyed coming.

The program will hold their next event January 5th for a "Make Your Own Terrarium and January 18th they will have a storytelling program for families. The program also has classes such as quilting.

If you would like to take part in any of these programs you can contact the North Alabama Agriplex. Their phone number is 256-297-1044 and their e-mail is cullmanag@gmail.com. They also have a Facebook page they would like you to check out by searching North Alabama Agriplex on Facebook. They would be more than happy to give you any information that you may want.



Photos by Jessica Norrell

Making a Joyful Noise

By: Micheal Bryant
michealbryant@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE – Starting today and running through Friday, December 14th, the Wallace State Vocal Jazz Ensemble will be serving as living Christmas Cards this year.

"Well the singing Christmas Card service is an idea Mrs. Richter had for the Jazz vocal ensemble to put on to help raise money for the Wallace State Concert Choir to go to Washington D.C. this spring," said Joel Burks, who is a member of the concert choir, the Wallace State Singers. "We (will) get the opportunity to sing at the Kennedy Center and the "singers" (will) get to perform at the Lincoln memorial. It's just a way for the jazz ensemble to take some money off the top to make it more manageable for everyone."

With each booking, the Vocal Jazz Ensemble will sing a holiday greeting for someone at your office, to your family, or even a personal friend. It isn't just some run of the mill telegram service.

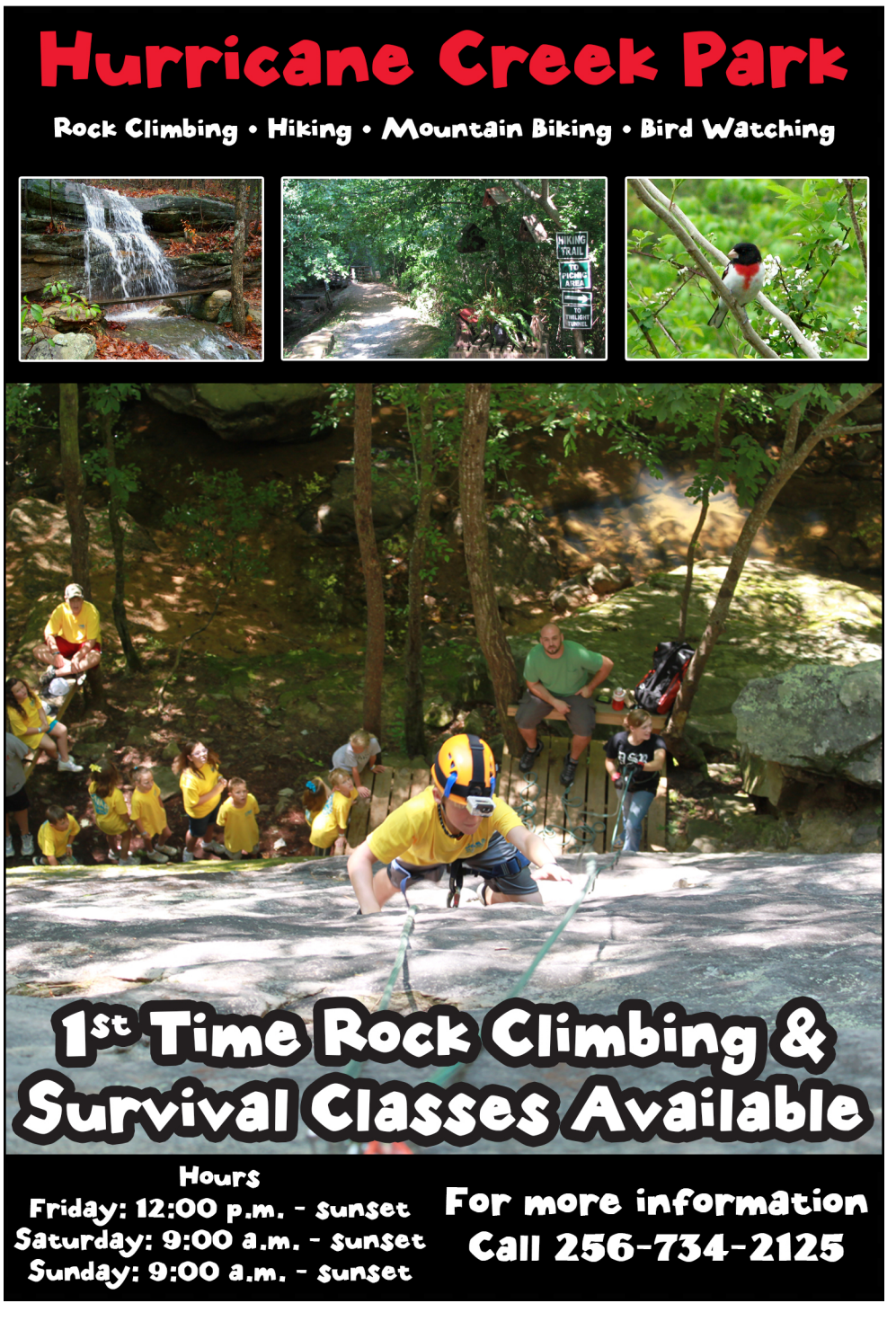
"People should choose the jazz ensembles Christmas Card service, because with us you won't just be getting one person singing you a generic Christmas song (instead) you will get six people who have worked (their) voices, spent time perfecting the craft, and you will get so much more for the price," said Burks.

"You will get a front row seat to one of Wallace's up and coming premier singing groups. Mrs. Richter will have nothing to do with mediocrity, she expects the best, and that's what we give her."

Appearances for the Living Christmas Cards are twenty dollars and they available by appointment Monday, Dec. 3 through Friday, Dec. 14. If you would like to schedule one for someone special in your life, you can call Wallace State choral director Tiffany Richter at 256-352-8034 to make a reservation or for more information.

Also this week the Wallace State Music Department will be putting on their annual Christmas Concert in which all of their ensembles will perform. The event will be held in the Betty Leeth Haynes Theater, this Thursday at 7:00 p.m..

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Community Matters

A Glow with Holiday Spirit

By: Jessica Norrell
jessicanorrell@cullmansense.com

HOLLY POND – Holly Pond Park was bustling Saturday night with residents eager to see the park decked out for the Christmas holiday. Lights were strung from shrubbery, gazebos, bridges, and along the fences, adding a luminous presence to the landscape.

The main attractions were the plywood painted Christmas cards contributed and decorated by local businesses, churches, and schools. The giant cards were beautifully painted in different scenes with a friendly message or phrase from the organization that contributed them along with decorations surrounding the cards such as Christmas trees and winter characters or symbols.

Residents of all ages came to enjoy a walk in the park while viewing artwork from familiar organizations that make up the Holly Pond community and left with a smile. 'Christmas Card in the Park' will be on view the entire month of December as Holly Pond closes out their celebration of their 100th birthday!





Brandin' a New Location (Continued from Front)

At 5,200 sq. ft. the new location in Fairview may only be an additional 400 sq. ft. larger but Stricklin said the additional space will be noticeable once you venture inside.

"We will be able to seat about 40 additional patrons. We will start out with a seating of 215, so we can get the kitchen, the staff, and everyone up to speed but the goal is to be able to seat up to 300," he said.

Fairview mayor Dale Seals is eager for the work to begin on the new steakhouse. He said the opportunity to have a good sit down steakhouse is a perfect fit for the town.

"It means a great deal to our community. They will supply a great service for our community, with the convenience of being able to enjoy a good wholesome meal and I see them having a lot of repeat business because I'm going to be one of those people," said Seals. "The community is all excited about the fact they will be here. I believe that this will be a great mix for our community and the Brandin' Iron."

CullmanSense will keep you updated as progress is made on this new venture.



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Community Matters

Holiday Safety Tips & Reminders

By: Micheal Bryant
michealbryant@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The holidays are a time of joy and festivities. It is also the time of year that people run their heaters and sit by warm cozy fires. If not careful, and precautions are not taken, these can cause hazards that no one wants to see. In order to keep you and your family safe, please follow these safety tips.

Before running your heaters or starting your fires this winter please follow this checklist to ensure your safety:

- Inspect your furnace every 12 months.
- Make sure all chimneys and vents have been cleaned.
- Make sure to use dry, seasoned wood.
- Make sure fireplace screens are metal or heat-tempered glass.
- Make sure you have a covered metal container to dispose of ashes.
- Make sure children stay at least three feet away at all times.
- Make sure portable space heaters have automatic shutoffs.
- Make sure portable space heaters are plugged directly into an outlet.
- Make sure all smoke alarms are tested.
- Make sure all carbon monoxide alarms are tested.

Besides these safety measures there are some topic specific safety measures you can take.

Christmas Tree Precautions:

- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched
- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents, or lights
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit
- Be sure to add water daily to the tree stand.
- Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

Holiday Decorating Precautions:

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini light sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of LED strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.

Holiday Entertaining Precautions:

- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.

Candle Precautions:

- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.
- Think about using flameless candles.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, and won't tip over easily.
- Put candle holders on a sturdy, uncluttered surface.
- Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- Don't burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.
- Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a power outage. Never use candles.

Heating Safety Precautions:

- Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot "children-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms monthly.

If you would like downloadable copies of these and other fire safety related issues, please visit www.nfpa.org. Cullman Fire Marshal Chris Chaffin said of the 30 fire related incidents last year, two of them were holiday related. Please follow these precautions and let us get that number down to a big fat zero.

This Week in History Dec. 3 - Dec. 9

December 3rd

- 1847 – Frederick Douglass publishes first issue of his newspaper "North Star"
- 1931 – Alka Seltzer goes on sale
- 1964 – "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer" first airs on TV
- 2006 – Hugo Chavez, leftist dictator, is re-elected President of Venezuela

December 4th

- 1791 – Britain's Observer, oldest Sunday newspaper in world, first published
- 1952 – Killer fogs begin in London England, "Smog" becomes a word
- 1980 – 2 months after death of drummer John Bonham, Led Zeppelin breaks up
- 2010 – Political pressure and cyber-attacks directed against WikiLeaks are condemned by Reporters Without Borders

December 5th

- 1861 – Gatling gun patented
- 1932 – German physicist Albert Einstein granted a visa
- 1988 – Shuttle Atlantis launches world's first nuclear-war-fighting satellite
- 2011 – Reports indicate the credit ratings agency Standard & Poors will review 15 nations for possible downgrades, including France and Germany

December 6th

- 1631 – First predicted transit of Venus (Kepler) is observed
- 1940 – Gestapo arrest German resistance fighter/poster artist Helen Ernst
- 1987 – 3 Satanist Missouri teenagers bludgeon comrade to death for "fun"

December 7th

- 1787 – Delaware becomes first state to ratify constitution
- 1988 – Mikhail Gorbachev cheered by Wall St. crowds upon arrival in New York City
- 2011 – In Hawaii, the U.S. commemorates the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor

December 8th

- 1792 – First cremation in U.S., Henry Laurens
- 1952 – Isaak Ben-Zwi elected President of Israel
- 1966 – U.S. and U.S.S.R. sign treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons in outer space
- 2010 – Paris closes the Eiffel Tower due to snow

December 9th

- 1793 – Noah Webster establishes New York's first daily newspaper, American Minerva
- 1931 – Japanese army attacks Chinese province of Jehol
- 2000 – Supreme Court halts Florida vote recount



Local Events Calendar

Send your Events to: calendar@cullmansense.com

Monday, December 3rd

Cullman Kiwanis Club
The Cullman Kiwanis Club invites all local men and women who are interested in taking part in community service along with great fellowship, fun, networking, and learning to attend their weekly luncheon meeting at 12 noon each Monday in the All Steak's third floor banquet room. Come see what Kiwanis is all about and enjoy a great luncheon meal as well.

Christmas Winter Wonder Light Show - Sportsmans Lake Park
The annual Christmas Winter Wonder Light Show will be lit up again this year at Sportsmans Lake Park from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m. each night through December 23. Santa Claus will be available for visits and carriage rides are also on tap. Fee is $5.00 per car and $10.00 per bus. Come out and enjoy the sparkling light display and get into the holiday spirit right here in Cullman at Sportsmans Lake Park!

Making Choices - BODYWORKS
A series of FREE sessions on healthy living will be offered. Sessions to include mindful eating to 'reading' a food. Teens to adults are welcome. There are morning classes from 10 until 11:30 a.m. and evening classes from 4 until 5:30 p.m. for your convenience. For further information please call Donna Shanklin at the County Extension Office at 256-737-9386. Classes are scheduled for each Monday at this time. Please attend first meeting or call to pre-register if you are interested in this program.

Overeaters Anonymous Gather at Grace Episcopal
Members of Overeaters Anonymous meet every Monday, at 9:30 a.m. at Grace Episcopal Church in the Carriage House located on Church premises. Further information is available at 256-747-6218 or 256-352-1143. Everyone is invited to attend these gatherings.

GED Classes at Desperation Church
GED learning classes are held each Monday night from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Desperation Church. For additional information please contact Ed Oaks at 256-737-9564 or 256-735-6811. These classes are open to the public and everyone who wants to obtain their GED is welcome to participate.

Cornerstone Revival Ladies Prayer Meeting
A Ladies Prayer meeting is conducted each Monday night at 7 p.m. at Cornerstone Revival Center. For additional information call 256-796-2899. All interested women are invited to attend.

Aqua Zumba Classes at CWAC
Everyone is invited to take part in the Aqua Zumba classes that are offered each Monday at Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center beginning at 7 p.m. in the center's indoor pool. Please call 256-775-7946 for additional information!

Tuesday, December 4th

Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Group for Caregivers Meeting
A new support group to help Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregivers is being organized by Westminster Assisted Living and Memory Care and Omega Hospice. This first meeting will begin at 10 a.m. at Westminster. Monthly meetings will take place each month on the second Tuesday. Additional information is available by calling Suzy Prymmer of Westminster Assisted Living and Memory Care at 256-255-0361.

Take Off Pounds Sensibly
Anyone interested in ideas for weight loss are invited to attend the TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) group as they meet each Tuesday night at 6 p.m. at Benedictine Manor. Jeanne Latham (256-734-7146) or Ginger McMinn (256-739-3925) will share information concerning their meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend TOPS and receive encouragement from others who are interested in weight loss.

Emotions Anonymous Support Group Meeting
An Emotions Anonymous Support Group meets each Tuesday at noon at Grace Episcopal Church Carriage House. Those interested are invited to attend these group sessions. Further information is available through the Group Director's office at 256-734-3605 or 256-796-8440.

Knit 1, Read 2
The Knit 1, Read 2 group meets every Tuesday at the Cullman County Public Library, Main Branch, at 3 p.m. This group welcomes all newcomers.

Ladies' Auxiliary VFW Dance at Post 2214
The Ladies' Auxiliary of VFW Post 2214 invites the community to their weekly Tuesday night dances at the VFW Post building. The country line dance starts at 7 p.m. each Tuesday night, with admission only $5.00 per person. Concessions are available and all proceeds benefit the Auxiliary's local projects.

North Central Alabama Genealogical Society Meeting
Members of the North Central Alabama Genealogical Society meet every Tuesday in the basement of the Wallace State Community College Library for informal study and to help new researchers. The meeting is from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. and those interested are invited to this free gathering. Come learn about your 'roots!' Call Von at 256-739-2843 for more information.

Wednesday, December 5th

CRMC WomenFirst/SeniorChoice Christmas Party
Members of CRMC's WomenFirst/SeniorChoice group are invited to attend the annual Christmas Party today in POB ll starting at 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. The hospital will supply the drinks, ham, turkey, green beans and dressing and all attendees are asked to bring a favorite dish or dessert to the party to share! Come celebrate the holiday season with your friends at CRMC.

Aqua Zumba Classes at CWAC
Everyone is invited to take part in the Aqua Zumba classes, which are offered each Wednesday at Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center beginning at 7 p.m. in the center's indoor pool. Please call 256-775-7946 for additional information!

Thursday, December 6th

'Waiting in Joyful Hope: An Advent Day of Reflection' at Sacred Heart Retreat Center
Sr. Eileen Gallagher, OSB, of Sacred Heart Retreat Center will host a one day retreat 'Waiting in Joyful Hope An Advent Day of Reflection' from 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. For further information please contact the Retreat Center at 256-734-8302 or www.shmon.org.

Christmas in the Park Tree Lighting Ceremony
Bring the family out for Cullman's official tree lighting ceremony tonight. Ceremonies run from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at Depot Park with entertainment from the Wallace State Singers and various choirs from our local community. Bring your cameras for picture with Santa as he plans to stop by Depot Park to visit with the 'children' of all ages! Concessions will be available during this event. Come celebrate the start of the holiday season!

Dr. Herman C. Ensor Lights of Love Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony
Everyone is invited to attend the 21st annual Dr. Herman C. Ensor Lights of Love Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at CRMC in the Col. Cullmann Room in POB ll. This holiday event benefits Hospice of Cullman County. The ceremony is held to honor and memorialize family and community members who have passed away, especially during the past year. Any of the gifts given are tax-deductible and will help CRMC's Hospice as it continues to provide excellent end-of-life care to those in need in the local communities. Special holiday music and light refreshments will be served.

Wallace State Music Department to perform Christmas Concert
Wallace State Community College's Music Department will hold a Christmas concert this December. The WSCC Music Department's annual Christmas Concert featuring the Concert Band, Concert Choir, and ensembles will perform Thursday, Dec. 6, at 7 p.m. at the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre in the Student Center. Admission is free to both events. For more information, call 256.352.8277.

Adult Diabetes Support Group
If you are having trouble with adult diabetes, then come to the Adult Diabetes Support Group which meets at CRMC, POB ll, at 6 p.m. For more information please contact the CRMC Diabetes Care Center at 256-737-2025.

Friday, December 7th

Christmas Arts & Crafts Show
Free admission to the annual Christmas Arts & Crafts show at the McGukin Civic Center from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on both days. Come shop for our talented artists local handmade items for that special someone on your Christmas list. Food will be available for purchase during the two days.

Friday Night Dance at the VFW
Cullman's VFW Post 2214 invites everyone to come to their weekly Friday night dances at the VFW Hall from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m. The cost is $5.00 per person and music by the Golden Oldies and Country with the Midnight Highway Band will be filling the air. Funds raised go toward the building rental. Get your dancing shoes on and come out for a great evening of fun and entertainment tonight!

Saturday, December 8th

Christmas Arts & Crafts Show
Free admission to the annual Christmas Arts & Crafts show at the McGukin Civic Center from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on both days. Come shop for our talented artists local handmade items for that special someone on your Christmas list. Food will be available for purchase during the two days.

VFW Saturday Night Dance
The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2214 invites everyone to their weekly Saturday night dances which begin at 7 p.m. and last until 10 p.m. The Boogie Night Band provides music on Saturday nights. Entrance fee is $5.00 for each individual. Come on out and bring your dancing shoes and enjoy an evening of great music, fun and fellowship!

Sunday, December 9th

Guy Hunt Historical Marker
Everyone is invited by the Holly Pond Historical Society to the unveiling of the Guy Hunt Historical Marker at 2 p.m. This event will take place at the Guy Hunt Museum-Library. The marker highlights the life of the former Governor of Alabama and Holly Pond resident Guy Hunt.

Monday, December 10th

Cullman Kiwanis Club
The Cullman Kiwanis Club invites all local men and women who are interested in taking part in community service along with great fellowship, fun, networking, and learning to attend their weekly luncheon meeting at 12 noon each Monday in the All Steak's third floor banquet room. Come see what Kiwanis is all about and enjoy a great luncheon meal as well.

Making Choices - BODYWORKS
A series of FREE sessions on healthy living will be offered. Sessions to include mindful eating to 'reading' a food. Teens to adults are welcome. There are morning classes from 10 until 11:30 a.m. and evening classes from 4 until 5:30 p.m. for your convenience. For further information please call Donna Shanklin at the County Extension Office at 256-737-9386. Classes are scheduled for each Monday at this time. Please attend first meeting or call to pre-register if you are interested in this program.

Overeaters Anonymous Gather at Grace Episcopal
Members of Overeaters Anonymous meet every Monday, at 9:30 a.m. at Grace Episcopal Church in the Carriage House located on Church premises. Further information is available at 256-747-6218 or 256-352-1143. Everyone is invited to attend these gatherings.

GED Classes at Desperation Church
GED learning classes are held each Monday night from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Desperation Church. For additional information please contact Ed Oaks at 256-737-9564 or 256-735-6811. These classes are open to the public and everyone who wants to obtain their GED is welcome to participate.

Cornerstone Revival Ladies Prayer Meeting
A Ladies Prayer meeting is conducted each Monday night at 7 p.m. at Cornerstone Revival Center. For additional information call 256-796-2899. All interested women are invited to attend.

Aqua Zumba Classes at CWAC
Everyone is invited to take part in the Aqua Zumba classes that are offered each Monday at Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center beginning at 7 p.m. in the center's indoor pool. Please call 256-775-7946 for additional information!

Looking Ahead

Christmas Winter Wonder Light Show - Sportsmans Lake Park
The annual Christmas Winter Wonder Light Show will be lit up again this year at Sportsmans Lake Park from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m. each night through December 23. Santa Claus will be available for visits and carriage rides are also on tap. Fee is $5.00 per car and $10.00 per bus. Come out and enjoy the sparkling light display and get into the holiday spirit right here in Cullman at Sportsmans Lake Park!

Pilot Club Pecan Sale for Charity
Pilot members through November and December are selling Alabama Priester Pecans. This year's crop and fresh selections available include, pecan halves, pecan pieces, chocolate covered pecan halves, honey glazed pecan halves, and cinnamon-sugar pecan halves. $12 for 1-pound bag. For more information call Peggy Day, 256-734-6049. Proceeds will benefit local pilot club projects and activities focused on brain related disorders.

North Alabama Agriplex Upcoming Events
December 11 - Pruning, Care, and Maintenance- 6:00 - 8:00
January 5 - Farm Kid's Club: Terrariums - 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
January 8 & 10 - Hand Quilting with Raydonna - 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
For more information call 256- 297-1044 or e-mail cullmanag@gmail.com.

Community Matters

Passion for the Kitchen

Send your recipes to recipes@cullmansense.com

By: Annette Harris
annetteharris@cullmansense.com

My Best Year So Far

I can tell you that this year, well, ever since July 20th has been my best year so far.

Why do I say that? Well, as you can tell from the picture, the best thing in my life happened and I have my first grandchild.

That picture speaks to me about Christmas and almost everything it stands for. What better than to see a little child looking at Santa with wonder in his eyes and on his sweet little face?

People tried to tell me how great it was going to be…blah, blah, blah….wah, wah, wah, wah, wah….as said in Charlie Brown. I just smiled and shook my head in agreement.

Little did I know how much more wonderful my life would be after this little miracle appeared.

I was lucky enough to get to witness his birth. He is a blessing and a miracle. A life is a miracle.

You think the best time of your life is when you have your own kids, but let me tell you….. as great as that is, this is right up there with it if not better. My kids say…."Mooommmmm, how can you say that? I thought the best time was when WE were born." Can you hear the whining? You just have to experience it for yourself.

I think it depends what time frame you are in at certain times of your life when all these great and wonderful things happen. When you get out of school and are 17-18 years old, you think this is the best time ever! Well, some of you went to college and I'm sure when you graduated, THAT was the best time ever. Getting married was the BEST ever for me…UNTIL…..here comes baby number 1. WOW! Can things get any better? Here came baby number 2, then 3. I was on top of the world! I loved my life, loved my husband, my kids, and my job. Life was good!

Life has had its ups and downs since then, but now I am in a phase where it couldn't get any better than this. A grandchild. How wonderful! Now I am the one telling the next grandparent to be how much better their life is about to be.

There has never been love like this. Smelling that sweet little head is like heaven. I don't think this little boy is going to be able to do any wrong in my eyes. Every little sound or smile just makes my day. Are you sick to your stomach by now? If you are a grandparent you understand and totally agree with me.

I think there must be some sort of grandparents club. We all think our grandbaby is the smartest and cutest, but we all understand the feeling. Wait. That's kind of how it is when you have your children too.

So, get ready little Harris. You are in for a lot of love and spoiling from your Nettie and Pappy. You have made my entire year better in just the 4 months you have been here. I am truly blessed.

Life is better than good, its AWESOME!

Baked Ziti

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 pound ground sausage (I use mild)
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes with juice
- 2 cans (14.5 oz) tomato sauce or Prego traditional large size
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoons red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 16 oz. Ziti or Penne pasta, cooked until not quite done
- 1- 15 oz. whole milk Ricotta cheese
- 1 ½ lb. shredded Mozzarella cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 whole egg



Instructions:

1. Heat olive oil in a pot over medium heat. Add onions and garlic; sauté for several minutes. Add sausage and ground beef and cook until browned. Drain, leaving a little for flavor.
2. Add diced tomatoes, salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, and red pepper flakes. Stir and simmer for 25-30 minutes. After that time, remove 3-4 cups of the sauce to a different bowl to cool down.
3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
4. In a separate bowl, mix together the ricotta cheese, 2 cups of the grated mozzarella, Parmesan, egg, salt, and pepper. Stir together a couple of times, do not mix completely.
5. Drain the pasta and rinse under cool water to stop the cooking and cool it down. Pour it into the bowl with the cheese mixture and toss to slightly combine (there should be large lumps). Add the cooled meat sauce and toss to combine.
6. Add half the coated pasta to a large casserole dish or lasagna dish. Spoon half of the remaining sauce over the top, then top with half the remaining mozzarella cheese. Repeat with another layer of the coated pasta, the sauce, and the mozzarella.
7. Bake for 20 minutes, or until bubbling. Remove from the oven and let stand 5 minutes before serving.

This is FANTASTIC and very much comfort food.

Cullman's 'Knit-Wits' Donate Winter Items as Ministry Work

By: Barbara Ragsdale
Community Contributor

CULLMAN – Members of a local knitting group, the 'Knit-Wits', accomplished a major goal recently when they completed their 200th knitted cap/hat in only 5 months!

Several members of the group are residents of Benedictine Manor, a retirement facility located on the grounds of Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman.

The knitters meet each Tuesday afternoon from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Manor with local women joining in as well.

While they usually knitted items for themselves, families, and friends, they determined they wanted to make something useful for others less fortunate. Five months ago they began their 'Anna's Place Mission' project.

'Anna's Place', located in Chester, Pennsylvania, is run by the Sisters of St. Frances of Philadelphia.

Their mission feeds over 100 folks a day, they care for children after school hours and in general look out for the welfare of some of the city's poorest.

The seven knitters started their project from scratch, using any and all yarn and knitting goods they could locate, accepting donations gratefully. In addition to the hats, which are formed on a loom, they made scarves of glorious colors and doll clothes!

Anne Oakes of Vinemont found numerous old dolls and plush toys in various locations. She washed them, cleaned them, and then the Knit-Witters had fun playing 'dress up' with the baby dolls!

Sr. Barbara Gallagher, O.S.F, noted that any mistakes made could be fixed easily or covered up, in order to ease the minds of new knitters who joined the project.

Their first batch started at 25 hats and caps, but as they quickly learned how to use the head looms, they kept on making, and making, and making.

Since Sr. Barbara was heading to Pennsylvania for a religious conference, she was entrusted with the task of delivering the 'goodies'!

By the time she was ready to head north her car was stuffed with 200 hats and caps for children, men, and women, scarves, 40 dolls dressed to the 'nines', countless bears and monkeys, and other lovable creatures.

Knit-Wit group members achieved their goal of helping children and adults who would receive the fruits of their labor as well as benefit from a bit of extra warmth this winter. Plans are to organize another support program next year; they welcome all help.

With their project completed, the knitters began to prepare Christmas gifts for their own families and loved ones.

Everyone is invited to attend their weekly knitting session each Tuesday afternoon at Benedictine Manor.

Members of the public are invited to attend the many entertaining events which take place weekly at Benedictine Manor, beginning with Monday afternoons which see folks gathered around the Bingo tables or the Mexican Train Dominoes tables.

Residents of Benedictine Manor, a moderate cost retirement facility, enjoy the advantages of home-cooked meals, weekly Bible classes, art studies, various other activities, and the fellowship of other residents.

Everyone is welcome to visit the Manor and see what is available on an individual basis. Sr. Virginia Rohling, O.S.B., serves as Director of the facility and she can be contacted at 256-739-2853 for additional information.

The residents of Benedictine Manor invite everyone to their annual Open House on Sunday, December 9, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Come visit, meet, and tour residents' rooms, the dining facilities, and the recreational rooms which comprise the peaceful 'home' at Benedictine Manor.

The doors are open and you are invited during this Christmas season! Refreshments will be served during this festive event.

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JUST FOR FUN

Micheal's View of the Blu (and DVD) – *The Dark Knight Rises*

By: Micheal Bryant
michealbryant@cullmansense.com

Minor spoilers for those who have not seen *Batman Begins* or *The Dark Knight* follow.

At the end of *The Dark Knight*, Batman took the blame for Harvey Dent's crimes, and together with Commissioner Gordon they kept the secret. That secret has stayed intact for eight years.

Organized crime has vanished from Gotham City, but a new threat rises that uncovers the secret: Bane. A leader of a mysterious organization has come to Gotham for unknown reasons and he uses lies to take Gotham hostage. Now Batman must return, after years out of commission, and battle this indestructible force.

That is the premise for the film and what a film it is. Normally the third movie in a superhero trilogy is subpar at best. *Spider-Man 3* and *X-Men: The Last Stand* are just two examples that have left a bad taste in fans' mouths, but not *The Dark Knight Rises*. Director Christopher Nolan has woven a story so complex and unique one cannot help but be enthralled.

Along with his brother Jonah, and screenwriter David Goyer, they not only continue the events of *The Dark Knight*, but tie the trilogy back around to *Batman Begins* bringing the events full circle. Needless to say it works brilliantly.

Of course you can't have a great movie without a great cast, and this film may have one of the best.

Academy Award Winner Christian Bale (*The Fighter*, *Newsies*) returns as Bruce Wayne and Batman for the third and final time. This time he plays the character with such remorse and eagerness to get back into the game that he's not just another character, he's human.

He's joined by a bevy of who's who actors. Academy Award Winner Michael Caine (*Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Prestige*), Academy Award Winner Marion Cotillard (*Inception*, *La Vie En Rose*), Academy Award Winner Morgan Freeman (*The Shawshank Redemption*, *Bruce Almighty*), and a host of other award winners and nominees make this film have one of the best casts assembled together on screen.

The Dark Knight Rises is, in my opinion, the best movie of the year so far and it looks as if *The Hobbit* is the only thing left to come out that could topple it, but that will be no easy feat.

With the holiday season coming up I would definitely put this on your Christmas gift wish list.

The Dark Knight Rises

Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of action and violence, some sensuality, and language.

Starring: Christian Bale, Tom Hardy, Anne Hathaway, Joseph Gordon-Levitt

Premise: **8**
Acting: **10**
Directing: **10**
Execution: **10**
Entertainment: **10**
Overall: **48/50**

Micheal's View of the Blu (and DVD) – *Paranorman*

By: Micheal Bryant
michealbryant@cullmansense.com

Norman is your normal, everyday child. Well, except he can see ghost. Not just people, but animals, plants, anything that can die and become a ghost, he can see. However one day going to school he starts to have mysterious visions that he can't control, and walking home from school he and his buddy, Neil, run into a creepy old man hiding behind a statue who warns Norman that he can do what Norman can, and he is also having visions. Norman doesn't believe him, but after the old man dies and appears to Norman as a ghost, the vision starts to become a reality. The dead will soon come back to walk the earth. Now it is up to Norman to and an assortment of oddball characters to save the day.

On the surface the premise of *Paranorman* seems déjà vu, but the writer Chris Butler makes it fresh and enjoyable, not just for the young children who may be watching, but the adults as well.

One thing that works is the humor. Normally in a Pixar film, which this is not, there are jokes for the young ones, and then there are jokes for the adults that fly over the young ones' heads. Not so in *Paranorman* as the jokes work for both the adults and the children.

When it comes to the acting of the film, the actors perform their parts admirably. Kodi-Smit McPhee (*Let Me In*, *The Road*) plays the part of Norman as a coming-of-age young boy who is both afraid and enthralled by the "changes" he's going through.

However, the best performance comes from Tucker Albrizzi (*Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked*, *Space Buddies*) who plays Norman's best friend and comic relief.

Along with McPhee, it is on the two's shoulders to carry the film and to be young performers they come through like veterans of the voice acting trade.

They are not alone though, as the cast features a few big names in the supporting cast. Anna Kendrick (*Up in the Air*, *Twilight*), Casey Affleck (*Gone Baby Gone*, *Good Will Hunting*), and Christopher Mintz-Plasse (*Superbad*, *Role Models*) all lend their voices and unlike a lot of big Hollywood names in these types of films, they actually seem to enjoy the material as a treasure and not as a hindrance,.

But the best supporting performance comes from John Goodman (*Monsters, Inc.*, *Confessions of a Shopaholic*) who plays the crazy old man who gives the prophecy, as well as has a connection to Norman that I will not spoil here.

While this is a good film that is worth the rental, some of the content may not be suitable for all ages. Due to some language and some visual scenes that may come off as scary, this may not be a film for the five and under crowd.

Paranorman

Rated PG for scary action and images, thematic elements, some rude humor and language

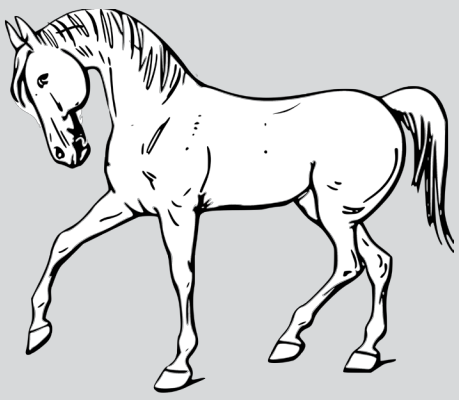
Starring: Kodi-Smit McPhee, Tucker Albrizzi, Anna Kendrick, Casey Affleck

Premise Rating: **6**
Execution Rating: **9**
Directing Rating: **8**
Acting Rating: **9**
Entertainment Rating: **10**
Overall: **43/50**

GETTING CORNY

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Community Matters

Christmas Tour of Homes (Continued from Front)

all of our fundraisers go straight to our project and all of us missionaries that go, we pay our own way. We've seen in the three times I've been probably close to two thousand patients and we have issued somewhere around four thousand prescriptions during that time."

The multi-purpose building that is currently under construction will be a four thousand square feet facility.

The project has also recently sponsored their first ever children's camp last summer, which saw them sponsoring one hundred and fifty-seven children.

"They have never had vacation bible school or anything like that. So they had the real deal," she said. "We also ship supplies over there to them, and out of those one hundred and fifty-seven children, seventy one of them accepted Christ. That's our main thing. We're going to do medical clinics and build churches, but we're going to spread the word of Jesus, because they have to have him over anything. In a country where voodoo overruns everything it's hard to get in and hard to share the gospel, but that is one way of reaching the people, through the children."

When Campbell left Haiti last March on one Sunday afternoon she said they had about eighty-five to one hundred children in their Sunday school class. Then this past November that number increased dramatically to four hundred and five children in their Sunday school.

"That is how much it has grown in nine months," she said. "We have approximately five hundred children signed up for this year's vacation bible school. God is just doing tremendous work in such a short period of time."

Campbell says the process of going into the country and spreading the word of God was not an easy one at first.

"Voodoo is the main religion (in Haiti)," said Campbell, "and when you come in you really don't know how well you are being taken by people. Some of them look at you thinking what's the deal, because I'm sure they've seen missionary groups come in over the years and stay for a little bit, but nothing changes or gets better, but going in and building a church as well as providing free medical care has actually shown them that we do care and are in for the long haul. It's just us building a relationship with them, and getting into the community that has been the biggest obstacle".

Kim says getting into the country is not the hard part, it is meeting and getting accepted by the people in the country and have them understanding that the group is there because they not only love Jesus, but they want to introduce Him into the lives of the Haitians.

"That is just very difficult when they have been raised in voodoo their whole life," said Campbell.

While Kim Campbell's first trip was in October of last year, the project isn't much older than that. The church first travelled to Haiti in February about a year and a half ago.

"They built a latrine in a small fishing village," said Campbell, "but we just felt led to go and help with Pastor Monel Jules."

The history on how they first got involved with Pastor Jules is a "big, long history" according to Campbell.

"Our pastor, Michael Jones, his mother-in-law and father-in-law actually met his family on a mission trip several years ago and they actually paid for Pastor Jules' wife to go through medical school, and she is a medical doctor over there. They are both Haitians who have lived there their whole lives," she said.

"They had come to a point where they were discouraged and felt helpless in their own country because the poverty was so unreal. They were looking and asking God what He wanted them to do, so they came over here and spoke at our church. From that point it just feels like God has really opened the door and we have gotten connected with them. It's a God thing. My first time was in October and we started out with this land in the Jungle. Pastor Jules' lived on it until he was six years old and then they moved, but kept the land. They gave it to (Pastor Jules) and he felt like God was leading him there to build a church."

If you would like to become involved with the mission you can check out their website or give them a call at 256-739-5849.

Below is a list of the homes that visitors were able to see on this year's Christmas Tour of Homes as well as a brief description.

- **Stone Bridge Farms**: Owned and operated by the fourth generation of the Reverend V.L. Foust family, Ron and Sarah Foust. Ron's grandfather was a minister who married, baptized, and held funeral ceremonies for hundreds of people in Cullman County. The Foust family is carrying on the tradition of holding weddings by offering their home, grounds, and services.
- **The Wooten Household**: Gerry and Kathy Wooten, who own the company Homtex, purchased the home in 1992. The Wooten's did extensive renovations through the last couple of years to transform the home into a unique style of its own.
- **The Blaylock Household**: The owners of Cullman's beloved Carlton's Italian Restaurant, Harry and Leslie Blaylock, purchased their beautiful Lake George home in 2011. After almost a year of renovations it now serves as a restful retreat for the couple and their large extended family.
- **The King Household**: Chris and Tanya King are the owners of the Lake George Estates home that was built in 2008. It features a castle entry door and was decorated throughout in an eclectic style.

If you would like to visit Stone Bridge Farms and see it for yourself you can contact them at 256-734-9765 and ask them about their great deals on lodging, wedding ceremonies, and more, and to thank them for helping out with such a great mission.

"We've always wanted to do mission work for other people," said Ron Foust who is the owner of Stone Bridge Farms, "and we saw that we could help with this Christmas tour."



A Christmas Spectacular

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CHS Fine Arts department setting standard for local theater scene

No bah humbugs from this gent after being treated to the tremendous stylings of the CHS fine arts department Friday evening for the fall production of "A CHS Christmas Carol Spectacular." It was just that – spectacular.

For the past decade or so Cullman residents have tried hard to revitalize the theater scene but so far most attempts have fallen easily by the wayside. Well, now that the community has a director with a vision, Mr. Dillon Lee, and a bevy of young talent there is no reason why this revitalization movement will not succeed.

Lee, along with fellow CHS workmate Joshua Agnew, worked tirelessly on the made for Cullman adaptation of the Christmas classic, which paid off come show night. The two men joined forces bridging the gap between chorus and drama to produce one of the best versions of the famed classic tale of a man beholden to his money.

Audience members were treated to vivid colors, spot-on accurate period clothing, and choral arrangements which are generally reserved for ornate church rituals. The production, which consisted of three separate choirs – featured choir, CHS girls' choir, and CHS chamber choir – lasted just under 90 minutes, which I must say was the only disappointment simply because I did not want it to end.

As far as onstage performances go, well the entire cast portrayed each of the supporting cast with such great fluidity it allowed the audience to easily meld into the action on stage. The performance of Antonio Cipollari – The Ghost of Christmas Present – was indeed a splendid present to all in attendance. Cipollari's larger than life interpretation of the joyous ghost had many laughing, but he was also able to command the audience's full attention whenever the subject matter shifted towards a serious note.

By far the highlight of the evening belonged to actor Jackson Hogan, whose portrayal of Scrooge rivaled any seen before on either the silver screen or onstage. The young man's performance was simply captivating, as it forced me to sit down to fully taken in the performance.

Hogan's natural acting ability is evident and my only wish – if only out of selfishness – is to see this young performer dive deeper into acting so he can continue to provide audiences with amazing performances.

All told, this particular performance is now the benchmark for success, not just for CHS productions but for any production that comes to town.

I wish the group could keep this performance going throughout the holiday season but if two days is all we get then I'm thrilled to know I was able to share in this momentum shifting performance.

So to everyone at CHS who helped in this production, whether it was onstage or behind the scenes, be extremely proud of yourselves because you all did something that was thought impossible. You all breathed life into the local theater scene, something many of us have tried to do for years, now don't let it escape!

