Holly Pond Historical Society Asks you to Help Preserve the Past-p.2

Series 2, Issue 51 Monday, December 17, 2012

Cullman's Monday Newspaper

CULLMANSENSE

$0.50 Community Matters $0.50

Basketball Wrap-Up-4

Easy Black Bean Soup-10

The Hobbit: A Review-11

Community Calendar-9







Giving Goats for Christmas?

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

West Point students send unusual gifts to families they've never met

Mark 25:40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'



WEST POINT – Students at West Point Elementary and West Point Intermediate opted to celebrate their school Christmas functions in a rather unusual way. In lieu of the typical party, complete with gift giving, the second grade and fifth grade classes instead chose to raise money for families living in Haiti.

The idea was brought to the table by Kim Campbell, member of West Point Baptist Church and missionary with Haiti's Eden Project, as she discussed the idea of buying goats with lifelong friend Cynde Roberts.

"She (Roberts) came in for an appointment a few weeks before the November mission trip and told me she wanted to do something to help. I told her she could buy a goat and she smiled really big and said 'buy a goat'," said Campbell. "I explained the project and she said she thought her class would be really excited to help. So she invited me to speak to her class about it."

Roberts said once she heard the story she knew her students would want to get involved.

"It just touched my heart in a way that I

See Goats, Page 12

Reindeer Games

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

Family carries on tradition of Christmas Pasts

CULLMAN – For those who've driven down 3rd Ave SE in recent weeks the sight of a reindeer family at play has been a beautiful reminder of the upcoming celebration of Christmas. For Mark Whitley the handcrafted version of Santa's herd is a Christmas dream come true.

"Well ever since our daughter Hannah was young we would ride through Larkwood at Christmas to view all the lights and decorations," said Whitley. "We would ride through the neighborhood every year because one house would always display these beautiful reindeer. These reindeer were my daughter's favorite."

Following a family tradition, the Whitley's would travel out to the home in Larkwood each Christmas season to see what additions had been made to the ever growing collection. Then one year it just all stopped.

"One Christmas we drove by and to our surprise they were not out. This happened for two or three more years until one night they were back out," he said.

"We thought they would be back to stay but the following year they were not there and since then we've not seen the reindeer." Since that last Christmas Whitley's profession of reupholstering furniture has been carrying him all around the county.

A chance encounter with a client turned a normal trip to price the value of several chairs

See Reindeer, Page 6

Broncos double up in rankings; CS Lady Eagles soar

By: Josh McBrayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

The Lady Broncos of Holly Pond, the Cold Springs Lady Eagles, and the Holly Pond Broncos are all taking care of business this year on the hardwood and sportswriters from around the state of Alabama are taking notice.

Holly Pond Lady Broncos hold their place at #7 in Class 3A

The Holly Pond Lady Broncos (10-2) are coached by one of the best coaches in the business, Scott Adams, and they are led on the hardwood by Lexi Malone and Taylor Terry. Each girl dominates in her position, leading the Lady Broncos to a 10-2 record.

The Lady Broncos only have two blemishes on their record. Holly Pond lost both games by a combined total of seven points. A 59-55 loss to the Priceville Lady Bulldogs and a 41-38 defeat at the hands of the fifth ranked Cold Springs Lady Eagles.

Cold Springs Lady Eagles vaulted to #5

Losing two 1,000 point scorers, one could be led to believe that a team would have a rebuilding year. Not so for the Cold Springs Lady Eagles (10-3) who once again find themselves in the thick of another run at a 2A state title.

Cold Springs does not have a stand-out shooter like they have had in the past with both Abby Myrex and KK Crider. Instead head coach Tammy West has her girls pass the ball as many times as it takes to find the open shot.

Cold Springs has lost only three games this season. 52-41 to #7 in 3A Holly Pond and back-to-back losses to Lawrence County 66-54 and to Danville 53-45. A recent win on December 7th helped move Cold Springs from their number

See Rankings, Page 5

SUPER Stocking Stuffers-p. 2

PRINTED LOCALLY @ PRINTING Alabama Web Press

In Brief

Give the gift of healthier indoor air; radon test kits make super stocking stuffers

By: James L. McNees
Contributor

MONTGOMERY – Looking for a thoughtful and inexpensive gift that saves lives? Why not give the gift of healthier indoor air by buying a radon test kit as a stocking stuffer for family and friends?

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers.

"You can't see, smell, or taste radon, but it could be present at a dangerous level in your home," cautioned James McNees, director of the Alabama Department of Public Health Office of Radiation Control.

"The cold winter months when homes are closed and radon levels are likely to build to their highest concentrations are the perfect time of year to test."

Radon claims the lives of about 21,000 Americans each year. The Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Surgeon General urge all Americans to protect their health by testing their homes, schools, and other buildings for radon.

Exposure to radon is a preventable health risk, and testing radon levels in your home can help prevent unnecessary exposure. If a high radon level is detected in your residence, you can take steps to protect yourself and your family by addressing the problem.

High levels of indoor radon have been found in many areas of Alabama, but it appears to occur most frequently in homes across the Tennessee Valley and in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains from Jefferson and Shelby counties to Cleburne County.

Because radon is a colorless, odorless gas that occurs naturally in soil and rocks through the breakdown of uranium, testing is the only way to learn the radon level in a home.

Radon test kits weigh only a few ounces and cost about $15 or less. Testing for radon should be done on the lowest level of the home where the occupants spend time, so a finished basement or a basement containing a workshop is a good place to test. Kitchens are not recommended testing areas.

"Testing directions are on the kit, and it only takes a few days to obtain a sample," McNees said. "Most people can easily do a radon test on their home."

While radon test kits are available at many larger home improvement stores, Alabama homeowners can get one at many local offices of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System for a discounted price. For more information, contact your county extension office for details or visit www.aces.edu/fcs/hndh/radon/shorttermtestkit.php.

If test results are above the levels recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Alabama Department of Public Health, homeowners should consider installing a radon remediation system.

Systems cost between $800 and $1,200, depending on the square footage of the residence and the difficulty in finding a suitable pathway for the radon removal pipe. Homes with a crawl space, no gravel under the slab, or a completely finished lower level sometimes cost more.

To learn more about this and other radiation and health issues visit adph.org/radiation/.

Cullman Physician Honored as Hospital Hero

By: Lindsey Dossey
CRMC Contributor

CULLMAN — Five area hospital employees and one area physician were honored for their dedication to the health care field recently at a luncheon in Decatur hosted by the North Alabama Regional Council of the Alabama Hospital Association (AlaHA).

The luncheon is one of seven regional awards presentations being held as part of AlaHA's 10th annual statewide "Hospital Hero" award contest, which recognizes the value of health careers and honors hospital employees who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to the health care field.

The contest will culminate with a banquet in February where up to 10 of the regional winners will be honored as statewide Hospital Heroes. One statewide Hospital Physician Hero will also be recognized in February.

"AlaHA is honored to recognize those outstanding caregivers who go above and beyond the call of duty to help their co-workers and to make their patients feel special," said J. Michael Horsley, FACHE, president of the Alabama Hospital Association.

"These amazing individuals deserve to be called heroes not only because they are an inspiration to their colleagues, but also because they have raised the bar in terms of what it means to provide exceptional patient care."

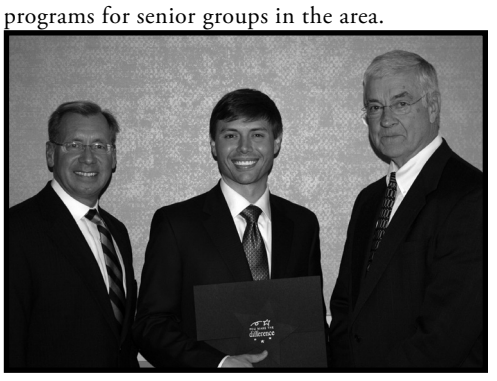
Cullman Regional Medical Center (CRMC) is proud to announce that the Hospital Hero Physician Honoree is Jeremy V. Stidham, MD, chair of the medicine department and chief of internal medicine at CRMC.

Jeremy Stidham, MD is an internist with Cullman Internal Medicine and is also an active member of the medical staff at Cullman Regional Medical Center (CRMC), serving as the chief of internal medicine and the chairman of the medicine department. Dr. Stidham is the newly appointed medical director for North Alabama Community Care, which seeks to improve primary care provided to patients covered by Medicaid.

The senior leadership team at CRMC has credited Dr. Stidham with leading the cause to open a clinic focused on providing much-needed care to Medicaid patients. In his clinic, he not only provides primary care to patients, but also ensures that patients discharged from the hospital get the follow up care needed to keep them healthy and avoid a readmission to the hospital.

"The community is grateful to Dr. Stidham for his opening of a clinic specifically seeing patients with Medicaid insurance," said Jim Weidner, president and CEO of CRMC. "It's a rarity for any physician to have such community commitment to assure all have access to good quality primary care."

Dr. Stidham is also an active board member of the CRMC Foundation and supports many hospital events promoting health and wellness, in addition to providing community educational programs for senior groups in the area.



Cullman County Hospice $5 Jewelry & Accessories Sale

By: Lindsey Dossey
CRMC Contributor

CULLMAN — Hospice of Cullman County is partnering with Masquerade Fundraising on Wednesday, December 19 from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. & Thursday, December 20 from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. to host a Fall $5 Jewelry & Accessories Sale with all proceeds going to Hospice of Cullman County Inc. Indigent Care Fund.

Get suited to support your favorite SEC football team with a grand selection of collegiate items, or simply finish up your last minute Christmas shopping.

You won't believe the quality and quantity of beautiful merchandise available – scarves, bags, purses, rings, necklaces, bracelets, bags, watches, holiday jewelry, children's jewelry, and so much more. You can buy all of your Christmas gifts at this sale and no one will even suspect you paid only $5 for these items.

For more information on this and other upcoming Hospice fundraising opportunities, contact the Hospice office at 256- 739-5185 or visit online at www.hospiceofcullmancounty.com.

CRMC Diagnostic Imaging Center Recognizes Top Staff

By: Lindsey Dossey
CRMC Contributor

CULLMAN – Cullman Regional Medical Center's Diagnostic Imaging Center recently celebrated National Radiologic Technology Week by recognizing top employees in their department.

This year, the staff proudly voted Vicki Suits, RT(R) as the top staff member. Each year, in honor of Radiologic Technology Week, the CRMC Diagnostic Center team members vote for the top employee of the year; therefore, employees are honored to be recognized for outstanding team work and patient care by his or her peers.

"I am extremely proud to have Vicki as a member of our Imaging Team," CRMC Diagnostic Imaging Department Director Dwayne Denney, RT(R)CT said.

"Her contributions to patient care are second to none and she is a valuable member of the CRMC Team."

For more information about services available through the CRMC Diagnostic Imaging Department and Cullman Regional Medical Center call 256-737-2600 or visit online at www.crmchospital.com.

Visit Us Online

CullmanSense.com

Historical Society asking for your contribution to preserve the past

Michael Bryant
michealbryant@cullmansense.com

HOLLY POND – The Holly Pond historical society is relatively young, having been around since 2005, but they are already making progress in preserving the history of their town.

"We've had a great deal of success since we started this program," said Dan Scott, member of the Holly Pond historical society.

"As Holly Pond has its annual Founders Day, we set up copy materials to scan old photographs that people would bring in and we did that for about five years and as a result of that we have ended up with a good collection of family photographs we would have usually never seen before."

Brown says the project got started because they were interested in photographs from Holly Pond that were taken prior to 1950.

"We had to set a deadline somewhere as everyone wanted to turn in photos that included current children or grandchildren. We can get those later, but right now we are after the older photographs and we have quite a collection and they are all in digital format or are filed away to be kept for future use. And as soon as the library becomes more functional they will be here in the library for anyone to see. We are trying to get stories to go with the photographs."

The historical society has come a long way in its short time as they have not only gotten themselves incorporated as a tax free corporation and exempt from all taxes, but they have also published one additional book from the historical society itself in addition to also publishing two calendars and newsletters.

"These calendars all have some of those rare photographs that people have never seen before like photographs of the old school," said Brown, "and those were all fantastic finds."

Another project the historical society of Holly Pond has going for it is putting a collection of books which features about fifty to sixty different books that are rare and are written specifically about the area of Holly Pond or have a section or two in them about the area, particularly the early history. The historical society is also looking to collect other items, some of which include all of the old books that stores used to keep their customer documents in as well as old church books, in addition to the census records they have gotten their hands on.

"The census records were taken every ten years, but people in the early days in Holly Pond operated on credit," said Brown.

"While they grew most of their food, they bought the necessities from the store and jotted down daily what they bought, so we know who was here during the census records. It gives you some idea of the nature of the people and what they purchased. It's also interesting of note that everyone paid their bills and it was also interesting to note that they were charged an eight percent interest if it was carried over until the following year which was in September as usually it was on the 1st of that month the interest was added, whether it was bought last week or if it was bought almost a year ago. So we have several from the Shaw store and we have some gin records where people carried their cotton to the gin. Again it lets us know who was here and a little bit about them."

The historical society is continuing to seek out these priceless items. If you have some you would like to donate, or know of someone who does, you may contact them by mail:

Holly Pond Historical Society
P.O. Box 28
Holly Pond, AL 35083

or by e-mail hollypond35083@yahoo.com.

They would be more than happy to discuss further with you about the town of Holly Pond.

"We're like the (former) Governor (Guy Hunt) was as we love to talk about Holly Pond," said Brown.

No(ah)-It-All: : Too much sadness, Too much evil

By: Noah Chandler

noahchandler@cullmansense.com

With great sorrow, a burdened heart, and a confused mind I come to you with tragedies which have unfolded across the globe over the past weeks. The airwaves have been jammed with homicides, acts of pure evil, such as the killing of 20 children in Connecticut, the mall shooting in Portland which left two dead, and a horrific knife attack Friday morning in China, leaving 22 children injured.

I am going to discuss some topics in this editorial which may not be easy to digest. There will be points where you disagree with the words on this page but understand these words are merely how these situations appear to me, so in saying that I respectively continue.

Talking heads on every channel are trying to conduct a public discussion, which at the moment is only being fueled by fear, hatred, or both, but in my eyes using these children as a lynchpin for any ideal other than remembering their short lives and the lives of those willing to die in their place is nothing less than shameful.

Around the same time I received word about the tragedy occurring in Connecticut, a new thread came across the wire involving a similar attack taking place halfway across the globe.

A total of 22 children were attacked at the entrance of the Chenpeng Village Primary School in Henan province, according to the public information department of Guangshan County. The attack occurred as the students were heading inside when a 36-year-old male attacked them with a knife and clever.

According to reports made on Chinanews.com, the unnamed man is allegedly mentally ill. See, here in the states when we get word of someone killing others, especially children, most get outraged – and rightly so – but then the problem begins as it did just minutes after the initial reports came out.

It seemed as if it only took five minutes for the anti-gun, pro-big government types to begin clamoring that all of this could have been avoided if we just had tougher gun laws.

Really? The person in this instance allegedly took the guns from this mother's home shortly after killing her. So pardon my discrediting the tougher gun laws notion would have prevented this unforeseen horrific tragedy.

Of course, on the other side of the coin are the pro-anything that goes boom should be ours under the Second Amendment types, which disturbingly began pumping out ridiculous images on social networking sites flat-out saying all of this would have been avoided if a teacher had a gun.

Really? The solution to stopping violence is to be on guard all the time, with gun in hand, waiting on someone to enter the room and begin firing? Come on.

This argument too completely disgusts me and has so ever since I could understand the nightly news broadcasts.

Actually, to be frank, any argument focusing on the loss of human life in regards to mass murder, murder-suicide, revenge killings, gangland murders, serial killers, or any other form of atrocity and evil disgusts me.

Don't worry, I'm guilty of this too since this very column centers around these topics. However, I am not placing blame on anyone but the person responsible for these horrendous acts of cruelty, and even then I'm not hoping or praying that he burns in hell, as I've seen so many people post on news sites.

While the tragedies which have occurred over the current weeks are horrific, the situation taking place in Chicago, Illinois is completely out of control.

Leading the nation with well over 440 homicides this year alone, the land of former gangsters has yet again been seized by death in the past decades, leaving mothers motherless, children parentless, and a city scrambling to stop the violence.

There will be no quick end to any of these senseless murders, assaults, attacks, or fire bombings, which hurts to admit.

These escalations in evil are only going to continue as financial pressure, lack of real community and love for oneself – actual love, not that arrogant attitude of self-entitlement – continue to be pressurized, and the events occurring on the streets of Chicago will bubble out to cover the country.

The senseless murders of the 20 children in Connecticut hurt most of us because we understand what pain, what fear, they endured during the attack.

This understanding makes us want to lash out, and I can guarantee if this young man would not have taken his own life someone else would. We should instead pray – if you deem it so – for these families and, if possible, donate money which will allow them the financial security to be able to grieve in their own time.

I just ask you see these families as you would your own then when you do ask yourself, "Is this the argument I would want others to use on mine or my family's behalf?"

What is happening in our world is hard to explain from a secular perspective; therefore I won't even attempt to do so.

If you want to discuss it in detail, in more of a private setting, please feel free to e-mail me at noahchandler@cullmansense.com or by phone at 256-297-1847.

About Us - Call us Anytime at 256-297-1847

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

Micheal Bryant News/Sports michealbryant@ cullmansense.com	Noah Chandler Publisher noahchandler@ cullmansense.com	Lindsey Dossey Contributor health@ cullmansense.com
Annette Harris Columnist annetteharris@ cullmansense.com	Kristen Holmes Contributor education@ cullmansense.com	Dustin Isom Editor dustinisom@ cullmansense.com
Kassey Laney Advertising klaney@ cullmansense.com	Josh McBrayer Sports Editor joshmcbrayer@ cullmansense.com	Jessica Norrell Photographer jessicanorrell@ cullmansense.com
Subscriptions thecullmanpaper. com	News Tips & Comments 256-297-1TIP	Fax 256-261-2439
Calendar Listings calendar@ cullmansense.com	Sports Tips sports@ cullmansense.com	Obituaries* obituaries@ cullmansense.com

CullmanSense is located at 101 1st Avenue Northeast Cullman, Alabama 35055
For past issues, e-mail cullmansense@cullmansense.com or call 256-297-1847

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.

The Lights at Depot Park

By: Dustin Isom

dustinisom@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Last week a small black sign sat alone in the corner of Depot Park welcoming visitors to the "Official Tree Lighting Ceremony" happening tonight.

Well that sign was a straggler, one which had been up since the Christmas in Cullman celebration in mid-November, and one which has created a lot of controversy.

"We (CPR) did move the tree lighting ceremony up a few weeks to accommodate Christmas in Cullman," said Waid Harbison, Cullman City Parks & Recreation Marketing Director.

"It is my job to communicate these changes in dates to the public, the media, and to anyone interested in the event. This is something I know we at the Cullman City Parks & Recreation did very well."

The official tree lighting ceremony has been held around the same time for the past 15 years and according to CPR Director John Hunt, "this was the first year to move it up."

"We provided plenty of notification through news outlets here in Cullman, including the local TV stations and newspapers," said Harbison.

"I know we did a great job communicating to the public that the tree lighting ceremony was moved to an earlier date."

In a column written by former *CS* reporter Micheal Bryant, the City of Cullman and CPR were called out for being liars, along with other accusations. Although said in jest, the words in that particular piece entitled "Communicate People" were taken to heart by many within the city.

"It was never our intention to offend anyone, or call a specific department out as being a liar," said Noah Chandler, *CS* Publisher.

"At the end of the day the blame falls directly at my feet. As publisher it is my job to ensure that the content being printed is accurate, non-slanderous, and up to par with our internal standards. This particular piece violated these points. I take full blame for allowing the column to be published."

BURCHELL INSURANCE AGENCY
Martha Burchell, Agent
Nationwide
On Your Side
Auto • Home • Life • Commercial
No one will ever perform a better human service to secure the needs of others

X-TERNAL X-PRESSIONS
TATTOOS & PIERCINGS
TO MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT CALL 256-775-0018
18260 U.S. HWY 31 CULLMAN, AL. 35058
(LOCATED AT MILE MARKER 331 ON HWY 31 IN VINEMONT)

Get a FREE 2 Week Trial Subscription to CullmanSense

Limit of one trial subscription per address.



Complete and send to:
CullmanSense
101 1st Ave NE
Cullman, AL 35055



Name:_____

Street:_____

City:_____ State:____ Zip_____

Phone:_____

E-mail:_____

SPORTS

CullmanSense's Weekly Basketball Wrap-Up

By: Josh McBrayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

Another great week of hoops action is in the books for local Cullman County teams. The CullmanSense crew was out in full force covering every local game as it happened. Here are the firsthand accounts of the stunning action from the seven local games.

Holly Pond vs. Fairview
By Johnny Thornton
Boys Varsity

Holly Pond forward Austin Smith was affected by foul trouble in Tuesday's Cullman County showdown with the Fairview Aggies. Smith was able to get back on the floor late in the game and deliver from the offensive side, helping the Broncos get past the Aggies 64-61.

Smith converted a three-point play with less than a minute remaining to put the Broncos back on top after Fairview rallied from a 13-point deficit.

Then Smith sank a pair of free throws with 17 seconds left to extend the lead to three as Holly Pond handed Fairview its first loss in Cullman County play. The Broncos are now 4-1 in county regular season games with an overall record of 9-2.

Fairview is 3-1 in the county and 5-3 on the year. This game serves as importance when the pairings for the Cullman County Tournament will be drawn on Jan. 9 at the Cullman County Board of Education office.

On a night in which Fairview honored former coach Joe Shults who led the Aggies to 289 victories and six Cullman County championships, the current team got off to a good start in taking a 15-12 lead following the first period.

The guard play of point guard Peter Kessler and shooting guard Elijah Garrison anchored Greg Boatright's squad in the opening eight minutes with both scoring twice from the perimeter.

Then it was Holly Pond to feature solid play in its backcourt. With Colby Adams and Gunter Morris combining for 14 second quarter points, the Broncos went on a 22-14 run and headed into the locker room with the lead at 34-29.

By the break, Morris had 10 points on five field goals and Adams had contributed 11 to the scoring tally.

The game remained close going into the final period with Holly Pond on top 45-42. In the first 4:00 of the final period, the Broncos knocked down six shots including a trey from Adams and enjoyed their largest lead of the night at 59-46.

Fairview didn't go away. Thanks to Blake Parker finding a hot hand and a couple of shots to go down by Luke Bailey, the Aggies scored 13 straight and tied the contest at 59-59 approaching the game's final minute.

Smith got a pass from Adams, hit the shot, then followed with a free throw for a three-point play and the Broncos led 62-59 with less than a minute to go.

Garrison tossed in a jumper to close the margin to 62-61 before Smith pushed the Holly Pond margin to three by making two from the stripe. The Broncos hit their final four throws after starting the last period missing five straight.

The scoring was well balanced for Holly Pond with Adams, Morris, and Jacob Cahoon each collecting 14 points. Smith finished with 12, getting seven in crunch time, Cody Jones scored five, Vince Clingman four, and Ben Wilson one.

Bailey topped the Fairview attack with 19, Garrison added 15, Kessler tossed in 14, and Parker had 13.

Fairview now has an important game at home Thursday with Hanceville looking to stay near the top of the leaderboard in the county regular season standings.

Holly Pond has an area game Friday at Brindlee Mountain then plays in the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic on Saturday afternoon at Cleveland.

Girls Varsity

Holly Pond sprinted out to a 22-0 lead in the first period and was ahead 41-0 before Fairview got on the scoreboard late in the second period.

The halftime score was Lady Broncos 48-6 with eight players for Holly Pond coach Scott Adams getting into the scoring column by intermission.

It was 61-10 going into the fourth period with the final 8:00 played under the new rule by the AHSAA, a running clock thanks to Holly Pond on top by more than 30 points.

The Lady Broncos are now 10-2 with the victory and 4-1 in the county as Taylor Terry delivered 15, Natasha Holcomb 14, Lexi Malone 10, Meg Gambrill eight, Rachel Finley, Kristen Sparks six, Taylor Rowell and Lexi Lynn three.

Kennedy Trimble tossed in seven for Fairview (0-7, 0-4 in county). Kylee Bannister, Ali Harris, and Makenna Butts scored two with Marlana Johnson and Sarah Harper hitting one.

Vinemont vs. Good Hope
By Zeke McBrayer
Girls Varsity

The Good Hope Lady Raiders took the court first against the Vinemont Lady Eagles. The Lady Raiders took the lead early and never slowed down. Kayla Tillman started off the scoring with a quick deuce and then the Lady Raiders went to work. With good offensive plays and strong defense the Lady Raiders were able to keep the Vinemont Lady Eagles at bay.

A huge third period for the Lady Raiders sealed the game. By scoring 13 and holding Vinemont to just one point, Good Hope effectively put the game out of reach. The game ended with a score of 52-21 in favor of the Lady Raiders.

Kayla Tillman led the Lady Raiders in scoring with 17 points. Alanah Klenke added in 10. These were the only Lady Raiders in double digits. Sydney Wallace led the Lady Eagles in scoring with nine points.

Boys Varsity

The Good Hope Raiders looked to follow the girls with a win of their own as they took on Vinemont, but the Eagles had other plans. The game started with an 8-0 run by Vinemont, led by two big three pointers from Duncan Hopper and Jacob Smith. The Raiders were quick to answer with a 12-0 run of their own to gain the lead. The Raiders ended the period with two big three pointers from Mason Johnson and Andrew Cofer to end with an 18-13 lead. The second period, while at a much slower pace, saw the Eagles regain the lead and the half at 26-22.

The third period saw both teams score ten points, keeping the Eagle's lead at four. The last period looked as if it belonged to Vinemont as the Eagles pulled away from a determined Good Hope squad 47-37. It looked as if the game was in the bag, but the Raiders weren't done. An 8 point run brought the game back to within two points, but time was running out and Good Hope needed to foul. Two free throw points put the Eagles up by four with under a minute to go. Two missed three pointers by the Raiders sealed the deal and a layup by Tyler Stringer was too little too late as they fell 49-47.

The Raiders were led by Andrew Cofer who had 16 points. Alex Cofer added in 10. The Eagles were led by Garrett Sipe and Jacob Smith who both had 10.

Hartselle vs. West Point
By Josh McBrayer
Girls Varsity

Points were hard to come by in the first quarter for both the West Point Lady Warriors (4-6) and the Hartselle Lady Tigers (5-3). Neither team could break the 10 point mark leaving the score 9-8 in favor of West Point at the end of one.

West Point started the second on a 8-0 run, all eight being scored by Rachel Persall, while Hartselle continue to shoot cold especially from three point land. The Lady Tigers quickly saw their deficit increase from one to nine before a much needed time-out.

The first Hartselle points in the second quarter came on two free throws by Kaylee Shelton with 2:20 left to go in the quarter. Shelton scored again at the buzzer for Hartselle but this was the only four points the Lady Tigers would score in the quarter. West Point outscored their opponents 15-4 and took a 12 point lead to the half. Persall scored 12 in the quarter with six of her points coming from the free throw line.

After the hot shooting second quarter, the Lady Warriors went cold once more, taking over five minutes to hit their first field goal of the second half. Hartselle on the other hand found their range and cut the West Point lead to five with just over a minute left in the third. Persall who had been held scoreless in the quarter, drilled a floater from three point range as the buzzer sounded to give West Point a 35-27 advantage to start the fourth.

Quannesha Burks, a highly recruited track star, scored all 11 points in an early 11-4 run that cut the Lady Warrior lead to just one with four minutes left in the close contest. Burks took it upon herself to carry her team and with her 13th point of the quarter tied the score at 40. The action and score would go back and forth for the next few times down the floor with West Point going up by two and Hartselle coming back to tie it. The Lady Tigers took their first lead of the game with just over a minute left when Shelton hit an easy lay-up in the paint off a great assist from Burks. This is a lead they would not relinquish, overcoming a cold shooting first half to take the game 51-46. Burks finished the fourth with 17.

Leading the Lady Tigers was Quanesha Burks with 19. Following her was Kaylee Shelton with 10.

Rachel Persall led the Lady Warriors with 19. Kari Williams followed her with nine.

Boys Varsity

The West Point Warriors (8-3) got on the board first but the Hartselle Tigers (2-3) immediately answered on the next trip down the floor. Hartselle took the lead for the first time on a basket by Timbo Slaton to go up 10-8 at the end of the first.

West Point outscored Hartselle 11-5 to start the second and took the lead back from the Tigers. Hartselle came back to tie the score while the action and score went back and forth for the rest of the quarter. West Point gained the two point advantage, 26-24, heading into halftime. Tristian Dubblery was on fire in the second quarter scoring 12 of the Warriors' 18 second stanza points.

West Point stretched their lead to seven over a course of five minutes prompting a Tiger timeout to slow down the Warrior offense. The timeout stopped West Point from extending the lead but they still carried the seven point advantage to the last quarter.

The fourth quarter was full of emotion and great plays as you would expect in a close contest against two rivals like West Point and Hartselle. The Tigers battled back and were able to cut the Warrior lead down to four with 2:45 left in the "slobber-knocker" of a contest. Two huge blocks by Nick Nuss flipped the floor for West Point and allowed the Warriors to extend the lead to six. Wesley Smith furthered the West Point lead when he knocked down both halves of a one and one following a hard foul that upset every Warrior fan in attendance. This turned out to be the difference in the game as West Point went on to win 51-45.

Leading the Warriors in scoring was Kris Keller and Tristian Dubberly with 14 each. Wesley Smith added 13.

The bruiser inside for the Hartselle Tigers, Timbo Slaton, led all scorers with 22.

Hanceville @ Cold Springs
By Micheal Bryant
Girls Varsity

The Lady Eagles came out with the hot hand early scoring nine straight points. The scoring was started with a three pointer from Hayden West, and then followed by baskets from Caitlyn Hall, Chloe Harbison, and Haley Freeman, before Hanceville got on the board with a Mariah Twitty two pointer. Cold Springs would then score eight straight, getting four from Caitlyn Hall, and the Lady Bulldogs would respond with a Karrah Johnson bucket. Cold Springs would then get the last five points of the quarter with a West three pointer right at the buzzer, capping a 22-4 first quarter run.

The second quarter was all Lady Eagles as they outscored the Lady Bulldogs 18-0 to take a 40-4 lead at the half. Karlee Perdue got five in the quarter while Harbison chipped in five as well, all of her points coming from the free throw line.

In the third period the Eagles hot hand continued as they scored the first nine points, including five from Perdue. Hanceville would get the final shot of the quarter as Taylor Hollingsworth hit a two pointer.

The fourth quarter was much the same. Cold Springs would score the first eight, getting four from Hall, before Hanceville would add their final points of the night from a Karrah Johnson three pointer.

Harbison would get the final three points for the Eagles and that would be the ball game, Cold Springs winning 60-9.

Karrah Johnson led the Lady Bulldogs with five points, and Caitlyn Hall led Cold Springs and all scorers with fourteen.

Boys Varsity

Hanceville would get on the board first with a three pointer by Brontae Harris, but Cold Springs' Tristan Chambers would respond with three of his own. The two teams would trade baskets before Cold Springs would get off seven straight points, getting five from Layne Rice. Hanceville's Dont'e Reese would get a free throw, but a three pointer by Brandon Whaley would extend the Eagles' lead.

The second quarter would open the same way, this time a three pointer by Hanceville's Matt Burns. Cold Springs' Rice would extend his team's lead to four, and that is when Hanceville's Chris Smith would take over scoring five straight points to give the Bulldogs a one point lead. Cold Springs would respond with a Chambers' two, but Hanceville would score six straight, four from Harris, to take a five point lead. The two teams would trade baskets with Hanceville getting their lead to seven, but at the buzzer three from Rice would cut the Bulldogs' lead to four.

That wasn't enough for a momentum shift as Hanceville dominated the third quarter. The Bulldogs started off on a seven point run, getting three from Tyler Tankersley, before a pair of free throws from Chambers finally put the Eagles on the board in the period. Harris would then hit a three and a layup, and his teammate Keith Twitty would put in two of his own to further extend the lead. The two teams traded

CullmanSense's Weekly Basketball Wrap-Up (Continued)

buckets to end the quarter.

Cold Springs started the fourth with a pair of free throws, but Marshall Jackson would answer back. The two teams would trade buckets once more, until the Eagles scored five straight getting another three pointer from Chambers, but five straight including three from Harris would have the Bulldogs answering back.

The teams traded baskets again, but seven straight points for the Eagles would cut the Bulldog lead to five. Chris Smith would extend the lead back to seven with a pair of free throws, but a Bulldog foul allowed Chambers to get those points back. That's when the Bulldogs lobbed a Hail Mary on the inbound to Smith for an easy layup and to seal the win.

Hanceville's Brontae Harris had twenty three points, while Cold Springs' Tristan Chambers led all Varsity Boys' scorers with thirty one.

Cullman vs. West Point
By Grant Smith
Boys Varsity

The Warriors got two big free throws from Wesley Smith, with less than thirty seconds to play, to build a four point lead and hold off the Bearcats, 55-50.

The game was a see-saw affair which saw neither team get more than a five point lead throughout the contest.

West Point led 15-14 after one quarter, thanks to six points from Kris Keller while Cullman was led by Troy Forrest's four points while Seth Swalve and Richard Donaldson nailed three pointers in the opening frame.

Keller led the Warriors to a 19-16 advantage during the second to take a 33-30 lead into the halftime break. Cullman rallied during the third quarter to claim a 43-41 lead going into the final eight minutes.

There were eight lead changes and eight ties throughout the game.

Jordan McKenzie sparked the Warriors during the final frame by forcing numerous turnovers and fast break opportunities.

McKenzie, Smith, Josh Looney, and Tristan Dubberly all hit free throws.

Houston Turner fouled out of the game with 42.1 seconds left while Forrest was called for intentional foul with twenty plus seconds remaining.

The Warriors hit free throws down the stretch to hang on to the win.

Keller led the Warriors with 14 points while McKenzie added 13 points.

Rounding out the scoring for West Point were Smith with nine, Dubberly with seven, Nick Nuss and Looney with three each, and Austin Ray with two.

Forrest led the Bearcats with 12 while Turner added 11, Swalve with 10.

Other scorers for Cullman were Keaton Dean and Donaldson with five, while Lawson Schaffer added four and Lukas McNeal three.

Girls Varsity

The Lady Bearcats got a three pointer from Baylee Johnson with seven seconds left to pull off a thrilling 56-55 victory over the West Point Lady Warriors.

Trailing 55-53 with time winding down, Johnson put up her three point attempt and it banked off the backboard and through the basket.

Cullman jumped out to a 17-9 lead after one quarter thanks to five points from Morgan Smith and four each from Johnson and Hayden Short.

The Lady Warriors got a big effort from Madison Rusk, who scored a career high 32 points.

Kari Williams hit a pair of three pointers in the opening frame for West Point.

The Lady Bearcats extended their lead to 11 at the halftime break, thanks to a pair of three pointers from Smith and seven points from Johnson.

Rusk led West Point with eight points during the second quarter. Cullman led 33-22 at the break.

Rusk continued her hot streak in the third quarter with eight more points while Johnson led the Lady Bearcats with five points as Cullman held a five point lead, 44-39 heading into the final eight minutes.

Rusk added eight more points during the final frame however, Johnson's three pointer gave Cullman the victory.

Johnson led the Lady Bearcats with 24 points while Smith added 16, Hayden Short with six, Emily Tucker five, Blair Nall three, and Oakleigh White with two.

Behind Rusk's 32 points, Williams added 12, Jamie Beasley six, Rachel Persall and Taylor McManus two each, and Mallory Walker one.

Good Hope vs. Hanceville
By Johnny Thornton
Boys Varsity

Good Hope stayed right with Hanceville after the first eight minutes Friday night, trailing only 12-11.

Then the Bulldogs started to develop a shooting attack in scoring from close range and outside to pull away from the Raiders 62-39 in a county and area assignment that was played in the old gymnasium on the Hanceville campus.

With guard Brontae Harris knocking down nine field goals, four from three-point range, the Bulldogs got control of the game with a 17-5 run in the second quarter to lead 29-16 at halftime.

From there, the Bulldogs stayed hot with 33 second half points in which they hit 11 field goals in the final 16:00, eight in the third period, to bounce back into the win column after getting defeated at Fairview 49-36 the night before.

The win moved the Bulldogs to 8-4 on the season, 2-1 in 3A, Area 13, and 3-1 in Cullman County games. Holly Pond is currently top in the county standings at 4-1 followed by Fairview with a 4-1 record then the Bulldogs, Cold Springs 5-3, West Point 3-2, Vinemont 1-4, and Good Hope 0-8.

Good Hope fell to 1-11 with the setback and is winless in three games in Area 13. Besides the loss, the Raiders had starting point guard Eli Marty to go down with an ankle injury midway in the third period and lost reserve guard Tyler Stringer to an ankle injury early in the fourth quarter.

Hanceville scored on seven field goals in the second with six of them near the basket to extend the one-point advantage to 13. The Bulldogs clamped down on the Raider shooters, allowing Good Hope only two field goals in the second stanza.

Harris was on fire with four and five made shots during the third that broke the contest open. He anchored a 22-11 run and Daniel Wakefield's Bulldogs carried a 51-27 lead into the fourth.

Supporting the 23 point effort by Harris was Chris Smith with 14, Dante Reese scored 12, Keith Twitty tossed in 10, Brandon Flanigan had two, and Austin Baker one.

Leading Good Hope was Andrew Cofer with 22, Alex Cofer 10, Marty, Jonathan Grigsby, and Josh Grigsby two, and Zack Sloan one.

The status on Marty and Stringer being available for the Raiders' game vs. Fairview at D.E Ryan Gymnasium Tuesday was undetermined late Friday night.

Girls Varsity

Kayla Tillman shook off a sluggish first half with five second half baskets, finishing with 20 points in leading the Lady Raiders to victory. That moved Good Hope closer of clinching the regular season title in Area 13 as they now stand at 3-0 in competition and ran the season record to 6-9.

The Lady Raiders led by only 17-11 at the half as Hanceville stayed in the game shooting 90 percent from the foul line. Then Tillman got her shooting touch and set the tone in the second half with Good Hope cruising by a 34-14 margin on the scoreboard. The game got out of reach in the third period on a 20-7 run and a 37-18 advantage.

Darcie Wilson pitched in nine for the Lady Raiders, Kayla Scott had six, Kami Calvert scored four, Kaitlyn Bishop and Savanna Fendley netted five, and Kaci Thomas two.

For Hanceville, Karrah Johnson tossed in 13 and was six of six at the line, Mariah Twitty and Taylor Hollingsworth scored four, Taylor Chambers two, and Kristina Denham and Katie Tankersley one each.

The only game to take place outside of Cullman County was on the 11th when the Saint Bernard Saints traveled to Falkville to take on the Blue Devils.

The Lady Blue Devils of Falkville dropped the Lady Saints 40-15. The Saints dropped the boys contest by a final score of 67-59.

We hope you enjoy reading our local basketball coverage as much as we at CullmanSense enjoy bringing it to you!

The best training....PERIOD

By: Josh McBrayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – There is a nip in the air, the stores are full of holiday shoppers looking for that perfect gift, and families are all gathering at a table to share a holiday meal with relatives they have not seen all year. With all that in mind, here is one of my favorite sayings, "Tis the season for.....BASEBALL!"

Yes I said baseball and no I am not going insane from holiday stress. I love the Christmas season as much as anyone else but unlike anyone else, this time of year makes me think of America's past time.

Major League Baseball Winter Meetings just finished up in Tennessee and pitchers and catchers will be reporting for Spring Training before you know it. With MLB on the brain, another holiday tradition comes to mind, All Sports Performance Training's (ASPT) winter baseball camp.

ASPT is owned and operated by Cullman's legendary sports trainer, Steve Johnson, who has been training area athletes for over 15 years. He has worked with various programs including Wallace State Community College in Hanceville and Cullman High School, just a stone's throw away from the ASPT facility.

He has worked with the best athletes to ever come through Cullman County and the surrounding areas and now they are coming back to help Johnson train the next crop of great baseball players.

"These guys are giving up two days of their (Christmas) vacation to come out and help with the camp," said ASPT owner Johnson.

These athletes include former Major League starting pitcher and current West Point assistant coach, Steve Woodard who played his high school ball at Hartselle. Former Cullman Bearcat standout pitcher Caleb Clay who was drafted by the Boston Red Sox and is now in the Washington Nationals farm system will be on site to pass down his knowledge to any of the eager camp goers.

Another former Bearcat and MLB breakout star Josh Rutledge is going to be on hand to help and provide instruction to the campers. Rutledge played his college ball at the University of Alabama and has since blazed a path through the Colorado Rockies farm system that earned him a call up to the majors on July 13th where he tore the cover off the ball, batting .274 with eight long balls and and 37 RBI's in just 73 games.

2011 NL Rookie of the Year and former Wallace State pitcher Craig Kimbrel will also be on hand. Kimbrel is the fireball throwing closer for the Atlanta Braves and holds the rookie record for saves in a season, 46.

He is a two-time MLB All-Star and has led the National League in saves for 2011 and 2012. Along with the four professional players, there will also be a slew of other players whom have made their own impact on Cullman County Baseball on hand to give expert instruction to the campers.

"If you miss this camp, you are missing out on some great instruction," said Johnson.

Of all the phenomenal instructors that are going to be at the camp, one name stands out: Andrew Winfrey. Steve Johnson told me that Andrew would be the #2 boss.

The camp is two days and takes place on December 27th and 28th for ages 5 and up and will run from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Lunch will be provided for the campers.

Cost for both days is $160 (early bird $130) and includes a t-shirt for the campers.

This is a great opportunity for that baseball player in your life to learn from the best in the business, Steve Johnson, and from some of the greatest players to ever set foot on a baseball diamond. Do not miss out on this wonderful camp.

Broncos double up in rankings; CS Lady Eagles soar (Continued from Front)

nine spot last week to the fifth spot in Class 2A in the most recent poll.

Holly Pond Broncos join their female counterparts in the top 10

The Holly Pond Broncos (9-2) find themselves in the top 10 in Class 3A this week. They are led by the outstanding play of shooting guard Colby Adams who is a dangerous threat from the three point range as well as off the penetrating dribble.

The Broncos can hurt you inside and out and have different players step up and "answer the bell" each and every night which is why they have only dropped two games this year, each contest going down to the wire.

The first loss came all the way back on November 16th when the Broncos lost a heart-breaker 78-76 in double overtime to the Cold Springs Eagles. The second loss came at the hands of county rivals, the West Point Warriors, just seven days later. This contest was decided by three points, 58-55.

There are some stellar teams in Cullman County, both ranked and not ranked. If you enjoy "hoops"you owe it to yourself to get out to the gym and see some well played, well coached county basketball action.

Community Matters

Reindeer Games (Continued from Front)

into the Christmas find his family had been searching for.

"I had a client who wanted to meet me at her mother's house in Larkwood. On the way over to the house I was thinking 'wouldn't it be funny if her mother had the reindeer, and about that time we were pulling into her driveway," he said. "We got down into the basement and there they were, just all stacked up. She asked me if I wanted to buy them, then they were off to my house."

The home belonged to Mary Guthrie. Her late husband John was the man behind the original reindeer display which captivated the Whitley's. "Ms. Guthrie's husband John was the man who would organized the display each year and when he passed away she was not able to put them out," he said.

"The last year they were on display, her children had come by to put them out."

Now with a new home, the 21 white reindeer stand proudly in the Whitley's front lawn, causing a bit of slow traffic along the normally busy roadway. Besides the large herd focused primarily in the center of the lawn, the entire house has been hit with the Christmas spirit. And if you look hard enough you may even find Santa Claus hanging around.

We have done the house the past couple of years, but this is the first year with the reindeer," he said. "The entire house has been decorated with lights and a total of six trees can be seen from outside. If you look off to the side you will see Santa Claus, who was donated by Perry Warren for this season. He said, 'he belonged here.'"



Sportsman Lake Light Show

By: Jessica Norrell

jessicanorrell@cullmansense.com

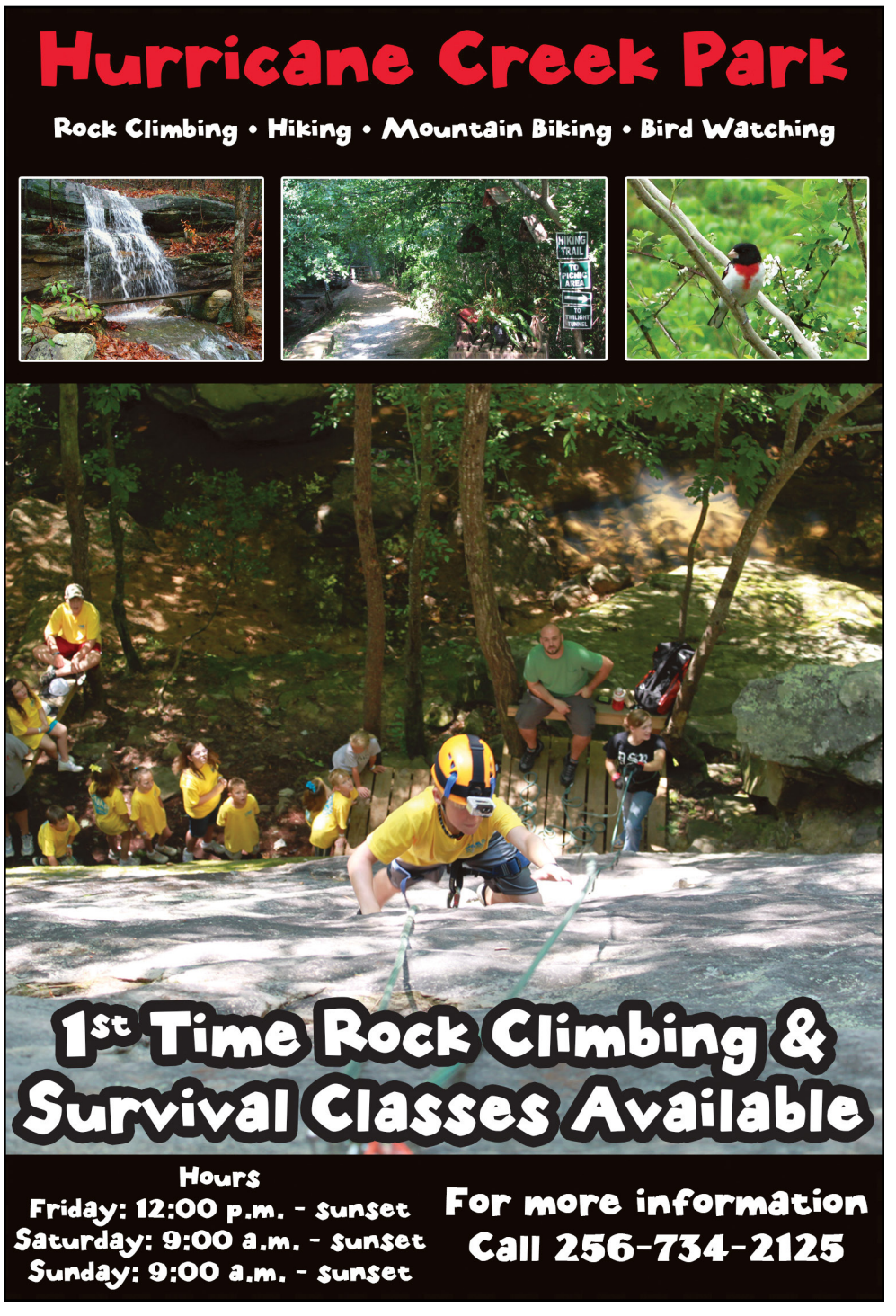
Cullman County Parks and Recreation is holding its 6th annual Sportsman Wonderland this year. The light show, located at Sportsman Lake Park, features an animated Christmas light drive-through around the wooded area of the park.

The trees, buildings, and structures such as the manger scene and reindeer are adorned with lights and decorations. For those seeking something a little more old-fashioned, the Victorian horse and carriage ride gives a classic Christmas feel to the attraction even in unseasonably warm weather.

In addition to the lights, Santa will be at the concession stand taking pictures and serving hot chocolate and candy canes.

The drive-through is open until December 23rd from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. with a $5 admission per vehicle. Sportsman Wonderland provides a beautiful Christmas spectacle close to home with a warm, family environment.





An Abundance of Christmas Cheer

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – On Friday, nearly 900 area seniors converged on the Cullman Civic Center for the Cullman Commission on Aging's annual Christmas Party. "This is always such a wonderful event for our residents," said Randall Shedd, Cullman Commission on Aging Director.

"The Christmas party has been going on for more than 30 years. It's an opportunity to honor our seniors who've paid taxes all their lives and built the infrastructure that we younger folks enjoy today."

Those in attendance received a fruit tray with fresh fruit and enjoyed the styling's of live Christmas music before sitting down for a traditional Christmas meal of turkey, dressing, and cranberry sauce. The waiters however were not who you would normally expect.

Mayors from across the county including, Kenneth Kilgo (West Point), Kenneth Nail (Hanceville), Herman Nail (Holly Pond), and Dale Seals (Fairview), along with council members from around the county joined together to serve as Celebrity Waiters.

"We couldn't do it without them because they come as celebrity waiters. It means a lot to our seniors to know that our elected officials care enough to come out and do this," said Shedd. "We added the celebrity waiters about seven or eight years ago because it was hard to get meals out quickly and with that much help we are able to get them fed pretty soon. Also, it is good for the elected officials to come out to and get involved."

Besides dining on turkey, those seniors in attendance had an opportunity to take home a door prize. The items ranged from paintings, to gift certificates, to even cash.

"The business community has just been great with donating door prizes," he said. "Patricia McGriff has done a tremendous job going out to these businesses, securing these prizes and I know the seniors appreciate it."

Shedd said the Christmas Party is a Cullman Commission on Aging event, in cooperation with United Way, NARCOG, and the Alabama Department of Senior Citizens, along with our Cullman County Commission and City of Cullman which helps fund the event.

"This whole purpose is to say thank you to them for what they've done for our community. They've established what we're enjoying," he said. For more photos of this event, visit cullmansense.com.

Windsor Powder Coating & Sandblasting
10231 Hwy 31 South
Hanceville, AL 35077
E-mail: windsori@hiwaay.net
Chris Windsor
Kyle Windsor
Patrick Allred
Office: 256-737-9272
Cell: 256-338-2242













Community Matters

Private Education in a Serene Setting

By: Joyce Nix

St. Bernard Contributor

CULLMAN – Located in the beautiful Appalachian foothills of North Alabama and tucked away on the east side of Cullman County is Alabama's only Catholic boarding school – St. Bernard Preparatory School. St. Bernard Prep is a residential and day school for grades 7-12 that was begun by the Benedictine Monks at St. Bernard Abbey in 1891, the year the monastery was founded. Since that time the call to educate has been central in the work of the monks, including high school, college, and seminary education.

For over 1,500 years Benedictine Monks have been involved in the business of education, keeping alive the love for learning and a deep appreciation for God's creation and world cultures. With that solid foundation, the Cullman, Alabama school has declared its mission: "St. Bernard Preparatory School is committed to fully engaging students in learning for the whole person – body, mind, and spirit."

In the year 2005, St. Bernard opened Founder's Hall and created a wonderful learning environment for students in grades 7 and 8. The Middle School contains six classrooms, including a music room, science lab, and a newly purchased mobile computer lab.

The Upper School offers most classroom instruction in the Swisher Classroom Building, with music, art, drama, and physical education located at other campus locations. Classes are taught by highly certified veteran instructors with vast experience at both the high school and collegiate level. Most have been educated beyond the master's degree level.

The Middle School academic program is structured for the purpose of improving academic achievement in the 7th and 8th grades. The concepts and skills taught in the middle grades provide the necessary foundation for the college preparatory curriculum of the Upper School.

The entire school curriculum is based on the liberal arts: languages and literature, history, mathematics, science, the social sciences, theology, and the arts. The teaching philosophy emphasizes the ability to think, to read with understanding, to express oneself with precision and confidence, and to solve problems creatively. Courses encourage the development of mental and physical discipline, of breadth and depth of knowledge, of responsible thought and action, and of critical thinking.

Benedict Dorm is home to the young men of St. Bernard, and the young ladies reside in their dormitory located in the Administration Building. Whether students choose to reside on campus or commute daily, they are taught to acquire good study habits and develop daily routines that lead to personal growth and development.

School President, Fr. Joel Martin, who served as Headmaster for 15 years, says he is proud of what he has witnessed from the students who have graduated and who are currently enrolled.

"We have high expectations for our students. We believe in a full life of true involvement, overcoming fear and taking risks, but most of all responsibility and self-control," he said.

Teaching students how to budget time, study, set goals, get along with one another, and limit their time on the internet, cell phone, and TV, are part of the school's overall philosophy. Students are encouraged to make good decisions and accept consequences, solve problems, clean their room well, do laundry, and learn to accept the joys and difficulties of life with others.

Chuckling, Fr. Joel said parents often comment on the changes they see in their child who enters the residential life. "Parents have said on more than one occasion, they have experienced first-hand an increasing closeness to family, a greater depth of communication, appreciation and love, as well as self-discipline, self-respect, and self-confidence. It all comes from St. Bernard Prep's belief in teenagers and in our expectation that they think for themselves and make wise choices."

The school currently has 22 international students enrolled from five different countries: Germany, Korea, China, Vietnam, and Taiwan. That makes for a breadth of experience: a school that mirrors not just the local population, but the world community of which we are a part.

St. Bernard offers a broad athletic program and boasts facilities seldom seen in a school population of less than 200. Competing in the AHSAA 1A Division, The Cross Country team created a 5K running trail though the 800 wooded acres of St. Bernard's treasure forest, and has become known as a dominate powerhouse in the 1A Cross Country competitions for both male and females.

The Fazi-Richard Athletic Center completed in 1996, allows students to participate in volleyball, basketball, and other athletic activities. The school's out-of-doors athletic facilities consist of a fine tennis complex, fields for baseball, softball, archery, etc., and a state-of-the-art soccer field that was home to the Argentine Olympic Football Federation in 1996.

John Schneider, a resident of Decatur and current Student Body President, experienced the life of a St. Bernard student through his older siblings, a sister and two brothers, all graduates of St. Bernard.

"St. Bernard is our home away from home," Schneider said. "We chose St. Bernard for the educational aspect, but received so much more. Our life-long friends, the memories of the dorm, the dining hall, Abbey Church, the quad, Blue and White Day, the Grotto, Bloomin' Festival, the routines, and hard work will remain in our hearts forever."

Fr. Joel says St. Bernard should strongly be considered if one is academically capable and willing to prepare seriously for the life that lies ahead of them in college and university studies, and beyond. He went on to say that St. Bernard is not equipped as a therapeutic setting for students with serious personal, social, or academic difficulties.

St. Bernard offers a commuting bus service daily to the Decatur, Alabama area and is prepared to expand transportation services to other locations in the future as needed.

Anyone interested in learning more about St. Bernard Prep should attend Open House on Sunday, March 3, 2013 beginning at 2 p.m. or call 256-739-6682 for a personal tour of the school. Visit us online at www.stbernardprep.com or like us on www.facebook.com/stbernardprep.

This Week in History Dec. 17 - Dec. 23

December 17th

- 1777 – France recognizes independence of English colonies in America
- 1900 – New Ellis Island Immigration station completed costing $1.5 million
- 1944 – Japanese-Americans released from detention camps
- 2011 – Protesters in Cario's Tahir Square are beaten by Egyptian Army soldiers in a second day of skirmishes resulting in 10 deaths and hundreds of injured

December 18th

- 1865 – 13th Amendment ratified, slavery abolished
- 1936 – Su-Lin, first giant panda to come to U.S. from China, arrives in San Francisco
- 1966 – Dr. Seuss' "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" airs for first time on CBS
- 2011 – The last convoy of U.S. Army soldiers leaves Iraq, formally marking the end of the Iraq War

December 19th

- 1828 – South Carolina declares right of states to nullify federal laws
- 1980 – Iran requests $24 billion in U.S. guarantees to free hostages
- 2011 – North Korea's Supreme Leader, Kim Jong-il, dies; Kim Jong-un is announced as his father's successor

December 20th

- 1669 – First jury trial in Delaware; Marcus Jacobson condemned for insurrection and sentenced to flogging, branding and slavery
- 1907 – Explosion at Yolande, Alabama coal mine kills 91
- 1957 – Elvis Presley given draft notice to join U.S. Army for National Service
- 1995 – American Flight 965 crashes in Columbia, 159 die, 5 survive

December 21st

- 1914 – First feature-length silent film comedy, "Tillie's Punctured Romance" released, staring Marie Dressler, Mabel Normand and Charles Chaplin
- 1939 – Hitler named Adolf Eichmann leader of "Referat IV B"
- 1978 – Police in Des Plaines Ill, arrest John Wayne Gacy, Jr. for murder
- 1989 – Dan Quayle sends out 30,000 Christmas cards with word beacon spelled beakon

December 22nd

- 1886 – First national accountants' society in U.S. formed in New York City
- 1941- Winston Churchill arrives in Washington for a wartime conference
- 1988 – Two robbers wearing police uniforms rob armored truck of $3 Million in New Jersey

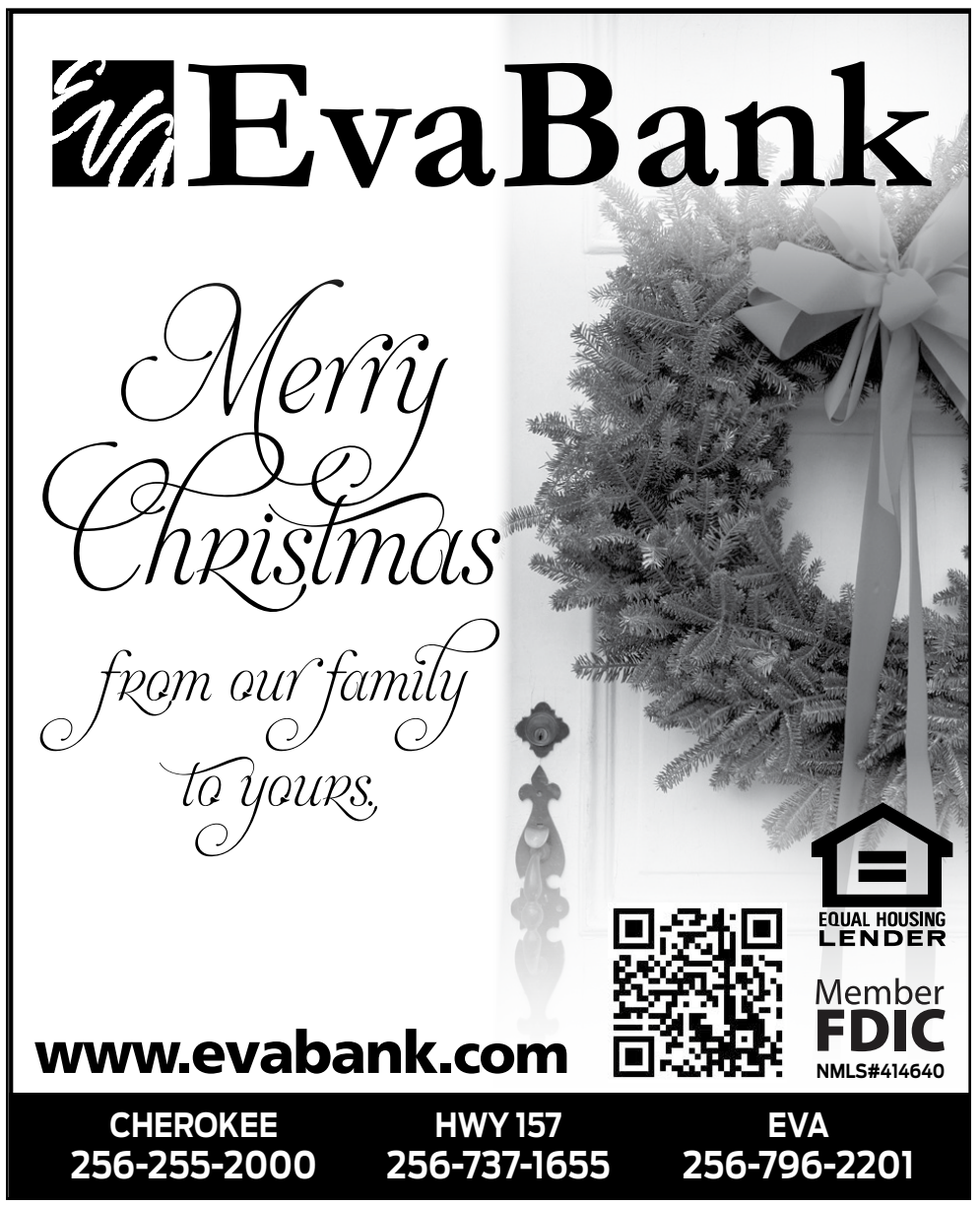
December 23rd

- 1788 – Maryland votes to cede a 10 mile area for District of Columbia
- 1913 – President Woodrow Wilson signs Federal Reserve Act into law
- 1997 – Terry Nichols found guilty of manslaughter in Oklahoma bombing

We Value Your Feedback!

feedback@cullmansense.com

or 256-297-1847



Local Events Calendar

Send your Events to: calendar@cullmansense.com

Monday, December 17th

Gentiva Hospice and Home Health Patient Tree
If you would like to contribute to the holiday spirit for local elderly folks and those in nursing homes, then the Angel Tree at Gentiva Hospice and Home Health has patient names hanging on its branches just waiting for you to pick your favorite one. Useful items include fruit baskets, pajamas, slippers (with non-slip soles), soaps, socks, and warm lap blankets. To take part in this special holiday project please contact Mandi Lake at 256-339-9915 or Teresa Cook at 256-339-9271. The tree is located in the main office and everyone is welcome to come see the cards and pick up one. In the spirit of the holiday, it is always better to give than to receive, yet in your giving, you will receive such wonderful feelings of love and community.

Therapeutic Recreation Christmas Party
The Therapeutic Program of Cullman Parks & Recreation Department will sponsor a Community Christmas Party tonight from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. at Cullman Civic Center. There will be crafts, music, horse-drawn buggy rides, food, and lots more fun for the evening. Please call Hollie at 256-339-2853 or Rhonda at 256-962-2208 for additional information.

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!

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!

Bosom Buddies Support Group Meeting
Bosom Buddies Support Group offers support to individuals affected by Breast Cancer. The group will hold its meeting on Monday, December 17 at 6 p.m. in Cullman Regional Medical Center's Ave Maria Room in the Community Education Center located in Professional Office Building 2 (1912 AL Highway 157, POB 2, Cullman, AL 35058).

Tuesday, December 18th

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.

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!

Wednesday, December 19th

'Christmas Voices' Concert at Northbrook Baptist Church
Everyone is invited to Northbrook Baptist Church at 6:30 p.m. for their 'Christmas Voices' Concert which celebrates the birth of Our Savior through song! Bring your family and friends and come listen to the songs of the season.

St. John's Evangelical Communion Meditation Service
Everyone is invited to attend a lunch meal at 11:30 a.m. at St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church. The lunch will be followed by a Communion Meditation Service at 12:30 p.m. in the Church Sanctuary. This special service will have Bruce Rapp, representative of Jews for Jesus, presenting a program on Hanukkah and how this Jewish celebration interacts with the Christian faith. Please contact the Church office for additional info at 256-734-0344. All faiths are invited to attend this special Advent-season presentation.

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!

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!

Thursday, December 20th

'A Christmas Story' Play at Sacred Heart School
Students of Sacred Heart School will take to the stage at 6:30 p.m. as they present that ever popular 'A Christmas Story'. Everyone is invited to attend in the Family Life Center gym. Come and let the holiday spirit seep into your life with this comical and special presentation.

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!

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 21st

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!

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!

Saturday, December 22nd

St. Nick at Flavors Bakery
Bring your children by to visit with St. Nick from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. to enjoy some holiday cheer. Flavors Bakery is located at on 1st Ave. NE in the Historic Warehouse District.

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!

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 23rd

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!

Monday, December 24th

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

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
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

Soup Making Skills

When we first got married, as most of you know from reading my articles, I couldn't cook a thing. It didn't take me long to figure out how to put it all together and come up with some pretty tasty meals.

Before that happened, I remember working at Kessler's Florist. They tried to help me out with suggestions on how to cook better. One time in particular they told me I should make soup because that's pretty easy.

I was excited and eager to try making soup and even bring them some of it to try, after all…..they told me everything I needed to know so it should be easy. It sounded easy.

I went home and worked so hard on my soup. I had decided to make vegetable soup. How hard could that be? It was summer and vegetables were readily available and fresh. I couldn't mess up!

That night Ralph and I feasted on my homemade vegetable soup. He was always nice about things I attempted and it was no different that night.

I thought I did a pretty good job. I was excited about bringing my co-workers some of my soup.

My coworkers weren't as nice, but tried to act like they liked it….I think.

I remember Mary Ruth making a horrible face and kind of sputtered, almost spitting it out.

She said "What in the world is in this? How did you make it?"

I was still pretty proud, thinking maybe she didn't know how to appreciate a good bowl of soup.

I told her I started with a pot of water…… …..I guess that was where the laughter started. I just threw in all the vegetables and boiled them together, added some salt and pepper and TADA! Soup!

Even to this day my vegetable soup isn't where it should be, but I have learned to use broth, seasonings, and even make a roux.

I guess I have learned that boiling water isn't the answer to everything.

Easy Black Bean Soup

This soup is easy and doesn't take hardly any time to make. Give it a try and see what you think! Makes 4 servings.

Ingredients:

- 6 slices bacon, chopped
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups chicken broth
- pinch of dried oregano
- pinch of cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- salt to taste
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 14 1/2 fluid ounces water
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper



Instructions:

1. Place bacon in a pot. Turn heat to medium, cook and stir until the bacon is cooked but not crisp.
2. Stir in onion; cook and stir for 5 minutes, until the onion turns translucent and golden.
3. Stir in garlic; cook for 2-3 minutes. Add chicken broth, turn heat to medium-high. Stir in oregano, cayenne, and salt. Add black beans and water. Return to a simmer.
4. Simmer on medium-low, stirring occasionally, for 20-30 minutes. While it's cooking, mash about half the beans to thicken the soup.
5. Stir in black pepper and cumin. Add salt to taste.
6. Top with chopped green onions, shredded cheddar cheese, and sour cream.

White & Black by St. Edo - st.edo@cullmansense.com



facebook.com/CullmanSense

Peace, Love, Coffee
Berkeley Bob's CoffeeHouse
BERKELEY BOB'S COFFEE HOUSE
presents
Open Mic
Monday, December 17th, 7-9 p.m.
The Vulcan Eejits
A Great Celtic Band Returns
Saturday, December 22nd, 7-9 p.m.
256-775-2944
www.berkeleybob.com

JOHNNY'S since 1949
We'll Serve No Swine Before Its Time
BAR-B-Q
OPEN TUESDAY - SATURDAY 10 A.M. - 9 P.M.
CALL-IN / FAMILY DINING / PICK-UP WINDOW
AWARDED "BEST OF THE BEST BBQ IN AMERICA" BY NATIONAL BARBECUE NEWS
• 1401 4th St. SW Cullman, AL 35055 • 256-734-8539 • johnnysbarbq.com

JUST FOR FUN

The Hobbit: A (Completely) Expected Review

By: Dillon Lee
CHS Theater Director & Independent Filmmaker

Pardon the pitiable wordplay, but the reference was too ripe and the hack writer that lives within my brain could not resist. Watching *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* was like revisiting old friends in a place that you love well.

It begins a prequel trilogy that tells the genesis of the events that play out in *The Lord of the Rings* films. In keeping the same director and creative team, led by Peter Jackson, the art design and characterization remains consistent, anchored particularly well by Ian McKellan, reprising his role as the wizard Gandalf, and Martin Freeman, as a younger Bilbo Baggins.

They truly build the fond friendship that Gandalf and Bilbo possessed in the *LOTR* trilogy. Freeman was the perfect choice to play a young Ian Holm, the actor that originally took the role of an older Bilbo Baggins, and clearly Freeman studied Holm's portrayal carefully. That cohesiveness and layering of fiction is perhaps the films greatest success.

I imagine a day when my kid's kids can watch all six movies in the correct story order and enjoy a sweeping epic, which is introduced in *The Hobbit* to a younger audience, as with the book.

In *The Hobbit*, the stakes are much lower than the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, though Peter Jackson takes great pains to sow the seeds of the calamity to come. As such, when viewed as a cycle of films, the stakes and the serious tone will raise appropriately.

Since *The Hobbit* films were planned as a series of two and are now a series of three, the storytelling and pacing are decompressed. This is more in line with the Special Editions of *The Lord of the Rings* films, where additional scenes are added to plumb the depths of Middle Earth mythology, but those additions rarely seem crucial nor do they help the pacing. This might explain the mild critical drubbing that the film is getting (with a 67% cumulative score on Rotten Tomatoes).

However, for fans of Peter Jackson's take of Tolkien's Middle Earth, each additional second is appreciated. For fair-weather fans or more professional critics, this may be interpreted as bloating which does hinder the flow of the storytelling.

I wonder if a theatrical cut would have made this film more critically successful, though its financial success is not in doubt. Other serious critiques can be applied to the film especially from purist fans of Tolkien's work.

I recognize the delineation between book and film and see the need for truncation and elaboration where necessary. In fact, even Gandalf points out the need for "elaboration" in the best stories in an early line in the film, perhaps foreshadowing Jackson's expanded, decompressed fiction.

My main critiques come from a certain directorial decisions. First among them being the use of CGI characters. WETA, the effects company behind all the *Rings* films and Jackson's other works, was a pioneer in creating authentic CGI characters, surpassing the work of George Lucas by using sophisticated motion capture performance. Gollum is the pinnacle of this work.

In *The Hobbit*, Gollum's realism and genuine emotion, most importantly his complex pathos, retains its high quality. The other CGI characters in the film seemed far less genuine.

In the original *LOTR* trilogy, actors in detailed make up portrayed the battling orcs and Uruk Hai of the enemy. *The Hobbit* relies on characters that are almost exclusively digitial, in particular the leader of the orcs pursuing Thorim Oakenshield and his Dwarven company. The goblins of the Misty Mountains are also complete digital creations. This saps away some of the grim realism that made Middle Earth seem so authentic in previous films. This is perhaps intentional as the *The Hobbit* has always been considered a "kids" book.

While the death, chaos, and mayhem of the previous films are intact, there is something less brutal and more cartoonish about the situations in which our heroes find themselves.

Another directorial criticism is the camera work in the action sequences. Previously, Jackson used sweeping shots and a fair amount of slow motion to frame his battles and swordplay.

In *The Hobbit* the camera is moved closer and the action occasionally gets lost in the constricted, confined angles and dark lighting. This leads to some personal trepidation concerning the climactic finale of the *The Hobbit*, likely seen in the third film.

Will those battles lack the seriousness and grim realism of the weight they carry in the book? Might they be a muddle of dark, occasionally confusing action sequences?

Of course, the encounters in the first part of *The Hobbit* are much more enclosed if not intimate. And, in capturing the most intimate of these moments, the meeting of Bilbo, Gollum, and the One Ring, things are handled expertly.

Thankfully, the filmmakers still employed detailed miniatures for some locations and avoided building digital environments for the myriad locales in Bilbo's journey. This seemingly trivial film making technique, lost in modern age of CGI, communicates an authenticity that is lacking in the green screen and digitally built vistas of most Hollywood fare.

Miniatures and location filming have always given Middle Earth a truest sense of "place" for a completely fantastical world. It gives hope that the grandeur befitting the finale of these films is in capable hands.

For fans, this film is a perfect addition to the previous films, building towards the scope and stakes found in *The Return of the King*. For purists of Tolkien's fiction, it keeps the spirit of the books- the gruff playfulness of the Dwarven company and the utilization of the songs and poems which fill Tolkien's pages.

However, like the original films, creative license has been taken in some characterization and storytelling. For the casual viewer, the film's pacing may seem slow at times and the movie itself could have lost 20 minutes for the wide theatrical release.

In finality, it still retains much of the excitement, wonder, and sense of place so meticulously crafted and well-loved in *The Lord of the Rings* and will find a place among the classics in the pantheon of truly epic works of cinema.

Micheal's View of the Blu (and DVD): *Premium Rush*

By: Micheal Bryant
michealbryant@cullmansense.com

Wilee is the best bicycle delivery person in New York City. With his high tech GPS, his quick answer cell phone skills, and his patented bike with no brakes, no one can touch him.

However on a day like any other work day he gets tasked with delivering a simple envelope, but the delivery isn't so simple. Having to fend off not only his number one messenger rival and New York City's finest bicycle cop, he also has a corrupt detective on his tail whom needs the contents of the envelope to pay off a gambling debt.

That sounds like a pretty simple premise, but the execution of it is what makes *Premium Rush* a good movie. It has some of the most intense bicycle stunts ever seen on screen, and with the way they are filmed you could almost swear it was the actors themselves performing them.

The only drawback I found with the movie was the exclusion of some bike work. There are times in the film where one of the riders has to go to a location and instead of showing the ride we get a map with a yellow arrow shooting down the streets and then it cuts to the biker already there.

Now normally I do a little paragraph on the actors in the film, but while there is a small cast this is Joseph Gordon-Levitt's (*The Dark Knight Rises*, *10 Things I Hate About You*) movie and he proves he can be a star instead of just a simple background actor or sidekick. With the last *Batman* film and also *Looper*, you cannot say there was an actor with a better three films in 2012 than Gordon-Levitt.

Overall, *Premium Rush* is a premium delight (my apologies for the bad pun) and is one movie that I suggest you definitely add to your collection.

Micheal's View of the Blu (and DVD): *The Odd Life of Timothy Green*

By: Micheal Bryant
michealbryant@cullmansense.com

The Odd Life of Timothy Green

Rated PG for Mild Thematic Elements and brief language

Starring: Jennifer Garner, Joel Edgerton, CJ Adams, and Odeya Rush

Premise: **10**
Actors: **8**
Director: **8**
Execution: **10**
Entertainment: **8**
Overall: **44/50**

Imagine you are a couple who after years of trying to have children, you finally find out that there is no hope. What would you do? Well Cindy and Jim Green cope with the pain by writing down all of the qualities they would want in their son on individual pieces of paper.

The couple places these pieces of paper inside a box and buries them in the garden. The two then awake in the middle of the night to find an adolescent boy covered in dirt running through their house.

They give the child a bath and notice that he has leaves growing from his leg, only to find out that this boy grew from the buried box and now calls them mom and dad.

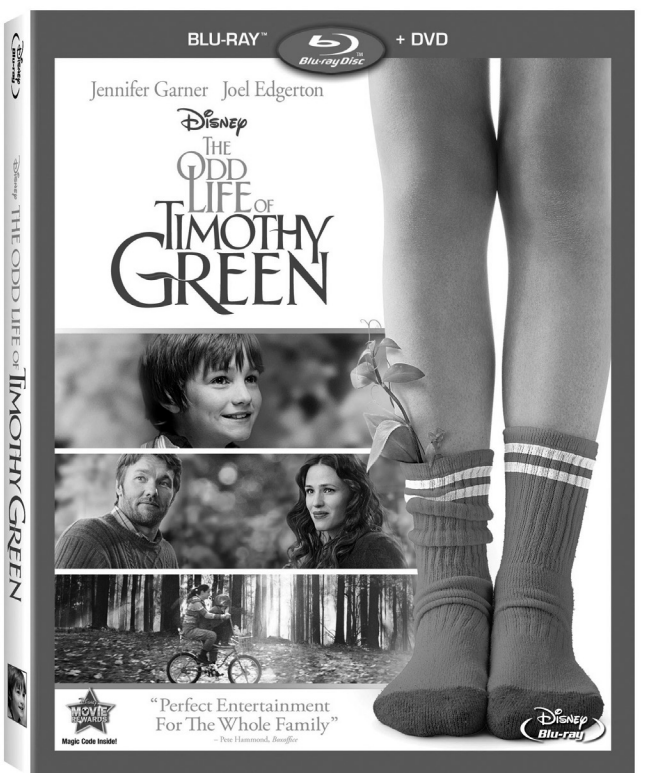
This is how the story of *The Odd Life of Timothy Green* starts off and it is absolutely wonderful. *The Odd Life of Timothy Green* is not a movie that will have you enthralled with its action or laughing on the edge of your seat with humor, but it is a heartwarming tale of family and love.

The story is told through flashbacks as Cindy and Jim are at an adoption agency trying to persuade an agent on why they would be good to adopt and while some movies may make this a farce, *The Odd Life of Timothy Green*, however, treats its subject matter with an endearing reality.

The movie also works because of its actors. Jennifer Garner (*13 Going on 30*, *Catch Me if You Can*) and Joel Edgerton (*Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*, *Warrior*) play their characters with such believability that you cannot help but be caught up as they find themselves happy for the opportunity they are in, but baffled as to how they are to explain it to their families.

Not to mention having to raise a child who is not familiar with earthly customs, but the one who steals the show is CJ Adams in only his second film role, and first major one, as Timothy Green. From his unique observations to his impeccable manners, CJ plays the role as a seasoned vet with years of experience.

The Odd Life of Timothy Green is a Disney film that did not receive much Disney fanfare, but it should have. I recommend that you rent *The Odd Life of Timothy Green*.



Do You Know a Student That Should be Spotlighted?
News Tip?
Story Idea?
or Just Want to Voice your Opinion?

We Want To Know!

Call Us - 256-297-1847
Facebook Us
Tweet Us
or E-mail Us
voice@cullmansense.com

Community Matters

Giving Goats for Christmas? (Continued from Front)

wanted to someway help. I came back and shared the story with my students, they were really excited and wanted to help out too," said Roberts.

The students were not just excited about the prospect of raising funds to send goats to families in need, they were moved. Seeing a need to help, all six of the 2nd grade classes seized upon the moment; quickly organizing their own goat fundraising efforts.

Annalee Thornton, of Mrs. Roberts' class, said the experience was a fun one. She said she, "just wanted to help the country because they don't have as much as we have."

Her classmate, Kanen Trussell, echoed her response but added the act of kindness made him feel cheerful because he knows, "they don't have much over there and we have a lot, so I just wanted to get goats for them."

Not only did the 2nd grade students get onboard with the fundraising efforts, not to be outdone, the 5th grade classes at West Point Intermediate began pooling funds together.

Presley Palmer, a fifth grade student, was moved by the story. So much so that she elected to use one of her allotted three Christmas gifts to purchase two goats. The decision was not a hard one for Palmer to make, especially since she knew how important a single goat could be to an entire family.

"My mom says 'if three presents was good enough for Jesus then three presents is good enough for us'," said Palmer. "Well she kept telling me I needed to figure out what I wanted for my third present. She told me I had one week to decide. While I was thinking about it, we were told about the people in Haiti and how important the goat is to them. The goat can provide milk, cheese, and eventually meat. It was an easy decision."

West Point Intermediate Principal Shane Barnette was overjoyed with his students outpouring of support for the fundraising efforts. As a man who has been to Haiti recently, he was able to express to his students the impact that just one goat could make.

"Well I went to Haiti with West Point Baptist Church on a trip, the kids knew where I was at, and so when I came back they were all asking about the trip. So one day, in a spare room we have, I setup a slideshow for the students," said Barnette. "I tied it into Thanksgiving and talked about how thankful we should be because even though those living in Haiti have hardly anything they are still grateful."

Barnette said as the day went on some of the students began asking how they could get involved. He said that's when the 5th grade class proposed an immediate solution.

"Instead of exchanging presents they wanted to take the money they would have spent on gifts for one another, and then put it towards purchasing goats," he said. "It tickles me to death to see them so willing to give. And Presley setting aside one of her gifts to give two goats, is just remarkable. I'm just so proud of these students."

Between both grades the students raised enough money to purchase 17 goats, which isn't too shabby considering the goats cost $50 each. The final tally blew Campbell's initial expectations of 10 or 12 goats.

"I would like to tell the children how proud I am of them for opening their hearts to help others less fortunate. The families in Haiti will be so thankful for their willingness to give them a gift that can literally change their lives," said Campbell.

"I want to thank the parents who helped make all of this possible. You may never know just what an impact that something as simple as buying a goat can have on a family, community, or even a country. It opens the door for the Good News of Jesus to be shared. That is our purpose after all."

To make a donation, visit haitiseden.org. Donations may also be brought to West Point First Baptist Church office, or at Campbell & Company Salon.



2013 CULLMAN SAVINGS BANK
FROSTY 5k
cpr cullman city parks & recreation
& POLAR BEAR PLUNGE
Saturday January 12, 2013 at 9:00am
at the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center
Pre-register today at the Civic Center or register online at www.active.com.
The first 250 runners receive a free technical shirt!
Everyone who takes the plunge will be entered into a drawing to win a free 1 Year Membership to the Wellness and Aquatic Center. ($780 value!)
For more info contact the Cullman Civic Center at 256-734-9157
Working for Cullman County Families Since 1887
Cullman Savings Bank

Comics by St. Edo - st.edo@cullmansense.com

