Series 3, Issue 47 Monday, November 25, 2013

Cullman's Monday Newspaper

CULLMANSENSE

Community Matters

$0.50 $0.50

Local



2013 Farm-City Banquet gives thanks, recognition to all local farmers and producers p7

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Ala.'s Sept. and Oct. Unemployment Rates Announced; Cullman County at 5.4%

By: Tara Hutchison

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Tom Surtees today announced Alabama's September unemployment rate and October's preliminary rate.

In September, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.4%, up from August's revised rate of 6.2%. This represents 136,716 unemployed persons, up from 134,287 in August, and significantly lower than the 157,360 reported unemployed in September 2012.

October's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 6.5%. October's rate represents 138,029 unemployed persons, up from 136,716 in September, and, again, significantly lower than the 152,957 reported in October 2012. "This is a unique situation in that we have never experienced a reporting period quite like this one," said Surtees. "Obviously, the federal government shutdown impacted many jobs in Alabama. It also affect-

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HOLIDAY BAZAAR



Holiday Bazaar draws large crowd, raises money for Vinemont band p7

State Spending Dips As Stimulus Money Dries Up

By: Elaine S. Povich • Stateline

States' overall spending declined for the first time in 26 years in fiscal year 2012 as federal stimulus money dried up, according to a new report by the National Association of State Budget Officers.

However, NASBO expects the 1.7 percent decrease between 2011 and 2012 to be a temporary blip. Although final numbers are not yet available, the group estimates that total state expenditures were up 4.7 percent in fiscal year 2013.

State expenditures of federal money declined 9.1 percent in 2012, more than offsetting a 2.2 percent increase in states' spending from general and other funds. The reason was revenues: State tax revenues increased $23.3 billion in 2012, while the federal dollars flowing to states as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act declined by $63.4 billion.

NASBO estimates that in 2013 state general fund revenues increased 5.4 percent, including sales, personal income, corporate income, gaming and other taxes.

"Our report shows that while state budgets are growing, the growth is still quite modest," said NASBO Executive Director Scott Pattison.

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Congressman Aderholt remarks on Blue Cross and Blue Shield Announcement

By: Brian Rell

No Magic Wand to make the Numbers Add-up

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Robert Aderholt (AL-04) released the following statement after the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama announcement that the Affordable Care Act known as Obamacare precluded their ability to offer health care plans previously available for the same cost to provide the same coverage.

"If you look beyond the problems associated with the healthcare.gov website, the bottom line is that the things

p6

UA selects Cullman for first in-home recruiting

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – A collection of eager juniors and seniors converged on the home of Rod and Sunshine Wynn recently to speak with University of Alabama's Dr. Shane Sharpe, Dean of Honors College, regarding the benefits of attending the university's honors college.

"A small, select group of high achieving students were invited to this casual event so that Dean Sharpe can talk one-on-one with parents and students about unique opportunities and programs within the Honors College," Tara L. Rinks, Regional Recruiter for North Alabama Office of Undergraduate Admissions, Uni-

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Shop Small: Small Business Saturday is November 30

By: Natalie Bonner

It's the stores we've come to love. It's the stores that aren't available just anywhere. It's the stores that Cullmanites are so very proud to call their own; the non-chain, "mom and pop" stores, if you will. These are the places that Small Business Saturday was born for. These are the places that the "shop small" craze celebrates.

Small Business Saturday is one of the most important shopping days of the year for small-town and local shop owners.

This is their own version of "Black Friday," as community members make "shopping small" a movement in support of their local stores and shops.

Cullman Downtown Merchants Association President Nathan Anderson said of Small Business Saturday, "It is a great way to show our local businesses how important they are to our community. According to Business Insider, small businesses provide 44% of the U.S. payroll, and 64% of all new jobs come from small businesses."

These may be shocking statistics to those who are unaware of such information and may choose to go to a big chain such as Wal-Mart to save just a little more on their purchases.

And while Wal-Mart can be viewed as the leader on big savings, it comes at a price. Often times, you can score just as great a deal at the smaller stores, but people flock to Wal-Mart out of habit.

With a tagline that boasts, "Save money. Live better." Wal-Mart surely urges shoppers to come there over anywhere. Not to knock the giant monopoly that is Wal-Mart (hey, to each his own), but there are certainly other local places that offer even better quality at comparable or even lower prices.

Anderson said, "Our local small business owners do so much for our local economy by providing jobs and generating revenue. More revenue means better support for our community."

So just how does "shopping locally" benefit our community as a whole?

To name a few, it provides many benefits to our local economy such as additional jobs as mentioned, convenience and unique retail stores. Small businesses are advertised as the "heartbeat of our communities."

Anderson also said, "It benefits our local economy and strengthens our community. On average, for every $100 spent locally, $45 will be reinvested in the local economy."

Even American Express is rewarding their cardholders who shop small, stating that cardholders will get $10 back when they spend $10 or more.

American Express is a huge advocate of Small Business Saturday. They are awarding the following offer to those who shop at qualifying business locations on November 30.

With Celebrate Christmas coming up, Anderson said, "This event will offer lots of family-centered entertainment located around our downtown area. It will be an excellent opportunity for shopping locally."

November 23rd Proclaimed "National Adoption Day" in Cullman

By: Leanne West



Amy Smith, Ashley Campbell, Mayor Townson, Lainie Alexander, and Callie Smith. Not pictured is Christy Webb.

CULLMAN – On Tuesday, November 18, 2013, the City of Cullman recognized the efforts of adoption workers in our community by proclaiming November 23, 2013, "National Adoption Day" in Cullman.

Since 2000, "National Adoption Day" has been observed throughout the country as a collective effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children waiting in foster care in the U.S. The goal is to create "forever families" by finalizing adoptions from foster care and honoring all families who adopt.

Cullman Mayor Max A. Townson presented the official proclamation to representatives from Cullman's Department of Human Resources (DHR). Accepting the proclamation were Lainie Alexander (Program Supervisor), Callie Smith (Resource Worker), Amy Smith (Social Worker Supervisor), and Ashley Campbell (Social Worker).

Director Catherine Denard stated that she is proud of DHR staff in their efforts to keep children safe and ensure permanency for children in care. Mrs. Denard also stated that without the efforts of the Judges, the Cullman County Court System and community partners, many children would still be in foster care. Mrs. Denard commented that it is nice to work in a community who put children first.

In Cullman, thirty-one children have been placed with permanent families through the Cullman County DHR this year.

To find out more about the services DHR provides, including adoption services, call or visit them online at dhr.alabama.gov or call 256-737-5300.

St. Bernard Middle School hosts food drive

By: Joyce Nix

CULLMAN – Students at St. Bernard Middle School students have spent two weeks collecting food items to contribute to families in the Cullman community for Thanksgiving dinner.

Religion instructor, Martha Ann Warnke, provided a sign-up sheet requesting students to bring canned goods and other items that would make for a perfect Thanksgiving dinner. As items were brought to school, it was displayed on their respective tables. "We had a great response this year," Warnke said. "We still have $70 left in cash donations, which will be used to purchase more turkeys and ham."

The boarding students along with the faculty provided money to purchase turkeys and hams; and the commuting students contributed the much needed side dish items from cake and pumpkin pie mix to green beans and stuffing.

William Calvert, Middle School Principal, said this is an annual event at St. Bernard Middle School. "Our students and their families always come through with enough food to feed several families at this time of year."

All food is donated to the St. Vincent DePaul Food Bank at Sacred Heart Church in Cullman.

Recruiting (from Front)

versity of Alabama, said. "This includes University Fellows Experience, Computer-Based Honors Program, research projects, study abroad opportunities, and civic engagement."

A brief Honors presentation was held before students were able to meet with Dean Sharpe and other UA representatives one-on-one. Representation from Honors College, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Scholarships, and the Cullman County Alumni Chapter were each in attendance.

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Jill Gudger Howell, M.A. Ed.
President/ Developer,
PreK-12th Grade
"$cholar$hip Jump$tart"

Did you know that traditionally the most important deadline for 12th grade college funding is Dec. 1 nationally for them to receive priority, merit-based funding consideration for all (4) years of undergraduate work?

Did you know that seniors who want to transfer from a 2-year program to a 4-year need to go ahead and prepare for transfer scholaship eligibility now?

While there are many variables that affect a student being selected for a merit-based award over another similarly academically qualified student, typically, the student's gpa & test score are the standards by which the student is entered into his/her highest "eligibility selection window":

- Seniors with higher scores, let us show you how to maximize your auto-offers!
- Seniors with mid-range scores, let us show you how to maximize your remaining merit-based funding opportunities!
- Seniors with no/low scores, let us show you what you still can do to get as much funding as possible!
- Seniors with exceptional circumstances, let us show you how to help ensure that all of your additional opportunities are utilized!

Our locally owned & nationally known company that is featured on the Dave Ramsey Radio Show's 'Kids & Money segment' and recommended by certified Dave Ramsey coaches & Financial Peace University coordinators across the country since 2005, invites your family to give our results-oriented college funding team a call today to let us help you 'make college cost less'!

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What's Online

Making Strides Towards Awareness

In order to raise awareness sometimes, well most times, those reaching out must put themselves in positions they would normally not find themselves in. Case in point, on Saturday the weather was sloppy, with a fresh layer of rain topped by a thick cover of fog...

qrne.ws/125



Holidays can be Stressful for Seniors: Advice for Caregivers

The holidays may be filled with joy, but for the ever-growing number of aging Americans and those who care for them this otherwise celebratory season can become mired in challenges.

qrne.ws/126

OPINION: Stifling Activism, the Bureaucratic Way

I am writing and raging. Raging because I am tired, oh so tired, of my activism being repressed or limited by bureaucratic minutia and ridiculous protocol. I am even more upset at the ways bureaucracy stifles my students who, because they are informed and outraged...

qrne.ws/127

More Schools Collecting, Using Student Data

By: Adrienne Lu • Stateline

A growing number of states are expanding the way they use student and school data. Teachers easily tap into data about their students' performance to adjust how they teach, and parents can log into networks to learn how their children are doing, according to a new report by the Data Quality Campaign, a Washington-based nonprofit that advocates using data to improve student achievement.

Along the way, questions about student privacy and other concerns are mounting.

Among the report's findings:

- Teachers this year can access information about their students through secure state web sites or portals in 35 states, an increase from 28 states in 2011. Teachers can view multiple years' worth of information about individual students, including courses taken and attendance.
- In 17 states, teacher training programs can tap into information about how their graduates are performing in the classroom, up from six states in 2011. The data show how students in those teachers' classrooms perform on standardized tests.
- Parents in 14 states can access electronic data about their children.
- Thirty-one states use data to identify the students most at risk of academic failure or dropping out, up from 18 in 2011.
- Forty-five states have policies requiring the maintenance or use of school data systems, up from 36 in 2011.

The survey of state programs was taken in the summer and includes results from the District of Columbia and every state except California, which declined to participate.

Aimee Rogstad Guidera, executive director of the Data Quality Campaign, said the survey showed the focus has now shifted from collecting data in the schools to actually using it.

"State leaders increasingly recognize that empowering parents, educators and policymakers with the right data at the right time in the right format better ensures our young people graduate from high school prepared for postsecondary education and careers," Guidera said.

Privacy Issues

The report also highlights challenges for schools and states handling student data, such as the need to ensure privacy. Oklahoma, for example, passed legislation this year establishing safeguards around the collection and use of student data.

Elsewhere around the country, several states that had signed up to work with inBloom, an Atlanta-based nonprofit that collects and stores student data for school districts, have since backed off over security concerns. In New York, parents are suing to stop the state education department from working with inBloom. Parents have expressed concerns about inBloom's plan to place student data on a cloud-based data system accessible through the Internet. The group said its system is secure, and that school districts will be able to manage and control their own data.

Stateline is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news service of the Pew Charitable Trusts that provides daily reporting and analysis on trends in state policy.

James Fields Announces Historic Run for Alabama Lieutenant Governor



Submitted by: Dr. Mell Johnson

BIRMINGHAM – James Fields, former state representative from Cullman announced a historic run for Lieutenant Governor at Harbert Center on Friday.

"I've been a coach and mentor to 1,000s of children. If I can corral them, teach them, help them to learn to be respectful and make the right choices, I can do that for the Alabama State Legislature," stated Fields.

What makes Fields' announcement historic is if he wins the primary, as expected, he would be slated to become the first African-American nominee for statewide executive office in Alabama.

Fields' life has been devoted to helping and guiding people - from being a minister, to working as a supervisor for nearly 30 years for the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations to coaching young people - Fields has used his leadership skills for the betterment of all our citizens.

He is proud of his education as a graduate of Jacksonville State University and training at the Marine Corps Officers' Academy in Quantico, Virginia. He is a director of the Alabama Wildlife Federation and sits on numerous boards of trustees, including the Cullman Electric Cooperative, Victims Services of Cullman and Hanceville Civitans.

He is a pastor at St. James United Methodist Church in Birmingham.

Grant to help University of Ala. prevent assaults, assist victims

By: Mike Presley

MONTGOMERY — Gov. Robert Bentley has awarded a $120,000 grant to help the University of Alabama prevent assaults and offer professional assistance to students and staff members who become victims of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault.

Located on campus, the Women's Resource Center offers free and confidential assistance to victims, including crisis intervention and counseling to help with emotional trauma after an attack. Advocates help victims navigate the criminal justice system.

Through Project HOPE, the center also instructs students how to avoid dangerous situations and protect themselves if threatened. The center offers presentations, workshops, and educational materials.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grant from funds made available by the U.S. Justice Department.

ADECA administers an array of programs supporting law enforcement and traffic safety, economic development, energy conservation, workforce development, water resource management, and recreation development. Bentley notified Cynthia Hope, director of the university's Office of Sponsored Programs, that he had approved the grant. Matching funds of $30,000 are supplementing the award.

Governor Bentley Proclaims Nov. 20-28 Farm-City Week

By: Jeff Helms

MONTGOMERY — As Alabama families prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving, Gov. Robert Bentley honored the partnerships that make the bounty of the season possible by proclaiming Nov. 20-28 Farm-City Week in Alabama.

"Alabama farmers grow the food and fiber we depend on everyday, but they can't feed the world alone," Bentley said. "It takes cooperation between urban and rural communities to provide farm labor, equipment and supplies; market agricultural products; and deliver those goods to customers. Farm-City Week recognizes the value of these partnerships in feeding our families and fueling our economy."

First observed in 1955, Farm-City Week is celebrated the week before Thanksgiving as a way to foster greater understanding between farmers and their urban neighbors. In Alabama, thousands of volunteers are involved in tours, banquets, business luncheons and children's activities to educate the public about the importance of agriculture.

The statewide theme for this year's Farm-City Week observance is "Alabama Agriculture: Growing for You and Me." It focuses on an economic impact study released earlier this year showing agriculture and forestry related industries contribute $70.4 billion a year to Ala.'s economy and create 580,295 jobs — or 22 percent of the state's workforce.

MADD Alabama announces 2013 Legislative Champions

By: Carol Ronis

Representative Farley and Senator Holtzclaw Recognized for Authoring Drunk Driving Legislation

MONTGOMERY —Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) recently announced its "2013 Legislative Champions" and recognized Representative Allen Farley (R-McCalla) and Senator Bill Holtzclaw (R-Madison) for their leadership within the Alabama Legislature to stop drunk driving.

"MADD thanks Representative Farley and Senator Holtzclaw for their tireless work and commitment to advancing MADD's mission in Alabama. MADD supports expanding the use of ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers as this DUI countermeasure has been key in saving lives on the nation's roads," said MADD Alabama volunteer and former National Board Member Glenda Richardson.

In 2013, Representative Farley and Senator Holtzclaw authored HB 477 and SB 401 to help implement Alabama's 2011 ignition interlock law.

This legislation, that will incentivize the use of ignition interlocks for all first time offenders with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 to .14, is currently being discussed as part of an interim study session for 2014. In 2011, Alabama became the last state to enact an ignition interlock law.

"As legislators, a lot of bills come across our desks, but rarely is there an opportunity to sponsor legislation that is all but guaranteed to save lives," said Senator Bill Holtzclaw. "I am glad to partner with MADD and I thank them for taking such a proactive role with the use of ignition interlocks. Tragically, a five year old boy was killed in my district a few years back because of a drunk driver and I will not stop fighting to stop this preventable crime."

"As a former Assistant Sheriff and volunteer in a substance abuse recovery program, I know the irrevocable damage alcohol abuse can do to families, especially those whose loved ones are killed by drunk drivers," said Representative Allen Farley.

"This is a preventable crime, and I feel that ignition interlocks are a proven way to save lives and heal harmful habits. I want to thank MADD for the honor of this award, but I also thank my colleagues for keeping this important issue at the forefront of the legislative agenda," said continued Farley.

"MADD applauds and is grateful to Representative Farley and Senator Holtzclaw for authoring legislation improving Alabama's drunk driving law. MADD looks forward to the 2014 session so we can advance legislation implementing Alabama's ignition interlock program and requiring these devices for any DUI offender who drives during a license suspension," said MADD National President Jan Withers.

On Thursday, November 21, 2013, MADD staff and volunteers presented Representative Farley and Senator Holtzclaw with their certificates to thank them for their commitment to save lives in Alabama.

A major portion of MADD's advocacy efforts across the Nation originates from the Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving® that was launched in 2006. A key component of the Campaign calls for laws requiring, or highly incentivizing, ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers like HB 477 and SB 401 authored by Senator Holtzclaw and Representative Farley. Prior to the Campaign, only one state (New Mexico), required ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers. Today, 20 states require or highly incentivize the use of ignition interlocks for all convicted drunk drivers.

For more information on ignition interlocks, please visit www.madd.org/interlock.

Showdown on the Plains

By: Josh McBrayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

November 30th is a date that has been circled on countless calendars across the state. To the majority of Americans, it is just another Saturday but to Alabamians it has been the biggest day of the year since they were old enough to understand football. I am, of course, talking about the Iron Bowl.

The annual contest between the Tigers of Auburn and the Alabama Crimson Tide has been a must see in the state of Alabama since the rivalry was renewed in 1948 and it usually captures the attention of the national viewing audience as the game features two of the premier teams in the Southeastern Conference.

The game earned it's name due to being played at Legion Field in Birmingham, a place known for the steel industry, for a large chunk of the 20th Century. The phrase was coined by legendary coach Shug Jordan whose name is on Auburn's stadium.

Alabama leads the all-time series with a record of 42-34-1 and also holds the win with the largest margin, 55-0 in '48. When the game moved to Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa for the first time in 2000, it was Auburn who had the edge, dropping Alabama 9-0. The Tigers would win the next three in Tuscaloosa before Alabama secured a 36-0 victory at home in 2008. There have been many memorable games over the years, from both teams.

AUBURN

- **1957** - Auburn came into the Iron Bowl in '57 9-0 and looking to finish out a perfect season which they did, romping the Crimson Tide 40-0 at Legion Field on their way to the Associated Press National Title.
- **1972** - In the game that is known as "Punt Bama Punt", Auburn came into the game as a huge underdog to the #2 ranked Alabama squad. Auburn was down by a 16-3 score when Alabama was forced to punt. Bill Newton broke through the line and blocked the punt attempt of Greg Gantt. David Langner of Auburn caught the ball on the fly and ran it in 25 yards for the score, making the score 16-10. Later in the game, with Alabama still up 16-10, Newton again blocked the punt and again it was ran in for the touchdown by Langner. Auburn hit the PAT and won the game 17-16.
- **2005** - In 2005 it was all about defense for Auburn. Seven different Auburn defenders got to Alabama quarterback Brodie Croyle for a record 11 sacks on the Crimson Tide QB. Auburn won the game 28-18 and spawned the bumper stickers that read "Honk if you sacked Brodie."
- **2010** - "The Cam-Back" is freshest on the minds of the Auburn fans and one of the most memorable. Alabama was ranked #11 while Auburn was #2. The Crimson Tide jumped out to a 24-0 lead. However, eventual Heisman Trophy winner Cam Newton led Auburn all the way back, capping the comeback with a TD pass to tight end Phillip Lutzenkirchen. Auburn won the game 28-27 and went on to win the National Championship. This is the largest deficit overcome for a win in the storied rivalry.

ALABAMA

- **1981** - The '81 Iron Bowl will forever hold a special place in the hearts of Alabama fans. This was the game where legendary coach Paul "Bear" Bryant notched his 315th victory, passing Amos Alonzo Stagg as the all time winningest coach (at the time).
- **1985** - Known as "The Kick," one of the best kickers the rivalry has ever seen, Van Tiffen boomed a 52 yard field goal that found it's way through the uprights as time expired, giving Alabama the 25-23 victory. The kick tied the longest field goal of the rivalry.
- 2008 - "The Beatdown in T-Town" was one of the most lopsided victories in the series. The top ranked Tide crushed the Tigers 36-0, marking Tommy Tubberville's last game as Auburn head coach and ending the six game Iron Bowl win streak for Auburn.
- 2009 - The #2 Alabama squad trailed the unranked Tigers 21-2 with just over eight minutes left in the game. This was where Alabama QB Greg McElroy took over. He completed seven straight passes including a TD pass to Roy Upchurch with 1:24 left to seal the win for the Crimson Tide.

With all of these great match ups, it is no wonder why the whole state will be tuned in Saturday for the 65th Iron Bowl!

Wallace State volleyball eliminated at NJCAA Division I national tournament, concludes season at 30-17

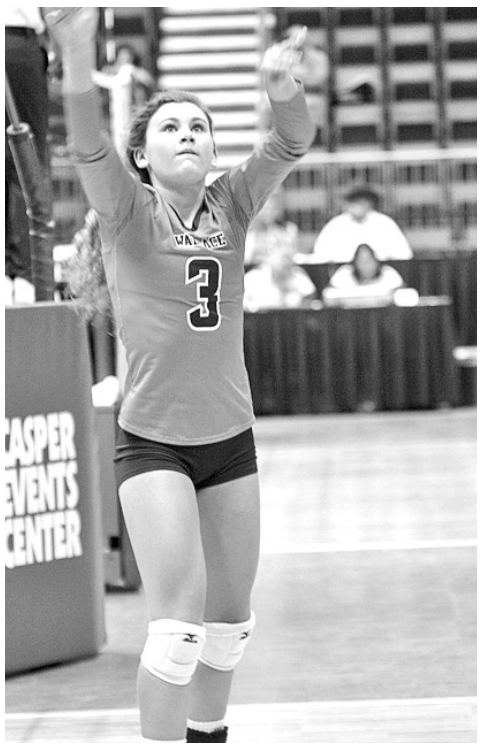
By: Russell Moore • WSCC Contributor

CASPER, WYO – Wallace State's five-time defending state champion volleyball team had its season end recently at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division I national championship tournament in Casper, Wyo.

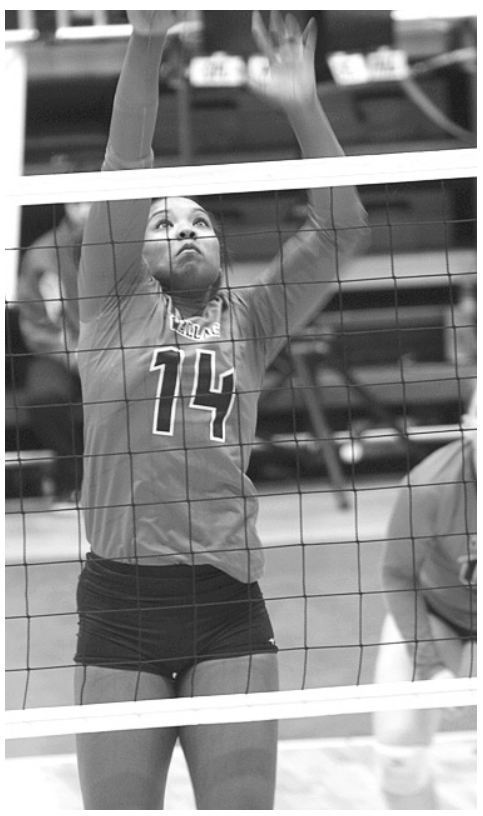
Wallace State, making its state-best 14th national tournament appearance and fifth in a row, lost 14-25, 8-25, 18-25 to seventh-seeded Central Florida College at the Casper Events Center.

The Lions (30-17) started off strongly in the first and third sets, maintaining early leads, but Central Florida battled back each time, securing its sweep.

"Central Florida College is very good. We were just outmatched. Their size and strength gave us a lot of trouble. It's been a struggle for us to win here, but as a whole, I'm proud of our team. Winning 30 matches with 11 freshmen is nothing to be ashamed of," said Wallace State coach Randy Daniel, who wrapped up his seventh season with the Lions. "Our team played well when it mattered most at our region tournament, so you have to be happy with our success.



Wallace State setter Taylor Traglia prepares to assist a teammate during the Lions' match vs. Central Florida College at the NJCAA Division I national tournament in Casper, Wyo.



Kianna Delaney skies in an attempt to block a shot from a Central Florida College opponent in their NJCAA Division I match Friday in Casper, Wyo.

"Our freshmen earned a lot of valuable experience, and you hope that is a good sign for the future going forward. Some of our freshmen are going to be very good players next season, so I'm definitely excited about those prospects."

Sophomore Kianna Delaney had five kills and four digs in her final match for Wallace State.

BreAnna Thompson finished with five kills and five digs for the Lions, Montana Clark had six digs and Taylor Traglia added a team-high 17 assists and six digs.

Central Florida College (27-13) was led by Raveen Golston's 11 digs and 10 kills. The Patriots, who have natives of Poland, Brazil, Spain, and Puerto Rico on their roster, had team totals of 43 digs and 39 kills against the Lions.

Wallace State, a No. 15 seed, lost its tournament opener to No.2 Tyler (Texas) College on Thursday.

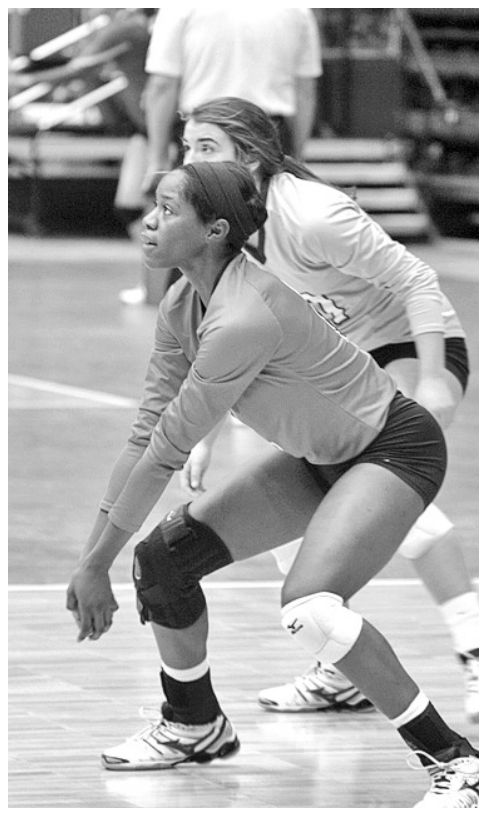
Delaney and Nicole Penny wrapped up their two-year careers with the Lions recently. The duo was a part of 53 wins, two state championships and a pair of national tournament appearances.

Delaney, a Chattanooga, Tenn. native, had an exceptional sophomore campaign. She was named the 2013 ACCC/Region 22 tournament MVP and the ACCC Player of the Year for her efforts during the regular season. Delaney led the conference in three categories, tallying 427 kills, 119 blocks and 3.16 kills per set and was also second in the conference with a .347 hitting percentage.

"Kianna has been such a good player for us for two years. It speaks a lot considering how much she has done as person here and how much she cares for me, the program and her teammates," Daniel said.

"Kianna is successful on and off the court because of her character and is going to be missed. She is like a daughter, and it's going to an adjustment not having her on the court next year." Penny was second on the team with 460 assists this season after earning All-Tournament and second-team All-Region honors last season. Blaise Brown, who transferred from Snead State last offseason, was the only other sophomore on this season's roster.

For more information about Wallace State athletics, visit wallacestate.edu.



Olivia Walker sets up to successfully dig a volley from a Central Florida College opponent during their Friday match.



Cullman County basketball scoring wrap-up

By: Josh Mc Brayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

On a week that was light with games leading into the Thanksgiving holidays that will see area teams mix it up in the Holly Pond and Hanceville annual tournaments, some teams were blown out while others were the one on the positive end of the lopsided victories. Here are the scores from around the county.

Monday

GIRLS
Cold Springs 69 vs. West Point 31

BOYS
Cold Springs 75 vs. West Point 65

Tuesday

GIRLS
Cold Springs 46 vs. West Point 26
Cullman 41 vs. Lawrence County 42 (Double overtime)
West Point 21 vs. Holly pond 58

BOYS
Cullman 90 vs. Lawrence County 70
Hanceville 92 vs. Cordova 31
Holly Pond 79 vs. West Point 62

Thursday

GIRLS
Hanceville 60 vs. Susan Moore 54

BOYS
Hanceville 79 vs. Susan Moore 42

Friday

GIRLS
Good Hope 44 vs. Danville 53
Hanceville 35 vs. Vinemont 33
West point 38 vs. East limestone 62
Holly Pond 71 vs. New Hope 16

BOYS
Good Hope 50 vs. Danville 61
Hanceville 52 vs. Vinemont 59
Holly Pond 85 vs. New Hope 64

Heaping Helpings of Hardwood

By: Josh Mc Brayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

Thursday is Thanksgiving. A time for family, friends, food, and ...basketball. That's right, it's Thanksgiving tournament time again. All eight local teams will be in action over the holiday break.

Cullman, Fairview, Holly Pond, Vinemont, and West Point will all be in action starting Wednesday in the 57th Annual Holly Pond Thanksgiving Tournament.

Cold Springs, Good Hope, and Hanceville will participate in the 31st Annual Hanceville Thanksgiving Tournament, the first tournament to be held in the new Lane Horton Gymnasium.

Here is how the tournaments will unfold:

57th Holly Pond Thanksgiving Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, November 27th
4:00 p.m.- Cullman vs. Vinemont
5:30 p.m.- West Point vs. Arab
7:00 p.m.- Fairview vs. JB Pennington
8:30 p.m.- Holly Pond vs. Locust Fork

Thursday, November 28th
4:00 p.m.- Loser of Fairview/Pennington vs. HP/LF loser
5:30 p.m.- Loser of Cullman/VM vs. WP/Arab loser
7:00 p.m.- Semifinal FV/Penn winner vs. HP/LF winner
8:30 p.m.- Semifinal Cullman/VM vs. WP/Arab winner

Friday, November 29th
5:00 p.m.- 5th place game
6:30 p.m.- 3rd place game
8:00 p.m.- Championship game

31st Hanceville Thanksgiving Tournament at New Lane Horton Gym

Tuesday, November 26th
4:00 p.m.- Good Hope vs. Corner
5:15 p.m.- Cold Springs vs. Springville
6:30 p.m.- Dora vs. Mortimer Jordan
7:45 p.m.- Hanceville vs. Curry

Wednesday, November 27th
3:30 p.m.- Loser of GH/Corner vs. CS/Springville
4:45 p.m.- Loser of Dora/MJ vs. Hanceville/Curry
6:00 p.m.- Semifinal – GH/Corner vs. CS/Springville
7:15 p.m.- Semifinal – Dora/MJ vs. Hanceville/Curry

Friday, November 29th
3:30 p.m.- 7th place game
4:45 p.m.- 5th place game
6:00 p.m.- 3rd place game
7:15 p.m.- Championship game

After visiting the family and gorging on turkey, ham, and pumpkin pie, come out and watch some great high school hardwood action!

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Auburn Downs Murray State, 75-67

By: Matt Crouch

AUBURN, Ala. – KT Harrell went for 17 points and 10 rebounds while Chris Denson had his third 20-point game of the season, scoring 23, as Auburn defeated Murray State, 75-67, on Saturday night.

Tied at 44-44 with 14:17 left in the game, Auburn (3-1) went on an 8-0 run over the next three-and-a-half minutes. Denson hit three shots in the run as Auburn went up 52-44. Denson would score 19 of his points after intermission, hitting 7-of-9 from the floor and 5-of-9 from the free throw line, collecting his seventh consecutive double-digit scoring game dating to last season.

Murray State would trim the lead to a bucket, 53-51, with 9:08 left but was never able to tie it up as Auburn scored the next seven points to extend the lead to nine, 60-51.

The lead would grow to 12 twice, the last coming at 67-55 with 4:06 left.

Asauhn Dixon-Tatum finished with 10 points and 6 rebounds for Auburn while Allen Payne had 7 points and tied his career-high with 10 rebounds.

Point guard Tahj Shamsid-Deen scored 11 points as Auburn had four players in double figures for the first time this season.

Jeffery Moss and Cameron Payne each had 16 points for Murray State (2-3).

Auburn returns to the floor on Tuesday at 7 p.m. when it plays host to Tennessee State.

Auburn Falls At UT-Chattanooga, 80-52

By: Matt Crouch

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. – Playing a team with the second-longest home winning streak in the country, the Auburn women's basketball team dropped to 3-2 on the season Sunday with an 80-52 loss at Tennessee-Chattanooga (4-1). Turnovers and defensive lapses sealed the fate for the Tigers.

Sophomore Tra'cee Tanner came off the bench to lead the Tigers with 14 points and eight rebounds. Junior Kiani Parker added 10 points while freshman Allina Starr tallied team highs with five assists and two steals.

"We played about as bad as we could have played," said Auburn head coach Terri Williams-Flournoy. "We didn't play defense and then we came down offensively and turned the ball over. We had 22 turnovers against a team that did not even press us."

The Tigers were in the hole from the start, going down 14-0 in the opening minutes of the game. But, Auburn rallied back and cut the UT-Chattanooga lead to three with less than six minutes to play.

The Lady Mocs had another run in them, though, and pulled back away for a 35-24 lead at the break. Auburn's freshmen and sophomores had 18 of the 24 first-half points.

UT-Chattanooga came out determined in the second half to not let Auburn back in the game and did just that. The Lady Mocs led by as many as 29 points in the final period to polish off the 80-52 win.

Meghan Downes led UTC with 17 points while Ashlen Dewart and Alex Black scored 13 each. Taylor Hall had seven points, eight rebounds and five steals.

Auburn's youth fueled the team, as freshmen and sophomores accounted for 32 of the Tigers' 52 points.

Senior Tyrese Tanner had eight points and five rebounds while freshmen Brandy Montgomery and Katie Frerking added eight and seven points each, respectively.

Auburn will return to action this week as the team travels to Las Vegas, Nev., for the South Point Thanksgiving Shootout at the South Point Hotel and Casino. The Tigers will take on Ball State at 2 p.m. CT, Friday, and No. 22/16 Iowa State at 9:30 p.m. CT, Saturday.

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Jet Pep - Hwy 157
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Southmart Chevron - Hwy. 278
The Hutch
Vinemont Super Saver
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West Point Superette

Black Friday Survival Guide

By: Natalie Bonner

She had a black eye, a busted lip, and a small limp. And she was missing a shoe. Yes, a shoe. This was the encounter I witnessed on my first (and probably last) Black Friday. Now, don't get me wrong – I am all for saving a dollar, and people everywhere love the competitive edge and the savings that go hand-in-hand with this unofficial "holiday," but I am simply not one of these people by nature.

So, for those of you out there who may secretly cringe or tremble in fear of venturing out at 5 a.m. the day after Thanksgiving, take heart, for I have created a Black Friday Survival Guide for you in just five easy steps!

1. **Prepare.** Go online and check out all the best sales in advance. Compose a list of the most important items you need. After creating your list, narrow it down to the most imperative items with the most savings. List the places you will shop for according to what is next to each other.
2. **Plan.** Bring small snacks to munch on if you get hungry. Make sure you have plenty of water with you to stay hydrated – especially if your Black Friday adventure will be an all-dayer. Know your route inside and out so you can save as much time as possible.
3. **Communicate.** It might seem kiddish, but walkie-talkies might just be your best friends on this day. Of course, cell phones are great, too, but sometimes winning that prized possession can come down to mere seconds, and this is where walkies-talkies will win with ease – they are fast and efficient.
4. **Execute.** Once you have your plan of action in place, make sure your team understands every last detail so there are no mix-ups. Each one of you should have separate items to find and purchase. Or you and a partner could tag-team an area and come out twice as lucky. Remember to be swift, yet respectful. No one need shed some blood over a flat screen television, just saying.
5. **Rejoice.** Once Black Friday has been defeated, come home and lay out your marked down goodies and revel in your savings and victory. You can then mark off the items you lucked out on, and focus on what's left to get on your Christmas list.

There you go – five easy steps to ensure a less stressful Black Friday Although I will be comfortably lounging in sweats and feasting on Thanksgiving leftovers, I give major props to all of you brave souls who awaken in the wee hours of the morning, ready to fight the war on savings. And remember this all too popular Black Friday meme floating around on the Internet: Black Friday - Because only in America, people trample others for cheap goods mere hours after being thankful for what they already had. This meme is funny, but also serious. People do get injured on this day, I have witnessed this first-hand. Exercise safety over savings. That flat screen television sure is pretty, but a black eye is not.

Great Holiday Gifts for Current and Future College Students



(StatePoint) Whether the students in your life are in high school and dreaming about their future majors, or in the middle of their college careers, the holiday season is a great opportunity to shower them with gifts that quench their thirst for knowledge and foster their academic interests.

Stumped? Here are a few holiday gift ideas to brighten the bookshelves and desks of your favorite scholars:

Make Cramming Easier

For dorm dwellers, book lights are crucial. When roomies are snoozing, night owls can use a book light that attaches to the pages of the book, or a task light that sits atop the desk, to keep studying in an unobtrusive manner.

Consider creating a gift basket full of snacks. But skip the junk food and instead fill the basket with "brain food." Nuts, almond butter, and popcorn are all great choices containing brain-boosting vitamins and minerals.

Simplify Complex Concepts

A standard text book covering weighty subject matter sometimes can make things even more confusing for a student. Help demystify some of the hard-to-grasp subjects with a new book series from DK Publishing, "Big Ideas, Simply Explained."

The fully-illustrated series uses innovative graphics and creative typography to cut through the haze of misunderstanding, untangles knotty theories, and sheds light on abstract concepts.

There are five books currently available: "The Philosophy Book," "The Psychology Book," "The Politics Book," "The Religions Book," and "The Economics Book," which covers more than 100 economic concepts from Aristotle to the top economic thinkers of today, and is a 2013 Parents Choice Gold Book Award Winner.

More information about these books and other forthcoming titles including, "The Business Book" and "The Science Book' is available at www.us.dk.com.

Broaden Horizons

No matter what your gift recipient plans to study or is currently studying, you can round out his or her education with a great dose of classic cinema. Consider a gift set that features the collected works of a gifted director such as Ingmar Bergman or Akira Kurosawa.

Or opt for a topical box set on a favorite subject, such as World War II or nature.

This holiday season, you can enrich and round out classroom learning in fun and interesting ways.

Blue Cross (from Front)

we have been warning about Obamacare are now coming true," said Aderholt. "The reason that the insurance companies cannot offer the same plans for the same price is that Obamacare changed the cost equation. Despite whatever the President wants to say, the actual numbers don't add up."

"Healthcare is complicated and you cannot make policy changes at the drop of a hat. Further, despite his best efforts to create one, there is no 'magic wand' available to the President to waive away unworkable portions of the law without Congress. Quite frankly, the President is now seeing what many Democrats in Congress have already accepted, Obamacare just plain does not work."

The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 3350, "Keep Your Health Plan Act," on November 15, 2013 with bipartisan support at 261-157, including 39 Democrats who crossed the aisle to support the measure despite the White House veto threat. It awaits action in the Senate.

Aderholt currently serves as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies for the powerful House Appropriations Committee, is a member of the Committee's Commerce, Justice and Science; and Homeland Security Subcommittees, and also serves on the Helsinki Commission.

Spending (from Front)

"States will continue to adjust to what many call the 'new normal' of slower growth for state finances. "

Medicaid is the largest single spending category in state budgets, though some of that money comes from the federal government. K-12 education spending is the largest budget item for states when only state dollars are considered. According to the NASBO report, Medicaid represented 24.5 percent of state budgets, up from 23.9 percent in both 2011 and 2012. Elementary and secondary education declined slightly from 20.1 percent of state budgets in fiscal 2012 to an estimated 20 percent in fiscal 2013.

The report predicts that in fiscal 2014 and beyond, states will continue to contend with slow economic growth and uncertainty about federal funding. Many state budget officers and governors have expressed frustration about the difficulty in planning state budgets as Congress careens from one fiscal crisis to the next.

On Capitol Hill, House and Senate negotiators are engaged in talks about whether, or how, to modify the next round of scheduled across-the-board sequester cuts. The outcome of those talks could greatly affect state budgets, but that will not be known for at least the next few weeks.

Meanwhile, states are juggling pent-up demands for the money they do have and worrying about whether revenues will keep up. "States are ... hopeful that spending and revenue will continue to grow moderately along with the national economy and the budget volatility of recent years will subside," NASBO said in its report.

Stateline is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news service of the Pew Charitable Trusts that provides daily reporting and analysis on trends in state policy.

Unemployment (from Front)

ed the numbers and how they were reported. Thousands of Alabamians were out of work in October due to the shutdown, and therefore affected our unemployment rate."

"Our department estimates that there are approximately 40,000 federal employees in Alabama. During the shutdown, nearly 2,000 filed initial unemployment compensation claims, but thousands more did not," Surtees continued. "Whether they didn't file because they knew they would be later paid, or for some other reason, we can't really know. When they file claims, they are traceable to some extent. The problem arose when the federal government conducted its monthly employment surveys and found discrepancies in the ways these federal government workers answered employment questions."

The Census Bureau is responsible for conducting the survey to identify members of the workforce each month and to determine who is working and who is not. This is known as the Current Population (CPS) or the household survey.

Another survey is conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a division of the U.S. Department of Labor among employers to measure how many jobs are in the economy. This is known as the establishment survey.

In the household survey, some furloughed workers answered that they were unemployed, but not looking for work, as they currently held jobs. This resulted in shrinking the labor force. At the same time, the same federal government jobs were counted as current jobs in the establishment survey.

After falling slightly in September, wage and salary employment increased in October by 8,600. One industry leading this increase is motor vehicle parts manufacturing, which has increased by nearly 17% since October 2012.

With the exception of three, all counties are showing a decrease in their October 2013 unemployment rate from October 2012, some with drops as high as one and a half percentage points, like Greene County (-1.6%), Washington County (-1.5%), and Chambers County (-1.5%).

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates in September were: Shelby County at 4.4%, Lee County at 5.0%, and Cullman County at 5.4%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates in September were: Wilcox County at 15.6%, Dallas County at 13.6%, and Bullock County at 13.0%.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates in October are: Shelby County at 4.3%, Lee County at 5.1%, and Cherokee County at 5.4%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates in October are: Wilcox County at 15.5%, Bullock County at 13.2%, and Dallas County at 13.0%.

2013 Farm-City Banquet

By: Natalie Bonner



CULLMAN - The annual Farm-City Banquet was held this past week on Thursday, November 21, 2013 at the Cullman Civic Center. An abundance of guests attended and several people were honored. Farm-City Banquet is an event held every year to give thanks to all the local farmers and producers and recognize their contributions to our community. It is also the kick-off event for National Farm-City Week, which is held the third week of November.

Farm-City Board Member Ashley Graves said of the event, "This is our way to show appreciation and let people know the food in the grocery store doesn't just appear. We honor the farmers who work hard all year long because they are the ones who put the food on our tables in the end."

The banquet featured Guest Speaker Caroline Aderholt, wife of Congressman Robert Aderholt. She spoke of her own experiences growing up on a cotton farm and how these roots instilled in her a great appreciation of where she came from. She comically described her parents, saying her father was a version of Atticus Finch from "To Kill a Mockingbird" and her mother would remind one of Lucille Ball.

Aderholt was listed in the program as "Entertainment," and she laughingly said she wasn't sure if that was correct. She told many anecdotes from her younger days, running around with her brothers and competing in local pageants such as "Little Miss Cotton Top" and "Maid of Cotton."

Aderholt wrapped up her speech by saying, "The greatest gift [my dad] gave us kids was a good name. Don't ever be ashamed of where you come from. Money can't buy what you have here."

The 2014 Farm Family was announced shortly thereafter, awarding Jeremy and Julie Calvert, and son James, the great honor. They graciously accepted their award, while the crowd thunderously applauded.

Jeremy Calvert humbly stated, "We don't do anything special. We are but survivors. We have what the Lord has blessed us with. We don't feel deserving of this honor."



With a farm that boasts 40 acres worth of such diverse produce as strawberries, peaches, cabbage, collards, tomatoes, okra, corn, peppers, watermelon, and eggplant, to name just a few, this farm family is certainly devoted to their land and produce and have earned this prestigious title.

Not to mention, their farm surely contributed, along with many others, in helping make Cullman County number one in agriculture in the state. The Farm-City Banquet had many accomplishments to celebrate.

The Farm-City Poster Contest awards were announced as well, naming three winners in two separate divisions. In the K-3 division: Preston Gay, first; Carson Smith, second; and Anna Martin, third. In the 4-6 division: Christian Bagwell, first; Abigail Kusz, second; and Landan Taylor, third.

Youth Awards were also given out, highlighting three outstanding students in three different divisions.

Kristin Quick from the Cullman Area Career Center was awarded Outstanding FCCLA Member. Abigail McClellan from Abundant Grace Christian Academy was awarded Outstanding 4-H Member. And Payden Smith from Holly Pond High School was awarded Outstanding FFA Member.

There was also a special recognition present in the form of a beautiful framed photo given to the 2013 City Family of the Year, Dr. Tom (Big Doc) and Judy Williamson.

Farm-City Committee Chairman Brian Lacy was awarded Outstanding Leadership as Chairman. Lacy was honored to receive this award and said, "I am merely the driver trying to keep it from going off the road. The engine is the advisors and members."

Lacy also expressed his gratitude and excitement for the event itself.

"The main purpose of Farm-City Week is to promote more understanding between rural and urban communities, which have traditionally always meant rural being agriculture based and urban being industry based, but how each group is dependent upon one another," Lacy said.

"Farmers can't do their jobs without industrial means, and industry workers rely on farmers for their fiber and such. Their jobs go hand-in-hand."

Bentley awards $1.8 million for emergency housing assistance

By: Mike Presley

MONTGOMERY — Gov. Robert Bentley has awarded grants totaling $1.8 million to help homeless Alabamians find immediate housing and to assist others who are in danger of becoming homeless.

The funds from the Emergency Solutions Grant program will provide shelter, legal, and health services and money-management education for families and individuals who are without a residence.

The program also can help these families with costs associated with moving to a new apartment or home including utility deposits and deposits needed for a rental property.

"During hard times, some residents may need temporary assistance to provide shelter for themselves and their families," Bentley said. "These grants will prevent homelessness by giving a helping hand to Alabamians at a time of critical need."

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grants from funds made available by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Bentley awarded the grants to 13 local governments and community agencies across the state that administer the program at the local level and assess needs of individuals who wish to be considered for assistance.

Local case managers screen applicants for program eligibility.

An individual or family requesting assistance can contact their local agency directly or may receive a referral to the program by a local shelter.

Below is a list of each amount awarded, the name of the grant recipient and the counties or areas served:

- $30,000 to Marshall County Commission (Marshall County)
- $180,000 to city of Tuscaloosa (Tuscaloosa County)
- $180,000 to Shelby County Commission (Shelby County)
- $180,000 to city of Huntsville (Huntsville)
- $180,000 to city of Birmingham (Birmingham)
- $180,000 to city of Gadsden (Etowah County)
- $132,866 to Montgomery Area Coalition for the Homeless (Montgomery, Autauga, Bullock, Elmore, and Lowndes counties)
- $40,000 to YWCA Central Alabama (Jefferson, Blount, Shelby, Walker, and St. Clair counties)
- $169,539 to 2nd Chance Inc. (Calhoun, Cherokee, Cleburne, Etowah, Randolph, and Talladega counties)
- $180,000 to Alabama Rural Coalition for the Homeless (Barbour, Bibb, Blount, Butler, Chambers, Chilton, Choctaw, Clarke, Clay, Cleburne, Coffee, Conecuh, Coosa, Covington, Crenshaw, **Cullman**, Dale, Dallas, Escambia, Fayette, Geneva, Greene, Hale, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Lamar, Lee, Macon, Marengo, Marshall, Monroe, Perry, Pickens, Pike, Randolph, Russell, Sumter, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Walker, Washington, and Wilcox counties)
- $180,000 to Safeplace Inc. (Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Marion, and Winston counties)
- $105,710 to AIDS Action Coalition of Huntsville (Madison, Morgan, and Limestone counties)
- $105,710 to Penelope House Family Violence Center Inc. (Mobile County)

Bazaar (from Front)

By: Noah Chandler • noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Christmas wreaths, ornate mailbox toppers, scroll saw designed ornaments, and a bevy of Christmas themed trinkets were each on display at the annual Vinemont Band Boosters Holiday Arts & Crafts Bazaar over the weekend at McGukin Civic Center.

"This is our annual fundraiser for the Vinemont Band," Kim, Band Booster treasurer, said. "This year has been a great success. It was a sold out show."

A total of 71 vendors attended this year's bazaar.

"This has definitely been the largest gathering of vendors to my memory," she said. "We've filled up the entire civic center with vendors, so we are all very happy for this year's outcome."

For more on the Vinemont Band Boosters Holiday Arts & Crafts Bazaar, visit CullmanSense.com.


Happy Thanksgiving from the City of Cullman!

MAYOR
Max A. Townson

CITY COUNCIL
Garlan E. Gudger, Jr.
Andy Page
John W. Cook
Clint Hollingsworth
Jenny Folsom

www.cullmancity.org
Phone: 256-775-7109
facebook.com/cullmancity

– Calendar –

Submit your event to calendar@cullmansense.com

Monday

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.

Domestic Violence Survivor Support Group
Victim Services of Cullman sponsors a Domestic Violence Survivor Support Group meeting every Monday evening from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the old County Board of Education Building with childcare available. For additional information please call 256-775-2600. CRISIS HOTLINE - 256-734-6100.

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

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

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

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

Tuesday

Festhalle Farmers' Market
The Festhalle Farmers' Market is once again open for business on Tuesdays through the spring and summer, from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. Come visit your local farmers as they offer their homegrown produce for your dinner table.

Beginner Line Dance Lessons
Beginner Line Dance Lessons for 6 weeks each Tuesday night starting October 15 at 6:30 p.m. These lessons will take place in the basement of the Col. Cullmann Museum. $5.00 per lesson per person, with Patricia Quick as instructor. Open for all.

Cullman Caring for Kids in Need of Donations
If you are able to contribute to Cullman County's Community Food Band, the 'Caring for Kids' organization, they would be grateful. Non-perishable food items are needed, and of course cash enables them to purchase needed products to fill their empty shelves. Please call 256-739-1111 to see how to help or mail checks or money orders to Cullman Caring for Kids, P. O. Box 698, Cullman, Alabama 35056-0698. Thanks in advance for anything you can do.

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.

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.

Wednesday

'Wii Bowling' at the Donald E. Green Senior Center
The entertainment for senior citizens is 'Wii Bowling' at the Donald E. Green Senior Center starting at 1 p.m. Everyone is invited. Come enjoy some exercise (but not too physical!) and fellowship with friends. They bowl every Wednesday and Friday afternoons at 1 p.m.

Latter Day Saints Genealogy Library
The Genealogy Library at the Latter Day Saints (L.D.S.) Church is open to the public each Wednesday night from 7 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Don Jones is available to open the Library at other times, if needed, so please contact him at 256-784-5098.

Girls & Boys Club at Spirit Life
Spirit Life Church will host a Girls & Boys Club meeting for those 12 and under every Wednesday beginning at 7 p.m. at the church. All are welcome. Please call the church for further info 256-739-3326.

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

Thursday

CULLMANSENSE WISHES EVERYONE A SAFE AND HAPPY THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Cullman County and City Senior Centers and Commission on Aging Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
All Cullman County and City Senior Centers and Commission on Aging office closed, November 28, and Friday, November 29, for the Thanksgiving holiday. Regular days and hours will resume on Monday, December 2.

Chamber for Children
Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring their 'Chamber for Children' collection of new, unwrapped items such as toys, clothing and general needs with all donations going to Cullman area families in need. Play 'Santa' this year and help those less fortunate. Deadline is December 12.

'Whole' Ham Shoot in Simcoe on Thanksgiving Day
There will be a 'Whole' ham shoot with funds raised to help with trip expenses for Fairview Elementary Student Ambassador Maddie Sims to make a trip to Austrailia in 2014. This shoot starts at 8 a.m. in the lot next to Simcoe Baptist Church on Highway 69 East. It is $4.00 a shot. Come win your 'dinner' for the holiday and help Maddie raise money for her exciting trip to Australia.

Turkey Shoot at Cullman Moose Lodge
Everyone is invited to bring your own guns and take part in a turkey shoot starting at 8 a.m. at the Cullman Moose Lodge. All shots are $4.00 for your chance to win assorted meats, turkeys and cheese. Funds raised will go toward the Lodge's numerous children's projects.

New Vision Support Group
There is a New Vision Support Group which will meet at 10 a.m. and everyone interested in this subject is welcome to attend. The program is at Hilltop Community Center. Additional information is available by calling Linda Estes, 256-739-4653.

Friday

'Wii Bowling' at the Donald E. Green Senior Center
The entertainment for senior citizens is 'Wii Bowling' at the Donald E. Green Senior Center starting at 1 p.m. Everyone is invited. Come enjoy some exercise (but not too physical!) and fellowship with friends. They bowl every Wednesday and Friday afternoons at 1 p.m.

'Food for Fines' at Cullman Public Library
The Cullman Public Library is once again offering their 'Food for Fines' program this month. They will forgive $1.00 in overdue fines for every non-perishable food items (canned or boxed) brought in. Food cannot be used to pay for lost or damaged items. Call Lesia for additional information 256-734-2720, ex. 21, 22 or 23.

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

Saturday

Festhalle Farmers' Market
The Festhalle Farmers' Market is once again open for business on Saturdays through the spring and summer, from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. Come visit your local farmers as they offer their homegrown produce for your dinner table.

'Christmas in Cullman' Beauty Pageant
'Christmas in Cullman' Beauty Pageant today at Cullman Civic Center. Awards include beautiful Christmas crowns, trophies, robes, prizes and cash. Age divisions girls and boys, 0 and up. All entrants will receive something nice to remember their experience. Please call 256-352-4615 for starting times and additional information. Please call for event times or email Hbbpageant@aol.com.

Rock Climbing at Hurricane Creek Park
If you are interested in rock climbing then check-in with Hurricane Creek Park for their Saturday morning rock climbing session, starting at 10 a.m. Reservations are required. For more information, call 256-734-2125. Hurricane Creek Park is located on Highway 31 North.

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!

Next Monday

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.

Domestic Violence Survivor Support Group
Victim Services of Cullman sponsors a Domestic Violence Survivor Support Group meeting every Monday evening from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the old County Board of Education Building with childcare available. For additional information please call 256-775-2600. CRISIS HOTLINE - 256-734-6100.

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.

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cullman city parks & recreation

WHAT'S ON DECK AT PARKS AND REC....

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

- **Christmas Arts & Crafts Show:** The annual Christmas Arts & Crafts Show will be held at the Cullman Civic Center on Dec. 6-7 from 9am-9pm on Friday and from 9am-5pm on Saturday. Admission is free to enter, and over 70 vendors with homemade items will be present. Call 256-734-9157 for details.
- **FREE Phone Calls from Santa Program:** Sign your child up to receive their FREE phone call from Santa. Sign-ups begin on Dec. 2nd on a limited, first come-first serve basis. Your child will receive their phone call from Santa on Monday, Dec. 23 at your requested time. Be sure you are at home and do not miss out on your call! Call the Civic Center at 256-734-9157 for details.
- **CWAC Thanksgiving Hours:** The Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center will be closed on Thursday, November 28, 2013 for Thanksgiving. The center will be open from 7am-5pm on Friday, November 29, 2013.
- **Ballroom Dance Classes:** Ballroom dance classes will be held weekly at the Cullman Civic Center on Thursday nights with beginners at 6:30pm and advanced class at 7:30pm under instructor Mack Wilson. Cost is $10 per person per class. Call the Cullman Civic Center for details at 256-734-9157.
- **Zumba Classes:** Held at the Civic Center Mon., Wed., and Thurs. 5:30-6:30pm. $40 for 10 classes or $6 per class with instructor Monica Kugler.
- **Nia Dance & Ageless Grace Fitness Classes:** Includes yoga stretching, anti-aging tips, and more with instructor Ann Caretti. Nia class is held Tuesdays at 10:00am at the civic center, and Ageless Grace is held on Thursdays at 5:30pm.
- **Card Making Class:** A card making class will be held at the Cullman Civic Center on Wednesday, November 20 from 10am-2pm. Cost is $15 per class with instructor Shirley Ross. Call the Civic Center for details at 256-734-9157.
- **Oil Painting and Acrylic Classes:** Classes are held Mondays from 6:30-9:30pm at the Cullman Art Guild with instructor Delancey Gardner. Class is $20 per month, call 256-734-9157 for details.
- **Yoga Classes**: Stay fit and relax with yoga held at the Civic Center every Tuesday night at 6:00pm with Fabian Holland. Six classes for $40 or $30 for seniors.

Reflections of History

Share your historic photos with us!
E-mail history@cullmansense.com

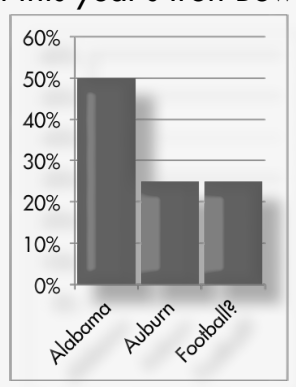


Griffin House

Contrib. by Cullman County Museum

Poll

Who are you pulling for in this year's Iron Bowl?



This Week's Poll

How do you heat your home?

Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

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Practical Applications for Feeling Well

Kristie J. Williams • LMT # 3237
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NCBTMB Approved Provider #298

Chronic Headaches and Migraines

In a 2006 study published in the Annals of Behavioral Medicine, massage therapy recipients exhibited fewer migraines and better sleep quality than the control group. A 1998 study published in the International Journal of Neuroscience found that massage therapy decreased the occurrence of headaches, sleep disturbances, and distress symptoms in adults with migraines.-American Massage Therapy Association

Do you or someone you know suffer from chronic tension headaches or migraines? Did you know that in as little as two neuromuscular sessions you could see results? In this article I will be discussing how Neuromuscular Therapy has been proven in the relief and management of a variety of headaches.

More than 25 million people in the US suffer from migraines. Migraine headaches may occur as little as a few times a year to as many as a few times a week. During a migraine headache, the pain can be so severe and literally blinding that the person may be immobilized. Migraines are often brought on by stress, poor sleep, poor diet, food allergies, low blood sugar, lack of exercise, hormonal changes, and other factors.

Once thought to be caused by vascular constriction of the blood vessels in the brain, migraines are now thought to be caused by chemical imbalances in the brain that leads to inflammation of the blood vessels in the meninges (the tissues that cover the brain). When serotonin levels drop, the inflammation response is triggered leading to a migraine headache.

Pharmaceuticals that are designed to increase serotonin levels are often used to immediately treat migraine pain and also to manage migraines. Unfortunately, there are severe side effects associated with many of these medications and a physician will not prescribe any of these medications for people with heart disease. If you are taking a prescription for migraine headaches, it is important that you do not discontinue your medication without the consent and guidance of your physician, as there can be serious side effects from discontinuing some medications.

Neuromuscular Therapy is a promising treatment for migraine sufferers. In a study from Annals of Behavioral Medicine, a group of migraine sufferers underwent a 13-week study that involved regular Neuromuscular Therapy sessions during weeks 5-10. Compared to the control group, the Neuromuscular Therapy group reported lowered frequency of migraines. In addition, sleep quality improved, cortisol levels dropped, anxiety was reduced, and the Neuromuscular Therapy group also exhibited better stress management.

Symptoms of Migraine Headaches

While for most, migraine occurs only once or twice a month; about 12 million people experience attacks on a near-daily basis. Medication is the most common treatment for migraines, however we have found specific treatment using Neuromuscular Therapy to be equally, and in most cases even more effective, than traditional pharmaceutical treatment. Migraine is a syndrome, a group of symptoms with a common cause. The severe, intense pain that accompanies a migraine attack can be completely debilitating causing an individual to desire nothing but to seek out a dark, quiet place in which they can lay completely still. Usually, head pain associated with migraine will be focused in one location on one side of the head but can be present on both sides simultaneously.

Additional symptoms include:

- Severe, Intense Head Pain
- Visual Disturbances
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Sensitivity to Sound, Light, Touch, and Smell
- Numbness or Tingling in the Extremities or Face

Causes of Migraine Headaches

Theories on the cause of migraine have focused on the constriction and dilation of blood vessels in the head. Other causes of migraine may include changes to the trigeminal nerve, imbalances in neurotransmitters, and biological functions that result in pain generated by the membranes surrounding the brain. There are a wide range of triggers for migraine attacks including lack of food or sleep, exposure to light, hormonal irregularities (in women), anxiety, stress or even, relaxation after a stressful period. Other triggers can include certain foods, intense physical exertion, changes in barometric pressure, and certain medications.

Effective Non-Surgical Treatment for Migraine Headaches

The patients that receive St. John Method Neuromuscular Therapy show substantial reductions in the frequency, duration, and intensity of their headaches as compared to patients that received Swedish massage.

The results of this research also showed better outcomes, as compared to other studies, for migraine patients who received St. John Method Neuromuscular Therapy than those who were prescribed the leading migraine medication.

Many migraine-like symptoms can be produced purely from muscular imbalance patterns that cause spasm, strain, and trigger point referrals.

A quick look at the head and neck trigger point diagrams in Travell and Simons' Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction will reveal familiar pain patterns to any headache sufferer. By treating trigger point referral patterns from muscles like sternocleidomastoid or the suboccipital group that produce documented pain patterns that are commonly described as migraine, a large percentage of these headaches are successfully eliminated. Often diagnosed as migraine headache, the origin of these headaches is purely muscular.

If you suffer from Chronic Migraines and would like to try a non-pharmaceutical approach, please call our office today 256-590-6689 Alabama Therapeutic Massage, LLC.

Fuss-Free Holiday Dessert Ideas

(StatePoint) Between decorating your home and preparing the year's most important meal, you may lose steam by the time you get to the sweet stuff.

But creating holiday desserts that stand out doesn't have to be a daunting prospect. There are simple things you can do to give treats flair, without spending hours slaving away.

Whipped topping makes a perfect fuss-free topping on special occasion pies, cakes, and cookies, as well as your everyday favorites like fruit, coffee, and ice cream.

Your family and guests will taste the difference, so be sure to use natural ingredients. For example, Reddi-wip is made from real dairy cream, unlike other leading brands which have hydrogenated oils as their top ingredient.

To deliciously top off your holiday meal, try this recipe for Apple Crumble Pie, where warm apple pie filling is topped with a brown sugar and oat crumble and served in a flaky pie crust.

Want to save even more time? Consider picking up a frozen dessert pie, such as one from Marie Callender's and top it off with Reddi-wip for a quicker, but still super tasty, dessert option.

Ingredients

- 1 frozen pie crust (9-inch), thawed
- 1 can (21 oz each) apple pie filling
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup quick-cooking rolled oats
- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup cold Parkay Original-stick (1/2 cup = 1 stick)
- Reddi-wip Original Dairy Whipped Topping

Directions

- Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Pierce bottom and side of pie crust lightly with fork. Bake 5 to 7 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cool slightly. Reduce oven temperature to 400 degrees F.
- Pour pie filling into baked pie crust; set aside.
- Mix flour, oats, sugar, cinnamon, and salt in medium bowl. Cut in Parkay with pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle evenly over pie filling.
- Bake 25 minutes or until juices are bubbly and topping is golden brown. Cool slightly. Cut into 8 slices to serve.
- Top with Reddi-wip, if desired.

More delicious recipes and holiday inspiration can be found at www.Reddiwip.com.

Don't let your desserts take a back seat to the rest of your holiday food.

With a quick rosette of real whipped topping, you can pack a big taste punch that's fuss-free, leaving more time for making memories.

Upcoming events at North Alabama Agriplex

Here are all the upcoming programs that will be at the North Alabama Agriplex Heritage Center, 1714 Talley Ho St SW, Cullman, Alabama.

December 7, 2013
Farm Kid's Club- Holiday Crafts

Natural holiday crafts for all ages. For kids ages 5 and up with an adult. $5 per child. Chaperones free. $10 max per family.

Registration required. 9:00-10:30am. To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

January 4, 2014
Farm Kid's Club- Rabbits

Get to see rabbits up close and learn how to care for them.

For kids ages 5 and up with an adult. $5 per child.

Chaperones free. $10 max per family.

Registration required. 9:00-10:30am. To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

January 9, 2014
Heritage Skills-Trapping and Tanning

Learn the basics of trapping and how to tan an animal hide. Ages 8 and up. 5:30-7:30pm. $5.

To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

January 24, 2014
Heritage Skills-Winemaking Workshop

Class on beginning winemaking. $10. Registration required. 6:00-9:00pm, Cullman County Extension (256) 737-9386, www.aces.edu/counties/Cullman/, cullmancounty@auburn.edu.

January 28, 2014
Living Landscapes-Attracting Bluebirds

Learn about bluebirds and how to attract them. Make a bluebird house to keep. $5. Registration required. 6:00-8:00pm. To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

February 1, 2014
Farm Kid's Club- Building for the Birds

Create birdhouses and nesters to attract birds at your home.

For kids ages 5 and up with an adult. $5 per child. Chaperones free. $10 max per family.

Registration required. 9:00-10:30am. To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

February 25, 2014
Living Landscapes- Organic Vegetable Gardening Basics

Find out how to get started growing your own vegetables naturally.

We will cover the basic organic growing techniques and prepare you to get a garden started this spring!

Ages 13 and up. 6:00-8:00pm. $5.

To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

March 1, 2014 Cullman
Farm Kid's Club- Chick Time

See baby chicks up close and learn how eggs hatch.

For kids ages 5 and up with an adult. $5 per child. Chaperones free. $10 max per family. Registration required. 9:00-10:30 a.m.

To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

March 6, 2014
Heritage Skills- Growing Your Own Fishing Bait

Learn how to grow your own worms for fishing and to plant catalpa trees for catalpa worms. Ages 8 and up 5:30-7:30pm. $5. To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

March 11, 2014 Cullman
Living Landscapes- Cultivating Mushrooms

Mushroom expert Rhonda Britton will teach this class about growing shitake mushrooms.

The class will inoculate small pieces of logs to take home to grow your own mushrooms. Ages 13 and up. 6:00-8:00pm. $5.

To register, call 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com.

Comet ISON could be on its way

By: Tom Esposito

It is only when thought of in astronomical terms can one object pass by another object at a distance of 730,000 miles and still be considered a near miss. Likewise, the speed of one of those objects is considered slow at 40,000 mph especially since that object will soon be accelerated to 830,000 mph. Maybe.

On Thanksgiving Day, a snowball approximately 1 mile in diameter will begin to make its elliptical swing around our sun. In the process, it will come within the aforementioned 730,000 miles of the star and at this point scientists are unable to state whether or not the comet named ISON will survive its first, and possibly last, close encounter with Sol. If it does survive, and as it speeds back into the depths of space, the comet may become one of the grandest cosmic spectacles of our lifetime.

ISON was spotted in September of 2012 by a pair of Russian astronomers and the icy object was named after the International Scientific Optical Network which was used by the scientists to call attention to its existence. Officially, it is designated as C/2012 S1 which indicates when it was discovered as well as if it will return. The jury is still out as to whether ISON is a hyperbolic object that will never return or a comet on an elliptical orbit and will return periodically as does Halley's Comet.

The comet is believed to have been nudged out of its orbit in the Oort cloud which circles the outer most fringe of our solar system and is composed of many billions, probably trillions of similar frigid objects.

Occasionally, whether by gravity or in a game of cosmic bumper cars, one of these objects leaves the Cloud and it begins its long journey to the inner solar system.

As it nears the sun, the solar winds start to exert their influence over the comet and it begins to leave a trail of gases and particles that form its "coma" (the thin atmosphere that surrounds the nucleus of the comet) and "tail". It is when our planet passes through the debris field of a comet that we have our annual meteor showers such as the Geminids and the Leonids.

In ISON's case, it will be passing and rounding the sun in such close proximity that the gravity, radiation, and solar winds it will encounter may rip the comet to pieces and even evaporate it.

If it survives it will slingshot off of the sun's gravity and accelerate to approximately 830,000 mph.

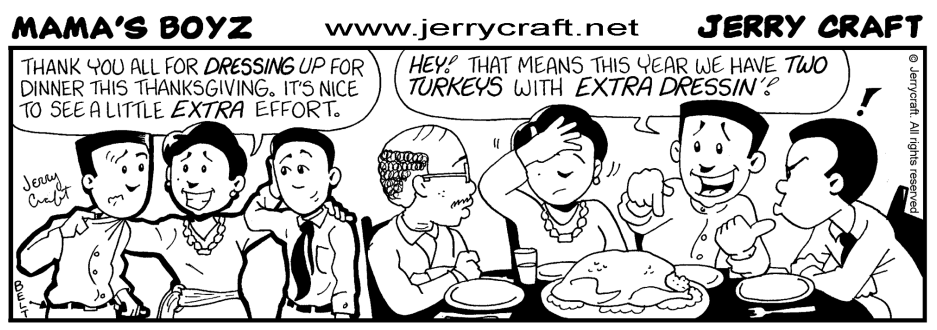
If it does survive the trip, we will know in December, ISON promises to put on a wonderful show. As it heads back into space at a speed that would enable it to circle the earth 33+ times in one hour, ISON's coma and tail will easily be visible to sky watchers. It has been noted by the Comet ISON Observing Campaign that when compared at this relative time to comet Lovejoy which put on a great display in December of 2011, that ISON is presently 100 times brighter than Lovejoy.

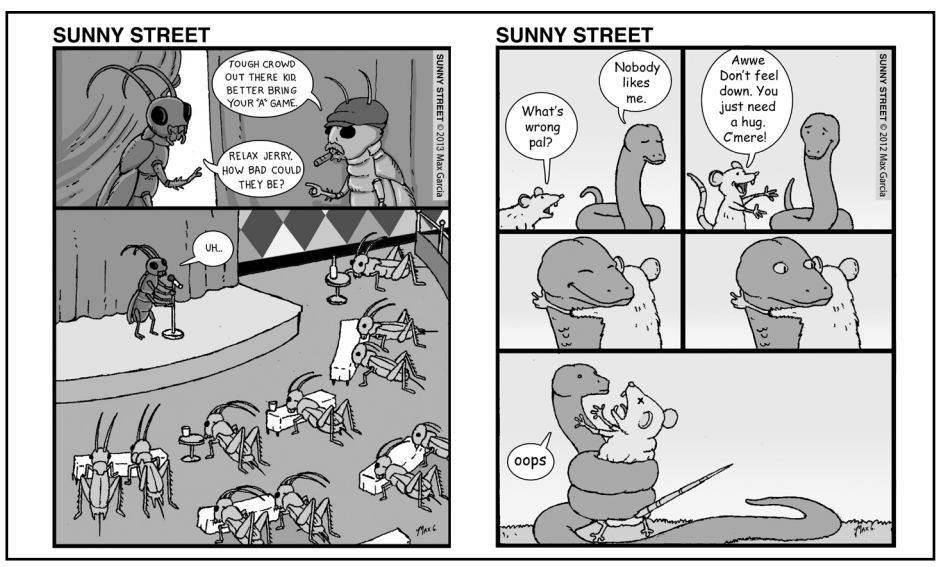
So get your binoculars or telescope ready and be prepared for a visual treat. Maybe.

Comics

WHITE & BLACK • st.edo@cullmansense.com







Billy Currington added to the RTS 2014 Lineup



By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – "Billy Currington is one of the hottest artists in country music," Shane Quick, concert promoter, said when announcing the music festival's newest act at a special event recently.

"The guy has a full night of songs you know by heart. He's also been one of the most requested artists from Rock the South fans."

The two-day Rock the South Music Festival lineup has continued to grow each week, with legendary southern rock acts the Charlie Daniels Band and Lynyrd Skynyrd announced recently. Added to the mix is Little Big Town, and Quick said many more are still to be named.

"The 2014 lineup is going to have something for everybody. Billy is going to draw people from far and wide," he said.

The two-day festival will take place at Cullman's Heritage Park on June 20-21, 2014. Tickets will go on sale at 10 a.m. December 13.

"People need to be ready to get their tickets on December 13th. They're going to go fast," he said.

Artist announcements will continue throughout the month of November, each taking place on Friday mornings at 10 a.m. For more on Rock the South, visit www.rockthesouth.com, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RockTheSouth.

Dogged Journalism Is A Blessing, Not A Curse

By:

Lee H. Hamilton

BRIEF BIO

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Let's start with the obvious: A democracy needs intelligence agencies. It needs to know what's happening in the world — and understand the plans of allies and enemies — to keep the nation prepared and secure.

If intelligence work is going to be effective, much of it has to be done in secret. "National security" is not merely an excuse for keeping intelligence activity under wraps: often, the only way to protect our collective well-being is to pursue many national security activities, including intelligence-gathering, in the dark.

But that's if they're legitimately in the national interest. All too often, governments use secrecy to protect themselves politically or to shroud activities that, seen in the cold light of day, their citizens would reject. This is why secrecy in government can be dangerous, and should be subject to the checks and balances of our constitutional system.

However legitimate secrecy may be, though, there is a limit to how much a democracy can stand. As ordinary citizens, we need information about what our government is up to in order to make informed and discriminating choices about politicians and policies. Journalists and their media outlets are indispensable conveyors of this information. The work of the journalist, who often presses for a more open, accountable government, creates tensions with a government set upon guarding state secrets. But it's a healthy, much-needed tension.

Which brings us to Edward Snowden's revelations to the press about the National Security Agency and its vast efforts to monitor communications. Around Washington, Snowden is routinely excoriated, and he's none too popular in the country at large, either. But whether he's a hero or a criminal in your book, there's no question that because of him, we know far more about the surveillance our government has been carrying out. The expansion of government power that the leaks reveal is without precedent in the modern era. Technology, along with the surveillance and monitoring it enables, has clearly outrun the policies to deal with it.

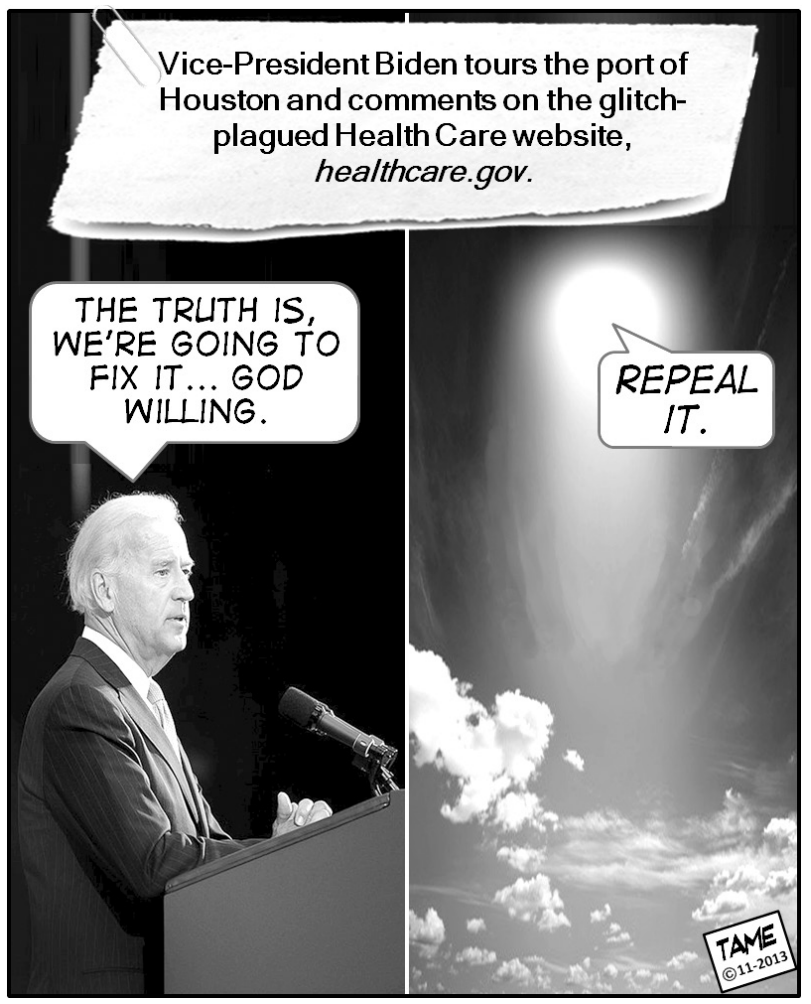
Although many commentators have raised questions about Snowden's leaks, the journalists who have dug into the NSA files he provided are doing the job that democracy depends on them to do: getting information that details government actions and prompting a badly needed debate. It's one of the most important ways to hold government accountable for the use of its power. Our ability to judge whether it acted appropriately or abusively and to act as responsible citizens is buttressed by journalists who are skilled at finding and keeping confidential sources, who know how to dig through copious records or amounts of data, who have learned how to build a story from a tip or a leak, and who are accurate, honest, rigorous, and fair-minded.

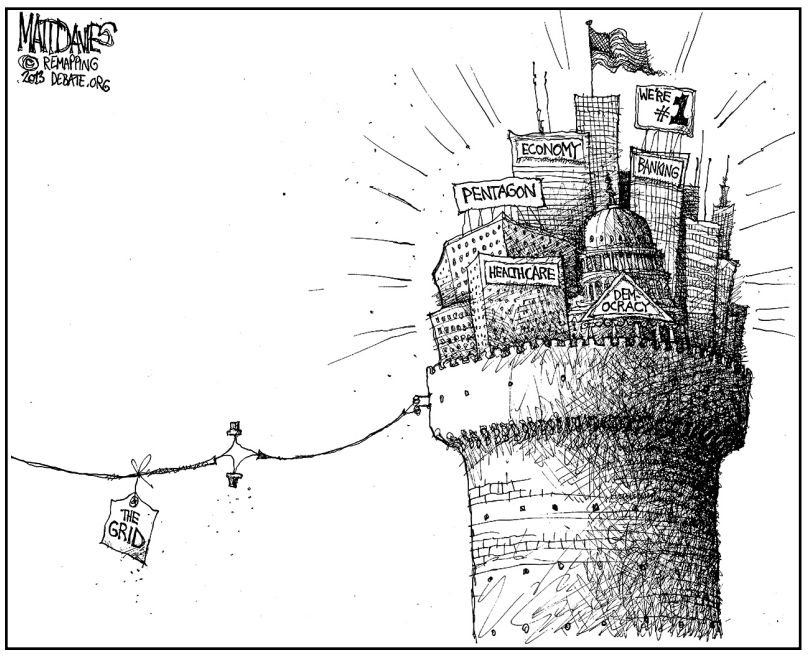
Now, I don't want to whitewash what's happening in the media right now. There are plenty of worrisome trends. As a whole, media outlets are less interested than they used to be in accuracy, objectivity, and solid coverage, and more interested in advocacy, persuasion, and entertainment. Even at the largest papers, cutbacks have reined in their ability to cover the world and to launch expensive investigative work. The recent rise of alternatives — such as the non-profit ProPublica and the investigative reporting venture just announced by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar — may go some distance toward recovering what's been lost, but they're also an acknowledgement that we have lost ground.

And we've done so precisely at a time when we face a real challenge in constraining the reach of government into our lives. Its powers of monitoring and surveillance are astonishing and are being used aggressively. It is classifying secret information wholesale, it is vigorously seeking to prosecute leaks, and it is trying to intimidate journalists: all of these are signs of a national security state that is determined to bulk up.

Congress is only now beginning to stir; until recently it has been a passive and willing participant in secrecy. At a moment like this, we have to depend more than ever on the curiosity, skill, and determination of good reporters to spur the kind of debate we should be having as our society tries to strike the right balance between security and freedom.

EDITORIAL CARTOONS











Bill Smith

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