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CULLMAN'S MONDAY NEWSPAPER

CULLMANSENSE

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LOCAL

Local volunteers prepare lunches for thousands p7



CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL & MARKET

Play, Eat, Shop, & Celebrate p6

Food Stamp Cuts, Holidays Stress Food Banks

By: Jake Grovum • Stateline

Food banks across the country are bracing for what has become an annual occurrence during this season: a spike in demand as millions of Americans struggle to put holiday meals on their tables.

For those who help the hungry, 2013 is looking a lot like the years since the recession began—with the added challenge of a $5 billion cut in food stamp benefits, which took effect Nov. 1.

About 48 million Americans will be hit by the reduction in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), which will subtract $36 per month for a family of four. Total benefit amounts vary by state.

"Nobody's been able to catch their breath," said Ross Fraser of Feeding America, a nationwide network of 200 food banks that supplies 63,000 agencies around the country.

"Everyone's scared to death about these SNAP cuts."

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THE TRUE STORY OF CHRIS KRINGLE



CHS's progressive play gets audience moving p10

Heritage Park recognized as USSSA Facility of the Year

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The Cullman City Parks & Recreation department has not been a stranger to national recognition. However, the latest award certifies the bustling parks department as producing one of the nation's best facilities.

"This is just a tremendous honor for the entire parks department," Waid Harbison, CP&R Marketing Director, said. "We were all thrilled just to be nominated but to be awarded the Facility of the Year from the USSSA is just amazing."

The facility has been nationally known for many years, as it has played host to multiple baseball, softball, and soccer tournaments, along with hosting the newly emerging coun-

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CP&R Athletic Director Shelby Williams accepting the award for Facility of the Year

Local MS Support Group to offer Holiday Dinner

By: Randy E. Bennett

CULLMAN – The Joanne P. LaGanke MS Support Group has extended an open invitation to the community for the group's annual Holiday Dinner, to be held at 6 p.m. on December 10.

If you would like to attend the deadline to register is Tuesday, December 3rd at noon. There will be no exceptions as there is a deadline for ordering the turkey and dressing, along with obtaining extra seating.

Attendees are invited to join in our "Dirty Santa". It is not required, although it is a fun way to share a bit of holiday cheer. If you are participating, please bring a Dirty Santa Unisex Gift for $10

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Drought likely to persist or develop in the Southwest, Southeastern U.S. this winter

By: Monica Allen
NOAA contributor

No strong climate pattern influence anticipated through upcoming winter season

Winter is likely to offer little relief to the drought-stricken U.S. Southwest, and drought is likely to develop across parts of the Southeast as below-average precipitation is favored in these areas of the country, according to NOAA's annual Winter Outlook announced recently.

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‘Giving Christmas Tree’ at Sacred Heart of Jesus in Cullman

By: Barbara Ragsdale



Parishioners at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Cullman gather around their ‘Giving Christmas Tree’ following Church services recently. They are playing ‘Santa’ for area children in need. Fharis Richter who is in charge of the project says she has over 400 hundred ‘wishes’ for Santa’s ‘elves’ to grant, so more names will be added once the first group has been selected by the church members!

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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?

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- Seniors with exceptional circumstances, let us show you how to help ensure that all of your additional opportunities are utilized!



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Miscommunication at center of CP&R budget overage

By: Noah Chandler • noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Recently reports stating the Cullman City Parks & Recreation department was over budget by a half-million dollars, due to lost revenue in the special events portion of the vast department, prompted both the City of Cullman and CP&R to analyze the situation.

Recently, CP&R Director John Hunt sat down with CullmanSense to discuss the facts at hand.

Noah Chandler: If you would, tell me a bit about the CP&R budget this past year, and the difference between the city appropriations and your (CP&R) budget.
John Hunt: First and foremost the City of Cullman Parks & Recreation is in very good financial shape. Recently there have been some things that have come out that says that we’re not but there are some miscommunications between a city appropriation and a city budget.

The Cullman City Parks & Recreation is an autonomous board. It’s easier said – it’s almost like a school board. We get city appropriations; we do not get a city budget. The city budget (CP&R) is set by our Parks and Recreation board taking in all our revenues and all of our revenues throughout the department.

NC: How much does the city appropriations make up the CP&R budget?
JH: About 33% only comes from the City of Cullman.

NC: So this past year what was the amount allotted through city appropriations and is that where the miscommunication came from?
JH: I think the miscommunication was, we (CP&R board) were under the impression last October 1, that we were working off a $2.8 million budget from the city. At the end of the year when the numbers came out, they were under the impression that we were working off a budget of $2.4 million, so there is the whole swing right there.

Just to be clear about this, we, again, just want to make sure that we are doing the right thing by the money that the city council gives us and what our community wants. We do everything we can possibly do to bring in all of these big tournaments in, to have the least amount of staffing that we possibly can, but to give the quality of recreation to our community, and I think we are doing that.

NC: You spoke briefly that the city parks and rec pays back any overages that incurred throughout the year. You were under the impression of a $2.8 million appropriation this past year and your payroll was?
JH: It runs about $2.9 to $3 million, so there is about a $200,000 swing, which is nothing. We’ve been paying this back for five years straight. We know the following year that we will have to pay something back that is something we’ve worked into all of fees and charges to make sure we can pay that money back. We want to be good stewards of our money. So when these numbers came out we were concerned because we were trying to figure out where the miscommunication was and why they were saying we were so over appropriations and we’ve been working on it.

NC: You may have been over on appropriations but that is something that is paid back?
JH: Our budget is in very good shape. We had a very good year for the parks department. It’s not our job to make money, we try to break even. We try to give our community everything we can for the amount of money we’ve got.

I’ve always said we’ve given the city of Cullman Walt Disney World on a county fair’s budget. We really do. But we do a good job with that and we really trying to meet that quality of life for our community and we do that.

NC: If you would, you’ve been here for a little more than 20 years, 22 years now, so how many times have you actually been over budget in that timeframe?
JH: Hopefully I’ve got the documents to go back that far. I can remember, and I know for a fact that there has only been two years in all of those years that we have been over budget, and it wasn’t by a whole lot. But both years is when we totally lost our golf course for six months when we had to close down and rebuild, basically, the golf course.

One was when had a frost-dew winter kill, which was a complete kill, where we lost every one of our fairways and our greens. The second time was almost the same thing when we lost all of our greens due to a fungus which was caused by winter being so cold that it totally killed all of our grass.

NC: This past year, what was the comparison to the CP&R budget expenditures compared to what it took in?
JH: At the end of the year, and we just went through our auditing numbers, not only were our revenues above but our expenditures are down over $27,000 in just expenditures, so yes, we are cutting the budget as we speak.

One thing that I do want people to understand is that we run the City of Cullman Parks & Recreation department on a very small fulltime skeletal crew. We are probably half what other departments are across the United States with our fulltime employees, but we do have a lot of part-time employees. I want people to look at how many kids we are giving jobs to for their very first time; we’ve got lifeguards, concessionaires, scorekeepers, umpires, day camp, archery teachers, and tennis teachers. We are doing a lot more than most people, which makes Cullman the best place in the world to live. Maybe that is why our City Parks & Recreation has been voted one of the best four parks departments in the country three straight years.

What’s Online

Cullman Emergency Medical Services Finds Permanent Home



After more than two and a half years, the Cullman Regional Medical Center Board has determined a suitable, permanent home for the Cullman Emergency Medical Service Ambulance Service displaced after the...

qrne.ws/128

MADD Alabama announced 2013 Legislative Champions

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...

qrne.ws/129

Prevent foodborne illnesses this holiday season

Recent foodborne outbreaks that resulted in hospitalizations should alert Alabamians to follow safe food preparation and storage practices. As the holidays approach and the number of parties, covered-dish meals, and family...

qrne.ws/130

Groups Challenge Flawed Coal Mine Permitting along Black Warrior River

By: Mike Senatore

BIRMINGHAM – The continued use of a controversial permit in the Black Warrior River watershed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fails to comply with federal requirements for surface mining, according to a lawsuit filed today by the Southern Environmental Law Center and Public Justice on behalf of Black Warrior Riverkeeper and Defenders of Wildlife.

The lawsuit challenges the Corps' use of a general permit known as Nationwide Permit 21 in Alabama, which has already authorized the fill and burial of hundreds of miles of streams and wetlands to accommodate surface mining, without the detailed study and analysis of cumulative impacts required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. In two prior lawsuits brought by Public Justice against the Corps in Kentucky and West Virginia, two federal courts have already declared NWP 21 to be in violation of these laws.

The Corps suspended the use of this permit elsewhere in the Appalachian region in 2010 because of mounting concern over its adverse effects on aquatic resources. Although the Corps substantially revised the permit when reissuing it in 2012, the Corps also included an arbitrary "grandfather" provision that allows the unlimited fill of streams and wetlands authorized by the previous version of the permit to continue in Alabama until 2017. Originally estimating that the "grandfather" would be used rarely, the Corps has approved around 80 total projects across the country under its auspices -- including 41 projects in the Black Warrior watershed alone.

"These 41 grandfathered permits should never have been granted, because they rely on the Corps' unsupportable and undocumented assumption that burying and disturbing tens of miles of streams has only minimal cumulative effects," said Jim Hecker, Environmental Enforcement Director at Public Justice.

Since May of 2012, the use of this deeply flawed permit has authorized the fill of over 145,000 linear feet of streams (or approximately 27 miles) in the Black Warrior basin. The Black Warrior River watershed is a major source of drinking water for Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, and other Alabama communities.

"The Corps of Engineers is depriving Alabama of protections it affords other states, allowing miles of precious streams along the Black Warrior River to be destroyed by coal mines," said Nelson Brooke, Black Warrior Riverkeeper. "The Corps should be barred immediately from using Nationwide Permit 21 in Alabama, home to the United States' largest number of aquatic species and the tail end of the Appalachian Mountains."

This lawsuit asks the Corps to revise the permitting process to adequately consider the site-specific and cumulative environmental impacts of new stream-filling by coal mining. Activities that have more than minimal effects, either individually or cumulatively, such as significant stream-filling by coal mining, require individual permits under the Clean Water Act that can only be issued after careful review and public comment, a process the Corps has avoided under Nationwide Permit 21.

"It's the responsibility of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that surface mining in Alabama strictly follows the permitting process required by law," said Catherine Wannamaker, attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center. "It is possible to balance protections for clean water and natural resources with economic opportunities, but this process has failed to do so."

The Black Warrior River watershed is the largest coal producing region in Alabama, with more than 90 active coal mines. Much of the area has been degraded by surface coal mining, which has allowed significant loss of headwater tributary stream function, damage to wetlands with essential water filtration capabilities, and elevated pollutants in mine runoff such as sediment and heavy metals.

"Alabama's freshwater streams host one of the greatest bounties of biodiversity in the world, yet the Corps has turned a blind eye to the impacts of multiple coal mining projects polluting and destroying stream habitats," said Jane Davenport, senior staff attorney at Defenders of Wildlife. "The rare species pushed to the brink of extinction by coal mining are the canaries warning us that our irreplaceable rivers and streams must be protected from further damage if we are to protect human health as well."

Military Stability Foundation Elects New Chairman

By: Katy Sulhoff

MONTGOMERY (November 26, 2013) – As Chairman of the Alabama Job Creation and Military Stability Commission (MSC), Lieutenant Governor Kay Ivey announced the recent election of Mike Ward as Chairman of the Alabama Military Stability Foundation (MSF).

MSF is a private, non-profit organization established to serve as the day-to-day operational arm of MSC. The two organizations work together to develop and implement measures to retain and strengthen Alabama's military assets in the face of any potential cuts due to the impending Base Realignment and Closure Process (BRAC).

Ward is Vice President of Government Affairs for the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce and has served as a member of MSF since its creation in 2011.

"Working with key leaders from the Tennessee Valley, I've been privileged to help support Redstone Arsenal through my work with the Chamber for more than 20 years. That work has included support for our community's BRAC efforts since the mid 1990s," said Ward.

"I am very familiar with the process and look forward to supporting the other military installations in the State as we face potential future rounds of BRAC."

Lieutenant Governor Ivey applauded Ward's election and touted his qualifications for the position.

"Mike possesses a deep understanding of the importance of reinforcing Alabama's role as a good host to the military. The goal of the Commission and Foundation is to cultivate a military-friendly environment so that missions carried out in Alabama, stay in Alabama. I am confident he will serve as an effective leader and look forward to continuing to work with him," said Lieutenant Governor Ivey.

Ward replaced Brigadier General Paul Hankins (Ret.), former Commander of the Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools, as Chair. Ward's term continues until October 2014.

A graduate of the University of Alabama, he attended the University on a debate scholarship and received his bachelor degree in Business Administration. Ward and his wife, Cathryne, have three children.

NASA Taps Student Teams to Simulate Human Exploration of Other Worlds

By: Ann Marie Trotta

WASHINGTON – NASA is debuting a new engineering design challenge to engage students worldwide in the next phase of human space exploration. The NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge is a more complex follow-on to the successful NASA Great Moonbuggy Race.

The competition is open to high school and college students and challenges them to create a vehicle designed to traverse the simulated surface of another world.

Registration closes Jan. 10 for international teams and Feb. 7 for U.S. teams.

During its 20-year run, the Great Moonbuggy Race engaged more than 10,000 students and demonstrated these budding scientists and engineers were capable of even more complex undertakings.

The NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge will provide that complexity through an authentic engineering experience.

The student teams will design, build and test technologies that enable vehicles to perform in a wide variety of environments.

Their results and findings will inform the design process for NASA's next generation space systems.

"We designed this engineering challenge to align with NASA's commitment of sending humans to Mars by the 2030s," said Rocky Lind, who manages education and outreach efforts in the Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters in Washington. "The student teams will be timed, ranked and scored based on design, safety, and how well they traverse the set course. The results of the competition will contribute to the design process for NASA's future exploration goals."

With the agency taking a stepping-stone approach to building capabilities necessary for sending astronauts to Mars, this student design challenge represents a logical next step.

It also continues NASA's effort to use the appeal and intrigue of its space missions and programs as catalysts for engaging students in STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

"Students will create their own vehicles to power around a rugged course at the final competition." said Tammy Rowan manager of the academic affairs office at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala.

"The obstacles around the course will mimic some of the real terrain challenges of solar system exploration, so students must design robust and durable rovers with the traction to scale obstacles and meet other challenges."

The culminating event of the NASA rover competition is scheduled for April 10-12 at the U.S. Space and Rocket in Huntsville, which is home to U.S. Space Camp and serves as the official visitor center for Marshall. Corporate sponsors will award prizes for winning components of the challenge.

The planned course for the competition will require teams to traverse a terrain that includes a simulated field of asteroid debris – boulders from 5-15 inches across; an ancient stream bed with pebbles about 6 inches deep; and erosion ruts and crevasses in varying widths and depths.

A full description of the obstacles and qualifications for vehicle designs can be found at the NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge website listed below.

The NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge looks to the next generation of scientists and engineers to aid in the design process by providing innovative designs and unique perspectives.

It also continues the agency's legacy of providing valuable experience to students who may someday be responsible for future mission planning and crewed space missions to other worlds.

For more information about the NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/roverchallenge

For more information about NASA's education programs, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/education



Cullman edges Holly Pond in overtime to win Thanksgiving Tournament

By: Johnny Thornton

HOLLY POND – Cullman found another facility to its liking this week in Holly Pond's Felton Easterwood Gym. The Bearcats capped off four consecutive days of visiting the campus in winning the 57th Holly Pond Thanksgiving Tournament by getting past Holly Pond in the title game Friday night 95-89 in overtime.

It looked like Cullman was going to run away with the championship in taking a 67-53 lead to the fourth period.

But the Broncos had other thoughts of a comeback in which shooting guard Colby Adams began the fourth with four straight field goals and the Broncos were down 67-61.

The Holly Pond defense contained Cullman, allowing the Bearcats one field goal in the first 4:00 of the fourth period.

Holly Pond was able to overcome missing five free throws down the stretch of the period that kept the Bearcats in a chance to get the game tied.

The game ended in regulation with the score even at 83-83.

In the extra four minutes, the Bearcats were seven of eight from the line and took advantage of a slump the Broncos experienced. The Broncos began to miss shots and started to foul with Lawson Schaffer going four of four in overtime, Seth Swalve two of two, and Keaton Dean one of two.

Cullman led 26-19 after the opening period and was ahead at the break by the score of 49-41. The 'Cats knocked down 12 shots from three-point range in the first half as six different players scored from long distance.

The 30-16 Holly Pond scoring edge in the fourth had Adams account for 10, Austin Smith seven, and Cody Jones' six. The 16 points was the second lowest for the Bearcats in this tournament as they came to Holly Pond averaging 87 points a game.

Cullman has now won five in a row. Schaffer scored 35 in the title game and in two games this week vs. the Broncos, he accounted for 76 points.

Swalve delivered 22, Lane Donaldson scored 15 on five treys, Lee Mattox seven, Dean and Chase Slocomb five, and Auston Neal one.

Holly Pond is now 5-2. Adams netted 25 in the final with Smith scoring 23, Gunter Morris 15, Jones 12, Josh Horton eight, Darriel Harwood four, and Nathan Duke one.



Photo by Jimmy "Scoop" Olson

3rd Place Game

Arab 62, Fairview 61

After suffering a tough loss to Cullman on Thanksgiving night, Arab was determined to leave the tournament feeling better on how they performed. They started well against Fairview, taking a 20-12 first period lead with Joe Crowder scoring eight in the process.

Fairview fell behind 24-14 with two minutes gone into the second and at times struggled to execute its offense against the Arab zone.

Behind balanced scoring from inside and outside, the Knights left the floor on top of the Aggies 38-24 at intermission.

The Knights led 51-40 as time expired in the third.

A three-pointer by Dylan Smith gave the Aggies a lift in cutting the lead to 53-47 with 5:50 to play in the game.

Arab went up 57-47 then Elijah Garrison nailed a trey for Fairview to pull the Aggies with seven at 57-50 at the 3:30 mark. A three-point play by Ethan Widner with 3:21 to go made the score Arab 57, Fairview 53.

The drama continued with Garrison scoring, drawing a foul, and making the free throw. Fairview was down 57-56 as the clock moved under 2:50.

Chance Hill knocked down a trey to tie the game at 59-59 with 1:40 remaining, bringing the Aggies back from a large deficit throughout the contest.

Hill put the Aggies in front with two from the line with 1:01 left. The score was Aggies 61, Knights 60.

Crowder got fouled and was perfect from the line in two attempts, sending Arab back on top, 62-61 with 18 seconds showing.

The Aggies had two chances at winning the game, but missed a jumper from the top and a rebound shot from the baseline as time ran out.

Garrison gave it a great effort for the Aggies with 25, Tyler Yearwood had nine, Hill eight, Widner six, Smith and Parker five, and Jackson Smith two. The Aggies dropped to 1-5.

Arab is now 4-3 after the win with Crowder and Taylor Parker scoring 14, Jason Landman 12, and Ridge Watson 10.

5th Place Game

West Point 76, Locust Fork 55

Center Ryder Jones continued his good performance in the tournament by putting four baskets into the net in the opening quarter that carried the Warriors to a 19-7 lead.

Shooting guard Tristan Dubberly fired in two shots from long range and the Warriors were up 27-10 with less than 5:00 to play in the first half.

At the half, the Warriors led 38-18 as Jones, Dubberly, and Levi Laney combined for 29 points. Jones had 11, Dubberly 10, and Laney eight as the trio combined for nine field goals.

West Point went up by 25 in the third as Locust Fork closed the margin to 49-32 inside the 3:00 mark. Back-to-back treys by Will Wrenn and Dubberly enabled the Warriors to regain momentum, leading 55-34 at the end of the period.

Once again, the Hornets made a run by balanced scoring during the fourth and trailed 63-47 with 5:07 left. After a timeout, the Warriors got baskets from Dubberly and free throws by Wrenn in leading 69-53 with under 3:00 to play.

The Warriors got the lead back above 20 and never looked back in getting their record even at 4-4. Now they have a battle Wednesday in Hanceville with the Bulldogs looking to go above the .500 mark.

Dubberly finished with 22 to lead the Warriors while Jones tossed in 20, Wrenn scored 12, Laney eight, Riley Voce four, Rusk five, Michael Jernigan three, and Bryant Farley two.

For Locust Fork, Kyle Hornbuckle hit 14, Todd Goodwin had 12, and Andrew Lanningham scored 10 in leading the Hornet attack.

31st Annual Hanceville Thanksgiving Tournament Wrap-up

By: Josh McBrayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE – After all the turkey was eaten and the family festivities were over, eight teams still had a score to settle when they suited up for the final day of the 31st Annual Hanceville Thanksgiving Tournament.

A brief recap of the tournament's last day is below. For more on the 31st Annual Hanceville Thanksgiving Tournament, please visit CullmanSense.com.

7th Place Game

Mortimer Jordan 69, Springville 67

In a game marred by fouls, Mortimer Jordan took seventh place by defeating Springville 69-67. The Blue Devils of Mortimer Jordan got to the free throw line 36 times in a name that saw both teams combine for 60 fouls.

5th Place Game

Good Hope 58, Curry 48

For the second straight game Good Hope led their opponent at the half but they were not content to settle for just that.

The Raiders started the third quarter on a 13-5 run that put them up 11 midway through the third. Andrew Cofer and Tyler Vanderburg had huge quarters, Cofer scoring 14 and Vanderburg adding nine for the Raiders. Good Hope cruised into the fourth quarter up comfortably 46-27.

Good Hope continued to control the game and easily won 58-48. Cofer finished with 20 and Vanderburg had dropped in 15.

3rd Place Game

Cold Springs 51, Hanceville 69

In a highly anticipated matchup the Cold Springs Eagles and the Hanceville Bulldogs squared off in the third place game of the Hanceville Thanksgiving Tournament and the game did not disappoint.

Hanceville came out strong in the first with Brontae Harris hitting a trifecta of threes. The hot shooting of Hanceville gave the Bulldogs the early 21-10 lead after the first quarter

Tristan Chambers of Cold Springs put the Eagles on his back, scoring nine of the 14 second quarter points for Cold Springs. However, Hanceville kept pace with the Eagles and had a 34-24 lead at the half.

Three missed Cold Springs shots, coupled with three made by the Bulldogs started a 10-2 run that put the Bulldogs up 18 early in the third quarter.

Cold Springs answered right back with a 9-0 run helped by threes from Josh Freeman and Layne Rice. Hanceville closed the quarter on a 5-0 run to take a 53-38 lead to the fourth.

The Bulldogs continued to play solid ball and were able to hold on to the lead, downing Cold Springs 69-51 to lay claim to third place.

Championship Game

Dora 63, Corner 55

Dora defeated Corner 63-55 and was crowned tournament champion.

Georgia on my mind

By: Josh Mc Brayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

"Georgia, Georgia. Just an old sweet song that keeps Georgia on my mind."

These are the opening lyrics to a song made famous by Ray Charles and Willie Nelson and is undoubtedly running through the minds of Auburn and Missouri fans alike as their teams get ready to square off in the 22nd SEC Championship at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

Mizzou clinched the East Saturday night by defeating reigning Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel and the Texas A&M Aggies by a 28-21 score.

As I am sure everyone in the state of Alabama is aware, Auburn won the West by defeating the defending BCS National Champions, Alabama, with a thrilling and improbable touchdown by Chris Davis on a return of a missed Crimson Tide field goal on Saturday.

The Mizzou Tigers are 11-1 and have outscored their opponents 407 to 233 for an average of 34 points per game for the offense while the defense gives up just 19 per game.

The only Mizzou loss came at the hands of the South Carolina Gamecocks 27-24.

The orange and blue Tigers of Auburn are a likewise 11-1.

They have outscored their opponents 479 to 256, scoring, on average, 40 points per game while allowing just 21.

Auburn's one loss came "on the bayou" at LSU 35-21.

The Auburn Tigers have been able to run on every team they have played this year and are rushing for 318.3 a game. This is the 5th best in FBS.

Mizzou is averaging 252.6 through the air which is something Auburn will have to be wary of as the orange and blue Tigers give up 255.7 in the air, on average.

Now that you have the numbers, you can throw them out the window.

This game is about the Missouri Tigers, a relative newcomer to the SEC, trying to prove that they can play with the big boys.

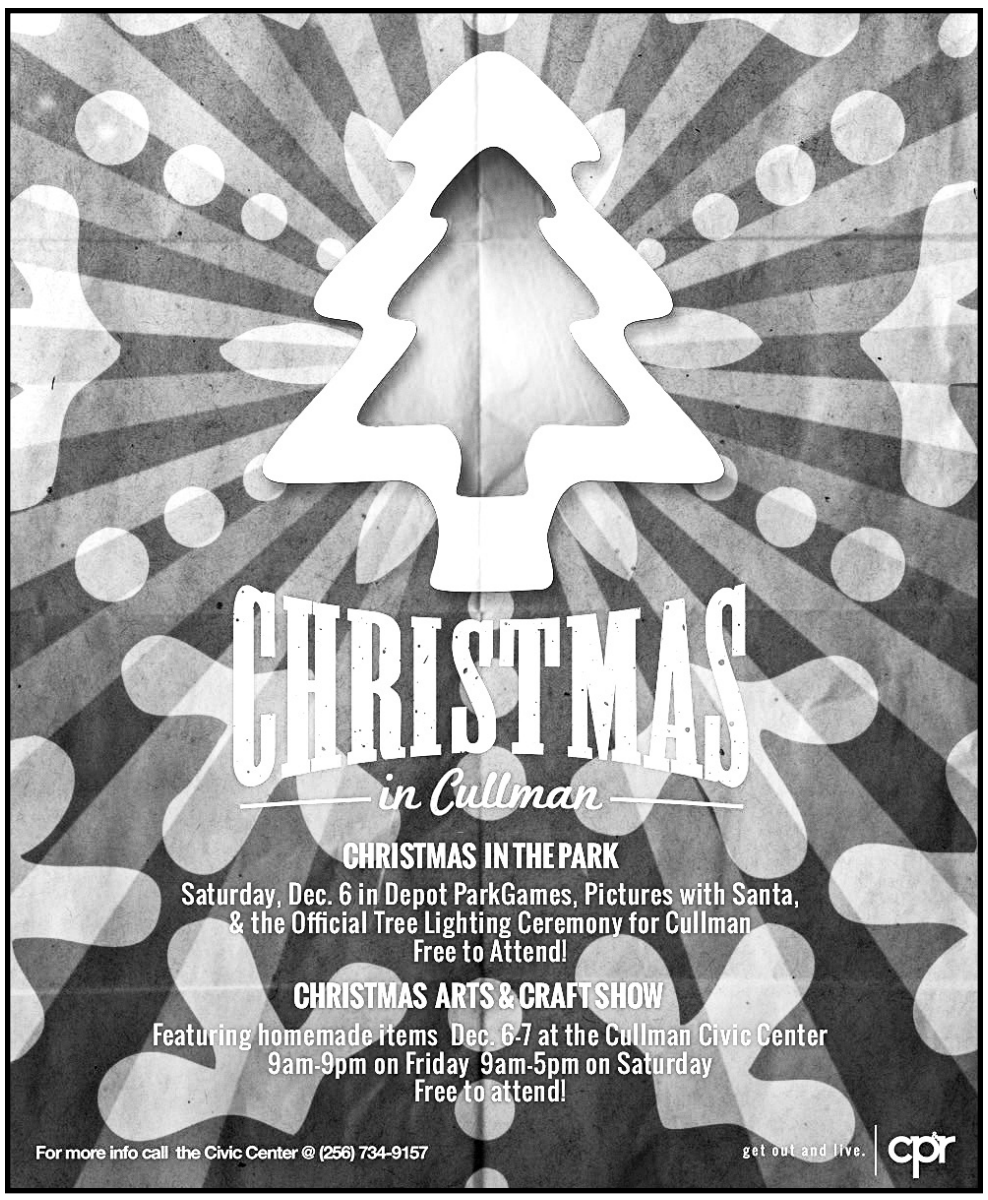
It is about the Auburn Tigers and redemption after a dismal 3-9 season last year that saw them go winless in the SEC.

But most importantly, it is about pride and the chance to call yourself champion. Not just champion, but champions of the SEC.

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Berlin Plaza Quick Stop
Brandin Iron Steakhouse
Busy Bee Cafe
Calley's Jet-Pep - Hwy. 278
Catoma Mart
Cullman Civic Center
Cullman County Courthouse
Cullman Wellness & Aquatics Center
Deb's Bookstore
Fairview Superette
Good Hope Grocery
Graves' BP 157
Hanceville Chevron
High Quality Fuels - Dodge City
Holly Pond Cafe
Holly Pond Supermarket
Jet Pep - Hwy 157
Joe's Freeway Exxon
Johnny's Bar-B-Q
Lowry's Discount Mart - Hwy. 157
Piggly Wiggly - Hwy. 157
Rumors Deli
S&S Foods
Southmart Chevron - Hwy. 278
The Hutch
Vinemont Super Saver
Wendy's / Texaco
West Point Superette

Christmas Festival and Market

By: Natalie Bonner

CULLMAN - The folks at St. John's Evangelical Church and Christ Lutheran Church have partnered together to bring a very special first-time event to the community of Cullman. On Saturday, December 14 from 1:00 – 6:00 p.m., the first annual Christmas Festival and Market will be held and will offer a multitude of activities for the family, kids, and adults to enjoy.

There will be two special areas in particular – Candy Cane Lane for the kids and The Dinckelberg Market for adults.

Candy Cane Lane is a kids' carnival area, complete with inflatables, a Velcro wall, lots of games, and pictures with Santa Claus. There will also be a carousel ride, carriage ride, Christmas hayride, and even Buckin' Blitzen, a mechanical bull.

The Dinckelberg Market urges everyone to come ready to shop and eat. Over 30 market vendors will be present selling their handmade varieties of household goods, decorations, and a bevvy of gifts to choose from for your Christmas shopping.

Food vendors will be there to ensure you keep your energy up with yummy goodies such as pizza, funnel cakes, hot dogs, cupcakes, cotton candy, and much more.

The event will feature a variety of entertainment such as CHS Jazz Band, Wallace State Singers, St. John's Praise Band, Shirley's Dancers, CHS Drama Team, and many more. In addition, there will be a live nativity.

The event has been described as an outdoor community festival celebrating the wonders of the Christmas season. It is sure to capture the Christmas spirit and all families and individuals are welcome to attend.

The first annual Christmas Festival and Market will be located at 512 Second Avenue Southeast in Cullman. For more information, please contact 256-734-0344.

Thanksgiving service held at St. Bernard

By: Joyce Nix

CULLMAN – Students at St. Bernard Prep School celebrated Mass recently during the school's Annual Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service. Traditionally each year St. Bernard students and staff are given the opportunity to invite clergy representing their various congregations and religious traditions.

Twenty ministers from the area took part in the service composed of prayers; psalms, scripture readings and hymns, and students offered thanks and petitions to God as they laid symbols of their lives before the altar.

The Rev. Andrew Siegenthaler of Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church presented the sermon. Rev. Siegenthaler encouraged all in attendance of the importance of building a relationship with God.

He reminded the audience of the biblical story from Luke 17:11-19 where Jesus was headed to Jerusalem travelling through Samaria and Galilee when he heard cries from lepers begging him for help.

When he healed them by asking them to go show themselves to the priest; only one returned to say thanks –the Samaritan.

"God's grace is abundant. He gave each of us a big heart. It's easy when things are going wrong to pray to God, but sometimes we fall short when things are going right. I encourage each of you to build a relationship with God. Show your gratitude daily," Seigenthaler said.

St. Bernard Prep Headmaster, Fr. Joel Martin, O.S.B. said, "This is an opportunity for all of us in the school community to give thanks to God for the many gifts we have received, and to do so along with those pastors, ministers, and priests who are so important in the lives of our students. These men and women are very busy, so we are all impressed with and grateful for their taking time to join us."

Music was provided by Dr. Rebecca Whited and Lester Harris.

A Thanksgiving dinner was served following the service for all guests, students, faculty, and staff. The guest clergymen were served by the students.

Drought (from Front)

Drought has been an ongoing concern across parts of the Southwest and Texas for nearly three years, and after some relief during the past few months, drought is likely to redevelop during winter.

Sea surface temperatures across the equatorial Pacific have been near average since spring 2012, and forecasters expect that to continue through the winter.

This means that neither El Niño nor La Niña is expected to influence the climate during the upcoming winter.

"It's a challenge to produce a long-term winter forecast without the climate pattern of an El Niño or a La Niña in place out in the Pacific because those climate patterns often strongly influence winter temperature and precipitation here in the United States," said Mike Halpert, acting director of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center.

"Without this strong seasonal influence, winter weather is often affected by short-term climate patterns, such as the Arctic Oscillation, that are not predictable beyond a week or two. So it's important to pay attention to your local daily weather forecast throughout the winter."

The Precipitation Outlook favors:

- Below-average precipitation in the Southwest, Southeast, and the Alaskan panhandle.
- Above-average precipitation in the Northern Rockies, particularly over Montana and northern Wyoming and in Hawaii

The Temperature Outlook favors:

- Below-average temperatures in the Northern Plains and the Alaskan Panhandle.
- Above-average temperatures in the Southwest, the South-Central U.S., parts of the Southeast, New England, and western Alaska.

The rest of the country falls into the "equal chance" category, meaning that there is not a strong or reliable enough climate signal in these areas to favor one category over the others, so they have an equal chance for above-, near-, or below-normal temperatures and/or precipitation.

The Climate Prediction Center produces the U.S. Winter Outlook to give American communities the best possible scientific prediction of how the winter may shape up across the nation.

This outlook supports local and state governments in their effort to plan for public needs during the winter, and large and small businesses as they plan for winter impacts on things like transportation, market demand for goods and services, and finances. Building a Weather-Ready Nation is a collective effort to improve America's resilience to extreme weather and climate by empowering the public to make fast, smart and life-saving decisions.

This seasonal outlook does not project where and when snowstorms may hit or provide total seasonal snowfall accumulations.

Snow forecasts are dependent upon the strength and track of winter storms, which are generally not predictable more than a week in advance.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and our other social media channels.

Food (from Front)

Bad Timing

As advocates for the hungry tell it, the reduction in food stamp benefits — the result of an expiration of a temporary boost enacted in 2009 — couldn't have come at worse time.

The Great Recession has already stretched food banks' ability to help the 15 percent of all Americans who are considered "food insecure," according to an Agriculture Department report. Many of those people do not use food stamps.

Many food banks are holding extra food drives, or asking companies to make special seasonal donations – turkeys, for example.

Others food banks just buy more food; one reported buying 50 percent more this month compared to October.

The cut in food stamp benefits will only increase the demand.

Enrollment in food stamps is almost three times what it was in 2000, but that hasn't lessened the dependence on food banks.

Since 2006, the number of Americans receiving aid from food pantries and similar services is up almost 50 percent, according to Feeding America.

A survey by the nonprofit Food Bank for New York City found that almost half of its food pantries and soup kitchens were forced to turn visitors away at some point last year, with 83 percent blaming a lack of food.

At the same time, the group said their ranks shrank during the recession, with 247 of its partners closing since 2007.

In Indiana this year, lawmakers approved using state funds to pay for the processing of deer meat donated by hunters across the state.

This was the first year the state chipped in to pay for the processing in an attempt to boost donations.

In the past, hunters or processors covered the cost.

That led to a welcome infusion of meat donations to the state's food banks, supplementing the normal fare comprised largely of canned vegetables and other non-perishables, said Jake Bruner of the Hoosier Hills Food Bank in Bloomington, Ind.

Those additional donations were well-timed. Hoosier Hills has already distributed more than 3.2 million pounds of food this year, Bruner said, more than in 2011 or 2012.

"Some pantries are serving thousands of people a week," he said.

Perishables Move

The spike in demand has led to an unexpected benefit: In the past, fresh food and produce often lingered on shelves so long it went bad. Now, that's not a concern.

"A lot of those are fairly rural counties," Bruner said of the areas his food bank serves. "We're seeing agencies, a mom-and-pop food pantry, being able to take full bins of bananas and distribute them quickly."

In Fort Smith, Ark., near the Oklahoma border, the River Valley Food Bank is nearing the end of its own record-setting year, having distributed more than 8 million pounds of food in 2013, compared to 6.7 million last year.

The reason for the jump is a mix of still-increasing demand and the bank's ability to store more food, said its director, Ted Clemons. "When you can distribute 8 million pounds and the pantries are still taking that food, that shows there is a demand," he said.

Unlike past years, the food bank didn't receive any donated turkeys this year. So River Valley decided to hold a one-day "turkey drive" recently.

Halfway through Friday's effort, Clemons, reached by phone while out collecting turkeys, said they'd already collected more than 300, with a goal of 800 for the day.

Still Not Enough

But even the most robust food banks aren't able to fill the need, a fact that was true even before the recent food stamp cuts.

By Feeding America's estimate, the benefit cuts will cost 1.9 million meals for low-income Americans next year—more than half the number of meals the organization distributes in a given year.

Even at Washington, D.C.'s Capital Area Food Bank, which moves 45 million pounds of food each year from its 100,000-square-foot facility a few miles from the U.S. Capitol, organizers know they can't feed everybody who is hungry.

The facility covers parts of Virginia and Maryland, along with the nation's capital itself, where almost one in four residents is on food stamps.

In preparation for the holidays, the food bank bought 50 percent more food this month than it did in October.

Two weeks ago, it received a donation of 1,000 turkeys from a grocer.

"It would be great to put ourselves out of business," Page Crosland, director of media and events at the food bank, said last week. "But I don't see that happening."

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

Volunteers spend Thanksgiving morning preparing lunches for thousands of locals





By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – With all the talk of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, it appears that the seasonal tradition of Thanksgiving has fallen to the monetary wayside.

While that may appear to be the case, volunteers at First Baptist Church in Cullman have been ensuring that the tradition of giving thanks for what has been given is shared with those who might be in need for over the past 20 years.

"I have been blessed so much and I see a lot of people who need to have a meal at Thanksgiving, so that's why we are here," Grover Reeves, event organizer, said.

In years' past the church has churned out of 1,300 box meals per year, including feeding inmates at the Cullman County Detention Center.

"We're prepared to feed 1,500 people, which is something we've grown accustom to," he said.

"It's what we enjoy doing. We've been blessed and we want to turn around and bless others."

A bevy of volunteers, including high school students from St. Bernard, helped ensure all the meals were packaged and delivered on time.

USSSA (from Front)

try music festival, Rock the South.

"Heritage Park, on average, is booked between 42-44 weeks each year for a variety of tournaments" he said.

"The economic impact for just one 3-day tournament can be on the low end of roughly $1 million for this county and city. That's huge for everyone."

The person at the helm of all the madness is CP&R Athletic Director Shelby Williams.

"Shelby does an amazing job making sure all of our events go off without a hitch. She takes on all the tournaments and other special events at the complex," he said.

Harbison said one of the main draws to Cullman is the welcoming attitude offered by locals to those visiting from surrounding counties and nearby states.

"We can have the best facilities in the country but if we didn't have such a welcoming, accommodating community, then we wouldn't have made it this far," he said. "This award speaks as much about the community as it does about the facilities, so Cullman County you should be proud."



Dinner (from Front)

or less. The holiday dinner will be located downstairs in the Conference room of The North Central Neurology Assoc., P.C. Joanne P. LaGanke MS Center, which is located at 1809 Kress St. Cullman, AL 35058.

For directions or information please call Co-Leader Randy E. Bennett at 256-531-7841.

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@CullmanSense

Love Nativity
St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church and Christ Lutheran Church
Present the
FIRST ANNUAL
Christmas Festival and Market
An outdoor community festival celebrating the wonders of the Christmas season
Saturday, December 14, 2013 ~ 1:00-6:00 p.m.
Come Ready to Play, Eat, Shop and Celebrate



Candy Cane Lane
Kids' Carnival Area
- Inflatables
- Buckin' Blitzen (Mechanical Bull)
- Velcro Wall
- Carousel Ride
- Carriage Ride
- Pictures with Santa
- Christmas Hayride
- Games, Games, Games

Music/Entertainment
CHS Jazz Band
Wallace State Singers
St. John's Praise Band
Shirley's Dancers
CHS Drama Team
and much more!

The Dinckelberg Market
Come Ready to Shop
Over 30 Market Vendors
Food Vendors -
Pizza, Funnel Cakes, Hot Dogs, Cupcakes, Cotton Candy and more!

Located at 512 Second Avenue, Southeast ~ Cullman, Alabama
For more information, contact us at 256-734-0344

– 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

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.

Cullman Community Lions Club Meeting
All members of the Cullman Community Lions Club are urged to attend an 11 a.m. meeting at Rumors Deli. Please bring interested friends and possible new members. Contact Patty Miller for additional information at 256-734-0131.

Art After Hours
The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce will once again sponsor it's annual 'Art After Hours', a Chamber of Commerce for Charities Silent Auction from 5 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. 50% of funds raised go to local charities and 50% to local artists. There will be pictures, drawings, mixed media, sculptures and much more on display for bidding. Come take part in a special Cullman artisan event.

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.

'An Evening in December Christmas Tour' with the Nelons
Everyone is invited to attend 'An Evening in December Christmas Tour with The Nelons and The LeFevre Quartet' at Cullman's First Baptist Church. This program starts at 7 p.m. and tickets, $10.00 each, are available at the Church Office, Doug Doggett Jewelers, Ed White Jewelers and Yates-Chance Christian Bookstore. Please call 256-734-5632 or 256-347-0803 for additional information on this event. Come celebrate the 'Reason for the Season' with these special musical groups.

Nighttime Christmas Parade in Downtown Cullman
The Downtown Merchants Association in Cullman is planning a Christmas Parade for at 7 p.m. as part of a 'Celebrate Christmas' in the local area. Hosted by the CDMA, CP&R and Cullman Savings Bank and sponsore4d by CullmanSense, with entertainment sponsored by Bill Smith Buick GMC, the event will take place the same night as the lighting of the official Cullman City Christmas tree in Depot Park. Activities during the evening will highlight music by Unknown Lyric, a band from Atlanta, Dickensian Christmas carolers, lots of kids' activities, and live reindeer, Santa and Mrs. Claus. All these events are held in downtown Cullman and everyone is invited to attend. Interested groups who wish to have floats in the parade need to go by or call the Lee Powell Insurance Agency. There is no entry fee for this event.

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.

22nd County Christmas Parade in Hanceville
Everyone is invited to attend, and take part in, the 22nd annual Cullman County Christmas Parade in Hanceville. This event, which starts at 2 p.m. at Wallace State Community College and proceeds to Hanceville City Hall, is sponsored by the Hanceville Civitan Club. Floats, horses, tractors and of course there's a hint that Santa might make an appearance - all will be in store for attendees. All schools, Churches, community organizations and any other interested folks are invited to take part in the parade. Contact Joann Walls for additional info at 256-352-9799 or at walls747234@bellsouth.net.

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.

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cullman city parks & recreation

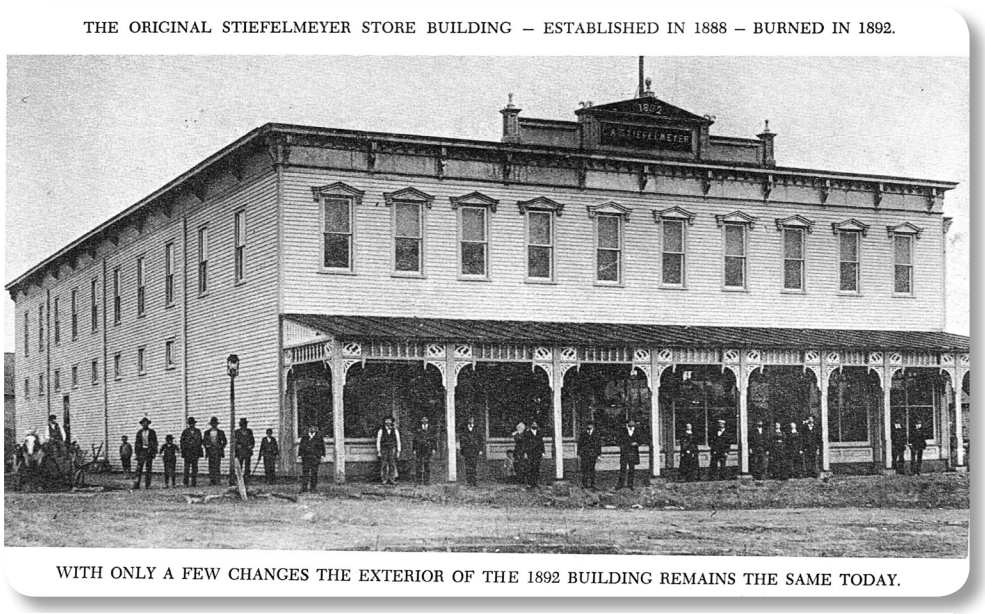
WHAT'S ON DECK AT PARKS AND REC....

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

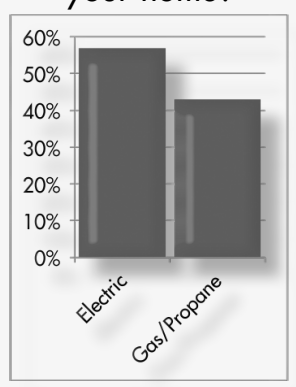
Share your historic photos with us!
E-mail history@cullmansense.com



The original Stiefelmeyer Store Building — Contrib. by Cullman County Museum

Poll

How do you heat your home?



This Week's Poll

Have you enrolled in Obamacare?

Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

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The Procrastinator's Guide to Christmas Survival

By: Natalie Bonner

I know – you have just emerged from your turkey, stuffing, cranberry, and dressing Thanksgiving coma only to find out that it is December 2, and you haven't even started your Christmas shopping. You're probably thinking, "Where did the time go? How did this happen to me? Again?"

If you're a fellow procrastinator, then you know all too well what happens when you wait. The sentiments "Oh, I'll do it later" or the favorite "I'm off tomorrow so I can get it done then" inevitably turn into "I still have time" and "I'm just too tired today." I'm here to tell you that it's going to be okay. Just take a deep breath, relax, and get started. Well, maybe don't relax too much – after all, it's time to get started! You can do this.

I have developed yet another five-step plan to ensure you swoop in like the Christmas spirited survivor you are and make it all look like you just waved a wand around. It will be that easy.

1. Put your tree up! Families all over put their Christmas tree up at different times, but it seems pretty standard to have it up on or by the first of the month. Now, don't be scared. This can be really fun and a great family bonding experience. Got kids? Let them be a part of the fun. They can help distribute tinsel and help hang ornaments. Pick your Christmas tree theme and get busy. Once you start, you won't want to stop.
2. Make a countdown! My sister religiously puts out an adorable countdown each year that she and her two young sons make together out of construction paper and markers. If you don't have the time or just aren't into crafts as much, you can purchase a cute, festive countdown at Hobby Lobby or Wal-Mart. They will help you keep track of the days and how much time you have, plus give your little one something to look forward to in removing the days and counting down to Christmas.
3. Make your Christmas list! Make a list of everyone you need to buy for, what you wish to get them, and where this item can be found. This will help you keep track of everyone you need to buy for and what you have in mind for them. You can even further separate your list into a family list, friend's list and work list. This will help eliminate any confusion, too, if you have several same-named friends and family members.
4. Start your shopping! You are now prepared to go out there and dominate the masses. Having a list on-hand will help keep you focused and eliminate the impulse buy urges. Keep focused. Go into each store with a goal and a time limit set so you don't wind up looking at your watch and thinking, "I've been in Rue 21 for two hours?!" Depending on your list, you may have to venture out for a good solid second day of shopping to cross off everything on your list, but remember to focus and adhere to your list and time limit and the crowds and impulse buys will not even fluster you.
5. Wrap your presents and relax! Now, you get to make your presents look fancy by wrapping them or stuffing them into festive bags with tissue paper. Either way, everyone loves a surprise and neat little presents tucked under the Christmas tree is a sight sure to please. After you finish getting your presents ready, cap the night off with a hot cocoa and Christmas movie. Now, the only thing left to do is relax and have fun!

See! That wasn't too bad. I told you that you could do it. All it takes is a little bit of planning, organizing, and follow-through. The best way to avoid a last-minute fiasco is to get started now. The holidays are fun, festive, and wonderful but can be stressful. Keep this guide handy in case you need a little help getting started. Besides, once Christmas is over, then there's the New Year. Not to worry though – I will have a guide for you on that one as well.

Tips to Avoid Colds or Flu this Holiday Travel Season

(StatePoint) The most wonderful time of the year is all about spending time with loved ones. But if doing so requires travel, be sure to take precautions to stay healthy.

"Stressed travelers confined in crowded spaces can be particularly susceptible to colds and flu, especially at this time of year," says Dr. Kenneth Redcross, M.D.

But don't despair. Redcross says that a few behavior tweaks and a natural flu medicine can help you get through the season.

Don't Touch That

Cold and flu viruses are transmitted by touching respiratory secretions and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. So avoid touching escalator rails and other surfaces in crowded public places like airports.

Don't put your face directly on airline-supplied pillows or blankets that haven't been sanitized. Use antibacterial wipes to clean off tray tables and arm rests.

One of the simplest ways to avoid transmitting cold and flu bugs is to wash your hands, yet as many as 30 percent of airline travelers do not after using airport restrooms, according to a study by the American Society for Microbiology.

Nip it in the Bud

The moment you feel achy or rundown, nip flu symptoms in the bud with a natural homeopathic medicine clinically shown to shorten the duration and reduce the severity of flu-like symptoms, such as fatigue, headache, body aches, chills, and fever.

"I recommend my patients keep a homeopathic medicine called Oscillo in their carry-on bags. It's very small and easy to take without water," says Redcross who treats patients of all ages at Manhattan's Physician Group in Harlem. "My patients like it because it's non-drowsy, and baby boomers don't have to worry about it interacting with other medications."

To learn more, or to download a coupon, visit www.oscillo.com/travel.

The Air Up There

Airplane cabins are extremely dry, and viruses tend to thrive in low-humidity conditions. Cold, dry air will dry out your mucous membranes, breaking down your natural barrier to infection. Drinking water, juice or electrolyte drinks or spritzing your face with water will keep skin moist. Avoid dehydrating beverages like coffee, soda, and alcohol.

Healthy Habits

Stress can take a toll on your immune system. Reduce the stress associated with traveling by being flexible and prepared. Build extra time into your schedule for a more relaxing trip.

Exercise may prevent the elderly from getting colds and flu, according to a study reported in the journal, "Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise." Make an effort to continue exercising on trips.



Source: Shutterstock

Do your best to get a full night's sleep while traveling. Even missing an hour or two of sleep nightly can wear down your immune system and increase your stress level, making you more susceptible to germs.

Eat right to avoid digestion problems and ensure you're getting immunity-boosting nutrients, such as vitamin C.

The busy holiday season doesn't have to mean sniffles, a sore throat and an achy, rundown body. Take steps to ring in a happy, healthy New Year.

This Week in History

December 2nd
- 1864 – Skirmish at Rocky Creek Church, Georgia
- 1972 – "December Giant" largest sinkhole in U.S. collapses in Alabama

December 3rd
- 1866 – Paid fire department replaces volunteer companies

December 4th
- 1930 – Vatican approves rhythm method for birth control
- 1996 – NASA's first Mars rover launched from Cape Canaveral

December 5th
- 1349 – 500 Jews of Nuremberg massacre during Black Death riots
- 1893 – First electric car, built in Toronto, could go 15 miles between charges

December 6th
- 1492 – Haiti discovered by Columbus, at Mole Saint Nicolas

December 7th
- 1917 – U.S. becomes 13th country to declare war on Austria during World War I

December 8th
- 1931 – Coaxial cable patented

A Series of Short Cunning Bites: *A Review of Vampires in a Lemon Grove* by Karen Russell

By: Dillon Lee
dillon@cullmansense.com

Karen Russell is not a new name to book readers. Her best-selling debut novel *Swamplandia!* topped "best of" lists in 2012 and was a finalist for the sought after Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Russell's knack for quirkiness is evident in *Swamplandia!* which centers on a family of alligator wrestlers that make their home in an amusement park of the same name. *Vampires in a Lemon Grove*, the 2013 short story collection, takes that quirkiness to deep, unsettling, dizzying, and impressive heights.

Short story collections are often overlooked, but in a culture reared by YouTube and reality television, short fiction with true substance may be the savior of modern literature.

It can be concise yet rich, bold while thoughtful. Obviously, the committee that chooses the recipient of the MacArthur Genius Grant agrees that Karen Russell's short fiction matters. Russell won the 2013 award for fiction with stories and subject matter that may be surprising to traditional readers of mainstays like drama and suspense.

In *Vampires*, Russell channels some this centuries greatest fantasy and horror novelists, like Neil Gaiman and Stephen King, and combines it with a rich regard for humanity, history, and absurdity.

Most of these tales hook you early by presenting a seemingly preposterous narrative conceit that soon seems believable and spellbinding.

For example, one of the books greatest triumphs, the story "The Barn At The End of Our Term" revolves around eleven former US presidents who are inexplicably reincarnated as horses in a barn tended to by an Irish groundskeeper. These former heads of state, now mere pasture horses, range from Woodrow Wilson to Dwight Eisenhower to Andrew Jackson to John Adams.

The focus of the story largely follows the plight of Rutherford B. Hayes, a rather unremarkable president less occupied with the delusions of power and rebirth that dominate his fellow equine leaders. Their status, station, and fate in this farmyard limbo is never explained but with many of these stories it's the journey amongst such an ingenious conceit that make the tale worth reading.

"Proving Up" is a tale much more grounded in reality as a homesteader's son, Miles, journeys to help his family and others meet an arbitrary government guideline require to claim their full deed. The story is awash in historical context and a touch of horror akin to the works of Stephen King.

Never do things drift too far from reality as the hardscrabble life in the homestead frontier is stark and almost otherworldly enough to modern readers.

Here it is perfectly captured with all its frustrations, dangers, heartache, and fleeting joy. In fact, the piece would teach high schoolers more about the homesteaders' plight that more history books and compel them in the trappings of suspense.

Russell proves adept in themes of horror, fantasy, and science fiction all within these pages. Yet, the real craft is in making them relevant and thought provoking. She writes with a first person narrative or an intimate third, usually settling on one character than omniscience. These make the stories personal.

Even when a young boy in another tale discovers a flock of seagulls stealing items that alter time and fate, Russell makes us believe and follows the young man on his very human quest to figure out his own life in the midst of extra dimensional madness.

In "Reeling for the Empire," another standout, Russell tackles the modernization of Japan, the historical treatment of women in society, and the spread of sweatshop industrialization.

This may seem dry subject matter until you are told that the narrative superficially revolves around young Japanese women indentured to Japan's silk industry and then, through either magic or arcane science, transformed into giant human silk worms. Kafka would be proud of using such a bold and bizarre concept to communicate something about life, humanity, and history.

While there are weaker stories within these pages, the majority are fascinating. Whether illuminating a dim corner of our own world or seemingly taking us an impossible, alternate version, Russell leaps over lines of genre, time, and style to bring us tales that terrify, bemuse, or, at their best, provoke deeper consideration.

It's difficult to imagine a more solid collection of short stories that are, both inherently and symbolically, magical.

Comics



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Progressive Play (from Front)

By: Natalie Bonner

Celebrate Christmas is this Friday and Saturday in downtown Cullman. Amongst the many things to see and do, including a Christmas Tree Lighting and the first nighttime Christmas parade to be held in almost 30 years, there will also be a live play performed by the Cullman High School Theater Department and Choral Music Department. CHS Choir Director Joshua Agnew and CHS Theater Director and Writer Dillon Lee have joined forces to bring to you a very special Christmas play.

The play is titled "The True Story of Chris Kringle" and it is loosely based on the 1970s Claymation film "Santa Claus Comes to Town." Dillon Lee wrote the script with original lines and jokes. Agnew said that a few character names were changed to tie in various story lines.

"It's a classic story that attempts to explain the origin of Santa Claus, from the time he was a baby until he became the jolly man in a red suit we know today. The show will guide the audience through critical moments in Santa's life," Agnew stated.

"The True Story of Chris Kringle" is a fun, fictional account of Santa Claus. Agnew said the "true story" part is meant to be humorous and that an underlying theme of the show is that kindness can melt even the hardest of hearts.

The play is deemed progressive because it gradually progresses from scene to scene through an almost interactive audience experience where the audience moves to each scene as it goes along.

Agnew explained, "The audience will gather in front of the first set to see scene one, then walk to the next set for scene two. As they "progress," a new group of people will enter the first set for scene one and will move through the rotation until all scenes have been viewed. Basically, by the time the first group gets to the end, the third group is starting the show."

Lee said it was also symbolically progressive for their department because the presentation was a new, unconventional undertaking for CHS Theater.

"The show will consist of five scenes with a cast of actors, but other stops in the walking play will feature music and effects, as well as interaction with one of our narrators," Agnew said.

The music will be recorded and performed live by the Cullman High School Choral Music Department. Agnew said the music is chosen to compliment the show and provide an entertaining experience for all who see and hear it. Throughout the show, the music sets the mood and tone for various scenes.

The progressive play in the park was a perfect opportunity for CHS to try something new, and for Agnew and Lee to partner up and combine their creative talents to bring something unexpected and fresh to Cullman. The CHS Fine Arts Department has not had access to their campus auditorium due to recent restorations, so they definitely delivered on a creative concept in an unusual environment.

"Since our facilities are getting a major renovation, we have made significant efforts to adapt our specialized lighting and stage effects to travel with us," Agnew said. "Now, with a generous grant from the Cullman City Schools Foundation, we can take our shows anywhere and create our own stage. This is the next evolution in our continuing efforts to create a genuine professional experience for our cast and crew."

Truly a unique theatrical and musical experience, CHS has pulled out all the stops to impress with their brand new progressive play performance. You won't want to miss out on their unique mode of storytelling and powerful music.

"We hope that it appeals to children and that they are entertained by Santa's whimsical origins as presented in my adaptation," Lee said. "It also repeats a message of giving, generosity, hope, and optimism while largely eschewing the religious overtones of a nativity story."

The play's Title Sponsor is The Birmingham School of Massage. "The True Story of Cris Kringle" will take place in Downtown Cullman at Depot Park. The show will run from 5:20 - 6:45 p.m. and after the Parade and Christmas Tree Lighting from 8:20 – 10:00 p.m. Admission is $2 per person and includes free popcorn for as long as it lasts.

Honoring our Military Men and Women is Not Confined to Patriotic Holidays

By:

Lieutenant Governor Kay Ivey

BRIEF BIO

Kay Ivey successfully sought the office of Lieutenant Governor in the 2010 election. In doing so, she became the second woman and the first Republican woman in Alabama history, to be elected to the post of Lieutenant Governor.

Lieutenant Governor Kay Ivey may be contacted at 334-242-7900 or www.ltgov.alabama.gov.

For most Alabamians, honoring our military men and women is not confined to the few days in a year designated for that purpose. It is knit into the fiber of our being to honor them every day. Our hearts swell with pride and gratitude at the sight of the American flag being carried onto the field before kickoff, after watching a news story about soldiers coming home to their families, or by reading the obituary of a war hero.

My father was among the Greatest Generation and proudly served in World War II, and I am committed to supporting those who make daily sacrifices to serve our Nation. As Lieutenant Governor and Chair of the Alabama Military Stability Commission, I have focused a great deal on issues relating to our military personnel, installations, and veterans.

The Commission is taking proactive steps to the potential threat of cuts in our military force and assets due the Base Realignment and Closure Process (BRAC). The timeline for when that will begin is unclear. It is likely two or three years away, but it will be too late to prepare if we wait until then. The goal of the Commission is to take action now to cultivate a military-friendly environment so that military missions carried out in Alabama, stay in Alabama.

These missions are vital to not only our state and national defense, but our local and state economy. The statewide economic impact of Alabama's four major military installations – Redstone Arsenal, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ft. Rucker, and Anniston Army Depot – is $12 billion. That's equivalent to the economic impact of three auto manufacturing plants, like those we are fortunate to have in Alabama. I have cited this figure before, but it is worth mentioning again to impress upon us the importance of maintaining the military's presence in our state.

The Commission was instrumental in passing bills last Legislative Session that positively impact our military and protect the missions. We are currently working on additional measures to be filed for consideration by lawmakers during the upcoming Session beginning in January.

In addition to bills drafted by the Commission, we plan to actively support the Overseas Military Voters bill, originated in the Secretary of State's office. The bill will bring Alabama into compliance with the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act which safeguards overseas military families' ability to effectively participate in elections. Alabama should do everything in its power to ensure that those who fight to preserve our rights are able to exercise those rights. The bill was proposed in the last Legislative Session and I am optimistic that with the Military Stability Commission's support, it can pass this Session.

I am also pleased to announce the recent election of Mike Ward as Chair of the Military Stability Foundation, a private, non-profit organization established to serve as the day-to-day operational arm of the Commission. Mike has served on the Foundation since its creation in 2011 and is Vice President of Government Affairs for the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce. He is very well-equipped for the job having worked with his community's BRAC efforts since the mid-1990s. I am confident he will serve the Foundation well.

We have strong leadership at the helm of the Military Stability Foundation and Commission, and the commitment of our State leaders. Our efforts to strengthen Alabama's military assets are our best protection from potential drastic cuts or changes. I hope you will join me in fighting for our military, as they have fought for us. We recently celebrated Veterans Day and I'm sure, like me, your feelings of pride and appreciation felt stronger as we paid tribute to our warriors, past and present. It is appropriate, on these occasions, to set aside our other obligations, pause from the busyness of our daily lives, and offer special appreciation to the courageous men and women who bravely defend our country. But I am very grateful to live in a state where our gratitude is not limited to a few days in a year. We say thank you today and every day. Thank you for the honor to serve as your Lieutenant Governor and please do not hesitate to contact my office if I may ever be of assistance to you.

EDITORIAL CARTOONS



Disagreement without the Hate

By: Laura Finley, Ph.D

Disagreement is an essential component of a healthy relationship, a healthy workplace, and a healthy democracy. Much research documents the dangers of surrounding ourselves with so-called "yes men" who always concur. Workplace echo chambers stifle innovation and reify bad policy decisions. Disagreement stimulates creative thinking and prompts innovation.

Yet, there is indeed a peaceful, even collaborative, way to disagree.

And, I contend, that it never involves personal insults, ad hominem attacks, and strings of epithets and curse words.

Unfortunately, it seems as though few in the U.S are taught how to disagree peacefully and constructively.

Instead, if we read, hear, or see something that bothers us, we tend to get all pissy about it and, rather than present our case, resort to the lowest blows we can. This behavior is, of course, modeled at nearly every turn.

It is difficult to remember any politician in the recent past who has not decided that the way to offer a contrasting view is to rip the crap out of his or her opponent.

As bad (sometimes worse) is media, where television pundits (and I note, both conservative and liberal) seem to love nothing more than to invite guests onto their shows to interrupt them, yell at them, berate them, and otherwise set them up to look foolish.

In professional sports, having the best trash-talker on your team is often viewed as an asset. K-12 schools reinforce the normalcy of mean-spirited disagreement when they fail to hold accountable those who denigrate those with whom they disagree.

Popular culture encourages the "othering" of the alleged opposition. For just one example, the t-shirt company David and Goliath offers a shirt that says, "Boys are stupid, throw rocks at them."

My recent experience authoring op-eds illustrates the issue perfectly. I authored a piece about the bureaucratic stifling of activism.

In the op-ed, I encouraged folks who disagree with my positions to share their viewpoints, as dialogue and disagreement can lead to amazingly creative social change from the synthesis of the best parts of different arguments.

While I did receive some pleasant feedback, I also received one very disturbing piece of hate email.

Not only did this anonymous emailer attack me personally, using hateful slurs, but s/he also failed to see the point I was making, which was precisely that we should not all agree but should not stifle those who do not see things our way.

I implore those who are reading this to understand what I am saying: I do not have all the answers. I never suggested I did.

No one does. And I think it is amazing when people get worked up about an issue or a cause and take that passion to the streets, to the airwaves, to the print media, and anywhere else they can find an audience.

But please, do so in a peaceful, respectful manner. We really can learn from one another if we discuss and debate, rather than attack.

Laura Finley, Ph.D., teaches in the Barry University Department of Sociology & Criminology and is syndicated by PeaceVoice.





Bill Smith

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