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CULLMAN'S MONDAY NEWSPAPER

CULLMANSENSE

COMMUNITY MATTERS

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Local



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BUSINESS

Deep South Classics Finds a New Home p2



Last Minute Holiday Gift Guide for the Thrifty Gifter p10

Busy Bee begins serving German heritage, one bite at a time

By: Kate Mullaney

CULLMAN - In a German founded town, The Busy Bee Cafe is now the only restaurant in Cullman to serve German dishes year round. For p7



Alabama's November Unemployment Rate Drops to 6.2%; Cullman, 4.7%

Contributed

MONTGOMERY — Governor Robert Bentley announced recently that Alabama's preliminary seasonally adjusted November unemployment rate is 6.2%, down from October's revised rate of 6.4%. November's rate represents 132,381 unemployed persons, compared to 137,160 in October and 148,956 in November 2012.

"The long-term trend in Alabama's unemployment rate is encouraging news for Alabamians who want a job," Governor Robert Bentley said.

"Every Alabama county has a decrease in their unemployment rate for November, and that is a sign that Alabamians are getting back to work in both rural and urban areas of Alabama. There is still much work left to be done, however, until Alabama reaches full employment, and our efforts to recruit more jobs will continue."

November's rate represents the third time this year that Alabama's unemployment rate has been at its lowest in five years.

Both July and August 2013 registered preliminary unemployment rates of 6.2% as well.

The last time the unemployment rate was at or below 6.2% was in October 2008, when the rate was 5.9%.

"Not surprisingly, it appears as though seasonal hiring, especially in retail establishments, helped to lower our unemployment rate," Alabama Labor Commissioner Tom Surtees said. p7

A sincere sense of giving

Local missionaries brighten lives with simple gesture of love





p6

Married authors welcomed at Yates Chance Christian Bookstore for book signing

By: Kate Mullaney

CULLMAN - Authors Sheila and HL Robertson from Lynchburg, TN were at the Yates Chance Christian bookstore last Saturday evening signing copies of their newest books. This married couple travels across the Southeast for book signings and enjoys every minute of it.

HL Robertson was signing copies of his book, "Into His Presence".

"My book is about the Lord's prayer in the Old Testament tabernacle," HL stated. "It's sort of entering into God's presence. A lot of people will use it as a devotional. There's a prayer in each chapter for that step in the journey."

HL encourages his audience to seek and approach God. "For me, I look at the fact that in the Old Testament there was sort of a formula for approaching God. I want people to understand that God is approachable today just as he was then, that he's not off in the back side of the universe somewhere and that we're left alone. He's a personal and interactive God who's here to work with us."

HL's wife, Sheila, was signing copies of two of her books.

"My first book is called 'Alzheimer's: There is hope'. It's been out for four years. It's a study in fear and how it affects us and how I believe that has a lot to do with Alzheimer's."

Sheila wants her audience to p6

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Deep South Classics Finds a New Home

By: Natalie Bonner

CULLMAN - Deep South Classics is known for their fine selection of upscale items for brides and babies, but they also have luxury items of all kinds for every taste and season. In addition to their specialty items, they offer a variety of furniture, gift accessories, jewelry, gourmet foods, and coffee.

On December 18, Deep South Classics celebrated a move to their brand new location at 400 5th Street SW, Cullman. Their Ribbon Cutting was a success and they are excited about their new home.

Owner Bonita Hutchinson said, "The location for Deep South Classics was chosen back in June and we moved the store from its old location to The Little Green House on the corner. We love the character and the quaint atmosphere it provides."

Clientele can expect the same great items just in a brand new environment. Still serving as a full service bridal registry, baby registry, and general gift registry store, Deep South Classics is committed to bringing the very best to Cullman.

"Customers can expect the same service as in the past. We have added many new lines that have not been around Cullman and so far they have been well received. We do plan to expand our home decor, lighting, and decorative accessories," Hutchinson said.

Along with the newer home décor additions, Deep South Classics also offers all kinds of china, both fine and everyday.

They also carry stemware, flatware, and table linens. Their kitchen department is growing and they now offer Nambé and Rosenthal cookware. And who doesn't love their gourmet coffee department?

"Our gourmet department is growing as well, back by popular demand. We are now carrying the coffees that Cullmanites have grown to love over the past 30 years," Hutchinson stated.

Their dedicated customers can expect the same level of customer service and satisfaction for which Deep South Classics is known.

The new location gives the business a fresh new look with



the same great quality and class.

Hutchinson and her husband purchased Deep South Classics just last month in November, but the store itself has been around since 1986. Hutchinson noted that prior to '86 the store was first called Ben Prickett's then later R.M. Hearin Gifts.

Hutchinson said, "I am so excited to be a part of this great store that has been around for so many years. When I was in high school, I was fortunate enough to work for both Ben Prickett and Robby Hearin. That is when the love of the gift industry began. I have been in this business ever since."

CCSO, CNET nab burglary suspects

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Last Wednesday, Cullman County Sheriff Mike Rainey announced two arrests had been made in connection with several burglaries to both residential homes and storage units throughout the county between November and mid-December of this year.

"The thefts occurred from several different areas within the county and were not from any one specific geographical area," Sheriff Mike Rainey said. "Investigators and CNET agents were able to develop leads and witnesses that led them to the identity of a male and female suspect."

Rainey said both William Shawn Driskell, 32, of Hanceville, and Brandy Roxanne Cross, 32, of Cullman, have been charged with one count of Burglary-3rd degree. Investigators are awaiting additional warrants stemming from this investigation.

"Capt. Jon Montgomery, Lt. Doug Duke, Inv. Randy Frost, and CNET agents were the lead investigators who were responsible for developing the leads and recovery of property, which led to the arrest of Driskell and Cross," he said. The investigation has led to the clearance of four residential burglaries exceeding $5,000."

A portion of the suspected stolen items have been recovered, however, investigators are continuing their pursuit to locate the remainder of the stolen property.

Rainey asked if anyone has information pertaining to the burglaries, or if someone feels they may have purchased any of the stolen items, to contact the sheriff's office immediately.

"We urge anyone who has purchased property from William Shawn Driskell or Brandy Cross to contact the Cullman County Sheriff's Office in order for us to determine if the property may have been stolen," he said.

Among the items recovered were a table, chairs, costume jewelry, class rings, stuffed animals, flat screen televisions, tools, and a bible.

Rainey asked that residents be diligent when it comes to properly securing your home, car, or storage unit. One key point, Rainey said, is to have neighbors watching out for other neighbors.

"As Sheriff I urge citizens to report to the sheriff's office any strange or suspicious activity around your or your neighbor's homes. Many of these crimes occurred during the daylight hours when the victims were at work, so we all need to keep an eye out for suspicious activity."

William Shawn Driskell remains in the Cullman County Detention Center with a $15,000 cash bond. Brandy Roxanne Cross is currently out of jail on a $5,000 property bond.

Huntsville Collegium Musicum Christmas Program performed at Sacred Heart

By: Barbara G. Ragsdale

CULLMAN - Eight members of The Huntsville Collegium Musicum recently presented an acapella concert at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church featuring a musical depiction of the Christmas story.

Using music dating back to 1420, the program featured works by Cristobal Morales, Jean Mouton, Gustav Holst, and Johann Walther as well as the words of American poet Joshua Smith from the eighteenth century.

Using ancient plainchant, motets and carols new and old, the 'Puer Natus Est: Medieval and Renaissance Music for Advent and Christmas' rendition first announced the Birth of Christ, followed by a musical meditation on the Blessed Mother including the dramatic Ave Maria as a six-voice version.



» Select members of the Huntsville Collegium Musicium: Melanie Payne, Sarah Loach Meister, Chris Walters (Music Director), Erin Colwitz, Suzanne Bouvier-Page, Bryan Page, Aaron Cain, and David Caine.

Alternating between German and Latin the third section of the program focused on the Child in the manger, lullabies by His Mother, and the songs of praise which emanated on that Holy Night.

Finally the Good Tidings part of the program, jubilant and contemplative, when sung by the eight members of the chorus swelled the rafters of the century old church until it seemed as though 100 voices were joined in lush, sustained harmonies.

The musicians, who presented two concerts earlier in the weekend, desire to share their talents with others, hoping that musical inspiration from the past reinvigorates the universal message of joy, peace, and goodwill, that is as relevant centuries ago as it is this holiday season.

Possible homicide being investigated

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – According to Cullman County Sheriff Mike Rainey, 71-year-old Fredrick William Galin was found deceased in his home on St. Joseph Dr. Last Thursday evening, prompting authorities to treat the situation as a possible homicide.

"The man's caregiver came to the home earlier this evening. When the man could not be reached the caregiver called the police department," Sheriff Rainey said. Once officials arrived on scene, officers had to make a forcible entry into the residence, where the elderly gentleman was found.

"They forced their way in and he was deceased there inside the door. At this time we do suspect foul play but as far as cause of death we don't have that right now," he said.

Cullman gets $5.72M in April 27 tornado grants

By: Jennifer Ardis

MONTGOMERY—Governor Robert Bentley recently announced more than $30 million in grants that will be awarded to 16 Alabama counties and municipalities devastated by the April 2011 tornadoes.

The announcement is part of a special $49.1 million Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to aid continued disaster recovery. The funding will address continuing needs for demolition and clearance, multi-family housing, construction of public buildings, road repairs, water and sewer services, drainage improvements, and economic revitalization. The funding will also help with infrastructure and flood management improvements designed to minimize potential damage from any future storms. Alabama will submit an additional plan for projects to be funded with the remaining allocation at a later date.

Grant Highlights

- Cullman – $5.72 million for sewer improvements
- Cullman County - $1.29 million for road improvements
- Hanceville - $80,000 for sewer improvements

What's Online

Ornamental Goals

A local, talented artist will see her latest creation on display at the state capitol. Senior Katelyn Abbott from West Point High School has been selected to createa special ornament that represents the West Point community.



qrne.ws/137

The Little Path: A Journey with the Documentary "Brother Joseph and the Grotto"

There is an almost magical quality in a visit to the Ave Maria Grotto, nestled in the woods around St. Bernard. At any age, it can be viewed with childlike wonder as holy sites, historical landmarks...

qrne.ws/138

State Arts Council awards grants totaling $342,695

The Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA) awarded 99 grants totaling $342,695 at its Council meeting in Montgomery on December 6, 2012. This round of grants will support arts in education, folk art, community, literature, performing, and...

qrne.ws/139

The State of the Death Penalty as 2013 Ends

By: Maggie Clark • Stateline

States continued to turn away from the death penalty this year, with just 39 people executed in nine states, according to a year-end report from the Death Penalty Information Center. Maryland repealed the death penalty this year, continuing a six-year trend of one state each year ending the punishment.

There were 80 new death sentences handed down this year, which was a slight increase over last year but still well below the peak years in the mid-1990s when more than 300 sentences were imposed each year, according to the report.

Outside that trend were two notable efforts in North Carolina and Florida to speed up the execution clock, which is years-long in all states.

Republican lawmakers in North Carolina repealed the state's Racial Justice Act, which had created an additional appeal for inmates who felt their death sentence was a result of racial bias in the jury selection process.

"For nearly a decade, liberal death penalty opponents have orchestrated legal challenges to impede the law in North Carolina. Justice delayed is justice denied," said North Carolina Republican State Sen. Phil Berger after he led the charge to repeal the Racial Justice Act.

Florida lawmakers shortened the timeline for death row inmates so that their execution date cannot be more than six months after they've exhausted all their appeals. The average wait before the law changed was 22 years.

"An inmate who has been on death row for 22 years has had a fair opportunity to discover all of the evidence needed to challenge his conviction," Gov. Rick Scott wrote in his signing message of the Timely Justice Act.

That amount of time "is surely a crushing burden of uncertainty to the victims' families," the GOP governor added.

Nationwide, the mechanics of the death penalty became more difficult this year.

States faced execution drugshortages that caused execution delays and uncertainty.

Missouri, Texas, Georgia and Ohio turned to compounding pharmacies to recreate single doses of execution drugs because European drug manufacturers objected to their drugs' use in executions.

Those states' existing supply of the drug expired last year.

Nationally, 60 percent of public favors the death penalty, according to a Gallup poll taken in October.

While still a majority, it's the lowest level of support since 1972, according to Gallup, which has polled on the death penalty since the 1950s.

The year marked a continuation of a trend towards reducing the death penalty that Richard Dieter, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, expects to continue into next year.

"It's an eye-opener because standing against the death penalty is a traditionally risky position for governors and legislators," said Dieter.

"That didn't happen in the 1980s or 1990s, but now we've seen six states in six years (repeal the death penalty) and we expect more next year."

New Hampshire, Delaware, Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado are likely to debate repealing the death penalty in 2014, said Dieter.

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

Legislative Leaders Launch Alabama RepFinder App

By: Rachel Adams

Secretary of State says app will enable greater access to Alabama Votes system

MONTGOMERY – Alabama House Speaker Mike Hubbard (R-Auburn) and Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh (R-Anniston) on Wednesday announced a new mobile phone app designed to help voters identify their current House and Senate members in addition to representatives for new legislative districts that will take effect in 2014.

The app was designed by Venturi, Inc., a Huntsville-based aerospace and technology company, and allows mobile phone users to look up legislators using either an address or their current location and provides contact information for those elected officials. Mobile users can download the free app by searching for "Alabama RepFinder" in Google Play or the Apple App Store.

Hubbard said the RepFinder app is the first of its kind to allow voters to identify their legislative representation under the recently-drawn 2014 legislative districts.

"With technology constantly changing and improving it's important that we continue to find new ways to engage with Alabamians," said Hubbard. "The Alabama RepFinder gives people access to important district information on their mobile phone for the first time."

Adding that the idea for the app was brought forward by Senator Bill Holtzclaw (R-Madison), Marsh said the use of collaborative technology will provide users with a unique ability to identify and contact their elected officials.

"With district lines recently being redrawn, it's important that Alabamians have the ability to identify their new legislative representatives," Marsh said. "This app gives voters that capability at their fingertips."

RepFinder is also optimized to access the mobile version of the Secretary of State's AlabamaVotes.gov election center. Secretary of State Jim Bennett said the app will ensure greater access to information on voter registration, provisional and absentee ballots, and polling places.

"Anytime we can increase access to information that will enable citizens to participate in the electoral process, it's a win," Bennett said. "This app is a handy tool, and it helps bring our electoral system into the ever-evolving arena of mobile technology."

Holtzclaw said the app represents an innovative approach to addressing a constituent services need.

"Venturi is a local small business that had a unique capability to create this app," Holtzclaw said. "They approached us with the software and I'm proud that we were able to connect them to this opportunity."

Red Cross Pet Therapy Program Brings Hope to Our Heroes

By: Chris Osborne

BIRMINGHAM — The American Red Cross Alabama Region recently announced a new partnership with Pet Pals of Alabama. This partnership will enable the Alabama Red Cross to initiate a local Red Cross Pet Therapy Program (PTP).

The Alabama Region PTP will start in the Birmingham area at our VA State Homes and will work to expand and offer the program statewide. Pet Pals of Alabama share our same goals of offering their services statewide.

The American Red Cross supports members of our armed services and their families in many ways—from connecting loved ones in times of emergency to linking military families to local financial and social services counseling designed for their needs. The Red Cross also supports wounded, ill and injured warriors in military hospitals, including using pet therapy to bring hope and comfort into a patient's life.

Dogs and other service animals offer unconditional love and comfort to wounded and ill warriors undergoing treatment at military hospitals for injuries seen and unseen. They help patients forget about their current circumstances and relax for a little while.

The Red Cross offers free training for volunteers and their pets who are interested in becoming Animal Assisted Therapy volunteers. Pets obtain pet therapy certification (no cost involved) and begin volunteering. Owners and their pets can make visits on their own or as part of a group.

Pet therapy animals should be calm, gentle and well-mannered. There are no breed requirements. Cats and small dogs are good because they can be lifted easily and fit even on the smallest laps. A large dog makes a good companion for someone in a wheelchair, sitting patiently and allowing the occupant to stroke his fur.

Therapy cats and dogs have a calm, gentle personality, are people-oriented, love attention, and are not shy. They provide an invaluable service to those who are lonely or ill. For more, call the Ala. Red Cross office at 205-439-7800.

Alabama's Hegemans Appointed To National Yf&R Committee

By: Chris Osborne

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Alabama Farmers Federation's Jon and Amy Hegeman of Anniston have been appointed to the American Farm Bureau Federation's national Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee.

The Hegemans' two-year term begins in March. They are among 16 committee members who represent all regions of the U.S.

"Jon and Amy's enthusiasm for farming and the Young Farmers program is contagious," said Alabama Farmers Federation Young Farmer Division Director Jennifer Himburg. "It's an honor for them to be a part of this elite group of young leaders."

Committee members are responsible for the YF&R Program planning, which includes the operation of YF&R competitive events during AFBF's annual convention, along with planning and implementation of the YF&R Leadership Conference held in February.

The Hegemans, who were Alabama's Outstanding Young Farm Family in 2013, have greenhouses and horses on their farm in Calhoun County. Jon was the State Young Farmers Committee chairman that same year.

AFBF President Bob Stallman announced the appointment of the committee. Others include Miles and Sarah Kuschel, Sebeka, Minn. (beef cattle); Andy and Kasey Clay, Jamestown, Mo. (corn, soybeans and cattle); Aaron and Nicole Banks, Arundel, Maine (quarter horses); Derek Helms, Arkadelphia, Ark. (rice, corn, soybeans and wheat); Danielle and Jacob Larson, Okeechobee, Fla. (row crops, beef and dairy cattle); Sara and Zandon Bray, Redvale, Colo. (beef cattle); and Jason Flowers, Midland, Ore. (small grain crops, hay and cattle).

"It is important to ensure the future of agriculture is in good hands, and I am confident these individuals are great leaders as they have already given so much back to their communities," said Stallman.

"I look forward to the work they will do on the YF&R Committee, as well as watching them become even stronger and more capable leaders for American agriculture."

National committee members are nominated by their respective state Farm Bureaus. They study farm and food policy issues, participate in leadership training exercises and develop other professional skills while on the committee.

The Young Farmers & Ranchers program includes men and women between 18-35 years old. Learn more online at http://www.fb.org/index.php?action=programs.yfr.home.



» Jon and Amy Hegeman and their daughter Ella Kate

Prep Basketball Wrap Up

By: Josh McBrayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

This week was chocked full of games with each team looking to get on a roll heading into the various Christmas tournaments they will be playing in over the holiday break. Some teams kept their winning ways going and some got desperately needed wins. Here is the action from around the county.

Vinemont Ends Losing Streak With Victory Over Falkville

By: Johnny Thornton

Vinemont Eagles 47 - Falkville Blue Devils 39

VINEMONT - A seven-game losing streak was broken by the Vinemont Eagles Friday night in defeating Falkville 47-39. What keyed the Eagles to their first win since the Tuesday before Thanksgiving was good defense in the fourth period, holding Falkville to one made field goal and three of six from the foul line.

The Eagles got enough points from the line in the final frame, eight of 14 after having shooting problems at the stripe the entire night.

The Eagles got off to a fast start in building a 10-2 lead with Riley Foust hitting two shots from three-point range and field goals from close range by Zack Drake and Austan Hedgecock.

Falkville erased the deficit with a 9-1 run to finish the quarter and tie the score at 11-11.

It was back and forth for both teams during the second with the lead switching the scoreboard numerous times before the Eagles inched in front at the break, 27-24.

During the third, the game remained tight as Vinemont was ahead 35-34 with one quarter to go.

Heading into the fourth, the Eagles were only five of 12 at the line while the Blue Devils had made 10 of 12 attempts. It changed in the final 8:00 with Falkville only three of six and Vinemont getting eight points from the line. Hedgecock and Lance Stanley were two for two in the period with two free throws also coming from center Garrett Sipe and Foust hitting two before missing four in a row.

Foust was the lone double digit scorer for Todd Johnson's Eagles with 12 points, Sipe had nine, Stanley eight, Austin Mosley six, Drake five, Hedgecock four and Tyler Tucker three.

Falkville suffered its second straight loss and fell to 6-5. The Blue Devils got 10 points each from Travis Cole and Cannan Smith and six by Nathinel Drinkard.

Falkville Lady Blue Devils 52 - Vinemont Lady Eagles 25

Leading only 15-9 after the first period, the 10th ranked Lady Blue Devils in Class 1A went on a 17-0 spurt in the second to gain control and led at halftime 32-9.

Vinemont stayed close to the Blue Devils in the second half, just getting outscored 20-16. The Lady Eagles had a 10-4 advantage in the final period of play.

Emily Mickelson guided Falkville, 9-2, with 15 points while Autumn Eddy tossed in 13.

For Vinemont, Katie Speer netted eight, Casey Westmoreland six, Laura Smithson three and Zoe Thomas, Autumn Barnette, Sarah Smith and Hannah Adamson two apiece.

Big night for the Raiders at home

By: Matt Glover

Good Hope Lady Raiders 41 - Danville Lady Hawks 27

The Lady Raiders faced rival Danville in a game that was paramount to Area standings.

Both playoff expectant teams knew that this game would be perhaps their biggest test. The Lady Raiders lead most of the way, but the Lady Hawks managed to cut the lead to five half way through the fourth quarter. However, the Lady Raiders would get the win by hitting several key free throws down the stretch to secure it 41-27.

Bishop led the Raiders with 11, followed closely by Kinser with 10. Then it was Scott with 9, Mattey with 7, Thomas had 3, and Whisenant 1. For the Hawks, Anderson scored 11, followed by Tuck with 10. Cordova had 5.

Good Hope Raiders 58 - Danville Hawks 48

The boys' game didn't have quite the drama coming into the game as the girls, but it would prove to have plenty after all was said and done.

The Hawks were the big favorite, trumping the Raiders in their first meeting of the season. However it was the Raiders who jumped out to the early 11-5 lead. The Hawks would go on a 12-4 run to lead 19-17 after the first period. Good Hope battled back to tie it 19. The Raiders would then go on a 11-4 run to lead the Hawks at the half, by a score of 30-23.

After the half the Hawks quickly scored four points to cut the lead to 3. The Raiders then outscored them 11-8 throughout the remainder of the period to lead by 7 after three, 42-35.

There were feelings of cautious optimism in the crowd as the fourth quarter began.

Again, the Hawks would quickly score first, cutting the lead to five, but this is as close as the Hawks would get to the Raiders.

The Raiders used great ball movement and timely shooting to hold on to their lead throughout the fourth period. Ultimately completing the upset 58-48.

Cofer led the way with 20, Marty dropped in 14, Vanderburg had 9, Smith put in 7, and Johnson scored 5 off the bench. Grigsby had 2 and Raper 1.

A. Cordova lead the Hawks with 18, followed by Doherty with 12. A. Cordova had 6, both Alexander and Robinson put in 5, and Moore had 2.

OTHER SCORES

BOYS

Dec. 16
Fairview 65, Oneonta 45

Dec. 17:
Fairview 43, Good Hope 29
Cullman 84, Butler 74
Holly Pond 74, Vinemont 57
Oakman 58, Cold Springs 51
West Point 67, Hayden 36
Hanceville 70, Curry 50

Dec. 19:
Hanceville 71, Marion County 41

Dec. 20:
Vinemont 47, Falkville 39
Cullman 63, Hartselle 46
Holly Pond 71, Fairview 45
Hanceville 84, Tarrant 54
Walker 70, Cold Springs 56
East Limestone 82, West Point 75

GIRLS

Dec. 16
Oneonta 57, Fairview 34

Dec. 17
Good Hope 42, Fairview 31
Holly Pond 56, Vinemont 22
Hanceville 43, Curry 32
Cullman 53, Butler 23
Cold Springs 64, Oakman 13
Hayden 55, West Point 34

Dec. 20
Holly Pond 73, Fairview 36
Cold Springs 55, Walker 51
Cullman 44, Hartselle 37
East Limestone 61, West Point 32
Falkville 52, Vinemont 25

It's Senior Bowl Time!

By: Josh McBrayer
joshmcbrayer@cullmansense.com

MOBILE - With the college bowl week already underway and culminating in the clash between the #1 Florida State Seminoles and the #2 Auburn Tigers for the last ever BCS National Title, college football is just about done for the 2013 season. But for a few lucky college seniors, there is one more chance to shine because the 2014 Senior Bowl is rapidly approaching.

Since 1950 the Senior Bowl has been a place where senior college football players have gathered to showcase their talent in front of fans, coaches, and scouts in hopes of improving their NFL draft stock.

The first game was played in 1950 in Jacksonville, FL and is the only game to not be played in Mobile, AL. The game saw the South squad win 22 to 13 over the North and featured a young player who would go on to be a legend in the sport of football, Doak Walker.

Since 1951 the game has been held in Mobile and is currently played at Ladd-Peebles Stadium.

The Senior Bowl has been the launching pad for many former and current NFL players, including 500+ that are currently in the league, like Colin Kaepernick, Jimmy Graham, Arian Foster, Clay Matthews, and last years #1 overall pick, Eric Fisher.

Along with the game, played on January 25th, there are many fan friendly activities in and around Mobile to enhance the fan experience. Activities that include open practices and autograph sessions. The Friday before the game plays host to the Vica Cola Fan Experience with games, giveaways, and a meet and greet with all of the players from both the North and South squads.

If you are a fan of football, this is a do not miss event. Stay connected to CullmanSense for up to date rosters and information on which players will be attending the 2014 Senior Bowl.

Get ready for the 2nd Annual Yule Tide Basketball Classic

By: Johnny Thornton

HANCEVILLE - An event that is now part of the sports activity after Christmas will be in its second edition.

The Yule Tide Classic, presented by Mitch Smith Chevrolet and hosted by Cullman High School, will be on Dec. 26-28 at Wallace State's Tom Drake Coliseum.

A total of 16 teams, eight girls and eight boys will enjoy the opportunity on playing at one of the best venues across the state. Tom Drake Coliseum is in its 21st year of existence and has been the host to the Cullman County Basketball Tournament since 1993 and the Alabama High School Northwest Regional since 1994.

The field, like last year, covers a portion of Northwest and Northeast Alabama along with teams from the Birmingham area and Tuscaloosa.

The Cullman Bearcats are the defending tournament champions after a big upset of Class 2A power Tanner in the title game last year.

Northridge from Tuscaloosa is back to defend its crown in the girls division after a victory in the title bout with Athens.

Cullman is not just the only team locally that will be in the event. For the second straight year, the Holly Pond Lady Broncos will be part of the festivities. They were rated fourth the previous week in the first release of the Alabama Sportswriters' poll in Class 3A.

Scott Adams' Lady Broncos come to this event 13-2 with a seven-game winning streak.

The Cullman Bearcats have won seven games and the Holly Pond Thanksgiving championship and bring a fast pace offense that is averaging in the mid 80s per game.

Cullman Lady Bearcats have picked it up with a series of wins in recent weeks and want to make a deep run into this tournament.

Tanner is No. 5 in 2A girls, Tanner on top of 2A boys, and Athens No. 8 in 5A boys.

Here is the daily schedule of the 2013 Yule Tide Classic:

Thursday, Dec. 26
Holly Pond vs. Tanner (Girls) 9:30 a.m.
Athens vs. Dora 11 a.m.
Athens vs, Gardendale (Girls) 12:30 p.m.
Tanner vs. Arab 2 p.m.
Hartselle vs. Brooks (Girls) 3:30 p.m.
Gardendale vs. Muscle Shoals 5 p.m.
Cullman vs. Northridge (Girls) 6:30 p.m.
Cullman vs. Boaz 8 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 27
H Pond/Tanner loser vs. Athens/Gardendale loser (Girls) 9:30 a.m.
Athens/Dora loser vs. Tanner/Arab loser 11 a.m.
Hartselle/Brooks loser vs. Cullman/Northridge loser (Girls) 12:30
Gardendale/Muscle Shoals loser vs. Cullman/Boaz loser 2 p.m.
Semifinal: HP or Tanner vs. Athens or Gardendale (Girls) 3:30
Semifinal: Athens or Dora vs. Tanner or Arab 5 p.m.
Semifinal: Hartselle or Brooks vs. Cullman or Nridge (Girls) 6:30
Semifinal: G'dale or M Shoals vs. Cullman or Boaz 8 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 28
Consolation bracket game (Girls) 9:30 a.m.
Consolation bracket game 11 a.m.
5th place game (Girls) 12:30 p.m.
5th place game 2 p.m.
3rd place game (Girls) 3:30 p.m.
3rd place game 5 p.m.
Championship game (Girls) 6:30 p.m.
Championship game 8 p.m.



Auburn Falls At Minnesota 67-54 In Non-Conference Finale

By: Matt Crouch

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – Auburn (9-4) forced Minnesota (10-3) into 23 turnovers, but turnovers of its own and a cold night shooting combined to give the Tigers a 67-54 loss in their second game of the Subway Classic in Minneapolis, Minn. Senior Tyrese Tanner led Auburn with 15 points and four steals.

"It is hard to get your team rolling with three of your starters are sitting on the bench in foul trouble early in the first half," said Auburn head coach Terri Williams-Flournoy. "Then we did not shoot the ball well at all in the second half. We should have pushed it more in transition, but we just stood out there and took bad shots."

Fouls came early and often for the Tigers in the first half as Tyrese Tanner, Hasina Muhammad and Tra'Cee Tanner did not break double digits in minutes played until the second half.

Auburn's defense picked up its seventh game of the season and fourth in a row with more than 20 opponent turnovers. The Tigers also picked up 11 steals, with Kiani Parker totaling three, just one behind Tanner's four.

Despite the defensive effort, only two Tigers finished the game in double figures while the team finished the game with 22 turnovers of its own.

"We have to have certain people do more for us, if you are going to be in the starting lineup, you have to have starters' numbers," said Williams-Flournoy. "Defensively, we gave up a lot inside and lost the shooters a lot. We can't do that, we have to be a better defensive team."

Auburn held Minnesota without a field goal for the first 5:45 of the game, but fouls and turnovers gave the Tigers problems. Auburn led 9-4 early on, but went scoreless for more than four minutes, allowing the Gophers to take the lead. Minnesota led by as many as six points in the first half, taking a 30-25 lead into the locker room.

Minnesota would never surrender that lead, building it to as many as 15 in the second half. The Gophers shot 53.8 percent from the field in the second half and held the Tigers to 33.9 percent shooting for the game. Minnesota was also 7-of-15 from 3-point range.

Peyton Davis was the only other Tiger in double figures, picking up 11 points with two rebounds. Hasina Muhammad totaled nine points with a team-high seven rebounds. Muhammad and Tyrese Tanner were both named to the Subway Classic All-Tournament Team.

Rachel Banham led Minnesota with a game-high 22 points and five assists. Amanda Zahui added 16 points with six blocked shots.

Auburn will return to the court on Sunday, Jan. 5 in its SEC opener at Mississippi State. The Tigers will return to Auburn Arena on Thursday, Jan. 9 in its SEC home-opener against Vanderbilt.

WSCC's women beat Ala. Southern extending winning streak to six games

By: Russel Moore

HANCEVILLE – Morgan Smith scored 13 of her game-high 16 points in the second half, Ashley Rodgers added 11 off the bench and Wallace State's women's basketball team won its sixth game in a row Wednesday, beating Alabama Southern 70-61 at Tom Drake Coliseum.

Unlike their previous five wins during the streak, the Lady Lions had to fight harder down the stretch to put away Alabama Southern.

"I told our team we didn't need to stub our toe going into Christmas. We struggled early, but then took a deep breath, got things together and ran it on out. We needed a game like this because I think we were getting a little borderline cocky and maybe thinking we were better than what we really were," said Wallace State coach Ron Burdette, whose team improved to 10-2 on the season.

"We never quit and never panicked and that's a great sign. I'm real pleased to be where we're at going into Christmas. We're going to take a break for Christmas, come back on Dec. 27, and get ready to go again."

After trailing by seven points in first half, Wallace State grabbed control of a slim 22-20 advantage on a pair of made free throws by Ashley Rodgers with 7:24 remaining before intermission.

Morgan Pearson, Rodgers and Smith then drained 3-pointers on consecutive possessions for Wallace State, increasing its lead to 31-24. The Lady Lions led 39-28 at the break.

Less than five minutes into the second half, Wallace State widened its lead to as many as 17 points.

Alabama Southern didn't go down quietly though. The Lady Eagles battled back over the next seven minutes and trimmed their deficit to as little as six points on two instances.

Wallace State answered with the last blow, limiting Alabama Southern to only three points over the final 4:06 of the game.

After scoring only four points apiece in her last two games, Smith was huge for the Lady Lions in the second half, helping Wallace State hold off multiple Alabama Southern runs with timely buckets of her own. Smith, a freshman from Cullman, also collected six rebounds.

"Once again we had someone new step up and give us big minutes. Some of our women who have been playing well didn't have a great game tonight (Wednesday), and that's going to happen," Burdette said.

"The thing is our team pulls for each other. No one pouts or mopes, which is huge for us in a game like this.

"That's a good basketball team we beat. I'm certain we'll run across them again during the state tournament."

Jasmine Coleman finished with eight points and 14 rebounds for the Lady Lions, barely missing out on her fifth double-double of the season. Pearson contributed nine points off the bench and Jaylan Snowden scored five points and dished out four assists.

Shannon Watts led Alabama Southern with 14 points, while Jasmine McCants had 11.

Wallace State is idle until Dec. 30, when it will head to Memphis and play Arkansas Baptist College and Southwest Tennessee in consecutive days.

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

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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?

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!



Jill Gudger Howell, M.A. Ed.
President/ Developer,
PreK-12th Grade
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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

A sincere sense of giving (from Front)

By: Noah Chandler
noahchandler@cullmansense.com

LIMBE, HAITI - Four missionaries from West Point Baptist Church made the over 1,000 mile journey to Limbe, Haiti on Friday to visit the church's newest edition at Haiti's Eden.

However, the group brought a bit more than themselves, as more than 700 gift bags, shirts sunglasses and more, were given out. "I guess from the fist moment we came to Haiti, when the children would watch us work from afar, to see just how far they've come in a short time is amazing," Kim Campbell said.



"To see their faces when given their gifts was just unbelievable. It's been two years since we began clearing out the middle of jungle and to see so many children at a church that was started less than two years ago is awesome!" Campbell - aka Mom in Haiti - served as trip leader. Cassie Black - also a seasoned missionary in Belize - helped husband and wife duo Jackie and Danny Kilpatrick handout presents to the children of Limbe.

For Cassie Black, the opportunity to travel abroad, not for leisure but for missions work, has opened her eyes to the differences between American problems and those affecting millions in third world nations. "For me it makes you see things much differently. Children in Belize and Haiti are happier than most children in America, simply because in over there children are grateful for anything - crayons, color booking, anything. That has been the biggest realization for me," Black said.

For more on this story, including an extensive photo gallery of the trip, visit CullmanSense.com, Cullman's leader in authentic community news.



» Over 500 boys and girls received a bag filled with goodies, a snack, and fruit juice during the first Christmas giveaway. Food was purchased by Carlton's Italian.

Busy Bee (from Front)

those of you in search of an authentic German meal and German beer, look no further than The Busy Bee.

The Busy Bee Cafe is Cullman's oldest restaurant, opening in 1919. After the tornados of 2011 destroyed the restaurant, it has reopened even better than before, featuring the original menu as well as some new favorites. They offer hot breakfast items, old fashioned burgers, and other southern meals. In addition to the Bee's signatures are a large selection of beers including imports and craft beers. Now, back by popular demand, is their German menu, which owner Kyle Spears added recently to the standard lineup.

My taste buds urged me to visit the Busy Bee last Friday, so I did just that. I also brought my friend, Tobias Biermeier, from Germany along with me. His work brought him to the states in March of this year, and he and his stomach have been searching for authentic German food ever since.

As soon as we walked in to the Busy Bee, we were greeted by a smiling staff. It had the look of on old diner and the comfort of my grandmother's house.

The smell of southern cooked food teased my stomach, so I was happy that we were seated immediately.

The menu offered all sorts of delicious entrees, but we were only interested in the German food. First came the beer, which Tobias was especially excited about.

Our cheerful waitress, Amber brought us a pitcher of Dunkel Weiss, a dark wheat beer brewed by Franziskaner Brewing in Munich. It was dark brown, had a hint of caramel, and we drank every bit of it. Tobias said he felt right at home.

Next, Amber brought us Sauerpuffers as an appetizer, sour krout formed into patties, and fried. Tobias never had them in Germany, but we both enjoyed the fried, salty goodness anyways.

Our smiling waitress brought our entrees out next. Tobias has been craving authentic schnitzel since he's been in the states. A schnitzel is a tenderized piece of pork, coated with bread crumbs, and fried to perfection.

It is an entrée sure to please any German. Tobias was eager to try the Schweine Schnitzel, which is the plain schnitzel with no sauce. On the side he opted for french fries and a heaping portion of German potato salad.

I decided on the Jaeger Schnitzel, which is a schnitzel swimming in a rich mushroom gravy, and on the side I picked German potato salad and red cabbage. Our plates were beautiful, complete with a piece of pumpernickel bread. The generous portions were displayed so wonderfully, we almost didn't want to start eating, but we got over this very quickly and decided to dig in to the potato salad first. It was creamy, salty, and light as a feather. "I make mine a little different." Tobias told me, "Mine has some different ingredients, but this is delicious." We both loved the potato salad, and my taste buds thanked me for such a treat.

The red cabbage is the most popular side dish. This delicious side is made with apples, onions, red wine, brown sugar, and vinegar. It is the perfect blend of salty and sweet.

Finally, we dug into our schnitzels. For Tobias, it was love at first bite.

"That's original German," he said, "That's exactly how it's supposed to taste."

My taste buds and I were also impressed by my schnitzel. It was rich in taste, and crunchy and creamy at the same time. The mushroom gravy was smooth and bursting with flavor.

After sharing my meal with Tobias, he raved about it.

"I've had a lot of schnitzel since I've been in the U.S., and never have I had a Jaeger Schnitzel as good as this one."

"Only one thing is different," he continued, "We do something in Germany that probably no one knows about here in the U.S. We take a slice of lemon and squeeze it over the schnitzel. The lemon is usually lying on top of it."

Satisfied after our meals, we had a chance to speak with the owner, Kyle Spears, about where and why he started cooking German food.

"Starting August of last year I wanted to do something for Oktoberfest, so I went to Old Heidelberg in Huntsville with some friends. Each one of us would try something different. We would eat off each others plates and critique it and decide what we liked and what we didn't like. And for the things I did like, I started looking online for recipes. Once we found some recipes we started practicing them, and it has just gone from there."

After Oktoberfest, Kyle was excited to add the German meals to his permanent menu.

"There's no competition. If you want it, you have to come here," he stated. "I just thought I would fill a niche because this is a German town with no German restaurants."

Kyle encourages everyone in Cullman to come to his restaurant and try the German meals. "We have a quality selection of beer and wine," he said. "All our beer is either craft or German imports. I think you should come on down here to the Busy Bee and try some German food."

I could not agree with him more. It was an exciting night, and a truly authentic experience, and now I know exactly where I'll be every Friday night.

Signing (from Front)

know that hope and healing are possible for people who have been affected by this disease.

"There is hope, there is healing available. This is a Christian book. It's is a biblical perspective. I'd like to see it prevented, and I think the information in the book can help people to start thinking the right way to stay out of fear."

Sheila also loves writing for kids, and her newest book is the first in a children's series. It is called "Fairhaven Forest: The Adventure Begins".

"There are already nine books in the series," Sheila stated.

"Each book teaches a moral lesson. The first lesson is obedience and listening. There are questions for discussion at the end to bring the point home to the child, and each book comes with a free audio download."

The main characters of these books are two charming cats, which are adorably displayed as cartoons on the cover.

"These are my cats and all these are based on true stories. I've been writing children's stories since I was a teenager, but I've never had any of them published. I love writing kid's books"

Kids love her books just as much as she enjoys writing them. At the book signing was Kaley Grace Hartwig, an excited 5 year old who could not stop giggling as she was getting her new book signed.

"My favorite part about the books are the cats," she giggled. "It teaches you to listen and obey."

"Into His Presence" is HL's first published book, with the exception of two self-published books. He is also working on about five other projects right now.

"Alzheimer's: There is Hope" was Sheila's first book to be published, while her children's book was the second.

This couple will continue to travel to book signings to raise awareness about their books and the messages they are trying to convey.

Their books are available online on amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, or you can go through the publisher, at tatepublishing.com. There are also copies available at the Yates Chance Christian Bookstore.

Owner of the bookstore, Melanie Chance, was delighted to have this couple in her business.

"Sheila and HL are very friendly people. They communicate to their audiences so well, letting them know what their books are about. It's been a pleasure having them here and I hope they can come back."

Be sure pick up your copy of Sheila and HL Robertson's newest books at the Yates Chance Christian bookstore.



What does Christmas mean to you?

By: Kate Mullaney



Brooks Loftin
Age: 4
Cullman

"Christmas to me is Jesus' birthday and getting presents. My favorite part about Christmas is God."



Breana Morgan
Age: 22
Cullman

"Christmas to me is a time to spend time with your family and friends and those who are close to you. I have a huge family, myself, so I get to see everybody that I may not get to see throughout the year. And it's just a time to celebrate Jesus' birthday. It's a special time for me."



Mayor Max Townson
Cullman

"The first word in Christmas is Christ, and that's what it's all about. For a nation that is Christian, we're celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Beyond that, I think Christmas means family, children, love, and helping others. Everybody's in a wonderful mood, it's just the time of the season. I think another thing is, when you look at Christmas in America, it's a tradition. It's just our heritage that we celebrate. Not only the birth of Jesus Christ, but our families. It's so much fun to watch small children get excited about Christmas. To see those eyes of excitement and pure joy, it's just a wonderful experience, and I hope everyone has a very merry Christmas."



Kendall Bussman
Age: 6
Cullman

"Christmas means that you love everyone and you're nice. My favorite part about Christmas is that you care about others."



Kayla Lowery
Age: 24
Decatur

"Christmas means getting together with my family even though we don't like each other any other day of the year. Christmas means we can put it all aside and stand each other for five seconds."



Cindy Dyer
Age: 51
Cullman

"Christmas is believing. On our tree when my kids were growing up we had a red heart on there that said 'Christmas is believing', and every time the kids would ask about Santa Claus, I would say, 'Christmas is believing, believing that Jesus Christ came and died on the cross for you and all those components about Christmas. And as long as you believe, there will be Santa Claus and gifts under the tree for you.'"



Paige Harbison
Age: 22
Cullman

"Christmas to me means family time. There's nothing more important than your family."



Nathan Harvell
Age: 22
Cullman

"Christmas to me is Jesus' birthday and getting presents. My favorite part about Christmas is God."

Rate (from Front)

"This traditionally happens during the months of November and December as employers prepare for the Christmas shopping rush."

Wage and salary employment increased 4,100 in November, with the majority of the growth in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector, including retail trade, which saw an increase of nearly 8,000 jobs.

Growth was also seen in the government, education and health services, and manufacturing sectors.

"The decline in the county unemployment rates, which range from at least a half a percentage point to nearly two, may present a clearer picture of what is actually going on throughout Alabama as the county data are not seasonally adjusted," said Surtees.

"Seasonal adjustment" refers to BLS's practice of anticipating certain trends in the labor force, such as hiring during the holidays or the surge in the labor force when students graduate in the spring, and predicting their effects of the unemployment rate.

The not seasonally adjusted data show the number of people working in a county, with no seasonal factors imposed.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates were: Shelby County at 3.6%, Lee County at 4.5%, and Cullman, St. Clair, and Cherokee Counties at 4.7%.

Counties with the highest unemployment rates were: Wilcox County at 13.9%, Bullock County at 11.9%, and Perry and Dallas Counties at 11.1%.

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– 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.

Cullman County Revenue Office Closed
The Revenue Commission will be closed December 23-25 and will reopen for normal business hours on December 26.

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

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 County Revenue Office Closed
The Revenue Commission will be closed December 23-25 and will reopen for normal business hours on December 26.

All Cullman County Facilities Closed
All Cullman County facilities will be closed through December 25 (Christmas) and will reopen regular time on Thursday, December 26.

Pilot Club Members Priester Pecans Fundraiser
Members of the Cullman Pilot Club are selling Alabama Priester Pecans to raise funds for their special projects brain related disorders, Project Lifesaver program, brain minder puppet shows, Alzheimer's Support Group, Margaret Jean Jones Center, Field of Miracles and the Pilot Light Home. This year's crop of pecans include pecan halves, pecan pieces, chocolate covered pecan halves, honey glazsed pecan halves, praline sugar halves and cinnamon sugar pecan halves. Bags are $12.00 for one pound of these delicious pecans. To obtain pecans please contact any Pilot club member you know or call Peggy Harris at 256-734-2831 or Ann Fox at 256-962-0910. Order some delicious goodies for the holidays while helping club members with their special projects. Win both ways!

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.

Knifty Knitters Weekly Meeting
Members of the Cullman Knifty Knitters group meet each Tuesday afternoon at 3 p.m. in the Cullman County Library. Everyone is invited to come learn how to knit yarn and needles are free. This group is open to all ages, both accomplished knitters and those wishing to learn the art form. Crocheters also are invited to take part in these weekly meetings. Please call Lesia for more info 256-734-2720, ext. 23.

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.

Thursday

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.

Cullman County Revenue Office Reopens
The Revenue Commission is now open to normal office hours.

All Cullman County Facilities Reopened
All Cullman County facilities are now reopened.

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.

2-Day Vinemont Baseball Christmas Camp
All interested youths ages 6 to 14 are invited to take part in the Vinemont baseball program's 'Christmas Camp' scheduled for today and tomorrow, Dec. 27 and 28, from 9 a.m. until 12 noon on the school's campus. Fee for the sessions is $50.00 per player. Instructors for the program include Grand Side of the Cleveland Indians, Judson Sullivan from Andrew College, Izaac Yarbrough (recent Vinemont Eagle graduate, current Wallace State pitcher and Auburn University signee for next season) and Vinemont coach Chad Shannon. For additional information please contact Coach Shannon at cshannon@ccboe.org or call him at 256-338-9072.

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.

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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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CullmanSense Wishes Everyone a Merry Christmas

Tips to Stay Well this Winter

By: Natalie Bonner

Maybe that Nyquil commercial has gotten to us. "The nighttime, sniffling, sneezing, coughing, aching, stuffy, head fever so you can rest medicine." I don't know about you, but I can't remember the last time that I woke up and didn't have to cough. Or sneeze. You get the point.

Whether it's allergies, a sinus infection, a cold, or something much worse, it seems we are all a bit under the weather lately. Someone is sneezing, another is coughing, and everyone is miserable.

How do you enable wellness or proactively try to keep well during the chilly winter months?

We all wash our hands with soap and water as much as we can, but there are a few other key steps we can do to maintain our wellness during the winter.

1. Drink plenty of water. Drinking water will keep you healthy and on the go more than almost anything you can do for yourself. Water flushes out those bad toxins and keeps you hydrated.

Our bodies are mostly made up of water, so we should replenish as much as possible. It's recommended that everyone drink at least eight glasses of water a day, if not more.

2. Eat healthy. Eating the right fruits and vegetables readily supplies your body with what it needs to fight off infections, fatigue, and sickness. Not only will you stay well, but you will also have a continuous source of energy. Eating the right foods gives your body the fuel it needs to accomplish a full day's work in addition to staying well.

3. Take your vitamins. Vitamins help your body with any deficiencies it may have. You can choose to take a multivitamin to enhance your overall health or focus on certain areas where your diet is lacking and take a particular vitamin to account for that.

Vitamins C and D and calcium are popular choices and are essential sources of energy and wellness. Once you get in the habit of supplementing your meals with vitamins, you'll feel better and immediately notice a difference in how you feel.

4. Get plenty of rest. This may seem like the no-brainer, but many people overlook this factor. They think getting by on five hours of sleep is enough, when eight is a much better number

We all have our comfortable number of slumber hours though. What works for one may not work for all, but eight is a good, general guideline. Not getting enough sleep can make you feel fatigued, not as productive, and cause headaches. Getting enough sleep is essential to staying well as your body needs sleep to recuperate.

5. Exercise. Keeping fit will ward off sickness. That doesn't mean that if you are hitting the gym every single day that you won't get sick, but it does mean your body will have a harder time getting sick.

When you exercise, you are building up your body's natural defenses, strengthening your overall health and wellness, not to mention your energy and mood. Regular physical activity can help you manage or prevent other sickness, illness, or diseases from sneaking up on you.

So there are five simple tips that everyone knows but may often neglect that can help you keep your health in check and help you stay well during the winter.

Try brushing up on some of these tips and see if sickness stays at bay for you. No one else need buy the surplus package of Kleenex tissues this season.

Take the Stress Out of Holiday Cooking

(StatePoint) Anything to make entertaining easier is a welcome gift around the holiday season.

"Whether you're a newer cook or a seasoned expert, everyone can use an ally in the kitchen" says Anne-Michele Harrington, brand director at PAM.

In fact, 21 percent of home cooks have burned part of a meal (or the whole thing!) over the holiday season, according to the results of "The Sticky Situations" survey conducted by PAM, and over a quarter of respondents have made a dessert or entrée that was stuck to the pan and wouldn't come off.

With the avoidance of such kitchen snafus in mind, the experts at PAM are offering some tips to ease the kitchen madness so typical of holiday cooking:

• Set rules. If you are the type of cook or baker who gets irked by having too many cooks in the kitchen, the holidays can be particularly upsetting. Avoid this by keeping guests out of the kitchen entirely, or by assigning helpers specific tasks.

• Stick to what you know. The day you cook a big meal for an extended group of friends and family is not the day to stray too far outside your comfort zone.

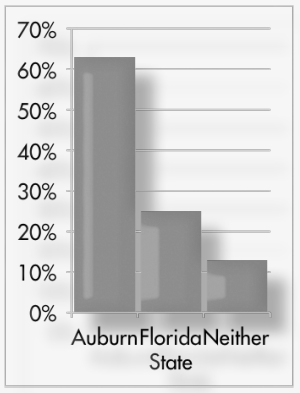
"Save the experimentation for another time, or do a practice run in advance of the big day," says Harrington.

• Make cleanup a cinch by coating pans and utensils with a cooking spray such as PAM. Nearly 40 percent of survey respondents spend over 45 minutes washing dishes during or after a holiday meal, but that doesn't have to be you.

This holiday season say "so long" to the hitches and glitches that tripped up your kitchen in the past.

Poll

Who will you be cheering for during the BCS National Championship Game?



This Week's Poll

Has nonstop commercialization caused Christmas to lose its purpose?
Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

Reflections of History

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



A.J. Manning Home — Contrib. by Cullman County Museum

This Week in History

December 23rd
- 1690 – John Flamsteed observes Uranus without realizing it's undiscovered

December 24th
- 1893 – Henry Ford completes his first useful gas motor

December 25th
- 337 – Earliest possible date that Christmas was celebrated on December 25th

December 26th
- 1854 – Wood-pulp paper first exhibited, Buffalo

December 27th
- 1949 – United States of Indonesia gains independence from Netherlands

December 28th
- 1942 – Robert Sullivan becomes first pilot to fly Atlantic 100 times

December 29th
- 1837 – Steam-powered threshing machine patented, Winthrop, Maine

cpr

cullman city parks & recreation

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

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

- **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.
- **Cullman Savings Bank Frosty 5K & Polar Bear Plunge:** Registration is now open for this event to be held on Jan. 11, 2014 at the Wellness & Aquatic Center. Cost to register is $25 for the race, $30 for the plunge and race, or $10 for the plunge. Register now at active.com, the Cullman Civic Center, or CWAC. Great door prizes and cash prizes to winners of to $200 plus a chance to win a FREE one year membership to CWAC. Call for details at 256-734-9157.
- **CWAC Holiday Hours:** The Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center will be closed on Wed. Dec. 25 for Christmas, as well as open from 4:45am-12pm on Tues. Dec. 24 for Christmas Eve. The facility will be closed on Wed. Jan. 1 for New Year's.
- **Dog Obedience Classes:** Dog Obedience classes will begin on Tues. Jan 14, 2014 at the Cullman Civic Center. The class will be 7 sessions and go through March 11. Registration is open now at the Civic Center for puppy and adult classes, call the Civic Center for details at 256-734-9157.
- **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.
- **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.





Last Minute Holiday Gift Guide for the Thrifty Gifter

By: Natalie Bonner

You can't believe Christmas is two days away. You haven't finished your shopping and thinking of going to the mall sends you into a small panic attack. Gift cards seem too impersonal and you can't give cash again. What is the last minute thrifty shopper to do?

If you're particularly Pinterest-obsessed, there is a plethora of ideas for homemade presents here. On Pinterest, people may "pin" whichever ideas they like to their own board. From there, you can track the pin to its original post and learn where it came from and how to make/do a variety of different things from how to make that perfect cake recipe to crafting one-of-a-kind gifts. Pinterest is the place to go for the creatively inclined and craft lovers among us. And who doesn't love gifts from the heart?

Speaking of homemade gifts, what about repurposing or upcycling some goods you already have just lying around the house? An example of such is reclaimed wooden frames. Take that spare wood you don't need and repurpose it in an original piece of art that will have everyone asking, "Where did you get that?" And there are some helpful tutorials available online to walk even the novice craftsman through his or her first creation.

Not big on building or constructing items such as frames or other woodwork pieces? What about knitting or crocheting a cute item such as a hat, sweater, or scarf? If you are a beginner, you may want to stick to a simple, easy pattern, as some require a lot of time, attention, and detail. Either way, homemade scarves and the like are always popular gift ideas.

If you are especially short on time, you may want to consider taking a loved one to a special event down the road. You could purchase an advanced ticket to a concert or another exciting event happening some time early next year. That way, you and your present person have something to look forward to and you can really surprise him or her when you give them a little box with the ticket or voucher information in it.

If you have some thrifty chic friends, you may want to hit up the local thrift stores and consignment shops to find that perfect gently used item. The saying goes, "Another person's trash is another person's treasure." You never know what you will find at these diamond in the rough stores. Half of an item's charm that is purchased from these places is their history and originality.

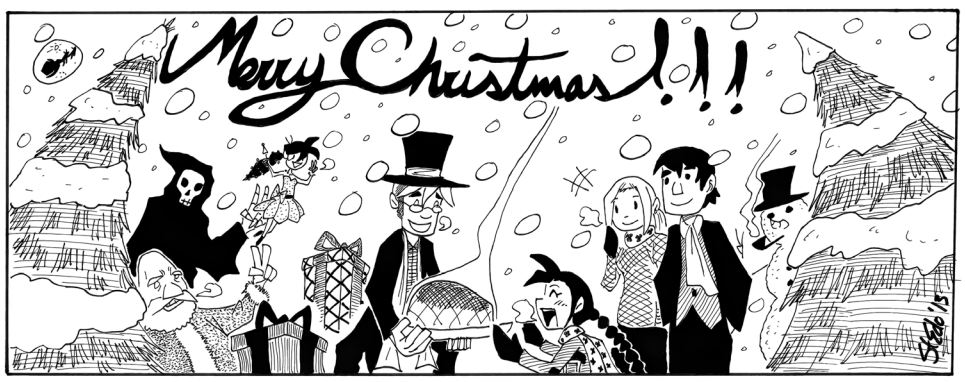
Not a fan of concerts or event attending? Hate crowds and don't want to guess at a gift? Can't craft or build or knit to save your life? Don't have any money or time? It's okay – you still have options!

For someone that is especially tough to buy for or just simply doesn't need anything, you could always give them an IOU. No, not the traditional IOU, but a new kind where you give the person you are buying for a type of redemption coupon. For example, an IOU can be one such as "One free night of babysitting" or "One free month of house chores done." It should carry some incentive for the redeemer. Say your mom hates doing the dishes, and maybe you make her an IOU that reads, "One free week of dish duty." Be clever and have fun with your IOU coupons.

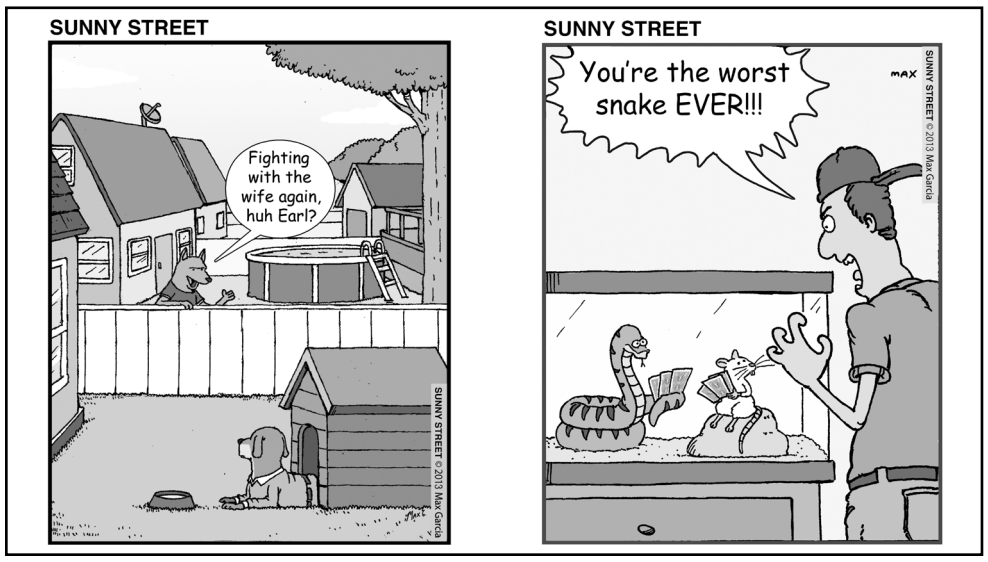
Of course, gift cards and cash may seem a little impersonal, but no one ever seems to complain about receiving one. It puts the buying power directly in the gift receiver's hands and they are able to purchase exactly what they want. So, if you are really down to the wire and none of the above gift suggestions seem to be fitting, you really can't go wrong with the old cash or gift card present.

Comics

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All By Myself: 5 movies to watch if you're alone this Christmas

By: Kate Mullaney

If you've found yourself alone this holiday season, don't despair. There are plenty of ways to have a merry Christmas even by yourself. One of the best ways to keep yourself company during your loneness is to watch movies. So here you have the top five movies you should watch if you're alone on Christmas:

1. "Monty Python and The Holy Grail"

This is easily one of the most quotable movies of all time. In this classic film, God commands King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table to find the holy grail, sending them on an adventure throughout medieval Europe. Of course, they face several obstacles along the way including a Frenchman with an outrageous accent, a group of knights who use the power of words (er- one word) to their advantage, several rabbits, and a bridge keeper with mind boggling trivia questions.

If you have not seen this movie yet, there is a good chance you've been stuck in a "Monty Python" quote battle between your friends, leaving you confused and left out. Watch this movie alone instead of with your friends; you're too late for that. You'll be the only one who doesn't already know every word to the movie, and you'll end up listening to your pals quote the movie line for line.

End the embarrassment you've experienced from a lack of this movie this Christmas by watching this hilarious parody of a classic story.

2. "Reservoir Dogs"

Nothing says "Christmas" quite like a bloody Tarantino film. This film is a story about a group of criminals whose attempt at a large scale jewelry store robbery goes awry.

We can always count on Tarantino's creative approach to story telling, and this movie is no exception. It shows nothing of the robbery itself, but instead details the events that happen before and after the robbery. And, of course, the film is laced with Tarantino's timely comedic relief.

If your heart is aching because you're alone this Christmas, this violent film has the intensity to get your mind off your seclusion. If you're bored from your holiday solitude, this movie will give you an adrenaline rush more extreme than sky diving. And, if you're simply thinking of robbing a jewelry store for last minute Christmas gifts, "Reservoir Dogs" is a perfect example of what not to do.

3. "Home Alone"

There is no better movie to watch than this if you're alone this Christmas, since your predicament is literally the title of the movie. This is a hilarious no-brainer.

You'll find it easy to relate to a young Macaulay Culkin, who finds himself alone during the holidays, especially if your family accidentally leaves you at home while they go vacation in Paris, France. After learning to enjoy his alone time by jumping on the beds and eating heaps of ice cream, Kevin (Culkin) discovers "The Wet Bandits", a blundering pair of burglars, are relentlessly trying to rob his house. Kevin makes enemies with this duo and finds creative ways to outsmart them.

Watching this movie alone at your house is like dressing up as a wizard to watch the "Harry Potter" movies. You'll be catching your breath and wiping your tears through side splitting laughter while watching this movie.

This priceless film is all about slapstick comedy. If watching a small child torture two full grown adults doesn't feel like Christmas to you, what does? After this movie, you might prefer to be alone for the holidays.

4. "How the Grinch Stole Christmas"

Jim Carrey stars as Mr. Grinch himself in this comical take on Dr. Suess's classic Christmas tale. The Grinch is a monster to the citizens of Whoville. Though he was born in Whoville, he was teased throughout elementary school because of his appearance. He finally leaves his hometown when Mary Whovier breaks his heart. Now, he lives above Whoville on Mt. Crumpet, and spends all his days hating the Whos. When he gets fed up with the Whos' excitement and hype, he decides to steal Christmas. With the help of his dog, Max, he goes to Whoville, plotting to steal every single Christmas decoration, present, and cheer.

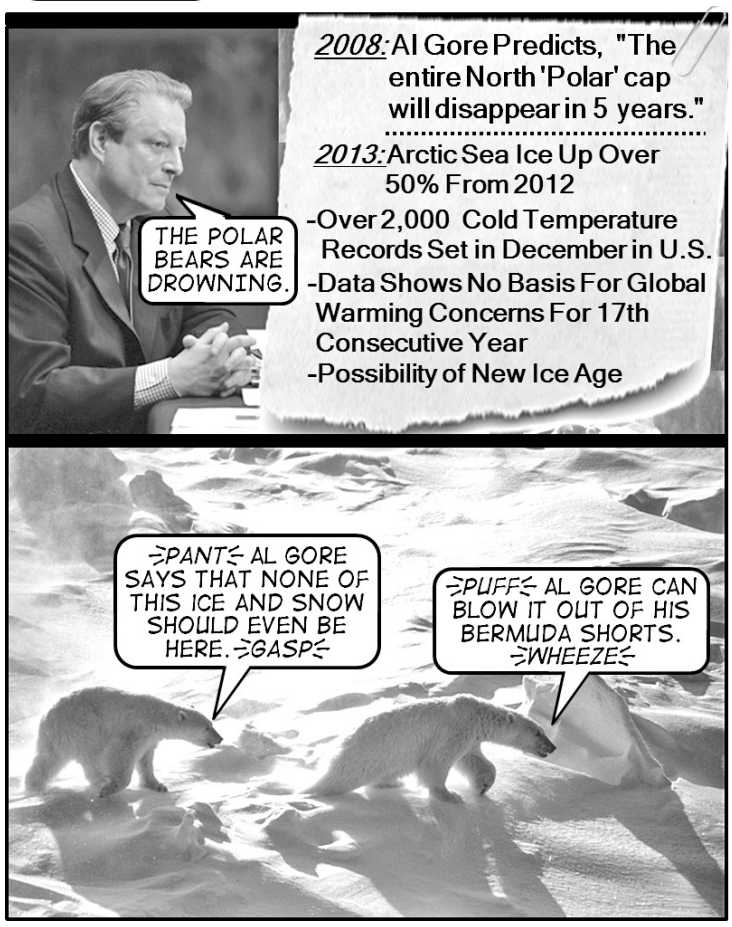
You will clearly relate to the the Grinch if you find yourself sarcastic and alone this Christmas (or if you're just terribly ugly). If you are having a hard time getting into the holiday spirit, watch this movie. It will unmistakably turn your holiday grumpiness into extravagant Christmas cheer.

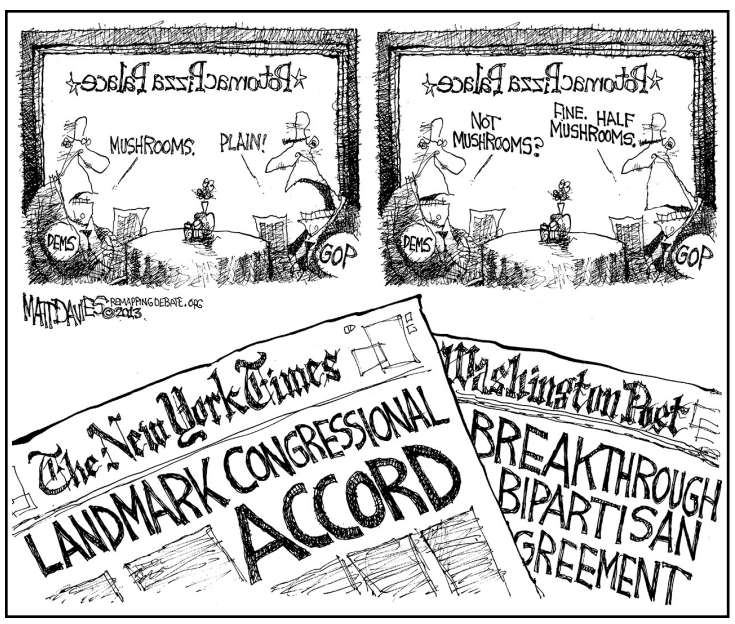
5. "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug"

Check out Entertainment Editor Dillon Lee's review on CullmanSense.com and then go catch the newest of "The Hobbit" movies before the new year. In this epic tale, Bilbo Baggins continues his journey with wizard Gandalf and thirteen dwarfs. You will be on the edge of your seat as you adventure with this brave crew. An enormous bear, terrifying Orcs, and the world's worst nightmare: giant spiders pursue this group as they continue their quest to recover the fallen Dwarf Kingdom of Erebor.

Don't let being alone stop you from getting out this holiday season. Go see a movie alone and do it with confidence. You won't have to deal with friends who can't keep up with movies asking you "what" and "why" every five minutes of the movie, and you'll be forced to embrace the solitary lifestyle.

Maybe you'll even meet some other lonely friends who will be glad to celebrate the joy of Christmas with you. If you love fantasy, the second movie in "The Hobbit" trilogy is a perfect movie to watch by yourself. Embrace solitude this holiday season, and have an epic Christmas.





Congress Still Isn't Being Responsible

By: Lee H. Hamilton

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.

Congress is winding down its historically unproductive session with a small flurry of activity. It's a welcome change, but so long overdue that it can't possibly make up for what should have been accomplished on Capitol Hill this year.

The problem is that for too long, members of Congress have been working hard at everything except the one thing they should have been working hard at: legislating.

They've been so unproductive that they've actually threatened our world standing and our domestic well-being. To be sure, they are moving incrementally. Gridlock is breached, but not broken.

The likelihood is that Congress will pass a defense bill. It reached a small-scale budget agreement that undoes a bit of the damage caused by the sequester.

It is finally starting to work through a list as long as your arm of judicial and executive-branch confirmations, but only because Senate Democrats decided they had to change the rules if they wanted to fill long-unfilled government appointments.

Yet the list of what Congress hasn't done is sobering. There's no food-stamp reauthorization or waterways construction bill. It passed a one-month extension to the farm bill, but that falls far short of the certainty this crucial economic sector needs. There's no lasting solution to the debt ceiling problem.

Almost nothing has been done about the fundamental gap between taxes and spending. It has left unemployment benefits unresolved, immigration reform unresolved, tax reform unresolved, and action on climate change unresolved.

This lack of productivity makes me wonder if Congress can address truly hard challenges without a crisis before it. Mind you, some legislators take pride in how unproductive Congress has been.

They argue that the less the government does, the better. But given Congress's pathetically low standing in the polls, it's clear that most Americans don't agree.

They don't like incompetence, as their response to the botched rollout of the Affordable Care Act suggests, and they really don't like people who dodge their responsibilities, which is what Congress's ineffectiveness amounts to.

Unlike many members of Congress, Americans seem to understand that things that ought to be done are not getting done, and that there are real costs to inaction. We're in a competitive race with China for world leadership, and whether we like it or not, others around the globe are comparing our two governments.

The attractiveness of the American model is under challenge, and our political dysfunction is a serious handicap.

As the Wall Street Journal put it recently, a superpower that isn't sure it can fund its government or pay its bills is not in a position to lead. And because problems aren't getting addressed, others are stepping into the breach at home, too — but with less transparency, less accountability, and less flexibility.

The Fed is doing the heavy lifting on the economy. The Supreme Court is essentially legislating. Executive branch agencies are trying to handle massively difficult challenges through executive orders.

State and local governments have decided that even on issues they can't truly address effectively, like immigration, they're on their own.

When asked about all this, congressional leaders tend to blame the other house, arguing that they've done their best but the other side has bottled up their efforts.

All I can say is, finger-pointing is not an excuse, it's an admission of failure. A leader's responsibility is to enact legislation, not just get a bill through the house of Congress he or she controls. Legislating is tough, demanding work. It requires many hours of conversation about differences, commonalities, and possible solutions. It demands patience, mutual respect, persistence, collegiality, compromise, artful negotiation, and creative leadership.

Especially when Congress is so divided. Yet when Congress meets only episodically throughout the year, when it often works just three days a week and plans an even more relaxed schedule in 2014, when the House and Senate give themselves just one overlapping week this month to resolve huge questions of public policy, you can only come to one conclusion:

They're not really willing to work hard at legislating. A last-minute flurry of bills offers hope, but it's going to take a lot more work to convince the country that Congress knows how to live up to its responsibilities.

Christmas is Joyous Time; Important to Remember What and Whom we Celebrate

By: Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey

During this time of year, it is easy to be distracted by the hustle and bustle of the season. Most of us are busy planning festive get-togethers, making travel arrangements, and managing our budgets while fulfilling Christmas wishes. But it is a joyous time to spend with family and to share God's blessings with others. Above all, in the midst of the busyness, it is most important to remember what and whom we celebrate. In all I do, I hold fast to my faith and the foundation of it as told in the Christmas story of the birth of Jesus Christ. This month, I would like to dedicate my column to sharing what I believe is the most important message we can read and know this time of year.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.
Luke 2:2-15 (NIV)

I hope you and your family enjoy a Blessed and Merry Christmas! 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.

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

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