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CULLMAN'S MONDAY NEWSPAPER

# CULLMANSENSE

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## Cans for Canines and Felines

» Local animal shelter asks for aluminum can donations

By: Chelsea Sparks

**CULLMAN** - Most of us are aware of the Cullman County Animal Shelter and where it is located. The little shelter down Convent Road has been a rest stop for many animals over the years. Most of them were owner surrendered or the result of a stray that was not spayed or neutered. All of these animals are waiting on homes. It is understandable that not everyone can adopt a pet, but there is something that we can all give – our cans.

Right outside of the Animal Shelter, you will find a recycling bin. This is where donations of aluminum cans are accepted. The money goes to the Cullman County General Fund from which the shelter receives its funding. This is an easy way to make a donation and recycle your aluminum at the same time.

It takes a lot to keep these animals warm and fed, and the shelter is always in need of help. Certainly no one knows this better than Candie Horsley, manager at the Cullman Animal Shelter, who has been working with these animals for nine years.

"We have a lot of animals out here. We are in need of volunteers, foster parents, and es-

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## A Bridge Covered in History

» CLARKSON COVERED BRIDGE RECEIVES $834,000 GRANT FOR RESTORATIONS P2



## SEC Baseball gets some Cullman Flair

By: Josh McBrayer
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**CULLMAN** - Baseball season is upon us and teams around the country from little league to the MLB are preparing for the upcoming season but, with this being Alabama, baseball nuts are firmly focused on their favorite teams from the SEC and are eager to see how their team does on the diamond. However, fans of Cullman baseball have a reason to pay just a little more attention to the SEC diamond this year because there will be three home-grown players suiting up for three different SEC teams.

**Ben Moore – University of Alabama**

The player with the most experience, Ben Moore will once again hit the diamond for the Alabama Crimson Tide. Moore, a converted catcher, will spend his second year patrolling the outfield for the Crimson Tide and scarcely catching. The junior has racked up numerous awards at Alabama including being named to two different SEC All-Freshman teams and being named a Freshman All-American by Louisville Slugger. As a sophomore, Moore hit at an impressive .280 clip with four dingers and 41 RBI, the latter of which led the Crimson Tide. He smashed four triples and swiped 16 bags, both of which ranked in the top 10 in SEC play. Moore started all 63 games for Alabama, 61 of which were in the outfield. Moore looks to be even stronger and more comfortable heading into his junior season at Alabama.

**Matthew Britton – Mississippi State University**

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## Is your Driver's License up for Renewal this Year? Make Sure to Get Your STAR

By: Sage Overton

If your driver's license or state issued ID card is up for renewal this year, you may want to take the time to bring some extra documents and get your gold star. A tiny gold star that gets placed in the top left-hand of your ID card is Alabama's answer to the "Real ID Act of 2005," which goes into effect December 1st of this year. Never heard of it? You aren't alone.

The purpose of the Real ID Act is to create an ID universally accepted by the federal government from all U.S. states and territories. Any ID must include a person's full legal name, signature, date of birth, gender, principle residence, and a front-facing photo.

Before a state can issue such an ID to someone, they must first establish all of the aforementioned information via documents, as well as legal status in the U.S. and a social security number. This ID can eventually be required for all federal purposes, including commercial aircraft boarding.

The Real ID Act has been controversial since being signed into law on May 11, 2005 by Pres. George W. Bush. The implantation and deadline for all parts of the law are under direction of the Department of Homeland Security. Two attempts to repeal the bill, both led by democrats, have failed.

Currently, only 21 states are compliant with the law in-

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# A Bridge Covered in History

By: Kate Mullaney
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**CULLMAN** - The Clarkson Covered Bridge is one of Cullman's biggest tourist attractions. It is one of only seven covered bridges in the entire state of Alabama. This historical bridge was built in 1904. It was destroyed and rebuilt in 1921. And in 1974, it became a part of the National Register of Historic Places.

The bridge recently received a grant for $834,000 to help clean up the area. The grant is an 80/20 split between federal and county money (respectively.) Part of the federal money came out of the Transportation Enhancement program, while the other part came out of the Historical Covered Bridge Preservation Program.

"They're going to straighten up the bridge," said County Engineer Jon Brunner.

"Over the years, the top of it has leaned over and they're going to make sure it doesn't do that again. They'll take the bow out of the center of the bridge and clean out the pond as well. They're basically restoring it to its original condition."

Brunner expects construction to begin sometime in February.

"I think they should be done sometime in the early summer or the fall. It just depends on weather and conditions."

Bridge Director Doug Davenport invites everyone to come visit the bridge both before and after the renovations.

"This is a beautiful park," he said. "And a great place to go sightseeing. There is a picnic area, a park, an old historical water wheel, several walkways through a beautiful Alabama forest and, of course, the bridge. If you look at our guest book, you'll see that several people from all over the world have visited the bridge."

The Clarkson Covered Bridge has hosted several weddings, birthday parties, and family reunions.

They also host their own events, such as a Halloween trunk or treat.

The restoration of this area is going to be a beautiful change, as well as a great way to preserve history.

People from all over the world have visited this bridge and restoring it is a wonderful way to promote and improve the already beautiful Cullman.



**» Originally built in 1904 and rebuilt in 1921, the Clarkson Covered Bridge will soon be restored to its near original condition.**

TO BEE THE BEST

# 6th Grader Macy Whaley Wins Cullman County Spelling Bee

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

**FAIRVIEW** - The Cullman County Spelling Bee was held last Monday night at Fairview High School. The stage was filled with 25 nervous students, grades third through eighth, as they slowly spelled their way to victory.

Schools represented in this competition were: Cold Springs Elementary; Cullman Christian School; Cullman Middle School; East Elementary; Fairview Elementary and Middle Schools; Garden City Elementary; Good Hope Elementary and Middle Schools; Hanceville Elementary and Middle Schools; Harmony School; Holly Pond Elementary and Middle Schools; Parkside; Sacred Heart School; St. Bernard Middle School; St. Paul's Lutheran School; Vinemont Elementary and Middle Schools; Welti School; West Elementary; and West Point Elementary, Intermediate, and Middle Schools.

Pronouncers were retired Director Rebecca Eason of Career Tech of Cullman County Schools and Minister of Education Steve Wood of St. John's Evangelical Church. Judges were President Dwight Moss of Moss Engineering, LLC, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce President Leah Bolin, Circuit Judge Greg Nicholas of the 32nd Judicial Circuit, and Barbara Guthrie, a retired educator in the Cullman County school system.

Dr. Doreen Griffith, the superintendent of Cullman City Schools, and Billy Coleman, the superintendent of Cullman County Schools, presented the awards to the winner of the Spelling Bee.

All Spelling Bee contestants received a free chicken sandwich from Chick-fil-A; a free Icee from Burger King; two free games from the Cullman Bowling Center; a free family day pass to the Cullman Wellness and Aquatics Center; a set of four managerial passes; as well as $1 admission tickets to Carmike 10 Cinemas and a free Spelling Bee t-shirt from Peoples Bank. The winner also received grand prizes.

Before the Spelling Bee began, Representatives Mac Buttram and Randall Shedd introduced and congratulated the contestants. Then, the rules of the spelling bee were briefly explained by the Spelling Bee Coordinator Denise Schuman. This year, a vocabulary round will be added to the state and nationwide spelling bees so it was added to the countywide spelling bee as well.

There were nine rounds in last Monday's competition, with every other round being vocabulary and the rest of the rounds being traditional spelling rounds.

Macy Whaley, a sixth grader at Sacred Heart School, eventually spelled her way to victory last Monday night. The winning word was "affinity."

"I studied for about a month," she said. "I'd study a whole column, and then my mom would call them out to me, and I would spell them out."

On March 8th, Macy will travel to Oak Mountain to participate in the statewide spelling bee competition. "I'm a little nervous about going to state," she said with a smile, but her teachers and principal are sure she will do wonderfully.

"Macy is a wonderful girl," stated Principal Ernest Hauk of Sacred Heart. "She makes our school very proud, and we know that she is not just a winner in this tonight, but a winner all the time."

Macy went home with a trophy, a free portrait package from Shelley Creel Photography, $100 from Mitch Smith Chevrolet, an ice cream cake from Dairy Queen, a set of four $1 admission tickets to Carmike 10 Cinemas, and a $20 gift certificate to Moe's Original BBQ.

Congratulations to Macy Whaley and to Sacred Heart School for this victory and good luck to her as she travels to Oak Mountain in March for the Alabama State Spelling Bee.




**» Macy Whaley stands with her parents after correctly spelling "affinity" and winning the Cullman County Spelling Bee.**

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# Smithsonian Exhibition Exploring the American Workforce Coming to Cullman

By: Claire Brown

**CULLMAN** – What would life be like without teachers, doctors or firefighters? Every day, Americans are hard at work on farms, factories, in homes or at desks keeping our communities thriving.

The Cullman Area, in cooperation with Alabama Humanities Foundation, will explore the professions and the people that sustain American society when it hosts "The Way We Worked," a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition. "The Way We Worked" will be on view February and March of 2015.

The Cullman Area has been expressly chosen by the Alabama Humanities Foundation to host "The Way We Worked" as part of the Museum on Main Street project—a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. The exhibition will tour six communities in Alabama from July 2014 through June 2015: Pell City, Athens, Valley, Cullman, Demopolis, and Dothan.

"The Way We Worked," adapted from an original exhibition developed by the National Archives and Records Administration, explores how work has become a central element in American culture.

It traces the many changes that have affected the workforce and work environments over the past 150 years, including the growth of manufacturing and increasing use of technology.

The exhibition draws from the Archives' rich collections, including historical photographs, archival accounts of workers, film, audio, and interactives, to tell the compelling story of how work impacts our individual lives and the historical and cultural fabric of our communities.

"We are very pleased to be able to bring "The Way We Worked" to our area," said Cecelia Smith, Tourism Director of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce.

"It allows us the opportunity to explore this fascinating aspect of our own region's history, and we hope that it will inspire many people to visit Cullman and become even more involved in the cultural life of our community."

Elaine Fuller, Director of the Cullman County Museum said, "It is a very high honor that Cullman was chosen to host this exhibit. It will bring visitors in from the surrounding areas and boost tourism in the area. Tourism, in turn, helps the economy by having visitors spend their money here for things like gas, food, and lodging. In the museum industry, a Smithsonian exhibit is the goal that most museums work toward. Having this exhibit here is like the frosting on the cake for me. It is something I have worked toward for many years."

Since 1997, the foundation has partnered with the Smithsonian to bring the Museum on Main Street program to small cities and rural communities across Alabama. "Allowing all of our state's residents to have access to the cultural resources of our nation's premiere museum is a priority of the Alabama Humanities Foundation," said Executive Director Armand DeKeyser.

"The Way We Worked" is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation and local host institutions.

To learn more about "The Way We Worked" and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress, Alabama Power Foundation, and Norfolk Southern Foundation.

SITES connects millions of Americans with their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of art, science, and history exhibitions.

State humanities councils, located in each state and U.S. territory, support community-based humanities programs that highlight such topics as local history, literature, and cultural traditions.

To learn more, visit www.sites.si.edu or www.alabamahumanities.org.

# The National Guard Takes On Hackers

By: Melissa Maynard • Stateline

At home, the National Guard is summoned during natural disasters and civil unrest. Overseas, it complements the active duty military. Now, the nation's governors want to mobilize the Guard to take on a new threat: cyberattacks.

Terrorists could endanger thousands or even millions of Americans by crippling the computer infrastructure of water utilities or the electrical grid.

Meanwhile, criminals are anxious to get their hands on the financial, medical and other personal data states hold in their electronic records.

Guard units in every state have made great strides in protecting their own computer infrastructure, and governors say the Guard is well-equipped to meet broader state demands for cybersecurity.

In an October 2012 survey of states' chief information security officers, 70 percent of them said their state had experienced a cybersecurity breach.

Only 24 percent said they felt "very confident" that their state assets were protected against external threats, and only 32 percent said their staffs were competent to protect against cyberattacks.

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, who is the vice-chairman of the National Governors Association, addressed the issue during the annual "State of the States" speech earlier this month in Washington, D.C.

"As the nation develops resiliency to cyberattacks, the Guard should be mobilized to support federal and state efforts to protect networks and respond to incidents," said Hickenlooper, a Democrat.

"While the federal government seeks to clarify how it will work with the private sector and states to better secure cyberspace, states are already moving forward to develop and implement new cyberpolicies to protect their economies and ensure public safety."

The federal government is taking notice, judging from the National Defense Authorization Act President Barack Obama signed into law on Dec. 26.

The measure requires the Department of Defense to consider the Guard's capabilities as it shores up the Pentagon's cybersecurity. It also orders the department to consult with governors as it assesses states' cybersecurity needs and the Guard's ability to help on that front.

Furthermore, last March eight U.S. senators introduced a bill to establish "cybersecurity civil support teams" in the National Guard, similar to Guard teams that have been created to deal with incidents involving weapons of mass destruction.

Under the measure, a governor or the secretary of defense could activate the teams in response to a cyberattack.

"The Cyber Warrior Act will ensure that in the first hours and days after a devastating cyberattack, our local responders will have the same support of the National Guard for response and recovery that they do when a hurricane strikes," said Democratic Sen. Christopher Coons of Delaware, a co-sponsor of the measure.

### Washington State Leads the Way

Washington was the first state to find a role for the National Guard in its cybersecurity efforts, said Maj. Gen. Tim Lowenberg, who commanded the state's forces as adjutant general from 1999 to 2012 before retiring from the Guard, and is now vice president of Gordon Thomas Honeywell Governmental Affairs.

Missouri, Maryland, Delaware, Utah, and Rhode Island are among the other states that have created Guard units to counter cyberattacks.

Guard soldiers hold civilian jobs or attend college while maintaining their military training part time. Washington recognized the potential of its Guard as a cyberforce when it discovered that many of its Guard soldiers spent the workweek toiling for tech-related employers such as Google, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Comcast, Verizon, Microsoft, Cisco and Hewlett-Packard. Washington decided to capitalize on that experience.

"It is generally accepted that we will never be able to recruit, train and retain sufficient numbers of [active duty] cybersecurity specialists in the military to meet our national security requirements," Lowenberg said.

"With the National Guard, we found a combination of leading-edge technical knowledge and long and stable career commitment that are really unique."

Washington has used its Guard for cyberemergency planning and to search for vulnerabilities in its state networks through "red team" exercises conducted at the direction of the governor.

Such exercises were used to demonstrate the security of the Washington Department of Licensing's network when the state was seeking permission to implement an Enhanced Driver License, which can be used to cross the Canadian border, according to Lowenberg. Implementing the program required persuading the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to allow access to its databases—which required hard proof of network security.

Lowenberg said the result of the National Guard's efforts in Washington state is a higher level of security—and a higher level of preparedness if an attack on critical infrastructure proves unavoidable.

"This would not be a pick-up game," he said. "We've fully developed the responses and protocols for all of this."

### Knowing the Local Landscape

Another advantage to using the Guard, according to the National Guard Association of the United States, is that Guard soldiers come from the communities they serve, giving them knowledge of state and local infrastructure that is difficult for federal officials to replicate.

"The National Guard provides a cost-effective and uniquely capable force that can provide capability for the DoD, homeland defense, civil support and intrastate missions," the group said in a statement.

"Most importantly, the National Guard is composed of citizen-soldiers, working in communities and providing knowledge of critical infrastructure at the local level."

Heather Hogsett of the National Governors Association echoed that view.

"You don't necessarily know where a cyberattack is coming from, but it has a very localized impact," Hogsett said, adding that the Guard is accustomed to serving in a wide variety of roles under governors' direction.

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

# Lands Unsuitable for Coal Mining Petition: Public Hearing on February 20

By: Nelson Brooke

**JASPER** – The Alabama Surface Mining Commission (ASMC) will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 20 on appeals of Black Warrior Riverkeeper's Lands Unsuitable for Coal Mining Petition. The hearing will start at 10 a.m. in the Activity Room of the Community Health Systems Building (204 19th St. East #100 - Jasper, AL 35501).

On October 28, 2013, the ASMC refused to declare 40,300 acres of land adjacent to the Mulberry Fork of the Black Warrior River as off limits to coal mining, missing a historic opportunity to protect the drinking water source for 200,000 residents in the greater Birmingham area. Black Warrior Riverkeeper and the Birmingham Water Works Board (BWWB) each appealed that decision in separate filings on November 26, 2013.

The purpose of the upcoming public hearing is to hear those appeals, although Birmingham area drinking water consumers and concerned citizens can sign up to speak onsite prior to the beginning of the hearing.

Black Warrior Riverkeeper filed a petition with the ASMC on September 10, 2012 to designate this area as unsuitable for coal mining under a provision of the Alabama Surface Mining Control & Reclamation Act, which was specifically enacted to preserve public resources like tap water.

The designation should be applied when surface mining could result in a substantial loss or reduction in the long range productivity of the water supply.

Black Warrior Riverkeeper submitted public comments and evidence to support their petition, including an analysis of BWWB water quality data as well as preliminary data recently compiled by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

The results of this analysis conclusively demonstrate that even after reclamation occurs, surface coal mining has persistent negative effects on downstream water quality.

Citing concerns about potential treatment cost hikes or even an inability to treat the water under certain circumstances, the BWWB intervened in the petition process to represent their concerns about the impacts of mining on source water quality and to ask the ASMC to declare the area unsuitable for mining.

John Kinney, Enforcement Coordinator for Black Warrior Riverkeeper notes, "We have appealed the ASMC's ruling because they misinterpreted the available data which demonstrates the clear relationship between surface mining and the degradation of downstream water quality."

Riverkeeper Nelson Brooke added, "This stretch of river deserves full protection as a vital source of water. The state should not be allowing companies to discharge pollution from coal mines into the daily source of water for 200,000 greater Birmingham-area drinking water consumers."

Black Warrior Riverkeeper's mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. To learn more visit BlackWarriorRiver.org.

# Are you eligible for WIC?

By: Amanda Martin • ADPH

**MONTGOMERY** – Alabama families may qualify for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, better known as WIC. If you are a woman who is pregnant, just had a baby within the past six months, who is breastfeeding, or who is the parent or guardian of a child up to age 5, you are invited and encouraged to apply for WIC at your local county health department.

"One-month issuance from government shutdown several months ago is over, and we are back to business as usual," Amanda Martin, WIC director, Alabama Department of Public Health, said. "In addition to letting the public know we have been issuing benefits on a three-month basis since Nov. 1, we encourage other eligible families to participate."

Prenatal nutrition helps with healthy birth outcomes. Nutrition is a focus for infants and children to ensure healthy growth and development, and healthy food choices help children develop healthy eating habits for life.

Participants in the program receive free nutrition education and breastfeeding peer counseling support. In addition, participants have the option to receive up to three months of food benefits at a time for each qualified family member. Food benefits are redeemable at WIC-authorized stores throughout Alabama.

Under the 2013 federal poverty guidelines, more families may be eligible for the program. WIC is open to participants with incomes up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Check the table on the right to see whether your family qualifies. WIC participants must have both a limited income and a nutritional need. Families who receive Medicaid, SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps, or Family Assistance, formerly known as TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) already meet the income qualifications for WIC. Even families who do not qualify for these three programs may be eligible for WIC because of its higher income limits.

For more information contact your local county health department or call the statewide toll-free line at 1-888-942-4673.

| Family size | Annual Income | Weekly Income |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | $21,257 | $409 |
| 2 | $28,694 | $552 |
| 3 | $36,131 | $695 |
| 4 | $43,568 | $838 |
| 5 | $51,005 | $981 |

# Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship: New Format Will Create Most Intensity Ever at Talladega

By: Price Mason

**TALLADEGA, AL** – The pressure and intensity to win at NASCAR's biggest, baddest, and most competitive track – Talladega Superspeedway - is now at an all-time level after Thursday's new "Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship" format was announced by NASCAR.

As a result, there is little doubt that the 2.66-mile, 33-degree banked venue will host the two most exciting races in all of motorsports in 2014.

The "Win And You're In" format will place heavy emphasis on going to Gatorade Victory Lane. During the first 26 events, a winning driver (top 30 in points standings) could make the expanded 16-driver Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship, the 10-race playoff at the end of the season.

Winning a race in the elimination "round-by-round" Chase will ultimately reward a battle-tested, worthy champion.

The urgency to triumph at both Talladega NASCAR Sprint Cup Series races – the Aaron's 499 in the spring and the GEICO 500, the sixth race in the Chase, will be tense.

The GEICO 500 will be the final race of what NASCAR has deemed the "Contender Round," races 30-32 of the 36-race schedule.

After the GEICO 500, the field of challengers for the Chase for the Sprint Cup Series Championship will be reduced from 12 drivers to eight, making Talladega again the "Wild Card" event of the Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup.

**Details of the new Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series format include:**

• A victory in the first 26 races all but guarantees a berth in the 10-race Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup – a change that will put an unprecedented importance on winning a NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race all season long

• Expanding the Chase field from 12 to 16 drivers, with those drivers advancing to what now will be known as the NASCAR Chase Grid

• The number of championship drivers in contention for the NASCAR Sprint Cup championship will decrease after every three Chase races, from 16 to start in the Chase Grid; 12 after Chase race No. 3; eight after Chase race No. 6 (Talladega Superspeedway's GEICO 500); and four after Chase race No. 9

• The first three races of the Chase (27-29) will be known as the Challenger Round; races 30-32 (Race 32 - Talladega Superspeedway's GEICO 500) will be known as the Contender Round; races 33-35 will be the Eliminator Round and race No. 36 will be the NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship

• A win by a championship-eligible driver in any Chase race automatically clinches the winning driver a spot in the next Chase round

• Four drivers will enter the NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship with a chance at the title, with the highest finisher among those four capturing the prestigious NASCAR Sprint Cup Series championship.

**Eligibility for the Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup**

The top 15 drivers with the most wins over the first 26 races will earn a spot in the NASCAR Chase Grid – provided they have finished in the top 30 in points and attempted to qualify for every race (except in rare instances).

The 16th Chase position will go to the points leader after race No. 26, if he/she does not have a victory. In the event that there are 16 or more different winners over 26 races, the only winless driver who can earn a Chase Grid spot would be the points leader after 26 races. If there are fewer than 16 different winners in the first 26 races, the remaining Chase Grid positions will go to those winless drivers highest in points. If there are 16 or more winners in the first 26 races, the ties will first be broken by number of wins, followed by NASCAR Sprint Cup Series driver points.

As was implemented in 2011, prior to the start of the Chase, all Chase Grid drivers will have their points adjusted to 2,000, with three additional bonus points added to their total for each win in the first 26 races.

**Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Structure**

After the third Chase race, the Chase Grid will be left with 12 drivers. After the sixth Chase race, the field will drop to eight drivers, and following the ninth Chase race, only four drivers will remain in championship contention for the NASCAR Sprint Cup title.

The first round (races 27-29) will be called the Challenger Round. If a driver in the Chase Grid wins a Challenger Round race, the driver automatically advances to the next round. The remaining available positions 1-12 that have not been filled based upon wins will be based on points. Each will then have their points reset to 3,000.

The second round (races 30-32) will be called the Contender Round. Likewise, if a driver in the top 12 in points wins a race in the Contender Round, the driver automatically advances to the next round.

The remaining available positions 1-8 that have not been filled based upon wins will be based on points. Each will then have their points reset to 4,000.

The third round (races 33-35) will be called the Eliminator Round. If a driver in the top eight in points wins a race in the Eliminator Round, the driver automatically advances to the next round.

The remaining available positions 1-4 that have not been filled based upon wins will be based on points. Each will then have their points reset to 5,000.

Additionally, drivers who are eliminated in the Contender and Eliminator Rounds will have their points readjusted. Each eliminated driver will return to the Chase-start base of 2,000 (plus any regular season wins bonus points), with their accumulated points starting with race No. 27 added. This will allow all drivers not in contention for the NASCAR Sprint Cup title to continue to race for the best possible season-long standing, with final positions fifth-through-16th still up for grabs.

**Four Drivers, First-to-the-Finish Championship Finale**

The 36th and final race of the season will be the NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship. Simply stated, the highest finisher in that race among the remaining four eligible drivers will win the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series title.

Bonus points for laps led will not apply in the season finale, so the official finishing position alone will decide the champion.

Note: All rules outlined above also apply to the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series owner championship structure.

NASCAR returns to Talladega Superspeedway in 2014 with the Aaron's Dream Weekend, which is set for May 2-4.

The NASCAR Nationwide Series will take to the track on Saturday, May 3 while NASCAR's Sprint Cup Series machines take the green flag on Sunday, May 4. For ticket information, log onto talladegasuperspeedway.com.

# Young Vinemont Eagles baseball team looks to soar high

By: Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

**VINEMONT** – Although the freezing temperatures and the nasty weather make it seem more like early December than February, one thing around the county is heating up, and that's baseball. That's right, America's Pastime is right around the corner and Vinemont head baseball coach Chad Shannon is going to make sure his team is ready.

"Before each season we have our players develop between 3 to 5 team and individual goals," said coach Shannon when asked about the goals and expectations on the season. "They generally involve the AHSAA Playoffs, Area Play, Cullman County Tournament, and a total number of victories. We like for our players to talk together as a group and decide what is important to them as individuals and as a team. I personally have a team goal for our kids to play with great Attitudes, Energy, and Effort every time out and represent the blue collar work ethic of our community."

To help reach these goals, Vinemont has some returning players who are ready to make a huge impact on the season. Players like Riley Foust who will step straight off the basketball hardwood and straight onto the baseball diamond. Also returning this year are Josh Kent, Kyle Dyer, and Sam Wood.

Shannon is going to be leaning heavily on his seniors to not only get the job done as players but to also be leaders to the up and coming players. Vinemont will not focus on big sticks and homeruns but rather playing small ball and doing things right.

"I don't think we have that single guy we will have to rely on to drive in runs," said Shannon of his hitters. "One through nine, we'll have to move runners and play the small game. We're stressing the importance of winning the "Freebie War" and winning at-bats. I think if you can be flexible throughout the order it gives you different opportunities to score instead of relying on a single individual."

When it comes to the mound, Shannon says the Eagles will not rely on one single, dominate arm, instead they will ride a wave of solid pitching up and down the rotation.

"Riley Foust and Sam Wood are our senior pitchers. Lance Stanley and Blake Melton are our junior pitchers. Melton is a 1st basemen and our closer. He is rehabbing his way back from an ACL injury at the end of football season and may be available for the second half of the season. Takota Millwood, Corbin Barnett, and Garrett Boland are our freshman pitchers."

As far as the season in a whole, the Vinemont skipper had this to say, "I think as a group we're going to be young and inexperienced. Riley Foust will be our only three-year varsity starter. Two-year varsity starters include Sam Wood, Kyle Dyer, and Blake Melton. The remaining guys have limited to no varsity experience but are talented and have worked extremely hard. They understand what the baseball program means to the community and the winning tradition of the baseball program. The early portion of the season we'll be playing catch up with our lack of experience and key contributors coming out of basketball but should be ready by the time we get to area play in late March. We play three AHSAA State Champions in Mars Hill, Shoals Christian, and Athens Bible early in the season so we should be well tested preparing for area play and the playoffs."

Vinemont is young but they look to be a strong willed, competitive team. If anyone can get Vinemont ready to make a run at the county title and beyond, it is Chad Shannon and his group of coaches at Vinemont High School.

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# WSCC's defending national champion softball team ranked No. 1 in NJCAA preseason poll

By: Russell Moore
WSCC Contributor

**HANCEVILLE** – Wallace State's defending national championship softball team is No. 1 in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division I preseason poll for the first time in program history. The Lady Lions will enter the 2014 as the top-ranked team after winning the program's second national championship last season in St. George, Utah.

WSCC won its first NJCAA Division I national title under coach Jayne Clem in 2008 and started at No. 3 in the preseason poll the following campaign.

"It's awesome for our program to be the top-ranked team in the nation. Our players are excited to be a part of the first team to be ranked at the top of the preseason poll," said Clem, who is entering her 15th season with the Lady Lions. "Rankings don't mean anything until you get on the field and do what you are supposed to do. We do have a good nucleus returning, and they're excited for the challenge."

WSCC opens the regular season on Feb. 7, when it hosts the Creek Indian JUCO Classic in Atmore. Teams from Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi and Texas are scheduled to play in the two-day tournament.

Kori Benson, Madeline Lee, Kelsey King, Ashleigh McClure, Sabrina Russell, and Annie Holcomb are Wallace State's returning sophomores this season.

Benson hit a single-season school-record 23 home runs as a freshman, also finishing with a .352 average and 69 RBIs. The Oak Grove product was the 2013 NJCAA national tournament defensive MVP, a NFCA All-American, and the ACCC/Region 22 state tournament MVP. Lee, an all-tournament selection at the national tournament, hit .385 for the Lady Lions with nine homers and 37 RBIs. She added 15 doubles, 19 steals, and a .428 on base percentage.

WSCC defeated Salt Lake City Community College in last year's title game. The Lady Lions won five of six games in the tournament, scoring 33 runs along the way. In 2013, WSCC also won its second straight state tournament championship and sixth in seven seasons.

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

# 2014 Area Basketball Tournament Preview

By: Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

With the Cullman County title decided and the regular season almost at an end, basketball teams around the Cullman area have now turned their attention to making a run at the state title and that starts with the area tournament. For the majority of the teams, it means playing well on the road as 13 of the 16 teams from the Cullman area will be traveling. Only Holly Pond's boys, as well as their girls, and Hanceville's boys will have home court advantage, but all will be looking to win the area championship. Here is how the area stacks up.

**GIRLS**

**2A Area 14**
**COLD SPRINGS HOST**
The Cold Springs Lady Eagles are on a roll and will host their area tournament. This will allow the Lady Eagles to defend their home court and keep the 2A Area 14 title where it belongs, in Cold Springs.

- 2-6 Lamar County vs. Sulligent 5:30 p.m.
- 2-6 Cold Springs vs. Oakman 7:00 p.m.
- 2-8 FINALS 7:00 p.m.

**3A Area 12**
**HOLLY POND HOST**
Fresh off their Cullman County championship victory, the #4 Holly Pond Lady Broncos are favored to win the Area 12 crown. To do this they will have to go through New Hope in the first round and most likely face #10 Brindlee Mountain in the finals.

- 2-6 JB Pennington vs. Brindlee Mountain 5:30 p.m.
- 2-6 Holly Pond vs. New Hope 7:00 p.m.
- 2-10 FINALS 5:30 p.m.

**3A Area 13**
**DANVILLE HOST**
This will be a tough area to go through as each game will be a toss-up. Good Hope seems to have a slight advantage and has been playing great basketball as of late but Vinemont has been showing heart and their never quit attitude can be dangerous in a win or go home type environment, but don't count out Hanceville. They have improved all season and the Lady Bulldogs play hard up and down the floor for the full 36 minutes.

- 2-6 Danville vs. Vinemont 6:00 p.m.
- 2-6 Hanceville vs. Good Hope 7:30 p.m.
- 2-8 FINALS 2:00 p.m.

**4A**
**HOST ONEONTA**
The Fairview Lady Aggies will travel to Oneonta as the Lady Indians will host the area. Due to the severe weather we have had, the bracket is not yet available.

**5A Area 15**
**HOST EAST LIMESTONE**
The Cullman Lady Bearcats will hit the road for their area tournament, traveling to East Limestone. The Lady Bearcats have played strong over the last few weeks and seemed poised and ready to run rough shot through the Area 15 tournament but the West Point Lady Warriors will not be a pushover. Led by the hard-nosed play of Tess Hembree, West Point thinks they will be the team claiming the top prize in the area.

- 2-6 East Limestone vs. West Point 6:00 p.m.
- 2-6 Hartselle vs. Cullman 7:30 p.m.
- 2-10 FINALS 6:00 p.m.

**BOYS**

**HOST LAMAR COUNTY**
**2A Area 14**
In his first year as head coach of Cold Springs, head coach Tim Willoughby has his team ready to make a run at the state title but the Eagles first have to get through the area tournament. They will need strong play from Tristan Chambers, Layne Rice, and Josh Freeman to take down the area crown.

- 2-7 Oakman vs. Cold Springs 5:30 p.m.
- 2-7 Lamar County vs. Sulligent 7:00 p.m.
- 2-10 FINALS 7:00 p.m.

**3A Area 12**
**HOST HOLLY POND**
Just like their female counterparts, the #3 Holly Pond Broncos are the heavy favorites to win Area 12. Coming up just short against Cold Springs in the finals of the Cullman County Basketball tournament has made the Broncos even hungrier in their quest for the 3A state title.

- 2-7 JB Pennington vs. New Hope 5:30 p.m.
- 2-7 Holly Pond vs. Brindlee Mountain 7:00 p.m.
- 2-10 FINALS 7:00 p.m.

**3A Area 13**
**HOST HANCEVILLE**
With this being another tough area that features the fast paced offense and the smothering defense of the Hanceville Bulldogs, the three point shooting of Lance Stanley and the Vinemont Eagles, and the controlled frenzy of the Good Hope Raiders, this area is truly up for grabs.

- 2-7 Vinemont vs. Danville 6:00 p.m.
- 2-7 Hanceville vs. Good Hope 7:30 p.m.
- 2-10 FINALS 7:00 p.m.

**4A**
**HOST ST. CLAIR COUNTY**
The Fairview Aggies have had some ups and downs this year but they hope to rectify that in the area tournament. Due to the severe weather we have had, the area bracket is not yet available.

**5A Area 15**
**HOST EAST LIMESTONE**
Cullman and West Point will butt heads in the first round of the 5A Area 15 tournament with room for just one in the finals. This will undoubtedly be one of the best match-ups of any area tournament.

- 2-7 East Limestone vs. Hartselle 6 p.m.
- 2-7 West Point vs. Cullman 7:30 p.m.
- 2-10 FINALS 7:30 p.m.

## SEC (from Front)

When your father is the all-time winningest coach in the history of Cullman football, what do you do? You play baseball of course. All kidding aside, Matthew Britton is one of the best players to come though the Cullman Baseball program and that is why the Mississippi State Bulldogs jumped at the chance to sign the infielder. As a true freshman, Britton started 34 games his first year, the majority of those starts were second base although he was the Opening Day starter for the Bulldogs at shortstop. He was named to the All-Tallahassee Regional Team as a second baseman. and he was the best of the seven freshman that saw playing time last year. As he looks ahead to the upcoming season, he is undoubtedly looking forward to etching his name in the annals of MSU baseball history.

**Keegan Thompson – Auburn University**
There are many different words to describe Keegan Thompson's performance on the baseball diamond but just one comes to mind....DOMINANT. Thompson is a baseball prodigy. When he stands in the mound, his 6'1" frame is not very imposing, until he releases his fastball. Touching 90 mph, Thompson has enough speed to blow the ball by hitters, and just when they think they have his timing down, he will drop a breaking ball that gets the hitter so far out in front, there is no chance of hitting it. Keegan is the only player in the history of Alabama to be named the Gatorade Player of the Year twice, once as a sophomore and then again as a senior.

I have been lucky in my sports writing career to be around all of these players, whether it has been watching Thompson from the dugout in high school, or Moore and Britton from the press box at the Hoover Met Stadium during the SEC baseball tournament. These are three of the most talented players I have seen on a baseball diamond and there is one constant they all share, they have each played under former Cullman assistant and now Cullman head coach Brent Patterson.

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# Cystic Fibrosis Foundation to Host Benefit Event

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

**CULLMAN** - Come support the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation on May 3, 2014 at Depot Park. Vendors, inflatables, food, a dog show, face painting, and the bands, Coal Rain and Vintage Cowboys, will be at this exciting family event! All proceeds will go to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

This event is hosted by Jessica Pettus and her family. Jessica's son, Crew Pettus, was diagnosed with a genetic disorder associated with Cystic Fibrosis in March of 2013.

Every three months, Crew and his family travel to Florida for tests that he needs.

"We're hosting this event so that people will learn and be more aware of this awful disease," said Pettus.

"Most people don't even know what Cystic Fibrosis is, and it's one of the most common chronic lung diseases."

Cystic Fibrosis is a genetic disease that affects the lungs and digestive systems.

It affects about 30,000 children and adults in the U.S.

This disease is characterized by a defective gene which produces a thick mucus that clogs the lungs and causes infections, obstructs the pancreas, and stops natural enzymes from helping the body break down food. Today, several treatments are available for those with Cystic Fibrosis.

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation does the most research in the U.S. for this disease.

The Pettus family would like to invite you to this event in order to raise awareness for Cystic Fibrosis as well as educate the community on this disease.

Through this family event, they hope to help not only Crew, but all children and adults living with Cystic Fibrosis. "It's for a good cause," she added. "And it's a local event for kids and adults!"

## Cans (from Front)

pecially transporters. People who take the animals to the vet and back for us," she said.

Anyone who owns a pet knows how much love, care, and supplies an animal needs.

It is no wonder then, why the shelter has a wish list of items that they are always in need of for the animals.

"We are always accepting donations of paper towels, dog food, cat food, cat litter, laundry detergent, and Visa gift cards. All donations, other than cans, are tax deductible," Horsley said.

Items like those listed above are essential to the upkeep of the shelter.

There are always more animals than money, so your donations and support are essential.

Horsley also said that people who have lost their pets and haven't come to claim them has made an increase in the number of animals that need shelter.

If your animal runs away, check with any animal shelters first.

If you are looking to adopt a furry companion, you can do so at the shelter Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. You can also look them up online at www.cullmananimalshelter.petfinder.com and take a look at all the animals that are waiting for a loving home.

If you are ever in the area, they also have adoptions at Pet Depot every Saturday.

Whether or not a new pet is in your future, all can agree that these animals deserve our help.

The smallest of donations can make a difference and helps to ensure that while these animals are waiting, they are getting everything they need.

Every year, so many pets are abandoned, and shelters all over the state are having a hard time keeping up.

A small act can have a great impact. Please donate or adopt from your local shelter.

As a great man named Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Never, never be afraid to do what's right, especially if the well-being of a person or animal is at stake."

Society's punishments are small compared to the wounds we inflict on our soul when we look the other way."

## STAR (from Front)

cluding Ala., Colo., Conn., Del., Fla., Ga., Hawaii, Ind., Iowa, Kan., Md., Miss., Neb., Ohio, S.D., Tenn., Utah, Vt., W. Va., Wis., and Wyoming. Twenty states and territories have been granted extensions with 15 states noncompliant.

In addition to revised IDs, the Act also requires states to share their motor vehicle database with all members of the driver's license act. The shared information includes all information printed on the IDs, the photos and drivers' histories.

The Real ID Act modified members of the DLA to include not just U.S. states and territories, but provinces and territories of Canada and states of Mexico, should they choose. This has been a major sticking point with many interest groups opposed to the law, both conservative and liberal, who argue foreign authorities should not have open access to U.S. citizen's personal information.

On December 1st of this year, those born after Dec. 1, 1964 may be required to have a Real ID for federal purposes. Persons born before then will have until Dec. 1, 2017 to obtain one. Exactly what difficulties not having a Real ID will pose is still being decided.

The Real ID Act allows the DHS to decide what the ID may or may not be used for without Congressional approval.

The DHS has said it will not limit airline travel based on not having a Real ID until at least Jan. 2016.

However, other agencies may begin restricting access in December of this year. This can affect anything from obtaining a passport to federal unemployment benefits and first time social security applicants to even documents required for I-9s. The law will currently not apply to those under the age of 18. A valid U.S. passport can be used in lieu of a Real ID for most purposes. To comply with the law, Alabama passed the "Secure, Trusted and Reliable" ID or STAR ID.

These IDs may only be obtained from offices that issue an original driver's license or non-driver identification card.

Satellite offices used for renewals are so far unable to grant STAR IDs, and there is no information on if they will be able to do so in the future.

In order to upgrade from a current license or ID card to a STAR ID, you will need a document to establish your identity and origin of birth, proof of your social security number, and two documents to show your current primary residence. A full list of acceptable documents can be found on the Alabama Department of Public safety website.

There are still several of the more intricate details of the STAR ID that are being sorted out. Clerks at license offices in Jefferson, Shelby, and Cullman counties were unable to say if a STAR ID could be issued on a Learner's Permit or on licenses for drivers under the age of 18. They also could not say if a STAR ID could be renewed at satellite offices once obtained. The current state driver's license and non-driver ID cards will continue to work for all state purposes. The STAR ID is an upgrade of the current state ID and not a separate card. If you have already renewed your license or ID without taking the extra steps to get the Real ID, you will have to pay the full price for a new STAR ID.

More information can be found at dps.alabama.gov.

## Legal Advertisement

The City of Cullman's Alcohol Review Committee will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, February 4th, 2014 at 5:00 pm, in the Administrative Conference Room of City Hall, located at 204 Second Avenue NE.

Comments will be received on the proposed approval for the sale of alcohol in the City of Cullman by the following applicants:

**Top of the Town**

(Michael D. Pitts)

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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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## What's Online

### Workshop Teaches Cullmanites the Art of Making Their Own Wine

The winemaking workshop at the North Alabama Agriplex was a huge success last Thursday night. About 40 people attended this exciting event as Rob Werner and Gery Teichmiller gave a quick introduction on how to make wine.

**qrne.ws/156**



### Wallace State's defending national champion softball team ranked No. 1 in NJCAA preseason poll

Wallace State's defending national championship softball team is No. 1 in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division I preseason poll for the first time in program history.

**qrne.ws/157**

### West Point is 2014 Cullman County Freshman Champion

With Connor Marsh unstoppable in the low post, the West Point Warriors started championship Saturday at the 2014 Cullman County Basketball Tournament winning the freshmen crown by defeating Holly Pond 38-20.

**qrne.ws/158**

AROUND THE TOWN

# Cure that Winter Chill with some of the best coffee in Cullman

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

With round two of the winter whirlwind sweeping through Cullman, it can be hard to keep yourself motivated. Perhaps all you need this winter is a hot cup of coffee to warm you up and boost your spirit. We're all counting down the days until it's warm enough to put ice cubes in our coffee again, but until then, grab yourself a warm beverage from one of the best places in Cullman to get coffee.

**1. Berkeley Bob's**

This 60s inspired coffee house is located in downtown Cullman on First Avenue. Relax on their couches if you please or bring your laptop and work at a table. Either way, you will feel like a coffee drinking hippie as the psychedelic decorations and the colorful murals welcome you. Berkeley Bob's has a full espresso bar and a menu offering cappuccinos, lattes, mochas, and tea. If you prefer plain coffee, they also offer a coffee of the day. If you're hungry, too, you're in luck. Berkeley Bob's offers bakery items, salads, soups, and delicious sandwiches. They also sell tons of other cool merhchandise such as clay dyed t-shirts and local honey. The atmosphere in this place makes it a great place to go with your friends and relax with a cup of coffee. So journey back to the 60s here, coffee in hand.

**2. Flavor's Bakery**

This charming bakery is located in the most beautiful part of Cullman – the Warehouse District. From the colorful walls to the charming brick, this bakery is bursting with character. The best part? That's tough to determine. It could be the countless number of baked goods including muffins, scones, cinnamon rolls, and cookies that are all, by the way, made completely from scratch. You can definitely taste the difference.

Or the best part could be the coffee flavoring bar. Flavor's Bakery allows you to be your own barista with their assortment of at least 20 different coffee flavorings. You have complete creative control over your coffee at this bakery and the possibilities are endless. Or, perhaps, the best part of this alluring bakery could be the atmosphere. Flavor's has found the perfect balance of delightful charm and upscale beauty, and you are certain to feel suave and sophisticated as you meet here for a work meeting, to catch up with an old friend, or even for a coffee date. From the made-from-scratch goodies to the endlessly customizable coffee, Flavor's Bakery is certainly appropriately named.

**3. Starbucks**

We've all been there. We've all had it. We've all experienced the delicious coffee brew that is Starbucks. And although it does not have the local charm of Berkeley Bob's and Flavor's Bakery, Starbucks knows how to make a cup of coffee. They have a few comfortable chairs as well as a few tables so you can either work or relax as you enjoy your coffee. They also have a drive through, which is convenient in case you are in a hurry but do not want to settle for fast food coffee. The Cullman Starbucks is located on Highway 69 South.

**4. Rumor's Deli**

Rumor's Deli no longer has a coffee house, but you can still order a cup of coffee and enjoy it with your favorite Rumor's sandwich. Don't forget, Rumor's is opening a new coffee house called Rumor's Cafe in the new nursing building at Wallace State. Coming soon!

**5. Joe Muggs**

If you're a book lover, Joe Muggs is the perfect place to go sip on a hot coffee as it is located inside Books-A-Million. With a seating area as well as a few larger, more comfortable chairs scattered throughout the store, Joe Muggs allows you to enjoy your beverage as you look through a book or magazine. If you don't know which book you would like to buy, take a while to sit and read as you decide. This is also simply a great place to meet a friend and discuss a book over coffee. Embrace your inner book lover and go enjoy a warm cup of coffee at Joe Muggs.

**6. McDonald's**

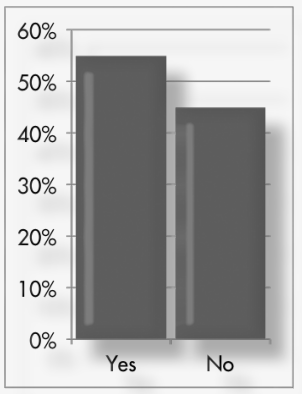
Yes, you read that right. It says McDonald's. Surprisingly, Mickey D's is an excellent choice for coffee. Because the atmosphere is nothing to brag about, McDonald's is a delicious choice for coffee if you're in a hurry. Their menu offers lattes, mochas, cappuccinos and, of course, plain coffee, for a great price. You can get your fix on a budget with a small latte at just above two dollars. If you're unsure about buying coffee from a fast food restaurant, try McDonald's coffee. This excellent fast food café will definitely surprise you.

**7. Home**

Of course, if you're just too cold to leave the house, stock up on some good coffee and brew it at home. Whole bean coffee is absolutely the best to buy. Grind it up a little at a time and you'll be able to taste the freshness in every sip. You can buy coffee at Berkeley Bob's, Flavor's Bakery, Starbucks, and Joe Muggs, so you can enjoy your favorite brews from your own home. There are also tons of options at your local grocery store. Some great choices are Eight O'Clock Coffee, Dunkin' Donuts and Cafe Bustelo. If you're into flavored coffee, check out www.flavoredcoffee.com. They offer coffee in almost every flavor you could imagine. So, build a fire, grab your Snuggie and warm up with a cup of coffee. With winter in full swing, coffee should be your beverage of choice.

## Poll

Should Alabama legalize marijuana for both recreational and medicinal purposes?




**This Week's Poll**

Have you ever had frostbite?
Vote Today at
CullmanSense.com/Poll

18th Annual
"Big Band" Dance

The jazz band will perform a variety of music for dancing with an emphasis on big band swing. Glen Miller's "In The Mood", Woody Herman's "Woodchopper's Ball", and Duke Ellington's "Satin Doll" are just a sampling of the swinging selections that will be performed at the dance. The band will also perform waltzes, Latin selections, and ballads.

Feb. 7, 2014
7 to 9 p.m.
Cullman Civic Center



Door Prizes and Refreshments

As an added treat, instructors will present a free dance class for anyone interested 30 minutes prior to the start of the dance.

$6.00 per person
$10.00 per couple

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

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

- **Youth Baseball & Softball Reg:** Spring youth league baseball and softball will register Jan. 15-Feb. 15 for ages 4-14. Games will start in March at Heritage Park and the Field of Miracles. Cost is $90 and includes a hat and jersey. Call 256-734-9157 for details. Registration is open online at active.com by searching "Cullman Parks" or at the Cullman Civic Center.
- **Miracle League Basketball Reg:** Miracle League Basketball registration is now open through Jan. 20. Games will be played at Ingle Park Gym starting in February. All ages are encouraged to play, cost is $30. Call 256-734-9157 for details.
- **Dog Obedience Classes:** Dog Obedience classes will begin on Tuesday, January 28 at the Cullman Civic Center with a puppy class at 6pm and an adult class at 7pm. An orientation will be held Monday night, January 27 at the center for both classes. Call to reserve your spot by Monday at 5pm by calling 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.
- **Flag Football Registration:** Now open through February 15, cost is $350 per team which includes the season and a tournament at the end of the season. Ages 15 & up, call 256-739-9931.
- **Senior Spirit Travel:** Senior Spirit will travel to "Magnificent Michigan" May 8-14 with stops at Windmill Island, Veldheer's Tulip Farm & Delft Factory, Nelis' Dutch Village, as well as several museums and parades. Cost with motor coach travel and 6 nights of lodging is $1,349 for dbl, $1649 for sngl. Deposit payment of $75 is due by March 1, and spaces are filling up fast! Call 256-734-4803 for more information.
- **Hurricane Creek Park 1st Time Rock Climb:** Offered Saturday mornings at 10am by reservation for first time rock climbers. Cost is $25 and includes professional instruction. Call 734-2125.

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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.

**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

**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.

**Northbrook Baptist Church Hosts Adult Luncheon**
Everyone is invited to attend the adult luncheon sponsored by Northbrook Baptist Church starting at 10:30 a.m. in the church atrium. There will be a guest speaker, Bobby Denton. For additional information please contact Wade Maynard, 256-734-6401.

**Dripping Springs Chapter DAR Meeting**
All interested are invited to attend the Dripping Springs Chapter DAR meeting at 2 p.m. This event will be held at Cullman First United Methodist Church and the program will 'Celebrate the C.A.R. and the Pursuit of Happiness'.

**Square Dancing lessons**
The Friendship Square Dance Club of Cullman will be holding free lessons on square dancing from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Contact Rip Johnston at 256-347-7266 or Hulda Schaefers 256-734-3566

**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.

## Wednesday

**St. Monica's Group**
St. Monica's Group for those addicted to alcohol or drugs meets every Wednesday night at 7 p.m. in the Rectory Basement of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church. All are welcome to attend who feel the need. For further information please contact Brian, 256-595-0515 or Rita, 256-507-0358.

**Manna Meals at St. Andrew's United Methodist**
Everyone is invited to attend the weekly Wednesday night 'Manna Meals' at St. Andrew's United Methodist Church from 5 p.m. until 6 p.m. Sack dinners will be available for carry outs. Please call the Church office for further information 256-735-0444.

**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

**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.

**MedSnap Medication Safety Screening**
CRMC is sponsoring the chance for community members to check their prescription medications with the MedSnap Medication Safety Screening from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. in the Col. Cullman Room in POB ll. Bring your medications, medication lists and any organizer you keep your medication in. Appointments are strongly recommended. For time slots call 256-737-2600.

## 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.

**Baseball Season Signup for Vinemont Parks & Recreation**
Those interested in playing baseball for Vinemont Parks & Recreation Department are encouraged to sign up on Friday, Feb. 7 and Saturday, Feb. 8 in the school lunchroom from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. T-Ball players, ages 4 - 6, have a $50.00 fee per player; boys baseball and girls softball fees are $55.00 per person, for ages 7 - 12. Get ready for springtime.

**Baseball and softball for Good Hope Parks & Recreation Department**
Those interested in playing baseball and softball for Good Hope Parks & Recreation Department need to sign up between now and February 14 at Good Hope City Hall. Hours Monday through Friday are from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Cost for T-Ball players (ages 5-6) is $60.00 per player; softball and baseball ages 7-14 cost $70.00 per player. Please call 256-739-3757 for additional information.

**18th Annual Big Band Dance**
Cullman High School Jazz Band once again takes to the stage to present its 18th Annual Big Band Dance at Cullman Civic Center. The dance, $6.00 per person or $10.00 per couple, will be from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. and will feature a variety of musical numbers including big band swing, Latin numbers, ballads and waltzes, all just perfect for ballroom dancing. For those interested, the time between 6:30 p.m. and the start of the dance at 7 p.m., will include free dance lessons and complimentary refreshments will be served during the evening's entertainment. Even if you don't want to dance, come sit a spell and enjoy the music and dancing of others.

**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

**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!

**Turkey Shoot sponsored by the Hanceville Quarterback Club**
There will be a Turkey Shoot sponsored by the Hanceville Quarterback Club starting at 8 a.m. This event will be held just south of Domino's Pizza on Highway 31 South in Hanceville. To shoot for a turkey or ham the cost is $4.00 per shoot; and the money shot is $5.00 each time. Funds raised will go to the Hanceville Quarterback Club. Everyone is invited.

## Next Monday

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

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

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

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

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

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

## RESIDENTIAL RECIPES

# Salsa Chicken Chilequiles

By: Allison Robertson • Local Contributor

This is a great one-skillet wonder. I love making this dish because there's not a lot of clean-up and it is a great way to break up the bland routine of dinner.

It's like a Mexican restaurant in your own home. You will be surprised what you can do in just one dish.

**Ingredients:**
- 10 to 12 corn tortillas
- canola oil - to liking
- salt - to taste
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 (8 ounces) can - tomato sauce
- 2 jalapenos - (seeded and chopped)
- 1 clove - garlic (crushed and minced)
- 1 teaspoon - paprika
- 1 teaspoon - ground cumin
- 1 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon - real butter (do not use substitute)

**Instructions:**
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut tortillas into one by two inch strips, toss with oil, and spread onto foil-lined baking sheet.
- Sprinkle liberally with salt and toss to coat.
- Place in oven for 20 minutes, taking them out and flipping them over halfway through.
- Meanwhile, season both sides of the chicken breasts with chili powder and place them on a medium high grill 5-7 minutes per side. If you don't want to use a grill, go ahead and cook it in your skillet 5-7 minutes on both sides over medium high heat. I like the smoky taste and the char the grill gives but the stove-top is just fine.
- After the chicken is finished, place on a plate to rest.
- Add the butter to your frying pan over medium-high heat. Melt it down and keep stirring until it is brown and smells nutty.
- Add your jalapenos, garlic, paprika, and cumin. Sauté this until the peppers and garlic soften up.
- Add the tomato sauce and turn the heat down to medium.
- Slice the chicken breasts into strips and place into skillet.
- Combine all ingredients and heat through all together.

Put a pile of those homemade tortilla chips on your plate and spoon the chicken chilequiles on top.

Sprinkle with shredded cheese, dollop some sour cream on top or whatever topping you like, and you have a great meal to heat up the winter.

# Stuffed Jalapeno Peppers

By: Phillip Pryor • Local Contributor

This recipe for stuffed jalapeno peppers is great for gatherings or just a simple snack.

Prep time doesn't take long and these are very easy to make, especially for a beginner cook.

If you like a kick, then these are the perfect appetizer for you.

**Ingredients:**
- 12 to 16 - jalapeno peppers (seeded)
- 8 ounces - cream cheese (cubed)
- 2 eggs - beaten
- 1 cup – flour

**Yields 12 to 16 servings**

**Instructions:**
- Stuff each pepper with cubed cream cheese.
- Combine eggs and flour together. Roll each pepper in mixture.
- Place each pepper in a deep fryer and brown.
- Drain peppers on a paper towel. Let cool and serve.

**GET YOUR RECIPE PUBLISHED**

*E-mail submissions to:*

*recipes@cullmansense.com*

CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITOR CENTER

Official Newsletter

Eyes of PROGRESS

www.cullmanchamber.org

Serving the Community Since 1943

Serving:
BAILEYTON
COLONY
CULLMAN
DODGE CITY
FAIRVIEW
GARDEN CITY
GOOD HOPE
HANCEVILLE
HOLLY POND
SOUTH VINEMONT
WEST POINT

***From the Chamber President***

# Do I hear Chamber Music?

*Chamber of Commerce*. What image comes to mind when you read these words? Business? Money? Boredom?? Recently I was having a conversation with a group of people about our upcoming Annual Meeting and Gala. I was telling them about our plans for a classic Vegas theme with live music, dancing and fun games. They stopped me midsentence and said, "This can't be a chamber event, it sounds like too much fun." I realized at that moment, that our rebranding campaign had only just begun. Business as usual does not apply to chambers, industries, small business or corporate America anymore. "We are not interested in mapping out what we did yesterday – we are looking for the people, activities, situations, markets, relationships, interactions, value propositions and business models we've never seen before – presented in a context the business understands and can use" (ebusiness) Business and marketing theory is being rewritten as we speak. The reality is that we live and compete in a brand new era. We have altered our course. We are connecting with those who are defining the future of business and commerce. Not with boring meetings and events, but with effective networking opportunities and valuable resources for you and your business. Even though it is the end of business as usual, it is the beginning of a new age of opportunity. Suits and flow charts have been replaced by business casual and interactive computer images. Historically, chambers have always moved with the times. The days of the predictable and lackluster chamber style music are over, replaced with a refreshing and updated style that is timeless. For instance, did you know that a chamber helped pay for Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic? A chamber also bought the permit for the Woodstock Music & Art Fair in 1969. No, chambers of commerce aren't boring… at least not your chamber. We provide people with the valuable tools and offer exciting events they need to further their business. All while having fun doing it. You will actually enjoy these sessions and workshops while taking away a new piece of insider information. Join us this month for our Annual Meeting and Gala. We're calling it Rollin' in the Dough. Sister Schubert (yes, she makes those delicious rolls) will be our guest speaker and The Retro Catz will be piping in the tunes 'til 10:30. With all of the new opportunities this year at the Chamber, you could be rolling in the dough, too. It's true – you will hear chamber music this year, but probably not what you expect. Big things are coming your way from the CoC, and we are as committed as ever to bringing you the cutting edge tools and necessary information to ensure that your business grows and prospers to its fullest this year. Visit our website for a schedule of programs, seminars and events for 2014. We'll be waiting for you.



Leah Bolin

*President & CEO,*
*Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce*

**Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce**

PO Box 1104
Cullman, AL 35056-1104
info@cullmanchamber.org
256-734-0454 | F: 256-737-7443
**www.cullmanchamber.org**
**www.visitcullman.org**






# Membership 101 Educates and Excites

Last Thursday, January 23rd, the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce held their quarterly meeting for new members called Membership 101. Director of Membership & Marketing Deonne Ludwig helped to facilitate the event along with Chamber staff.

The quarterly meeting is a basic introduction into what the Cullman Chamber does and educates new members on how they can make the most of out of their membership. The meeting was from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and covered a vast variety of information.

Cullman Chamber President & CEO Leah Bolin stepped up to the plate to deliver her enthusiastic and entertaining repertoire of chamber history, knowledge, goals and events. The crowd of attendees sat in their seats heavily engrossed in Bolin's speech.

Following the President's introduction, Director of Business & Workforce Development Jackie Moore presented an extensive PowerPoint covering her business prowess and development efforts. By the end of her last slide, one thing was clear – people were undoubtedly surprised by what the Cullman Chamber really does. There seems to be a lot of misconceptions in regards to what a chamber really does, let alone our very own Cullman Chamber. A chamber is a private organization whose goal is to grow the commerce in their area to the best of their abilities through a variety of efforts. Bolin said of this common misconception, "I am often surprised to find out that members do not really understand the role of a CoC or how many benefits are associated with this membership organization. Additionally, they are surprised at the many things we do for the community."

Membership clearly has its perks and privileges, but here is just a partial listing of what one may receive when they join the Chamber as a member: business networking opportunities; member-only monthly marketing reports; complimentary meeting rooms; additional member-to-member discounts; additional business referrals and contacts you may have otherwise missed; two free business listings on www.culllmanchamber.org; free business listing in the "Cullman Area Who's Who Business Directory;" and a free listing in "Classic Cullman."

"Membership has its privileges, but if you do not know what those are, it is hard to take advantage of them. Membership 101 provides the history of the CoC, the CoC program of work and an overview of who we are and who we aren't," Bolin stated.

Following Moore's presentation, Administrative & Media Specialist Natalie Bonner spoke about the growing tourism field and travel industry as she filled in for Tourism Director Cecelia Smith who was busy

CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITOR CENTER

# Welcome!

We are so glad to have you!

## APPLICATION

| for SUCCESS |

DATE____/____/____ [PLEASE PRINT]

COMPANY NAME:

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:

MAILING ADDRESS: ☐ (Use Physical address)

BUSINESS PHONE:

WEBSITE:

FACEBOOK: TWITTER:

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES: PART TIME EMPLOYEES: BUSINESS CATEGORY:

REPRESENTATIVES:

| PRIMARY CONTACT: | JOB TITLE: | EMAIL: |
|---|---|---|
| BILLING CONTACT: | JOB TITLE: | EMAIL: |

PLEASE PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION *(20 words or less)* OF YOUR BUSINESS

*Access to your Member profile is available 24/7 to make any additions or updates at www.ChamberLogin.com*

I prefer to pay by:
☐ CHECK #_____ ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express
ACCOUNT NO. _____
NAME ON CARD _____ CSV_____
EXP _____ BILLING ADDRESS _____
SIGNATURE_____

Being in agreement with the programs and goals of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, I agree to invest the stated amount in the Chamber. I understand this investment is due with this application and that subsequent annual investments will be payable during the anniversary month of our membership. **The Chamber may depend on my annual investment until notified by my business.**

**We appreciate your investment in the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce – and our community!**

$_____ ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP INVESTMENT*

* MEMBERSHIP - FAIR SHARE FORMULA

**FAIR SHARE**

A. **Manufacturing/Processing/Distributing/Professionals/General Business**
1 – 5 Employees = $200 / Each Employee over 5 = $10

B. **Associate Members** = $125
Organization must have its own full membership; this is for employees of a member firm who wants their own listing and visibility in Chamber materials.

C. **Financial Institutions (Banks, Credit Unions, Savings & Loans)**
$30 per million dollars in Cullman County deposits / Minimum $650 Investment

D. **Family Farms, Non-Profit Organizations, Retired Individuals** = $100

SIGNED _____ TITLE_____ DATE____/____/____

Email to Info@cullmanchamber.org | Fax to 256.737.7443 | Mail to PO Box 1104, Cullman, AL 35055

**Reminder: YOUR CHAMBER INVESTMENT IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE AS A BUSINESS EXPENSE.**

**Also, renew your membership on time next year and get two Fourth Friday passes!**

giving a special tour of the Cullman area to four visitors from the Ardmore Welcome Center.

Director of Membership & Marketing Deonne Ludwig went into specifics about membership and showed new members how to navigate our Chamber website and how to make the most out of their membership.

"Attending a Membership 101 will give the Chamber member the opportunity to see how to put the Chamber to work for their business. During the informal meetings, most that attend are astonished at everything that the Chamber does in our community and to promote their members," Ludwig said.

"One new feature of our Memberships is the ability to enhance their online presence through the Chamber and I think most realize how valuable that is and don't know that aspect is part of their investment."

One thing is for sure, the Cullman Chamber is invested in their members and, likewise, their members are invested in their chamber. For more information on how to become a member, please call (256) 734-0454 or email dludwig@cullmanchamber.org.

# Chamber helped to celebrate growth in the Cullman area




**JIM N NICK'S BAR-B-Q**
216 2nd Avenue SE, Cullman

STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT
*Leading-Edge Cancer Treatment*

(SRS) STEREOTACTIC RADIOSURGERY

Life*first* Imaging and Oncology is pleased to announce that Dr. P. Colby Maher will be teaming with Dr. Vincent Karolewics to provide specialized Stereotactic Radiosurgery (SRS) treatments for both malignant and non-cancerous lesions in the brain. Together these physicians provide university-level care with state-of-the-art technology available in a community setting. Life*first* of Cullman is one of the first cancer treatment sites in northern Alabama offering this leading-edge treatment with RapidArc® technology.





DR. MAHER, A NEUROSURGEON, OBTAINED HIS DOCTORATE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE. HE IS AFFILIATED WITH ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL AND THE CULLMAN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER.

DR. KAROLEWICS, A RADIATION ONCOLOGIST, GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA AND MEDICAL COLLEGE OF VIRGINIA. HE IS THE FOUNDER OF LIFE*FIRST* IMAGING AND ONCOLOGY AND IS ON STAFF WITH CULLMAN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER.

Lifefirst
IMAGING AND ONCOLOGY
1811 Parkway Circle
Cullman, AL 35058
(256) 737-2285






# TOPIC: Raising the Tech Bar

## - COMMUNITY LUNCHEON -

THE 2014 COMMUNITY LUNCHEON PROGRAM IS PRESENTED BY:
Mickey Parrish State Farm Insurance & Financial Services
256-734-4640 MickeyParrish.com



The Chamber will host it's monthly "Community Luncheon" on Friday, February 28, in the All Steak Restaurant Banquet Room (323 3rd Ave. S.E.). Our featured speaker will be Lew Drummond, Executive Director of the Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association.

The event is sponsored by The Quality Staffing Solution, Inc.

Doors open at 11:30 am to allow networking opportunities before the program begins at 11:50 am. Lunch is $15 per person for Chamber members and $20 for "Future" members. Reservations in advance are required*.

Please register online at www.cullmanchamber.org or RSVP by contacting the Chamber via e-mail at info@cullmanchamber.org or by calling 256-734-0454.

** 48 hours cancellation notice or subject to billing. No payments will be taken at the door but can be invoiced or paid online.*



The February Community Luncheon is brought to you by:
Quality STAFFING SOLUTION, INC
www.qualitystaffingsolution.com

# Meet Lew Drummond of AAMA

As director of the West Alabama Center for Workforce Development, Lewis Drummond focuses on helping people get the skills local employers need.

In 2011 he donned an additional hat. Drummond became executive director of the Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association.

The 10-year-old association has more than 450 member companies and organizations in Alabama and neighboring states. It includes automotive manufacturers Mercedes-Benz, Honda, Hyundai and Toyota; hundreds of automotive parts suppliers and firms providing professional services; and government entities and private organizations interested in seeing the state's automotive industry succeed. The association doesn't lobby elected officials or take political positions, Drummond said.

"The mission of the association is to provide growth and continued improvement in Alabama's automotive industry," he said. Quarterly meetings held around the state let its members interact and get information on manufacturing trends, techniques and concerns.

The Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association's goals mesh with those of the West Alabama Center for Workforce Development, which is affiliated with and housed at Shelton State Community College. Drummond grew up in Huntsville and came to Tuscaloosa to attend the University of Alabama. After graduating, he settled in Tuscaloosa and took a job with IBM. He worked in IBM's higher education unit that developed informational technology solutions for colleges and universities. His territory included Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee, and he became familiar with area colleges' needs.

After retiring, he joined the staff of Shelton State and five years ago, he became director of its Center for Workforce Development.

The center opened in 2003 and was part of then-Gov. Bob Riley's plan that set up 10 workforce development centers across the state to meet existing industries' needs. The Shelton State center covers employers' workforce needs in seven West Alabama counties — Tuscaloosa, Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar and Pickens.

Drummond said he is optimistic about the state's auto industry, which continues to grow, and what it means for workers with the skills and training needed by that industry. They have a bright future, he said.



Lew Drummond

*Executive Director, Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association*

# Phone Etiquette Seminar is a Success

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce recently held one of its many programs this past Thursday, January 23 called Phone Etiquette with speaker Lacy Beasley. This seemingly simple seminar turned out to be anything but as the room filled with almost 20 people who signed up to attend the free seminar.

"I was very pleased with the turnout. We had had a high level of interest and everyone was able to attend. The message was great. The interaction between the attendees and the speaker was great. Lacy did an excellent job talking about this topic, covering cell phone and in-office phone etiquette," Director of Business & Workforce Development Jackie Moore said.

"This is something that the Cullman Chamber is working really hard to find resources for small business and large business, business period, in the area and resources they can use that have value to them which will help businesses improve or fine-tune their skill set."

Attendees were excited to participate in this interactive seminar and take invaluable tips away to help instill in their own businesses. Lacy was a charismatic and energetic speaker whose tips were extremely effective. When asked why such a simple task of answering the phone is so important, she explained that it's all connected. The phone call is the first communication established with almost any potential customer, and that first means of contact is a reflection of your business.

"The goal is to make Cullman a more vibrant community. And the more we can improve the businesses locally, the more we increase the quality of life and the amount of business that flow into Cullman," guest speaker and Vice President of Retail Strategies Lacy Beasley said. "So, continuing to have these workshops and to keep all the local businesses up to speed on the best business practices, the better it makes the entire city as a whole and helps the local economy."

Explaining her day job, Beasley stated, "Retail Strategies is a municipality-consulting firm. We help cities bring in new businesses and help the existing businesses grow. Essentially, we grow a better retail environment for municipalities."

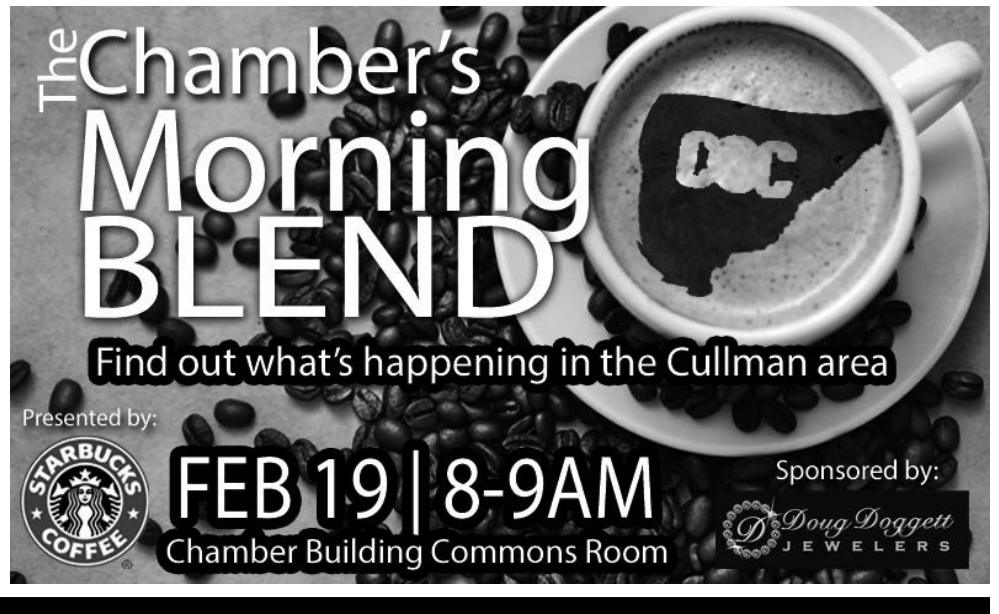
The Cullman Chamber strives to bring pertinent and business changing programs, seminars, workshops, etc. to the table for their members. They want to help grow business locally on all planes.

Retail Development Coordinator of Cullman Economic Development Agency and Chairperson for the Chamber's Retail Committee Susie Hood Ashley said, "We've spent a lot of time coming up with new events, programs, seminars and workshops to try to revitalize existing businesses, as well as bring in new businesses and invite them to join the Chamber and to be a part of these events to improve their businesses. Whether it is through customer service or reintroducing best practices, things you already know day to day, but may forget when you are consumed in other duties. It's just a refresher course for business basics."

And no one is ever too old to have a refresher on a seemingly simple task as answering the phone. Just as technology and times change, so too does the way in which we communicate. There is still an art to answering the phone – be it a cell phone or an in-office phone – in a professional setting and a professional mannerism.





CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# POWERFUL VISIBILITY ON THE CHAMBER WEBSITE!

**People on our website have already made an important decision; they are looking for a business right here in our area.**

Statistics indicate that people searching the internet are experienced, educated consumers who use the web to help make purchase decisions! In fact, 78% of American adults use the internet and 83% of users have purchased a product/service online.*

## Are you reaching this targeted market?

Many members realize the benefit of their membership and the value of targeting the market already driven to the Chamber's Online Business Directory. It is about utilizing the web and the Chamber name to promote your business.

Upgrade opportunities are available, including the ability to display your logo in our Online Business Directory, increase visibility to your own web link, and provide enhancements that give a professional first impression. Contact the Chamber for more information.




## Stand Out from the Crowd!!

- **Enhance your Listing**
- Logo, Photos, Priority Placement in the Online Business Directory, a 1600 Character Business Description, with an additional 200 Character Description right in the Search Results
- **Receive an Enhanced Map Listing**
- Pin which includes more information when clicked
- **Be Highlighted in your Business Category**
- Display a custom banner ad as one of our Limited Business Category Sponsors
- **Select Premiere Visibility on High Traffic Pages**
- Choose to become a Complete Website Sponsor

For more details regarding these opportunities, please contact Deonne Ludwig at dludwig@cullmanchamber.org or 256-255-0726.

## Also available - A Free Basic Listing instructional video can be provided!

## Your **FREE Listing** on the Chamber's Online Business Directory includes

- Online Member Profile – mini webpage
- 200 character business description
- Hours of operation/ Driving directions
- Personalized keywords that help people searching online find YOU.
- Free event postings
- Free online job postings
- Free online promotions / Advertise with Hot Deals and monitor internets hits.
- Ability to register for Events and pay online.
- Acces your data from anywhere, at anytime!
- Updates are displayed on the Chamber's website automatically, immediately.
- Access lead lists tailored to your business category(ies)
- Lodging members may view and update vacancies, facilities and room amenities.

**The basic listings require your attention** to update your **business description, 8 key word/ search terms, hours of operation and driving directions** to enhance your 'searchability'.

You can review and update this information through the Chamber's website, or by going directly to www.chamberlogin.com. Contact the Chamber for your login and password if you don't have it.
To view an instructional video about the online features please visit http://benefits.cullmanchamber.org

**Take a few minutes to update your information to take advantage of your online potential!**

*PEW Research - 2010; FCC Broadband Performance Report - 2010

# CoC Seventh Annual Montgomery Drive-In

## | MARCH 5, 2014 |

The Chamber's 7th Annual Montgomery Drive-In presented by the Cullman Economic Development Agency and Cullman County Industrial Development Authority is set for Wednesday, March 5. The cost for participants is $50 which includes transportation (bus) to and from Montgomery and lunch.

The program will also include presentations from various departmental and agency directors who will meet with our group and provide an update on their respective programs and activities. Furthermore, our local Cullman area state legislative delegation has been invited to join us for lunch that day to provide an overview on legislative issues.

Presented by:

CULLMAN COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

CULLMAN ECONOMIC Development Agency

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# Leadership Cullman County - February Session to be Held

## | FEBRUARY 20, 2014 - "QUALITY OF LIFE"|

The program is designed to identify, prepare and build upon leadership resources within Cullman County. It brings leaders together to discuss the present and future direction of our county and prepares them for greater involvement through volunteer roles in the community.

The program consists of eight monthly meetings focused on various topics such as education, criminal justice, local government, health care, state government, economic development, and quality of life. For more information contact the Chamber at 256-734-0454.

2013-14 Cullman County Youth Leadership Program is brought to you by:

Merchants Bank of Alabama Member FDIC
**www.merchantsbankal.com**

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**www.cullmanec.com**

# Nominate your favorite small business today

The Retail Committee of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to provide special recognition to our small business community by presenting one (1) monthly recognition award and one (1) yearly award. Monthly award winners will be considered the nominees for the yearly recognition award to be presented at the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting held each February. Visit CullmanChamber.org to show some love to your favorite business.

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Brandin' Iron Steakhouse

BRANDIN' IRON STEAKHOUSE

87 County Road 1242
Cullman, AL 35057
**(256) 739-1112**
**brandironsteakhouse.com**




## January Session Held: "Ag Day"

The Chamber's Youth Leadership Class visited Wallace State Community College and toured the Horticulture Department. After the tour the group returned to the North Alabama Agri-plex Heritage Center for lunch. Travis Kress with Soil and Conservation and also a local farmer provided information on careers in Agriculture, Ag Industry and Technology. Rachel Dawsey, coordinator at the Agri-plex provided information on programs offered at the facility. After lunch the group visited Clark Haynes, Sweet Potato Farm and also received a tour of Kim Haynes greenhouse facility. Thanks to all the sponsors and the Agri-plex for all the help assisting with this tour. Thanks Big "Doc" for joining us on this day.

The class will visit Montgomery on February 27 and have lunch with legislators and also tour the capitol. Breakfast will be sponsored by Serra Visser Nissan.

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To sponsor a student contact
**jmoore@cullmanchamber.org**




# Join the "CA$H MOB"

HOW IT WORKS: The Cash Mob is a way to show support of local area business. Each month participants meet in a designated area with a pre-determined amount of money in hand. During the mob the participants are asked to meet 3 new people. As part of our Cash Mob initiative, we require that each business pay it forward by selecting a local non-profit or charity to donate to. It can be a percentage of the cash mob sales or donation of time/resources. This should be a lot of fun and a great way to promote SHOP LOCAL! Let's keep our tax dollars in Cullman and keep our existing businesses in business!

# 2014 CoC Annual Meeting & Gala | Event Preview |

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's 71st Annual Meeting & Gala "Rollin' in the Dough" presented by Peoples Bank of Alabama is scheduled for Thursday, February 13th and will celebrate the past year's accomplishments under Melissa Cartee's leadership and kick-off the new year of programs and activities under 2014-15 Chamber Chair Jim Weidner's leadership.

The Annual Meeting & Gala event will be held at Loft 212 with doors opening at 5:30 p.m. and the program beginning at 6:00 p.m. The Post Party will be from 8 to 10:30 p.m. The event is "Old Vegas" dress optional. A limited number of tickets for $50 per individual remain as well as a few Silver tables.

"Guests can expect a traditional annual meeting. Melissa Cartee will be handing the gavel over to our incoming chair Jim Weidner. We will present our Emma Marie Eddleman Award and the Mayors Association will present the Lucille Galin Award. Of course, there will be a few new things added to the agenda. Our venue is at Loft 212. The backdrop of this old building will add to the ambience of these traditions," Cullman Chamber President & CEO Leah Bolin said.

With the brand new venue and exciting alternate style of dress with the theme of "Old Vegas," this night is sure to keep you entertained and informed.

"We have chosen a classic Vegas theme this year with our tag line, 'Rollin in the Dough.' It seemed appropriate since Sister Schubert is our guest speaker. Seventy years ago, our annual meeting was a combination of reports, music and dancing. We are going to honor that tradition with a post party. There will be a "big band," a dance floor, plenty of games and food and, of course, our Drawdown," Bolin added.

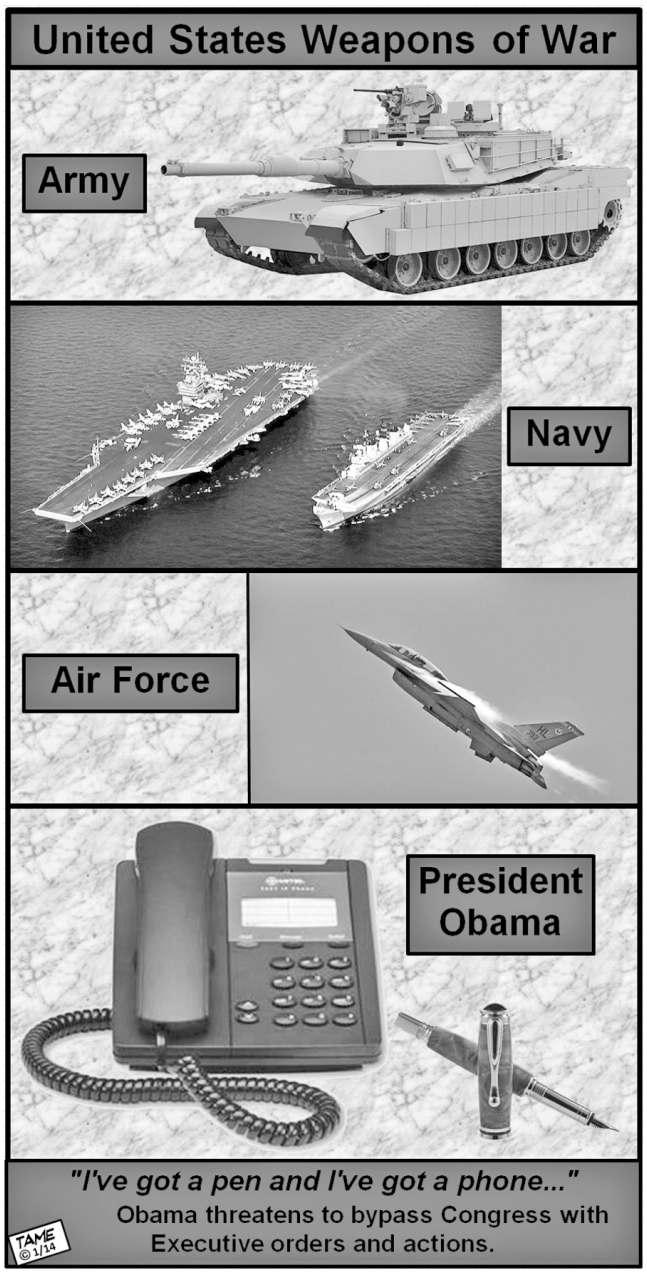
For some added fun, there will be a Drawdown for the chance to win $10,000 presented by Drinkard Development. There is a one in 300 chance of winning.

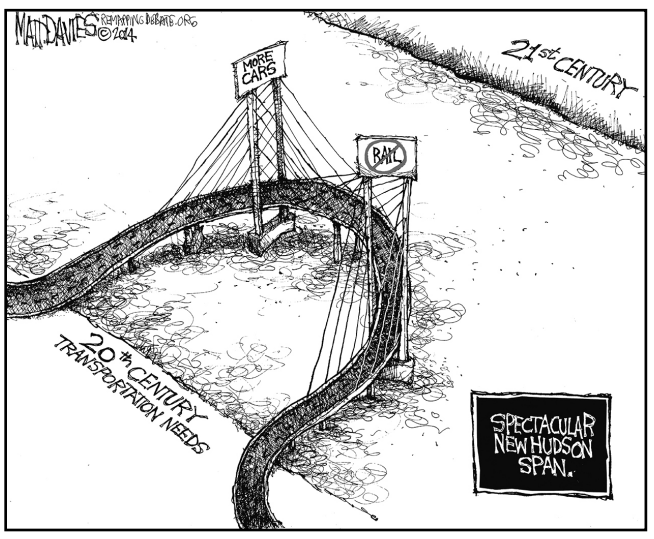
Director of Membership & Marketing Deonne Ludwig said, "The Gala will continue to grow each year, but this year is going to be hard to top."

It sounds like it will certainly be a fun, informative event. For more information, to make a reservation or to purchase a Drawdown ticket, please contact the Chamber at info@cullmanchamber.org or by telephone at (256) 734-0454.



# Editorial Cartoons




# – Editorial –

## Late New Year's Resolution: Push U.S. to Withdraw Military from Afghanistan

**By: John LaForge**

John LaForge is a Co-director of Nukewatch, a nuclear watchdog and environmental justice group in Wisconsin, edits its quarterly newsletter, and writes for PeaceVoice.

After so much blood and destruction in Afghanistan, a lot of people dream of Secretary of State John Kerry reviving his monumental 1971 question, "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?"

A July ABC News/ Washington Post poll found only 28 percent of North Americans think the war is worth fighting. "... a steady drumbeat of bad news" like these poll numbers forced Gen. Joseph Dunford, commander of occupation forces in Afghanistan, "to turn his attention to the home front" to try and combat the viral realization that the war is lost.

Last year, Gen. John Allen, Dunford's predecessor, put the chances of victory this way, "Let me make sure I'm clear on this: Nothing is sure."

Former Pentagon Chief Leon Penetta has said that corruption in Afghanistan's government and safe havens in Pakistan for the resistance fighters were major US problems.

"None of those are likely to be fixed with American firepower," he said. One thing "fire" power could fix is the million-dollar-per-month CIA cash deliveries to the offices of Afghan President Hamid Karzai — just fire the CIA delivery boys.

Because of the persistent strength of the Taliban, the slow-paced drawdown of US troop numbers is accompanied by fear that imperial gains made through US bombing and invasion will be lost. "[M] any areas in the south and east where troop pullouts are under way have had only tenuous security gains at best, despite years of hard-fought [US]-led advances," the New York Times said last summer.

Some of the General Staff's fears harken back to the bloodier war in Vietnam, where the US propped up similarly corrupt regimes. "Alliance commanders acknowledge that one of their greatest fears is an insurgent offensive on Kabul," the Times reported last May.

Even if such an offensive failed technically — "like" as the Times put it, "the Tet Offensive in the Vietnam War" — it would so humiliate Afghan, US and NATO forces that their governments would face bolder demands for immediate withdrawal.

**US Needs to Concede on Status of Forces**

"Status of forces" negotiations are ongoing over how and how many US troops are to stay in country. The Orwellian "pullout" may leave 12,000 soldiers forever. One sticking point is Afghanistan's demand that US troops not be granted immunity from prosecution for crimes committed there.

With US atrocities blaring from front pages, radios, and TVs, it's easy to understand Afghanistan's indignation. There is the video of US Marines urinating on Taliban corpses, the burning of a truckload of Korans taken from prisoners by US soldiers, hundreds of civilian deaths caused by US jets, thousands of terrifying nighttime house raids by US commandoes, and the recurrence of massacres, one of 16 civilians by Army Staff Sergeant Robert Bales.

Atrocities committed last winter moved the Afghans to ban US commandoes from an entire province. Reports had it that US Special Forces commanded Afghans troops in torturing and killing civilian villagers.

A statement by President Karzai hinted that the crimes "may have been committed by Special Operations forces and not just Afghans." Karzai called US forces "occupiers" with "little regard for the lives of ordinary Afghans." After Marine Staff Sgt. Frank Wuterich — the ringleader in the massacre of 24 civilians in Iraq — was sentenced to three months in jail and a reduction in rank (he had faced 152 years in prison), one can see why Afghan negotiators are holding fast against immunity.

In another echo of the US war in Vietnam, battlegrounds in Afghanistan once called "vital" have been abandoned to the Taliban. One example is the Pech Valley, formerly referred to gravely as "central to the campaign" against the Taliban and al-Qaida. More than 100 US soldiers died there and hundreds more were wounded, but it's now been deserted by the Pentagon. In 1971, John Kerry, who was then a combat veteran, told a panel of senators, "We watched while men charged up hills because a general said that hill has to be taken, and after losing one platoon or two platoons they marched away to leave the hill for reoccupation by the North Vietnamese."

The Pech Valley symbolizes the whole of the Afghan quagmire, where it is only vital that the bloodshed be ended. It's as Dr. King said of Southeast Asia: "The great initiative in this war is ours. The initiative to stop it must be ours."

## No(ah)-It All: Let me tell you a bit about the CS Crew

By: Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

Many of you may have obtained this quaint small-town publication for the first time today in your mailbox, and if so, kudos for the being the first group to receive this free monthly issue.

But instead of boring you with all the statistics of how CullmanSense came to be Cullman's fastest growing locally owned and operated news outlet – both in print and online – let me introduce you to the crew.

Leading the way, digitally speaking, is co-owner and CS editor, Dustin Isom. In 2010, Dustin came aboard bringing along a forward-thinking and digitally progressive thought process which has kept CS far ahead of any would-be competitor.

Next up is Natalie Bonner, who serves as CS newsroom editor. Natalie has been with CS for more than three years, and she always provides a boost of confidence to each of our writers, reporters, and correspondents. What can I say, she holds the group together as I continually look to expand.

In sports we have Josh McBrayer who serves as editor over the local section. Josh has been with CS since the first football season in 2011 and has traveled several thousand miles in the process ensuring great local coverage, whether the game is at home or away.

Also in sports is Johnny "The Flash" Thornton, who has also been with CS as a contributing sports writer since 2011. Having someone on the crew who possesses such a depth of knowledge of both current and past seasons, spanning close to 40 years, helps keep CS Sports ahead of the game. Plus, it's The Flashman!

Now to the reporters. This is my special nerd out section, simply because I cut my teeth in the industry as a reporter. So let's give these great writers, reporters, columnists, and photographers their credit for providing fun, thought provoking stories and imagery each day.

Kate Mullaney is the CS features reporter. Kate has been with CS for just under 3 months, but since coming aboard, she has blown us all out of the water.

Honestly, I can't say enough great things about this very talented young woman. Highfive, Mullaney!

Sage Overton recently joined the CS ranks as contributing reporter. Sage's main focus is politics – both locally and national – and legal issues which may affect residents All I can say about this gent is that he brings the heat with every story, so I'm looking forward to watching this reporter grow over the coming months.

Next up are our Residential Recipes columnists. Chelsea Sparks, Phillip Pryor, and Allison Robertson all bring a vast knowledge and love of cooking to the table each week. These great individuals will be receiving their own tab on CullmanSense.com, where new recipes will be uploaded daily.

Rounding out the list our three of CS newest talents. CS advice columnists Summer Crook, Grace Russell, and Allison Boyd have taken on the fun task of fielding your questions on health, religion, education, relationships, and parental issues – for both parents and teens – along with a host of other issues which may have you searching for advice. These three talented young women will supply you with the best advice possible, while making sure to keep everything tactful.

That ladies and gentlemen is the very talented and wonderfully gifted CS Crew.

Bringing up the rear, there has to be an elder statesman and that falls to myself; Noah Chandler, the founder, CEO, and publisher of CullmanSense. Cullman is the city of my birth and it the place I've called home for 32 years. What else can I say; I love this county, the residents, and the CS Crew!

However, at the end of each day, CullmanSense is *your* news outlet.

We don't survive unless you pay attention the stories, videos, and photos we display each Monday in our print publication, or daily on our free online site. But we also need your input to stay relevant, instead of becoming stale and falling to the wayside.

# Desirable Drinks and Dining

## Cullman's "Best Bartender" Talks About His Trade

By: Natalie Bonner
natalie@cullmansense.com

Julius Valentine not only has a grand name, but he also has a gift: cocktail craftsmen. Watching this bartender in action is akin to watching a magic show unfold before your eyes. One minute he's built a wine glass tower and lit it on fire and the next minute he is anticipating your palate's desire for another glass of wine as it suddenly appears before you.

This man is good. So good, in fact, he's unofficially been proclaimed as Cullman's Best Bartender. We caught up with the busy mixologist and begged for some knowhow on those carefully crafted cocktails.

Valentine enlightened us on his experience, passion, and knowledge of the industry.

"We've all had them – lackluster dining experiences. Restaurant mishaps ranging from mildly tolerable to inexcusable victims abound. Avoiding these atrocities sparked my passion for quality guest dining. For over a decade, my experience has ranged from serving guest tables to modest mixologist," he said.

"These seasoned skills have been honed through quality and diverse establishments and guests. And admittedly, my tenure at the All Steak Restaurant ranks the highest on my personal list of quality establishments of which to be part."

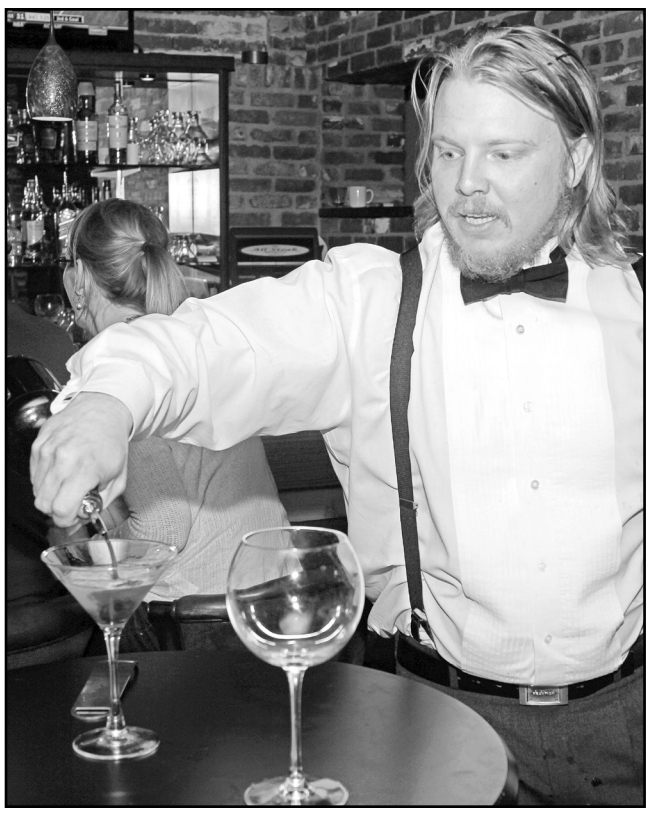
Valentine appreciates working with quality ownership that values the well-developed history and the community who supports it. With the undying support and patronage of Cullman and the surrounding areas (and the endless allure of the infamous Orange Roll,) it seems that All Steak's appeal is more popular than ever.

Of course, with the addition of the All Steak's new bar area, appropriately named the BackRoom, it seems foot traffic is even steadier.

"From regular business and professional guests with immaculately starched shirts to Saturday beer-and-burger patrons, the BackRoom boats a Cheers-esque atmosphere for all. Our devout customer basis is the pride of team operations."

As the master mixologist of the BackRoom, Valentine is the familiar face that rarely changes.

He knows your drink order upon entrance into his domain and promptly attends to your every need, as punctual as perfect in both theory and execution.



**» Julius Valentine is a skilled mixologist that knows how to make your cocktail just the way you like when you enter the BackRoom at the All Steak.**

"The majority of guests who experience the BackRoom typically have unique inquiries. Questions often relate to custom cocktail creations to cater to the individual personality of that guest. I'm often asked, 'How do you create this drink I (insert adjective here)' but those are trade secrets. The process is complex yet intriguing and interactive," he said.

Valentine said that two seemingly unimportant questions allow him to achieve the ultimate cocktail goal, which is customized liquid perfection.

Much like a magician, he did not reveal his secrets. He did share some of his favorite creations though.

"My personal favorite, the Mojito, has intense and unique flavor variations. This beautiful mint-and-lime filled cocktail is boldly sweet with a slight rum bite. An extremely well balanced cocktail, it has quickly become a local trend, as well as the popularity of the flavor variations."

Elaborating on other customized cocktail creations, Valentine said, "In addition to the multi-faceted Mojito,

"The Dude," an All Steak signature twist on a White Russian, is a powerfully unique concoction. Consisting of bold vanilla vodka, coffee liqueur, and balanced cream finished with a whipped topping, this combination creates a vivid blend of flavors resembling a cold coffee from a local barista."

Valentine enjoys his job and finds the craft and passion of his trade to be an artful experience.

While he is a master at mixing up quite a legendary drink, he also has a variety of other interests, similar in field but unique all the same. His passion for the industry is engaging and contagious.

"My experience has ignited an additional passion for wine appreciation. I anxiously look forward to earning a Wine Sommelier designation. Our valued and varied guests deserve accurate and extensive wine knowledge, which I strive to deliver. Undoubtedly, my passion for service will easily carry over into wine tastings, presentations, service, history, and more. In addition, my other interests lie in personal beer brewing," he said.

This mixologist wants you to know that if you are a first-time visitor to the area or a brand new guest, come visit him in the BackRoom at the All Steak where they look forward to creating unique guest dining experiences.

"From the desirable dining atmosphere to business meetings and even the casual after-hours cocktail enthusiasts, we look forward to creating unique experiences for every guest. Even though the occasional spill happens, we will continue to offer the most quality service we can with the best of intentions," Valentine said.

Check out the BackRoom at the All Steak the next time you are out and watch this gifted tradesman in action.

He has his routine down to a science and you are sure to stare in awe as he works his magic and delivers a delicious drink concoction to you in the timeliest of manners.

Drink up and not to worry, Valentine will have the next one ready and waiting for you.

# Comics




# *Kim of Queens* is a Hit

## Ugly Duckling Turned Pageant Pro Brings the Laughs

By: Natalie Bonner
natalie@cullmansense.com

A beautiful, robust blonde pops up on your screen and her southern twang instantly appeals to you. Kim Gravel saunters towards the viewer, saying, "I was quite the ugly duckling as a kid . . ." Suddenly a banner with a pretty young girl drops and Gravel hilariously states, "And that ain't me," walks forward some and another banner drops where she dramatically pauses and says, "That's me."

An awkward photo of an average looking girl peers out at us, compete with a horrid bowl shape haircut and that strange bang chop that hits in the middle of the forehead. As a viewer, I'm in shock. My initial thought: How is SHE going to teach anyone how to be a pageant queen?

Boy, did I eat my words. Just 30 minutes into the new reality show that premiered on Liftetime roughly a month ago and I am completely smitten with Kim Gravel. Her desperate, hysterical sister with questionable fashion advice, a good-natured mother with the best of intentions, and a set of young, pretty ladies complete with stage moms sets the tone of one crazy packed show as the tears and tiaras go flying.

Definitely not at the same level of vapidness that "Toddlers & Tiaras" is, "Kim of Queens" is a show with much more substance, heart, and hilarity. Gravel is a fighter. She wants only the best for her girls and she isn't one bit afraid to do whatever it takes. She has turned a preacher's daughter, a cowgirl, and a complete tomboy into certified princesses thus far and it looks like her reign of crowning isn't even close to halting.

If you are ready for a good chuckle and some down-home humor, you need to cut it on the latest pageant television show to shake up the crown industry. Kim Gravel is a hoot and a half and is as frank as the day is long. She is at once both relatable and glamorous. You'll root for this gifted underdog as she helps turn Georgia's youth into the next Miss America.

# Weaving Wonders

## Cullman Fiber Guild Introduces Members to the Art of Different Crafts

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

**CULLMAN** - The Cullman Fiber Guild held its monthly meeting last Saturday at Peindhart Farm. This month's topic was weaving and a group of about 15 people participated in the event. Weaving is a slow and tedious task, but this group of people patiently learned this ancient craft as they wove a red and white patterned band.

"It's much more difficult that I thought it would be," said member Charlie Gardner of Helena, Alabama. "But it's kinda cool. I like it."

The Cullman Fiber Guild was founded in 2009. Their first workshop was on spinning and now they meet monthly and hold programs on old crafts such as basket making, natural dying, felting, twining and, of course, weaving.

Lisa Williams has been a member for two years and enjoys the variety of workshops the Cullman Fiber Guild offers.

"You get to find out what you like to do in an inexpensive way," she said. "You get to try everything."

Gardner passionately stated that they are keeping these vintage crafts alive.

"We get to experience ancient crafts and lost crafts that people don't do anymore because everyone can buy it already made now," Williams said.

Crystal Kitchens taught this month's meeting. Each month they change leaders based on what topic they are covering. Everyone in the group seems to enjoy their time together.

"I wish we met more than once a month," said Williams. "We just have so much fun here."



**» The Cullman Fiber Guild teaches lost arts and crafts at its monthly meetings.**

# SEASONAL BAD ATTITUDE

## How to Make the Most of Winter Blues

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

In the midst of this dreadful weather, it can be hard to maintain a positive attitude. The winter season can negatively affect your mood, but don't worry – there are plenty of ways to fight back. Combat your bad attitude this season when winter starts singing you the blues.

Expose yourself to plenty of natural sunlight. Winter days are shorter and darker, and since it's cold, you are probably spending less time outside.

However, sunlight releases chemicals in your brain that affect your mood, so it's still important to catch some rays.

If it's not too cold, take a walk in Cullman's beautiful downtown area or enjoy the view at Heritage Park.

If it's just too cold to face the outdoors, try spending time near windows or briefly stepping outside every once in a while.

Either way, if you need an attitude adjustment this winter, I suggest you soak up the sun.

Another tip? Get some exercise. Exercise releases those "feel good" chemicals in your brain called endorphins. It's an excellent way to relieve seasonal sadness.

It also simply refocuses your mind to something besides your blues. Lucky for you, Cullman has plenty of options for gyms.

B Fit is a great option if you prefer a smaller area and a personal trainer. Health Fit, next to Hobby Lobby, is another option with a weight room and a cardio room.

The Cullman Wellness and Aquatics Center is a huge facility with a weight room, a basketball court, a track, and an indoor and outdoor pool (although I don't think you'll be using the outdoor pool anytime soon.)

Not feeling the weights just yet? Spend time with your friends. This is a no-brainer. Who can cheer you up better than your closest friends? (The answer is no one.) Go out to eat, review a beer, cook a meal, or simply chat by the fire. If you have friends out of town, take some time to go visit them.

On the other hand, spending time with negative people will definitely bring you down. So if your mood needs a pick-me-up this season, stay away from those with negative vibes and surround yourself with true friends.

Or use this hibernation time to do your hobbies. If you're stuck indoors, you're in the perfect situation to get to those hobbies you love.

This is where Pinterest comes in handy. Stop procrastinating, pick a craft, and get to it. This is also a great opportunity to pick up a new hobby.

Reading music is so good for your brain, and it will definitely get your mind off your winter blues.

Stimulate your brain this season and try something you've never done before! You might just surprise yourself with some hidden talents.

The quickest "feel better" tip is to get enough sleep. If you're not one who values sleep, you're missing out on a completely different way of life.

Being sleepy slows down your thought process, fogs your memory, and makes it more difficult to learn.

Imagine a world where you're sharp as a tack, you can remember where you put your cell phone, and you can spout off fun facts so quickly, it's annoying.

You could be that friend who knows too much about everything. Just try getting enough shuteye this week, if you usually don't.

It will be like someone with horrible eyesight getting glasses for the first time. And it will definitely adjust your seasonal bad attitude.

Read a book. If reality is just too cold for you, escape it. Who said there was anything wrong with running away from your problems? Grab a book and a blanket and escape to another (warmer, maybe?) reality.

One more tip – establish a routine. Although spontaneity keeps life exciting, routine keeps it sane; and believe it or not, humans crave routine.

You can fight winter madness this year by establishing a nighttime and morning routine. Try going to bed and waking up at the same time each night and morning.

Or try making your bed each morning. This will at least make it easier to stay out of bed when winter is begging you to get back in it.

You can even try reading before bed or sipping some chamomile tea. This organized way of starting and ending your days will keep you stress-free and smiling this winter.

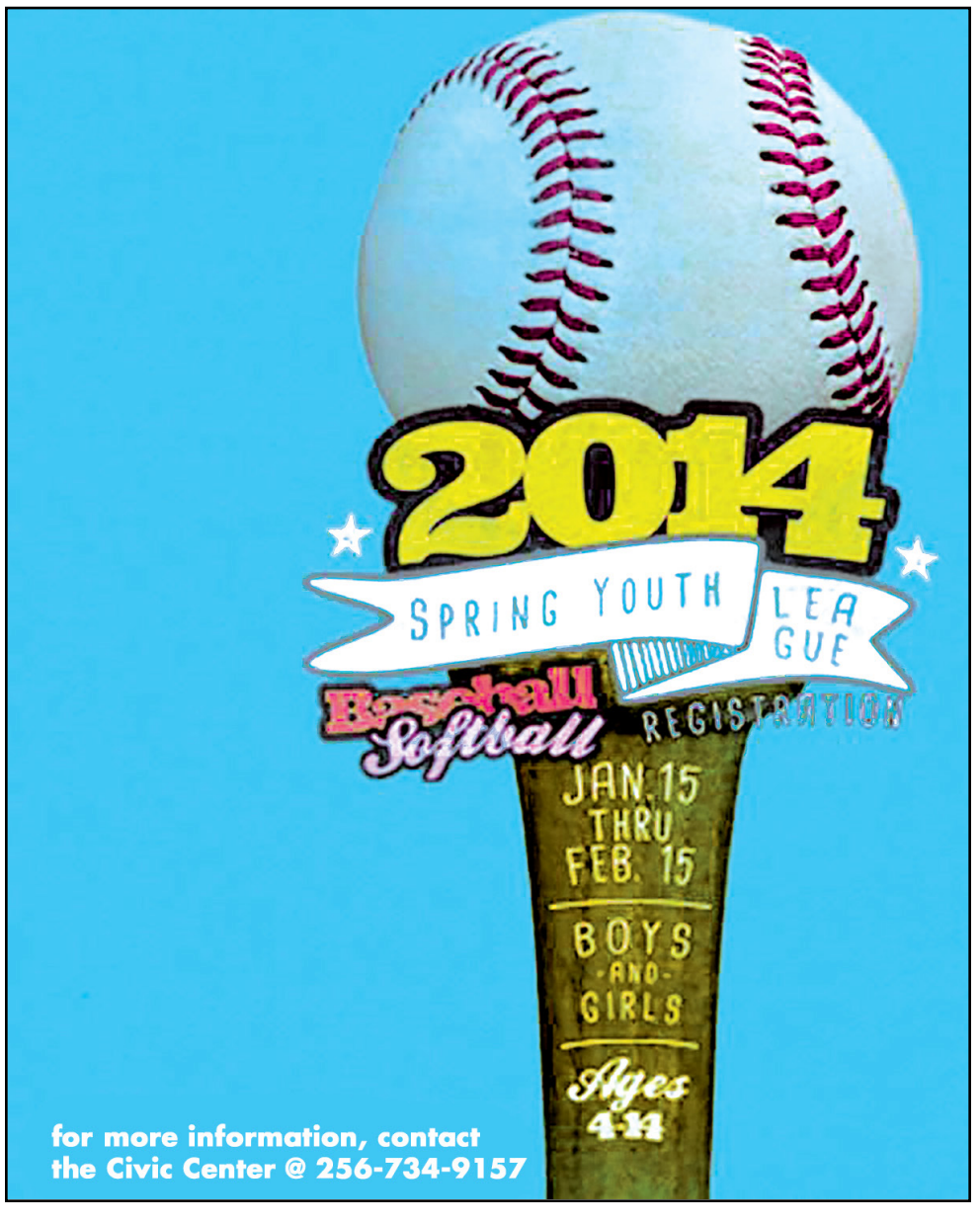
Finally, embrace the cold. Basically, there is nothing you can do about the weather. As we wait for our friend spring to arrive, try doing some things you can only do in the winter.

Go buy a new coat and proudly wear until it's too hot. Make endless amounts of tea, coffee, and hot chocolate and let it warm you up.

And, of course, warm your frozen hands by a fire this winter because there is nothing better than the feeling of warming up by a fire, and it will soon be too hot for this. Keep a smile on your face this season and fight the winter blues. Stay happy, my friends.

CULLMANSENSE
Community Matters

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### 2013 BUICK LACROSSE FWD - JUST $27,995

Summit White exterior, Cashmere interior, w/automatic transmission to accompany an Ecotec 2.4L DOHC 4-Cylinder DI, 4-Cylinder w/Eassist Technology. Mileage: 7,450. STK# 30118

### 2008 BUICK ENCLAVE AWD 4DR CX - LOW PRICE $20,807

White Opal exterior, Cashmere/Cocoa accents, w/automatic transmission to accompany a 3.6L Variable Valve Timing V6 engine. Mileage: 69,777. STK# 31001

### 2007 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 CLASSIC 4WD CREW CAB - ONLY $13,977

Summit White exterior, Tan interior, w/automatic transmission to accompany a Vortec 5.3L V8 SFI FlexFuel engine. Mileage: 222,369. STK# 46024B

### 2005 GMC YUKON 4DR 1500 SLE - LOW PRICE $8,577

Summit White exterior, Neutral/Shale interior, w/automatic transmission to accompany a Vortec 4800 V8 SFI engine. Mileage: 141,941. STK# 34088B

### 2012 GMC TERRAIN FWD 4DR SLE-2 - JUST $22,171

Merlot Jewel Metallic exterior, Ligth Titanium interior, w/automatic transmission to accompany a 2.4L DOHC 4-cylinder SIDI engine w/VVT. Mileage: 27,876. STK# 46341A

### 2010 GMC SIERRA 1500 CREW CAB - ONLY $32,286

Fire Red exterior, Very Dark Cashmere/light Cashmere interior, w/automatic transmission to accompany a Vortec 5.3L Variable Valve Timing V8 SFI FlexFuel with Active Fuel Management. Mileage: 21,860. STK# 44030A

### 2008 BUICK LUCERNE 4DR SDN V6 CXL - LOW PRICE $13,815

Gold Mist Metallic exterior, Cocoa/Shale interior, w/automatic transmission to accompany a 3.8L V6 SFI engine. Mileage: 72,560. STK# 46185A

*All rebates applied, must have '99 or newer qualifying trade in. Prices are plus tax, title, & fee. Colors may vary.

Bill Smith BUICK GMC