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CULLMAN'S MONDAY NEWSPAPER

CULLMANSENSE

COMMUNITY MATTERS

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Cullman / Walker football teams join for Community Project

» Group effort a symbol of sportsmanship and solidarity; statement to community that there is no animosity between schools p6



NOAH CHANDLER/CULLMANSENSE

» Players help finish landscaping at the CHS campus.

SPRING FEVER



By: Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

« Following a few weeks of messy winter weather, many residents across Cullman County took full advantage of the spring time weather over the weekend, taking to bike and hiking trails throughout the area, including Hurricane Creek Park. Matt Harris brought his two sons Owen, 7, and Aubrey, 9, to Hurricane Creek Park for a guys day out. Be sure to get a copy of our March 3 issue for some of the best areas to visit for affordable family experiences in the return of the CS original feature, Staycation Destinations.

Cullman County Farmer elected First Vice Chairman of State Pork Committee

By: Mary Johnson

MONTGOMERY – More than 750 Alabama farmers attended the Alabama Farmers Federation's annual Commodity Producers Conference, Feb. 4-6, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Montgomery.

Federation Governmental and Agricultural Programs Director Brian Hardin said the conference allows county commodity leaders to set priorities and learn about issues that could affect their farms.

"This conference is one of the Federation's most important meetings of the year because it brings together leaders in every commodity," p7



ALABAMA FARMERS FEDERATION

« Tim Donaldson of Cullman County, right, was elected first vice chairman of the Alabama Farmers Federation State Pork Committee, Feb. 4 during the Federation's Commodity Organization Conference in Montgomery. Donaldson will serve a one-year term as chairman. He is pictured with Federation Pork Division Director Guy Hall.

Bentley awards grant to add lighting to Stony Lonesome Park

By: Mike Presley

MONTGOMERY - Ross Harrison and his family have enjoyed riding the trails of Stony Lonesome OHV Park in Cullman County. But Harrison expressed a concern that park officials said was common among visitors: a lack of safety lighting in the parking lot after dark. In an e-mail to the park, he said the lighting would enable extended park hours in the evening and "... bring peace of mind for the ability to see what was around at night."

Gov. Robert Bentley has awarded a $42,584 grant to help the Cullman County Commission address that need. The project will install eight light poles in the park's parking area, where there is currently no lighting. Park officials say the lighting will increase safety for riders loading and unloading their vehicles at night and camping overnight, enable the park to stay open longer, and host more races and other riding events.

"Stony Lonesome is an example how an outdoor recreational trail can become a regional attraction that brings new events and visitors to an area," Bentley said.

"I am pleased to assist Cullman County officials with this upgrade to increase safety and attract even more events to the park."

Open year-round, the 1,500-acre park features trails for all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, mountain bikes, equestrians, and hikers.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grant from funds made available by the Federal Highway p7

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PRINTED LOCALLY @ PRINTING Alabama Web Press

Student Investment Foundation to Host 4th Annual Student Investment Dinner

» West Point High School graduate Brian NeSmith scheduled to speak on importance of schools

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - The Student Investment Foundation will host the 4th Annual Student Investment Dinner this Friday, Feb. 28, 2014. It will be held at the Brown Stone Centre at Stone Bridge Farms. Registration and a silent auction will begin at 5:30 p.m. and dinner will be served from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Brian NeSmith, a West Point High School graduate who has gone on to lead some of the biggest technology companies in the world will be a guest speaker at this event. Tickets are $25 and are available at the Cullman County Board of Education. All raised proceeds will benefit education in Cullman County schools.

This event was created by the Student Investment Foundation four years ago to raise funds to support education in Cullman County Schools focusing on the areas of math, science, technology, the arts, and character education.

The mission of the Student Investment Foundation is to mobilize community support and raise funds in order to bridge the gap created by insufficient funding to Cullman County public schools while providing academic improvement.

They wish to provide funds to support essential programs, materials, and equipment to help meet the educational expectation of our district and community.

All proceeds from this event will help the Student Investment Foundation reach its goals to improve education in Cullman County schools.

Brian NeSmith is the President and CEO of Arctic Wolf Networks, which he co-founded.

For 11 years, he was the CEO of Blue Coat Systems, the current market leader in contest and web security.

He later refocused the company on the security market and grew the business from $40 million per year to $500 million per year.

NeSmith was also the CEO of Ipsilon Networks, and he also co-founded Newbridge Networks' local area networking business, VIVID, and was the unit's first general manager.

This is an important fundraiser which is key to helping the schools and teachers of the Cullman County Schools by helping to fund projects for the students that would not be possible otherwise.

Terry Walker, co-chair of the Student Investment Foundation, emphasizes how important the community is to the county schools.

"The money raised helps teachers provide activities and resources that would not be possible without the help of our community," she said.

Education Liaison Barbara Guthrie agrees with Walker and also adds that if the community helps its schools, it will, in turn, benefit the community.

"Standing in support of our children and schools is important to our community. Education is huge economically and socially, as far as business opportunities for our young people," said Guthrie.

NeSmith will be speaking about how important our schools are in preparing students for advancing in the business world.

The Student Investment Foundation encourages you to attend this event and would like to remind you that when we invest in our youth, we invest in our future.

CRMC's Executive Chef, Chris Stone, Works with Cullman Area Career Center's Culinary Students

By: Heather Roberts
CRMC Contributor

CULLMAN – Chris Stone, Executive Chef of Cullman Regional Medical Center's Food and Nutrition Services Department recently volunteered to help teach culinary students at the Cullman Area Career Center on February 7 and February 18.

Chef Stone worked with Ms. Amie Hill's culinary students to help prepare them for an upcoming competition, the FCCLA STAR Events for Culinary Arts.

In this event, a team of three people will have one hour to prepare their dish. "This competition gives students the opportunity to win scholarships to culinary schools which they might not have access to otherwise," Stone said. Such schools include Virginia College Culinard and Johnson and Wales who both offer scholarships.

Stone instructed students on poaching salmon. Stone then used the salmon, oven-baked potato wedges, and ratatouille to teach the students the proper way to plate a dish, or make the food both appetizing and visually appealing.

"He was a great help," said Beth Anderson, CRMC board member and volunteer with the culinary students. "The more chefs they are exposed to the more knowledge they can absorb. They really enjoyed and appreciated the extra help. We are hoping for first place this year and with Chef Chris's help we have a wonderful chance." In the past two years, the Cullman Area Career Center team has finished third and second.

For more information about the CRMC Food and Nutrition Services, visit crmchospital.com.

About Executive Chef Stone

Stone and his wife relocated to Cullman from the Pelham/Hoover area in 2013 when Stone became the new Executive Chef for CRMC's Food and Nutrition Services Department. Stone's goal for CRMC is to create a savory menu that focuses on health and wellness. He also continues to educate himself, the CRMC staff and the community on new food items, culinary arts and nutrition.



CRMC

» Chef Stone instructs a culinary student in preparation for an upcoming competition.

CRMC Employees "Go Red" on National Wear Red Day

By: Heather Roberts
CRMC Contributor

CULLMAN - February is National Heart Month, and Cullman Regional Medical Center employees recently joined together to raise awareness and support the fight against heart disease by wearing red on National Wear Red Day, February 7, 2014. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), heart disease is the number one killer of women, causing 1 in 3 deaths each year. Heart disease causes more deaths than all forms of cancer combined. It is often a "silent killer" with no symptoms.

The American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute began National Wear Red Day in 2003 and encourage everyone to wear red on the first Friday of every February. This is meant to increase awareness and promote healthy lifestyle changes, specifically for women. They have also been raising awareness of heart disease through their Go Red for Women program since 2004. You can "Go Red" by eating healthy, exercising, knowing the signs of a heart attack, knowing your heart score, wearing red, and spreading the word about heart disease. For more, visit goredforwomen.org and crmchospital.com/heart.

Pets of the Week

Michiko

My name is Michiko and I am a stray at the shelter. I am about 2.5 years old and currently weigh 59 lbs. I am an Australian Shepherd and as you can see, I am quite beautiful. I am hoping that my family will come claim me but if they don't, I will be up for adoption on 02/25/14 at 9:30 a.m.



Catalina

My name is Catalina and I am available for adoption at this time. I am about 2 years old and currently weigh 28 lbs. I am an Australian Shepherd and I have a very sweet disposition. I am very pretty and would make a wonderful pet for your family. Please help me find my new forever home.



ADOPT THESE PETS TODAY

Both of these dogs have an adoption fee of $90 that will include their general exam at the Vet, vaccines, wormer, rabies shot, microchip, spay/neuter, and free 45 days of pet health insurance. Pet Depot will give you a bag of food (you pay taxes) as their way of supporting adoption.

If you know the owner of either dog or if you are interested in adopting one of the dogs, please call 256-734-5448 or come by the Animal Shelter.

Good Hope awarded $200k grant to aid development

By: Larry Childers

MONTGOMERY – A $200,000 grant awarded by Gov. Robert Bentley will help pave the way for 100 new jobs in Cullman County and provide a boost in commerce for the city of Good Hope.

The Community Development Block Grant will help Good Hope improve infrastructure necessary to build a fueling station plaza that will include a convenience store and fast-food restaurant. The improvements at Interstate 65 and Alabama Highway 69 also will make the interchange more attractive to future businesses.

WilcoHess will hire 65 employees to operate the plaza that will include fueling pumps and a convenience store. Wendy's will employ another 35 workers to run its fast-food restaurant that will be part of the complex.

The grant will fund construction of an access road and upgrade traffic signals to ensure the safe flow of vehicles in the area.

Bentley notified Mayor Corey Harbison that the grant had been approved. The city has pledged $50,000 for the project.

This is the second CDBG award that Bentley has announced for the city within the past year.

In August 2013, Bentley awarded a $150,000 CDBG to provide infrastructure necessary for James R. Smith Trucking Inc. to relocate in the city and hire additional workers.

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

ADECA administers a wide range of programs that support law enforcement, economic development, infrastructure upgrades, recreation, energy, water resources, job training, and career development.

Bentley awards grant to enhance outdoor activities at state parks

By: Mike Presley

MONTGOMERY – Gov. Robert Bentley has awarded a $14,400 grant to enhance outdoor activities at seven state parks.

The grant to Alabama State Parks, part of the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, will help continue an environmental and trail safety education program and provide equipment for participants to use.

"Alabama is blessed with abundant natural beauty and opportunities for recreation," said Bentley.

"This educational program will enrich Alabamians' enjoyment of our wonderful state parks."

The Environmental Education 101 program will develop curriculum and teach day workshops that educate participants about the many recreational opportunities available at the state parks along with details on environmental and trail safety.

The grant will help purchase items for kits that will include GPS units for geocaching, cameras for nature study, literature, and field guides.

Kits will be available for participants to use after workshops at Cheaha, DeSoto, Gulf State, Guntersville, Joe Wheeler, Lakepoint, and Oak Mountain state parks.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grant from funds made available by the Recreational Trails Program of the Federal Highway Administration.

ADECA administers a wide range of programs that support law enforcement, workforce development, energy conservation, economic development, water resource management, and recreation.

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Governor awards $11 million to assist low-income residents

By: Russell Sellers

MONTGOMERY - Gov. Robert Bentley has awarded grants totaling $11 million for programs that help low-income residents take steps to secure gainful employment and improve their quality of life.

The Community Service Block Grants will enable 21 community action agencies throughout the state to assist low-income residents achieve self-sufficiency and address barriers to success through a variety of programs and services.

The specific needs of the communities served determine which programs are available, which can include job search assistance and short-term employment skills classes, parenting classes, transitional housing, summer youth programs, financial literacy programs, and emergency food and shelter.

Residents seeking assistance should contact their local community action agency. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grants from funds made available by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Data from the 2010 Census and the poverty level of the counties served are factors used to determine the amount awarded to each agency.

Among the grants Bentley awarded is:

• Community Action Partnership of North Alabama Inc. (Cullman, Lawrence, Morgan) - $492,262. Phone: 256-355-7843

Cox named Area Organization Director for Alabama Farmers Federation

By: Mary Johnson

MONTGOMERY – Bradley Cox has joined the Alabama Farmers Federation's Organizational Department as the Area 2 Organization director. His territory covers Cullman, Fayette, Franklin, Lamar, Marion, Walker, and Winston counties.

Cox, who graduated from Auburn University in 2012, said he looks forward to getting out in the field to work with individual farmers in his area.

"The most important function the Federation serves is being an advocate for farmers," he said. "My family has a long history as members of the organization, and I'm proud to be part of a group that defends the rights of farmers."

Federation Organization Department Director Mike Tidwell said Cox has an enthusiasm that will serve him well in his new position.

"With his background, Brad understands the day-to-day tasks of farming and, as a former ag teacher, knows how to make farming appeal to the younger generation," Tidwell said.



ALA. FARMERS FEDERATION

» Arab native Bradley Cox

"I know Brad will work hard to represent our farmers and members in a very positive manner." An Arab, Ala., native, Cox now lives in Fayette.

The Alabama Farmers Federation is the state's largest farm organization with more than 365,000 members. For more information, visit AlfaFarmers.org.

Bentley awards funding for Scenic River Trail signage

By: Jim Plott

MONTGOMERY - Boaters and paddlers on the Alabama Scenic River Trail, a network of navigable rivers, streams and lakes, will be getting some directions thanks to an $80,000 grant awarded by Gov. Robert Bentley.

The grant will pay for signs to be placed at various locations along the 2,500-mile trail to provide directions and other pertinent information for those navigating the waterways.

"Throughout our history, Alabama's waterways have attracted interest, first as a means of exploration and commerce and now as a route for recreation and tourism," Bentley said. "The Alabama Scenic River Trail will allow people to travel our rivers and creeks, seeing the state much as our ancestors did."

The Scenic River Trail association anticipates posting at least 200 signs along the state waterways, identifying current location, lay of the waterway and take-out points, as well as locations for gas, food, and lodgings. The signs also will provide directions to points of interest and provide warnings about fast water and navigation obstacles.

According to the Scenic River Trail association, the signs will encourage more recreational use of the state's waterways and increase economic opportunities for outfitters and area merchants. The association has already undertaken a pilot program providing signs along Terrapin Creek located in the northeastern part of the state.

Bentley notified Jim Felder, executive director of the association, that the grant had been approved.

The grant was awarded from funds made available to state under the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs administers the program in Alabama.

ADECA manages a wide range of grants and programs that support law enforcement, economic development, workforce development, recreation, energy conservation, and water resource management.

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NASP Warm-up Archery Tournament Draws in Large Crowd

Waid Harbison
CP&R Contributor

CULLMAN – Over 200 archers came to put their skill to the test in the first ever NASP Warm-up Archery Tournament on Saturday, February 8 at the Ingle Park Gym.

The tournament, hosted by Cullman City Parks & Recreation Department, was the first of its kind hosted in the state that brought several schools from all over the state to Cullman for the tournament.

"This tournament is the first of its kind because it is the first archery tournament hosted by a parks and recreation to invite archery teams from schools across the state from elementary to high schools," parks director John Hunt said.

The tournament featured elementary and high schools from Cullman, Walker County, and as far away as Tuscaloosa.

The tournament was held one week prior to the NASP State Archery tournament, which Hunt thinks helped to make the event such a success.

"Most of these schools came out to have the opportunity to shoot just a week before their state tournament is held, so many of them wanted the opportunity to get some experience in," he said.

The parks and recreation department also offered incentives to the teams that participated by donating $250 to the winning school in each age division including elementary, middle, and high school divisions.

Topping the list of schools were local teams including East Elementary placing first in the elementary division, Welti Elementary placing third in the elementary division, and Good Hope High School winning the high school division.

Carlie Starnes of East Elementary School was the top female shooter in the elementary division helping her team to a first place victory overall.

The Cullman City Parks & Recreation department offers classes, facilities, and events for archers year round.

Archery classes are held at the Cullman Civic Center's indoor archery range through the year, as well as at the state of the art Community Archery Park located across from the Cullman Golf Course.

CP&R hosts several archery tournaments annually, including the NASP Warm-up, the ASA State Competition, and the final national tournament for professional and amateur archers alike in August.



CP&R

» A local shooter pulls her arrows after a successful round of shooting during a first of its kind tournament at the Ingle Park Gym.

For more information on CP&R's archery program, contact the Cullman Civic Center at 256-734-9157.

Lady Broncos on way back to BJCC for Final Four; look to capture first state title

By: Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

HOLLY POND – The Holly Pond Lady Broncos find themselves in familiar territory this week as they prepare for a return to the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center for the Class 3A Girls Final Four.

"We played Lauderdale County last year and we have played Madison Academy twice this year," said Holly Pond senior leader Taylor Rowell after the Lady Broncos' 16 point victory over Plainview. "We will be ready for both teams."

Before Holly Pond can think about Lauderdale County (Lauderdale Co. defeated Madison Academy in overtime) or the finals, they will have to get past Trinity Presbyterian.

Holly Pond will be led by a trio of seniors as they head into the Final Four: Meg Gambrill, who is coming off a career high 27 point performance in the Northwest Regional championship; Natasha Holcombe, who also set a career high with 16 rebounds; and Rowell who has the pass first shoot last mentality, setting up her teammates to score. An added advantage to the senior standouts is depth and Holly Pond is deep.

The entire lineup, from top to bottom, can handle the ball and shoot the lights out from downtown.

But offense is not the only thing the ladies from Holly Pond do well.

The Lady Broncos pride themselves in playing solid defense each and every time down the floor.

Active hands on the perimeter and lockdown denial in the paint make for a formidable combination that any team would have trouble scoring on.

The final piece of the puzzle is head coach Scott Adams. Adams believes in his system but more importantly, he believes in the group of girls running his system. Coach Adams even told media after the championship win on Saturday that sometimes he will let his team tell him what they think is working on the floor.

"ACT scores through the roof, grade point average through the roof. These girls are in the top ten of their class in a very high academic class. So I go in the locker room many times, they will tell you, I say what do you want to do. And they will tell me what is working."

With the senior leadership on the floor, the immense talent up and down the line, and the coaching prowess of Adams, there is no question why Holly Pond is in the Final Four in Birmingham and is looking to bring the first ever state title to the Holly Pond campus.

Lady Cats on the prowl

» Young softball team sets goal for season

By: Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The Cullman Lady Bearcats garnered more than a passing glance last year at regionals, but this year they look to go even further.

"Our goal is to definitely return to regionals and hopefully make an appearance in state," Cullman softball coach Stephanie Barlow told CullmanSense during an interview.

To do this, Barlow is going to need strong play and leadership out of her three returning seniors Hayden Short, Janie Flynn, and Katelynn Ethredge.

Not relying on any one hitter to serve as the catalyst of the offense, Barlow looks at every spot in her order to contribute in one way or another.

The pitching staff will also be leaned on heavily, especially 9th grader Olivia Schwaiger. "Olivia came on strong at the end of last year," said Barlow.

"She will be leading our pitching staff along with Elli Dixon, our catcher who is very solid and smart behind the plate."

When asked about expectations on the season, Barlow said, "I expect us to pick up where we left off last year when we turned some heads at regionals. We are still very young but I expect us to continue to get more consistent at the plate and build a stronger pitching staff."

Prep Baseball Weekly Recap

Monday, February 17th
Ashville 9 vs. Holly Pond 8
Good Hope 0 vs. Winston County 7
Cullman 5 vs. Hazel Green 8

Tuesday, February 18th
Good Hope 4 vs. Addison 13
Hanceville 0 vs. Addison 8
Locust Fork 8 vs. Holly Pond 5

Wednesday, February 19th
Good Hope 12 vs. Curry 2
Huntsville 2 vs. Cullman 1

Thursday, February 20th
Southeastern 5 vs. Holly Pond 3
Fairview 0 vs. Decatur Heritage 13

Friday, February 21st
Cold Springs 4 vs. St Bernard 2
Good Hope 2 vs. Oakman 0
Grissom 2 vs. Cullman 13

Saturday, February 22nd
Holly Pond 4 vs. Fultondale 2
East Lawrence 22 vs. Fairview 7

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Randy Howell's Charmed Last Day Leads To Bassmaster Classic Victory

By: Dave Precht
B.A.S.S. Contributor

BIRMINGHAM - Every angler dreams of catching bass after giant bass like Randy Howell did on Sunday.

Howell began hauling in Lake Guntersville lunkers minutes into the final round of the GEICO Bassmaster Classic presented by Diet Mountain Dew and GoPro. He lost track of how many culls he was able to make, but at one point he was trading 4- and 5-pounders for even larger bass.

When Howell brought his bag to the scales, his five bass weighed 29 pounds, 2 ounces, with the largest going 7-3. The banner day beefed up his total to 67 pounds, 8 ounces.

"I don't even know if I'm going to win, but it doesn't matter," Howell said before all the 25 finalists came to the scales. "It was the best day I've ever had in 21 years of professional bass fishing, a day of a lifetime."

But his day did get better: He became the world champion, the 2014 Bassmaster Classic champ.

"I've had this dream so many times, and it's happening now. I can't believe I won the Bassmaster Classic. I don't win tournaments very often," said Howell as he was announced the winner.

Howell is a two-time Bassmaster event winner, including a 2013 Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Northern Open presented by Allstate event that earned him his 2014 Classic qualification.

Sunday's victory — Howell's first after 11 other tries as a Classic competitor — was worth $300,000 and the most coveted trophy in the sport. From Springville, Ala., Howell became only the second angler to win the Classic in his home state.

Howell edged out B.A.S.S. Nation qualifier Paul Mueller of Naugatuck, Conn., by 1 pound. Mueller, who on Day 2 set a new one-day Classic weight record at 32-3, totaled 66-8 for second place.

Third place was claimed by second-day leader Edwin Evers of Talala, Okla., with 65-11. Fourth was Ott DeFoe of Knoxville, Tenn., with 63-6, including the day's largest bass, an 8-4. First-day leader Randall Tharp of Port St. Joe, Fla., finished in fifth place at 62-12.

Howell repeatedly used the words "perfect" and "effortless" to describe his day on Lake Guntersville.

"I caught my first one on my second or third cast," he said. "I caught one almost every cast or two and had a limit in the first 10 or 15 minutes. It was quick. It would have been quicker if I hadn't had to stop and retie every time because of the rocks."

The rocks were the riprap up against a causeway bridge on Spring Creek. That early flurry included releasing eight 4-pounders.

Howell spent most of his time on the riprap. He moved only once, going farther back into the creek to a grassy area. The move yielded a 6-pounder and allowed him to cull a 4-pounder.

He then motored back to the riprap. His largest was a 7-3. It was his fourth bass of the day and the one that told him he'd made the right decision to go to Spring Creek.

His Classic lure arsenal included a Livingston Lures model being developed within the Pro Series. Not yet available to the public, it's a medium diver in a crawfish color. He also used a Rapala DT6 crankbait in the "demon" crawfish color and a Yamamoto bladed jig.

"I went out this morning believing I could win," the champ said. "That's the weirdest thing. Typically, I would never be in 11th place and 9 pounds back and think I had a chance to win. But for some reason I had the feeling I could win on Spring Creek — that something big would happen there."

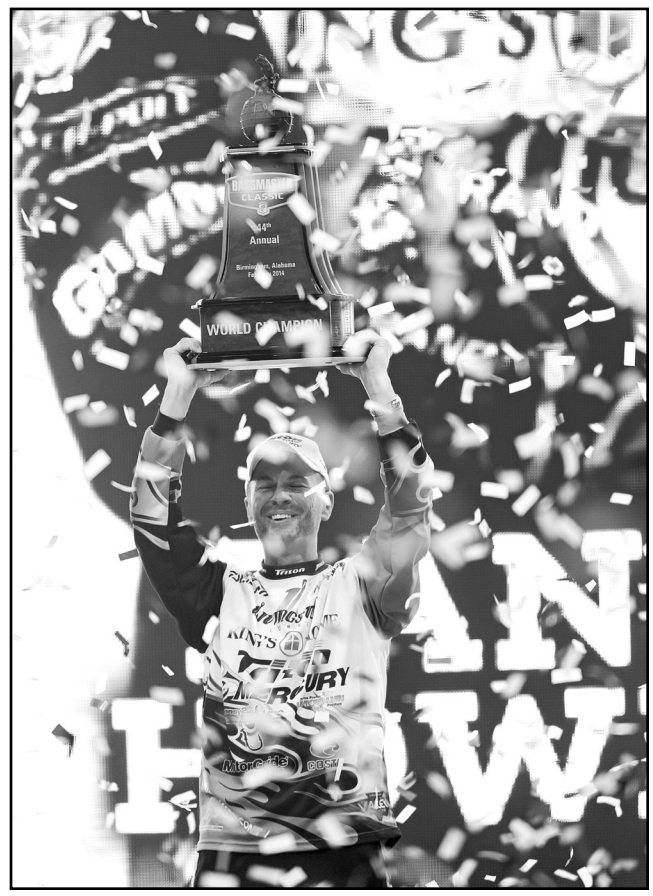
Fred Roumbanis' 9-3 largemouth from Day 1 won the event's Carhartt Big Bass Award of $1,000 plus $1,500 for wearing Carhartt clothing.

Howell earned a $7,500 Toyota Bonus Bucks award.

Tharp received the Day 1 GEICO Everyday Leader Award of $1,000 plus $1,500 for having a GEICO decal on his boat's windshield. Evers won the same bonus on Day 2.

Fans can catch 12 hours of Classic coverage on ESPN2 on The Bassmasters.

The first hour will air Saturday, March 1, at 10 a.m. ET. The show centered on Sunday's finale will air in prime time — 8 to 10 p.m. ET — on Sunday, March 2.



GARY TRAMONTINA

» Randy Howell takes home $300,000 as Bassmaster Classic winner.

2014 GEICO Bassmaster Classic Top 6

Angler • Hometown • No./lbs-oz • Points • Total $$$

1. Randy Howell	2. Paul Mueller	3. Edwin Evers	4. Ott DeFoe	5. Randall Tharp	6. Jordan Lee
Springville, AL	Naugatuck, CT	Talala, OK	Knoxville, TN	Port Saint Joe, FL	Vinemont, AL
15 67-08 0 $300,000.00	13 66-08 0 $45,000.00	15 65-11 0 $42,500.00	15 63-06 0 $30,000.00	15 62-12 0 $27,500.00	14 62-01 0 $22,000.00

Letting the Dawgs out - Hanceville shares aspirations for season

By: Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE - "We want to compete every day." Those five simple words spoken by Hanceville High School baseball coach Michale Chandler speak volumes about the Bulldogs and what they want to accomplish this season.

"We feel like we have outworked most of the teams we play and we just have to show up on game day and get it done," Chandler said.

Leading the Dawgs this season will be returning starter Kieth Twitty, who will suit up for his last season as a Hanceville Bulldog.

"Kieth is our captain on and off the field," Chandler said of his senior star.

"Nobody works harder than that guy. He is what we want our program to be about."

Helping Twitty at the plate and on the field will be sophomore Isaac Weissand, the Hanceville leadoff hitter, who has been a starter for the Bulldogs since eighth grade.

Austin Coker will also provide gap to gap power for the Dawgs while patrolling the shortstop position with great range and an above average arm.

Providing the pop in the Bulldogs lineup will be Isaac Harden and Hayden Loggins.

A luxury for Chandler and the Dawgs is pitching. It seems that just about everyone on the roster can step up for Hanceville in a pinch.

The ace of the staff is Christian James and Chandler expects him to lead the team in wins this season.

Loggins, Coker, and Harden will also pitch for the Bulldogs this season as well as Dontae Reese and freshman Branen Hurst, the latter of which is expected to chew up some innings for Hanceville.

"We want to win around 20 games this year," Chandler said when asked about goals for his team this season, "And win our area to host a first round series. We would also like to make a run at the county title. It has been about nine years since it has been Hanceville's title."

CULLMANSENSE
Community Matters

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Local Contributors Chelsea Sparks, Phillip Pryor, Allison Robertson, Summer Crook, Grace Russell, Allison Boyd, Sage Overton

N2COLLEGE

30-Day Sr. Scholarship Boot Camp

Email: info@N2College.com
Website: www.N2College.com
Phone: 256-736-5969

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
"$cholar$hip Jump$tart"

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

'Tis the Season for Finding the Perfect Prom Dress

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - It is officially prom season and high schoolers everywhere are dying to find the perfect dress (and date). Thankfully, Cullman has plenty of options to fit your prom needs as well as your prom budget.

High-low dresses, short dresses, one sleeve, and even long sleeve dresses are quite popular this year in formal wear. Another popular trend is vintage style dresses. This beautiful trend may be thanks to the movie *The Great Gatsby*. Some schools are even having *Great Gatsby* themed proms this year and will surely be host to many sequins, headpieces, and flapper style dresses.

Carol Holmes, owner of The Classy Lady, stated that full sequins on a dress is a style she's seen come around full circle.

"When I opened up 28 years ago, that was the trend," she said, "and now we're watching it come back into style."

Cullman has plenty of formal wear store options, so there is no need to go out of town to find that perfect prom dress. Spend your money in Cullman. The Classy Lady has over $2 million worth of inventory. There is no way you won't find at least one perfect dress in this store.

Remember while searching for that one perfect dress, you must consider your budget.

"We have a large selection of dresses that we've marked down," said Holmes. "We probably have 300 dresses marked down right now."

First Avenue Bridals & Formals also offers a unique, affordable selection of dresses available.

"We don't have what everyone else has on the racks," store owner Sonya White said. "We always keep our sale dresses out on the rack with the regular dresses. Do not hesitate to ask if there are sales wherever you are. Everyone has a budget."

She also mentioned that because it takes longer for formal wear to go out of style, dresses from one season to the next aren't very different and older dresses are usually less expensive than brand new ones.

"You can wear a style from a couple of seasons ago and no one would ever be able to tell the difference," she said.

Formal dresses often require alterations after you buy them. If you buy your dress at First Avenue Bridals & Formals, you will receive free alterations so your dress will be even more perfect for you.

So you now know what Cullman has to offer and that you can find a dress here even when you're on a budget. Yet, dress shopping can be overwhelming. What should you look for in a dress? And what type of dress is best for you?

Carol at The Classy Lady insists that there is not a right or wrong way to go dress shopping. Since everything they carry is in season, you cannot find an outdated dress at her store. "I think you just need to look for your own taste and what you feel most comfortable in," she stated.

Sonya from First Avenue Bridals and Formals agreed and adds that finding a dress to suit your body type is one of the most important things you can do.

"For example," she said, "if you have heavy hips, you want to go with an A-line dress or a dress with a flare. Find a dress that gives you the prettiest silhouette."

Although formal dresses aren't made for comfort, you should remember that you will be in this dress for probably six to eight hours so try to find something you can move easily in. "Find something fairly comfortable," White said. "Think about getting in and out of a car. Find something figure flattering but that is still easy to maneuver in as well."

Keep all these things in mind as you shop for your perfect dress but remember the most important thing in dress shopping is finding something that makes you feel beautiful.

Prom is for guys too

Prom season is not all about girls. Young men everywhere will be searching for a tuxedo so they can look just as sharp as their beautiful dates.

Closer fitting sleeves and a slimmer silhouette in the body of the coat, as well as retro looks such as suspenders and bow ties are some trends in men's formal wear this year.

At Mr. Hicks Mens Wear in Cullman, owner Phillip Hicks can help you find exactly what you're looking for. "We carry a large selection of coats, vests, and pre-tied bow ties and ties from Mr. Burch Formal Wear," said Hicks. "But if you are brave enough to tie your own we have bow ties for you too."

Hicks stated that proms are being held earlier in the spring and that planning and ordering time is often cut short.

"We can help with this because we do not require a deposit to place an order," he said. "Guys can come on in to get measured and select what they want to look like. If they need time to match the color of her dress, that's not a problem either, final details can be filled in later."

Don't forget the flowers

Finally, flowers are the finishing touch for both young ladies and men for prom. Although this can sometimes be an overlooked detail, your corsages and boutineers can be the perfect finishing touch to your formal wear. Tiny roses, orchids, tropical flowers, and even berries, pods, and other unique foliage are trendy this year. Floral designer Michael Richard at Michael's Flowers and Design is sure he can find you exactly what you want.

"All of our creations really stand out from the rest because of our attention to detail and the use of the freshest flowers available," he said. "Depending on your needs, we can make something unique, creative, natural, or with 'bling.' If you want to look your best, we guarantee you will love what we do!"

From dresses and budgets to tuxedos and flowers, prom can be overwhelming if not properly planned. Thankfully, Cullman has several options to fulfill your prom needs this year. As the limos start rolling in this spring, Cullman will surely be host to several sharp dressed young ladies and men.

Project (from Front)

By: Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Players and coaching staff from both Cullman and Walker high school joined together at Oliver Woodard Stadium in a community project to help finish landscaping at the CHS campus, while stamping out any thoughts the two schools cannot coexist.

"Because of the previous history of issues between CHS and WHS, we want to communicate to the community that time-to-time there may be some things to happen, but overall we do have a great working relationship with Walker and the other schools we compete with," Dr. Elton Bouldin, CHS principal, said. "Just as a sign of sportsmanship and solidarity we are working on a community project today to show the community there is no animosity toward either school."

The most recent and highly publicized issue arose with a physical altercation between then-Walker head coach John Holladay and Cullman assistant coach Matt Hopper following the opening season game on August 30, 2013. The result was a marred reputation for both schools and communities, as the spirited rivalry turned ugly.

WHS was placed on restrictive probation for the remainder of the 2013 football season and CHS was placed on non-restrictive probation for one year, with each school fined $1,500 for flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct during the altercation between both schools following their varsity football game.

Walker head coach John Holladay resigned and Cullman assistant coach Matt Hopper was suspended for the remainder of the 2013 football season for his involvement in the incident.

"Unfortunately, occasionally, the heat of competition or poor judgment on the part of a few individuals, it gets paint brushed as an institutional issue. The issues we have, have never been between the institutions, and it's never been between a large group of players or fans, it has just been individuals," said Bouldin.

The community project has players from both teams demonstrate to their community that there is no bitterness between the two counties, just a spirited rivalry when it comes to the gridiron.

Heath Brunner, Walker head coach, said he hopes both communities will learn from the athletes working together on the community project that a rivalry is great as long as you can work together after the game.

"The rivalry or bitterness hasn't been between our kids, it has been between our community and community members and they've built that rivalry up," Brunner said. "For them (players) to come out today, to work together, sends a message to our communities and to our community leaders that we are willing to work together to restore the healthy relationship between our communities and our kids."

WHS senior defensive end Jaiquan Crooks has suited up against Cullman many times and has looked forward to each matchup. He said the community project at CHS wasn't for the players, rather for everyone else as a sign that rivalry and hate has gone too far.

"It's not for us, it's for our communities. It's for the kids that are looking up to us. The ones that are just like we were, just waiting to take the field against a Bearcat," Crooks said passionately. "This season, our basketball team couldn't play Cullman and that's a big game. That hurts a lot of people. We've got to fix that, because we are all too good not to be playing each other."

Bearcat senior Mason Jones agreed with Crooks.

"On the football field there is a rivalry, well with any sport with Walker it is, but today is to show everyone that outside of the game we can work together," Jones said. "We are here to show that off the field we work as unit, as a team, but when we are on the field it's a lot different because it's a game."

The past two years the teams have faced each other in the season opener.

"Those games man, those are the games you practice for all year," Jones said.

"It's nothing more than the Alabama/Auburn game. We want to beat them, they want to beat us. Our fans want us to beat them and their fans want them to beat us. It's just a good game."



Empty Bowls Hosts 11th Annual Dinner

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

» Local Food Bank Benefits from Charitable Event

CULLMAN - The 11th Annual Empty Bowls dinner was held last Monday night at First United Methodist Church. This delicious dinner consisted of Bobby Nolen and Clint Creel's famous gourmet chili and a grilled cheese sandwich on the side.

The event was held from 4 - 6:30 p.m. and featured entertainment by Enell Baker, The Potentials, and The Revelations.

Also featuerd was a silent auction with a variety of exciting items to bid on. The proceeds from the dinner benefitted Cullman Caring for Kids.

The best part of this event though was the handmade piece of pottery you received when you received your meal.

These handcrafted bowls are one-of-a-kind and a unique way to raise money, but Cullman isn't the only place to host Empty Bowls.

Empty Bowls was started in 1990 by an art teacher in Michigan named John Hartom. He and his students planned a dinner to raise money for their local food bank.

Together, he and his students served soup out of bowls they had made by hand, which were meant to represent the many people suffering from hunger all over the world.

Now, Empty Bowls fundraisers are held all over the U.S. and other countries.

Cullman's Empty Bowls fundraiser benefits the Cullman Caring for Kids Food Bank. The event was $10 per person, which will enable the Food Bank to purchase 70 pounds of food per every $10 donated.

Empty Bowls of Cullman Coordinator Tonya Shearer came up with the idea for the first Empty Bowls in Cullman 11 years ago.

"It was started as a service learning project I was doing with Cullman City Schools," she said.

"This just seemed like the perfect project. Sometimes it's overwhelming, but it's been really exciting."

Shearer contacted Cullman Caring for Kids Executive Director Javon Daniel in 2003 and together they planned this event.

"She came to me the first year about it so we worked together and got it started," said Daniel. "We were thinking we would get maybe $500 to $1,000 raised but we raised $6,500 the first year. Last year a little over $12,000 was donated."

Daniel has seen this event truly come full circle since its beginning 11 years ago and has enjoyed it more and more each year.

"It's just grown each year and we're excited about it," he said. "It's a lot of fun."

Even though this fundraiser benefits Cullman Caring for Kids, they don't host it.

Empty Bowls is planned and hosted by the Empty Bowls of Cullman Committee, which consists of volunteers from the community. "They host the event and they do all the work," Daniel stated.

The bowls are handcrafted by Cullman volunteers. One volunteer is 94 years old and has been making bowls for the Empty Bowls fundraiser since it first began. Daniel feels excited and blessed that the community is so eager to attend Empty Bowls and help Cullman Caring for Kids.

"It's really become a community event," he reflected.



KATE MULLANEY/CULLMANSENSE

» Volunteers as old as 94 make handcrafted bowls to serve up Bobby Nolen and Clint Creel's famous chili to benefit Cullman Caring for Kids.

Basketball Fundraiser for Local Student is a Success

»Team Levi Shoots and Scores $1,026.91 for comrade

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Last Monday night, fifth graders from West Elementary, Fairview, and Hanceville competed on the basketball court for a good cause. This tournament served as a fundraiser for Levi Bates, a fifth grader at West Elementary who is battling Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma. It was held at First Baptist Church and all proceeds went to help Levi and his family.

Several attended this event to help fifth grader Levi as he battles cancer. Donations were taken at the door at this basketball tournament and snacks were served at the concession stand. The money made will go to benefit Levi's family.

Jason Murphree, one of the coaches for West Elementary, organized the event and was excited to have the opportunity to help Levi and his family.

"We're doing this for Levi," he said. "Several of the boys on our team are classmates of his and they wanted to do this as a fundraiser, so we invited Hanceville and Fairview."



KATE MULLANEY/CULLMANSENSE

» Students compete in a fundraising tournament for fellow classmate Levi Bates.

These guys played their hearts out that night, thinking about Levi every minute of the game.

"They want to win just like any other game, but they came into this knowing it was a little different. They have Levi on their minds," said Murphree.

Levi was unable to attend the basketball tournament because he had started a new round of treatments earlier that day. But some of the players on the West Elementary basketball team were more than happy to play for Levi, whether or not he was there.

"It feels awesome to play for Levi," says fifth grader Jackson Murphree. We just want to support him and be with him as he's going through his treatments." Levi's classmate Jaden Orr was also happy to be there playing basketball for Levi that night and he explained that it was the basketball team's idea to host the fundraiser.

"He's just a really nice guy," Orr stated. "He's in my class and we had the idea to come up with this and we just want to make as much money for him as we can."

The results of the tournament are as follows: Game 1: Cullman 34, Fairview 18; Game 2: Hanceville 32, Fairview 20; Game 3: Cullman 32, Hanceville 17. A total of $1,026.91 was raised for Levi Bates. The support that Levi's classmates have shown for him is moving, and they will continue to encourage him as he continues on in his treatment.

Farmer (from Front)

Hardin said.

"They share ideas, voice concerns, and elect representatives to serve on their state committees."

Each day, outgoing commodity leaders were recognized for service to their state committee during lunch.

Those honored were Richard Edgar of Elmore County, State Cotton Committee; Art Sessions of Mobile County, State Horticulture Committee; Wess Hallman of Blount County and J.C. Holt of Colbert County, State Meat Goat & Sheep Committee; and Diane Payton of DeKalb County, State Dairy Committee.

Lighting (from Front)

Administration's Recreational Trails Program.

ADECA administers an array of programs supporting law enforcement and traffic safety, economic development, energy conservation, workforce development, water resource management and recreation development.

Bentley notified Kenneth Walker, chairman of the County Commission, that the grant had been approved.

KCBS
KANSAS CITY BARBEQUE SOCIETY

Think You Can Grill?

Want to test your barbecue skills with others around the US?





Jim & Becky Johnson
Global Ambassadors from the Kansas City Barbecue Society

Do you have fun grilling in your own backyard and wonder if you could compete? Are you already involved in backyard or pro division barbecue competitions and want to take it to the next level?

Learn all about competition barbecue from members of the KCBS **"International Outreach Team."** Meet world-renowned Jim and Becky Johnson from **The Kansas City Barbecue Society representing these BBQ Global Ambassadors, & making their first-ever U.S. stop** in Cullman! Listen as they share with you their professional secrets along with providing hands-on, proven techniques to expand your knowledge in all aspects of barbecue judging, preparation and cooking. Put their combined 35 years of experience & over 75 Grand Championships on the KCBS and Memphis in May BBQ circuits to work for you! Come see why members of this team have been asked to cook on **The Food Network, for Presidents, & celebrities alike!** *The cost is $150 per student.*

KCBS Ambassador Cooking Class
Saturday, March 8, 2014 • 9 am to 5 pm
Cullman Festhalle Market Platz

Deadline to register is March 1
(Or until spaces are filled)
Contact: Mike Howell, Certified KCBS Event Coordinator
256-348-9590

Event Sponsors

WERNER'S trading company
MITCH SMITH CHEVROLET WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE www.mschev.com
FREEDOM INSURANCE AGENCY 256-737-0011
N2 COLLEGE

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.

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.

Storytime at the Hanceville Library
Everyone is invited to take part in the 'Storytime' session each Wednesday starting at 10 a.m. at the Hanceville Library!

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.

Thursday Afternoon Overeaters Anonymous Meeting
Those interested are invited to attend the weekly Thursday afternoon meetings of Overeaters Anonymous which begin at 4:45 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church's Carriage House. For additional information please call 734-376-2124 or 256-352-1143.

Annual Arbor Day Tree Sale
The annual Arbor Day Tree Sale will be held at the Cullman McGukin Civic Center. This event starts at 800 am and is sponsored by the Alabama Forestry Commission (256-734-0573) and the Cullman County Soil and Water Conservation District (256-734-1431). Several varieties of trees will be available for purchase for $1.00 each. Those included will be red maples, red buds, bald cypress, and a variety of assorted oak trees. This is a popular event, so early arrival will help ensure you receive the trees you wish to for planting.

Growing Your Own Fishing Bait Seminar
All 'kids' ages 8 and up are invited to attend the North Alabama Agriplex's seminar on Thursday, March 6, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. as they present a program on Heritage Skills 'Growing Your Own Fishing Bait'. Attendees, for the cost of $5.00 each, will learn how to plant catalpa trees for harvesting catalpa worms and how to grow other types of worms. Please PRE-REGISTER by calling 256-297-1044 or cullmanag@gmail.com. A great skill to learn in preparation for the upcoming fishing season!

2nd CMS Piano Recital
Everyone is invited to attend the 2nd Cullman Middle School Piano Recital at the Burrow Center for the Arts at Wallace State Community College. This event starts at 7 p.m. and is presented by the Cullman City Schools Foundation. A $5.00 donation is requested to help fund the Tony Ray Brock Music Enhancement Fund which supports musical education at all city schools. Light refreshments will be served during the event. Additional information available by contacting Dawn Klinger, 256-590-3159.

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.

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!

Farm Kids Club – Chick Time
Bring the kids to the North Alabama Agriplex this morning for their 'Farm Kids' Club - Chick Time' program from 9 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. For just $5.00 per child, $10.00 maximum per family and adult chaperones free, the kids ages 5 and up can see baby chicks up close and personal!! They will learn how eggs hatch and enjoy a great morning of entertainment and fun. Pre-registration required - please call the Agriplex at 256-297-1044 or connect with them thru cullmanag@gmail.com.

Next Monday

Cullman Kiwanis Club
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RESIDENTIAL RECIPES

Chicken Pot Pie Pockets

By: Chelsea Sparks • Local Contributor

This recipe has a lot of ingredients but is still very simple to make. The results are scrumptious chicken pot pie pockets. The prep and cook time together is only about an hour and this recipe is a great freezer meal, so you can make a big batch and use it again in a month. Who doesn't love a piping hot chicken pot pie? This is guaranteed to be a family favorite.

Ingredients:
- 8 ounces - cream cheese
- 4 tablespoons - butter
- 1/4 teaspoon - garlic salt
- 1/4 teaspoon – onion powder
- 1 1/2 cups – chicken, (cooked and shredded)
- 1/2 cup - potatoes, (peeled, cooked and diced)
- 1/2 cup - carrots, (peeled, cooked, and chopped)
- 1/4 cup – celery (chopped)
- 1 box - Pillsbury pie crust

Instructions:
- Combine butter and cream cheese and microwave until slightly melted and able to be stirred until smooth.
- Add onion powder and garlic salt to cream cheese / butter mixture.
- Add chicken and vegetables to the mixture. Stir well.
- Unroll pie crusts and cut both into quarters.
- On one quarter of the pie crust, put about 3/4 of a cup of the mix onto the crust.
- Place a second quarter over the top, making sure to line the edges up and pinch the seams to seal. You can flute the edges for a prettier appearance.
- Repeat this process until you have four pie pockets. Cut three small slits in the top of each to vent.
- Next you will need to either place the pockets on a greased cookie sheet and bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes or freeze them for later use.
- If baking from frozen pull out desired number of pockets and place on greased cookie sheet and let them sit for 15 to 20 minutes before baking. Then bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes.

Working for the Weekend Waffles

By: Allison Robertson • Local Contributor

Waffles are one of my all-time favorite breakfast foods. I'm not talking about your everyday freezer-burned cardboard waffles, but the light and fluffy homemade kind that melts in your mouth like the waffles that were once a luxury when Mom made them on Saturday mornings.

Waffles are a culinary canvas in which you can express your inner chef. Try adding chocolate chips, blueberries, bananas, hazelnut spread, or my favorite, peanut butter.

To get started though you will need a reliable waffle recipe and a waffle iron. These are so scrumptious and easy, you'll be making them for your brood every weekend.

Ingredients:
- 1 1/4 cup - self-rising flour
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) - melted butter
- 1 cup - buttermilk
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon - vanilla
- 1 tablespoon - granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon – cinnamon

Instructions:
- Mix flour, sugar, and cinnamon into a large bowl.
- Crack the eggs into a separate bowl and lightly beat with a fork. Add the eggs to the flour mixture, along with the remaining ingredients and mix all of it together with a fork. Be careful not to mix too much or it will be too thick. A few lumps are okay - they add character.
- Make sure you spray your waffle iron with non-stick spray before you preheat it and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Most irons take 3-5 minutes per batch. You'll have delicious waffles in no time. Add your favorite topping and you are good to go!

These waffles are also great to put into a gallon storage bag and freeze to use later in the week. Just reheat in the oven for a quick weekday breakfast!

GET YOUR RECIPE PUBLISHED
E-mail submissions to recipes@cullmansense.com

LOCAL BUSINESS

This is the Day!

» Local Event Planner is Ready to Make Your Event Unforgettable

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Planning a big day such as a wedding, shower or a birthday party can be a stressful task. In fact, the anxiety that goes along with planning such an event might outweigh the quality time you could be spending with your friends and family.

That's why for big events, you should hire an event planner. This is the Day! is an exciting new wedding and event planning business here in Cullman and owner Elena Caudle is ready to work for you. Caudle focuses primarily on weddings, but she also loves birthday parties, bridal and baby showers, and any other reason to celebrate.

She stated that the process of opening this business has been fairly smooth, with only a few bumpy moments.

"We've been so blessed," Caudle stated. "Not that we aren't great multi-taskers, but we find that although we always have the main goal in mind, if we just take one step at a time and do one thing at a time, things fall into place much more easily and with fewer regrets or things to go back and fix."

The most challenging part of this new business venture for her has been resisting the urge to do too much for too little just to get the business off the ground. Clearly, she is ready to plan your next event. But the most exciting part for her has been watching the events she planned.

"I love standing back while an event is taking place," she said. "Watching the smiles on our client's faces and watching the people in attendance enjoy themselves, knowing that we made it happen is the best part."



KATE MULLANEY/CULLMANSENSE

» This is the Day! takes the stress out of events.

Caudle encourages everyone who has an upcoming event to try This is the Day! as their event planners. She is sure that using her business will give your event a one-of-a-kind touch.

"We love the unique and individual, both in designs and in people, and we're not scared of a challenge. Above all, we are committed to the details. We always keep the big picture in mind, but focus on one detail at a time until the big picture comes into focus!"

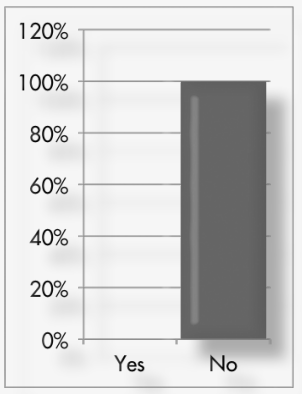
This is the Day! is unique in that they're not focused solely on the funds, they wish to give their customers the perfect special event they desire.

"Our main goal is not to become rich enough to buy the world, but to give each and every client the opportunity to feel like they own the world at least once in their life," she said. Caudle feels that her small business will be beneficial to Cullman and is excited to serve this area. "Cullman is an amazing town filled with unique individuals from various walks of life with varying ideas of what best defines themselves," she said. "We hope our commitment to focus on each client as an individual person instead of a 'one size fits all' plan is going to really be well received and appreciated."

If you have a special event coming up, skip the stress by using This is the Day! Caudle is passionate about using her talents to help other people feel extraordinary even if only for one day of their lives.

Poll

Do you plan on getting a new job this year?



This Week's Poll

Do you think Jimmy Fallon is a good host for "The Tonight Show"? Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

ADVICE

The Community Therapists

Saving Grace

Just as her name promises, Grace Russell has an abundance of grace to send your way. Grace is the refreshing voice to the chaotic mass of eruption in your mind and she is here to guide you in the right direction in the general throes of life.

DEAR SAVING GRACE: All of my friends are married, engaged, or pregnant. I am literally the last single girl. I hate feeling this way, but I just don't feel like I connect with any of them anymore. It's just babies and weddings all the time. Help. --SINGLE IN THE CROWD

DEAR SINGLE IN THE CROWD: Everyone reaches different stages of life at different paces and there is nothing unusual about feeling the way you do. I'm sure some of your friends have moments where they wish they were in your shoes again. Being married with kids is wonderful but so is being single. This is a season in your life in which you can explore new hobbies, travel abroad, or take the time to cultivate new skills that you wouldn't have time for if you were married. It can feel discouraging when you're with married and engaged friends who are discussing topics you feel you can't relate to. Cultivate friendships with other singles. By surrounding yourself with girls like you, you'll quickly find that you are a long ways from being "literally the last single girl." However, do set aside time to hang out with your married friends. There's a lot you can learn from couple as a single person. You may find yourself taking mental notes for when you reach that stage in your life. You are at a great stage now that not only allows you to be single but also allows you to learn from your married friends. Use this to your advantage.

Dear Ally

Like the world renowned, prolific advice legend "Dear Abby," our very own Allison Boyd is here to help you with your career and school problems as only this seasoned, exceptional lady can.

DEAR ALLY: I just turned 30 and I've been working at my job (legal assistant) now for 8 years. I'm ready for something new. I want a challenge. I've been considering law school, but I'm so much older that I wonder if I should just stick to what I have with the legal assistant position. I don't know what to do. I just don't feel fulfilled anymore. --NEED A CHANGE

DEAR NEED A CHANGE: I think it's great that you have 8 years of experience as a legal assistant; it will really be beneficial for anything you do in the future. I wouldn't worry one second about it being too late for law school. Law school is not like other professional schools. It only takes three years to complete a law degree and that is nothing when you are thinking of a lifetime of doing something that's more satisfying. I don't think you or anyone should just continue to do a job that is not making them feel nourished. It will only lead to you wasting more time and still feeling dejected. Don't feel self-conscious about your age because 30 is honestly not old at all. There are plenty of people who go back to professional school later in life, some even later than 30. If you have a desire to make a change and achieve a specific aspiration, then it's better to act on it than to regret not trying at all. You need to start making your game plan and go for it. Collect all the materials you need to study for the LSAT and begin hunting for a law school that you would want to attend. If you want a big change in your life, maybe look at schools in different cities? If you aren't interested in moving then I'm sure there is a law school near you that will work just fine. Find out what their admission requirements are and start gathering everything you will need to apply. Even though you are burned out from your job, view your experience as a legal assistant as a strength. You will have a head start on most of the students fresh out of undergraduate school, which will put you ahead when looking for internships. Be confident about your choices and only worry about yourself. You have to do this for yourself and your own fulfillment.

cpr&
cullman city parks & recreation

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

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

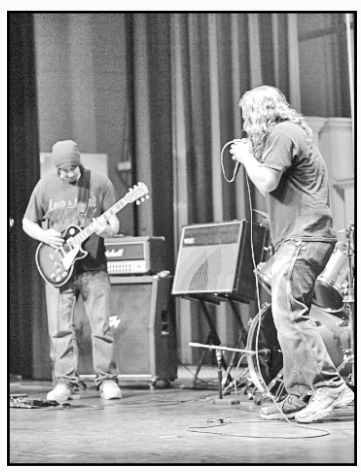
- **Youth Baseball & Softball Reg EXTENDED:** Spring youth league baseball and softball will be extended through Feb. 18 for ages 4-14. Games will start in March at Heritage Park and the Field of Miracles. Cost is $90 and includes a hat and jersey. Call 256-734-9157 for details. Registration is open online at active.com by searching "Cullman Parks" or at the Cullman Civic Center.
- **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.
- **Nia Dance & Ageless Grace Fitness Classes:** Includes yoga stretching, anti-aging tips, and more with instructor Ann Caretti. Nia class is held Tuesdays at 10:00am at the civic center, and Ageless Grace is held on Thursdays at 5:30pm.
- **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.
- **Men's Open Spring League Softball Reg.:** Feb. 15-March 15 at Heritage Park . Cost is $425 for a team which includes 12 game season and a single elimination tournament. Ages 15 & up, call 256-739-9931 for details or to register.
- **Miracle League Spring Softball Registration:** Feb. 15-March 15 at the Cullman Civic Center; cost is $50 per player which includes a jersey and trophy at the end of season. Call the Civic Center at 256-734-9157 for additional info.
- **Walk in the Park Disc Golf Tourn:** PDGA C-Tier tournament to be held on Sunday, Feb. 23 at 9:00am. Walk-up registration will be held on the back side of the park (old Woodland Hospital side) at the first disc-golf hole from 7:30am-9am. Call for details at 256-739-9931.

What's Online

Benefit Concert Preserves Beloved Student's Memory

Fairview High School held a benefit concert for the family of Lewis Beam last Saturday night. Lewis Beam was a senior at Fairview High School and tragically lost his life in a car accident earlier this year. The event took place to show support and love for his family. Mike Hays of Mad Dog Mike's...

qrne.ws/165



Pageant Celebrates Poise, Grace and Beauty

The Ms. Senior Cullman County Pageant was held last Saturday afternoon at Wallace State in the Betty Leeth-Haynes Theatre. Though this was a beauty pageant, the event was about more than just looks. It was about charm, poise, character and love. There were seven beautiful contestants in this pageant all...

qrne.ws/166

Cold Springs coach in line for America's Best Coach for the state of Alabama

County titles, area titles, regional titles, and most importantly state titles. This is how the greatness of a high school coach is measured. But there is an old saying, winning isn't everything, however the collective high school sports world puts more emphasis on wins than character of said...

qrne.ws/167

SHAPE UP

The Best Diets of 2014

By: Christopher Crook
Local Contributor

These days, infomercials and diet advertisements are floating everywhere. There's everything from 3-day cleanses, juice diets, grapefruit-only diets, miracle foods to over-the-counter pills that promise to allow a person to eat whatever they want while the "fat just melts away."

Every day, there is something new and it makes it hard to know what's best and what is safe. In all honesty, there is no easy way to diet. It takes dedication and effort, especially since sticking to the diet can be the hardest part.

As far as diets go, most diets out there seem to focus on cutting out something or limiting your diet to only certain food groups. For example, one of the more soaring ideas out there right now is the concept of gluten-free diets, which involves cutting out gluten, the protein in wheat, barley, and rye that is used in dough to provide elasticity.

However, unless someone has celiac disease or a gluten intolerance or sensitivity, there is not much added benefit to the diet. According to Mary Hartley, registered dietitian and nutritionist for dietsinreview.com, "gluten has nothing to do with weight loss, so the diet simply doesn't work." In fact, foods that claim to be gluten-free usually have extra fat, sugar and preservatives since gluten has to be replaced with something in order to hold the food together. This brings us to the most important question: What does work? It just so happens that every year, U.S. News gathers a panel of diet and nutrition experts to find out.

The Best Diets Rankings of 2014 by U.S. News & World Report takes all the leading eating plans that have withstood the test of time and then ranks them according to a list of categories. These categories include qualities such as: effects on heart health, easiness of following, likelihood of losing weight, safety, as well as short and long term weight loss.

Some of the diets on the list are ones that most people have heard of. For instance, Weight Watchers is on the list, which actually tied with two others for third place.

The diet at the top of the list is the DASH diet or Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, which was originally engineered to lower high blood pressure. It focuses on low sodium intake and consuming foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy. Basically, eat the stuff you've always been told to eat and lay off the salt.

Sliding into the number two spot on the list is the TLC or Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes diet. This diet focuses on lowering high cholesterol and is also government endorsed. To achieve the diet's goal, a person should cut back on certain fats, such as those found in fatty meats, fried foods, and dairy from whole-milk. The diet also involves choosing a target calorie level and limiting saturated fats to only seven percent of those calories.

The number three spot on the list is a three-way tie between the Mayo Clinic Diet, the Mediterranean Diet, and the Weight Watchers diet. The three of these are similar because they are all about balance.

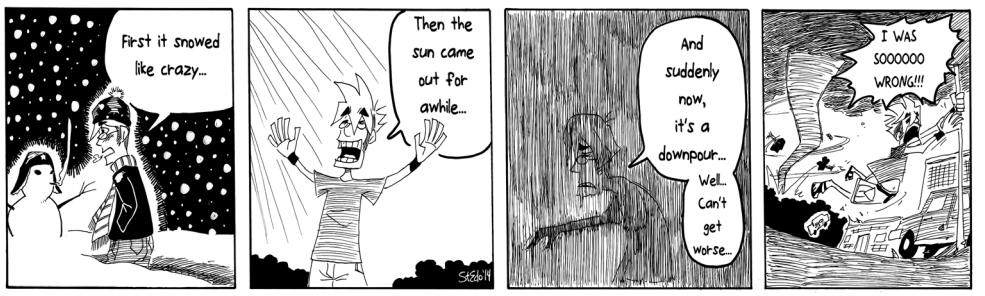
The Mayo diet is a two-part based program, which is all about redefining eating habits and knowing where to get your calories. You can eat all the fruits and veggies you want and no food is necessarily "off-limits." As for the Mediterranean, eat the essential groups along with emphasis on beans, nuts, olive oil, and herbs and spices. It promotes fish and seafood a couple of times a week, with moderation for eggs, chicken, and dairy.

Weight Watchers is all about points, where points are assigned to foods based on their composition and how your body is at burning them off. Basically, you get a points target and you try to stay under it.

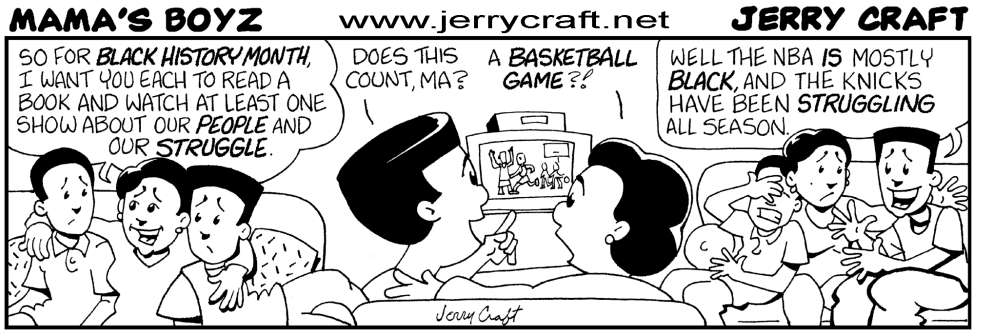
However, like the Mayo, fruits and veggies are free reign. All in all, it's about making smart choices. There is no magic food that you can add to or cut out of your diet to instantly lose inches. Just eat foods that are good for you while limiting junk food and pursue an active lifestyle.

Comics

WHITE & BLACK • **"Wacky Weather Season"** • st.edo@cullmansense.com



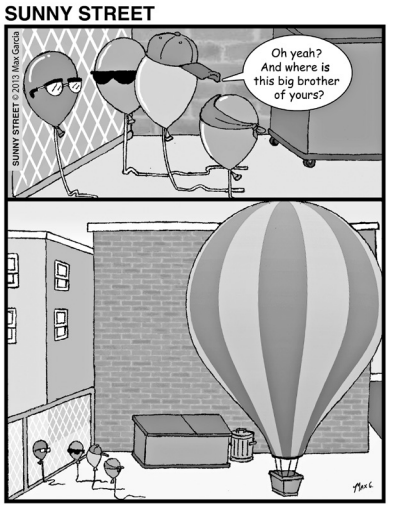
MAMA'S BOYZ www.jerrycraft.net **JERRY CRAFT**



SUNNY STREET



SUNNY STREET



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Second Century League of Cullman to Host Mardi Gras Party

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Get your Mardi Gras beads ready because the Second Century League will be hosting a Mardi Gras celebration benefitting the Department of Human Resources, the Gregath-Franey Memorial Fund, and Brooks' Place Child Advocacy Center.

This exciting party will be held at Top of The Town on March 1 at 7 p.m. Tickets are $150 per couple or $75 per individual and the dress is casual.

Entertainment at this event includes local band Coal Rain who will be opening for Shelbie Z. from the hit show The Voice.

Hors d'oeuvres will be served as well as complimentary beer and wine and a cash bar.

Event Director and Second Century League member Laci Schuman is excited about hosting a Mardi Gras party for Cullman.

"We're going to have two separate bands, shrimp and grits, other hors d'oeuvres, hurricane drinks, and a dance floor. It's really going to be a good time," she said.

Schuman stated that this party will be unique to Cullman because there are not a lot of Mardi Gras parties in this town.

"In a town like Cullman, we don't have a lot of experience with Mardi Gras," she said. "But, we're going to have fun. It's a good way to kick off lent, have fun, eat good food, have a good time with friends, and just party together."

Second Century League of Cullman was founded in October 1971. It was federated with the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs and General Federation of Women's Clubs three months later in January 1972.

The founders of this organization chose Second Century League as a name because this group was organized as Cullman began its Centennial celebration.

The mission of the Second Century League is to make a positive impact on the community through volunteer service during Cullman's next 100 years.

The Never-ending Job

Juggling Motherhood and a Career

By: Nicole Helms
Local Contributor

It is true that a mother's job is never done. Now try throwing a career on top of motherhood and life can get chaotic really quickly.

As a mother of three, I used to feel like I worked, almost robotically, from the moment I woke up until the very moment that I laid down to go to sleep. Now fast forward to fourteen years later, and I have definitely found a few good tricks to help me balance the load.

Whether you are doing something you enjoy or just taking an overdue nap, having time to yourself is the key to a mother's happiness. Schedule your free time in advance. I have found that it is never a bad idea to have a back-up babysitter.

There's absolutely no shame in occasionally buying a new movie for your kids so that you can take a short break and relax. Be as organized as possible and if you can, preplan dinners. The slow cooker soon became my best friend for the nights that my kids had events or practices.

I came to realize that instead of trying to keep my children away from snacks all afternoon, if I merely moved dinner up to about an hour after school, snacking half the afternoon wasn't a desire for my kids.

We also had a scheduled homework time after dinner and had dessert while working on their essays and math problems. Kids thrive with routine and structure. They want to know what is coming next and what you expect from them. I have my kids pick out their clothes and lay them out the night before school, along with any extras that might be necessary for school the next day.

Try sharing the household chores. Instead of an allowance or just giving my kids money to go skating or rent video games, I have a chart of household chores and the payment they will receive for doing each chore. Folding the laundry at my house will get you fifty cents, and you can get another fifty cents if you put the laundry up.

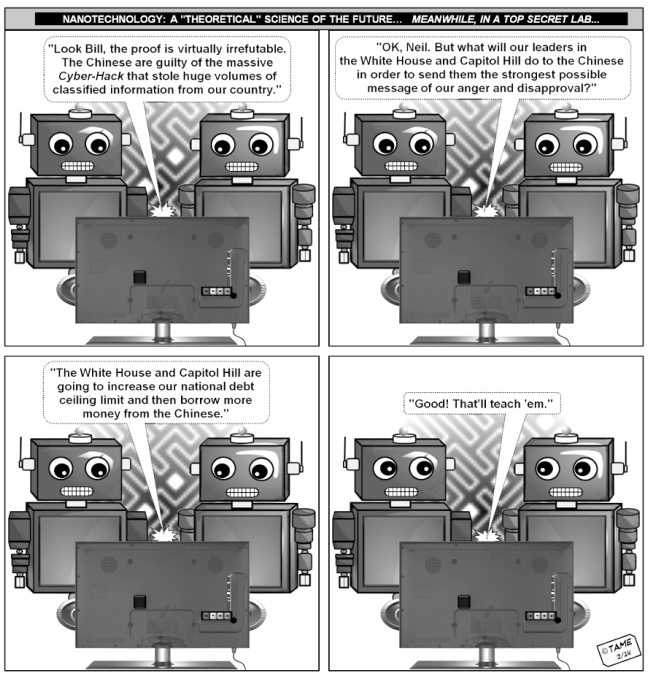
Make sure that your employer knows your limits. Don't be afraid to stand your ground on this issue. Leave when your workday is over. When it comes to important events, remember that being a parent is a job that you can't reschedule, whereas that meeting can be changed to a different day and time.

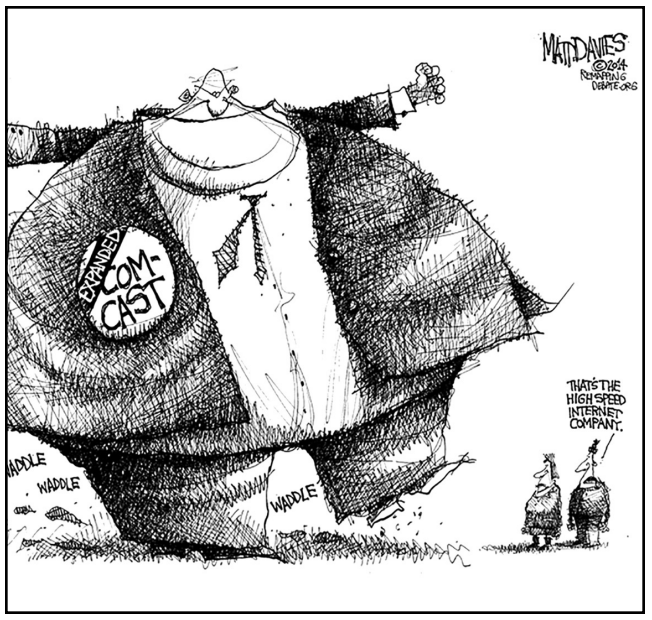
Don't be afraid to ask to reschedule or say no if your child is having an important event. If you are upfront with your employer about where you draw the line, then they will usually negotiate and help you find an easier route to staying involved in your children's lives while achieving your work goals on time.

Find ways to make the time that you do have with your children as fun and memorable as possible. Play board games during dinner or breakfast. I have a rule that I don't talk on my phone or listen to my music in the car before dropping my children off at school or after picking them up from school. I like to save that time for asking about their day, singing along with music that they pick out, and telling jokes.

The most important advice I could give to balancing a career and motherhood is to remember that no two mother's parenting systems are exactly alike. Try to find what works best for you and your child. Don't feel guilty for doing it your own way. If it doesn't make you and your kids happy, don't do it.

Editorial Cartoons





OPINION

The Trillion Dollar Road to Armageddon

By: Ira Helfand and Robert Dodge, MD

In March of last year the Norwegian government convened a gathering of 129 nations in Oslo for a two-day Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear War. Now there will be a follow up meeting in Mexico to further examine the scientific data now available documenting the devastating global impact of even a very limited use of these weapons.

The United States and the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council, who together possess 98% of the world's nuclear weapons, boycotted the Oslo meeting and have not yet indicated if they will attend the meeting in Mexico.

In a joint statement issued before the Oslo meeting, the P5, as they are called, said that a conference that examined what will actually happen if nuclear weapons are used would somehow "distract" them from their efforts to reduce the nuclear danger.

The administration has expressed particular concern that these conferences will somehow endanger the 1968 Non Proliferation Treaty, which makes it illegal for states which do not possess nuclear weapons to build them.

But Article VI of the NPT also requires the existing nuclear powers to engage in good faith negotiations to eliminate their own nuclear arsenals.

A recent statement by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel sheds light on the real threat to the NPT. Speaking after a tour of nuclear weapons facilities in Albuquerque earlier this month, Hagel called for the US to 'upgrade' its nuclear warheads and the submarines, bombers and missiles that deliver them.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated in late December these plans would cost $355 billion over the next decade. The Center for Nonproliferation Studies predicts the new weapons will cost $1 trillion over 30 years.

Meanwhile, the Russians are in the middle of a similar major upgrade of their nuclear forces.

So while asking the non-nuclear weapons states to respect the NPT and refrain from building nuclear weapons, the two main nuclear powers are ignoring their responsibilities under the treaty and expending vast sums of money they cannot afford to make sure they have thousands of nuclear weapons for the foreseeable future.

And this is the problem: the system of nuclear apartheid, where some nations possess nuclear weapons and others are forbidden to have them, is increasingly unacceptable to the non-nuclear weapons states. These nations do not want to build nuclear weapons of their own.

They want the nuclear powers to stop holding them hostage and putting the safety of the whole world at risk with the weapons they already possess.

This concern has indeed been fueled by the growing understanding of the actual effects of nuclear weapons, particularly the recent reports that have shown that even a very limited, regional nuclear war would have catastrophic weather, contamination, crop loss, and famine consequences worldwide, likely killing billions of people.

The weapons on a single US Trident submarine can produce this global catastrophe; we have 14 of them.

The US and Russia claim the world does not have to worry about their nuclear weapons—they will never be used. Around the world, it is an argument that persuades few.

If there is no chance these weapons will ever be used, why would we spend hundreds of billions of dollars on them? Even if they are not used deliberately, there exists the very real threat of an accidental war. We know of at least five occasions in the last 35 years when either Moscow or Washington prepared to launch a nuclear war in the mistaken belief that it was itself under attack. And a terrorist cyber attack could lead to the unauthorized launch of these weapons.

We are at a fundamental decision point with respect to nuclear weapons. We can begin negotiations with the other nuclear powers to eliminate our nuclear arsenals and prevent the proliferation of these weapons across the planet. Or we can spend a trillion dollars to extend our nuclear arsenal and send a clear message to the rest of the world that they should build nuclear weapons, too.

The US should stop insisting that the non-nuclear nations trust us and do as we say and not do as we do. We need to lead by example and seek the security of a world without nuclear weapons.

The US should attend the Mexico meeting and give leadership to the growing international movement to negotiate a treaty to eliminate these weapons once and for all.

OPINION

Navy Closes In On Hi-Tech Railgun

By: Tom Esposito

A key component of naval warfare, perhaps the most significant component, is distance. For much of its history, the success of a naval conflict depended on how close you could navigate your 40 gun galleon alongside the other guy's 40 gun galleon, before you let loose with a broadside, hopefully hitting more than the broadside of a barn; Volume rather than accuracy was the operative factor.

In their day, 18th century cannons were not notorious for accuracy, despite what any Errol Flynn pirate movie might depict to the contrary.

As naval technology evolved, so did the nature of the distance component in warfare. Power and accuracy became the new tactics with 16 inch (406mm) guns, such as those on the battleship Iowa, firing artillary shells of up to 2,700 lbs with near pinpoint accuracy at up to 20 mile (32km) distances.

You wanted to be as far away from the other guy's 16 inch guns as possible when maneuvering for your shot.

The next major, technological development in sea-to-sea engagements were missiles. Notoriously, as the British found out in the Falklands, the French Exocet missile (range up to 110 miles) was at the forefront of this type of weaponry. Newer and deadlier are the advanced, American Tomahawks. Missiles are capable of traveling large distances to reach a target.

The Tomahawk can reach out and touch someone at a distance of up to 810 miles. But with a pricetag of over $1 million, cost can become a factor, especially in times of cuts to military budgets.

Enter the "railgun." Seeming to be more science fiction than fact, a railgun does not use explosives in sending its warhead-gram to those who may not agree with your foreign policy activities.

Instead, it utilizes electrically powered electro-magnetic force to send a projectile downrange.

The projectile nestles between two rails on a sliding armature, the gun is charged – one rail followed by the second rail, and the projectile hurtles outwards at amazing speed. Of course, if it were only that simple.

Feats of still-to-be-determined engineering aside, experimental railguns are being tested that will allow for a non-explosive projectile to be fired at speeds of up to Mach 10. Mach 10 equates to 7,700 mph.

Like Superman, that's faster than a speeding bullet; Obviously that is much faster and there are no bullets that can travel to a distances between 100 to 220 miles away.

The projectiles used in current field tests weigh from 23 to 40 lbs. and cost about $25,000 each. This may be significantly less than a Tomahawk but what about the punch.

At the anticipated speeds, the punch is all about the kinetic energy. The projectile may be smaller than the 1,000 lb. warhead on the missile but it still hits with devastating effect.

The easiest way to see how important kinetic energy is, just take an example that uses an asteroid. Drop an asteroid 110 miles long by 6 miles in diameter from the upper edge of the earth's atmosphere and only those unlucky things under the asteroid and perhaps within a number of hundreds of yards around the drop zone would be obliterated.

Take that same asteroid and hurl it at the earth from outer space at 17,450 mph, and you have an extinction event.

The dinosaurs felt the effects of an asteroid and its kinetic energy at approximately that aforementioned size and that is why we don't have to worry about T-Rex's when take a jog through the woods. (Per NASA, 17,450 mph was the speed of Asteroid 2012 DA14 that flew past the Earth several years ago.)

That is why the small projectile of a railgun can be so deadly. Added to these facts, the Navy hopes to finish developing this weapon to have a firing rate of up to 10 projectiles per minute. That may not sound fast when compared to the cyclic rate of an M-16, but there is an important factor that has has to be taken into account.

The incredible energy used to engage a railgun and the ensuing heat that occurs when it is fired has a deleterious effect on the delivery system. In other words, the gun gets hot and the gun explodes. In this case, slower is better.

The Navy believes that it on track to eliminate that problem and that actual deployment of a railgun system on a Navy ship may be as little as 1-2 years away.

This would be significant for several reasons other than the relative low cost of a projectile. Safety comes to the fore. Having a stockpile of non-explosive but lethal projectiles in the dangerous environment of a Navy warship would be of major importance. Additionally, the projectiles are smaller, but again, still lethal and would take up far less space than conventional warheads and missiles.

Fighting enemies at sea or even lobbing projectiles inland at hostile forces is not the sole reason that the railgun is being developed.

In theory, the weapon could change hats and become a cheap way to send payloads into space. It costs a lot of money to send a case of mac-and-cheese into orbit. It would cost far less to send that same box by railgun. You could even throw in a few cases of antacids and still save taxpayers a ton.



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