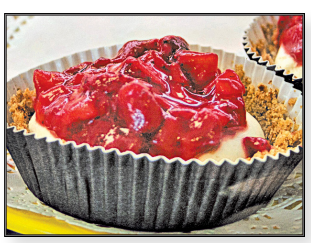
SERIES 4, ISSUE 14 MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2014
CULLMAN'S MONDAY NEWSPAPER
CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS
$0.50 $0.50

Local



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What you need to add to your Emergency Kit today and more emergency tips p5

Annual Safe Kids Expo Raises Awareness for Child Abuse

By: Jessica Norrell
jessica@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - The Safe Kids Expo was held at Sportsman Lake Park on Saturday and managed a great turnout. Free food, drinks, games, live music, free mini golf, and face painting were available for those in attendance. A number of local organizations also came out in support of child abuse prevention, handing out materials to raise p6



JESSICA NORRELL/CULLMANSENSE

» A child has his face painted at the Safe Kids Expo where children and parents learned how to spot child abuse and neglect.

Maybe it is Easy Being Green

» JCR Recycling makes every day Earth Day p7



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

» Workers at JCR Recycling, located next to the bowling alley, process recyclable materials for the City of Cullman.

AUTISM AWARENESS

One Step at a Time

» Cullman Walk for Autism educates community; celebrates families p6



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

» Families who live with autism find camaraderie and offer support to each other.

Holly Pond Band's 16th Annual Golf Classic Brings in Big Supporters

By: Paul King
Local Contributor

HOLLY POND - To most, music is what touches the heart, soothes the soul, and brings us all together. And bringing people together is just what three lovely ladies have done for the Holly Pond Band's 16th Annual Golf Classic at Chesley Oaks Golf Course.

When it comes to holding a fundraiser, Director Luette Benefield, Band Booster President Michele Shutt, and Secretary/Treasurer Lisa Patterson have it locked in to further that love of music for children and teens at Holly Pond Middle and High School.

Sixteen years ago, parents and teachers alike were all wondering as to what could be done to help out with the school's band program. When Benefield heard the commotion, she and several others gathered together and formed the Holly Pond Band Boost.

From cutlery to bed sheets, these go-getters know how to boost a cause for something that we all love – music. These boosters assist with everything from the upkeep of p7



PAUL KING

» Michele Shutt, Luette Benefield, and Lisa Patterson spearheaded fundraising for the Holly Pond Band.

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PRINTED LOCALLY @ PRINTING Alabama Web Press

Two local students recognized at Alabama Farm-City luncheon

By: AJ Watson
Contributor

BIRMINGHAM — Creative students from Clay, Pickens, Randolph, and Russell counties took top honors in the Alabama Farm-City poster, essay, and multimedia contests at an awards luncheon April 3 in Birmingham.

Clay County 11th-grader Zach Hurst took top honors in the 10th- through 12th-grade division of the essay contest, while Pickens County ninth-grader Anna Junkin placed first among seventh- through ninth-graders.

Second place honors went to 11th-grader Georgia Blanchard of Coosa County, 10th- through 12-grade; and ninth-grader Hallie Guinn of Baldwin County, seventh- through ninth-grade.

In the multimedia contest, Adrian Rodriguez-Febres, a Russell County senior, won the top prize for the second year in a row. Pickens County ninth-grader Ashleigh McCool placed second.

Alabama Farmers Cooperative (AFC) awarded $300 to first-place winners in the essay and multimedia contests and $200 for second. The students' schools received matching awards.

The state's best posters were illustrated by Russell County third-grader Xavier Mosley, who placed first in the kindergarten through third-grade division, and Randolph County fourth-grader Jake Crowson, who topped the fourth- through sixth-grade division.

Second place trophies and cash awards went to Cullman County second-grader Preston Gay, kindergarten through third-grade; and Winston County fourth-grader Aidan Thompson, fourth- through sixth-grade.

Ten students received an honorable mention. Their posters will appear alongside the first- and second-place winners in the 2015 Alabama Farm-City calendar. About 25,000 copies of the calendar are sold each year.

Honorable mentions were Keaton Grace Gunter, Marengo County; Vanessa Utama, Montgomery County; Sadie Latham, Jackson County; Annie Wingate, Barbour County; Matthew Shelton, Randolph County; Riley Newton, Marengo County; Daniel Carr, Pickens County; Brian Osburn, Hale County; Madie Garrett, Marshall County and Christian Bagwell, Cullman County.

In the poster contest, AFC awarded $200 for first-place, $100 for second place and $50 for an honorable mention.

Schools of the first- and second-place winner received matching awards.

Student winners at the Farm-City luncheon qualified for state competition by winning their county contests.

The awards luncheon was held in conjunction with the Alabama Farmers Federation's Women's Leadership Conference.

Alabama Farm-City Committee Chairman Jeff Helms said the poster, essay, and multimedia contests are great ways to teach students about the importance of agriculture.

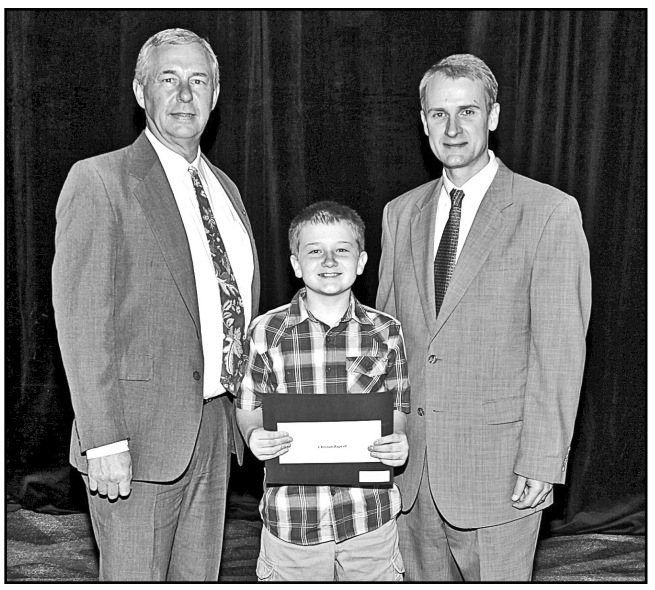
"The theme for this year's contests was 'Alabama Agriculture: Growing for You and Me,'" Helms said.

"With fewer children growing up on farms, it's vital that we educate students about how their food and fiber is produced and the role agriculture plays in our economy and environment. These students are the future of their communities, state and nation. They will be voters, elected officials, businesspeople, and leaders in their homes and churches. It's important they develop an appreciation for the work of farmers and the interdependence of rural and urban residents."

First observed in 1955, Farm-City Week is celebrated the week before Thanksgiving, but volunteers work year-round to foster understanding among farmers and their city neighbors.

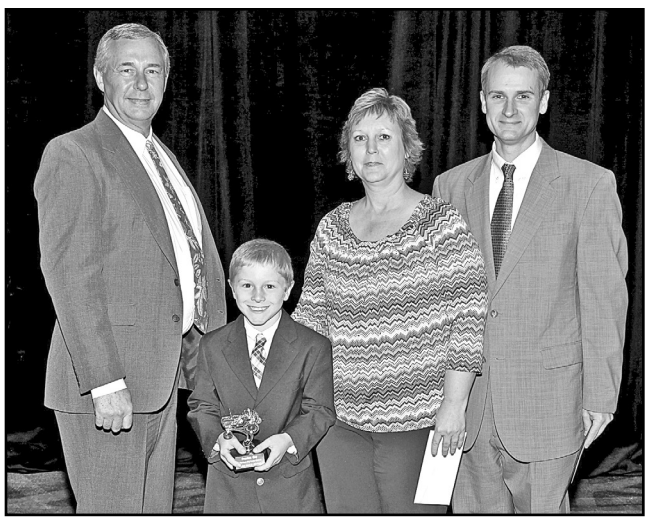
During the Alabama Farm-City Awards adult volunteers also were recognized for outstanding Farm-City activities, and Alabama's 2014 Farm of Distinction was named.

For more on the winners of these contests, visit AlfaFarmers.org. Photos from the event are available at: flickr.com/photos/84380492@N03/.



CONTRIBUTED

» Christian Bagwell, a student at Holly Pond Middle School, received an award for honorable mention in the Farm-City Poster Contest during the Alabama Farm-City Awards Luncheon April 3 in Birmingham. Bagwell won $50 and his drawing will be included in the 2015 Farm-City calendar. Pictured are Jim Allen of the Alabama Farmers Cooperative, Bagwell, and Alabama Farm-City Chairman Jeff Helms.



CONTRIBUTED

» Preston Gay, a student at Welti Elementary School, won second place in the Farm-City poster contest for kindergarten through third grades. Gay and his school each received $100 from the Alabama Farmers Cooperative at the Farm-City Awards Luncheon April 3 in Birmingham. His winning poster will be featured in the 2015 Farm-City calendar. Pictured are Jim Allen of the Alabama Farmers Cooperative, Gay, and Alabama Farm-City Chairman Jeff Helms.

Safe (from Front)

awareness for the cause.

Kim Bevis, who has helped organize Safe Kids since coming to Brooks Place in 2008, commented about all of the organizations and sponsors: "We are all in this together to help kids and to help crime victims."

The Safe Kids Expo has grown every year and was given a $5,000 federal grant this year from National Crime Victims Rights Week enabling them to purchase bags, shirts, and the means to give away more items this year than any previous, including free food.

Local law enforcement, helicopters, the Department of Human Resources, Victim Services, Cullman Caring for Kids, Brooks Place, and Bikers Against Child Abuse were among a few of the attendees to Saturday's event.

Literature providing information about the different organizations, their services and contact information, and how to spot child abuse and neglect were given out to children and parents.

The event gave kids a chance to have fun while raising awareness to change the lives of victims.

Brooks Place, a child advocacy center, where kids come that have experienced sexual abuse or physical abuse was one of the organizations present.

Brooks Place even played a hand in helping the Safe Kids Expo get started.

Brooks Place conducts forensic interviews with the children as well as provides counseling after such an encounter, giving the children a safe, non-threatening environment in which they can be evaluated. To contact Brooks Place, call 256-739-2243.

Cullman Caring for Kids also made their presence at the Expo and provided information on their mission, which includes providing resources for kids so that they don't have to go hungry or suffer abuse.

To contact Cullman Caring for Kids, call 256-739-1111 or visit their website at cullmancaringforkids.com for more information.

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) was also present and handed out information about what they do. It is their responsibility to investigate complaints or concerns about health and safety issues. They provide services and protection if needed.

To contact DHR, call 334-242-1310 or view their website at dhr.alabama.gov/contact/Contact_Us.aspx.

Bikers Against Child Abuse was another event attendee, and if you have spent any time on social media, you have probably seen their posts dedicated to the kind actions of the bikers who show up to make child abuse victims feel safe and know they have someone to help.

To learn more about BACA, visit their website at bacaworld.org. If you need assistance, e-mail stopabuse@bacaofal.com or call the help line at 855-553-3500.

And, of course, if you suspect child abuse or neglect you should contact local law enforcement.

Our Cullman officers were present at the Safe Kids Expo to inform kids with safety tips and to make them feel safe and know that they have someone to contact and trust if they need help or know someone who does.

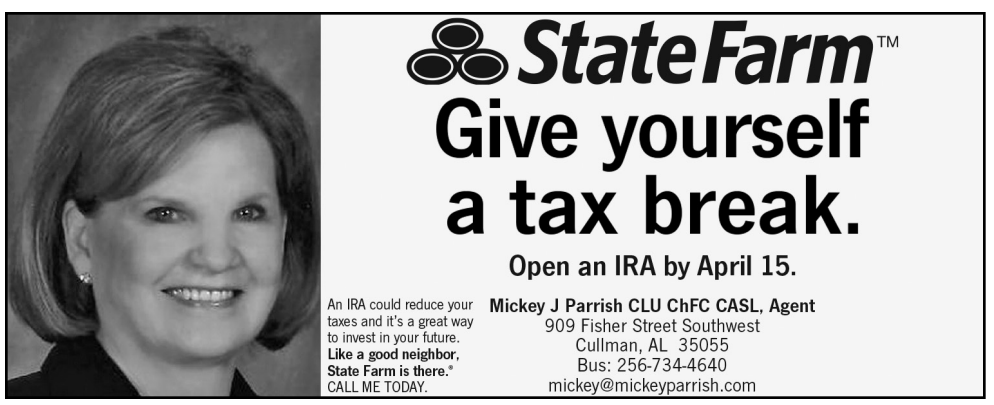
The community is thankful for their sponsors including Paul Bussman, Doug Williams, Matt Gentry, Mike Rainey, the many organizations and volunteers present, and the Cullman police department and fire department.

The community is grateful to local churches including Desperation Church that provided 600 hotdogs to guests and many more that made the event possible.

The Safe Kids Expo continues to grow year after year and local parents and children are encouraged to come out, have fun, and become aware of suspect situations, what to look for, and solutions to change them.

For this event churches, community organizations, police and fire rescue, local politicians, and the community came together for the purpose of protecting children.

Kim Bevis said, "We need to understand that there are victims of crime out there that we can help through support and encouragement." And this is exactly the aim of this now annual event in Cullman.





Balancing Privacy, Jobs in Drone Debate

By: Sandy Johnson • Stateline

Most states are wrestling with how to restrict the nascent domestic drone industry. North Dakota is embracing it.

North Dakota police don't need a warrant to use drones—in fact, the state does not have any drone laws at all. North Dakota lobbied to be a drone test site for the federal government, and was one of six sites chosen in December by the Federal Aviation Administration to research how to integrate them into the national airspace. (The others are in Alaska, Nevada, New York, Texas, and Virginia.)

But North Dakota is the exception. So far this year, 35 states have considered bills and resolutions regarding unmanned aerial vehicles, commonly known as drones. Most of them are privacy protection measures that would restrict the use of drones and set limits on the collection and storage of data.

In just the last two weeks:

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a Democrat, vetoed a bill that would have regulated drone use by government and law enforcement. He said the legislation didn't go far enough to protect privacy rights, although it had been endorsed by the American Civil Liberties Union and law enforcement agencies.

In Utah, Republican Gov. Gary Herbert signed a bill that sets limits on law enforcement use of drone technology. The law requires law officers to obtain a search warrant before using a drone in most situations. It would also regulate what kinds of data can be collected and how long it can be stored, and it requires the data to be made public after an investigation is over.

In Wisconsin, the legislature passed a bill that requires law enforcement to obtain a warrant before using drones except in emergency situations, and outlaws drone surveillance of people who have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

One sponsor said the bill struck a balance between privacy rights and public safety. "It is important that our laws advance as technology progresses. Even inexpensive drone technology is capable of capturing high-resolution pictures of people's homes and areas we consider most private and worthy of protection," Republican Sen. Jerry Petrowski said. He said the legislation was written so it does not cut off commercial development related to drones.

A Different Tactic

North Dakota is well-positioned to move quickly into the industry because of its long-standing aerospace school at the University of North Dakota. The university's traditional focus on training airline pilots has expanded to training students to operate drones. It was the first university to offer a degree in this field; 50 students have graduated and another 100 are enrolled in the program.

In a partnership with the university, the Grand Forks sheriff and police departments are already using drones in the northeastern quarter of the state.

Instead of the legal limits many other states have, drone flights in North Dakota are overseen by Alan Frazier, a UND associate professor in charge of the Law Enforcement Unmanned Aircraft Systems Research Project. Frazier, who is also a Grand Forks deputy sheriff, was a police officer for 28 years in Glendale, Calif., where he was in charge of a police air support unit. As a pilot, he has more than 6,000 hours of flying time.

Frazier reports to a university compliance panel that specified five situations in which drones may be used: to search for lost people; perform post-disaster assessments; photograph crime and accident scenes; search for crime suspects who pose a risk to public safety; and assist with traffic control at major events.

When a request comes in, Frazier gets FAA authorization for the flight. Then Frazier or another trained operator launches one of four small drones built by manufacturers AeroVironment and Draganfly Innovations Inc., to aid law enforcement. Frazier trains the pilots, tests the drones during actual incidents, and later assesses the effectiveness for the FAA and the two manufacturers. The information will help guide the FAA and the manufacturers as they make decisions about domestic drones, as well as lend a hand to local law enforcement officers in developing rules to govern drone use.

The drones are leased to law enforcement for $1 a year; Grand Forks County Sheriff Bob Rost said the services are essentially free. The $11,000 project is funded by grants and donations so there is no cost to the university.

Since May 2013, nine missions have been flown in northeastern North Dakota. Examples range from the mundane to the dramatic: Drones helped search a flooded river for drowning victims, photographed a train collision, photographed river bank erosion and damage to historic buildings, helped search for two suspects accused of auto theft and child molestation and took photos of an outdoor murder scene.

Last month, FAA gave the partnership the first-in-the-nation authorization to use drones at night. "A lot of significant crime activity occurs at night," Frazier said.

Privacy Concerns

Frazier doesn't see a need for warrants to fly drones. "Drones don't do anything that aircraft can't already do. It's not a drone concern – it's an information technology concern. The real concern is what's happening with that data," he said. Two key issues are how long the data is retained and who has access to it. (UND does not retain drone images; the law agencies retain essential images as evidence)

The ACLU shares that concern. The organization supports the warrant requirements that are being put into place in some states, including Utah, Indiana, and Wisconsin this year, but it is also focusing on what happens to the data collected.

"The trick is, we need a system of rules to ensure we can enjoy the benefits of drone technology without becoming a surveillance society," said Allie Bohm, advocacy and policy strategist for the ACLU. "We want to prohibit drones for massive surveillance and still allow law enforcement to use them in cases of wrongdoing."

Bohm said state economic development agencies don't want privacy protections because they fear it will hold back the drone industry and cost jobs. "Putting privacy protections in place assuages a lot of public concern and creates space for the industry to go forward ... Most of the bills we are supporting are not going to inhibit the drone industry," she said.

Job Growth

The FAA has projected as many as 7,500 commercial drones may be in use by 2018. Some states are wooing the fledgling industry because they expect that growth to bring jobs.

The unmanned vehicles association estimates more than 100,000 drone-related jobs will be created by 2025 in the United States with an economic impact of $82 billion.

North Dakota is just a small piece of that. The organization estimates the state's economic impact will be $83 million, with 105 jobs created by 2025. FAA Administrator Michael Huerta will visit Grand Forks on April 21 to review the state's growing drone industry.

Beyond law enforcement, the association says drone technology could be used to transport freight (as Amazon has suggested), disaster management, agricultural monitoring, weather forecasting, aerial mapping, and oil and gas exploration.

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

SPB Prevention Cost-Share Program Announced for Alabama's Forest Landowners

By: Alabama Forestry Commission

MONTGOMERY - For a limited time, financial assistance is being offered to help non-industrial private forest landowners protect pine stands from their number one cause of mortality, bark beetle infestation. Approximately $160,000 is allocated for this Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) Prevention cost-share program, which is administered by the Alabama Forestry Commission in partnership with the USDA Forest Service. The program's main objective is to prevent SPB outbreaks in Alabama forests by helping landowners reduce the susceptibility of their pines to the deadly pests.

Cost-share applications are available at local county offices of the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC). Interested forest landowners must return completed applications to the local AFC county office by the deadline of Friday, May 30, 2014.

Existing loblolly, shortleaf, or Virginia pine stands that are 10 to 100 acres in size are eligible for an incentive payment under this cost-share program. Forest management activities funded under the program include pre-commercial thinning and prescribed burning of pine stands. The incentive cost is $80 per acre for pre-commercial thinning of overstocked and high SPB hazard pine stands and $10 per acre for understory burning of high SPB hazard pine stands. If a borax treatment is used while conducting a pre-commercial thinning on a pine stand, the incentive cost is $90 per acre. Landowners that apply for the cost-share program must receive pre-approval from the AFC before initiating the management practice.

Southern pine beetles are the primary killer of pines in Alabama, with unmanaged and overcrowded stands of southern pines susceptible to attack. Epidemic populations of this bark beetle occur periodically in the state, destroying hundreds of acres of pines. If not controlled, these expanding populations can devastate entire stands causing millions of dollars in damage.

For additional inquiries, contact AFC Forest Health Coordinator Dana Stone by telephone at 334-240-9363 or email at Dana.Stone@forestry.alabama.gov.

The mission of the Alabama Forestry Commission is to protect and sustain Alabama's forest resources using professionally applied stewardship principals and education, ensuring that the state's forests contribute to abundant timber and wildlife, clean air and water, and a healthy economy.

To learn more about the AFC or locate the nearest county office, visit www.forestry.alabama.gov.

PALS
PEOPLE AGAINST A LITTERED STATE

Cullman County / City Clean-up
April 26, 2014
8:00 a.m. – 12 noon
Dumpster Locations:

West Elementary
East Elementary
Cullman High School
Cold Springs School
Baileyton Town Hall
Colony Community Center
Crane Hill Sulphur Springs
Dodge City Fire Station
Fairview Community Park (across from Fairview Superette)
Garden City maintenance area
Good Hope Town Hall
Hanceville behind City Hall
Holly Pond - Lions Club Park
Jones Chapel School
Vinemont First Baptist Church
West Point Town Hall

All dumpsters will be manned for your convenience

Items we **Can Not** take are tires, paint, and chemicals

55 gallon drums must have multiple punched holes or they are not allowed

Please contact your local Town Hall or City Hall for bags (bags furnished by State PALS).
We are asking all citizens to pick up the roads around their homes as far as possible in each direction.
Place this garbage with your weekly garbage and please be safe.

For more information contact:
Carl English, cenglish@topreamerica.com
Ashley Graves, agraves@co.cullman.al.us, 256-775-4696
Cherrie Haney, chaney@co.cullman.al.us, 256-531-4222

Bearcats Break Rare Losing Streak with Controversial Ending

By: Johnny Thornton
Sports Correspondent

CULLMAN - Following rare losses to a couple of Tennessee schools Friday at Bill Shelton Field, the No. 2 ranked Cullman Bearcats engaged in a confrontation with Gadsden City that was decided with an ending to excite one team and upset the other.

A pulled foot on a play at first base after Noah Fondren struck out allowed Maison Goodwin to scamper home with the winning run and Cullman claim an 8-7 decision. This completed five games in three days; just coming off on Thursday winning the 5A, Area 15 regular season title over longtime rival Hartselle.

Tennessee programs Houston and Collierville visited Friday and ended a 14-game winning streak.

The losses were the first by Brent Patterson's team since they opened with an 8-3 defeat to Northridge in the Hoover Classic on March 24.

Cullman has only three losses in a span of four weeks on the diamond.

Gadsden City attempted to make it three in a row when the Titans scored two in the top half of the first and added a run in the second to lead 3-1 when Cullman came to bat in the last of the third.

Carter Bowen and Lance Cleveland singled to set the scene for freshman Owen Lovell. Lovell rapped his 12th homer of the season and fourth of the week to put the Bearcats ahead for the first time in the game at 4-3.

However, the Titans responded with four in the fourth, three coming off a single with the bases loaded in which the ball was also booted in right field for an error. Heading into the bottom of the fourth, the visitors were on top 7-4.

Fondren got things going for the 'Cats in the fourth with a walk, Kolby Roberson was safe on an error, Cole Collins singled home Fondren to close the gap to 7-5. Cleveland grounded out to short that brought in Roberson and the 'Cats were getting close, down by the margin of 7-6.

Lovell went down the left field line for a double and Collins darted home with the tieing run, scoring all the way from first base.

Jackson Hill was effective in the final three innings in relief, keeping the Titans off the scoreboard.

Gadsden City got two quick outs to start the Cullman seventh then Goodwin received a free pass and headed to second on a stolen base.

Fondren struck out on a 3-2 pitch, but the ball got by the catcher and hit the backstop.

Goodwin was moving to third at the time of the strikeout with the throw from the catcher going to the first baseman covering the bag.

But the throw pulled him off the bag.

The field umpire appealed to his home plate partner as a discussion would follow. The field umpire signaled safe with Gadsden City not happy about the decision, but having to accept an upset victory had slipped through the grasp.

The Bearcats are scheduled to host Class 6A Sparkman in a twinbill Tuesday at Bill Shelton Field, weather permitting.

Then the No. 2 ranked ball club opens the first round of the 5A playoffs with Athens. Game 1 is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Friday with the second to follow at approximately 7 p.m.

A third game, if needed, would be Saturday with game time not set at the moment.

Cullman holds fast at #2 in ASWA standings

By: Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - The Cullman Bearcats have had a tremendous run of games as of late. Cullman has rattled off 11 straight wins, five in the past week, including wins over area rival Hartselle, and have put themselves in the driver's seat heading into the playoffs.

The Bearcat pitching staff have been nothing short of dominate in the run, and the performance at the plate has been like watching a fireworks show.

The 'Cats now lay claim to the Area 15 title and first round home field advantage.

CLASS 5A
1. Spanish Fort (26-5)
2. Cullman (31-8)
3. St. Paul's (26-1)
4. Southside-Gadsden (27-6)
5. Hartselle (24-16)
6. Muscle Shoals (26-10)
7. Homewood (17-10)
8. Etowah (18-12)
9. Briarwood Christian (13-9)
10. Rehobeth (18-8)

Others nominated: Mortimer Jordan (28-11), Pinson Valley (18-13), Pleasant Grove (25-10).

Lady Bearcats crack the ASWA top 10 for the second time this season, Holly Pond stays put

By: Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Despite a 2-3 week for the Cullman Lady Bearcats, they have cracked the Alabama Sportswriter's Association top 10 (#9) for the second time this season.

The Lady Bearcats have played some tough teams this past week but they have stayed strong and worked their way back into the rankings as they look forward to the start of the 5A State Playoffs.

Much like the Lady Bearcats, the Holly Pond Lady Broncos had a tough week last week, going 0-3, but it was not enough to knock them out of their spot at #3; a spot they have held since March 13th.

The Lady Broncos have played hard all year and this upcoming week will be no different as they gear up for the 3A State Playoffs.

CLASS 5A
1. Curry (28-4)
2. Hayden (25-2)
3. Southside-Gadsden (22-6)
4. Mortimer Jordan (18-10)
5. Hartselle (24-8)
6. Valley (16-8-1)
7. Springville (26-12)
8. Scottsboro (14-9)
9. Cullman (22-13)
10. Athens (20-13)

Others nominated: Citronelle (24-6), Faith Academy (11-11-2), Fort Payne (14-11), McAdory (24-9), Moody (17-8), Rehobeth (18-8), Saraland (18-13).

CLASS 3A
1. White Plains (23-5-1)
2. Pisgah (17-7)
3. Holly Pond (19-7)
4. Glencoe (18-1)
5. Winfield (17-8)
6. Cordova (21-11-1)
7. Westminster Christian (20-6)
8. Susan Moore (17-6-1)
9. Brindlee Mountain (14-4-1)
10. Slocomb (26-8)

Others nominated: Colbert County (22-8-1), Geneva (18-7), Gordo (12-12), Leeds (15-12), Opp (16-6), Straughn (16-11), West Morgan (24-10).

Pairings set for Cullman County Softball Tournament

By: Johnny Thornton
Sports Correspondent

WEST POINT – Good Hope looks to defend its title in this year's Cullman County High School softball tournament.

The event will be Monday through Wednesday for the varsity division with it being a double elimination format featuring all seven county teams.

All games will be played at West Point High School. The junior varsity will have five teams to compete in single play Thursday, April 17.

Here's the pairings for the 2014 Cullman County softball tournament:

VARSITY DIVISION

• Game 1 Monday – Vinemont vs. Cold Springs 11:00 a.m.
• Game 2 Monday – Holly Pond vs. Fairview 12:30 p.m.
• Game 3 Monday – VM/CS winner vs. HP/FV winner 2:00 p.m.
• Game 4 Monday – West Point vs. Hanceville 3:30 p.m.
• Game 5 Monday – Good Hope vs. WP/HV winner 5:00 p.m.
• Game 6 Monday – Loser of Game 2 vs. Game 3 loser 6:30 p.m.
• Tuesday – Loser of Game 1 vs. Game 5 loser 12:00 p.m.
• Tuesday – Game 6 winner vs. Game 4 loser 1:30 p.m.
• Tuesday – Game 4 winner vs. Game 5 winner 3:00 p.m.
• Tuesday – Winner of 12:00 game vs. winner of 1:30 game 4:30 p.m.
• Tuesday – Winner of 4:30 game vs. loser of 3:00 game 6:00 p.m.
• Wednesday – Championship game 2:00 p.m.
• Wednesday – If necessary game 3:30 p.m.

JUNIOR VARSITY DIVISION

• Thursday – Holly Pond vs. Vinemont 12:00 p.m.
• Thursday – Good Hope vs. Fairview 1:30 p.m.
• Thursday – West Point vs. HP/VM winner 3:00 p.m.
• Thursday – Championship game 4:30 p.m.

Prep Sports Weekly Scoring Recap

By:Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

Another week is in the books for sports teams around Cullman. Some teams took steps backwards as others flourished, including the Cullman Bearcats laying claim to the 2014 Area 15 championship and earning the right to host the first round of the playoffs. Here is a look at the scores from around the area.

Tuesday, April 9th
Baseball
Cullman 4 vs Hartselle 1
Good Hope 14 vs Vinemont 4
Good Hope 12 vs Vinemont 1
Falkville 18 vs St Bernard 0
New Hope 4 vs Holly Pond 5
Hanceville 7 vs Danville 10
Hanceville 6 vs Danville 13

Thursday, April 10th
Baseball
Cold Springs 10 vs Jefferson Christian Academy 0
Cold Springs 12 vs Jefferson Christian Academy 2
Holly Pond 7 vs New Hope 17
Holly Pond 6 vs New Hope 13
Vinemont 8 vs Good Hope 5
West Point 4 East Limestone 3
West Point 9 vs East Limestone 8

Softball
Hanceville 2 vs Good Hope 18
West Point 4 vs Cullman 12

Soccer (Girls)
Cullman 1 vs Hartselle 0

Soccer (Boys)
St Bernard 3 vs Danville 0

Friday, April 11th
Baseball
Cullman 4 vs Collierville 6
Cullman 1 vs Houston 8

Softball
Arab 2 vs Cullman 7
Soccer (Girls)
Danville 1 vs Cullman 1

Soccer (Boys)
Danville 1 vs Cullman 5

Saturday, April 12th
Softball
Prattville 3 vs Cold Springs 5
Vinemont 2 vs Prattville 11
Good Hope 2 vs Cold Springs 6
Good Hope 2 vs Vinemont 2
Good Hope 3 vs West Point 11

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Cullman County Museum Preserves Local Memories for Future Generations

By: Sharon Schuler Kreps
Local Contributor

CULLMAN - Deep in the heart of Cullman, a lovely two-story replica of the city's founder, Col. John G. Cullmann's residence stands, warmly inviting people of all ages to visit. This place is fondly known as the Cullman County Museum. Col. Cullmann's original home, which had once been considered the most beautiful place in town, was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1912.

Both buildings are the same on the outside, but unlike the original, bright yellow home, the current building doesn't house people - it houses their memories! Yes, the Cullman County Museum is the place to visit, especially when researching our town. From Cullman's humble beginnings to its amazing expansion, the museum walks you through Cullman's rich, German heritage every step of the way.

"The first dreams of the Cullman County Historical Society, following its organization in 1968, were the creation of a museum to preserve the interesting history of this area," stated Drew Green, spokesman for the museum.

"The replica of Colonel Cullman's home was originally designed to house both the Museum and the Chamber of Commerce, which had burned in a fire in 1972. Fundraising began in the centennial year of 1973 and actual construction took place in 1974-75 with a final cost for the project at $274, 0000."

For decades, both the Museum and the Chamber of Commerce shared the Col. Cullmann home. But over time, both places grew considerably and each needed more space. In April 2004, the Chamber of Commerce moved into a new location on Second Avenue, thus allowing the museum room to expand.

"The Museum received a facelift and the upper floor, where the Chamber had formally been located, was redesigned for offices, a community room, and additional display areas." Green said with a bashful smile. "If you need a venue of hosting a special occasion like a shower or birthday, the Museum has two community rooms that are available to rent at very reasonable rates."

The Museum has three full time employees, the first being Elaine Fuller, the museum's curator. Julie Burks is the special events coordinator and Drew Green fills in where needed.

The trio works well together as they take turns giving tours of the Museum and arrange step-on (bus) tours of Cullman for visitors.

"We also help with historical and family research; collecting oral histories from local citizens, restoring and archiving pictures and text," Green says with pride. "All so future generations will have accurate information on what life in Cullman was like."

A new service the Museum is happy to offer is access to Ancestry.com. This is free to the community, but appointments are needed for Monday/Wednesday/Friday access.

The Museum takes part in most events concerning Cullman and its vast array of history.

"The next big event that will be coming up at the Museum is the April Walking Tours." Green explains. "These tours start at the Museum at 10 a.m. each Saturday in April. These tours are led by local historians and usually take about one hour with lots of interesting local history and color being shared."

After that the next big event the museum will be a part of is the Strawberry Festival. This is a two-day event that celebrates our strawberry harvest, as well as the opening day of our Farmers Market.

There will be lots of food, music, arts and crafts, and a classic car show. The Strawberry Festival will be held on the weekend of May 9 and 10.



CONTRIBUTED

» After originally being destroyed by fire in 1912 Col. John G. Cullmann's home was rebuilt and now houses the Cullman County Museum.

Severe Weather Preparedness

» Basic emergency planning can save your life

By: Jessica Norrell
jessica@cullmansense.com

With April being one of the months notorious for storms in Cullman's history, it is good to know how to be prepared. There are several steps you can take to be prepared for tornadoes or other natural disasters.

You need to have an Emergency kit prepared and ready to go before the threat of severe weather.

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items (recommended by www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit):

1. Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days
2. Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
3. Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
4. Flashlight and extra batteries
5. First aid kit
6. Whistle to signal for help
7. Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
8. Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
9. Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
10. Manual can opener for food
11. Local maps
12. Cell phone with chargers, inverter, or solar charger



CULLMANSENSE FILE PHOTO

» Preparedness is essential to being ready for emergency situations like the April 27, 2011 tornadoes.

A First Aid kit and knowledge of how to use all of the items in it including bandages, soap, non-prescription medications, medications you may take daily, antibiotic ointment, scissors, and a few extras depending on your specific needs is helpful.

A complete list and extras to bring for kids, pets, elderly, and other circumstances is available at the www.ready.gov website.

These are just a few recommended basics that can comprise your emergency kit. There are more tips available to help customize your kit for specific needs such as kids, pets or businesses. A full list is available at www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit.

Planning ahead is another key step in being ready for severe weather.

These are a few tips on places to avoid and where to seek shelter. Identifying shelter locations and knowing where to go when natural disasters are predicted is key. An underground area, such as a basement or storm cellar, provides the best protection from a tornado.

If an underground shelter is unavailable, consider the following:

• Seek a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.

• Stay away from doors, windows, and outside walls.

• Stay in the center of the room and avoid corners because they attract debris.

• Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick, or block with no windows and a heavy concrete floor or roof system overhead is preferred.

• Avoid auditoriums, cafeterias, and gymnasiums that have flat, wide-span roofs.

Should you be caught outdoors when a tornado is threatening seek shelter in a basement or a sturdy building.

If you are not within walking distance, try to drive in a vehicle, using a seatbelt, to the nearest shelter.

If flying debris is encountered while in a vehicle, there are two options:

1. Stay in the vehicle with the seatbelt on, keep your head below the windows, and cover it with your hands or a blanket.
2. If there is an area that is noticeably lower than the roadway, lie in that area and cover your head with your hands.

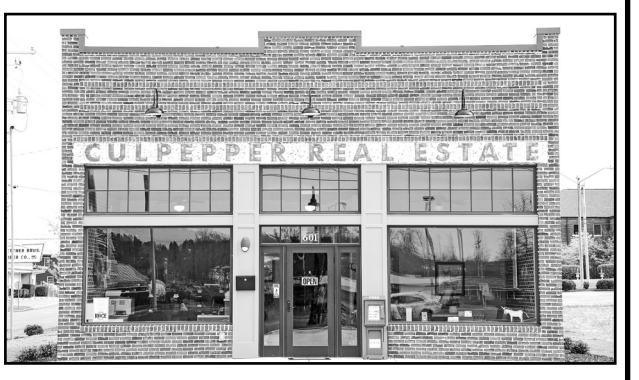
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91586 - 204 Waterford - $349,900 - 5 bdrm,3.5 ba., Carefree living on the golf course at Terri Pines. Expansive deck overlooking Heron Lake, 15th & 16th holes. Appliances updated recently.

92308 - 1707 Wynn Cliff DR NE - $295,000 - 4 bdrm,2.5 ba., Immaculate one level, convenient to Cullman Regional Medical Center, Hwy 157, Hwy278 and I-65. Carefree Living

91908 - 87 Teem Rd - $260,000 - 2 bdrm.,2ba., approx 2.6 ac., Beautiful views from every window, screened porch with view of pond. Large rooms - Family Room 22x30, downstairs master bdrm 27x34, Upstairs bdrm 27x29, rock fireplaces, unfinished basement.

91589 - 2175 Co Rd 1428 - $210,00 - 4 bdrm, 3 ba, approx 1 ac, Motivated Seller! New roof, new windows, new hot water heater, hardwood & ceramic throughout, stained concrete in finished basement. Movie in ready!

912175 - 1509 Pinecrest St - $189,900 - 3 bdrm, 2ba, Very nice brick home with vaulted ceilings in family room, wood and tile floors, large kitchen/dining area, wood deck with fenced back yard.

1815 Briarwood Lane SE - $124,900 - 3 bdrm, 2 ba., Updated and move in ready! Established neighborhood close to East Elementary School.

REHAU Opens Automotive Plant Expansion and Breaks Ground on New Technical Center in Cullman

By: Jane Taylor
REHAU Contributor

CULLMAN – A ribbon cutting ceremony and ground breaking were held Monday on the grounds of the newly completed $115M expansion of REHAU's first Technical Center (Research and Development) outside of Europe. The Tier 1 supplier of exterior automotive fascia to Mercedes, KIA, Nissan, and BMW hosted a slew of local, state, national and international officials and dignitaries for the morning ceremony.

The expansion is part of a multi-million dollar investment in infrastructure and equipment at its manufacturing facility, prompted by a new contract win from Mercedes-Benz to develop and produce bumper assemblies for the company's C-Class and M-Class vehicle lines.

Immediately following the grand opening ceremony, officials also broke ground on a new automotive technical center to be built alongside the plant expansion.

"The growth of our business with Mercedes-Benz is significant for both our Cullman, Ala. plant and for REHAU as a global company. Our teams work across international regions to develop bumper solutions that can be used on vehicles in numerous countries," said REHAU Automotive CFO Reiner Leifhelm.

"We have a solid history of collaboration with Mercedes-Benz, who has been our valued customer for many years. We look forward to our continuing relationship and the additional opportunities presented by our latest contract with the company."

The ceremony was attended by US Representative Robert B. Aderholt (R-AL), Alabama Governor Robert Bentley, City of Cullman Mayor Max Townson, REHAU Automotive CFO Reiner Leifhelm, REHAU North America CEO Christian Fabian, representatives of Mercedes-Benz, and a number of local officials.

"REHAU's latest expansion is a great compliment to the hard workers who are making this company successful," Governor Robert Bentley said.

"This is also a reflection of the business-friendly climate that we have worked hard to create here in Alabama. We are committed to recruiting new jobs and to helping our companies grow and succeed. I appreciate the investment that REHAU has made in Alabama over the years. And I appreciate the hard work of everyone who has made this expansion possible."

Congressman Robert B. Aderholt (R-AL) also commented on the expansion. "REHAU's continued investment in Cullman is an important and positive contribution to the local economy," he said.

"It is a great example of how, more and more, automotive industry jobs that have traditionally been overseas are being developed domestically, particularly in Cullman."

A total capital investment of $115 million including tooling was made for the recently completed plant expansion which accommodates the new business from Mercedes-Benz. Over a two-year period beginning mid-2011, 250 new jobs were created at the automotive plant.

In addition, REHAU has been awarded more business for Mercedes-Benz production beginning in 2014 and 2015 that will create another 160 jobs at the plant.

"This plant expansion is the result of our proven ability to deliver high-quality products and exceptional customer service here at Cullman and throughout our international network at REHAU," said Albert von Pelser, REHAU plant manager.

"We also attribute our success to the unwavering support from the City of Cullman, the Cullman Economic Development Agency, and the Industrial Development Board of the City of Cullman."

The investment in the new automotive technical center is estimated at between $2 and $3 million.

Slated for completion by spring 2015, the technical center will be the site of research and development functions that have previously been conducted primarily in Germany.

In addition to the building expansion, REHAU's Cullman production capabilities have been upgraded and expanded with new injection molding equipment and fabrication devices as well as conversion of the existing paint line to an environmentally friendly waterborne paint system.

Natural Egg Dyeing at the Agriplex Prepares Families for Easter with the Little Ones

By: Jessica Norrell
jessica@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - The North Alabama Agriplex Heritage Center held a natural egg dyeing and egg roll event this past Saturday, April 5, 2014. Rachel Dawsey hosted the egg dyeing and instructed participants on how to dye eggs using natural ingredients that can easily be found in one's own home.

Ingredients such as turmeric, red cabbage, blue violets, and coffee are a few popular ingredients, although you can be creative in finding components to make dyes.

For the first step of the dyeing process, water, dye material, and vinegar were combined in crock-pots and the provided eggs were placed in the mixture inside the crockpots.

The lids were put on the eggs and the eggs were allowed to heat for several minutes.

During this time, all the kids went outside and began hunting the Easter eggs provided and hidden by volunteers at the Agriplex Center.

Once the excitement of collecting the eggs came to an end, the kids lined up to race their eggs in an egg roll where they used wooden spoons to gently push (or for some, whacking the egg like a golf ball) the egg until it reached the finish line.

Every age was able to enjoy the entertaining races, which made for a great way to pass the time until the eggs were ready.

All participants returned to the room to reveal the exciting results of the natural dyes and much to everyone's delight, the process was a complete success and everyone was able to take home beautifully colored eggs.

A Few Tips for Natural Egg Dyeing

1) Dye Ingredients:

- To make yellow: yellow onionskins, turmeric
- To make blue: chopped red cabbage leaves
- To make green: birch leaves, spinach
- To make brownish-red: beetroot peel
- To make purple: blueberries
- To make red: whole red cabbage leaves
- To make pinkish-red: beetroot juice

You can also choose from many other ingredients, just be creative!

2) Other things you will need:

- Eggs
- Vinegar to mix with the dye ingredients
- Cooking or mineral oil to brush onto the eggs after being dyed to add shine
- A pan to boil water or a Crockpot to cook the eggs in the dye. The longer the eggs cook in the dye, the deeper their color will be.

The North Alabama Agriplex Heritage Center offers a number of classes and events that are family friendly, as well as a fun educational experience for kids and adults alike.

First South Farm Credit Union is a major sponsor for the Agriplex Center and the events hosted.

They cover supplies beyond what the $5 participation charge is per person or $10 max per family, keeping costs down for families.

The Cullman County Master Gardeners association is another supporter of the Agriplex Center and offer their time and sponsorship. All of the volunteers help make the events enjoyable and run smoothly.

2014 Summer Programs at the Agriplex

- Elementary Garden Camp: 9 to 11 a.m. • Wednesdays, June 11 & 25, July 9 & 23

- Preschool Garden Camp: 9 to 11 a.m. • Wednesdays, June 11 & 25, July 9 & 23

- 14th Annual Touring Farms for Kids • June 18-19, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- Sewing School • July 28 - August 1, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Walk (from Front)

By: Chelsea Sparks
Local Contributor

CULLMAN - Clear blue skies greeted those that showed up to participate in the Walk for Autism and 5K Run this past Saturday. Families and individuals from all across the county and beyond arrived to walk or run and show their support for this amazing group of people. The atmosphere was one of celebration and family.

The usual statistic that gets thrown out in any given press event is that 1 in 88 children are diagnosed with autism. That statistic has changed in recent years to 1 in 68.

To some, this seems like an increase in the number of children born with this disorder. The truth of the matter is, however, that those diagnosed with autism have always been amongst us.

There were just as many kids with autism 20 years ago as there are today.

The difference is that there is a name and diagnosis for these individuals, whereas before, they would have been lumped into another, less accurate category.

The autism community has come a long way in the past decade. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been poured into research all over the country in effort to solve some of the mysteries of the disorder.

So far, a cure or definitive reason for autism has not been found, but we have more hard evidence today than ever before of how and why autism occurs.

Events like the Cullman Walk for Autism are important for not only fundraising, but for allowing families who live with autism every day to have a day where they can meet with one another and celebrate how far they have come. Many of these families have known each other for years, and these events are their only way of seeing one another.

Other, newer families can use the opportunity to network and find the support and help they need as they start their journey.

For those families that may not have a loved one diagnosed, the reason for coming is just as important, if not more so.

By simply bringing your child or children to an event such as this, you are exposing them to children they may encounter in school and would otherwise not understand.

The more a child is exposed to those that are different to them, the potential for understanding and acceptance grows.

This is all too important to autistic children and their families.

Any parent sees their child being bullied as a nightmare, but the thought for a parent raising a child with autism is down right terrifying.

Everyone was happy and helpful Saturday morning. Free biscuits, fruit, and drinks were available for everyone, as were the many inflatables and games set up for the children to play.

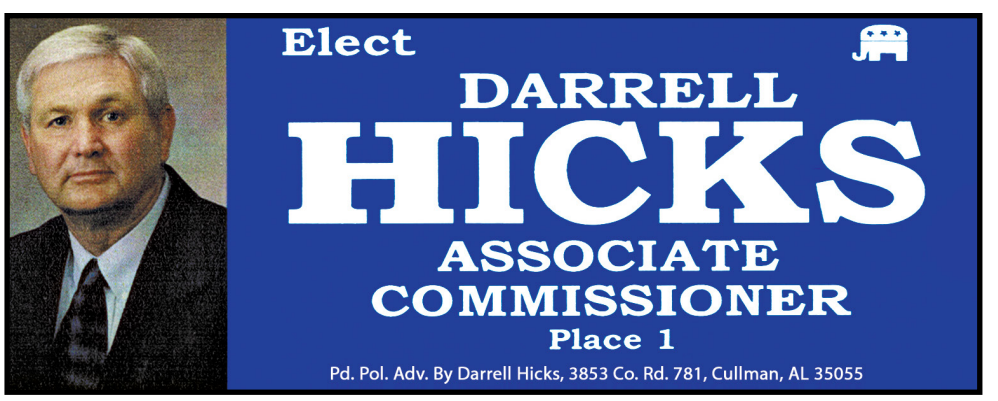
Booths set up all across the track field were filled with different resources about therapy, support groups, and general information.

One of the most popular tents was "Mr. Whiskers", the clown's tent.

Mr. Whiskers primarily works at hospitals like Children's in Birmingham, but made a special appearance to make the children balloon animals. Swords, ponies, hats, and more were created and given with love to each child who lit up like the fourth of July upon being given their gift.

The event was a success and hopefully a sizeable amount of money was raised to continue the ongoing research in Alabama.

If you would like more information on this or the Cullman area support group, please call Rhonda Davis at 256-962-2208.



Recycling (from Front)

By: Chelsea Sparks
Local Contributor

CULLMAN - "Going green" is a phrase we hear a lot about nowadays. From coast to coast, the effort to make our daily uses of water, electricity, and waste management more eco-friendly has been growing. Most people are on board with this idea, but may not know where to start in helping to make the earth just a little bit healthier. One of the best and most common ways is to start recycling some items that may often end up in a landfill.

According to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, our state has the lowest average dumping fees in the country, and as a result, is one of the best places for other states to dump in.

This is a problem that could prove disastrous for generations to come. Most waste that is dumped will take decades to disintegrate and a lot of it will never fully degrade. This leaves all manners of toxins and chemicals in Alabama's soil. This makes once fertile lands into little more than an oversized garbage can.

There are little things that can be done, however, that can make a big difference. Recycling is a great way to reduce waste and, therefore, reduce the amount of trash that goes into landfills.

JCR Recycling, located next to the bowling alley, is one such place doing their part to help people learn what materials they can recycle.

Joseph Fisher, owner of JCR, always had an interest in breaking into this business and was able to realize his dream when he started talking with his father's friend who was in the sanitation department.

With Fisher's vision and the help of his father's trucking company, they were able to land the account with the City of Cullman and the rest is history.

Since then, they have become an integral part of helping Cullman to be much more efficient in the few years since their opening.

Kolby Lawrence, director of operations at JCR, said that the plant has been a win for all involved.

"For the city it was a win because number one, it was putting people to work and giving people jobs here, and we were saving them an hour a day and man time and fuel to drive it up north," he said. "It was a win-win for both of us because it was something we were interested in doing as well and it saved them time and money. So it just kind of transpired from there."



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

» After starting out as a few guys sifting through trash JCR Recycling now handles the recycling of common materials for the City of Cullman.

JCR Recycling recycles an assortment of materials. Milk jugs, soda bottles, old newspapers, magazines, cardboard, aluminum, etc., can all be taken to JCR and recycled.

You can get rid of your clutter and feel good knowing that your small act is one step toward a big difference; a win-win for you and the environment.

Cullman has come a long way since it started working with JCR Recycling. In the four short years since the deal was made, the City of Cullman has went from recycling approximately 20 tons of its waste to now around 50 tons, and subsequently the industry standards of recycling have been raised significantly.

In another five years, who knows how much we could be recycling. It all starts with our own contributions to help keep our state beautiful and healthy.

Golf (from Front)

uniforms to helping underprivileged children take part in a cornerstone, such as the school band.

Whether playing on the course in the 4-man skirmish or a member of the band, everyone's heart was in the game of golf for this great cause.

"We love to see these players come out every year knowing what they play for," said Shutt.

With nine 4-man teams, the event made for quite a full course.

"We do this for the band. We do this for the kids. It gives them direction and teaches discipline. It gives them somewhere to go and to keep them from trouble. They absolutely love being in the band," followed Patterson.

Every major and minor resource acquired is put to great use as the year unfolds.

"It's not just 'a band', it's a family," said Patterson.

"We're here for them and they are here for the love of music."

Once one finds a burning desire for art, it's hard to pull away from that.

These three wonderful people know that music is no different.

To keep these children indulged in a rewarding activity is the reward of a lifetime for them.





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 at the All Steak. 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.

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

Emotions Anonymous Support Group Meeting
An Emotions Anonymous Support Group meets each Tuesday at noon at Grace Episcopal Church Carriage House. Those interested are invited to attend these group sessions. Further information is available through the Group Director's office at 256-734-3605 or 256-796-8440.

Ladies' Auxiliary VFW Dance at Post 2214
The Ladies' Auxiliary of VFW Post 2214 invites the community to their weekly Tuesday night dances at the VFW Post building. The country line dance starts at 7 p.m. each Tuesday night, with admission only $5.00 per person. Concessions are available and all proceeds benefit the Auxiliary's local projects.

Wednesday

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

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

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

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

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

Thursday

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

Osteoporosis: Prevention and the Importance of Utilizing Bone Mass Measurements
Join Benjamin Rogers, MD, with Cullman Internal Medicine as he discusses the risks with osteoporosis, prevention and the importance of utilizing bone mass measurements. This lunch and learn program will be held from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. in the Colonel Cullmann Room. Cost of the program is $5 for WomenFirst and SeniorChoice members and $8 for all others. To reserve your spot, register online at www.crmchospital.com or call (256) 737-2600.

'Root Ministry' at Abundant Grace Church
There is a weekly meeting each Thursday night starting at 6 pm at Abundant Grace Church. 'Root Ministry' has the aim of radically overcoming obstacles together for anyone with any types of hurts, hang-ups or habits in their lives. Please call 256-739-7091 for additional information. All welcome!! **

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.

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.

Nimble Thimble Quilt Guild of Cullman
Members of the Nimble Thimble Quilt Guild of Cullman will gather at the Colonel Cullman Museum starting at 9:30 a.m. All interested quilters are invited to attend this meeting.

Lenten Friday Fish Fry Dinner
The Knights of Columbus of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church will sponsor their annual Lenten Friday Fish Fry Dinners in the Family Life Center starting at 5 p.m. and going until 6:45 p.m. Stations of the Cross follow at 7 p.m. in the Church for those interested. All are welcome to the fish dinners - adult plates are $8.00 with children's plates at $5.00. Menu consists of fried or broiled fish, hush puppies, all the traditional trimmings, drink and dessert.

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!

April 'Walking Tours'
Everyone is invited to take part in the annual FREE guided walking tours each Saturday morning during April. Attendees will gather at the Col. Cullmann Museum, across from City Hall, at 10 a.m. each Saturday of April and local community leaders will escort folks through the historic districts and various locations in our hometown, sharing bits and pieces of local history and lore! Put on your walking shoes and get to know your Cullman history and perhaps some unusual 'tall tales from the old days'! Free for everyone!

Next Monday

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESIDENTIAL RECIPES

Home-Style Mashed Potatoes

By: Allison Robertson • Local Contributor

I used to be one of those people that thought by using boxed potato flakes I was saving time and money, until I got tired of having to season them to death and add things to make them thick instead of watery potato misery.

I then bought a 10 lb bag of potatoes for $2.99 and started testing my collection of potato recipes. I found how easy and delicious I could make my mashed potatoes and how far a 10 lb bag of potatoes could go. I put those disgusting boxes of powder to shame.

Ingredients:
- 4-6 small potatoes (2-3 medium)
- 2 tablespoons - salted butter
- 1 tablespoon - whipped dressing
- Seasoning salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:
- Start by washing all of the potatoes well and cutting them into 1/2 inch – 1-inch pieces. The smaller you make them, the quicker they will cook. Also, I leave the skins on to save time but if you wish to peel them that is fine too.
- Put them in a pot with just enough water to cover them one inch. Too much water will take too long to boil. Salt them liberally. Not only will the salt flavor the potatoes but it will also bring the boiling temperature of the water up faster.
- Once they come to a boil, let them boil uncovered for about 10 minutes or until fork tender. Drain and place back into the pot on the heated burner in order to evaporate the excess water.
- Throw them in a bowl along with your butter and whipped dressing, favorite seasoning, salt and pepper. Mash together or use a hand mixer to combine. And there you have your perfect home-style mashed potatoes.

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

This Week in Local Entertainment

Monday, April 14th
- Juried Art Exhibition at WSCC in the Evelyn Burrow Museum
- CRMC Book Sale at CRMC from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- 79-cent wings at Rodney G's Hickory Grill from 6-9 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15th
- Juried Art Exhibition at WSCC in the Evelyn Burrow Museum
- CRMC Book Sale at CRMC from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Katherine Vest, Piano 1st Place Winner - 2014 Alabama Federated Music Club's Auditions: 12:15 p.m. at the Burrow Recital Hall at WSCC
- WSCC Softball vs. Shelton State (DH) at 4 p.m.
- Square Dancing Lessons at East Point Community Center from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- Trivia Night at Rodney G's Hickory Grill at 7 p.m.
- Trivia Night at Grumpy's Italian Grill from 7 to 9 p.m.

Wednesday, April 16th
- Juried Art Exhibition at WSCC in the Evelyn Burrow Museum
- Cullman Area Visitor Center Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting at the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce Lobby at 9 a.m.
- Story Time at the Hanceville Library at 10 a.m.
- Singer Derek Sellers at All Steak at 6 p.m.
- Karaoke Night at Grumpy's Italian Grill from 7-10 p.m.
- Karaoke night at Cadillac Ron's

Thursday, April 17th
- Juried Art Exhibition at WSCC in the Evelyn Burrow Museum
- WSCC Relay for Life Bake Sale from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- WSCC Softball vs. Marion Military (DH) at 4 p.m.
- Trivia Night at Rodney G's at 7 p.m.
- Karaoke night at Cadillac Ron's

Friday, April 18th
- Juried Art Exhibition at WSCC in the Evelyn Burrow Museum
- Ladie's Night at Rodney G's at 8 p.m. - Half off drinks for ladies
- WSCC Jazz Band Dance at 8 p.m. in the Burrow Center at WSCC

Saturday, April 19th
- Juried Art Exhibition at WSCC in the Evelyn Burrow Museum
- Cullman Walking Tour starting from the Colonel Cullman Museum at 10 a.m.
- Curtis and Loretta in concert at Berkeley Bob's at 7 p.m.
- Ladie's Night at Rodney G's at 8 p.m. - Half off drinks for ladies

Sunday, April 20th
- Happy Easter!

LOCAL BUSINESS

Flavor's Bakery: Sweetening Cullman's Appetite for Gourmet Pastries

By: Jessica Norrell
jessica@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Flavor's Bakery, located in the Warehouse District in Cullman, is the perfect stop on a day out shopping or a morning (anytime) snack. Owner Lisa Durcholz opened Flavors Bakery almost two years ago and it has quickly become a community favorite.

Lisa's love for cooking was instilled by her grandmother and mother. Prior to starting the bakery, she had been at a desk job for around 20 years, and although it was a great job, Lisa knew she wasn't doing something she loved doing everyday and felt a passion for.

"I found myself at a crossroads after my husband died," she said.

At that point, Lisa was ready to make a change and take a chance.

She wanted to open her own bakery but upon looking into it more, she decided she needed a little extra training to feel more comfortable before opening her own business so she enrolled in culinary school for baking and received a certificate.

After culinary school, she began searching for a location to open her bakery. She looked into several different locations and even thought about Tuscaloosa, Alabama but these options never worked out. Her mother then told her of a space opening up in the Warehouse District in Cullman and then Flavors Bakery was born.

Now that she had her bakery space she needed to staff her new business venture.

"It's like people were sent from God," Lisa comments, having met one of the crew in the parking area of the Warehouse District.

Every member of her staff has been a blessing and a joy to work with, which is part of why the bakery has become so successful.

Flavors Bakery is special in that every single item is made from scratch. "Not mixes," Lisa specifies.

Lisa uses recipes from cookbooks, research, and other resources as inspiration and makes them into a unique bakery treat.

"We try to do things as natural as we can," she comments. "It's very important to me to not use trans fats. And if you eat our cupcakes or anything with butter cream in it, ours will melt in your mouth because butter will melt at your body temperature or more, but shortening wont melt in your mouth like butter cream will so it leaves a film."

Cinnamon and orange sweet rolls are a couple of the bakery's best-selling items and there is something new to choose from daily like spinach & cheese, ham & cheddar, and bacon & cheddar stratas, homemade bread, cookies, fudge brownies, and one of their newest additions, a strawberry pretzel tartlet.

All pastries are baked fresh and from scratch everyday and the menu constantly changes. To find out what's currently on the menu, check the Flavors Bakery Facebook page for updates.

This summer, look forward to frozen treats, which will include ice pops with fruit, frozen yogurt, and homemade ice cream sandwiches.

A delicious pastry isn't complete without a hot cup of coffee (or milk or juice for the young ones). Flavors receives their coffee from Toomer's in Auburn, Alabama.

When looking for the perfect local roaster to supply the bakery with coffee, Lisa observed that Toomer's was heavily involved with ministry and local churches, which was in tune with what she was looking for.

A Swiss water process is used for the decaffeinated coffees supplied by Toomer's instead of the typical chemical process used to decaffeinate coffee.

Flavors grounds the coffee for a fresh brew daily. A self-serve coffee station is set up so you can customize your cup of coffee.

Fresh cream, local honey, sugar, stevia sweetener, and a host of syrup flavors are available to make the perfect coffee. The brewed coffee flavors change daily and include Hazelnut Crème, White Chocolate Raspberry Truffle, Southern Pecan Pie, Vanilla Butter Cream, and Vermont Maple Nut. They even offer flavored decaff in the White Chocolate Raspberry and Hazelnut Crème.

Flavors Bakery continues to grow and was featured on Absolutely Alabama last August, which brought visitors from across the state.

Make sure you don't miss out on this stop and enjoy a tasty pastry and cup of coffee with a charming, homey atmosphere and, of course, friendly staff.

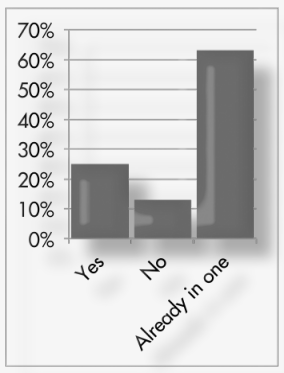


JESSICA NORRELL/CULLMANSENSE

» All items at Flavors Bakery are made from scratch with a focus on natural ingredients.

Poll

Do you feel a greater economic crash is about to occur?



This Week's Poll

Are you planning a road trip this summer?

Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

Leinenkuge's Summer Shandy Hits the Spot

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

The weather is finally warm and that calls for good beer. Leinenkugel's Summer Shandy is a delicious way to celebrate warm weather, good friends, and tasty beer.

The Leinenkugel family brewery was founded by Jacob Leinenkugel in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin in May 1867. Today, the fifth generation of the Leinenkugel's brew, with recipes inspired by the family beer that started the brewery those many years ago, is still popular today.

The Leinenkugel brewery brews four beers: three seasonal and one year round.

Their Summer Shandy is meant to kick off the season of warm weather as it is only brewed March through August.

This Summer Shandy is made with Pale and Wheat malts and cluster hops. It is only 4.2 percent alcohol, so perhaps enjoy two. I will say, if you don't like beer that is fruit flavored, then this is not the beer for you. But if you do, get ready to try the most summery delicious beer of your life. This Summer Shandy is made with the cool and refreshing flavor of natural lemonade.



KATE MULLANEY/CULLMANSENSE

» Leinenkuge's Summer Shandy won't be available for long.

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cullman city parks & recreation cp&r

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

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

- **Kamp Cullman Registration Opening April 1:** Kamp Cullman Summer camp registration will on April 1 at the Cullman Civic Center. Camp will be held with base at the Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center from June 2-27 and July 7—August 1. Camp will include swimming, recreational activities, field trips, and much more. Camp will be held Monday-Friday, 7:45am-5:15pm. Spaces are limited, so sign your child up NOW! Call 256-734-9157 for details.
- **Xtreme Allstars Cheer Squad Registration:** Want your child to learn the most XTREME cheer skills? Come join one of our Xtreme Allstar Cheer Squads! Evaluations clinics will be held May 6, May 8, May 13, May 15, and May 20 at the Gymnastics & Cheer Academy. Any athletes interested must attend the clinic. An informational meeting will be held on May 1 at 6pm in the CGCA birthday party room. Early bird registration for the clinics is now open through April 14. For more information, call 256-739-6762.
- **Laughter Yoga:** Come be a part of this fun new way to relax and get a workout! Laughter Yoga will be held on Saturdays starting March 1 at the Civic Center from 9am-10am with instructor Sandy Seibert. Classes are $5 each or $25 for 6 classes. Call 256-734-9157 for details.
- **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.
- **CP&R Yoga:** Check out our new Yoga classes at the Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center including Buti Yoga, Buti-tone, and Paddle Board Yoga in the pools! Call 775-SWIM or see front desk.
- **Archery Classes:** Archery classes are offered for ages 7 & up on Mondays for beginners, Tuesdays for intermediate shooters, and Thursdays for advanced archers. All classes held at the Civic Center's indoor archery range. 256-734-9157

What's Online

Medical Arts Apothecary: Cullman's Oldest Pharmacy

Medical Arts Apothecary has been serving Cullman for over 50 years. Now, they're even more equipped to do so with their new addition. Medical Arts Apothecary recently bought the Living Well Natural Store and added its stock to theirs.



qrne.ws/186

AdvancED recommends Continued Accreditation following review of CCS

The AdvancED external review team, under the direction of Dr. James Brown, reported to the Cullman City Board of Education they would be recommending Cullman City Schools for continued accreditation after their recent review of all schools in the system.

qrne.ws/187

Easter Photo Sessions: What to Avoid

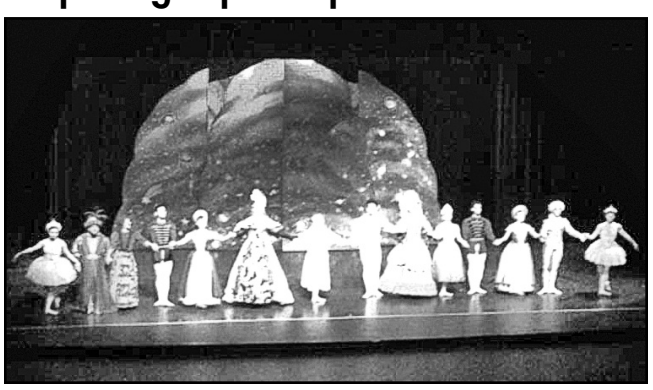
As Easter approaches, we begin thinking about coloring eggs, decorating with pastels, and if we have children, we might be thinking about dressing them up in adorable outfits and getting their pictures taken. Of course they look cute as a button in their best attire, but wouldn't it be even cuter if they posed next to...

qrne.ws/188

New York Theatre Ballet & Cullman Ballet Society impress with Cinderella and other stories

» Combined ballet performance afforded after fortunate circumstance; gives prospects glimpse of professional ballet

By: Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com



KATE MULLANEY/CULLMANSENSE

» The casts of the New York Theatre Ballet and Cullman Ballet Society perform at Wallace State.

CULLMAN - Cullman experienced a taste of the Big Apple last weekend as the New York Theatre Ballet and the Cullman Ballet Society wowed audiences with their spectacular combined performance. These two ballet companies presented "Cinderella and Other Stories" April 6 and 7 in the Betty Leeth Haynes theatre at Wallace State Community College.

The evening began with the story of Cinderella told through dance and it was performed entirely by the cast of the New York Theatre Ballet. This three-scene performance was dazzling as the audience watched Cinderella find the love of her life, all thanks to a certain shoe. The costumes were vibrant, the dancers were flawless, and the choreography told the story perfectly. This spectacular rendition of a classic story brought the audience to laughter and tears and left them in a heap of applause.

Next was a performance of "Gone" by the 12 dancers in the Cullman Ballet Company. It was a short modern piece choreographed to beautiful music. The only prop was a solitary rocking chair which each dancer gracefully moved or stood on or otherwise danced with in this moving piece. At the end, the girls left the stage and the rocking chair was left silently rocking alone.

Next was a beautiful number performed by the New York Theatre Ballet called "Soiree Musicale". Pianist Michael Scales provided music for this piece as the dancers performed the classical piece of ballet.

After pianist Michael Scales provided a brief musical interlude, the New York Theatre Ballet performed "Pas De Deux" from Romeo & Juliet. It was a beautiful love story between two dancers. These two dancers filled the otherwise empty stage with their very real emotion during this moving piece.

Finally, both the New York Theatre Ballet and dancers from the Cullman Community Cast told the story of "Sleeping Beauty's Wedding". This was truly a little girl's dream as Sleeping Beauty and Prince Charming were united in marriage in the presence of the King and Queen, beautiful and colorful fairies, Puss-n-Boots, Princess Florine and the Bluebird, The Lilac Fairy, as well as Red Riding Hood, and the Big Bad Wolf.

After the performance was a cast party sponsored by Yogurt Mountain. Cast members of both ballet companies as well as sponsors of this grand event were invited.

Artistic Director of the Cullman Ballet Society, Elaine Willingham, worked hard to make this even happen and was excited about how it unfolded.

"I have some wonderful people on the board of directors that work with me that made this happen," she stated happily.

She stated that everything from learning a new piece from a guest choreographer to watching this touring ballet company from New York has been wonderful for the future of her students.

"This is great exposure for my girls, and this experience allows them to see if professional ballet is something they would like to pursue after high school," she said.

The Cullman Ballet Society is dedicated to encouraging a greater appreciation for ballet offering opportunities for the expression of the arts in our community. Thanks to the hard working people at this wonderful organization, Cullman was able to experience a dazzling evening among a crowd of art lovers.

Comics

WHITE & BLACK • **"The Easter Stealing Squirrel"** • st.edo@cullmansense.com



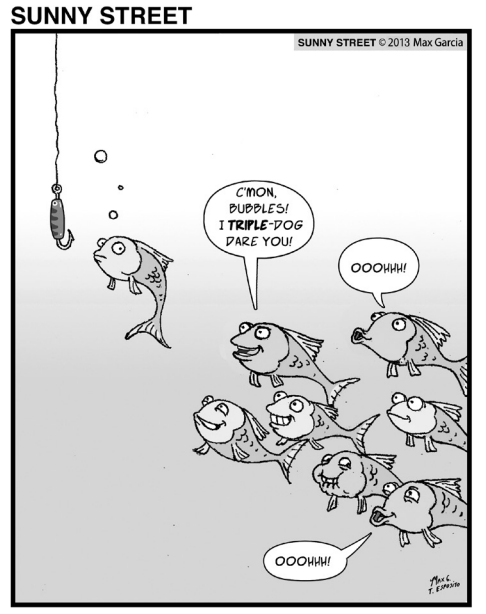
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Pets of the Week

Huckabee

Hello, my name is Huckabee! I am about 2 years old. I am a Heeler mix and I currently weigh 56 lbs.

I am spirited and playful. I am a medium size dog so make sure I have plenty of room to play.

Please stop by and say hello to me!



Dixie

Hello, my name is Dixie! I am about 1.5 years old. I am believed to be a Pit Bull mix and I currently weigh 60 lbs.

I am full of life and I love to play. I am a medium size dog so make sure I have plenty of room to play.

Please come visit me today!

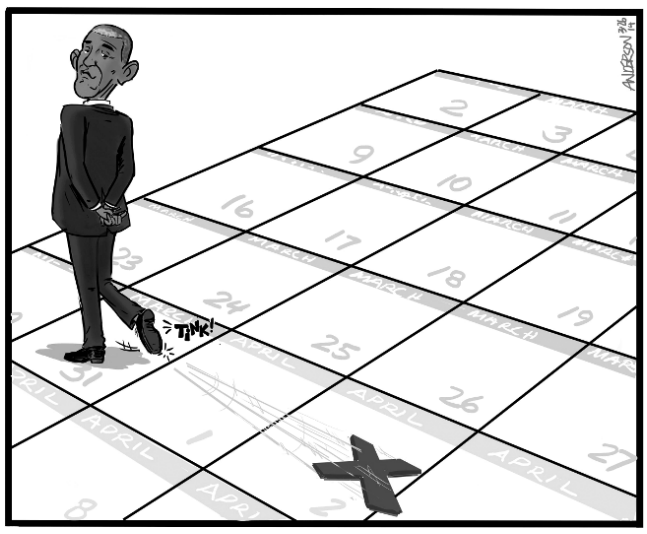


ADOPT THESE PETS TODAY

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.

Editorial Cartoon



HOW ARE WE DOING?

Tell us what we're doing right and how we can do better.

E-mail feedback@cullmansense.com
or Call 256-297-1847

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Cartoonist
Anthony Saint

OPINION

A Reminder of the Blessings of Being American: A Follow-Up on Fort Hood

By: Sage Overton
Local Contributor

Last week a horrible event repeated itself. A lone gunman attacked the army base of Fort Hood, killing three and injuring 16 others. This was less than five years after Army Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan killed 13 people and injured another 32.

Both events involved the use of firearms only. The most recent shooter, Spc. Ivan Lopez, committed suicide at the scene. Hasan is serving life is prison for his.

Both times the attacks have brought back into the national spotlight issues of gun control and terrorist attacks (Hasan admitted to carrying out his violence as a terrorist plot).

Different experts, politicians, lobbyists, reporters, and journalists will all weigh in with their own interpretations and personal views on what might prevent such a thing from reoccurring.

Lost in the middle of it all will be the true suffering, the survivors of the victims.

Death is terrible enough and difficult to bear. Fatality from any kind of assault is harder, trying to wrap our minds around why someone could find it justifiable to remove from this place someone we hold dear.

Attacks like Fort Hood are almost incomprehensible. We ask ourselves how someone could take away multiple people in a short time span simply so randomly.

Those who lose loved ones in such events have little to explain it or anything with which to console their grief.

The only answer they are left with is someone being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

For a life cut short, that reason is exceptionally cruel and unfair.

That being said, my heart, thoughts and prayers go out to the victims, their families and their friends.

Something like this always brings a prevailing thought to me though, especially any time our troops are involved with it.

We are blessed beyond belief to be American and live in America. It is the sacrifice of people like those who lost their lives in Fort Hood who make such a realization possible.

For Americans, the tragedies like both shootings in Texas are the exception instead of the norm. That may be part of the reason they shock, disappoint, hurt, and upset us so badly. It's easy to lose sight of how lucky we are in that.

There are many, many places in the world where worse tragedies are a daily occurrence.

For us, a mass murder typically involves less than 30 deaths.

Overseas, that can be an average Tuesday car bomb. Off the top 10 worst U.S. domestic terrorist attacks, six have resulted in less than thirty deaths.

In 2010, there were 2,468,435 reported deaths in the United States, roughly 800 per every 100,000 people.

Of those, only 16,259 occurred from homicide, less than one percent of all fatalities.

The majority of assault related deaths are caused by the intentional discharge of firearms, just over 11,000.

This is far from the leading cause of American deaths though.

The number one cause of death in the United States is heart disease and it has been for years.

In 2010, over 780,000 people died from heart disease.

Cancer was the second leading cause with just shy of 575,000. Chronic respiratory diseases were next with 138,000.

In fact, as an American, here are your odds of dying from someone trying to cause intentional harm versus other leading causes:

- From heart disease: 48 times more likely
- From cancer: 35 times more likely
- From accidents: 7 times more likely
- From Alzheimer's: 5 times more likely
- From flu or pneumonia: 3 times more likely

We, as Americans, are even twice as likely to kill ourselves versus someone else killing us. When I wake up tomorrow, my biggest risk will be traveling to work, where I am three times more likely to die in a car accident versus being shot.

If I have to climb a ladder while there tomorrow, I will be twice as likely to fall off and die rather than being shot.

My biggest risk in life will be controlling my diet and exercise in an attempt to prevent heart disease. That I can make those claims is proof of our blessings. Many citizens of other countries can't. We, in America, are so fortunate and it is largely because of soldiers like the ones who perished in the Fort Hood tragedy.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Improve County Schools

Our county school board members are now tasked to pick the best Superintendent to lead our school system into the future. They should be asking the candidates their ideas on the fixes necessary to improve both our graduation rates and academic results, so our kids are prepared to pursue either college or vocational training.

Alabama Department of Education statistics say that only one in four eighth graders is proficient in reading and only one in five is proficient in math. Our county kids average at or below those levels. As they fall behind, some drop out before even entering ninth grade. Academically, only two high schools in our county, are ranked in the top 100 of 357 statewide, based on results from the Alabama High School Graduation Exam. This discourages others, who drop out before graduation. In 2012, the state high school graduation rate was 75%. Last year, it dropped to 69%.

Here, West Point led with a graduation rate of 91%, followed by Cold Springs (86), GoodHope (83), Holly Pond (81), Fairview (80), Vinemont (74), and Hanceville (68). This means that, on average, of our county kids that do make it to ninth grade, one in five (20%) are not graduating high school. Will they excel at vocational training?

Additionally, many, who do graduate from our county high schools, have not been prepared for success afterward. Some local students go to Alabama (graduation rate 41%) and Auburn, (only 38% graduate in four years).

Many more attend Wallace State, where, according to their website, the graduation rate is 12% in two, and 31% in three years of college or vocational training courses.

While Cullman's outstanding economic development efforts have been successful in bringing new industries and jobs here to date, that progress cannot continue in the long run, without significant improvements in education.

New, innovative leadership, as well as education reform, are critical to the future success of Cullman County and its citizens.

Let us hope that our school board will have the vision to select a new Superintendent for our ailing county school system, who has a proven record of achieving academic results and whose leadership and experience were forged outside the system they are charged to improve.

Ken Brown
Cullman

CAMP CULLMAN

TWO SESSIONS...
June 2nd-27th & July 7th-Aug. 1st
7:45am - 5:15pm
Base Camp will be at Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center

REGISTRATION BEGINS APRIL 1ST!!
Enroll at the Civic Center
HURRY! SPACE LIMITED TO THE 1ST 50 CAMPERS!!!

For questions, contact wharbison@cullman.org, or call 256-734-9157.

Download the Parent Manual and Forms at www.cullmanrecreation.org

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