SERIES 4 • ISSUE 37 • SEPTEMBER 22, 2014
CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS



CITY GETS NEW RECYCLE TRUCK P2

CULLMAN FIGHTS HUNGER

GRANT BRINGS AMERICORPS VISTAS TO AGRIPLEX TO SERVE COMMUNITY P6



AGRIPLEX

The goal of the Food for Life program that the VISTAs will be assisting with at the Agriplex is to combat obesity and hunger and to promote local farming and agriculture.



KATE MULLANEY/CULLMANSENSE

DISCOVER LOCAL TALENT AT BERKELEY BOB'S COFFEE HOUSE'S OPEN MIC NIGHTS P10

LEAKING FLUID AT CULLMAN MEMORY GARDENS 'UNPLEASANT AT BEST BUT NOT HAZARDOUS' P3

RIDERS AGAINST TEXTING SEEK TO AMEND LAW P4



CONTRIBUTED

FAIR HISTORY REMEMBERING THE 2ND ANNUAL CULLMAN COUNTY FAIR P5

CULLMAN DISTRICT JUDGE KIM CHANEY ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF AADCP

Kate Mullaney
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CULLMAN - Cullman District Judge Kim Chaney was elected President of Alabama Association of Drug Court Professionals at their last conference in Montgomery Alabama.

"I am very proud and honored to have been selected to serve this Association and will continue to work to help all the specialty courts be as effective as possible," Judge Chaney said.

The judge's responsibilities as president of the association

p4

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OFFERS AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE HELP FOR LOW INCOME WOMEN

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN - On Tuesday, October 7, 2014 at 10 a.m., Ms. Cathy Rice will lead a free informational meeting for ladies in the community who need help enrolling in the Affordable Care Act. The meeting will be held at Grace Episcopal Church, which is located at 305 Arnold Street NE, Cullman, AL.

Ms. Rice is working un-

p4



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

During the meeting at Grace Episcopal Church a Federally Certified Navigator will be able to refer women who do not qualify for health insurance through the ACA Marketplace to Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIPS.

Annual Parade Sets Stage for Cullman County Fair

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN - On Saturday, the annual Cullman County Fair Parade strolled through downtown Cullman bringing with it all sorts of thrills and excitement. The streets were thickly lined with anxious men, women and children as much as an hour prior to the start of the parade, which began at 2 p.m. that afternoon.

The Fair Parade is a celebration of the upcoming Cullman County Fair, which is set to open September 25 and run through October 4. It is a great way

p2



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The annual Fair Parade celebrates the coming of the Cullman County Fair.

FLU SHOT CLINICS OFFER AFFORDABLE VACCINATIONS

Chelsea Sparks
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CULLMAN - In and around the Cullman area, there will be several flu shot clinics that will be offering flu shots to the public for reasonable prices. Flu season will be here before we know it, in fact, a few cases have already happened within our community.

The Cullman County Health Department will be hosting two flu shot clinics this season on October 7 and 8. If you need the flu shot at a rock bottom price, then mark these dates on your calendar. The first clinic on the 7th will be at the Wellness Center at Wallace State Community College from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost of the shot will be $5 and is available to ages six months and up. Rhonda Abbott, clinic supervisor for the health department, says that this service is offered to help the

p3

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ADEM GRANT USED FOR NEW RECYCLE TRUCK

Leanne West
Contributor



CONTRIBUTED

Sanitation employee Jeff Bishop, Mayor Max Townson, and Sanitation superintendent Larry Jones stand next to the new recycle truck.

CULLMAN - The City of Cullman Sanitation Department received a new recycle truck funded by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) through a grant from the Alabama Recycling Fund. The truck, a 2014 Freightliner Mini Max, cost $135,000 and was 100% funded by the grant. A container fork truck, at a cost of $59,887, was also obtained and funded through an ADEM grant.

The City of Cullman has been working to increase recycling to 50% in the city. However, to accomplish this goal, proper equipment is needed.

In order to handle the increased volume, an additional recycle truck and another fork container truck was required.

"We have a 2007 recycle truck that we currently use, and a container fork truck that is fourteen years old and showing its age," Sanitation Superintendent Larry Jones explained.

"We are extremely grateful for the grant funding because it will ensure that the City of Cullman's recycle program expands and continues to operate without interruption."

In addition to the recycle truck and fork container truck obtained through the ADEM grant, the City of Cullman has also recently purchased six additional recycle dumpsters to increase the dumpsters which were already placed at all city schools.

These additional dumpsters will be placed in strategic positions for city and county residents to use. Another 1,581 household curb side bins were also purchased.

"We are grateful for this funding from ADEM and are excited to get this new equipment out on the roads," said Mayor Townson.

"As Mayor I would like to encourage everyone in the City to take advantage of the City's recycling program and help us in our efforts to increase recycling in our community. Teach your family, neighbors, co-workers, and friends to recycle!"

Items that can be recycled include cardboard (if cut into smaller pieces), magazines, newspapers, aluminum and tin cans, plastic water bottles, milk jugs, and detergent bottles. Glass items are not accepted in the recycling program.

For further information, contact the Cullman City Sanitation Department at 256-737-7560 or e-mail cityhall@cullmancity.org.

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ZOMBIE RUN TO BENEFIT KARMA IN CULLMAN

Will Hogue
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CULLMAN - If you happen to be at Sportsman Lake Park around 5 p.m. on October 4, you could be in for a spooky surprise. A charity Zombie Run will be held with all proceeds benefitting Karma in Cullman.

Zombies are all the rage right now thanks to pop culture icons like "The Walking Dead" television show and graphic novels, so a few years ago big cities like New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles began putting a twist on charity 5Ks by adding a zombie theme.

Thanks to event organizer, Rachel Bryant, Cullman will join in on the fun this October with its very own Zombie Run at Sportsman Lake Park benefitting the non-profit organization, Karma in Cullman.

The event is open to all ages, but anyone under 18 has to have a parental consent waiver turned in with registration.

The prices for the event vary because each runner is one of three different categories: human, zombie, and zombie hunter.

In order to register in the race as a human, as of now, the cost is $20; as a zombie, $25; and as a zombie hunter, $30.

There will be multiple awards given according to the different categories. The human runners have 4 flags, or "lives", the zombie runners have 2 lives, and the zombie hunters have 1 life.

The zombie hunters can take flags from the zombies, the zombies can take flags from the humans and zombie hunters, and the humans just have to run.

The winners of each group will be the fastest times with the most flags.

There will be food vendors, arts and crafts, a make-up tent for those who want to have their face painted as a zombie for the race, and a bloodmobile for blood donations.

Parade (from Front)

to bring folks from all over of the county together with one goal in mind.... To have a great time!

This year's Cullman County Fair Parade was chocked full of marching bands, beauty pageant winners, horses, decorated cars and candy.... Lots and lots of candy! Children happily plucked pieces of candy from the side of the road and chucked them into their plastic grocery bags, grinning like little opossums the whole time.

"My favorite part about the parade is our school float," said Chloe Bales, sixth grader at Saint Paul's Lutheran School. "The whole school helped color the float, and I just can't wait to see it today," she giggled excitedly.

"I can't wait to see the Southern Starlet's float," smiled Josie Brown, a Hanceville Middle School seventh grader. "I've been twirling for eight years and really love it!"



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Children eagerly collect candy tossed to them.

Kids weren't the only ones excited about today's activities. Adults were just as delighted to be a part of the fun as anyone else.

"It's exciting, especially if you haven't been in a long time," said Brenda Wix, Cullman resident. "It's so much fun - just like the fair! I love the sirens, the people that are in the parade and I really love the horses."

If you missed Saturday's Cullman County Fair Parade, you missed a good one! But you must not miss out on the upcoming Cullman County Fair. For good times and lots of special memories, bring the whole family out to the fairgrounds, located next to Sportsman Lake.

If you or someone you know would like more information about the Cullman County Fair, feel free to visit their webpage at cullmanfair.com or give them a call at 256-734-0661. You can also e-mail them at cullmanfair0@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY-WIDE
YARD SALE & CRAFT FAIR
HERITAGE PARK
SATURDAY, SEPT. 27
15x15 LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE
$10—YARD SALE
$15—CRAFT FAIR

LEAKING FLUID AT CULLMAN MEMORY GARDENS 'UNPLEASANT AT BEST BUT NOT HAZARDOUS'

Noah Chandler
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CULLMAN - Paul Bussman, State Senator District 4, announced the latest round of results from testing at Cullman Memory Gardens, concerning a leakage at the mausoleum.

"Today (Friday) I received word from the Dept. of Public Health regarding the issues at Memory Gardens. They have a reasonable suspicion that the fluid leaking from the vault is from inside the vault. There are many possible causes," a press release stated.

"The most important issue is that the Department of Public Health does not think the leakage is hazardous. It is unpleasant at best but not hazardous. This means that those families that wish to move their loved ones from the site may do so using the normal precautions used at any transfer of a resting place."

Bussman went on to state that he, "will be in contact with the Trustee and hopefully we can get the access necessary to accommodate the families that wish to move a loved one. Now that we have determined the hazard issue, my next issue is to determine our options to fix the roof and clean up the leakage. I will keep you advised as we move forward."



NOAH CHANDLER/CULLMANSENSE

The Department of Public Health has reasonable suspicion that the fluid leaking from the Cullman Memory Gardens vault is from inside the vault and not hazardous.

LOCAL ADVICE TO SAFEGUARD YOUR BUSINESS FROM DIGITAL THIEVES

Chelsea Sparks
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CULLMAN - In our modern times, the biggest threat to any business or non-profit is not a burglar, or at least not in traditional terms. These days, everything is run on computers. Every transaction, filed document, and all employee information are kept on servers that companies depend on to run efficiently. What happens though when those servers are compromised and all your most sensitive data is exposed or used for fraudulent behavior?

Security for your customers and your business is vital for everyone, and luckily there are ways to ensure that. According to Tonya Williams, agent for Farmers Insurance, there are several steps you can take to ensure you stay secure, or have a contingency plan for any technological emergency.

"The first step is to educate employees," said Williams. "Teaching your employees safe internet practices, what your security procedures are, and keeping everyone updated on the latest threats. Anyone can be a victim, even here in Cullman."

You have probably heard about different major security breaches for companies like Target, who had the credit card numbers for thousands of customers stolen and sold on the black market. Another recent target of hackers was the e-mail service Gmail who had almost 5 million e-mail passwords and usernames stolen and published. While these are big companies, Williams warns that some hackers may not go so big, and many are content to hack people right in their own backyards. "Small businesses run risks of losing confidential information," said Williams. "And it only takes one time to ruin a business. That's why another great investment to look into with your insurance, or here at Farmers is cyber liability and data breach expense coverage."

It is because of these new and very real threats that more small businesses and non-profits are buying protection with their insurance companies for peace of mind. For a lot of companies, data is a precious commodity that they cannot afford to lose. That is also why more and more insurance companies are offering better coverage to their clients so that they can rest easy.

"Another important tip for companies and non-profits is to make sure that everything is backed up," Williams said. "More than anti-virus software, backing up confidential information is so important to keeping any business running smoothly if there is a crisis."

While it is a problem that can seem like something we only hear about on the news with large corporations, make no mistake that this type of theft is happening everyday to businesses both large and small. Williams says that choosing the right agency is also vital and thinks that what sets her company apart is the personable service she and her colleagues offer.

"I think we stand out with our customer service," Williams said. "Because we do care, and we answer the phone 24/7. So at 6 p.m. on a Friday afternoon, you are going to talk to me or Andrea. You will always talk to someone you know and who cares first."

For more on the Tonya Williams Agency - Farmers Insurance, visit their blog at backyardsandfenderbenders.tumblr.com or call 256-736-2636.

Vaccinations (from Front)

public stay healthy.

"Public health is here for the health and well being of others, and that is why we offer this shot at a reduced rate," said Abbott.

"So everyone is able to have access to the vaccine. And all you need is $5 or your Medicare and Medicaid card if you would like to file it with them."

For the elderly in our community, there will be many flu clinics being held around the county at local senior centers and town halls.

The shots will be given by several local pharmacies such as Hopper's, Lakeside, and Hospital Discount Pharmacies. The schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, September 23
• 8-9:00 a.m. - Hanceville Senior Center
• 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. - Dodge City Town Hall (basement)
• 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. - Hilltop Senior Center
• 11:00 to 11:30 a.m. - Holly Pond Senior Center
• Noon to 1 p.m. - New Canaan Senior Center

Wednesday, September 24
• 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. - Good Hope Town Hall (basement)
• 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. - Jones Chapel Senior Center (beside fire department)
• 11:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. - Center Hill Senior Center

Thursday, September 25
• 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. - Brushy Pond Senior Center
• 10:45 to 11:30 a.m. - Crane Hill Senior Center
• 11:45 to 12:45 - West Point Senior Center

Friday, September 26
• 9:00 to 9:45 a.m. Colony Senior Center
• 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. – Cullman Senior Center

Tuesday October 7
• 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. - Cold Springs Senior Center

Becky Faulk, office manager for the Cullman County Commission on Aging, says that it is vitally important for senior citizens to receive their shots.

"Getting a flu shot is especially important for our seniors," Faulk said.

"They are more vulnerable to the virus and have an increased risk of complications if they become sick. We hope that one of the locations will be convenient for them to get a flu shot. If not, they can check with their doctor or local pharmacist."

Lastly, if you cannot make it to any of the clinics mentioned above, you can always walk into pharmacies like CVS anytime to receive your shot. While some insurance policies do not cover the flu shot in a pharmacy setting, many do, and it is a great and convenient way to be vaccinated.

There are many options available for every family and schedule. Keeping yourself healthy this flu season is important. In some rare cases it could save a life.

For more information on the flu vaccine or the upcoming clinics, you can contact the health department at 256-734-1030 or the Cullman County Commission on Aging at 256-734-1241.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Program Facilitator needed for local domestic violence intervention program.

Full time, BS degree required. Send resume to: vsoced@vsoccullman.org

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Duties include;Scheduling travel and expense reporting. Coordination of offsite meetings, i.e. booking rooms, developing agendas, send your resume and salary expectations to: sonllyn1@gmail.com

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RIDERS AGAINST TEXTING SEEK TO AMEND LAW

Chelsea Sparks
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CULLMAN - Technology today is a remarkable thing. We can make a call, send an email or take a photograph at any time and in any place. They have brought people closer, and made life easier in so many ways. There is, however, another side to this coin, a side where people's lives are shattered and lives are lost due to distracted driving.

It is an issue that is becoming more and more prevalent. Teens and adults alike are looking down at their phones, when they should be looking up at the road. Fortunately, some Alabamians are trying to do something to make our highways safer.

Riders Against Texting is a group of concerned citizens coming together to help push our state to amend the current laws in place, and become a hands free state.

"We came up with the Riders Against Texting, or R.A.T. because of recent accidents and happenings with texting and driving," Marty Love, a representative from the R.A.T group said.

"And we decided on the word riders because that covers not only the one who is driving the bike, but it covers the passenger."

The movement the group is trying to spread across the state is one of safety and reform.

"Anybody who lives in the state of Alabama that believes that the law as it stands, which is a $25 citation, is ineffective, inappropriate and a joke," said Love. "We want to change the laws in place to stiffen the penalties, make penalties harsher and to make Alabama a hands-free state."

States like Illinois, Nevada, California, New York, and more have already made the move to be a hands-free state. More states are voting on bills to make the same change.

Love and his fellow group members hope to raise awareness and see the currents laws changed to do the same. Sheriff-elect Matt Gentry, and local Senator Paul Bussman, have both shown their support on the issue.

"We have met with our Senator Paul Bussman," said Love. "And he is behind this 100 percent. Matt Gentry is also behind this, and even identifying that the police officers would also be required to be hands-free which he thought was appropriate. It was something that he was willing to look into when he takes office."

"This is a law that is very difficult to enforce," Love stated.

"First of all the citation is only $25 for the first offense. Also, under the current laws, if a police officer sees someone texting and driving they have to subpoena their phone records to prove that they were texting."

When you add up the invasion of privacy for a simple traffic citation, the difficulty of proving anything and the man hours it took to make the ticket stick, it is a very ineffective deterrence.

This is why R.A.T believes that making the move to a hands-free state will be the most cost efficient and easiest way to enforce this law.

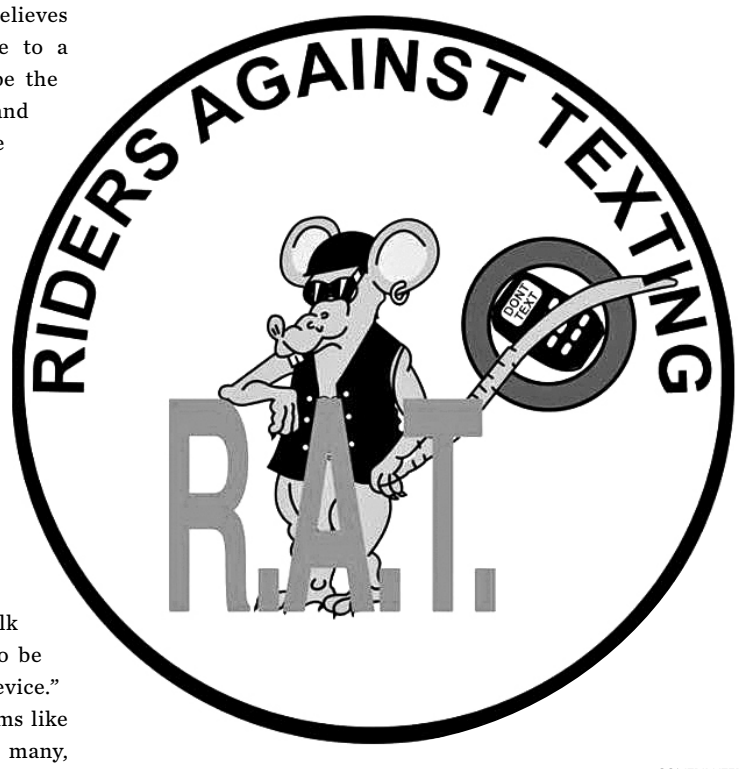
"We are getting petitions signed," Love said. "We are having petitions signed online and on paper. People are taking them to work and getting people to sign petitions that say we as Alabamians are done, and we want safer roads, and we want a hands-free state. If people want to talk and text it will have to be through a hands-free device."

While the issue seems like a distant problem to many, it only takes one moment of someone looking at their phone instead of the road to ruin the lives of two families forever.

It will devastate not only the family of the person who is killed, but the family of the person who caused the needless death of a neighbor.

Buying and wearing a hands-free device is a small price to pay for the safety of people.

For more information on the Riders Against Texting, visit them on Facebook, look up R.A.T Riders Against Texting and like their page.



CONTRIBUTED

Riders Against Texting is a group of concerned citizens that would like Alabama to become a hands free state.

AADCP (from Front)

revolve around training, facilitating grants, promotion, and maximizing drug courts, while maintaining the flexibility individual courts need to work in their different jurisdictions.

"The use of drug courts and other specialty courts as an alternative to incarceration have helped hundreds of individuals address their legal problems while saving the State of Alabama millions of general fund dollars," Judge Chaney said.

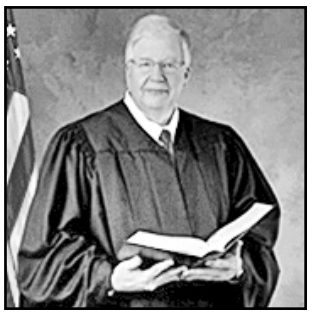
"Drug courts have proven to be efficient and cost effective while giving individuals the opportunity to improve their lives by making better decisions."

The Alabama Association of Drug Court Professionals is made up of Judges, District Attorneys, Defense Attorneys, counselors, Court Referral Officers, and case managers. This association works to help and support the 69 individual Adult Drugs Courts serving 66 counties in the State of Alabama.

It also supports many other Specialty Courts across Alabama including; 16 Family Drug Courts, 15 Juvenile Drug Courts, 5 Veterans Courts, and 10 Mental Health Courts.

"The individuals who graduate the yearlong program have made many positive changes and regained who they were prior to the time addiction stole their lives. Many participants are able to reconnect with family members and it is my hope that they will continue to do well and be productive members of our community," Judge Chaney said.

"These alternative courts are run different than other Courts but they have become very important because programs rarely offer so much benefit to its participants while at the same time saving tax payer money."



CONTRIBUTED

Judge Chaney

Insurance (from Front)

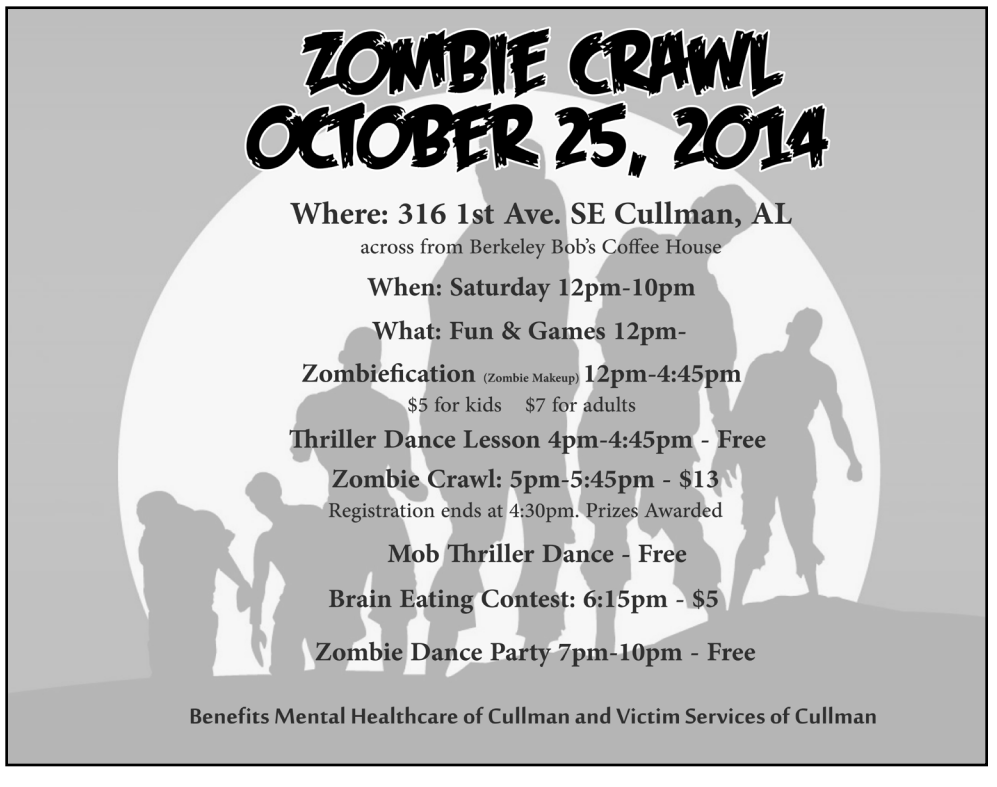
der a grant from the Office of Women's Health, which was awarded to educate and help facilitate enrollment in the Affordable Care Act for the hard-to-reach and underserved women in North Alabama. The next Open Enrollment period will be November 15, 2014 through February 15, 2015. Ms. Rice is a Federally Certified Navigator and because of her training, she can refer women who do not qualify for health insurance through the ACA Marketplace to Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIPS.

The presentation is free and Ms. Rice is willing to work with individuals one-on-one at no cost to the applicant. Her expenses are being paid through the grant. She will be available to female residents of Cullman County throughout the enrollment period. Her contact information will be available at the informational meeting on October 7.

This initial presentation will also allow participants to inform friends and relatives about the services available from Ms. Rice and refer to her as well.

Refreshments will be available at this meeting. The presentation is being made available with assistance from Cullman Area Mental Health, Daystar House, and Grace Episcopal Church.

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256-734-4933
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SUSAN SKINNER ADKISON, R.P.H.
Living Well natural store
Rx Health Mart PHARMACY



FAIR HISTORY: REMEMBERING THE 2ND ANNUAL CULLMAN COUNTY FAIR

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CULLMAN - The folks of Cullman County were all a buzz with the coming of the 1956 Cullman County Fair. The first Cullman County Fair, held the year before, had been considered a huge success and twice as many people turned out to enjoy the fun as was expected.

The festivities began Monday, September 24, 1956 with a full parade at 4 p.m., after the schools let out for the day. High school bands from Cullman, Hanceville, and Hartselle marched proudly down through the middle of town while dozens of silly clowns frolicked alongside doing tricks and tossing candy to the crowd. Lots of colorful floats were scattered throughout the parade, each represented a business or civic club from all over the county.

At 6 p.m., the Cullman County Fair of 1956 officially opened. Adults were charged 50 cents, and children over six years old, 25 cents, to enter the gates at the fair. Once inside, giddy people either wandered over to check the winners of the community exhibits or they went to the other side of the fairgrounds to admire the prized livestock. The younger crowd went straight to the rides and then later to the games. Small groups of teenage girls walked around in their finest poodle skirts and giggled while looking at the boys their age walking around in groups of their own.

Delicious smells that represented the many different foods that were available drifted through the air and landed on the crowd. That alone was enough to cause everyone's tummy to growl in fits of hunger. As a result, the small Lion's Club food stand had people of all shapes and sizes lined up all night. Each person patiently waited for their turn to purchase a hamburger, hotdog, popcorn, candy apples, Coca-Cola and cotton candy.

Over the course of the week, there were many different themes and activities at the fair. On Tuesday, Cullman County's Farmer of 1956 was named. He was chosen by a group of competent judges from a group of Cullman County farmers previously selected for their outstanding achievements for the betterment of farmers.

Wednesday was proclaimed as Governor's Day and Thursday was deemed Family Night. Family Night was really exciting because the family who had the largest representation at the fair that night received a cash prize of $50. With all the big families there that night, it took a while to decide who the winning family would be. Obviously there could be only one winner but great fun was had by all.

Friday was "Fair Day" and every school in the county was out for the day. All school children, as well as their teachers, were invited to the fair with free admission and half priced rides all day long. The night ended with the Miss Cullman County Fair of 1956 Pageant.

Young ladies, one from each school, took turns parading across the beautifully decorated flatbed truck, each wearing their finest, in competition for the coveted title. It was a tough decision, but in the end, congratulations would go out to Miss Pattie Swann of Cullman High School. She was named Cullman County's very first Fair Queen!



CONTRIBUTED

The highlight of the 1956 fair for many was the opportunity to win a brand new 1956 International Pickup Truck.

The fair ended at midnight on Saturday, but only after another exciting day.

The gates opened at 2 p.m., and after a nice long afternoon of entertainment, a drawing was held for a brand new 1956 International Pickup Truck, which was given away at 10 p.m. that night.

In order to be eligible to win the truck, everyone who attended the fair throughout the week was to hold on to their ticket stub. To win, the person's ticket had to match the one that was drawn plus the person had to be present during the drawing.

Needless to say, the fairgrounds were packed with hopeful people, eager to win that shiny new truck.

After the truck was given away, the fair closed its gates at midnight and the excitement was over until the same time next year.

The Cullman County Fair continues to draw lots of people from Cullman and surrounding counties each year. Even though a few things have changed over time, such as the pageant taking place on an actual stage instead of a truck bed, the common theme remains the same. Folks come out to have a good time, support the local farmers, and compete for the first place ribbons that give special bragging rights to all who participate.

MEMORIES OF SACRED HEART SCHOOL PART 1: THROUGH THE EYES OF A LITTLE GIRL

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CULLMAN - I have so many fond memories of being a student of Sacred Heart Elementary School; it's hard to even know where to begin. It was the late '70s and early '80s when I first walked through those old doors and into a whole new world.

I only went to school at Sacred Heart from 1st grade through 6th grade, but I remember reciting the Pledge of Allegiance as the day began religiously. The whole class, most of us still had sleepy looking eyes, all stood up straight and tall and saluted the American flag and then recited the Pledge of Allegiance - with gusto! I must point out one curious thing about the way we did the Pledge though. Toward the end, we never stopped at the words "...one nation, under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all". Instead, we immediately begin singing America, as if it was meant to run together.

On Thursdays we had singing practice and the whole school gathered in the church. We sang our little hearts out while Sister Janet Marie strummed her big ole guitar.

The girls always sang the loudest, trying to out-do the girl next to us. We were little "do-gooders" back then. (My Dad would refer to us as Little Mary-Margarets because we would nearly kill ourselves trying to act holier than the rest.)

We practiced those songs so much, I can still belt them out today without even looking at the words. These days, I have to be careful not to sing too loudly because I now understand it's not a contest anymore.

Free time was great - it meant we could go outside and do whatever we wanted during recess or physical education class. Oh how I loved playing on that old playground! Unfortunately, the whole thing has been replaced by the Family Life Center building.

I suppose the building was something the church needed, but I still miss it sometimes. I am truly thankful I was already grown with children of my own when that old playground was replaced.

I remember having the best time playing outside back then. I must have run a million miles playing games such as Boys Chase Girls and Girls Chase Boys.

All the kids in my class would get together and chase each other all over the place. When one of us got caught, we'd be released and then go back to running around, only to be chased all over again. I'm sure if we had been older, like maybe high school aged, we'd have played that game completely different.

But back then, we were so simple and innocent; the fun was just being able to catch someone of the opposite sex.

There were two sets of monkey bars, and we girls always seemed to gravitate toward them. One set was big, green and very tall - it was reserved for the big kids.

The other set was much shorter and orange. Nobody was allowed to play on the big green bars until they had completely mastered the smaller bars.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Between playing games and sleepily reciting the Pledge of Allegiance students perform their schoolwork at Sacred Heart.

And by mastered, I mean being able to climb all the way up, sit on the top, and then hook your feet under the bars and hang upside down like a vampire bat.

I could hang upside down for days it seemed like. Sometimes when I was really feeling good, I'd unhook one of my feet and just hang there with one leg dangling down and angled out from my body.

Those were the days of innocence and youth. Looking back now, I know for certain things have drastically changed for elementary children of today.

For better or worse, who's to say? I'm just happy to have been part of such a top-notch school and lucky to have been surrounded with wonderful folks back then. Be sure to look for Part 2 of my Memories of Sacred Heart School for other things I'd like to pass along.

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SMITH LAKE CLEAN UP CREW KEY IN KEEPING LAKE BEAUTIFUL

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

SMITH LAKE - Smith Lake has always been a point of pride for Cullman County, and a big economic strong point. Every year thousands of fisherman and tourists come to enjoy the sun, water and fun the lake has to offer. Local businesses enjoy the boost of business in the peak season. However, it takes a lot of hard work from dedicated volunteers to keep those tourists coming back.

The Smith Lake Environmental Preservation Committee in conjunction with Alabama Power's Renew Our Rivers program came together to keep Smith Lake clean last Friday.

Every year a handful of people and a couple of boats dedicate their time to picking up trash and debris that has accumulated in and around the lake.

"We do both a spring and a fall clean up," said president of the Smith Lake Environmental Preservation Committee, Eddie Hand. "The city of Cullman furnishes the dumpsters and the haul off free of charge. We started out many years ago picking up Styrofoam in the lake, and through our efforts and the efforts of the power company, we have gotten most of the Styrofoam off of the lake."

This has been no easy feat for the group over the years, but Hand says that they are proud of what they have accomplished thus far.

"We have had about three clean ups at Smith Lake Park and we have gone all the way around the park, almost to the intersection of Simpson Creek," said Hand. "We usually have more people come out to help in the spring, and the fall clean up we usually have about five people per boat."

This year, however, Hand was pleasantly surprised that they would be getting help from more than their usual bunch.

"We had a great crowd," Hand said. "We had about 30 volunteers. We had Cold Springs High School Bass Fishing Club come help, and Black Warrior River Keepers brought a boat to help, and Leon's Marina gave us two of his employees. Then of course the power company."

Over the years, the group has cleaned up literal tons of trash and debris. A small price to pay, Hand said, to keep Smith Lake the cleanest lake in Alabama.

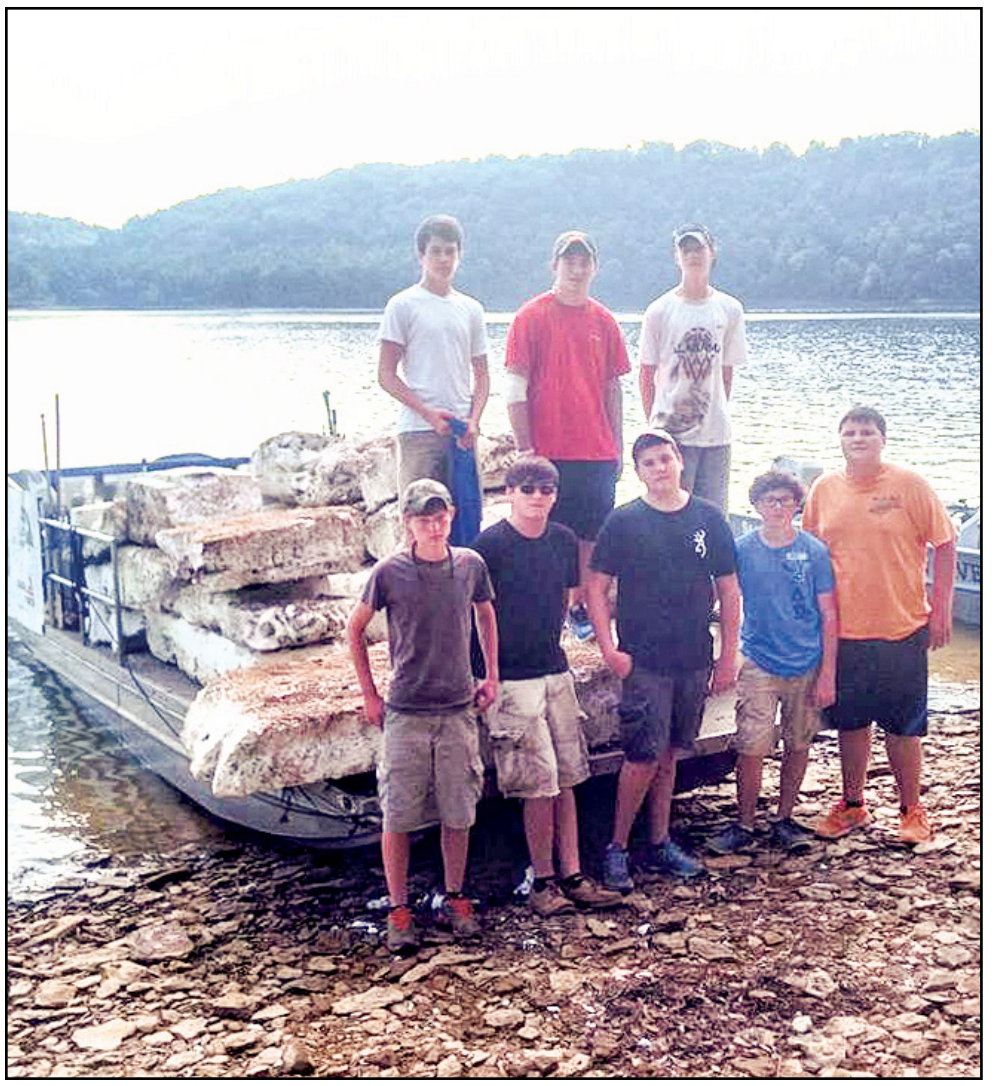
"People forget about things on their docks, and the wind getting up and sweeping those things into the lake," Hand said.

"So we clean it up for safety reasons and Smith Lake is the cleanest lake in the state, and we want to keep it that way. We draw people from Huntsville, Birmingham, Mississippi, and Tennessee, and they come here because it is the cleanest lake in the state."

Hand went on to say that Friday's turnout was no exception in keeping that reputation going.

With the help of the extra boat and volunteers, the crew was able to fill a 30 yard dumpster completely full of trash.

"It was a very successful clean up," Hand said. "It was also wonderful to see some interest from young people. It was so exciting to see it give them a sense of community, and maybe this clean up can carry on for a long time through them."



CONTRIBUTED

As part of a twice a year clean up, a group of approximately 30 volunteers gathered at Smith Lake to fill a 30 yard dumpster with trash from the water.

Hunger (from Front)

Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - The North Alabama Agriplex recently received a grant for their Food for Life program, which has brought AmeriCorps VISTA participants to serve here in Cullman. These good Samaritans are working with the Agriplex to make Cullman a better place.

The volunteers will be serving one-year terms and will receive a living allowance as well as an award at the end of their service.

VISTA stands for Volunteers in Service to America and was founded in 1965 by President John F. Kennedy as a program to fight poverty in America.

AmeriCorps VISTA members serve in nonprofit organizations or public agencies all over the country. They serve for one year at a time to assist low-income communities.

In Cullman, VISTA members are at the North Alabama Agriplex, working in the Food for Life program.

"We are working to combat obesity and hunger in Cullman County along with promoting local farming and agriculture," said Rachel Dawsey, coordinator for the Agriplex.

"We are working to increase school gardens and school gardening programs, adult gardening education, cooking classes and nutrition, and to promote gleaning and food redistribution."

The Food for Life program was established by the North Alabama Agriplex as a way to educate Cullman County on local food choices to fight poverty and hunger.

Cullman has high rates of childhood and adult obesity, like many rural parts of Alabama.

However, we also have a successful agricultural industry with several types of crops and livestock grown locally.

So, the Food for Life program aims to teach the needy part of Cullman how to best use their resources.

For the next three years, the Food for Life program will use five AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers to provide educational programming, crop gleaning, farmer's market coordination, and grant writing in an effort to improve the health of Cullman County.

Currently the North Alabama Agriplex has two VISTA members.

"I'm working on fundraising and grant writing," said VISTA member Kaitlyn Parks. "Cynthia, the other VISTA we have is working on establishing school gardens in five local elementary schools through the Junior Master Gardener curriculum."

Kaitlyn recently graduated from Emory & Henry College in Virginia with degrees in Sociology and Public Policy & Community Service.

"I was unsure about whether or not to commit to graduate school and thought that a year of VISTA would be a great opportunity to live and work and learn in a new community," Parks said.

"I've already learned a lot from the people and the culture of Cullman and am becoming increasingly familiar with the ins and outs of nonprofit work. The Agriplex is doing good work attempting to promote agricultural heritage through education, and we are still looking for three more VISTAs!"

That's right, the Agriplex is still looking for people to join the VISTA program and fight poverty here in Cullman. One of these positions will be working at the WaterWorks Environmental Education Center in Hartselle, AL while the other two positions will be in Cullman at the North Alabama Agriplex.

Time is running out! VISTA applications are due on September 20th with the positions starting November 4th.

To apply, visit https://my.americorps.gov/mp.



REVERSE THE CYCLE TRIATHLON DRAWS UNEXPECTED CROWD

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - On Saturday, a sizable group came together in Cullman to reverse the cycle of poverty with The Link of Cullman County. A Reverse the Cycle Triathlon drew participants from all over the country and marked the first year of many more triathlons to come.

The Link of Cullman County is a faith based, nonprofit organization whose sole purpose is to help those in need to get the resources they need to be successful. Bo Shirey, board member at the Link said that this triathlon is all about raising money to help those in need reverse the cycle of poverty.

"The Link is trying to break the cycle," Shirey said. "We started the triathlon and then decided to do a reverse triathlon, because it goes along with what we here at The Link do. We strive to reverse the cycle of poverty."

The Link will use the funds raised from the event to pay for their many programs they have in place to help educate and help those living in poverty, and even before the cycle begins by teaching children from an early age.

"We teach a class called Jobs for Life in the jails, and we teach a financial leadership class in almost every school. It costs about $10-12 per person to teach this class in the schools. When you think about how many kids that is, it takes a lot to teach these classes. We also teach the jobs for life class at the Foundry."

The Link also offers career coaching, and helping others to learn English as a second language. When a person walks into The Link asking for help, the goal is to help that person find a successful job so that they can live well for the rest of their lives.

The widely successful triathlon has helped to ensure that these programs stay in place to continue enriching our community. When the reverse triathlon was started, the goal was to get 100 participants. At the end of the day, The Link blew that number out of the water by doubling it to 200 participants.

"We had over 200 participants and more than doubled our goal which was great," said Shirey. "We also raised approximately $20,000, and our participants ranged in ages from 6 to 79 years old. Eight different states were represented with people as far as Ohio and St. Louis who came to the race."

The adult race consisted of an 8-mile bike ride through Cullman, a 2-mile run, and swimming eight laps in the outdoor pool at the Aquatics Center. Another important component in making the event a successful one were the generous sponsors.

"We couldn't have done this without our sponsors," said Shirey. "Peoples Bank was our main sponsor. We also were sponsored by Cullman Regional Medical Center, Encore Rehab, Urgent care of Cullman, Cullman Internal Medicine, and Valley Heating and Air were all some of our main sponsors." Shirey went on to say that many people were already asking if there would be another triathlon next year, and when it would be. Some experienced participants were very impressed with the first time event's organization over all. With $20,000 raised in funds, it is safe to say that this event will be around for years to come, and that The Link of Cullman County will continue their fight against poverty.



CONTRIBUTED

The Link's Triathlon raised about $20,000.

CULLMAN COUNTY FAIR PAGEANT

Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Representatives from the eight Cullman County high schools will compete on an equal basis for a $1,500.00 Scholarship Award beginning at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, September 30.

The winner will also receive a hand-finished, natural-color portrait awarded by "Photography By Theresa Burns" of Cullman, and a diamond pendant from Doug Doggett Jewelers of Cullman.

The first runner up will receive a $1,000.00 scholarship given by the Fair Association. The second runner-up will receive a $500.00 Scholarship given by Cullman Lions Club. Wallace State will give a one year scholarship in the field of performing arts to the winner of the Talent portion of the contest.

2014 Miss Cullman County Fair Queen Contestants: Megan Gambrill, Holly Pond H.S.; Lexi Bell, West Point H.S.; Tiffany Bell, Hanceville H.S.; Destiny Lansford, Vinemont H.S.; Josie Oliver, Cullman H.S.; Hannah Shaddix, Good Hope H.S.; Mallory Nichols, Cold Springs H.S.; Taylor Edge, Fairview H.S.



CONTRIBUTED







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.

Bosom Buddies Support Group
The Bosom Buddies Support Group offers support to individuals affected by Breast Cancer. The group will hold its next meeting on Monday, August 18 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Cullman Regional Medical Centers Depot Room in the Community Education Center located in Professional Office Building 2 (1890 AL Highway 157, Cullman, AL 35058).

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.

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.

'Women's Community Prayer' Group Meeting
All interested women of all faiths and churches are invited to attend the newly formed 'Womens' Community Prayer' Group meeting which meets at 10 a.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in their Chapel. This prayer ministry is open to women of all churches and faiths who wish to pray for our families, our city and our country. For additional information please contact Nancy Spurgeon, 256-737-0580. This prayer group also is open to those who would like to participate but cannot attend. They are welcome to join as 'Partners in Prayer'. Please call and get connected.

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.

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.

Church Group Wednesday Nights at CWAC
Youth groups, Sunday School Classes and other Church groups are invited to take part in 'Church Group Nights at Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center every Wednesday night from 6 p.m. until 11 p.m. Please call 256-775-SWIM (7946).

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.

'Celebrate Recovery' at Hanceville First Baptist Church
There will be a 'Celebrate Recovery' meeting tonight starting at 7 p.m. at Hanceville First Baptist Church. Childcare will be available. Additional info Church office at 256-352-9150. Open to all!

Ageless Grace Fitness Class
Come join in the Ageless Grace Fitness Class held each Thursday evening starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Cullman Civic Center. Leader Ann Caretti will show attendees the latest fitness tips available. The event is sponsored by Cullman Park and Recreation Department. Call 256-734-9157 for more information.

Good Hope Farmer's Market
Good Hope Farmers' Market is now open for local farmers to sell their produce from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Thursdays. This market is located in Good Hope's Hathcock Park. Everyone welcome to shop.

'Root Ministry' at Abundant Grace Church
There is a weekly meeting each Thursday night starting at 6 p.m. 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.

Dulcimer Classes
The Cullman City Parks & Recreation Senior Spirit Program is offering Dulcimer classes beginning July 11th. Classes will be held at the Donald E. Green Sr. Center on Fridays at 1 p.m. and taught by Craig Mann. Cost for the class is $10 for an hour. For more information or to register for the class contact Angie Jochum or Catherine Hasenbein at 256-734-4803.

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.

Saturday

Good Hope Farmer's Market
Good Hope Farmers' Market is now open for local farmers to sell their produce from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Saturdays. This market is located in Good Hope's Hathcock Park. Everyone welcome to shop.

'Pawgraphying Dog Maxnificent' to Appear at Deb's Bookstore
Come meet Maxnificent, the 'Pawgraphing Dog', who is the subject of his owner's book! "Maxnificent!, a great pyrenees dog, and owner, Dianne Burch, will be at Deb's Bookstore today from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. meeting and greeting folks and signing her books for attendees. Sponsored by Deb's and a local animal rescue group, funds raised will benefit the care of local animals, and in addition there will be a 'pet adoption' station set up in the store's parking lot.

Laughter Yoga at the Cullman Civic Center
Everyone is invited to take part in 'Laughter Yoga' classes each Saturday morning starting at 10 a.m. Donations accepted but no set fee is charged. Come start your weekend out with some great 'laughs'! Please call 256-734-9157 for additional information.

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.

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LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT
Sponsored by Busy Bee Café

Monday
• Little Women auditions for The Arts of Dixie
• 79 cent wings at Rodney G's Hickory Grill from 6-9 p.m.

Tuesday
• Pickin' Under the Pavilion at the Senior Center at 6:30 p.m.
• Living Landscapes program at the North Alabama Agriplex at 6 p.m.
• Square Dancing Lessons at East Point Community Center from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
• Kayaking lessons at the Cullman Wellness and Aquatics Center at 6 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.
• Trivia Night at Rodney G's at 7 p.m.
• Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-7 p.m.

Wednesday
• Karaoke Night at Grumpy's at 7 p.m.
• Musician Craig Edwards at Brothers at 7 p.m.
• Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-7 p.m.
• Karaoke Night at Cadillac Ron's at 7 p.m.
• Ladies' Night at Cadillac Ron's from 5-8 p.m.

Thursday
• Little Women auditions for The Arts of Dixie
• Cullman County Fair all day at Sportsman Lake Park
• Kayaking lessons at the Cullman Wellness and Aquatics Center at 6 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.
• Open Mic Night at Brothers from 8 p.m. to close
• Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-7 p.m.
• Karaoke Night at Cadillac Ron's at 7 p.m.

Friday
• Little Women auditions for The Arts of Dixie
• Cullman County Fair all day at Sportsman Lake Park
• Live Music at Brothers and Moe's
• Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-6 p.m.
• Live Music at Cadillac Ron's from 8 to close

Saturday
• Cullman County Fair all day at Sportsman Lake Park
• Live Music at Brothers and Moe's
• Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-6 p.m.
• Live Music at Cadillac Ron's from 8 to close

Sunday
• Cullman County Fair all day at Sportsman Lake Park

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ALA. DUBBED MOST DANGEROUS STATE FOR CYCLISTS: CCPD CHIEF URGES PUBLIC TO BE RESPECTFUL

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - A recent report from the League of American Bicyclists stated that Alabama was the most dangerous state in America for cyclists. The report is conducted annually and is based on several different aspects of safety including legislation, enforcement, policies, infrastructure, education and planning. For many cyclists in the state, this news comes as little surprise, and many cyclists in the state have been asking for more traffic laws to make Alabama's roads safer.

While there are many nuances to this issue, Chief Randy Culpepper of the Cullman City Police Department says that taking some basic precautions as the cyclist and behind the wheel can make all the difference.

"There is always the possibility of an accident when you mix cars and traffic," Culpepper said. "For the driver of a vehicle, and the bicyclist both, the best thing to do is keep your head on a swivel. Watch out for that person that may not be paying attention. One of the biggest things to help make yourself seen and more noticeable is to wear high visibility clothing."

High visibility clothing and gear can be invaluable for safety when you're riding in residential and high traffic areas. This is especially vital when riding at dusk or nighttime when a driver might not see you until it is too late. There are now many different ways to make yourself seen on the road, including headlights made specifically for your bike.

Another obvious, but often overlooked rule for youngsters in the city is helmets.

While adults may choose to not wear a helmet, children are required by law to wear a helmet while riding their bikes. With Cullman's population and traffic density on the rise, parents need to be sure that both they and their children are wearing a helmet when riding anywhere in the city.

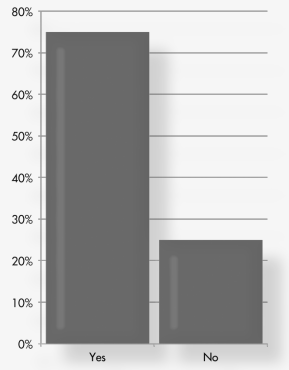
"If you're riding for exercise and not for leisure, then scout your route," Culpepper said. "Look for grates that might catch your wheel, dogs that might run out, and choke points on the road where traffic is forced to the edge of the road, like a bridge."

Here in Cullman, we have many recreational cyclists as well as children. It is a great way to get outside, get some exercise, and spend time with friends and family. However, road rage from impatient drivers toward cyclists has led to several accidents across the state. Even clipping a bike a little can have dire consequences. This is why Chief Culpepper's main statement to the public is to remain respectful and aware.

"Be respectful of each other," said Culpepper. "You know a lot of times we are not looking for bikes, and we are not as adept to picking them out because we are watching for cars to pull out in front of us. It is a mindset, like when school is back in session after being out all summer, people have to readjust to seeing kids walking to school. So we just need to be aware that the bicyclists are there, and that we need to respect them."

Poll

Do you think a photo I.D. should be required to vote?



This Week's Poll

Are either Alabama or Auburn ready for a national championship run?

Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

READY YOUR FAMILY THIS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Events like the deadly tornadoes of April 27, 2011 are not days that we as a county want to remember. Homes, businesses, and lives were lost that day across the state, and we as a community recovered together, stronger and united. After that day, the thought of having a plan in place for disaster became a top priority for many families.

September is National Preparedness Month where families and businesses are taking action to help their communities be more prepared for any disaster.

From natural disasters to manmade ones, a plan can be made for almost any situation. Matt Carrier, the disaster program manager for the Cullman Chapter of American Red Cross, says that the simple things can be a big help.

"Make sure you have insurance on your belongings," Carrier said. "You would be surprised how many people do not have it. Making sure you have structure and contents insurance, or renter's insurance will be a huge benefit to them. It is there no matter what the disaster is, and gives you something to start over with that you would otherwise not have."

Of course, as anyone who was around during that tumultuous April 27th day can tell you, being prepared when the power is out for days or even weeks is not something insurance will cover.

It is in these instances that everyone has to take different precautions.

Carrier says that in situations of evacuation, a to-go kit is what you need to be prepared.

"In times when you may need to evacuate quickly a to-go kit is always good to have on hand," said Carrier.

"Filled with items like a change of clothes, medications or first aid kit, water and some light food; whatever you feel you might need to survive on for a day or two."

The theme for this year's preparedness month is Resolve to be Prepared, with the concentration being on including your children in your preparations so that they can be informed on what they need to do in a disaster situation as well.

The website Ready.gov has some excellent resources on helping families teach their children how to be prepared by asking three simple questions: who to call, where to meet and what to pack. It is an idea that Carrier agrees with when planning with your family.

"If you have a family, then you need to have a family reunification plan," Carrier stated. "Not all disasters happen when everyone is at home. So if the kids are at school and the parents are at work, they really need to have a reunification plan."

Indeed it is all too easy to for loved ones to lose contact with one another when chaos has ensued. Having a plan for you, your children and even your pets can bring peace of mind to parents, and give children a sense of confidence and security.

Take a moment this month to sit down with your loved ones and come up with a set of plans that answer those three important questions for any situation: who to call, where to meet and what to pack.

For more information, please visit www.Redcross.org or www.Ready.gov.



cullman city parks & recreation

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

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

- **Community-Wide Yard Sale & Craft Fair** at Heritage Park, Saturday, September 27 at 7am. 10x10 and 15xz15 spaces will be available for $15, with lots of traffic through the park with tournaments in soccer and baseball during the event. To book your space, call 256-739-9931. Space is limited, call soon to reserve your spot.
- **Youth Outdoor Adventure Program:** Program will be held Saturdays from October 11-November 15 starting at 9:30am each Saturday. Program will explore outdoors with hiking, paddling, rock climbing, rappelling, and more. Cost is $75 for the 6 weeks, which includes all trips in and out of town. Space is limited to the first 30 boys and girls ages 7-14 who sign up. Registration is open now at the Cullman Civic Center. Call 256-734-9157 for more details.
- **Youth Basketball Registration:** October 1-20 at the Cullman Civic Center. Boys and girls ages 4-14. Cost is $90 which includes season, jersey, and end of year trophy. Call 256-734-9157 for more information.
- **Youth Basketball Cheerleading Registration:** Registration will be open Oct. 1-20 at the Cullman Civic Center. Cost is $90 which includes season, uniform, and end of the year trophy. Call 256-739-9931 for more information.
- **Carolina Beach Shag Dance Class** Thursdays in September from 6:30-8pm at the Donald E. Green Sr. Center. $7 per class or $20for 4 weeks.
- **A Nashville Christmas Sr. Spirit Travel** will take place Nov. 19-20, payment due October 1. $350/dbl. or $400/single. Home of stars tour, theater, shows, 3 meals included, motor coach transportation, and more. Call 256-734-4803 for more information.
- **Latin, Swing, and Ballroom Dancing Classes** at the Cullman Civic Center, Thursdays at 6:30pm for beginners and 7:30pm for advanced classes. Register at the Civic Center or call 256-734-9157 for more information.
- **Rock Climb at Hurricane Creek Park!** Come join the 1st Time Rock Climbing program, Saturday mornings at Hurricane Creek Park. Group rates are available, and no experience is required! Call ahead to reserve your spot at 256-734-2125.

What's Online

Vinemont Middle School Now Has Its Own News Team

Mandy Redding, technology teacher at Vinemont Middle School, has much more equipment at her disposal this school year thanks to purchases made by the VMS administration. The technology department at VMS is becoming highly equipped to handle the...



qrne.ws/255

Winning streak continues for Good Hope Middle School football program

Good Hope is the reigning Cullman County Middle School football champion. Defeat has not been a part of the Raider program for the past two plus seasons. The winning streak for the Raiders grew to 17 games Monday night as they ran past Holly Pond 38-12...

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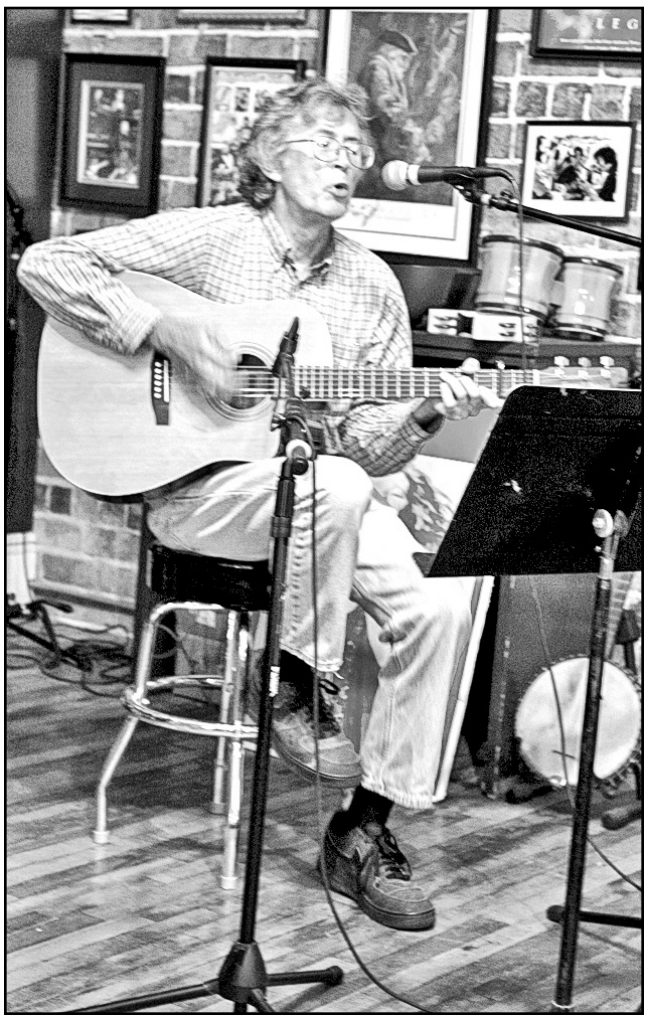
Cullman County Seeks to Regain Right of Way at Ryan Creek Marina

Local residents of Cullman County recently met at the Brushy Pond Community Center to discuss an ongoing legal battle that is affecting many in the area. Cullman County Associate Commissioner Stanley Yarbrough met with local concerned citizens along with Cullman County...

qrne.ws/257

DISCOVER LOCAL TALENT AT BERKELEY BOB'S COFFEE HOUSE'S OPEN MIC NIGHTS

Kate Mullaney
kate@cullmansense.com



KATE MULLANEY/CULLMANSENSE

Every first and third Monday, Berkeley Bob's Coffee House hosts Open Mic Night from 7-9 p.m.

CULLMAN - Last Monday night at Berkeley Bob's, Open Mic Night was a proud display of Cullman's talented people. For some, it was a chance to show off his/her stage presence, and for others it was an opportunity to sit back and soak up some local music. This unique event is held every first and third Monday at Berkeley Bob's from 7-9 p.m.

Old and young, rock and country, Open Mic Night was packed with a variety of people and styles. Berkeley Bob's was packed with an audience lounging on couches, sipping coffee at tables, and relaxing on comfy chairs.

The evening began with a brief welcome from the owner of Berkeley Bob's, Bob Keefe. There were 15 artists performing, and each had the opportunity to sing two songs, original or cover.

First up was a clever man named Carlo. He began with a story about running over road kill on a recent road trip.

He sang an original song inspired by his trip called "Dead Skunk in the Middle of the Road" and then went on to sing that it was "stinking up the highway heavens".

Carlo had the audience laughing, clapping, and even singing along – all while singing a cappella.

Another notable performer at last Monday's open mic night was a singer/songwriter named Gary Glover. He performs frequently at Berkeley Bob's and never fails to wow the crowd.

"I'm America's undiscovered songwriter," he began with a smile.

Glover began with an original song about a young women he met in Nashville whose loved one had recently passed away.

The song was called "Another Piece of Heaven" and was a beautiful prayer for this young woman.

Glover has a light acoustic style with a smooth voice that's quiet but strong.

A teenage boy named Kaleb with a long ponytail soon took the stage. He wore a plaid button down over a band T-shirt with shorts and combat boots.

He strummed his guitar a few times before looking into the crowd and humorously saying into the microphone, "My English teacher is here... that's great."

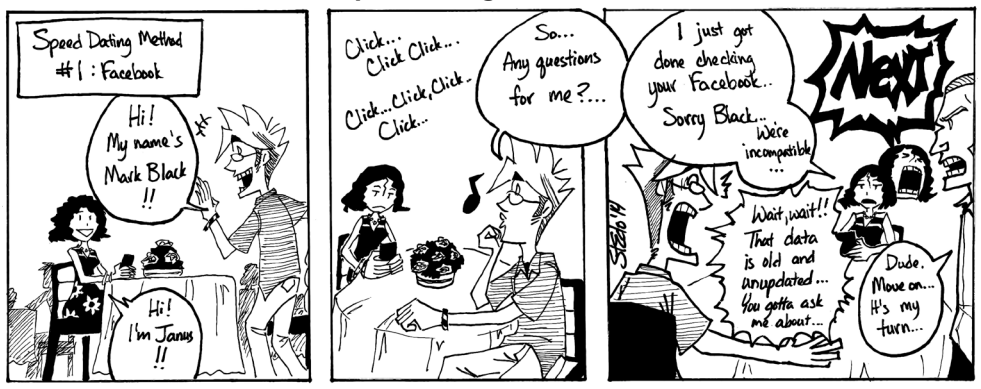
Kaleb covered "Where Are You Going?" by the Dave Matthews Band, as well as "Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town" by Pearl Jam.

He had a deep voice, which was quiet and soft in the Dave Matthews cover but loud and belty during the Pearl Jam rendition.

Discover Cullman's hidden talent at the next Open Mic night at Berkeley Bob's and be a part of this music loving crowd!

Comics

WHITE & BLACK • **"Speed Dating: Facebook Method"** • st.edo@cullmansense.com



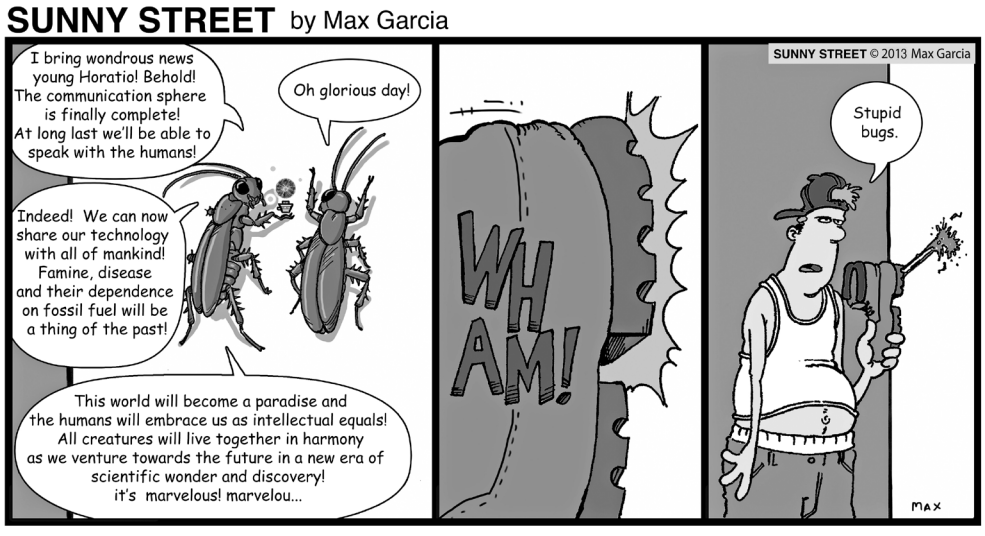
MAMA'S BOYZ www.jerrycraft.net **JERRY CRAFT**



Green Pieces by Drew Aquilina



SUNNY STREET by Max Garcia



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Pets of the Week

Mercury

Hello! My name is Mercury, and I am about 4 months old. I am a believed to be a Feist mix. I am a stray but will be available for adoption on 9/24/14 at 2:15 p.m. I am full of life and I love to play. I am ready to meet my new forever companion.



Mojo

Hello! My name is Mojo, and I am about 2 years old. I am believed to be a Yorkie mix, and I currently weigh 9.5 lbs. I am spirited and enjoy company.

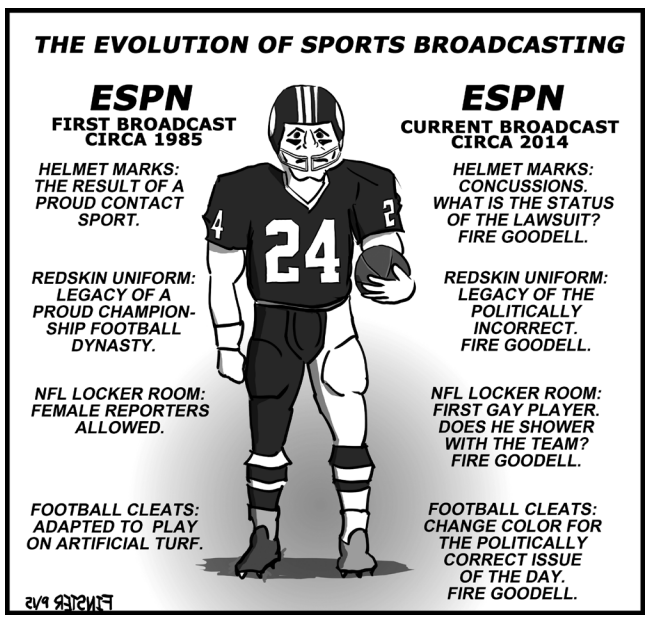


ADOPT THESE PETS TODAY

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 Cartoons





Inspired by Jerome Sessini's photos from the crash site of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 in Ukraine

HOW ARE WE DOING?

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OPINION

THE PRESIDENT & CONGRESS SHOULD WORK TOGETHER ON MILITARY INTERVENTION

Lee H. Hamilton
Contributor

In his speech recently outlining his plans to use military force against the jihadists of the Islamic State, President Obama gave Congress only passing mention. "I have the authority to address the threat from ISIL," he said. "But I believe we are strongest as a nation when the president and Congress work together."

He's right, of course. But that's not the half of it.

Our process for deciding to use force has not caught up with these dangerous times. It has been decades since Congress asserted any meaningful role — its members prefer to avoid a potentially difficult political vote, let the President take the lead, and then criticize him if he was wrong.

There are certainly occasions when the President must act alone. If we've been attacked or hostilities are imminent or some emergency presents itself for which force is the only response, we'd expect the President to respond effectively.

But there are powerful political reasons for making the decision to use force abroad a joint one with Congress in all but emergencies.

When our nation must deal with controversial, complicated questions, there is great value to making the President articulate his analysis of the situation and the reasons for his decisions, and to test that thinking beyond close advisors who naturally tend to support him. The best place to do so is in Congress.

Moreover, military action supported by both the President and Congress carries more legitimacy at home and more conviction abroad.

The U.S. is in a far stronger position before the world if it is clear that the branches of government are unified and that we are speaking with one voice as a nation.

It is common wisdom that our Constitution is ambiguous on war powers, since it makes the President the commander in chief, yet gives Congress the ability to declare war. In a sense, though, the Constitution's message is anything but ambiguous: by giving a role to each branch, it clearly considers the use of force to be a shared decision.

This imposes a responsibility on Congress. Congress cannot be a bystander when it comes to the grave decision to use our military abroad.

It, too, needs to take ownership of decisions to use force, for the good of the American people's understanding and acceptance of the issues at stake, and for the benefit of the nation's profile abroad.

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

SO YOU WANT TO WRITE A BOOK: WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

Most people make the statement, "I should write a book," at some point in their lives, yet how many of those people actually follow through and write one? If you are thinking about writing your own book, the time has never been better.

Independent authors, or more commonly called, indie authors and independent publishing are all the rage. Traditional publishing companies are scrambling to adjust as the new authors flood the market with everyone subject you can imagine.

When I wrote my book, "Jokers & Dandies", I knew from the beginning I would self publish it, which in turn made me an indie author.

I chose this path because it allowed me complete control of my book, and by choosing to self publish, it didn't cost me anything.

Yes, it was completely free! But just because it didn't cost me anything to upload my book to Amazon.com, didn't mean it was easy.

In fact, a lot of work goes into getting your book ready to publish.

Remember, when you self-publish, you have to do everything a publishing company does! Editor? Yes, you are it! Graphic designer? You guess it, you are! Marketing? That's your job too!

Get ready to work for yourself, because you will be working hard. I do believe however that with time, patience and a sense of humor, you are sure to succeed.

I put off writing until I was an adult because I always assumed that because I wasn't the best English student in school, I just wasn't allowed to write. Pretty silly, huh? I don't want you to make the same mistake I made.

If you want to write a book, then go for it! The hardest part is getting your story down in writing.

Once you've got your initial draft down, the rest is just a step-by-step process.

It pays to do some research in advance. Go to your local library there are plenty of books available on the subject. Read articles and blogs online.

My #1 hint: remember to back up your manuscript from time to time as you go along. Make sure to save your work before stopping at the end of the day!

Once you have written your book, have at least four or five different people read it and make suggestions and edits. When you get these edits back, work on your manuscript according to those edits and suggestions, then have another person or two reread and critique your work. This will go back and forth several times until your book is as close to perfect as possible.

Because I only know how to publish through CreateSpace, a division of Amazon, I only know their system.

Formatting, no matter what platform you use, can be a bit tricky and can be very time consuming. It pays to find out everything you can in advance. Once you have everything formatted, you can easily upload your book to CreateSpace and Kindle.

"As a self-publisher, the interior text for your manuscript could be a huge thorn in your side," explained Reba Ponder Weiss, Indie Author. "The good news is—it doesn't have to be. With a little preparation in advance you can save yourself a lot of heartache and wasted time."

After the formatting is complete, the next step is to upload your book to CreateSpace. There is no charge for this and you have the option of having your book available in both print and Kindle versions.



CONTRIBUTED

Kreps

The next step is to get the word out and market the heck out of it! It is your job to see that people know about your book. Social media and the internet provide a perfect opportunity to promote your book to the world.

In this article, I have just scratched the surface and did not go into lengthy details that are involved in self publishing. For more information, feel free to contact me at sharon@cullmansense.com or go to www.CreateSpace.com.

If you or someone you know would like more information about Cullman's own Reba Ponder Weiss, feel free to read her blog about self-publishing at her website: www.rebaponderweiss.com.

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