SERIES 4 • ISSUE 48 • DECEMBER 15, 2014
CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS



SANTA COMES TO RELAY FOR LIFE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL P6

SHOP WITH A COP IS ALL THEY WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

Chelsea Sparks
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CULLMAN - A year of work paid off for the Cullman City Police Department on Saturday when they gave a little extra help to local children and families this Christmas.

The Shop With a Cop program has now finished its second year, and the results have been nothing short of amazing, according to Officer Adam Clark who organizes the event.

"Things went really well," said Clark. "We ended up having 24 kids total. Six of those were unable to attend, so we had 18 kids go shopping with us today. For those that couldn't make it, we volunteer shopped for them and parents can still pick up their children's toys."

All the children and cops went on their shopping spree together at Kmart, who Clark says has been a huge supporter of the program.

"Kmart has been wonderful and they go out of their way to help us out," he said. "They have snacks and drinks for the kids and also make sure that we have our own registers open. They really take care of us and had extra people around to help us out."

With the passing of big supporter Mitch Smith after the last Shop With a Cop event, the Cullman Police Department had to come up with new ways to raise more money and

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CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

After a Kmart shopping spree, the excited children could barely sit still when they were surprised by Santa and Mrs. Claus.

CHANGE IS BREWING AT BERKELEY BOB'S COFFEE HOUSE P6



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL AND MARKET CELEBRATES A GERMAN TRADITION P7

LONG SOUGHT TRAFFIC LIGHT MAKES DODGE CITY HIGHWAY SAFER P2

CULLMAN PHONE & TABLET FIXES YOUR BROKEN ELECTRONICS P3

GOOD HOPE CHRISTMAS PARADE



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The Boy Scouts marched along with several other local organizations during the parade.

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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GOOD HOPE - A thrilling Christmas parade strolled down Highway 69 last Saturday for all the folks near and far to enjoy. Santa Claus lead the way as Herman Reid, Good Hope's first Mayor, and the parade's Grand Marshal followed closely behind.

The Good Hope Raider Band provided the music and dressed in bright red sweatshirts for the occasion. They marched proudly and played their instruments with enthusiasm. Fire engines followed behind the band, blasting their sirens and honking

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MUD CREEK FESTIVAL RAISES OVER $2,700 FOR HANCEVILLE SCHOOLS

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HANCEVILLE - The annual Mud Creek Arts and Crafts Festival showcases the works of local artists. The money raised from the festival is given to local schools. Educators are being creative in using their funds to encourage art, music, and drama in their school.

The arts department in many schools can be diminishing due to extensive budget cuts throughout the state. That is why it is important for communities and organizations to take an interest to help these programs whenever possible. The committee of the Mud Creek Festival is doing just that, and Tuesday morning they were doling out the checks.

"This was our fifth year," said Margie Burkart, committee member for Mud Creek and representative of

p7

GIVE A GIFT TO YOUR COMMUNITY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

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CULLMAN - Christmastime is the season of giving and several organizations in our community are making it easy. Whether you help a local school by purchasing a student's homemade ornament, donate to a food drive, or sponsor a family, there are many ways to help your community this Christmas. Some of the organizations holding activities include the Cullman County Child Development Center, Warehouse Discount Grocery, and Karma in Cullman.

Cullman County Child Development Center

The students at the Cullman County Child Development Center made handmade Christmas tree ornaments to sell in their 2nd Annual Christmas Ornament Fundraiser. The ornaments are hanging on a tree at the main office of Peoples Bank where they can be purchased for $10 now through Friday, January 2, 2015. The funds raised by ornament sales will go to meet specific needs within their school.

Stephanie Tankersley, a teacher at CCCDC said,

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LONG SOUGHT TRAFFIC LIGHT MAKES DODGE CITY HIGHWAY SAFER

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DODGE CITY - Safety is important for any town, and Dodge City has recently taken a step to make theirs safer. A new traffic light has been put up on Highway 69 that runs straight through the town. The local government has been trying for years to achieve this goal, and on December 19, they will have finally completed it.

"The light will be on Highway 69 and Howard Circle," said Mayor Tawana Canada. "We had been trying for about 8 years to get this traffic signal and to get the State of Alabama to approve it."

Since the light is intersecting with a state highway, it was up to the State of Alabama to approve the action to put the light up. Mayor Canada said that there has been a need for the light for some time with the large trucks that come through the city on a regular basis.

"It took a long time to get it approved," she said. "But we needed it, because with the trucks entering from Dodge City Travel Center it was becoming unsafe. They have deadlines they have to meet, and they are pulling out in front of people 3 and 4 at a time, and we understand that it was making for a very unsafe situation."

While the main concern was the large trucks, the Mayor went on to say that it in no way diminishes their great gratitude for the truckers' business.

"We truly appreciate their business," said the Mayor. "We want them to feel welcome, and to continue to do business, but our number one priority is the safety of everyone."

Dodge City paid half of the costs for the light to be put up which amounted to $40,000. The state was responsible for half of the light since it intersects on a state highway.

The town of Dodge City is still responsible, however, for the maintenance and electric costs for the light.

The town has been fortunate up until this point that the wrecks that have occurred have not ended in fatalities. With the new installation of the light, residents can rest easier knowing it is even safer now.

The light is currently up, and will be flashing yellow until the 19 of December when it will become fully operational.

LIFE RECOVERY CLASS TREATS ADDICTION SPIRITUALLY

Katie Dansby
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CULLMAN - Jeff Robertson, Missions and Outreach Pastor at Temple Baptist Church, meets with a Life Recovery class every Friday night and Sunday morning. The class focuses on certain situations that people deal with and helps them recover from addictions or negative events in their lives.

According to Robertson, "Basically it's just an outreach program for people with addictions." He went on to say that addictions can vary from relationships to alcohol.

He said that it is easy for people to pigeonhole addictions as only being drug or alcohol related, but the class is built to help people with anything they may be struggling with.

"Anything that you need to recover from," Robertson said. That is what the class helps with. He said that some people also need help recovering from tragedies such as the loss of loved ones.

Jeff has been teaching the class for a little over a year, and it was in effect for a couple of years prior to when he started.

When he began teaching the class, the average attendance was about 30 people and it has doubled since then.

"Our program is different than what you would get from an AA meeting. We don't do open forum talking. Ours is discipleship and a life skills type of program, and scripture is the bulk of what we use," Robertson said. According to him the biggest obstatcle with people in recovery is to changeing their thinking. He went on to say that from a biblical stand point, the input of the Holy Spirit can change people.

Robertson uses various types of teaching material, but explained how the class works, "Generally, I usually have some type of series going."

A scripturally based 12-step program and a life skills series are among the things he teaches. He said that everything he teaches is scripture based.

"Nothing replaces scripture," he said. Robertson said that he is extremely practical in his approach with the class and emphasized that recovery is a marathon. "Recovery is work. There is no magic formula," he said.

Robertson concluded by saying, "Anybody is welcome." He encourages anyone to come who is in need of support and scriptural based wisdom.

The Sunday morning class typically consists of half of the attendees as work release inmates from the county jail and the other half are families from the community.

Robertson picks up the work release folks on a bus every Sunday morning as approved by the jail and brings them to the class.

He said that on Sunday mornings, he repeats what he taught from the previous Friday evening.

The Sunday morning class meets during the 9:45 a.m. service and then they attend the 11:15 a.m. service together.

In addition to the class, the program holds a couple of large events each year including a block party and a banquet.

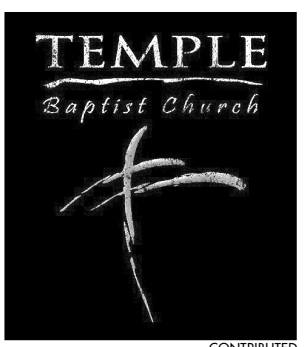
The block party is typically held in the spring or early summer. They set up tables outside and have special music to enjoy.

The banquet is usually held in January and according to Robertson, there is excellent food. He said that each of these events are always a lot of fun and draw in a lot of community members.

The Life Recovery class meets every Friday night at 6 p.m. and Sunday morning at 9:45 a.m. and there is childcare available at each time.

For more information, visit templebaptistcullman.com or call 256-737-0112. Temple Baptist Church is located at 30 County Road 1184 Cullman, AL 35057.

The Life Recovery Program at Temple Baptist Church helps people with a range of addictions from relationships to alcohol.



CONTRIBUTED

SAFEGUARD YOUR BUSINESS FROM DIGITAL THIEVES

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

Security for your customers and your businesses is vital and according to Tonya Williams, an agent for Farmers Insurance, there are several steps you can take to ensure that you stay secure, including creating 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 threats that more small businesses and non-profits are buying protection with their insurance companies for peace of mind.

For many companies, data is a precious resource 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.

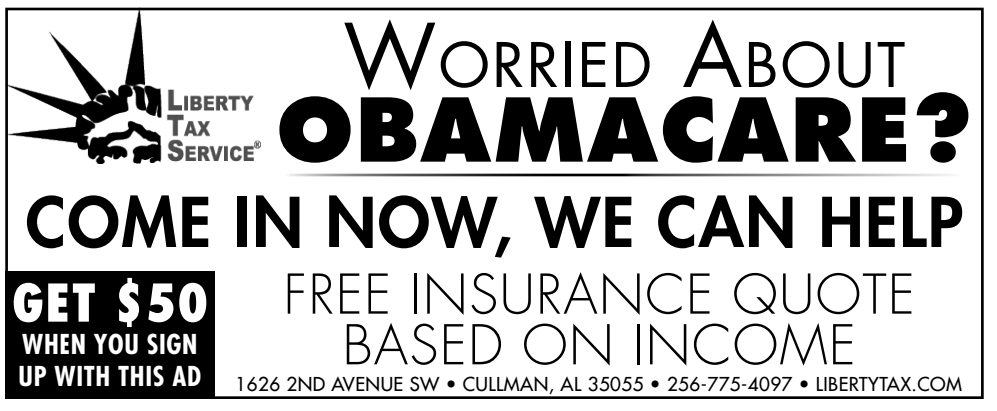
Williams says that choosing the right agency is also vital and thinks that what sets her company apart is the personable service she and her colleagues offer.

"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."

If you would like more information on the Tonya Williams Agency - Farmers Insurance, please visit their blog at http://backyardsandfenderbenders.tumblr.com or call 256-736-2636.





CULLMAN PHONE & TABLET FIXES YOUR BROKEN ELECTRONICS

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CULLMAN - It happens to everyone at some point, you drop your cell phone on the pavement, or maybe your toddler wants to see what happens when you put it in the toilet. One way or another, we all have that moment where our cell phone could use some TLC. If this sounds like you, then you need to head over to Cullman Phone & Tablet today and let them take care of you.

This young business started in September of 2013 and has been steadily growing ever since. Their reputation for taking care of their customers and expertise in fixing almost any problem with your phone, tablet, or computer has spread throughout the community.

"For a couple of years I had been fixing phones on the side for friends and family," said Jason Nichols, an owner of the store.

"And my business partner, Kyle Tucker, was doing the same thing, and back in September 2013, I was asked to fix more than I could fix on my own. So he and I decided fairly quickly and we decided to start a store."

Both Nichols and Tucker have an educational background that lent itself to this type of work.

"I went to school for electrical engineering," said Nichols.

"Kyle went to school for computer science. Being in both of those fields you sort of pick up on some of it."

Their current location on Highway 157 was the most affordable place at the time, but the company is now looking forward to a new venture.

"Our current location was the best and most affordable place at the time," said Nichols.

"We're now getting ready to move to Cherokee Avenue, starting December 1, 2014. It's going to be across the street from Verizon. We're all very excited about it because Verizon and AT&T already refer people to us, so we are hoping this just makes it that much easier for our customers."

The new location will offer more company exposure as well as convenience for them and their customers.

When Nichols and Tucker are not working on phones and computers for the public, they are working full time at the local automotive manufacturing plant Topre America.

While that can be difficult, the two have welcomed a third owner to help with the day to day management of the store.

"Kyle and I both really enjoy what we do with our jobs at Topre," said Nichols.

"So what we have done to help is we have a third owner now, Hunter Dutton. He has taken on managing the day to day responsibilities of the store. So he is here six days a week, and stays for 9-10 hours a day. So he has been a big help to us."

Nichols, Tucker, and Dutton are dedicating all of their free time to making their business a success and to produce quality work for the people of Cullman.

You can visit them on Facebook, or give them a call for more information at 256-531-7744.

"If you come to us to get something repaired, we are going to take care of you no matter what," Nichols said.

"Even if we have to replace their entire phone at our cost, or if we are not able to fix it, then there is no charge for the work we did. We are here to take care of them."

Gift (from Front)

"In the last two years, we've been adding multiple fundraisers to our school. We need a lot of things to help our kids succeed."

She said they have been meeting with people in the community to explore different opportunities to raise money and added that Robin Cummings at Peoples Bank gets the credit for the ornament sale.

"Peoples Bank is our school sponsor," Stephanie said. She said that Robin purchased artwork from a student once and thought it was a good idea to raise money for the school.

Due to the unique needs of the students, the school requires a lot of additional materials, resources, and equipment.

In order to provide the students with these needs, they must fundraise.

In 2013, they conducted their first Christmas Ornament Fundraiser where they raised $1,000.

With the money raised, they were able to purchase items on their "wish list". They hope that through the continued support of the community, their 2014 Ornament Fundraiser is as successful as last year.

For further questions regarding the ornament sale, call the CCCDC at 256-739-0486. You can also contact Chasidy Lipsey at Peoples Bank who is in charge of the tree. She can be reached at 256-737-7000. Peoples Bank is located at 1912 Cherokee Avenue SW Cullman, AL 35055.

Warehouse Discount Grocery

Warehouse Discount Grocery is running a food drive through the end of December. Your $5 donation will purchase a bag of food that will be delivered to Cullman Caring for Kids. Every store in Cullman is participating in the drive.

Karma in Cullman

If you have gently used items such as clothes, toys, or furniture that need a home, contact Rachel Bryant with Karma in Cullman. They accept anything except cash.

Currently they have nearly 95 families including 200 children to provide for. Rachel said that you can adopt a child or even a family to shop for. Rachel said, "The children are just so grateful and the parents are just so grateful." She said that no matter what the families receive, they are thankful for it.

Donations can be dropped off at 785 AL Highway 157 or picked up by calling Rachel at 256-735-3942.

They will also need volunteers for Santa's Workshop on December 15-18.

"We will go through the toys, clean them up, put batteries in them, and paint them," Rachel said. She added that this is a time to make the good toys great and that they will need a lot of volunteers to help.

Rachel said that there are a lot of chances for people to enjoy a meal during Christmas time, but none on Christmas day that she knew of.

She and her family will be hosting a meal at their home on Christmas Day at 2 p.m. for low-income families and those without families.

"We would like to share that day with others that may not have that opportunity. We wanted them to be a part of our family day." Food for 50 people has been donated and volunteers are needed to assist with cooking.

Rachel appreciates the efforts of everyone that helps out. "Sometimes the best thing is their time," she said. If you would like to volunteer some of your time to Karma in Cullman call Rachel at 256-735-3942.

Shop (from Front)

beat their total from last year. Fortunately, with programs like No Shave November and many generous donations from the community, they did beat their record.

"We spend $200-300 per kid," said Clark. "They can get whatever they want with the exception that $50 has to go to clothes. We raised $16,000 this year and beat last year's total."

The money was well spent on these adorable children who lit up like Christmas trees as they made their way back into the police department to eat after shopping.

Domino's Pizza was waiting for them as they entered, and then they were surprised by a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus.

The children were almost too excited to sit on Santa and Mrs. Claus' laps to tell them all about their shopping experience.

One mother, Beth, spoke about what the program meant to her and her son.

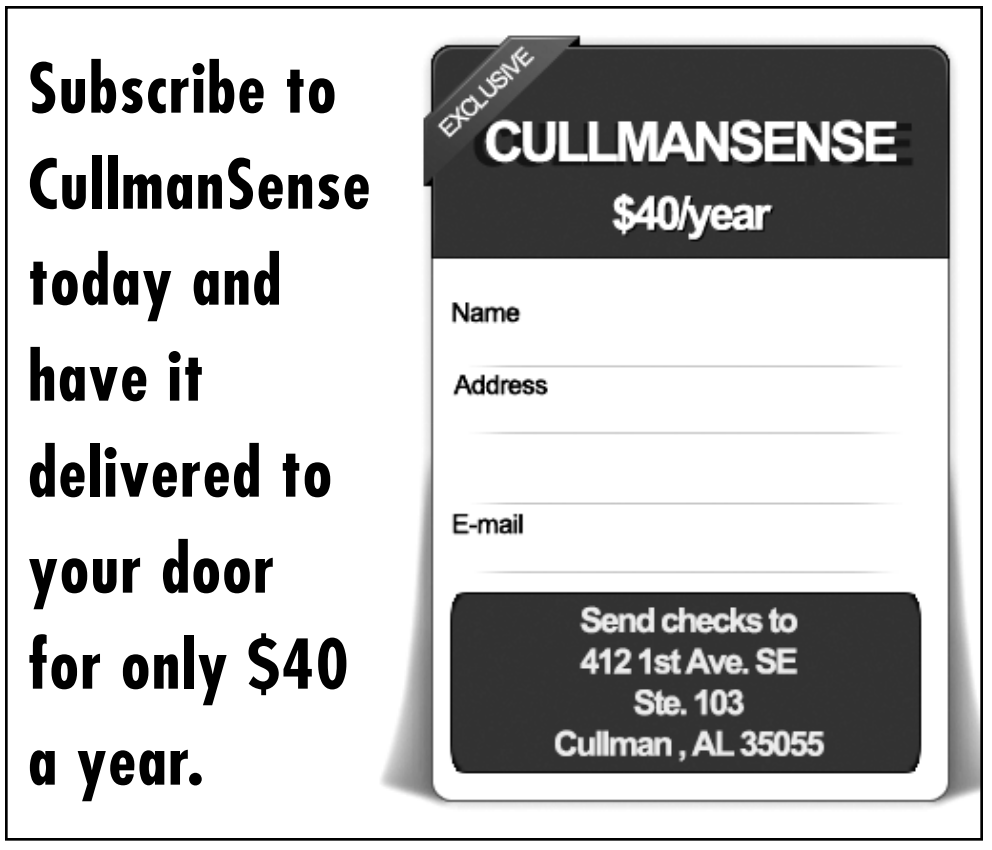
"It is so great that this community has this program and people who care," she said. "I'm not able to work currently, and will be starting back to school soon. I had never heard of this before and we are thankful for the help."

The day was not only beneficial to all of the families that were helped but also the CCPD.

"This means a lot to us," Clark said. "Because this may be our only experience they have with a police officer. If we can just make a really positive impact on one child, it is worth all of it. This can be stressful to put together, but if we can help a kid see us in a more positive light, then we have succeeded."

If you would like more information on this program, or you would like to help with next year's event, call 256-734-1434 or go by the police department and donate at 601 2nd Ave NE in Cullman.





FORMER EMPLOYEE NOW NEW OWNER OF CUTIE PATOOTIES

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CULLMAN - There are some stores in Cullman that are old favorites. Establishments that have been around for years and everyone knows the place you are referring to when you bring up the name. Cutie Patooties, is one such place, and after years of business is still going strong, but under new ownership.

Lindsay Mccroy, 24, a one-time employee of Cutie Patooties, took ownership a mere two months ago.

"I worked here around two years ago," said Mccroy. "So I knew the business. I've always wanted to own my own retail business. So when I saw that she was selling, I kind of jumped at the chance. My husband is also all about it; he wanted me to snatch it up."

Cutie Patooties is known for its adorable boutique kid's fashion, and selling the trendiest clothes for babies up to grade school children. Mccroy said that she has always loved shopping at the store, and plans to keep the public's favorite brands, but does have a few additions she wants to add in.

"I want to offer a few more things that are on the lower end of the boutique price range," said Mccroy. "Everyone that comes here loves the merchandise, but some items are pricey, so I am hoping to offer some more affordably priced items."

In addition to putting a few more moderately priced items on the rack, Mccroy is adding new types of merchandise as well.

"I have added a whole new section of baby shower gift items, shampoos and lotions," she said.

"We have new sleep sacks that close with magnets, not buttons. Very handy for new parents, and we also have receiving blankets, bibs and lots of new things that are perfect for gifts. I just want to offer something for everyone, and meet more of my customer's needs."

Being a 24-year-old small business owner is an impressive thing in and of itself, but it can have its drawbacks.

"Some people just don't know what to think," Mccroy said with a laugh.

"No one can believe I am the owner at 24. It's understandable though, because owning your own business is scary. I love it though. It allows me to work, but I can bring my kids here. It offers some flexibility that other jobs don't."

Cutie Patooties will continue to offer great boutique fashions for the Cullman community. All the brands you love, and now there is even more to choose from. Lindsay Mccroy might be young, but she is a smart and driven person who is determined to keep the store alive and well.

"I just want everyone to know that we're open and ready to serve everyone in the community. We are so happy to own a great store like Cutie Patooties and look forward to selling the same great brands, but also making it our own."

NO MISTLETOE FOR FIDO: KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE FROM DANGEROUS INDOOR PLANTS

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CULLMAN – We are responsible for keeping our pets safe in much the same we do our children. We keep them out of the road so they are not hit by car; we feed them and bathe them. Sometimes, we have to make sure they keep certain things out of their mouths too, like plants.

Most plants are harmless and there is nothing to worry about if a little is ingested. There are other plants, however, that pose a more serious threat. Often these plants are brought in during the winter, or are exchanged as gifts for the holidays. According to the Humane Society's website, there are many plants that can cause harm to your pet.

"More than 700 plants have been identified as producing physiologically active or toxic substances in sufficient amounts to cause harmful effects in animals," the site stated.

"Poisonous plants produce a variety of toxic substances and cause reactions ranging from mild nausea to death."

Local veterinarian Dr. Susie Dickerson spoke a little of the types of plants common to this area and time of year.

"Poinsettias are the plants most people think about," Dickerson said.

"They are not highly toxic but can cause some gastrointestinal upset if the animal ingests it. The ones that are more poisonous are mistletoe, holly and amaryllis. All of those are a part of the lily family."

She went on to say that these plants can cause more moderate to severe vomiting, diarrhea and salivation. The amaryllis plant can cause worse in some cases.

"The amaryllis plant is actually the most toxic," she said. "As opposed to others where certain parts of the plant are poisonous, in this plant all parts are toxic. They can cause seizures or possibly kill them if they ingested enough of it. People also need to be cautious of little palm trees that are kept in and around homes sometimes, those are extremely poisonous."

If you wish to keep your pet safe and happy this winter, consider a couple of options to ensure their safety.

"Puppies and dogs can become bored and a new and exciting plant is enough to spark their interest," said Dickerson.

"Then they end up digging into the plant and chewing on the plant for fun. Cats also love to get into plants a lot, and it usually takes little for them to show signs. I would put these plants in another room, or out of reach. Another good option is to buy the fake versions, or do what my mom does and re-gift them."

So while those beautiful plants you got as a gift from the office might seem beautiful and harmless, they could actually do more harm than good.

Let's keep our pets safe and take the advice of Dr. Dickerson, and keep those tails wagging this holiday season!

FIND CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER LOCALLY

Katie Dansby
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CULLMAN - Christmas day can be considered a day to honor someone special in your life, more specifically your significant other. Cullman stores are offering many specials only available during the holiday season for you to take advantage of. They are sure to make your gift selection a bit easier this year.

For the ladies, there are several options regarding just what to get her for the ultimate gift. At Bella Faire Day Spa & Salon there are some great deals for the holidays.

The first is called, 'All I Want for Christmas'. It includes a one hour Swedish massage, a one hour facial, a pedicure, a manicure, and a make-up consult all for $225. Their second option is called 'Mary Christmas Darling' and consists of a 1/2 hour massage, a 1/2 hour facial, a gel shellacked manicure and a pedicure for $140. Bella Faire can be reached at 256-739-9595 and is located at 104 1st Avenue Southeast Cullman, AL 35055.

Jayde Day Spa and Salon also has some great Christmas Packages to pamper the lady in your life such as the Christmas Escape. It includes a 1 hour hot stone massage, a "Pamper Yourself" pedicure, and a 1/2 hour mint facial for $130.

The second selection is called 'All Wrapped Up', which includes a 1 hour Swedish massage, a mini facial, a gel manicure and a pedicure for $90.

The third option is called 'All Decked Out' which includes a 1/2 hour Swedish massage, a 1/2 hour mint facial, a gel manicure, a pedicure and a Glo minerals makeup application for $140.

The fourth option is called 'Holiday Treat', which includes a 90 minute holiday massage, a 1/2 hour mint facial, a pedicure and a gel manicure for $165.

A fifth and final option is called 'It's a Wonderful Life', which includes a 1 hour Swedish massage, a 1 hour mint facial, a pedicure, a gel manicure, a makeup application, and a hair shampoo and style for $220. Jayde Day Spa can be reached at 256-737-1930 and is located at 601 Graham Street Southwest Cullman, AL 35055.

J Drake Salon Spa recommends gift cards and hair products for the men looking for just the right gift for their wives. Pedicures, manicures and hair styles can all be bought with the gift cards. J Drake Salon Spa can be reached at 256-734-2042 and is located at 207 1st Avenue Southwest Cullman, AL 35055.

For the ladies looking for the ultimate Christmas gift to please their husband, there are plenty of options in Cullman. J.J. Adams of Adams Pro Golf of Cullman suggested several options that golfing men would appreciate.

A few latest and greatest items for this season include the following:

- Callaway X2 Hot Driver-$199.99
- Callaway X2 Hot irons-$599.99
- Ping G30 Driver-$349.99
- Ping G30 irons-$799.99
- Nike Covert 2 irons-$499.99
- Taylor Made RSi 1 irons-$799.99
- Alabama and Auburn golf bags-$149.99
- Alabama and Auburn Mascot headcover-$29.99

Show these great deals to your husband to see which one would suit him best for his golf outings coming up.

Adams Pro Golf of Cullman can be reached at 256-775-1330 and is located at 1207 Loring Street Northwest Cullman, AL 35055.

Wilborn Outdoors & Feed is also prepared for the female shoppers coming in to buy for their husbands.

Typically they sell a lot of ammo, deer scents, and have deals throughout the entire store around the holidays. If your husband wants ammo for Christmas, take advantage of their deal of 15 percent off ammo.

If your husband is a hunter, there is no doubt that he will appreciate a good stock of ammo.

Hint around to make sure you know exactly what he needs and head over to Wilborn Outdoors to make your ultimate gift purchase. Wilborn Outdoors & Feed can be reached at 256-737-9595 and is located at 505 Main Avenue Northwest Cullman, AL 35055.

Another great idea for either the husband or wife is a car detail! 278 Auto Wash and Detail is offering gift certificates.

All available packages and examples of their work can be viewed on their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/278AutoWashandDetail. Once you get your gift certificate, be sure to make an appointment to ensure your car has a special time of its own to get the proper amount of attention.

278 Auto Wash and Detail can be reached at 256-595-1281 and is located at 8810 U.S. 278 Cullman, AL 35057.

Feel free to get creative this Christmas when giving your significant other their ultimate gift. Just remember, it's the thought that counts!

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MARRIED THREE TIMES AND AN ELOPER EVERY BLESSED TIME

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

Meet Mrs. Martha Ellen (Spivey) Mote Watson Wright

Miss Martha Ellen Spivey was born March 28, 1838 in Warm Springs, GA. She is the daughter of Louis Jordan Spivey and Sarah Chappell. On June 6, 1855, at the age of 17, she married De Mancel Mote who would later go on to fight in the Civil War. The two lovebirds had seven children together. Sadly, De Mancel died January 21, 1897 in Pinson, AL.

Martha Ellen would go on to marry two more times. Her second husband was Mr. James L. Watson from Jefferson County, Alabama. He was also a soldier in the American Civil War.

They were married September 12, 1899 and he passed away on April 12, 1906.

Last but not least, Martha married another Civil War veteran, Mr. Isham Wright. The two were married on October 7, 1909 and the two lived happily until his death on July 1, 1919.

Martha was the sister of Sarah Margaret Spivey who is my third great grandmother. A lot of folks right here in Cullman County are descendents of these two fine ladies. Below is a letter from Martha Ellen to her niece, Drucilla – my second great grandmother.

Pinson, AL Route 2 Box 24
December the 1st, 1926

Dear Drucilla,
I guess you will be surprised to get a letter from me. I am still living but am very feeble. I sure would love to see you in fare weather. I can sorter get around and cook a little, but when it is raining & cloudy I can't be up much. I was salivated when I was young and I am always poorly in bad weather.

I still live in a little house in Rosa's yard. I don't want to be so much trouble to nobody.

I feed myself mostly. The children and grandchildren bring me in cooked grub sometimes. I draw $110 dollars a year & it takes it to help me get along & take care of me.

Last summer Hunter, Thom Spivey, Hunter's son & Willie Thornall come to see us. They didn't stay here long. They stayed all night at Willie and Gordon's.

I had to hug every one of them, I was so glad they come in their own car & come in a day. If you have a car, come see us.

Rosa has 3 girls married. One of them lives about 5 miles (from here). He has a car & a good home & she comes after me & her ma. Last Saturday evening we went & they brought us back Sunday evening. She said she was as happy as anyone needs to want to be. A nice little man, well fixed (home) & plenty good to eat. Will Page is his name. The married brother's name is Padgett. Alma lives close to us. They have a new nice house & home. She has a good man too but Velma was unlucky, so I will close.

I went to Birmingham last summer to the old soldier's reunion and they would have me to parade with them in cars because I was a widow of 3 dead soldiers. And the next day a man came to take my picture & I am sending it to you. He wanted it put in the paper so I told him he just wanted it to make fun. He said I was the best looking he ever saw!

So write & come if you can.

Your Aunt,
Martha E. Wright.
My love to you all so bye bye

I have taken the liberty of correcting some spelling and adding punctuation in order to clarify the sweet little note.

I hope it brings a smile to your face as you read the words of this aging woman and allows you to consider our elderly, not only during the holidays, but throughout the whole year as well.



A mother of seven children, Martha Ellen Spivey outlived all three of her husbands.

SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

MIRRORING HISTORY: RAILROAD TRACKS

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Cullman's first train station was originally located on First Avenue at Third Street SW. In 1912 the L&N Railroad began lowering the train tracks to below grade level to fulfill a final request from Col. Cullman who had left money in his will to help pay for such a project.

After the tracks were lowered, viaducts or bridges were built over the tracks, and the area where the tracks had been was turned into parking lots and parks.

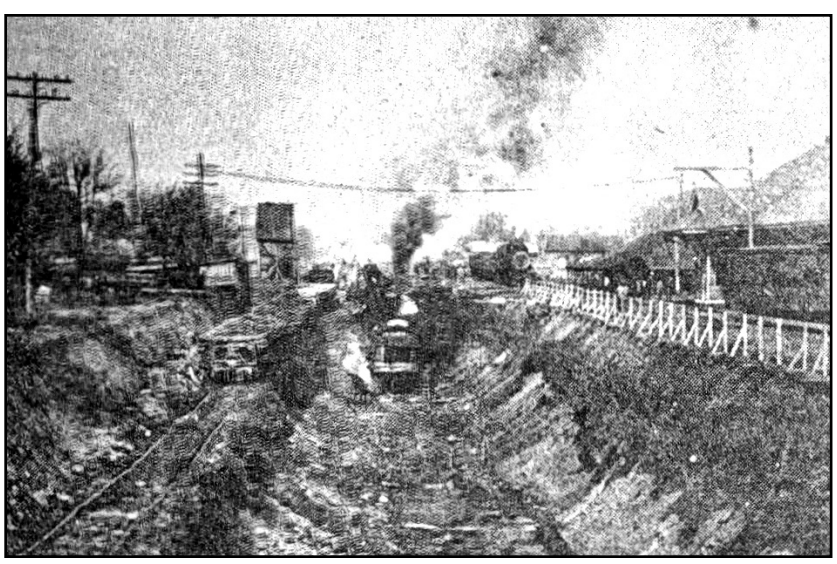
When lowering the railroad tracks was first proposed, many people in Cullman hated the idea.

They claimed the train passengers would not be able to see how lovely the great town of Cullman was.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The tracks are still widely used today.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

When lowering the railroad tracks was first proposed, many people in Cullman hated the idea.

WINTER CONCOCTIONS
EGGNOG CHEESECAKE BARS

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

Do you love all things Christmas flavored? If you answered yes, then I have the most absolutely perfect recipe for you to try this holiday season.

Eggnog, cheesecake and gingerbread are pretty much the epitome of Christmas tastes and flavors. That is why this recipe combines them all into one amazing bar!

Crust:
- 1 1/4 cups almond flour
- 1/3 cup Swerve Sweetener
- 2 tbsp coconut flour
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ginger
- 1/4 tsp cloves
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

Cheesecake Filling:
- 1 lb cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup granulated Swerve Sweetener
- 2 Safest Choice Eggs
- 1/2 cup eggnog
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

Gingerbread Whipped Cream:
- 3/4 cup whipping cream
- 3 tbsp powdered Swerve Sweetener
- 2 tsp molasses (optional on type)
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ginger

Instructions:
- For the crust, preheat oven to 325 degrees. In bottom of an 8x8 square baking pan, combine almond flour, sweetener, coconut flour, cinnamon, ginger, clove and salt.
- Add melted butter and stir together until mixture begins to clump together. Press firmly and evenly into the bottom of the pan.
- Bake crust 10 to 12 minutes or until just beginning to brown around the edges. Remove and let cool.
- Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees.
- For the filling, beat cream cheese with sweetener until well combined and fluffy. Beat in eggs, eggnog, flavoring and nutmeg until well combined and smooth.
- Pour filling over cooled crust. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until just set. Remove and let cool, then refrigerate at least 3 hours.
- For the gingerbread whipped cream, combine whipping cream, powdered sweetener, molasses, cinnamon and ginger in large bowl. Beat until medium stiff peaks form, but do not overbeat.
- Cut cheesecake into squares and serve with a dollop of gingerbread whipped cream.

WE WANT TO PUBLISH YOUR RECIPE! • SEND SUBMISSIONS TO RECIPES@CULLMANSENSE.COM

LOCAL RELAY FOR LIFE CHAPTER HOSTS CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL AND BAKE SALE

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Last Saturday folks all about town had an opportunity to complete their Christmas shopping while supporting a great cause. Relay For Life of Cullman County hosted a Christmas Festival and Bake Sale at the East Point Community Center, located on Alabama Highway 69, near the intersection of Alabama Highway 157.

Santa and Mrs. Claus were on hand to have their photographs taken with patrons and to share Christmas wishes with young and old alike. Free coffee and cocoa was available and door prizes were given out to various people throughout the day.

"This is a fundraiser for Relay For Life and there are a few of our teams here today," said Kelly Holmes, Relay For Life volunteer. "We are calling this our Christmas Festival. We have a little bake sale going on and Santa and Mrs. Claus will be here from 1-5 p.m."

The event was a group effort and there were several different Relay For Life teams that participated in Saturday's festival.

"The teams that are represented here today are Purple Skies, the Speegle Family, Hanceville Nursing & Rehab, as well as a couple of individuals who wanted to help," Holmes stated.

Relay For Life of Cullman County raises money for the American Cancer Society, who then uses the donated money to fund cancer research and to educate the community about the importance of prevention and early detection. The funds also go to help support cancer patients and advocate improving their lives.

"I am the Chair of Team Development," said Helen Allen. "This past Relay marked my 20th year to be involved. We've seen a lot of progress over the years. We still have a long way to go, especially in diagnostic equipment and things like that. It's a group effort from all of us and we all have a passion for it or we wouldn't be here."



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The funds raised from the Christmas Festival go to the American Cancer Society.

If you or someone you know would like more information about Relay For Life of Cullman County, contact Kelly Holmes at 256-615-5742 or visit www.relayforlife.org.

CHANGE IS BREWING AT BERKELEY BOB'S COFFEE HOUSE: OWNERS BOB AND GERRI KEEFE PREPARE FOR RETIREMENT

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Twelve years ago, Bob Keefe and his wife Gerri took Cullman by storm and opened up a small coffee shop with a 60s era theme. With plenty of great music, local artwork and dreamy coffees, the community embraced the new, hip hangout with open arms. Musicians frequently play their favorite tunes on the small stage while poets stand and read their latest works in front of a room full of dreamers. People from all over Alabama have heard of Berkeley Bob's Coffee Shop and many of them have made the trip to Cullman to visit the shop in person.

After many years of hard work, Bob and Gerri have decided to sell their beloved place and move on to bigger, better things – retirement! Parents to seven children and 14 grandchildren, Bob and Gerri look forward to spending more time with their family and getting a lot of things done around their home.

"Well, I've got my 95-year-old mom living with us and we're kind of her primary caregivers," Bob began, "and we're in our mid-70s. We feel like it's time to make some changes. I love this business and I could really stay here forever but we just can't work 12 hour days, seven days a week anymore."

Thankfully, Berkeley Bob's will remain open and someone new will be taking over.

"So we have someone, one of our baristas, who wants to take the store over so we are going to let her," Bob continued. "Her name is Katie Nelms and she's been with us off and on for seven or eight years now. She went to Auburn and got her degree and has worked here ever since then."

Most of us are dying to know if Katie will change things around or if she will leave the shop as it is currently. After all, she is expected to take over the business on January 1, 2015.

"It's really up to her," Bob explained. "I've been telling her that this is a 60s style ambiance, people her age (early 20s) don't know what the 60s were all about. So this doesn't have a lot of meaning to her, but to my generation it does. I can see where she might want to attract a younger crowd, but she knows what this is all about. She's worked in it for many years and she's not going to make a lot of major changes."

If you haven't been to Berkeley Bob's Coffee House yet, you are really missing out on something special. They are located at 304 First Avenue SE, Cullman, AL 35055. Like them on Facebook and give them a call at 256-775-2944.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Katie Nelms, center, will be taking over Bob and Gerri Keefe's business, Berkeley Bob's, on January 1.

Parade (from Front)

their horns. From nearly every float, handfuls of candy fell, landing on the ground in front of the crowd. People both young and old went away with pockets, and mouths, full of the sweet treats.

Beauty queens, Boy Scouts, horseback riders, and drivers of vintage cars and trucks waved happily to the folks alongside the road. "Merry Christmas" was hollered back and forth, over and over as everyone smiled and waved at each other.

"The parade was cool," said Tracy Williams who watched the entire event without her coat on. "I had fun picking up all the candy for the kids," she said as she pointed to the four little girls perched on the hood of a car.

"I thought it was really good this year," giggled parade watcher Meagan Patrum. "It was a lot better than it was last year. My favorite part was Elsa because my kids just love her," she smiled real big.

From the hood of a nearby car, a handful of children squealed with excitement as the parade strolled by in front of them.

Afterwards they chattered like little magpies, each talking about their favorite parts.

"I loved Elsa," said four-year-old Zoe.

"Horsies!" six-year-old Alexis exclaimed when asked what her favorite thing was.

"I'm also glad my dad was in the parade. He drove a tractor and they threw out a ton of candy to us," she beamed proudly.

"I love the horses too," whispered three-year-old Casey.

Once again, Good Hope managed to show the town a good time. Everyone who participated in the parade did a wonderful job of working together to make this year's Christmas parade a success.

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL AND MARKET

SECOND ANNUAL EVENT CELEBRATES A GERMAN TRADITION



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Along with German food, the Festival also featured games for children and a host of bands.

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Local area churches came together recently to host an outdoor Christmas Festival and Market. The parishioners from St. John's, St. Paul's, and Christ Lutheran pulled together to make the day a huge success. The 2nd Annual Cullman Christmas Festival and Outdoor Market was born out of the German Christmas Market tradition. There was an old-world Santa, as well as German baked goods and German sausages. For those who didn't care for the German cuisine, there was plenty of other foods available as well.

"I'm here representing Jim 'N Nick's," explained Beth Kibler.

"We are very community oriented, so I am handing out our cheese biscuits and passing out food tickets to invite people to our store. This is the first time we've come to this market because last year we weren't opened yet. It's been really fun being here and we hope to make it back out again next year."

There were all sorts of vendors selling anything from goat milk soaps and lotions, baked goods, handmade clothing, and so much more.

For the children, there were plenty of free games and rides. In the background, music from Round 2, the Wallace State Singers, the Jazz Bands from Cullman High School and Good Hope High School, Cold Springs Elementary, Cullman Brass, Ally Knight, Brad Steele and Jake Brown & Friends.

"We've had a bunch of kids here today," said Sierra Easterwood, a volunteer from the community. "A lot of them are trying to see Santa. They are having a great time. The kids get really excited when they win prizes from our games. The adults really enjoy the food here - it is really good," she smiled.

As a bonus, folks were able to walk by and see a live nativity scene while at the festival. Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus greeted the crowds from their places around the manger as a small goat chomped on the mounds of hay that was scattered.

The scene served as a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas – the celebrations of Jesus' birth all those years ago in Bethlehem.

"One thing we're doing is the churches is coming together to bring Christmas cheer and fun activities for the family," said Sandy Niiler, Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church.

"Also, our goal is to get people outside and enjoy the outdoors like a German festival. That's been kind of our thought and so far it's going well."

"We're just real proud that the churches can host this," Niiler continued. "It sends a nice message to the community. This has been something that has been very affordable and accessible – It's right in the heart of Cullman," she smiled real big.

If you weren't able to make it out to the Christmas Festival & Outdoor Market this year, please make sure you mark your calendars and go next year. The children will enjoy the free games and rides while the adults shop. There is a wide selection of foods to choose from and many happy Christmas memories are promised. You've just got to see it to believe it!

Creek (from Front)

Trinity Lutheran Church.

"The festival started from a committee at the Chamber of Commerce, the Hanceville Business Council. We started it in order to bring more people to Hanceville and let them know we're here and also to support the schools here in Hanceville."

The festival showcases local artists and craft vendors and also provides live entertainment and food. This year, a German style lunch was served by the Trinity Lutheran Church as part of the festivities. Thrivent Financial also helped by supplementing the funds.

There were also historical tours given to participants on Hanceville's first ever fire truck.

Over $2,700 was raised by the Mud Creek vendors and the Trinity Lutheran Church German lunch. The money was distributed to the elementary, middle school, and high school of Hanceville.

Cyndi Roden, principal of Hanceville Middle School, was thrilled to receive the money.

"This is an invaluable resource," said Roden. "The community supports us so much here and we are doing drama with the kids. We do it here during the day, and at night we are putting on a performance for the community. It is unimaginable the participation that we get with these shows."

The money given to the schools often goes to different areas of art, and some teachers have used the money in unique ways.

Hanceville Elementary's music teacher, Mary Jo Lakin, used last year's funds to create a sound exploration wall on the playground for the kids.

"We got 2x4s to make into a xylophone and tubes of metal and plastic," said Lakin.

"So now they can beat and bang during PE. It's really cool, and the kids really seem to enjoy it."

Hanceville High School will be using their money for the music and art department as well.

"This is just awesome," choral and music appreciation teacher at Hanceville High School, Steven Porter, said. "It is so great that the community gets involved like this, and takes an interest in the arts."

Those on the committee of Mud Creek, and all of those who help make it possible, have dedicated their time and energy to art education. For these schools, even a little extra help can go a long way.



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.

Ceremony of Carols with Cantani della donna
Cantanti della donna and the Cullman Community Band will hold a joint concert at WSCC, the Evelyn Burroughs Center for the Arts at 7 p.m. All are free. For more information call 256-736-2622

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.

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.

'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

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

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

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POSITION AVAILABLE

Program Facilitator needed for local domestic violence intervention program.
Full time, BS degree required. Send resume to: vsoced@vsoccullman.org

LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT
Sponsored by Busy Bee Café

MONDAY
- 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.
- 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.
- 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
- Live Trivia at Busy Bee Café from 6-8 p.m.
- 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
- Live Music at Brothers
- Live Music at Moe's
- Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-6 p.m.
- Live Music at Cadillac Ron's from 8 p.m. to close

SATURDAY
- Live Music at Brothers
- Live Music at Moe's
- Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-6 p.m.
- Live Music at Cadillac Ron's from 8 p.m. to close

BUSY BEE CAFÉ HAPPY HOUR SPECIALS
Wine Wednesdays • Thirsty Thursdays
Fill'er Up Fridays • Sudsy Saturdays
LIVE TRIVIA EACH THURSDAY 6-8 P.M.

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"By combining my years of successful advertising campaigns and award winning use of digital and social media, I am able to provide my clients with superior service. With the endless supply of support from CullmanSense, I am able to put my expertise to work by partnering with your business to maximize your advertising budget and increase your bottom line."

» Shawn Murphree - Automotive/ Digital/ Social Media Specialist

For more information on our great advertising rates, please give me a call at 256-297-1408 or you can reach me through e-mail at shawn@cullmansense.com.

AERIAL PHOTOS AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE

Katie Dansby
katie@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - David Warren may not call himself a photographer, but his aerial photography work proves to be worthy of purchase and most of all, appealing to the eye.

David started photographing in June of this year when he was inspired by someone he met at Rock the South who was taking pictures of the event with a GoPro camera. David admits to being the type of person to go full speed ahead when he finds something he likes.

"I'm the type of person when I get my mind set on something; it's all I can think about," David started searching GoPro hashtags on Instagram and was blown away with what the camera was capable of.

He invested in a GoPro camera at about $399, which is used to take shots from the ground. "That's how it started," David said. The GoPro is considered an action camera that takes wide-angle shots and is typically used for sports.

David used it to take pictures around Smith Lake as well as some farm photos around the Crane Hill area where he lives.

When he took pictures with his GoPro, he would put them on Instagram and hashtag them, '#GoPro.' Then he started looking through the different GoPro pictures on Instagram and kept seeing aerial pictures. "It amazed me," David said.

Then came the time for David to invest in a drone to satisfy his amazement with aerial photography. He purchased a quadcopter, which included a camera, remote control and one battery for around $1,200. He purchased 3 extra batteries at $120 a piece, and a case to store everything in. David attaches his phone to the remote control and everything that the camera sees, he sees on his phone screen.

He frames the picture with his phone, hits a button, and takes the picture. The drone can go as fast as 40 miles an hour and up to 400 feet in the air. He got the drone at the end of August and is getting comfortable with it.

"Basically all I do is take pictures of houses, businesses, property, pretty much anything that you would want to get a view of from the air." His favorite things to photograph with the drone are landmarks



DAVE WARREN

David Warren started photography with a GoPro in June.

like Sacred Heart Church and places on Smith Lake. He said that local places that people recognize, farms, and barns get the most feedback on his Facebook page.

David has photographed the main branch of Peoples Bank, James R. Smith and a few homes. He has not photographed any events yet, but sees it as a possibility when he becomes more comfortable with the drone.

"Drones have opened up a lot of opportunities," he said. "I think the possibilities are endless." David does not foresee his photography becoming a fulltime business, but does hope to continue it for a while. "I'm not trying to get rich. I'm just trying to have fun and make a little bit of money."

There are several ways you can contact David if you would like to hire him to take photographs for you. He has been working hard to get the word out and help folks understand that it is affordable compared to the expectations people have of using small airplanes and helicopters to take aerial photographs. David has a guarantee listed on his website.

If the pictures do not turn out the way you want them to, you do not have to pay for them and there are no hard feelings.

Feel free to e-mail him at dave_warren80@yahoo.com. He can also be reached by phone at 205-616-8009. Visit his Facebook page to see examples of his work at www.facebook.com/davewarrenphotography and his newly established website at cullmanaerialphotgraphy.com. If you would like to purchase his work, go to society6.com/davewarrenphotography.

CONCERT AT DEEP SOUTH TATTOOS HELPS TOYS FOR TOTS

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Cullman is home to many talented local bands and musicians. Some are just starting their musical journey and others are veterans who have been writing and playing for years. On December 20, such artists will be holding a special event, and tickets are limited.

Shallow Side, a band made of locals from the Cullman area and other parts of Alabama, will be holding a live acoustic event at Deep South Tattoos. There are not many shows like this in the Cullman area so it promises to be an event you will definitely want to get your ticket for.

"We wanted to do something in Cullman," said Cody Hampton, bass guitarist for Shallow Side. "There aren't many places in Cullman for us to play, but we wanted to do something in the area because it is the area where we came from."

He went on to say that the event is not only for music, but to give back.

"It is going to be a small event, because the place can only hold around 50 to 60 people," said Hampton.

"We are asking anyone that buys a ticket to also bring an unwrapped toy that will go to Toys for Tots. We wanted to do something here in Cullman, and so we teamed up with Deep South to make it happen."

Since it is a small event, the group will be performing an all-acoustic event as opposed to a full band performance. Hampton said they will be doing a mixture of original material as well as a few covers, and that the event will be clean and safe for everyone to attend.

"We just got off of a tour with Saliva and Hinder that was acoustic," said Hampton.

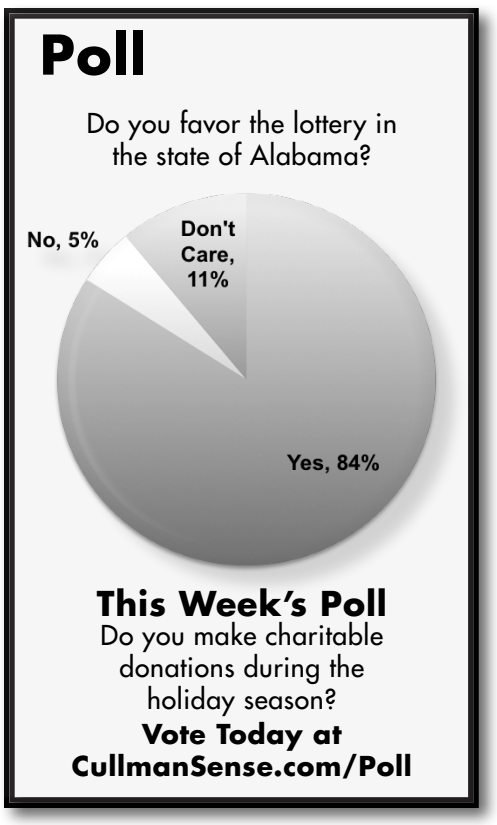
"So it is fitting. We are going to mix it up from classic rock to Bruno Mars and some original work. And we want to people to know who we are, and that, yes, we're a rock band, but we keep things pretty clean and that there isn't anything crazy in our music. We just want everyone to come enjoy it, and have a good time."

For those that might miss out on getting their ticket in time, there will be a live feed of the band's set online at www.stageit.com/Shallowside that will start at 10 p.m.

Doors open at 7 p.m. and Stephanie Ann from Birmingham will be first to play at 8 p.m., followed by Daniel Harbison at 9 p.m. Tickets can be bought at Deep South Tattoos for only $10 or on Shallowside.net.

Don't forget to bring a toy for the Toys for Tots drive when you come to rock out! Be sure to listen to our local rock stations like 95.1 for the soon national release of Shallow Sides' single.

Deep South is located at 1357 Co Rd 437 in Cullman.



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

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

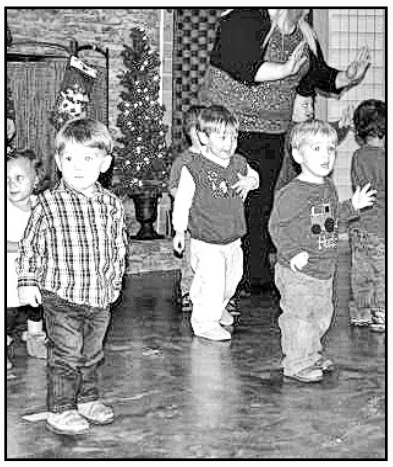
- **Annual Christmas Arts & Crafts Show** will be at the Cullman Civic Center on Friday and Saturday December 5-6. The show will feature handmade items only such as jewelry, clothing, wood working, outdoor items, home items, gifts, and much more. The event will be free to attend and hours will be 9am-9pm on Friday and 9am-5pm on Saturday. Call 256-734-9157 for info.
- **Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony** will be held as part of Christmas in Cullman on December 5, following the Christmas Parade through downtown at 6pm. The Tree Lighting will take place at Depot Park and also include free photos with Santa, entertainment, and more. The event as well as the parade is free to the public.
- **Phone Calls from Santa:** Sign up to have your child receive a FREE call from Santa. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis, and spaces are limited. Sign-ups will open Dec. 1 at the Civic Center. Call 256-734-9157 for more info.
- **Ten Years Younger classes** held at the Cullman Civic Center every Tuesday at 10am with Ann Caretti. Classes are $45 for 6 weeks. Call 256-734-9157 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 at 256-734-2125.
- **Yoga Classes** are offered at the Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center as well as a host of other fitness classes including Pilates, Zumba, spin, class, aerobics, water aerobics and more. Classes are offered 7 days a week. Check the front desk or call 256-775-SWIM for class schedule and times.
- **Youth Archery Classes** are held every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday at the Cullman Civic Center. Classes are $40 per month and are available for beginners, intermediate, and advanced archers. Bows are provided, or you can bring your own. Register at the Cullman Civic Center or call 256-734-9157 for information.

What's Online

Christmas Cheer and Children Sang at Hanceville First United Methodist Church

Recently, the children of Hanceville's First United Methodist Church's preschool hosted a delightful Christmas program for the many proud parents, grandparents, families and friends. The children sang and danced to happy Christmas...

qrne.ws/291



Art and Wine Made the Crowd Feel Fine

On a brisk fall evening, dozens of people gathered in the shop of Michael's Flowers and Design for a night of unique art and great wine. A beautiful display of art by one of Cullman's most talented painters, Krystal Corley, adorned the lavish back room for all to enjoy.

qrne.ws/292

TP Country Club: One of Cullman's Best Kept Secrets

Imagine long rolling hills and soft green grass, now add shady trees dotting throughout that same land and ponds of all shapes and sizes lay sprawled amongst the area. Built high upon one of the hills is a place where people can enjoy exquisite dining, gaze out over a...

qrne.ws/293

ART AFTER HOURS HIGHLIGHTS LOCAL ARTISTS, BENEFITS CULLMAN CARING FOR KIDS

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The proceeds raised were split between the artists and the food bank.

CULLMAN - Chamber for Charities proudly presented their 3rd Annual Art After Hours last Tuesday at TP Country Club. Both current Chamber members and potential future members came together to honor local artists and their artwork, and serve the community by donating a large portion of the proceeds to a local charity, Cullman Caring for Kids.

"We started this event three years ago in an effort to increase awareness of all our great local artists," explained Leah Bolin, president of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce. "It's also a part of our Chamber for Charities program that we started. Half of the proceeds will go to the local artists, the other half will go to the food bank, so we are feeding both artists and families here at Christmas time. It creates awareness of some cultural things in our area and it makes for a great, unique Christmas gift."

"It's grown exponentially," Bolin continued. "We had a great turn out the first year, we doubled it the second year and we've tripled it this year. We have about 100 pieces of art. The starting bids go anywhere from $10 to $600 and everywhere in between. We have canvas art, metal art, pottery, and all different kinds of art. We would love for artists, every year, to bring things to get exposure for them, plus I like it too," she giggled.

Not only was the Chamber of Commerce thrilled with the event, but the many artists buzzing around were excited as well.

"This is a terrific event," said Laura Walker, a local artist pretty renowned for her work. "We have so much amazing art and talent here in Cullman; we just need good venues to get it out there – venues like this event and the Red Door Emporium. Support our local artists, they are so talented!"

The United Way Food Bank is a division of Cullman Caring for Kids and will be the recipient of half the proceeds from Tuesday night's fundraiser.

"The past two years Art After Hours has donated their proceeds to Cullman Caring for Kids, so we're here to say thank you," smiled Javon Daniel, executive director of Cullman Caring for Kids. "It's so powerful for the community to be involved in helping those in need."

2014's Art After Hours was a huge success, and many thanks go out to the Chamber of Commerce, members of the Chamber and all the talented local artists. As a community, Cullman sure knows how to pull together and take care of its own!

If you or someone you know would like more information about the Chamber of Commerce, feel free to stop by and pay them a visit. They are located at 301 2nd Avenue SW, Cullman, AL 35055. Feel free to give them a call at 256-734-0454 or Toll Free: 1-800-313-5114.

You can find out more about Cullman Caring for Kids by calling them at 256-739-1111 or visiting them online at www.cullmancaringforkids.com or sending them an e-mail at cullmancaringforkids@msn.com.

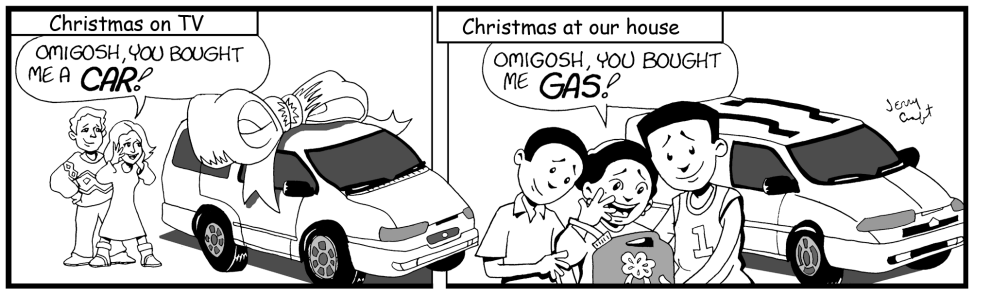
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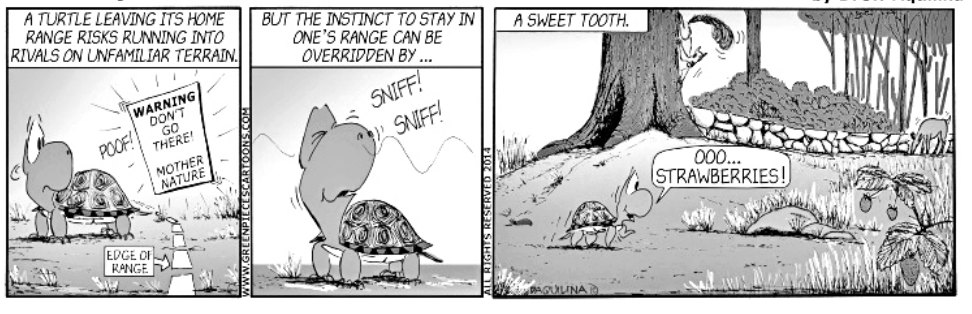
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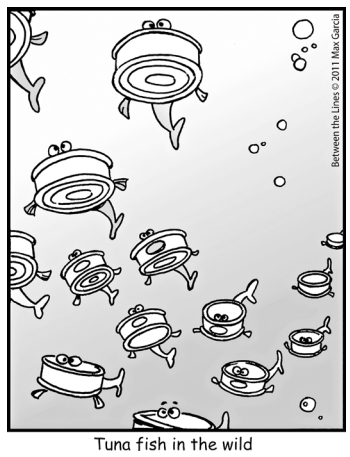


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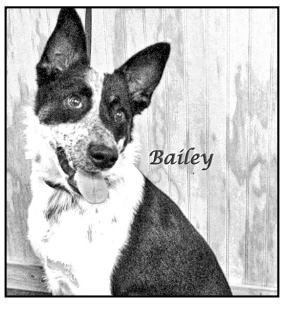
Tuna fish in the wild

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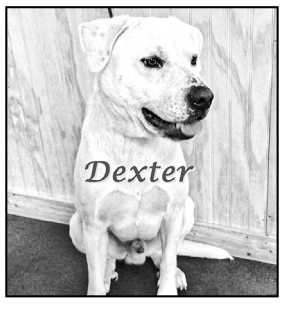
PETS OF THE WEEK

Bailey



Hello! My name is Bailey, and I am about 1 year old. I am a beautiful Border Collie/Aussie mix, and I currently weigh 56 lbs. I am spirited and enjoy company! I am ready to meet my new forever family and enjoy my new home. Please come visit me today, and I will win you over with my sweet demeanor.

Dexter



Hello! My name is Dexter, and I am about 2 years old. I am a very handsome white Lab mix, and I currently weigh 59 lbs. I was a stray but no one claimed me, so I am now up for adoption. I am full of life and I love to play. I am ready to meet my new best friend and forever companion! Please come visit me today, and I will steal your heart!

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





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Community Matters

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OPINION

LOOK UP AMERICANS, IT'S NOT AS BAD AS YOU THINK

Lee H. Hamilton
Contributor

We are one glum country. Trust in the federal government is at historic lows, according to Gallup. More than half of the respondents to an October Rasmussen poll think our best days are behind us. And just a few weeks ago, an NBC/Wall St. Journal poll found that the one thing Americans agree upon whatever their race or circumstances is that the system is stacked against people like them.

Scratch an American, it seems, and you'll get a litany of complaints about our representative democracy. I see this defeatism all around me. When I speak to classes of university students, I almost always ask for a show of hands on whether these young people believe the U.S. is in decline or on the rise. Every time, the room is evenly split. That's a lot of people who are losing faith in our system.

So I have just one thing to say: Could we all take a deep breath? For one thing, we deal with our challenges from a position of strength. We have friendly neighbors to the north and south, oceans to the east and west, and a growing, relatively young population.

We possess abundant natural resources, the world's most capable military force, a nuclear arsenal second to none, and a deterrent power envied by every other country on earth. We face no existential threat from foreign powers. We can choose the role we want to play in the world.

We created the major mechanisms for world stability — the United Nations, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank — and we still help maintain them. We lead the way in pressing for open markets and free trade. Our fundamentals — from our military to our technology to our system of higher education — remain strong. We're doing better economically than any other major industrialized nation, and have put more people back to work since the recovery began than the rest of the industrialized world combined. Does that sound like a once-great nation on its knees? Our people possess strengths in abundance. We have a remarkable reservoir of talent both in the workforce and, to judge by the students I encounter every day, preparing to enter it. We're blessed with a strong entrepreneurial tradition that nurtures inventiveness and creativity, and that draws countless people from abroad eager to make something of their future. Though we're hardly perfect on this score, we have friends across the globe who admire our accomplishments.

I'm not blind to our shortcomings — if you read this column regularly, you know that — or to the severe challenges we confront. But in the face of extraordinary difficulties, we adapt, persevere, and eventually emerge stronger.

After decades of trying, we have begun to wean ourselves from foreign oil. Our response to the ebola crisis was initially halting and clumsy, but the federal government and the nation's hospitals reformed their protocols remarkably quickly for a set of complex institutions. It's taken a long time to put a coalition together to fight the Islamic State, but international coalitions are difficult to create, and by dint of hard work we're better off now than we were a year ago. In the end, government may act slowly, and it's often well behind where you'd wish it to be, but it does act.

All these things give our society a resilience to keep in mind the next time you see a news story or commentary hyping a pessimistic view of our future. The world around us is in turmoil, under enormous pressures that explode most every morning somewhere, yet we remain an island of stability. We may be disenchanted with our government, yet we've come out of the downturn stronger than any other country in the world — a testament not just to our private sector, but to the public policies that supported it.

We have a long way to go, there's no doubt about it. But I'm reminded of a young woman a few years ago who asked me, after a bleak speech I'd given laying out the problems of the world, "Is there any hope?" My answer now is the same as it was then: Yes, of course there is.

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.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

CHARGES AGAINST FORMER GOOD HOPE TEACHER CHAD GAMBRILL ARE DISMISSED

CULLMAN - December 10, 2014 -- Chad Gambrill, who was indicted on January 7, 2012 for three counts of sexual abuse on decade-old allegations, received a dismissal of all charges on December 8, 2014. Mr. Gambrill was represented by Cullman lawyers Champ Crocker and Anna Sparks.

Chad Gambrill began this case an innocent man, and he is innocent today. From day one, when he was indicted 35 months ago, Mr. Gambrill denied wrongdoing and urged respect for the Constitution and the legal system. As a citizen, as a soldier, and as an educator, Mr. Gambrill has always understood the importance of the courts in determining whether a case has merit or whether it does not.

Indictments are not evidence, rather, indictments serve notice to a citizen that he has been charged with a crime. An accused has the constitutional guarantee of due process. Today, Mr. Gambrill is a free man because of those constitutional rights - the same rights he fought for in Iraq and the same rights we as free citizens enjoy in this great nation.

Mr. Gambrill was a first grade teacher at Good Hope Primary School when this case began. It cannot be overemphasized that these allegations had nothing to do with Mr. Gambrill's teaching career. In the words of former superintendent Billy Coleman, these charges had "absolutely nothing to do with school, in any way." (The Cullman Times, January 12, 2012).

Although the charges were completely unrelated to Mr. Gambrill's teaching career, Mr. Gambrill voluntarily surrendered his teaching license as part of a joint agreement with the State. Mr. Gambrill recently chose to resign from his position with Cullman County Schools to pursue other professional opportunities and interests and is looking forward to the next chapter of his life. Mr. Gambrill and his wife Tiffany are thankful and relieved that this case is over.

Chad Gambrill has the following statement: "This situation was more than either of us could bear alone. God was with us every moment of this long, extremely challenging journey, and He is the reason we have been successful in our effort to remain focused and determined. Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." We are also very grateful for the love, support, and prayers we have received from our family, friends, neighbors, church family, colleagues and my many former students and their parents. We requested a lot of prayers, and we promised to handle every step of this process in a way that honored God. I bear no ill will toward anyone, and I don't begrudge the prosecutors or anyone in the court system. I am just thankful for those who have supported me, for the opportunity to clear my name and for my fine legal counsel."

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