SERIES 5 • ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 5, 2015

CULLMANSENSE COMMUNITY MATTERS

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GIVING BACK IS THEIR RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

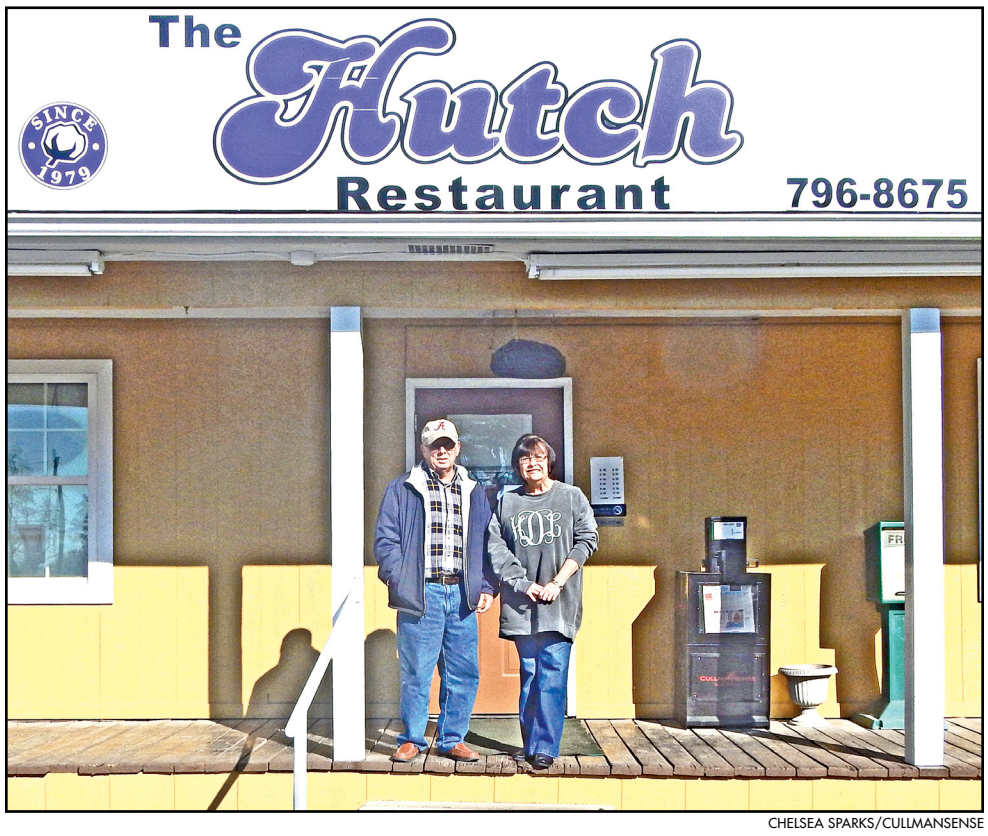
Chelsea Sparks
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FAIRVIEW - If you happen to be driving north down Highway 69 and need to grab a bite to eat, there's a little place you ought to stop by called The Hutch. This small and unassuming restaurant has been feeding the people of Fairview and surrounding areas for decades. While the ownership has changed over the years, the food and friendship has remained the same.

Henri Derrick and her husband took over the restaurant four years ago this March after her husband's retirement.

"My husband retired and I was still working," she said. "He was getting bored, and this [the restaurant] came up for sale. He ate breakfast and lunch here every day and loves it

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CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

Henri Derrick and her husband have owned The Hutch for nearly four years.

YOUTH VILLAGES CALLS FOR CULLMAN AREA FOSTER PARENTS

Will Hogue
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CULLMAN - Youth Villages, the nation-wide private non-profit organization dedicated to helping emotionally and behaviorally troubled children and their families live successfully, is now calling on adults in Cullman to join them and help children who need a home this winter.

Youth Villages says that these vulnerable children need a place to stay until they can either return to their families or they are adopted. Youth Villages describes what the role of foster parents during this time is: "Foster parents

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APPALACHIANHISTORY.NET

Myrtle's popularity was likely linked to her showmanship.

A FOUR-LEGGED WOMAN WITH REGIONAL TIES

MEET JOSEPHINE "MYRTLE" CORBIN P19

VFW POST 2214 ASKS FOR HELP ATTAINING FLAGS

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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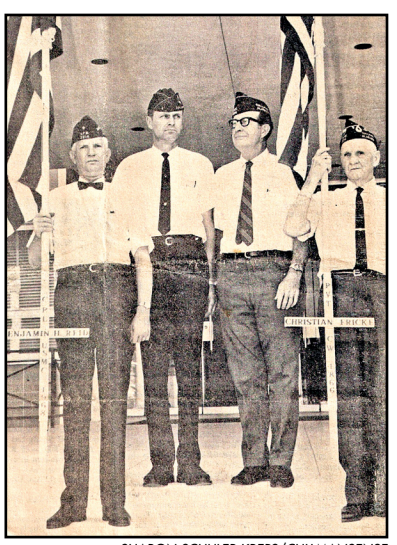
CULLMAN - Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2214 need you. They are asking for help in obtaining additional American flags to display along Highway 31, and along a portion of Highway 157. As you may know, these flags are placed on display during the year on special holidays. They honor both the living and the deceased veterans from the Cullman area. Unfortunately, many of the current flags have been damaged due to bad weather, old age, etc.

"We can only use the flags for one year before having to swap them out," said Randy McGraw, VFW Commander. "We have four major holidays that we put the flags out each year, each of those holidays they are out about four or five days. So there's that, plus if there are any damages from accidents, or in a past incidence we had five flags stolen from along Hwy. 31."

The "avenue of flags" first began back in July 1969 when two flags flew together next to the courthouse steps.

Under each flag was a cross with the names of the two soldiers they honored. One was for Cor-

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SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The "avenue of flags" began in July 1969.

FLU SEASON

CRMC NURSE EXPLAINS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT H3N2

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CULLMAN - The flu season is a dreaded time for all. It causes hospitals and doctor's offices to fill up, resulting in lengthy wait times and more chances for germs to spread through the community. This year has been of particular interest across the country as an unexpected strain of flu virus A has spread and is not hindered by this year's vaccine.

There is a lot of media hype because of this new strain, and in some areas like Tennessee, a higher fatality rate among children has been seen. With 22 states seeing high flu activity, and the CDC declaring it an epidemic, it can be easy to allow a feeling of panic to sink

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'POLAR BEARS' TAKE THE PLUNGE AT CWAC'S COMMUNITY WELLNESS DAY

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CULLMAN - This past Saturday, the first weekend of the new year, 43 people of all ages lined the edges of the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center's outdoor swimming pool, each shivering and quivering as they prepared to jump into the icy water. Those brave folks participated in the Polar Bear Plunge, and jumped into the cold water and completely submerged themselves in the hopes their name would be drawn afterwards for a free, one year membership to the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center, an $850.00 value.

Brian Blankenship was the lucky winner of the 2015 Polar Bear Plunge, and the crowd of fellow "polar bears" all clapped in unison to congratulate him. Even though all can't be winners, most felt a certain sense of pride after having completed the feat.

"It wasn't as bad as we thought it would be," said 14-year-old Abbie Yancy. "We thought it would be freezing, like very, very cold, but it wasn't as cold as we thought it would be – it was still cold though," she giggled.

"If I had the chance to do it again, I would do it again," piped up Abbie's friend, 14-year-old Paige Rodriguez. "I probably wouldn't be as scared next time."

"We started the Polar Bear Plunge back in 2010," explained Waid Harbison, Marketing and Programs Director at Cullman City Parks and Recreation. "It was a lot of fun, we even had television crews from ABC 33/40 and CBS there because it was 17 degrees in the pool that year," he chuckled. "The pool water wasn't actually frozen because of the chemicals in the water, but there was ice around the sides that we had to chip away that morning so people wouldn't slip and fall when they got out of the pool. It was a lot of fun!"

The Plunge isn't just geared for one certain age group, it is for everyone! In Cullman, "polar bears" come in all shapes, sizes and ages.

"We've had 5 and 6 year olds, and all the way up to 70 and 80 year olds that have done it," Harbison said. "Each year varies, as far as the amount of people who participate. In years past, we've had anywhere between 40 and 60 people doing the Plunge, but this year we're doing it a little differently; we are doing the Plunge as part of our Community Wellness Day."

The Community Wellness Day is a day where the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center is open to the public, for both members and nonmembers, free of charge. This year was the first time it has ever been done.

"The Polar Bear Plunge is a crowd favorite. A lot of people have fun stories that go along with it," he added. "Everybody asks if they can jump in from the high dive, and want to know if it would it be okay. We thought it may not be good for some who may have some sort of problems, so I volunteered to try it out. It was in December a couple years ago, so I go out there one day and I got up on the high dive, and I jumped into that water and my head didn't even get wet. When I hit that water, I popped right back up so quickly that my hair didn't get wet at all! You can ask my staff about that... they will verify it," he laughed.

If you missed this year's Community Wellness Day and Polar Bear Plunge, remember to mark your calendars for this time next year. It is a wonderful time to visit the Aquatic Center and look around. It's also an excellent time to hop into a freezing cold pool and try for a free membership!

If you or someone you know would like more information about the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center, feel free to stop by and pay them a visit. They are located at 1636 Field of Miracles Drive, Cullman, AL 35055. You may also call them at 256-775-7946. Go online and check out their website at www.cullmanrecreation.org/facilities-parks/cullman-wellness-aquatics.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

This year's Polar Bear Plunge was open to the public for the first time.

BODY CAMERAS, MICROPHONES AMONG IMPROVEMENTS AT CCPD

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CULLMAN - With the increase in crime throughout the United States, law enforcement is in high demand. As much as we depend on our local police and deputies, who do they depend upon? Are they safe while walking the beat day in and day out? Officers are specially trained when they take the job, but is there a little something extra our local heroes do to protect themselves due to the rise in crime?

"Our officers are trained where they wear their vests," said Lieutenant Handley with the Cullman City Police Department. "We just recently bought body microphones for everybody to wear, as well as body cameras. Our sergeants have told everyone to be vigilant."

Each officer wears a device that both records and films situations they come across. Part of the device is worn around the neck and clips to the collar. The actual recorder part is clipped to the belt. When the officer has an encounter with the public, he or she presses the button on their belt and the device turns on, backing up 20 to 30 seconds.

Body cameras are much needed, but the city police also have other ways of staying safe these days.

"I think we're better because our new Training Sergeant, Jason Mickle, has implemented the training program here a couple years ago, where three times a year, maybe four, we take two weeks – go to an alternate schedule – and all the officers go to some kind of training those two weeks, everybody gets the same training," Handley continued.

Recording devices and rigorous training are just a portion of what our police officers have at their disposal. In the future, additional equipment will be implemented to keep our officers and us safe, and right now, Handley feels the department is appropriately prepared.

"We're well equipped," he explained. "We get criticized a lot for some of the equipment we have, but God forbid we have something bad happen in a school or something here, we at least have the equipment to aid us."

Of course, they are more than happy to go above and beyond their call of duty, but likely can't help but feel a little worried about their own safety each time they step out and do what needs to be done in protecting our community.

"I've been here [in law enforcement] for 24 years and I've never seen the anti-police sentiment nationwide like it is now. Some of the older officers lived through the 60s and 70s and saw how things had gotten for law enforcement back then, but you also didn't have the national media coverage like we do now."

The Cullman Police Department has done a wonderful job in looking out for homes, our businesses, and us. They teach our children how to protect themselves through various programs in the school system.

Women all over Cullman have learned self-defense – thanks to our local police. The list of great things our officers do for the community goes go on and on. We can never thank them enough for the help they give us on a daily basis. If you see an officer while out and about, take a moment to let them know how much they are appreciated.

"The good thing about living in Cullman, it's not every day, but there's a lot of times where people just walk up to us and say, 'Hey, I appreciate what you're doing'," he smiled. "That means a lot, more than people know. It helps a lot."



FACEBOOK

In addition to new equipment a training program has also been implemented.

CRMC AWARDED $15,000 GRANT FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY EFFORTS

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CULLMAN - The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering funds to Cullman Regional Medical Center through the U.S. Department of Energy's State Energy Program.

CRMC, along with 10 other establishments around Alabama, will be the beneficiaries of grants to bolster the energy-efficiency of buildings and appliances.

CRMC has been awarded $15,000, supplemented by $41,495 in matching funds, "in order to enable installation of energy-efficient lighting for the facility's parking lot," according to a December 22, 2014 press release.

The head of Public Relations and Community Services for CRMC was unavailable for comment.

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FORK IN THE ROAD RESTAURANT SERVES UP HOME COOKED MEALS 24/7

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HANCEVILLE - Just off the Hanceville exit on I-65, next to the Shell Station, there is a little known restaurant. It has been there for many years, but has recently come under new ownership. What used to be known as Southern Sunrise Restaurant has now become Fork in the Road. With a new indoor look and fresh new menu, anyone traveling should definitely stop and give them a try.

Christy and Nate Forester both have several strengths they have brought to the table when they purchased the restaurant, but in completely different areas.

"I moved to Hanceville back in April," said Nate Forester. "And I parked my truck over here beside this restaurant all the time. My wife has managed many different restaurants over the years, so when the place came up for rent, I just thought it would be a good idea. Why not get paid at what you do?"

The couple has combined their strengths to hopefully produce a great spot for travelers and truck drivers to eat a hot meal. With Christy's food industry experience and Nate's knowledge of what truckers want and need, they have cooked up a great place to chow down.

"As a truck driver, I know that there aren't always good places to get a home cooked meal on the road," said Forester.

"And that is what this place is, a place for them to stop anytime and get a good meal. We are the most easily accessible place in the area, and we want them to have a home cooked meal away from home."

The menu for the restaurant is simple and delectable with special items like the Trucker Omelet that is made with four eggs and filled with sausage, ham, bacon, onions, mushrooms, and bell peppers. If you add a pile of their fresh and made to order home fries and you will definitely not leave hungry.

"Our whole hog plate is a really big seller," said Christy Forester. "We cover an entire 12-inch plate with a slice of ham, and then add three eggs, hash browns, and 2 pancakes. When you leave this restaurant, you won't be hungry, and you get a lot of food for your money. Everything is from scratch, nothing is frozen."



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Formerly known as Southern Sunrise, the always open Fork in the Road Restaurant is open to truckers, travelers, and the public alike.

The Fork in the Road Restaurant is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They offer CDL discounts to drivers who stop in, and are now hiring for full and part-time positions.

For more information call 256-287-5045, visit them on Facebook, or stop by at 14500 AL Highway 91 in Hanceville.

Parents (from Front)

provide children with a safe, comfortable environment and monitor their emotional growth, school progress and physical health."

If you feel compelled to call and offer some help, but fear that you are ill prepared to handle such a responsibility, that's okay, because Youth Villages is providing free training to those interested in becoming foster parents.

The next training session will begin January 6, 2015 at 6 p.m. at the Youth Villages office, located at 600 Beacon Pkwy. W. Suite 800 in Birmingham.

Youth Villages understands that being a foster parent can and will be challenging, so along with the free training, they offer continuous support for foster parents, including 24-hour access to counselors, support groups and a monthly stipend to offset the cost of adding a child to the home.

If you are interested or simply have any questions about Youth Villages, visit YouthVillages.org or call Larita Smith at 205-917-2960.

Flags (from Front)

poral Benjamin Reid, son of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Reid, who gave his life for his country in Vietnam in May of 1968.

The second flag was dedicated to the memory of Christian Fricke, who fought with the Union forces in the South, then later settled here in Cullman.

What began as two simple flags in 1969 has grown to include over 200 flags - all honoring our beloved veterans.

We want this to continue, but in order to do our brave men and women justice, new flags are in constant demand. The VFW would appreciate any monetary donation you can afford to help continue to fund such a wonderful cause.

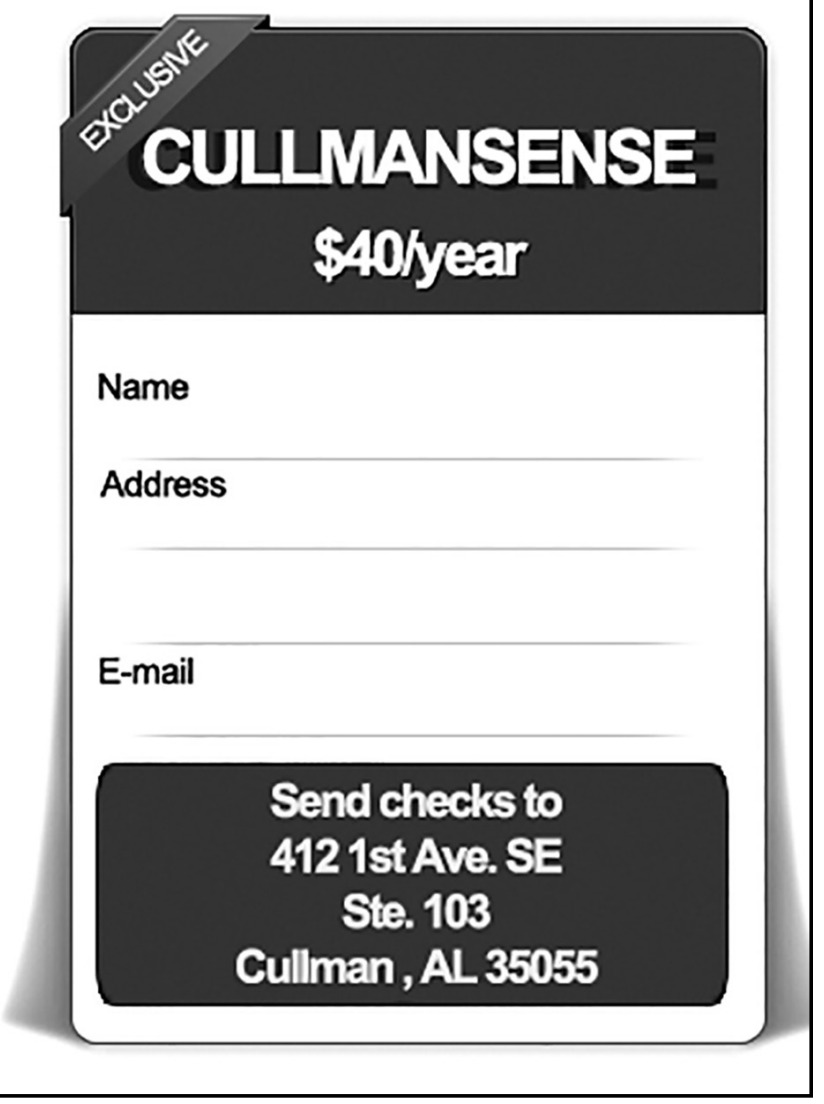
"The entire setup for a 31 Flag, which is what we call it, is $64.00 which is the flag, the pole and the base – everything," McGraw explained. "We are able to get our flags from Congressman Aderholt, so he is able to get us a better deal."

If you would like to help the VFW with their flags, please mail a check or money order to VFW Post 2214, 112 Veterans Drive SW, Cullman, Alabama 35055. Make a note on the check that it is to go to 'flag fund'. Keep in mind: all money given is tax-deductible. If you would like more information, feel free to give them a call at 256-739-6611.

POSITION AVAILABLE

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

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DODGE CITY SENIORS GROUP LOVES TO HAVE FUN

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DODGE CITY - Every Tuesday, the Dodge City Senior Citizens group gather together at the Town Hall's basement, or the Community Center, to share a few laughs, play a few games and eat a great lunch. The luncheon begins at 9 a.m. and lasts until the food runs out. Some days, the group goes on special field trips together instead of staying at the center. No matter what, this group of people knows how to have a good time.

Mrs. Brenda Wilson and Mrs. Louise Sprague, members of the group for quite some time, each enjoy being with their friends and hearing the latest gossip during these luncheons.

"This is a good group," said Ms. Sprague. "I love my seniors - and I am a senior!" she smiled sheepishly. "We always have a great time."

Dodge City's Mayor Tawana Canada is also a member of this exciting group.

She enjoys the time she spends with the group and together they have lots of fun. Sitting side by side a handful of other fine ladies, she cheerfully chatted away.

"Come and join the fun because Dodge City has the best seniors in the world," Canada said proudly.

"If you come one time, you will definitely come back," grinned Kathleen Fine as she spoke about the luncheon.

If you or someone you know would like to come out and see what all the talk is about, the group would love to have you.

The Community Center is located at 130 Howard Circle, Dodge City, AL 35077. All senior citizens from the community are invited to join the fun. For more information call the Community Center at 256-287-0364.

Mayor Tawana Canada would be happy to give you all the information you need about the senior group. She can be reached by e-mail at dcmayor@bellsouth.net.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

When not playing games or eating at the Community Center, the senior group goes on special field trips.

DON'T PROCRASTINATE THIS TAX SEASON

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CULLMAN - Benjamin Franklin once said, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." If you are expecting a big return, you may be reveling in the notion of getting that sweet check, but for many, this is the time of year to pray they won't have to pay a fortune to the government.

There are a few things you can do to make the process less stressful and to optimize your time. Jeb Williamson, a local CPA for the past 11 years, took the time to answer a few questions about the subject. He stated that the first step is to acquire all the necessary paperwork and information.

"In general, any forms like W2, 10-99, 10-98, K-1 are received by client," said Williamson.

"This incudes a summarized listing of self-employment or rental income and expenses, summarized listing of medical expenses, property and car tag taxes, charitable contributions, cost basis of any securities or property sold, HUD-1 forms for any property sold, AL drivers license number, and prior year tax returns if our office did not prepare it."

He went on to say that things may be a little more complicated when dealing with a business or corporation, and more information may be required.

"Depending on complexity, much more detail may be required for business returns classified as partnerships or corporations. We would need either complete financial statements and detailed trial balance/general ledger or the bank statements and other necessary data for our office to prepare these."

As everyone knows, tax laws change often and it can make it quite confusing from year to year. With the new healthcare laws in effect, there may be some surprises coming to some this tax season, according to Williamson.

"The affordable care act will severely impact those who purchased insurance through healthcare.gov or those who had any period during 2014 when they, or a member of their household, were not covered by health insurance," Williamson said.

"Each of these situations requires additional questions and forms. You will receive a Form 1095-A if you purchased insurance through the exchange. It will increase the cost of your tax return if you use a professional."

Some of the exceptions available to the individual insurance mandate and associated penalties require the individual to obtain an exemption code by printing and mailing a form obtained on healthcare.gov.

Form 1095-A and any exemption codes, if applicable, must be obtained prior to filing your tax return.

On the other hand, if you kept your health insurance you had previously, you will see few changes on your tax return unless your income was significantly higher.

"Don't procrastinate," Willamson said. "Make sure you have all of your forms and summarized information prior to seeing your tax professional. Many provide tax organizers to help you. If you are impacted by the new ACA laws, there will be more questions this year and it will likely take longer and cost more as a result."

It can seem overwhelming to go through this process with or without a professional's help. No one wants to leave something out, or forget something important and have the IRS come knocking. The important thing to remember, according to Williamson, is to get the process started now, so it is not a mad scramble come April.

For more information, or to seek help with your taxes contact Jeb Williamson, CPA, at 418 1st Ave SE Cullman, AL 35055 or call 256-734-7393.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY DO WE HAVE THEM?

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Now that Christmas has come and gone and the new year has been thoroughly rung in, complete with confetti and silly hats/glasses, folks are getting ready to welcome in the year of 2015 with some serious changes. Lots of New Year's resolutions have formed in the brains of those ready to complete challenges, and big plans are in the works as to how to go about fulfilling these new goals. But first, just for the record, what the heck is a New Year's resolution?

According to Wikipedia, "A New Year's resolution is a secular tradition, most common in the Western Hemisphere but also found in the Eastern Hemisphere, in which a person makes a promise to do an act of self-improvement or something slightly nice, such as opening doors for people beginning from New Year's Day."

In my research, I found that some of the most common resolutions in the United States are as follows: lose weight, volunteering, quit smoking, get a better job, save money, eat healthy, manage stress, manage debt, and drink less alcohol. Although these were all good ones, I went a step further and asked some of my Facebook friends to share their resolutions with me. I found their replies to be quite interesting, as well as a little different than most.

"I plan to learn how to paddle board, be on time, and continue on my own health journey," said Sandy S.

"I'm gonna try to look more on the fun side of things, instead of picking them apart and dreading the bad side," Leslie H. admitted.

Wendy T. said, "I plan on spending more quality time with my children."

Lowell H. piped in, "I want to finish editing my book and get it to the public."

"Get a boat," William K. stated rather matter of factly.

While these are all great feats to achieve, chances are most New Year's resolutions tend to slowly fizzle out before February rolls around. So how do we go about sticking to our resolutions and making them a success?

"With the new year comes the 'dreaded New Year's resolutions'," explained Sandy Seibert - COPE Certified Take Shape For Life Health Coach. "They are usually dreaded because people decide to cut out something in life that they have enjoyed doing for possibly years, but know deep in their hearts that they need to stop, like smoking or drinking, or overeating."

Because Seibert helps people attain their weight loss goals, she mainly focuses on ways to obtain and maintain healthy lifestyles. But her advice can be applied to just about anything.

"You might think about making a resolution that will support your commitment to improve your life," she smiled.

"Get Friendly! Hang with people that support your goals versus people that are out to sabotage your efforts," she suggests.

"We are the average of the five people we hang around most. Start every morning with your goal for the day. Start a journal of your life. Read a positive/self-motivating book each week or listen to daily podcasts. And finally, get rid of all negative thoughts - be a positive, happy person!"

New Year's resolutions are a great way to make much needed changes in your life, but they are definitely not for everyone.

If you have chosen to get healthy in the new year and would like a little extra help in meeting your goals, feel free to contact Sandy Seibert - COPE Certified Take Shape For Life Health Coach at 256-338-4645 or visit her website at www.path-changers.com.

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THE VINEMONT SANITARIUM: A LOOK BACK AT THE HEALTHCARE OF THE 1920S AND 1930S

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VINEMONT - In the early 1900s, sanitariums were places where people afflicted with Tuberculosis (TB) were taken and placed so that they may receive simple treatments that mainly consisted of a proper diet, fresh air, and lots of rest.

The Vinemont Sanitarium was located near the north end of Childhaven Road at Vinemont in a large house. Curiously, that same house was still standing as recent as 2008.

It was inside a large, white frame house, which had been built at the end of the Victorian Period. The Preacher Bates family owned and operated the residence during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The old sanitarium had two levels and a large front porch that wrapped around three sides of the place.

The porch played an important part of the healing process for the patients because it was where they were wheeled out and placed so that they could receive the much needed sunlight and fresh air necessary to their recovery.

TB was, and still is, a very dreaded and highly contagious bacterial infection that mainly affects the lungs. TB is spread from one person to another through tiny droplets that are released into the air by coughing and sneezing.

When a person in the Vinemont and surrounding areas back then contracted the terrible disease, they'd find themselves at the sanitarium where they spent a lengthy time in recovery.

The reason the afflicted person was taken from their homes back then was to prevent the spread of the disease to other family members. Sadly, a lot of people died as a result of TB.

Before the sanitarium was built, Mr. William Pope owned the property on which it stood; he was a man who had once owned a vast amount of land back in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Over the years, that same property changed ownership several times before the Lake family purchased it. Mr. and Mrs. James Thomas Lake bought the land to use for farming around 1934.

After the couple passed away, their son, James S., owned the land until his death. Today, descendants of the Lake family still own the house and surrounding property. The Lakes used the old sanitarium for residence only.



ROGER WALLING VIA THE HERITAGE OF CULLMAN COUNTY ALABAMA VOLUME II

Tuberculosis patients at Vinemont Sanitarium were treated with simple methods including proper diet, fresh air, and rest.

CULLMAN'S FIRST POWER POLE

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CULLMAN - Each year the December is filled with beautiful Christmas decorations. Brilliantly colorful lights are swirled around trees and line rooftops all over town. Christmas trees are adorned with exquisite ornaments and twinkling lights as stacks of perfectly wrapped presents lay scattered underneath. More recently, huge air-filled blow ups of Santa, elves and snowmen sit bloated in yards, giving off a faint hum from the machine that keeps them inflated.

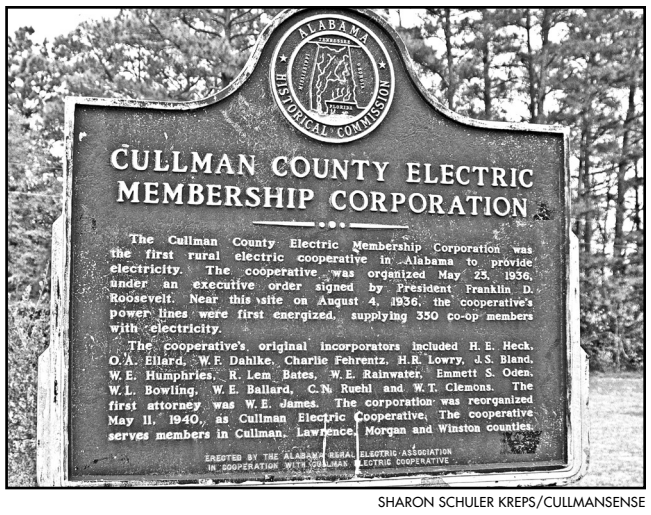
Christmas music is played on the radio while parents read "Twas the Night Before Christmas" under the glow of a lamp as sleep children wipe their eyes and think of sugar plums and how they look dancing in their heads. Homes are filled with the sweet smell of homemade cookies as hungry teenagers continually click on the oven lights and sneak peeks at the delicacies in order to gain an idea as to when the delicious goodies will be ready to decorate and eat.

Did you notice something everything above had in common? Electricity! Many of us these days have no idea what we would do without wonderful electricity. It has made our lives much easier and more convenient than ever before.

Cullman County went electric in 1936 and the first power pole was installed in the Simcoe area. According to the Cullman Electric Coop's website, "Cullman EC energized its first lines just east of the city of Cullman on Aug. 4, 1936, picking up 350 customers with 30 miles of line. Cullman EC was the second co-op in the state to incorporate, but was the first one to energize its lines."

There are no known photographs of that first power pole but today a historic marker can be seen in the general area where it first stood. It is located in front of the Simcoe Community Center. The marker reads:

"The Cullman County Electric Membership Corporation was the first rural electric cooperative in Alabama to provide electricity. The cooperative was organized May 25, 1936 under an executive order signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Near this site on August 4, 1936, the cooperative's power lines were first energized, supplying 350 co-op members with electricity."



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

A marker stands in front of the Simcoe Community Center near the first power pole's location.

"The cooperative's original incorporators included H.E. Heck, O.A. Ellard, W.F. Dahlke, Charlie Fehrentz, H.R. Lowry, J.S. Bland, W.E. Humphries, R. Lem Bates, W.E. Rainwater, Emmett S. Oden, W.L. Bowling, W.E. Ballard, C.N. Ruehl and W.T. Clemons. The first attorney was W.E. James. The cooperation was reorganized May 11, 1940 as Cullman Electric Cooperative. The cooperative serves people in Cullman, Lawrence, Morgan and Winston counties."

Electricity is an essential for most and powers almost every activity we do. It helps save lives and makes everything easier for us. If you would like more information about Cullman Electric Cooperative visit www.cullmanec.com, or call 256-737-3200 or 1-800-242-1806. They are located at 1749 Eva Road Northeast, Cullman, AL 35058.

WINTER FLAVORS

GREEK YOGURT PASTA WITH CHICKEN

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

There is a secret weapon in this simple recipe that kicks the sauce into a creamy overdrive – Greek yogurt. You will be amazed how filling, warm, and satisfying this dish is.

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- 8 ounces white mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
- 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- 12 ounces No Yolks egg noodles cooked and drained

Instructions:

- Add olive oil to a large skillet and place over medium-high heat. Add chicken and season with 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cook about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add minced garlic and continue to cook until chicken starts to brown about 4 minutes.
- Add mushrooms and continue to cook, stirring occasionally until chicken is lightly browned and mushrooms become soft, about 5 minutes.
- Add chicken broth and Greek yogurt and lower to simmer.
- Mix milk and cornstarch together and add to chicken mixture. Add Worcestershire, Dijon mustard and fresh thyme. Cook for 20 minutes or until sauce has thickened.
- Serve over egg noodles.

SEND YOUR RECIPE TO RECIPES@CULLMANSENSE.COM

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SEEKING SINGERS AND SONGBIRDS: OPEN AUDITIONS TO BE HELD FOR CANTANTI DELLA DONNA CHORAL GROUP

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - If you are a woman with a passion for the musical arts and singing, then you should consider auditioning for the Cantanti Della Donna choral group. This non-profit group has been host to some amazing voices in the Cullman and Hartselle areas for a number of years. They are now looking for more voices to add to their ranks.

"This is a select female vocal ensemble," said Artistic Director Laura Doss. "We meet in Cullman, but we have members from both Cullman and Hartselle. We are open to anyone that wants to meet and sing quality literature at a professional level."

The group has several local concerts throughout the year and is run solely off of membership dues and donations.

They can be found performing shows yearly at local churches and schools like Grace Episcopal Church in Cullman, Hartselle First Baptist Church, and Wallace State Community College.

"In the auditions, we are asking for people to bring a piece that they know and are comfortable with to sing," said Doss.

"We just want to know if they are able to learn music on their own, how well they hear and blend. Also we want to see how enthusiastic they are about putting on a quality performance."

The auditions will be for ladies ages 18 and above, not currently singing with the Cantanti. Prospective members should be prepared to sing a short selection of their choice, usually a hymn or folk song, and bring a copy of the music for the accompanist who will be provided.

Auditions will be held on January 6th and 8th from 6-7:30 p.m. in the St. John's Choir Room located at 512 2nd Ave SE in Cullman. For more information or to schedule an audition at another time, call Laura Doss at 256-708-7110 and leave a message with your name and contact information. You may also e-mail Laura at dossfarms@charter.net. Information about Cantanti Della Donna can be found on their Facebook page as well at facebook.com/Cantantidelladonna.



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

Auditions to join the Cantanti Della Donna choral group are open to women 18 and above.

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: CAN RED WINE MAKE YOU FEEL FINE?

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

It has long been debated what effects and benefits red wine can provide. Many people swear by the health benefits, while others are a tad more skeptical that any alcoholic beverage could be a good thing for us. In this article we will explore a new study that has taken a harder look at red wine, and just how beneficial it is.

As it turns out, there are two sides to this coin. In a study published in Nature by Sajish Matthew and Paul Schimmel at the Scripps Research Institute, they noticed a similarity between a compound found in red wine and proteins in our bodies. Resveratrol, is a compound found in some plants that enables them to deal with stresses like injury or harsh conditions. It helps some plants survive and has been used in medicine in other parts of the world for centuries.

Proteins inside our cells carry out very specific tasks and enable the cell to do its job. Sometimes proteins team up to carry out different jobs. They can bind and react with one another to get the job done. Schimmel and Scripps became interested in resveratrol by chance when they noticed its structure was similar to the stress-response compound tyrosyl tRNA synthetase.

Intrigued, the team put the two together to see how one would react with the other. What they found was that the interaction between the two was important as to whether the resveratrol would show a stress response. Thus giving the healthy benefits we have all heard about.

The next step was seeing how this interaction would affect how cells reacted to different stresses. Three of the molecules tested were p53, AMPK, and SIRT6. In mouse studies it was found that the molecule p53 is increased, which is significant given that the molecule p53 is known as one of the biggest tumor suppressors. Also, when the molecule SIRT6 is increased, it has shown to decrease glucose levels, becoming a benefit to diabetic patients.

There is a lot of work still to come for studies like this one. This study was a great leap forward in explaining why there is sound evidence that this compound found in red wine is beneficial. It also explains why it would be beneficial. So if you are a person who enjoys a glass of red wine at night, go ahead because there is science behind the rumors.

If wine is not your preference, you can also enjoy these benefits from other sources such as eucalyptus, lily, mulberries and just plain grapes themselves.

To read this paper for yourself, visit http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nature14028.html.

Hutch (from Front)

so he decided to buy it. He grew up in the restaurant business because his mother owned a place in Cullman years ago."

Twelve years of living, working, and cultivating friendships in the Fairview community led to a smooth transition of ownership for the couple. Already knowing what the community wanted, and giving back to the school has been a relationship that the business depends upon.

"We have a good business," said Derrick. "With the school being close by, we get a lot of business from events at the school, and in return we try to really support the school. We always make chicken sandwiches for the basketball games with a good price break, and we also buy signs for football and basketball. If there is a way to help, we do it."

When you walk into The Hutch, you definitely know you're in Aggie territory.

Pictures of various Fairview sports teams hang on almost every wall showcasing champions past.

The dining area is everything you need from a local diner and more, with beautiful new flooring that was recently added.

There is even an outdoor patio for patrons to enjoy their meal outdoors when the weather heats up. According to Derrick, what really sets their restaurant apart is the food.

"We have a great breakfast and a wonderful lunch bar with meat and country vegetables," she said.

"We have a busy business with our regulars, and also people drive from Cullman to eat with us and a lot of travelers. People come here a lot for our burgers because they are fresh meat from the grocery store and are hand pattied. We also have hand breaded chicken fingers that we make fresh as well."

Whatever your heart desires can probably be found at The Hutch. Like their delectable Philly cheese steak sandwiches, hamburger steaks, and fish, which tend to be popular items on their menu. For Henri Derrick and her husband, what keeps them motivated to maintain their quality service is the same thing that has kept them in Fairview for 12 years.

"We just love the community and people," said Derrick. "We are all so close and it is just a great place to live and be a part of. We're happy to serve them, and anyone who comes by."

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OPINION

PARENTS AND THE INTERNET: TOOL OR HINDRANCE?

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

Things have certainly changed in the parenting world from the days of our grandparents, or even when we were being raised. The world has seen great advancements, and also some pitfalls over the years leading to a reexamination of what parenting is, and how it is handled.

The Internet is probably the biggest game changer of modern parenting. On the one hand it is an invaluable tool and resource, and on the other hand it can be a panic inducing nightmare. Having the world of information at your fingertips is a wonderful thing for a parent to have; it can help you decide which areas are best to raise your kids, or find new and interesting ways to teach them. It can also help you spiral down a dark abyss of studies about how too much of TV can cause ADHD, or too little of this food will mean your child's test scores.

I cannot tell you how many nights I have spent researching symptoms of a simple cold, and by the end of the night, I was sure my son had some horrible disease. We, as modern parents, are inundated with almost too much information sometimes. There is always some new study suggesting that something we thought was good is actually very bad.

Now, I am not telling parents to ignore new and important information as it comes, but to take a second to research before you repost that link on Facebook. There are few things to consider before you take an article you read online seriously.

For starters, what website are you looking at? This seems obvious, but for a lot of people out there, the headline seems to be enough for them to believe whatever is being stated. Make sure that the website you are getting the information from is a credible source for the information. For example, mommaknowitall.com says that you should never put your baby down because it is detrimental to their psyches. Well, what are this blogger's credentials to make such a statement, or where are her sources? If there are none listed, then this would be an article to not take a second look at.

When a site is quoting a study, there should always be a link to said study. If there is not a link or source for the study, then it is probably bogus. If there is a link, go check out the study for yourself to be sure that they are using the information appropriately and not for their own agenda. Also, if there is a link to a source, but it takes you to another article from the same site, then that is not a credible resource. Do your own due diligence.

It can be tempting to give in to the hype of social media. If 20 of my friends posted this, then it must be true, right? Wrong. Always double check information, and save yourself a headache and a dose of parental guilt. You will help not only your own sanity, but will stop the spread of misinformation as well.

VOICE

DISASTER PREPPING: GROUP PREP

Dave Robinson
Contributor

My focus is usually on family and home preparedness. And while I still believe that preparedness is the responsibility of every individual and their family, I am equally convinced that whatever service club or church organization with which you are involved should also be prepared to meet needs when necessary.

Historically when a disaster or traumatic event strikes, church attendance swells. It seems to be a pattern anytime there is a crisis, people tend to look to a higher power for stability and comfort. Every church would like to be known as the place that met the needs of its community when disaster happened. Don't get me wrong, I still believe that families need to stock up. Get a kit, make a plan, and be informed, are very viable and essential for home preparedness.

A few years back when two major hurricanes struck the Gulf Coast, more than 40,000 refugees fled to the city of Austin, Texas. Several well-meaning pastors showed up at shelters only to be turned away because they were neither trained nor had any qualifications to deal with the situation.

Since then the Red Cross (upon request) has provided training to thousands of pastors and church members in their city. As a result, Austin is now one of the most ready cities in America.

To date members of the Austin Disaster Relief Network have been called upon to respond to floods and fires in the surrounding area. Some were even sent to Joplin, Missouri, to assist following the devastating tornado in that area.

Many churches in our region already have some food supplies on hand, some are operating their own mini food bank and many have a commercial-grade kitchen.

Moving ahead with an expanded disaster plan, including increasing supplies on hand, would be a small step toward making a big difference. And while you're at it, how about compiling a skills inventory of your group.

Who has medical experience? Is there a nurse or doctor in your group? Does anyone have skills in working with children? How about counseling? Maybe a team of musicians that don't need electricity to make music. You get the idea. If this sounds familiar, it should. Your church or service club is a microcosm of the community and it may be every bit as important to map your group, as it is to map your neighborhood.

The next time your service club or church has a planning session, show them a copy of this column. When all the lights in the neighborhood are out except for the Coleman lantern in your gathering place, people will naturally be drawn to you.

If there is a pot of soup on the propane stove and some coffee going, you might just make an impression on someone. You could save lives. Food for thought...

Dave Robinson is the Postmaster in Bandon, Oregon, and the author of "Disaster Prep For The Rest Of Us."

CULLMANSENSE
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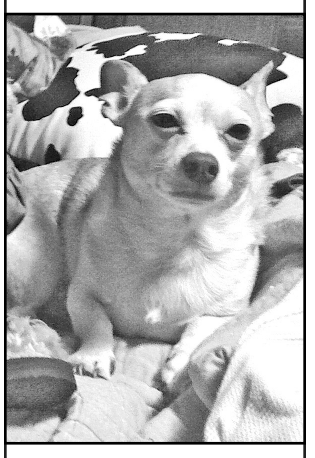
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Monday

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 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.

Walk the Pines
Join the ladies each Monday, Wednesday & Friday at 8:15 a.m. to Walk the Pines. Call 256-739-0738 for more info.

CRMC Farm Fresh Produce Sale
Eat healthy while supporting your local farmers. Cullman Regional Medical Center will be hosting a Farm Fresh Produce Sale every Monday beginning at 3:00 p.m. Local farmers will be selling seasonal fruits and vegetables in the front Main Hospital parking lot. The next produce sell will be held on Monday, June 9. The produce sell will be open to the public as well as CRMC employees. For more information, call (256) 737-2141. For a complete list of upcoming events, visit our Calendar of Events at www.crmchospital.com.

Domestic Violence Survivors Support Group
Victim Services of Cullman sponsors a Domestic Violence Survivors Support group meeting every Monday from 5pm to 7pm in the old Cullman County Board of Education building. Childcare is available. For more information please call 256-775-2600. CRISIS HOTLINE 256-734-6100.

Tuesday

Cullman Caring for Kids in Need of Donations
If you are able to contribute to Cullman County's Community Food Bank, the 'Caring for Kids' organization, they would be grateful. Non-perishable food items are needed, and of course cash enables them to purchase needed products to fill their empty shelves. Please call 256-739-1111 to see how to help or mail checks or money orders to Cullman Caring for Kids, P. O. Box 698, Cullman, Alabama 35056-0698. Thanks in advance for anything you can do.

Knifty Knitters and Crocheters Tuesday Afternoon Meeting
The Knifty Knitters and Crocheters meet at the Cullman County Public Library each Tuesday from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. The library provides the supplies for persons wishing to learn basic crocheting or knitting. There is no charge. All ages and knowledge levels from beginners to expert are welcome. For more information contact Lesia Coleman at 256-734-2720.

Cantanti della donna, Cullman's premier women's ensemble auditions
For ladies age 18 and above not currently singing with the Cantanti. Prospective members should be prepared to sing a short selection of their choice (usually a hymn or folk song) and bring a copy of the music for the accompanist (provided). Auditions will be held on January 6 and 8 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm in the St. John's Choir Room (512 2nd Ave SE). For more information or to schedule an audition at another time, call Laura Doss at 256-708-7110 and leave a message with your name and contact information. You may also email Laura at dossfarms@charter.net. Information about Cantanti della donna can be found on their Facebook page www.facebook.com/Cantantidelladonna."

Ladie's Auxiliary VFW Dance at Post 2214
The Ladies' Auxiliary of VFW Post 2214 invites the community to their weekly Tuesday night dances at the VFW Post building. The country line dance starts at 7:00 pm each Tuesday night, with admission only $5.00 per person. Concessions are available and all proceeds benefit the Auxiliary's local projects.

Wednesday

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

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.

Cantanti della donna, Cullman's premier women's ensemble auditions
For ladies age 18 and above not currently singing with the Cantanti. Prospective members should be prepared to sing a short selection of their choice (usually a hymn or folk song) and bring a copy of the music for the accompanist (provided). Auditions will be held on January 6 and 8 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm in the St. John's Choir Room (512 2nd Ave SE). For more information or to schedule an audition at another time, call Laura Doss at 256-708-7110 and leave a message with your name and contact information. You may also email Laura atdossfarms@charter.net. Information about Cantanti della donna can be found on their facebook page www.facebook.com/Cantantidelladonna."

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.

Cullman's VFW Post 2214
Invites everyone to their weekly Friday night dances at the VFW Hall from 7:00 pm until 10:00 pm. The cost is $5.00 per person and music by the Golden Oldies and Country with the Midnight Highway Band will be filling the air. Funds raised go toward the building rental. Get your dancing shoes on and come out for a great evening of fun and entertainment.

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

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

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

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

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!

LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT
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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 Aquatic 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.
- Ladies Auxiliary VFW Dance at Post 2214 starting at 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.

FRIDAY
- Live Music at Brothers starting at 7 p.m.
- 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
- Live Music at Grumpy's starting at 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY
- Live Music at Brothers starting at 7 p.m.
- 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
- Live Music at Grumpy's starting at 7:30 p.m.

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Official Newsletter

Volume 46 January 2015 | Issue 1

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We are thrilled to announce that the Chamber's 72nd Annual Meeting & Gala is right around the corner! It will be held on Thursday, February 19, 2015 at Stone Bridge Farms located at 281 County Road 717 in Cullman. The doors will open at 5:30 p.m. and the program starts at 6 p.m. There will be a post party from 8-10:30 p.m. The event is presented by Peoples Bank of Alabama and features the theme, "The Magic of Success". Our speaker and entertainment for the evening will be Mr. Joe M. Turner. Just who is this man of mystery? We aren't talking Austin Powers here, but what Turner can do is intriguing and exciting. The professional mentalist and magician will captivate you with his brilliant sleight of hand and complex trickery – ultimately whirling you around in the shroud of mystery. Let's just say you might feel a little like Alice when she fell down the rabbit hole. His show will engage and impact you. While Turner dazzles you with his inspiring and awe-inducing show, he will leave you with a certain message you won't forget! As a "Chief Impossibility Officer", one of his titles, you'll see exactly what is behind the curtain of business success as Turner walks you through the wonderland of expertise and insight. He is presented by Freedom Insurance - The Gloria Williams Agency. This year's program will also feature the presentations of the annual Emma Marie Eddleman Citizen of the Year Award and the Small Business of the Year Award. General admission tickets are now available for sale. For more information, or to make a reservation, please contact the Chamber at info@cullmanchamber.org or by calling 256-734-0454.

"Working people have a lot of bad habits, but the worst of these is work"

~ Clarence Darrow



Leah Bolin

President & CEO,
Cullman Area Chamber
of Commerce

Recently I told someone that I thought 2015 would be Cullman's best year! Look at what is on the horizon: New job opportunities, positive retail and industrial growth, and plenty of new tourist attractions and events. It's great to be a Cullmanite! But how did we get here from the downturn of 2009? I can answer that in one word, "YOU"! Cullman has been named the "City of Character". We have earned the fruits of our labor. Elected officials, leaders, churches and citizens alike have prayed, sweated, and devoted many hours to our economic recovery. Now it is time to refocus our energy. If you have ever lived through a major crisis, you know that while your adrenaline was up, so were you. Once recovery set in, however, so did exhaustion. I don't know about you, but my adrenaline is almost tapped out. I am going to use 2015 to refocus my personal and professional goals in order to make myself a more productive leader, spouse, mom and friend. Below are three habits I intend to resume and I would like to encourage you to do the same.

1. Become an early riser by going to bed early.

Early risers really do have a distinct advantage when it comes to mental clarity, acuity and energy. Most of these articles are written at 4:30 am!

2. Start every day with an intention, focus, and meditation.

Have you ever had a day where as soon as you woke up, there were already missed calls, text messages and emails screaming for your attention? You felt like you were struggling to stay afloat before breakfast. Oh, that sounds like every day, you say? Me too. That needs to stop. Prayer and meditation coupled with a clear vision of what you want to achieve will get your day started in the right direction.

3. Physical activity. Do it.

Working out is probably the highest-leverage tool in your arsenal. It makes you feel better and keeps you both physically and emotionally healthy, year round. To have the mental energy to take on the full calendar of to-do's that people want from you, you have to get physical! Our daily decisions and habits have a huge impact on both our levels of happiness and our success. Successful people are simply those with successful habits. "Working people have a lot of bad habits, but the worst of these is work". I love my work and I am sure you do too. But to stay on track for 2015, let's hold each other accountable in these three areas. I can't wait to see what 2015 holds for all of us.

Happy New Year!

www.CullmanChamber.org

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

TOURISM

community improvement awards

The final round of community improvement award winners of 2014 were recently announced, with the awardees listed. The Community Improvement Committee hopes to inspire others to take action to preserve, protect and promote community improvement in Cullman. Nominations are currently being sought the March 16 deadline. Anyone may nominate a commercial property/organization in the Cullman area. These awards will be given on a quarterly basis. Businesses/Organizations are eligible for one award per category each year and must be a Chamber member in order to be nominated.

continued on pg 14...



Business/Organization with New Construction –
Good Hope Pharmacy

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HANCEVILLE

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COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT 3rd QUARTER WINNERS



Business/Organization with Best Landscaping – Small
Marx Optical



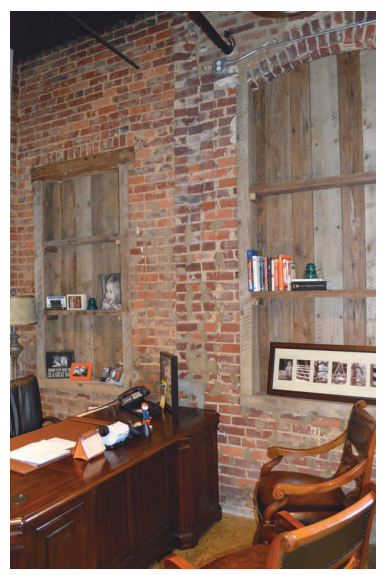
Business/Organization with Best Landscaping - Large
Cullman Regional Medical Center



Business/Organization with Best Curb Appeal –
Traditions Bank



Business/Organization
"Building a Sense of Community"
– Vinemont Sports Complex



Right: Business/Organization with Best Restoration –
Nearen Construction

MEMBERSHIP



Cullman Emergency Medical Services
601 2nd Ave SW Cullman, AL 35055



Hanceville Drug Company
101 Commercial St SE Cullman, AL 35077 | 256-352-5829



James R. Smith Trucking
240 Co. Rd. 222 Cullman, AL 35055 | 256-734-0511



Compton's Veterinary Hospital
1011 2nd Ave SW Cullman, AL 35055 | (256) 734-9488

New Chamber Members listed on page 13

The Cullman Area is growing. In 2014 we had a total of 55 ribbon cuttings!

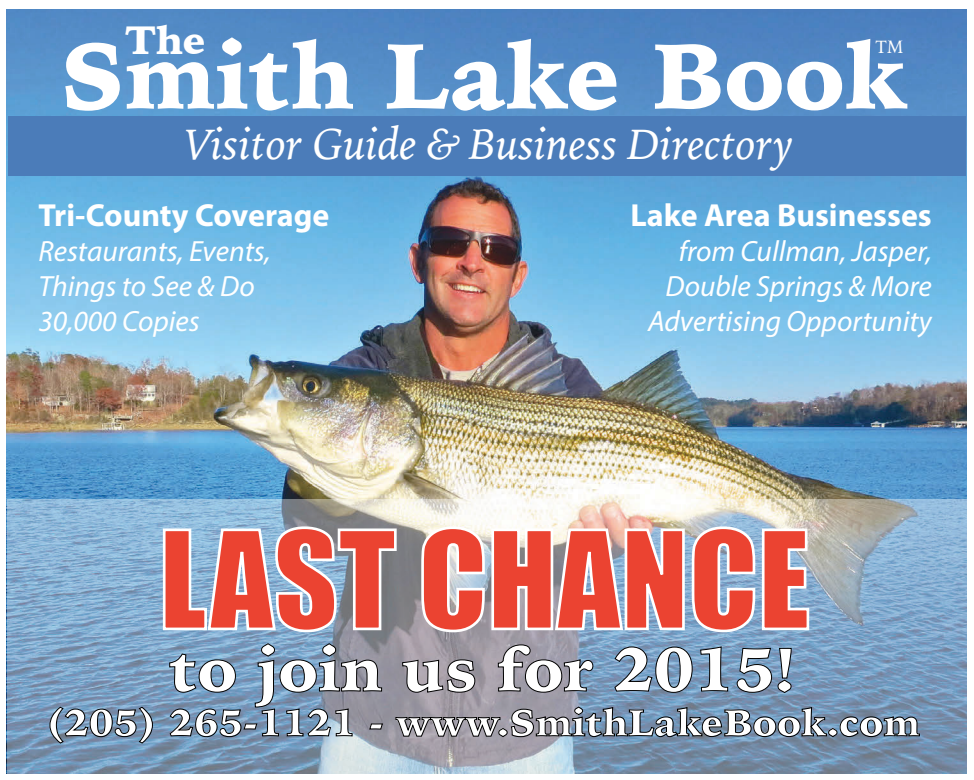
CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITOR CENTER Ribbon Cuttings



Cutie Patooties
306 1st Ave. SE Cullman, AL 35055 | 256-590-7661



Creative Design & Screenprinting
343 Co. Rd. 591 Hanceville, AL 35077 | 256-734-7242





JANUARY SMALL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

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Hanceville, AL 35077
(256) 734-2032

January's Sponsor:

1940 2nd Avenue NW
(256) 734-4472
www.billsmithbuickgmc.com

Bill Smith
BUICK GMC
1940 Second Avenue NW | Cullman, AL

DECEMBER'S SMALL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH



L to R: Bobbie Shedd, Mary Flanagan, Linda Cabri, Jo Kreps, Rickey Kreps, Manager (sitting), Carla Fussell, Cullman Florist, Maria Richter Schultz, Retail Committee Chair; Bill Strandlund, Charles Garrett.

Congratulations to our December Small Business of the Month winner, Office Equipment Company. This month's Small Business of the Month was sponsored by Cullman Florist. The Small Business of the Month award is given monthly to a local small business that meets nomination requirements. Eligible candidates have under 100 employees, are members of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce and make contributions to our community, offer outstanding customer service and serve as inspiring success stories. Nomination forms can be downloaded at www.cullmanchamber.org.

Who will be awarded Small Business of the Year? Go to page 15 to see the nominations!

Quick Tire Sales Inc.
Cullman, Alabama
256-739-1473
www.quicktiresales.com

COMMUNITY LUNCHEON

Cullman's legislative delegation will give an overview of what's currently happening in Montgomery. So be prepared to find out all you ever wanted to know that is happening at our state capitol! Bring business cards and get ready to network. Our first community luncheon of 2015 will be happening on Friday, January 23 at the All Steak Restaurant Banquet Room, located at 323 3rd Ave., S.E. Cullman, AL 35055, from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Thanks to our January Sponsor Carter & Company Real Estate. Prices are $15 for chamber members and $20 for future members. For more information or to make a reservation, please call 256-734-0454 or email info@cullmanchamber.org.



Senator Paul Bussman



Represenative Ed Henry



Represenative Randall Shedd

January's Community Luncheon Sponsor:

Carter & Company REAL ESTATE
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Represenative Corey Harbison

Presenting Sponsor for 2015 Community Luncheon

905 2nd Avenue SW
Cullman, AL 35055
(256) 255-1515
www.shirleyq.biz



State of the Community

On behalf of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's Governmental Affairs Committee, we would like to invite you to attend a panel presentation on the "State of the Community", sponsored by CullmanSense on Thursday, January 15, 2015 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. at the All Steak Restaurant. The purpose of this forum is to provide the community, and each of the municipalities in Cullman County, with the opportunity to share information on the state of their community with Chamber members and the business community. Thank you to our program sponsor O.F. Richter & Sons. For more information or to make a reservation, please call 256-734-0454 or email info@cullmanchamber.org. It is $15 for chamber members and $20 for future members.

Baileyton	Colony	Cullman
Dodge City	Fairview	Garden City
Good Hope	Hanceville	Holly Pond
South Vinemont		West Point

The State of the Community is presented by:

CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS

LEADERSHIP CULLMAN COUNTY

Leadership Cullman County is a nine-month series of seminars and programs designed to bring together a class of 20 community leaders to examine community issues such as education, healthcare, crime, government, economic development and quality of life. This ambitious group of leaders have successfully completed a group retreat, sessions on education, criminal justice and local government with January's outing to feature healthcare learning. Leadership Co-Chairs include Brian Lacy, Cullman Electric Cooperative; and TJ Franey, Cullman County Schools. Cullman Chamber President Leah Bolin leads the group and serves as program advisor. This spirited class looks forward to 2015 and all that the year will bring with it, including several opportunities for leadership ethics, service learning, and community improvement. January's Session sponsor is Cullman Electric Cooperative along with the Breakfast sponsor Ed Holcombe Pharmacy.

Presented By: TRADITIONS BANK | REACH HIGH



Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, speaks to the Leadership class.



Ben Harrison, speaks on behalf of Cullman Regional Airport.



Business changes for 2015?

Is your business changing locations for 2015, changes in staff, new hours of operation? Make sure you update your information with the Chamber! You can do this by logging into your Member Center. Please contact Magan F. Bartlett for your username! You can login to your Member Center by going to www.cullmanchamber.org, selecting the Chamber Tab, and choose Member Login. You will be able to access "how to videos", Business Reports and update your information. By updating your business' information you are helping others find you!

CULLMAN COUNTY YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Youth Leadership Cullman County is entering the 6th month of their nine-month series of seminars and programs. The programs are designed to educate the students on community issues such as education, healthcare, crime, government, economic development and quality of life. They have enjoyed sessions on experiencing leadership, community day, volunteerism day, law & criminal justice day, and look forward to learning about quality of life in their January session. They will be having breakfast sponsored by Serra Visser Nissan, and the students will travel to local healthcare facilities throughout the day. Lunch will be provided by Jackson & Williams Attorneys. The students will learn about how important it is to a community to embody a positive environment that fosters physical & mental health, education and social belonging. Jackie Moore, Director of Finance & Administration, is the program advisor.

Presenting Sponsor:

WALLACE STATE HANCEVILLE



The 2014-2015 YLCC class visited the Cullman County Dentention Center during December's session.

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Wellness Center for the Community

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CDL
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Medical Assisting Review

Online Courses
Health, Media & Design, Business, IT Software Design

WALLACE STATE HANCEVILLE
CONTINUING EDUCATION

For course descriptions:
www.wallacestate.edu/ce

To register call 256.352.7826

Classes start this month

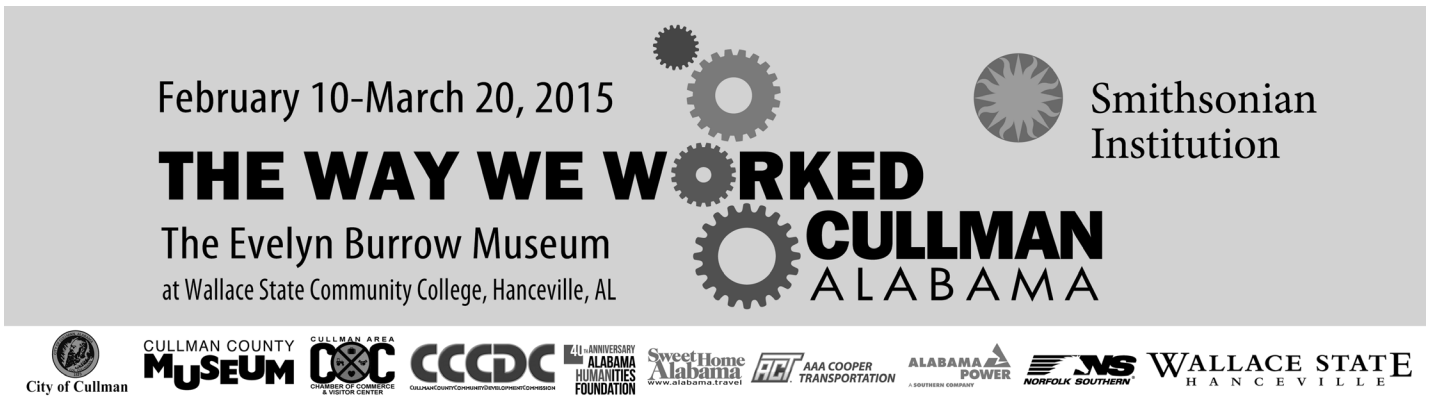
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Thank you for you support & investment in the Cullman Area!

Spradlin Farm	256-734-6419
Hankey Law Firm	256-736-8744
MoMoSHE 103	256-841-1688
Colonial Life	256-347-7478
Dave Warren Photography	205-616-8009
Agcor Steel, LLC	256-734-4792
ASI Constructors, Inc.	719-647-2821
Buenavista Mexican Cantina	256-737-5050

TOURISM

Smithsonian Exhibition
THE WAY WE WORKED - CULLMAN, ALABAMA



The Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition "The Way We Worked" will make its next stop in Cullman County, settling in at The Evelyn Burrow Museum on the campus of Wallace State Community College in Hanceville from February 10 to March 20. Admission to this exhibit free.

Expressly chosen by the Alabama Humanities Foundation to host "The Way We Worked" as part of the Museum on Main Street project, the Cullman area is one of only six communities in the state selected for the honor. The project — a national, state and local partnership — brings exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations as a way to explore the professions and the people that sustain the American society.

"The Way We Worked," adapted from an original exhibition developed by the National Archives and Records Administration, explores how work has become a central element in American culture. It traces the many changes that have affected the workforce and work environments over the past 150 years, including the growth of manufacturing and increasing use of technology. The exhibition draws from the Archives' rich collections, including historical photographs, archival accounts of workers, film, audio and interactives, to tell the compelling story of how work impacts our individual lives and the historical and cultural fabric of our communities. Since 1997, the foundation has partnered with the Smithsonian to bring the Museum on Main Street program to small cities and rural communities across Alabama. "Allowing all of our state's residents to have access to the cultural resources of our nation's premiere museum is a priority of the Alabama Humanities Foundation," said Executive Director Armand DeKeyser.

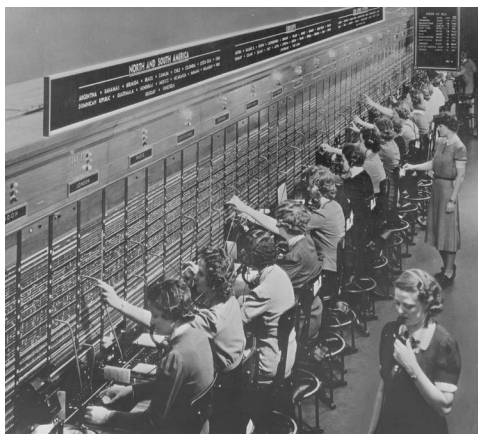
"The Way We Worked" is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation and local host institutions. To learn more about "The Way We Worked" and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

Support for Museum on Main Street is provided by the United States Congress, Alabama Power Foundation and Norfolk Southern Foundation. Cullman's exhibition is a joint project of the City of Cullman, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, Cullman County Museum, Cullman Economic Development Agency, Cullman County Community Development Commission and Wallace State Community College. SITES connects millions of Americans with their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of art, science and history exhibitions. State humanities councils, located in each state and U.S. territory, support community-based humanities programs that highlight such topics as local history, literature and cultural traditions. To learn more, visit www.sites.si.edu or www.alabamahumanities.org.

Volunteers needed!

If you would like to volunteer to be a docent, please contact Elaine Fuller with the Cullman County Museum at 256-739-1258. Docents will work with former educators and current docents to lead schoolchildren and museum visitors on guided tours.





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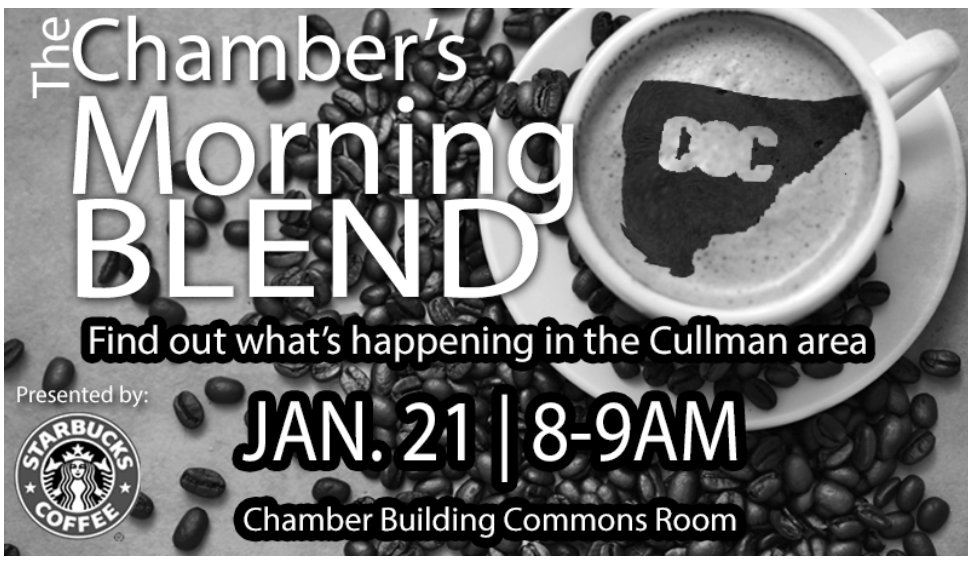
continued from pg 9.. Community Improvement Awards

There is no fee to nominate. You must submit a nomination form for the award on a yearly basis. If you have previously submitted a nomination in a certain category, no need to re-submit, we will keep said nomination on file for one year. A sign will be placed in the winner's location each quarter (July, October, January and April). Nomination deadlines for 2015 are March 16, June 15, September 15, and December 15. You may come by the chamber to fill out a nomination form or contact info@cullmanchamber.org to obtain a nomination form.

NESMITH PARK
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Jannie S. Ratliff, AHM
Senior Housing Manager
207 McNabb Road SW
Cullman, AL 35055
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(256) 734-5703 Fax
nesmithparkmgr@spm.net
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1637 Townsquare SW
Cullman, AL 35055
payroll.services@hotmail.com
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Morning Blend is a chamber event held each third Wednesday of the month in the Commons Room of the CoC. You set the topic, Starbucks provides the coffee. This is a great opportunity to network with others in the community. Thanks to Cullman Electric Cooperative for being our monthly sponsor! This event was one of the Chamber's top events for 2014. Make sure you join us for 2015! You never know who you could meet!

January's Monthly Sponsor: Cullman Electric Cooperative *providing energy with care* A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

For the past 15 months, the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's Retail Committee has presented the award of Small Business of the Month to a deserving business in the Cullman area that met pre-selected criteria. For the first time ever, the Small Business of the Year will be awarded at the 72nd Annual Meeting & Gala to be held on Thursday, February 19, 2015. If you would like to nominate a business for Small Business of the Month, please contact Derek Lane at dlane@cullmanchamber.org or submit a nomination form online at cullmanchamber.org. We look forward to awarding one of our hardworking local companies, as well as showcasing that our community is honored to have such prominent small businesses, which serve as one of the major economic engines of growth in the Cullman area.

	SBotM Winner	Sponsor
Oct-13	Chick-fil-A	Moe's Original BBQ
Nov-13	Freedom Insurance – Gloria Williams	Brown & Co. Beverages
Dec-13	Werner's Trading Co.	Bella Faire Day Spa & Salon
Jan-14	Mitch Smith Chevrolet	The Spot Beverages
Feb-14	Brandin' Iron Steakhouse	April Flours Catering
Mar-14	Johnny's Bar-B-Q	ADS Security
Apr-14	Alabama Farm Credit	Prestigious Pets
May-14	EvaBank	Cullman Chamber
Jun-14	Quick Tire	Cullman Chamber
Jul-14	DQ Grill & Chill - Cullman	Cullman Chamber
Aug-14	Walker Brothers Ltd.	Cullman Eye Specialists
Sep-14	R.E. Garrison Trucking, Inc.	Cullman Chamber
Oct-14	Southern Accents	EvaBank
Nov-14	Valley Heating & Cooling	What a Girl Wants
Dec-14	Office Equipment Co.	Cullman Florist

Tickets are limited for the Annual Meeting & Gala, please call the Chamber to reserve yours today at 256-734-0454. To learn more about the Annual Meeting & Gala, please refer to page 9. We hope to see you there!

MEMBERSHIP 101

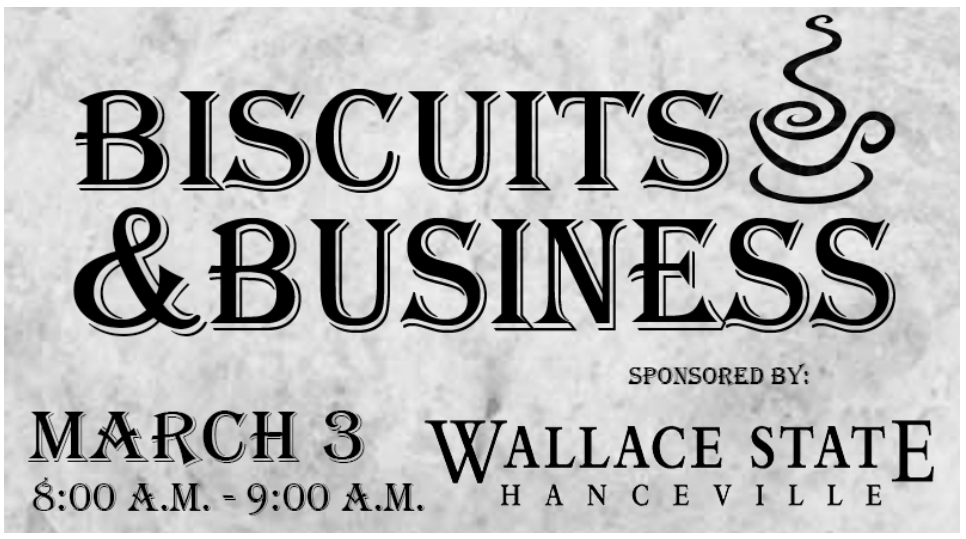
These quarterly held meetings teach new and existing members how best to maximize their membership investment in the Chamber by joining us for this free and exciting seminar, where we will teach you the ins and outs of the Chamber and show your company the full experience of what being a member is all about! The next session of this program will be on Thursday, January 22, 2015 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sponsored by Charter Business, this event will be beneficial for you whether you are a new member – or a long-time member with new employees. We encourage you to make plans to attend so you can be sure you're taking full advantage of your membership investment. A complimentary lunch will be available for all attendees. Reservations are requested, so please contact Magan F. Bartlett, mbartlett@cullmanchamber.org or by phone at 256-734-0454.

MEMBERSHIP 101
MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Membership 101 is presented by:

Charter Business

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce has revamped our Ambassador program. Ambassadors will assist with member services and will provide recognition for the ambassador and the business they represent. We are looking for someone that enjoys meeting people, shares enthusiasm for the Cullman Area, and has the ability to establish a positive rapport with indviduals and businesses. There will be monthly meetings, along with a point system. This will ensure the Ambassador is recognized for their work throughout the year. We look to have our first meeting in February 2015. If this sounds like something you would like to be a part of please fill out the application at www.cullmanchamber.org/pages/AmbassadorApplication1/ or contact Magan F. Bartlett. If you are interested in sponsoring the Ambassador Program please contact the Chamber 256-734-0454 and speak with Magan about this wonderful opportunity!



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events

January 15 - State of the Community (pg 12)
January 21 - Morning Blend - 8 AM (pg 15)
January 22 - Membership 101 - 11:30 AM (pg 15)
January 23 - Community Luncheon (pg 12)
January 28 - State of the Hospital,
Healthcare Professional of the Year
February 19 - 72nd Annual Meeting & Gala (pg 9)
February - March - Smithsonian (pg 14)

Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC)

The Governmental Affairs Committee of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to reviewing, developing, and supporting issues that promote a positive, pro-active economic environment with social progress and enhanced quality of life.

Role of GAC

- Establishing productive relationships between business interests and public officials.
- Providing forums to inform Chamber members, public officials and candidates for public office on issues impacting the business community.
- Developing and supporting legislation and other governmental action which promotes a strong business climate and job growth opportunities.
- Endeavoring to hold public officials accountable for their actions and the resulting impacts on the business community.

If you would like to apply for the GAC please contact Debbie Matthews at dmatthews@cullmanchamerber.org or fill out the application at www.cullmanchamber.org under forms.



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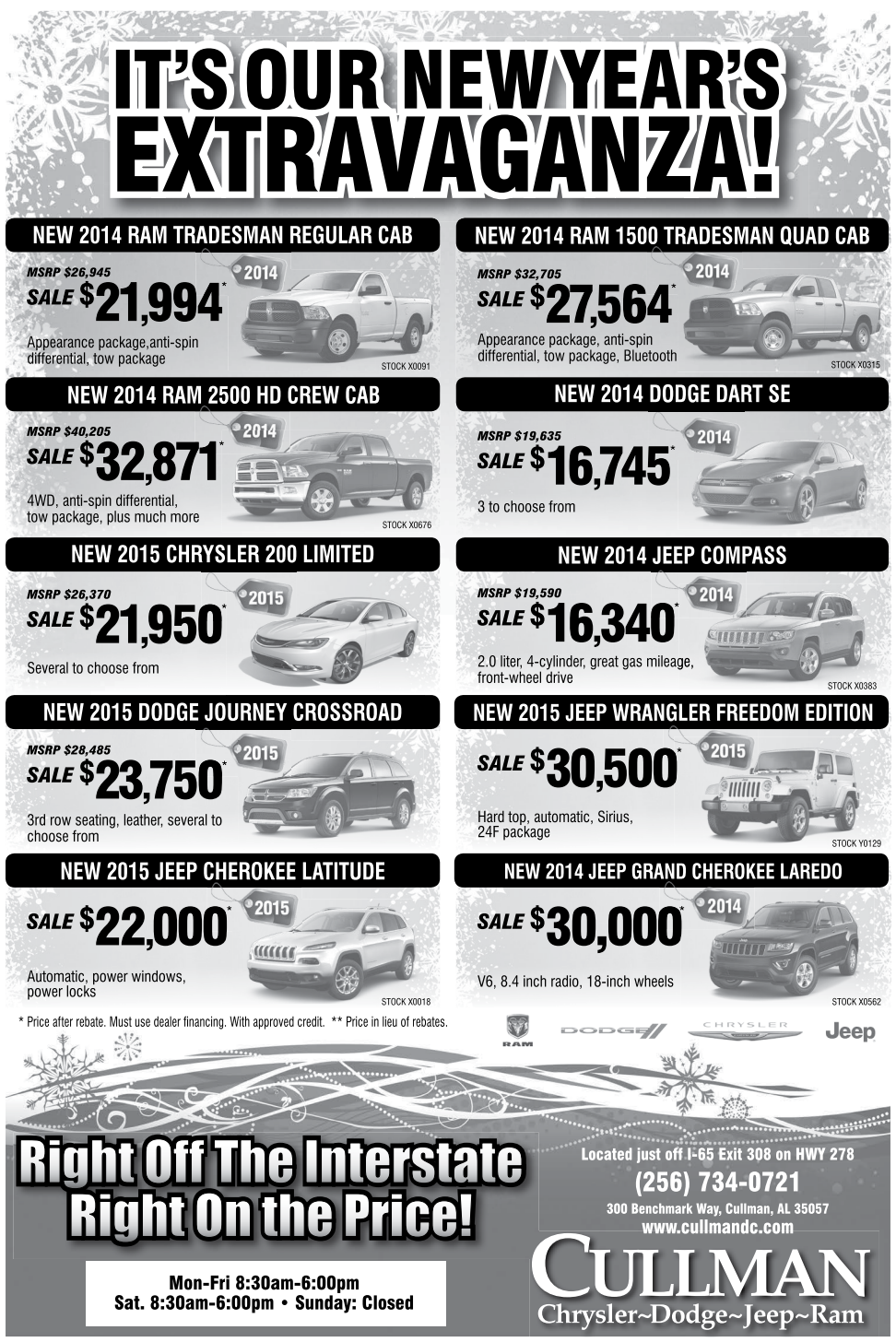
Emma Marie Eddleman Award

This award, presented in February of each year by the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the community. Nominations should include a written statement about the individual's accomplishments and why that individual should be considered for the award. The nominee should be dedicated to community service, have accomplished outstanding goals or tasks in a community service role, have achieved an outstanding status in the community and be a resident of Cullman County. All nominations must be submitted to the Chamber no later than the last day of January to be eligible. Some past recipients include: Chester Freeman ('94 –'95), Barry McGriff ('01 – '02), Gloria Williams ('11 – '12), Billy Coleman ('12 – '13), Roy Drinkard ('13 – '14). You may fill out a nomination form online at cullmanchamber.org - forms or email dmatthews@cullmanchamber.org.

This award is sponsored by: **O.F. Richter & Sons, Inc.**
308 1st Street SE
(256) 734-0582

INTERN APPLICATIONS

The Chamber is now accepting applications for the 2015 Internship Program. This quarterly internship is designed to develop the necessary skills required to efficiently perform in the fast-paced, multi-faceted environment in which we live. The internships occur on the following quarterly basis: Jan-March, April-June, July-Sept., Oct.-Dec. If you would like to apply for this paid internship, please complete the application online, it can be found under forms at cullmanchamber.org, or contact Debbie Matthews at dmatthews@cullmanchamber.org.



COMMUNITY WELLNESS DAY: CITIZENS GET A FREE PASS TO FIND OUT WHAT CWAC IS ALL ABOUT

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - This past Saturday, the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center celebrated their first annual Community Wellness Day. Folks from all over Cullman County came by and enjoyed a full day of fitness and fun.

"The Community Wellness Day was started this year as an event to open up the Aquatic Center for everybody to use," said Waid Harbison, Marketing and Programs Director at Cullman City Parks and Recreation. "There are a lot of people in the community that have never had access to the Center before. Some people have said, 'I've lived in Cullman all my life, but I've never known where the Aquatic Center is'."

Word of free access to the Aquatic Center spread fast and lots of new faces were there to visit.

Folks tried out the gym, the pool, and the classes that are offered on a daily basis.

"This is actually the first time we have opened up the Aquatic Center for free to nonmembers," Harbison continued. "We'll allow them to come in and use the facility – they can do anything a regular member can do, so they'll be able to use the fitness center, the pool, the fitness classes and all that will be available to them."

The facility also offered a discount on all memberships Saturday as part of the event by waiving the $50.00 enrollment fee. Many folks took the opportunity to save some money and begin their new year in the right direction for a healthier life by signing up for a membership that day.

"As part of the Community Wellness Day, we will have free enrollment on memberships that day to help out with memberships," Harbison said with a smile. "The whole day is kinda built around helping people achieve their New Year's resolutions."

The Community Wellness Day is a kick-start to a much bigger plan for the community. Everyone is encouraged to get out and get fit.

"Whether they are members or not members of the Aquatic Center, we are doing a big health and wellness campaign that we are going to start doing in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department for the coming year. We're really trying to get the whole community to get out and do something."

With a new year, comes a new healthy plan for the community as a whole, and the folks at Cullman City Parks and Recreation have a wonderful plan. It all starts with a unique new slogan.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Attendees browse various vendors as part of Community Wellness Day.

"Our campaign slogan is GOAL – Get Out And Live," he grinned proudly. "We are trying to get people to get out and get involved, whether that is a jog over at Heritage Park or a gym membership at the Aquatic Center, we want to help you achieve that. "

For more on the GOAL campaign, contact the Cullman City Parks and Recreation at 256-734-9157 or stop by the Cullman Civic Center. They are located at 510 5th St SW, Cullman, AL 35055. Their website is www.cullmanrecreation.org.

START THE YEAR HEALTHY: FITTING FITNESS INTO YOUR SCHEDULE

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - We all want to stay fit and healthy, and with the New Year just underway you may feel a new resolve to accomplish your goals. Starting a new and healthy lifestyle is a great endeavor at any time of year, but it is not something to enter into on a whim or with the wrong mindset. Local trainers weighed in on the subject with a few tips to keep in mind if you are setting out on the journey to a healthier life.

Local trainer at Cullman's Wellness and Aquatic Center, Sheila Federer, helps people all over the area stay motivated. She says that the first thing those who are just beginning need learn is that it is not a fast process and to pace yourself.

"First and foremost, remember that you are a beginner and go into it slowly," said Federer. "The pace really needs to be set depending on the individual and their needs. For some working out three days a week will work to start, but that may not be right for everyone."

She went on to note that possibly the most important part of being healthy is nutrition.

"Nutrition is key in my mind," she said. "And remember that you are going to have setbacks. I tell people to remember that water in is water off. I also always suggest 5 small meals a day, every 2.5 hours. I don't believe in diets, I believe in healthy nutrition. A good balance of protein, complex carbs, lots of vegetables and some fruit are essential to staying healthy."

A small, and more personal gym that is connected to Rennards Gallery on 1st Ave SE, is the perfect place for those who want to start their year on the right track.

Shannon Berse is a long time fitness expert and former bodybuilder. Her wealth of knowledge as both a trainer and nurse allows her to give her customers a unique experience.

"This is a private gym that is one on one," said Berse. "You pay one monthly fee and that entitles you to three days a week with a personal trainer for an hour each time. We go over nutrition and individualized workouts. I use to be a body builder, and my husband use to be a power lifter, so we have been working in the fitness world for some time."

For Shannon and her husband Dennis, helping others achieve their goals without breaking their budget is the most rewarding part of the job. For many, going to larger gyms can be intimidating with crowds of people and equipment that you may or may not know how to use properly if you are beginner. With B-fit's unique experience, you will not share the gym with scores of people. Your time is your time. For those that want to start a fitness routine without a gym membership or trainer, Berse says that there is strength in numbers.

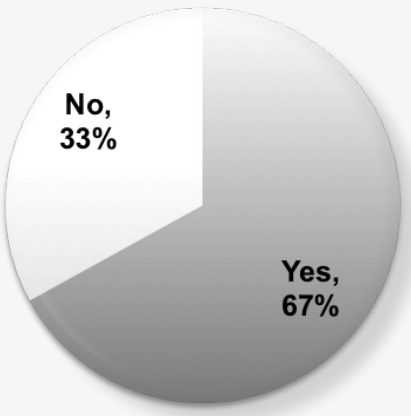
"Get a partner," she said. "Get someone to go and workout with you a few times a week. You need someone who you can check with and be accountable to. Also, a big tip is to not expect too much from yourself too fast. You can start out walking just five minutes a day. Don't go into it saying that I have to do 30 minutes a day, and if I can't, then there is no use in trying. Always keep going no matter if you do five minutes or an hour."

There are a number of ways to start a healthy year, but only one way to maintain it for a lifetime, consistency. Stay consistent and know that any bumps along the way do not mean you have failed. Remember, you can only fail if you stop trying.

To contact personal trainer Sheila Federer, please call 256-531-6217. To contact B-fit, please call 256-739-5997. B-fit will be running an introductory special through the month of January where you can sign up for only $50 a month.

Poll

Did you make a New Year's resolution?



This Week's Poll
Have you returned any of your Christmas gifts?
Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

cp&r
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WHAT'S ON DECK AT PARKS AND REC....

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

- **Community Wellness Day** will be held at the Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center on Saturday, January 3 from 7am-1pm. The event will include free access to the Wellness & Aquatic Center to the public, a health fair, featured fitness classes and speakers, and free enrollment on any new memberships, a $50 value. The Polar Bear Plunge will also take place on January 3, where entrants will have a chance to win a free one year membership to the center. Registration for the event will be free. For more info, call 775-SWIM.
- **Missoula Children's Theater Presents Aladdin** at the Cullman Civic Center on Saturday, January 24. Auditions for the show will be open to ages 5-18 and will take place on Monday, January 19 at 3:30pm at the Civic Center. Practices will take place at 3:30 each afternoon leading up to the show, which will take place at 2pm and 6pm on Saturday, January 24. Call 256-734-9157 for 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.
- **CP&R Archery Classes** are ongoing and take place each Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday afternoon for beginner, intermediate, and advanced archers. Cost is $40 for the month. Call 734-9157 for more information.

What's Online

AN ARTIST AMONG US

Shirley Roy at USA Healthcare is quite the artist. She passes the time by drawing and coloring pictures of the workers on the second floor where she lives as well as other drawings including landscapes, animals and cartoon characters."I started about 10 years ago drawing for the public. I've always drawn something and thrown it away because I...



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LOOKING AHEAD TO 2015

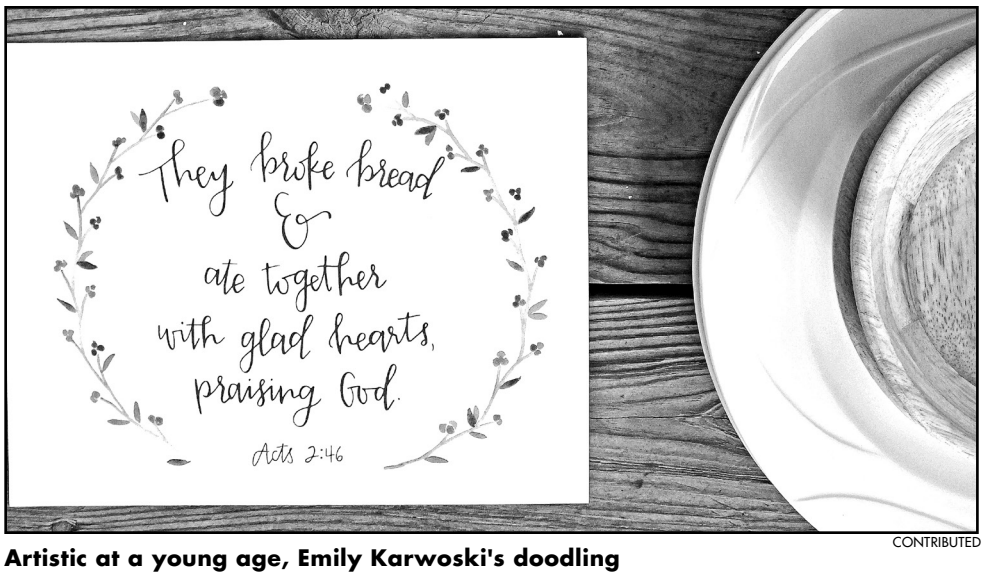
Cullman has seen a lot of changes in only a year's time. 2014 has been a great year for growth, both economically and within infrastructure. As many have noticed, business is getting bigger and better at almost every end of town, and according to officials, 2015 should be even better. New business and more job growth are both on the...

qrne.ws/301

A FAIR VIEW AT FAIRVIEW

Senator John Sparkman was born December 20, 1899 in Hartselle, AL. He was the seventh of 11 children of Joseph Whitten and Julia Mitchell Kent Sparkman. He represented Alabama for 42 years in the U. S. Congress, first in the House of Representatives from 1937 to 1946, and then in the Senate from 1946 to 1979. Over time...

qrne.ws/302



CONTRIBUTED

Artistic at a young age, Emily Karwoski's doodling has transformed into a growing business.

EMILY KARWOSKI KNOWS THE ART OF LETTERING

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Have you ever saw a quote that really stuck with you, or helped you through a difficult time? Most of us have, and a lot of us will write it down or print it out, and stick it on the fridge. Well if you happen to call on one Cullmanite, Emily Karwoski, you can have that quote in beautiful scripts to frame at more than reasonable pricing.

Karwoski was a child when she started expressing herself artistically. What some might consider doodles have become a well rounded business for her where she can earn money doing what she loves.

"Growing up, I loved to doodle on any and everything like school binders, notebooks, my arms, my jeans," she said. "I can remember people giving me compliments on my handwriting most of my life, but I never thought anything of it. I graduated with a degree in Speech Pathology that has never been used, and I spent the last several years working for a local non-profit mission organization, Kenya Relief. I continued to doodle in my journals; it became my little language to the Lord. I posted a few pictures of my journal to Instagram and soon people were asking me to letter their vows for them or design pieces for their homes."

Since then, Karwoski has been asked to make all kinds of works, and eventually she decided to give selling her art a try.

"Last October of 2013, our church, St. John's, announced they were going to host a German Christmas Market and they were asking for vendors to set up booths," Karwoski said.

"After much encouragement from my incredible husband, I decided to go out on a limb and sign up. I worked hard and handmade over 150 greeting cards and wall décor for the Market. I ended up selling all but a handful of my items, and before I knew it, I had a business up and running!"

The rest seemed to fall into place after that, and Joyful Papery was born. According to Karwoski, it was something unexpected that was placed in her life during a difficult time.

"Joyful Papery was born in a season of my life of learning to be content in all circumstances," she said.

"I clung to Paul's words in the letter to the Philippians, "For I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need." (Philippians 4:11,12 ESV) The Lord brought deep and unspeakable joy to my heart in a season of infertility, turning my mourning into dancing, and Joyful Papery became somewhat of an offering back to Him. My prayer for my business and my art is to always create reminders of joy, bringing contentment in His presence through beautiful and inspiring paper goods."

You can buy lots of different items on her Etsy shop, from cute planner downloads that you can print again and again, to home décor.

She can do it all and more, with her talents using handlettering, calligraphy, and watercolor. She is perfect for a unique gift, a beautiful card, or for special events like weddings. Karwoski is thankful for her continued success, and says that God is blessing her all the way.

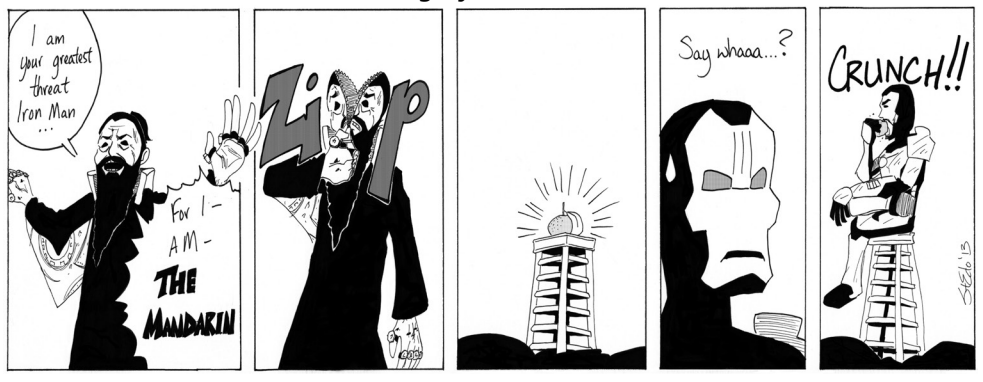
"The Lord has been blessing my business," Karowski said. "I feel more like myself than I ever have before, and I've learned so much in the process. I'm learning to be brave and make mistakes, because those mistakes build character and perseverance into us, and subsequently, molds us into the people we are. I'm also learning to dream big, but to let my heart be okay with the baby steps and the tiny victories along the way. Life and art is all about the process, and I'm so enjoying every little step."

You can follow and contact Emily Karwoski at Joyful Papery through any of these channels: Etsy Shop: joyfulpapery.etsy.com; e-mail: joyfulpapery@gmail.com. Follow along with my creative process, updates, and promotional codes on Instagram at @joyfulpapery or at facebook.com/joyfulpapery.

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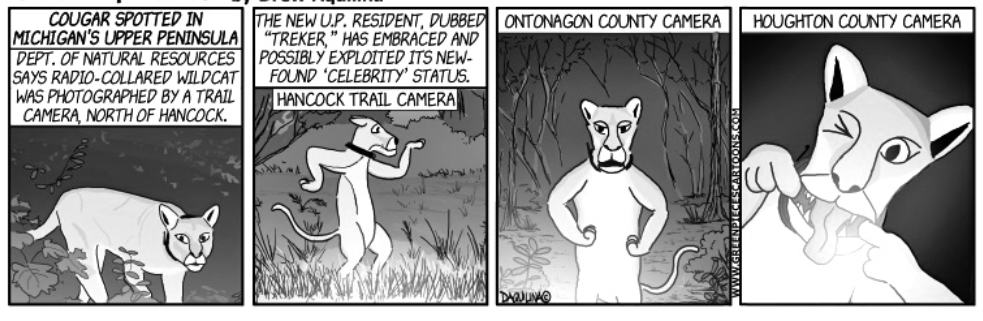
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PETS OF THE WEEK

Dandy



Hello my name is Dandy and I am about 9 months old. I am a Catahoula Leopard Dog and I currently weigh 47 lbs. I am full of life and I love to play. Come visit me today, and I will win you over with my sweet and loving nature!

Lexi



Hello my name is Lexi and I am about 1.5 year old. I am believed to be a Jack Russell Terrier mix and I currently weigh 28 lbs. I am full of life and I love to play. Come visit me today, and I will win you over with my sweet spirit!

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.

DODGE CITY'S LIFE CHURCH HOSTS THIRD ANNUAL BIG BALL DROP AND NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

DODGE CITY - On December 31, 2014, Life Church in Dodge City hosted their 3rd annual Big Ball Drop and New Year's Eve Bash. The event featured live music from the band Hope-Alive, retro indoor putt-putt golf, an inflatable castle for the little ones, free gift giveaways, hot chocolate and s'mores – all free of charge! Bonfires were scattered throughout the area, where people stood and roasted marshmallows, visited with friends and stayed warm.

The highlight of the night was the gigantic ball drop and fireworks that rang in the new year. As the crowd counted down in unison, the massive ball - 12 feet in diameter - was slowly dropped, landing at the bottom just as the clock struck midnight. Then suddenly, brilliant fireworks filled the sky and dazzled everyone for miles around. "Oooooohs and Ahhhhhs," filled the entire area while everyone clapped and jumped as the fireworks blasted in the air. It was truly a sight to see.

"We're out here just having a blast and loving our community," said Chris Pettit, Development Pastor at Life Church. "We're giving everyone an opportunity to come out and have fun on New Year's in a family atmosphere. It gives people something to do. It's a big thing for us to put on, and it's a lot of fun for everyone who comes out here."

People of all ages had a blast at the Ball Drop. Parents followed their children around as the tots played putt-putt, jumped in the castle, made silly New Year's hats and danced like there was no one watching. Teenagers dotted the area, munching on snacks and giggling with their buddies. Church volunteers were scattered about, manning their booths and lending a helping hand to anyone in need. It was truly a loving, God-filled time.

"Our statement is Live Life Forward," Pettit explained. "We're all about moving beyond your past; moving toward that great plan that God has for your life."

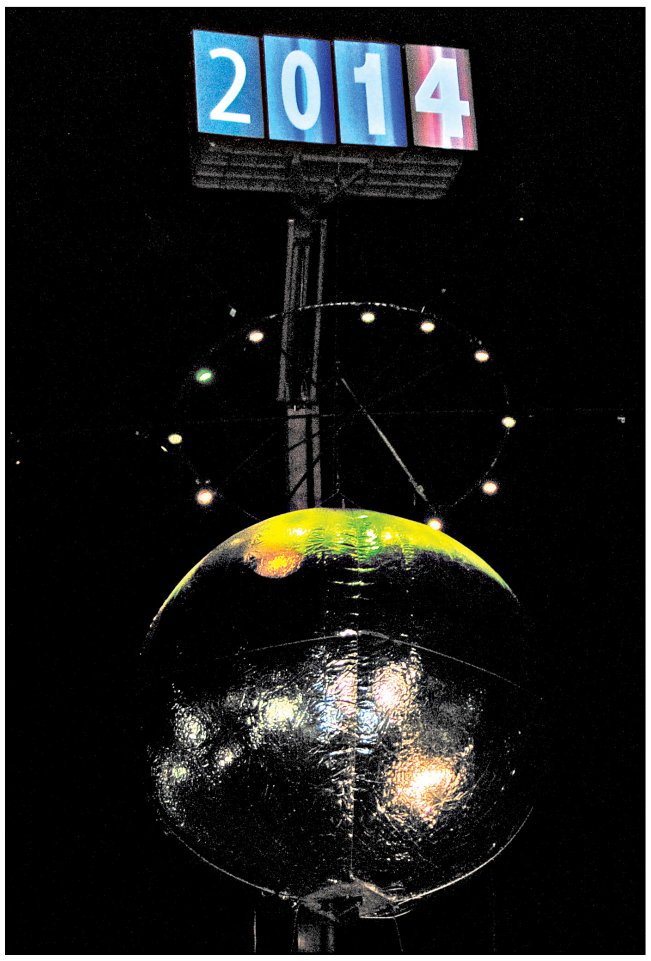
There were a lot of first time visitors to the Ball Drop; all had a great time and promised to come back again next year.

"The ball was so pretty," said Andria Busby, smiling from the crowd. "The fireworks were amazing too! I will definitely come back again next time, this was awesome!"

"The music was my favorite part of the night," said Emily Edmonds. "This was my first time to come and I plan to come back," she giggled.

If you are looking for a church and would like more information about Life Church in Dodge City, feel free to contact them. They are located at 471 Al Hwy 69 S, Hanceville, AL 35077. Their phone number is 256-297-1115 and e-mail is info@livelifefwd.com. Their website is www.livelifefwd.com. Visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/livelifefwd and Twitter page at twitter.com/livelifefwd.

Along with the ball drop, the family-oriented event featured putt-putt golf, an inflatable castle, giveaways, and live music.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Corbin (from Front)

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

Just over the state line, in Lincoln County Tennessee to be precise, a rather remarkable little girl was born. Miss Myrtle Corbin came into the world in 1868, and she was the daughter of a wounded Confederate soldier. Before long she and her family moved from the Volunteer State into Blount County, Alabama where she spent her childhood.

Myrtle was unique and most folks didn't quite know what to make of her. You see, she was born a twin, yet she was the only one of the two that lived. The tiny body of her parasitic sister had only fully developed from the waist down, and yet even that was malformed. At the bottom of her small legs, each foot only possessed three toes. Myrtle was able to control the movement in her sister's legs; unfortunately she was unable to use them for walking.

This made things very difficult for her to get around; mainly because she was born with a clubbed foot. Ironically, the 'Four-Legged girl' only had one good, usable leg.

As bad as it sounds this day and age, Myrtle's father began showing her to curious neighbors - for a dime - beginning when she was just one month old.

This money was used to both secure her future and provide for the family. The newspaper ads her father placed locally and the national publicity attracted world famous P. T. Barnum, and when she was 13 years old, Myrtle was signed up for the Barnum & London Tours. Myrtle was also a popular attraction with P. T. Barnum, and later with Ringling Bros. and Coney Island.

Her first promotional pamphlet (Biography of Myrtle Corbin, 1881) describes her as being "gentle of disposition as the summer sunshine and as happy as the day is long."

Myrtle's popularity was most likely linked to her showmanship. Most days she dressed the extra set of limbs with little socks and shoes that matched her own, which gave her a truly bizarre appearance. In her prime, she had become so popular she was able to earn as much as $450 dollars a week, which was a handsome sum back in those days.

Myrtle fell in love and married Dr. James Clinton Bricknell in June 1886. Once married, Myrtle left the sideshow business and became a doctor's wife. It was then that other areas of her bizarre anatomy became evident. It seems that her twin sister was also fully sexually formed and the happy couple began to have children.

The young family moved from Blount County, AL to Johnson County, TX, and eventually settled in Cleburne City.

The couple farmed and lived happily as their family grew to include a brood of eight children. Unfortunately, half of their children died in infancy.

In 1928 Myrtle developed some sort of skin infection on her right leg. When it failed to heal, she went to see a doctor in Cleburne. The doctor diagnosed her as having Erysipelas, which is a streptococcal skin infection.

Today, a simple round of antibiotics would have eliminated the problem and Myrtle would have been healed. Unfortunately, Myrtle lived back in the days before antibiotics and on May 6, 1928, less than a week after being diagnosed, Josephine Myrtle Corbin-Bicknell was dead.

I came across Miss Myrtle a few years ago when I saw an ad in one of our local newspapers.

It had a picture of her and the person who had placed the ad wanted to know if anyone here in town had information about her. It took me a little digging, but I finally found out about her. I hope the information lands in the right hands and pray it helps. If you or someone you know has further information about her, I ask you to contact me at sharon@cullmansense.com and let me know. I've grown to love this little lady and would love to hear more of her story.

H3N2 (from Front)

in. Registered Nurse Marti Smith, Infection Prevention and Health Manager at Cullman Regional Medical Center, explained why the vaccine is not working properly this year.

"The CDC selects the components for the flu vaccine a year in advance to give the drug companies time to manufacture the flu vaccine. Their guess for this flu season was not accurate, and the flu vaccine this year does not protect from a particular strain of Flu A that has been circulating."

While much of the media attention has focused on the danger for children, it is important to remember that young children and the elderly are always those at the greatest risk in any flu season. This is why Smith still encourages everyone to get themselves and children vaccinated every year.

"The annual flu vaccine is still our best protection against the flu. Sometimes, the flu vaccine can decrease the flu symptoms in those who do get the flu."

While many parts of Alabama and the south are seeing higher hospitalizations due to flu, Smith says that here in Cullman that is not the case.

"We have seen over 100 cases of the flu in our ER this flu season, which is slightly less than the number seen this time last year. We had five inpatients with the flu in our hospital yesterday."

The H3N2 subtype has been the culprit for 90 percent of cases of flu this year, and any of the H3 subtypes typically lead to higher rates of hospitalization.

Another issue that is concerning experts is the growing trend of an earlier and earlier peak of flu season.

"There is something unusual going on with the flu," ABC News Chief Health and Medical Editor Dr. Richard Besser said in an interview on Good Morning America. "For the past four years, the flu has started to peak at the end of December. It used to be that the flu didn't have its rise until February. For some reason it has started coming earlier and hitting during the holiday season."

This is a particularly strong strain of flu, but Marti Smith from Cullman Regional Medical Center says that the usual precautions are to be taken as with any other flu season.

"Watch for a fever of 100 degrees or higher and feeling feverish, as not everyone with the flu has a fever," said Smith. "A cough or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches, body aches, chills, fatigue, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, which are most common in children. Parents need to monitor their children for signs and symptoms of the flu and contact their physician for advice on how to care for their children if sick with the flu. Children with chronic illnesses are most at risk and should be treated promptly to avoid complications."

It is also important to remember to protect yourself and others during peak times of illness in the area by not leaving your home while sick and infecting others.

Try to limit outings to crowded areas with children to limit chances of exposure. Frequent hand washing is still one of the best lines of defense against illness and should be engrained into children for their protection.

We will be out of the woods before we know it, but we are not there yet, so continue to use the tips above to help yourself and the community stay well.

Bill Smith

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