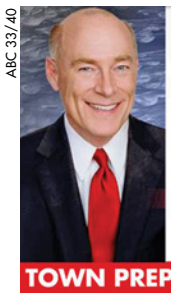
SERIES 5 • ISSUE 8 • FEBRUARY 23, 2015

CULLMANSENSE COMMUNITY MATTERS



ABC 33/40

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P2

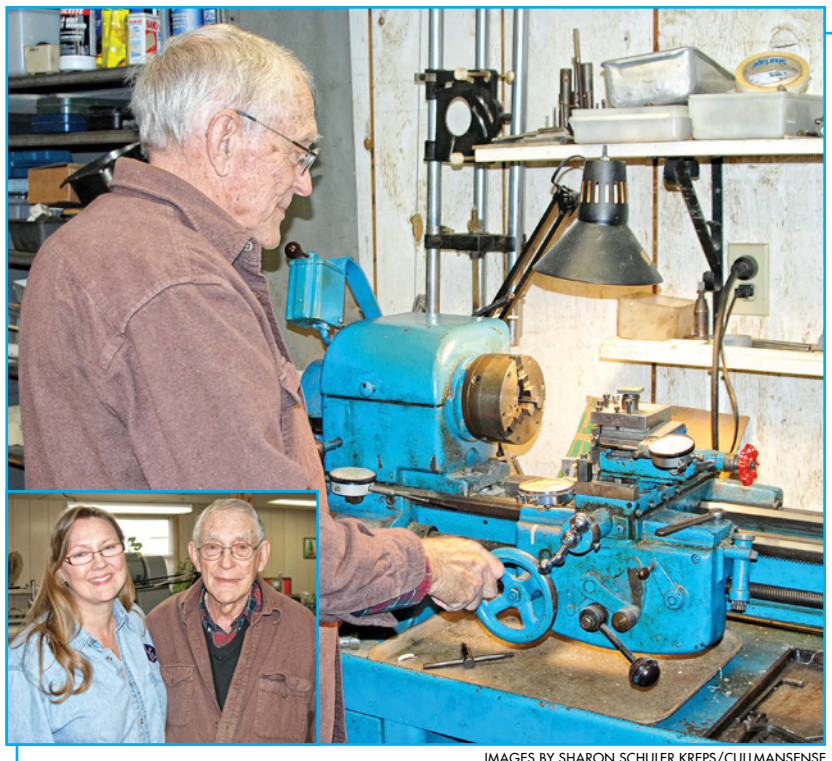
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WSCC

WSCC HOSTS 'DISNEY THROUGH THE DECADES' CONCERT P10



IMAGES BY SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

At 85 years old Joe Hayden is a self-taught machinist and lapidary whose work can be found on the moon.

OUTSTANDING CITIZENS

"I'M JUST LUCKY GOD GAVE ME THE TALENT TO DO WHAT I DO."

HUMBLE JOE HAYDEN CAN MAKE ALMOST ANYTHING P4

STEADY LOW UNEMPLOYMENT REFLECTS 'GREAT WORK ETHIC'

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

"We see approximately 1,000 jobs on the immediate horizon."

Dale Greer, Assistant Director of Cullman Economic Development Agency

CULLMAN – At the recent Industry Appreciation Reception, it was announced that Cullman was named the 3rd top micropolitan in the country for economic development. Not only can Cullman boast about a booming economy, but also one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state.

"For the better part of recent memory, we are always the third, fourth or fifth lowest in the state,"

Assistant Director of Cullman Economic Development Agency Dale Greer said.

"I think this can be attributed to a number of things such as strong industrial P6

BUSY BEE CAFÉ VOTED 2ND BEST BREAKFAST IN THE STATE P3

YOUNG STARS BURN BRIGHT AT FOR KIDS' SAKE VARIETY SHOW P4

LEE NABORS ART COLLECTION JOINS SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT AT WSCC MUSEUM P6

EMPTY BOWLS CELEBRATES 12TH YEAR, BENEFITS CULLMAN CARING FOR KIDS P7

REID HOUSE: THE NEW STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH

SMALLER, MODERN FACILITIES BEING BUILT ACROSS ALABAMA AS STATE HOSPITAL COSTS REMAIN PROHIBITIVE P3



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

Staff workers at the local Reid House facility prepare meals for residents in its modern kitchen.

RECYCLING FOR ALL

OSIRIS RECYCLING OFFERS PICK UP TO ALL RESIDENTS OF CULLMAN COUNTY

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE – Recycling has become a more common practice among average households than ever before. With more awareness emerging of the impact we have on our environment, and our overdependence on landfills, more and more houses choose to recycle as much waste as possible. For those that live in the city, recycling has been a breeze with the pickup services available, but not as convenient for those who want to recycle in the rural areas.

That, however, is about to change as a new business emerges that is eager and willing to pick up all of your recyclable items wherever you live in Cullman. Osiris Recycling Solutions, LLC is owned by Wes Pugh and Cody Nuss and is an up and coming service that has set out to make P6

OSIRIS RECYCLING

Osiris Recycling and Waste Management will pick up business and residential recycling anywhere in Cullman.

LIONS CLUB ANNUAL FISH AND HAM DINNER THIS SATURDAY

Will Hogue
will@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – This Saturday, Feb. 28, the Lions Club will be hosting their annual Fish and Ham Dinner. The event will be held at the Cullman Middle School Cafeteria from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.

The options P2

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ALLEGED RAPE, SODOMY, AND ENTICING A MINOR HAS FAIRVIEW VOLUNTEER BASKETBALL COACH FACING CHARGES

Noah Chandler
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CULLMAN – Allegations of rape, sodomy, and enticing a child under the age of 16 lands a Fairview volunteer basketball coach in Cullman County Detention Center.

"We received information yesterday (Tuesday) from Fairview School through one of our school resource officers, that we had a minor under the age of 16 where there was abuse, sexual intercourse with an individual named Spencer Jackson Byrd, 21 years of age," Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry said.

Sheriff Gentry said Byrd had been a volunteer for the boys' basketball team this season.

"Throughout the investigation the school resource officer contacted our investigator, coordinating and working with the child advocacy center and Department of Human Resources and we were able to obtain enough probable cause to make an arrest on Spencer Jackson Byrd on Rape-2nd, Sodomy-2nd, and Enticing a Child," Sheriff Gentry said.

Byrd has already bonded out of the Cullman County Detention Center on a $90,000 bond.

Gentry said more charges could follow.

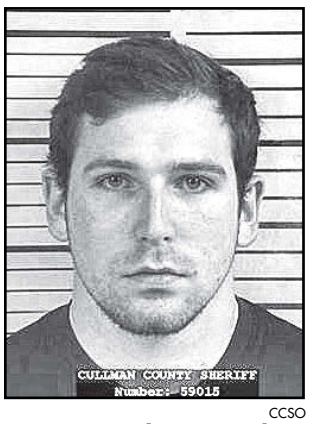
"We are working with the District Attorney's office and there could be potentially more charges coming down on Mr. Byrd," he said.

Gentry said Byrd did come to the Cullman County Sheriff's Office on his own accord after being asked to come speak with investigators.

"He was arrested here at the Sheriff's Office. He came in on his own," Gentry went on to say.

"I would like to thank the school resource officer, our investigators, everyone at DHR and the Child Advocacy Center for working quickly and together on this case."

Cullman County School Superintendent Dr. Craig Ross stated, "Dr. Payne and Dr. Gambrill handled the situation quickly and professionally. Mr. Byrd's work with us has been suspended while the authorities look into these matters."



CCSO
Spencer Jackson Byrd

JAMES SPANN COMING TO HANCEVILLE MARCH 3

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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HANCEVILLE - ABC 33/40 Meteorologist James Spann will be making a stop in Hanceville on Tuesday, March 3, 2015. The public is invited to join him, along with meteorologists Charles Daniel, Meaghan Thomas and Brian Peters outside Hanceville City Hall beginning at 4:15 p.m.

James Spann will forecast the weather live during ABC 33/40's Focus at 4 p.m., the news at 5 p.m., and the news at 6 p.m.

In between newscasts, fans will have opportunities to have their pictures taken with the different meteorologists.

At 5:30 p.m., James Spann will deliver a short message on severe weather safety.

"Our goal is to make sure every family, business and church has a severe weather plan and knows how they will receive the warnings," said Chief Meteorologist James Spann.

This will mark the 19th year ABC 33/40 has conducted a severe weather awareness tour.

"We are excited this year to visit some places we've never been and to present this information in a new and exciting format," said Spann.

Random drawings will be held for prizes, including James Spann bobble head dolls.

Attendees are encouraged to dress appropriately for the outdoors event.

In case of bad weather, watch ABC 33/40 for updated plans. Contact Hanceville City Hall at 256-352-9830 with any questions or concerns.

ABC 33/40 encourages everyone, especially school groups, civic groups and churches to make signs and gather together for their chance to appear on TV.

For more information, contact Gina Womack, ABC 33/40 promotion manager at gdwomack@sbgtv.com or call her at 205-403-3337.

GUITARS AND MORE OPENS DESPITE TREACHEROUS WEATHER

Chelsea Sparks
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CULLMAN – The weather was not favorable for an opening weekend, but the owner and staff of Guitars and More, LLC were determined not to disappoint. The new music store here opened up in the old Cash Mart next to Tobacco for Less on Highway 31.

Cullman music lovers are abuzz with excitement for the new store and the caliber of products Guitars and More is bringing in with them.

Despite having a rather difficult time preparing the store for opening due to inclement weather, the team managed, according to General Manager Eric Gibson.

"For three days straight, we have been here until 3:30 or 4 o'clock in the morning," Gibson said.

"Then the last night we were getting ready to make the last haul of equipment from Gardendale and we got hung out at the Blount Springs exit due to ice. Took us hours to get back to Gardendale, and part of our inventory was stuck in Nashville as well."

Despite the obstacles, the soft opening was still successful over all, according to Gibson.

"It's been good," said Gibson.

"We've had a steady stream of people coming in and taking a look around and hanging out with us for a bit. Most everyone has told us that they're grateful we're here, and that has been wonderful, but they are the reason we're here, not the other way around."

Whether you are looking for a beautiful new guitar, sound equipment, accessories and more, it can all be found at the new Guitars and More, LLC.

Gibson said that what excites him and storeowner Dustin Honeycutt most is being involved in the community of Cullman.

"We're really excited for this first week," said Gibson. "We'll be getting the rest of our inventory in that got locked up in Nashville. We're also just really excited for the opportunity to meet and serve the community here."

More information can be found online at Facebook.com/GuitarsAndMoreLLC. Store hours for Cullman are Monday through Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE
Guitars and More has a selection of quality acoustic and electric guitars.

Dinner (from Front)

for food are between fish and, you guessed it, ham.

With the $10 donation, attendees will receive a ticket that they may use to redeem their dinner.

More specifically, people have the choice of a catfish filet or ham.

Along with the main portion of the meal, sides will include a baked potato, slaw, hushpuppies, dessert and a drink.

There will be carryout boxes available with the drive-thru on the north side of the cafeteria.

Tickets can be purchased from Lions and Lioness club members and are also available at the following Cullman establishments: Rennard's Gallery, The Brandin' Iron Restaurant, Peek Auto Parts, Ponder Wrecker Service, Business Solutions of Cullman, Ed White Jewelers, Doug Doggett Jewelers, Cullman Veterinary Hospital and East Side Barber Shop.

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BUSY BEE CAFÉ VOTED 2ND BEST BREAKFAST IN THE STATE

Will Hogue
will@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – In a recent issue of Alabama Living Magazine, Busy Bee Café was voted as the second best "non-chain breakfast place," coming in behind Waysider Restaurant in Tuscaloosa.

This is the second year Alabama Living Magazine has taken votes for the "Best of Alabama."

The citizens of Alabama vote on items such as the best place to go on a first date and the best place to retire.

Kyle Spears who has been running the Busy Bee Café in Cullman for the past eight years and whose family has owned the Cullman classic for his entire life, said that he and the restaurant were chosen as the second best breakfast in the state of Alabama.

Although Spears considers earning such a high ranking in the state an honor, he and his café want to continually improve.

"We're not going to add anything to the menu, but we want to keep on improving and giving people good, hot, fresh food," Spears said.

The new ranking has already begun to improve business for the breakfast hotspot.

"A lot of new people have been in and out of here [Busy Bee Café] just because they read the article," Spears said.

"The regulars keep coming back," Spears continued, "but there have been a lot of new faces for sure."

Spears attributes the Busy Bee Café's success to quality menu options and well made meals.

The breakfast favorite of customers, according to Spears, is homemade. "The buttermilk biscuits are homemade. We don't use frozen biscuits," Spears explained. "And our gravy is homemade as well."

As far as the other breakfast item of choice for Busy Bee Café patrons, bacon is the favorite.

"On a busy Saturday," Spears said, "which is our busiest day, it's not a stretch to say we use as much as 60 pounds of bacon."

Spears explained how he and the café went through several different kinds of bacon before settling on the kind of bacon that they now offer. "We now use brown-sugar-cured, apple-wood smoked bacon," Spears said.

Busy Bee Café's is located at 101 5th Street Southeast. Their phone number is 256-734-9958.

House (from Front)

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The mental health system in Alabama has seen many changes over the last few years. Budget cuts and a revamp of the current system have not always been easy on mental health workers for the state. One change, however, has brought about positive influence in the way of newer facilities. The Reid House is one such facility that opened its doors in August of 2014.

"This is a 16 bed crisis residential facility," said Chris Van Dyke, executive director of Mental Healthcare of Cullman.

"Basically these facilities are taking the place of state hospitals. Where once people would have to go to Decatur, they can now come here."

According to Van Dyke, state hospitals have become far too costly, and so smaller, more modern facilities like Reid House have been built across Alabama.

A solution that, according to Van Dyke, is actually better for patients.

"State hospitals are expensive and the one in Decatur is very old," Van Dyke said.

"So with the budget cuts that have been coming from the state year after year, this is just something that had to be done. Plus, it's better for people to be treated close to home in their own community. These facilities are more modern and less institutional, and we were able to do this for half of the budget cost of a state hospital."

The 3,000 square foot space features an open and inviting atmosphere for residents – something Van Dyke says was there by design to make residents feel more comfortable.

"We wanted this place to look more like a lodge," he said. "The nurse's station isn't surrounded by thick glass, it is very open. Making it less institutional looking was important; it can be very scary for them [residents]."

"Every room here has one bed in it, so residents have their own space. At a state hospital you could have three people in one room. Here they feel less institutionalized."

Chris Van Dyke, Executive Director of Mental Healthcare of Cullman

The Reid House features an open floor plan with a lounge space, outdoor activity area, dining room and private bedrooms, a definite improvement over the old state hospitals according to Van Dyke.

"Every room here has one bed in it, so residents have their own space," said Van Dyke.

"At a state hospital you could have three people in one room. Here they feel less institutionalized."

The average length of stay for residents that have been committed is 34 days, according to Van Dyke.

During that time, residents receive group time that is either educational or therapy based, as well as individual sessions and appointments with a psychiatrist to adjust their medications as needed.

Steve Holley, a newer counselor on staff, says that he has heard great feedback from residents about the new home during their stay.

"The facilities here are very nice," Holley said.

"Even the clients when they come here say 'Wow, this is the cleanest place I have been in" because many of them have went to very old facilities and a lot of things didn't work. They are always pleased with how clean and new everything is, so we try to keep it that way."

Of course, more awareness and funding is always needed to further the help that those suffering from mental illnesses receive.

Mental Healthcare of Cullman is currently fundraising for Operation Help, which is a fund set up to help those with a mental illness in an emergency situation.

When a client with serious mental illness is found to be living without heat, water or needs help getting a prescription, money from the HELP fund goes to assist those with the situation to maintain stability in the patient's life.

"The goal of this house and the program is to get people who are a danger to themselves or others back to stability so that they can get back to living in their community," said Van Dyke.



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

The relaxed atmosphere and modern design of the Reid House helps its residents feel more at ease.

For more information on donations or Reid House, call Mental Healthcare of Cullman at 256-734-4688.

Subscribe to CullmanSense today and have it delivered to your door for only $40 a year.



YOUNG STARS BURN BRIGHT AT FOR KIDS' SAKE VARIETY SHOW

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE – For more than 20 years, the For Kids' Sake Variety Show has brought a wonderful opportunity for youth in the Cullman area to showcase their talents. Children and teens from every corner of Cullman took the stage at the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre on Saturday.

The For Kids' Sake Variety show was founded in 1993 by Dr. Eugene Bownes, a loved and respected pediatrician, when he noticed that many of his patients possessed immense talents.

"Dr. Bownes felt that their talent and enthusiasm should be shared with the community," said Maria Stanford, executive director of the Cullman Regional Medical Center Foundation.

"And the idea for the For Kids' Sake Variety Show was born. The first show featured 19 talented performers, and just like today, proceeds from the show benefit the nursery and pediatric care at Cullman Regional Medical Center."

The 2015 show featured talents from across the county. Dance routines from Cullman Dance Academy, Cullman Ballet Company and The Factory Dance Productions, as well as numerous singers and the Fairview FFA String Band, participated.

Young ladies and gentlemen twirled, leapt and belted beautiful notes for an adoring crowd.

Not only did performers have the opportunity to show off their talent, but to also raise money for many other children who come through CRMC.

"Since the beginning, this show has raised almost $100,000 for the nursery and pediatric care units," said Stanford.

"This year we are hoping to have raised $10,000 and we hope to hit our mark. The money this year will be used to buy new equipment like a new phototherapy light and telemetry system for the pediatric unit."

The show was sponsored this year by generous companies like MedPlan Recruiting Inc., Wallace State Community College, Wallace State Future Foundation, Shirley Quattlebaum State Farm, Cullman Primary Care Multi-Specialty Group and many others.

"The For Kids' Sake Variety Show continues to be both a great opportunity for kids to have the experience of performing before an audience and a successful fundraising event for CRMC," said Stanford.

"The financial support from this show allows the Foundation to purchase specialized nursery and pediatric equipment. We are grateful to all of our sponsors, volunteers and performers."



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

Performers from the Cullman Ballet Company gracefully dance across stage portraying the daughters of Zeus.

Hayden (from Front)

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The newest addition to CullmanSense's ongoing tribute to outstanding individuals in our area is Joe Hayden. Mr. Hayden is a devoted husband, loving father and doting grandfather. Not only is he an amazing family man, but he is also a rock hound, photographer and master carpenter. Professionally, he is a self-taught machinist and lapidary whose work can be found perched upon the moon.

"There is nothing he can't do," smiled Mary Hovater, Joe's daughter. "From mending to building, making the impossible a reality, to listening and helping solve problems."

Growing up, Joe, the oldest of 10 children, worked on the family farm as a youngster. While still in his teens, he joined the Army and was with the 101st Airborne Division and was stationed in Germany near the end of World War II.

After his stint in the Army, he tried his hand at several jobs before moving to Michigan and landing a job at Schiller Industries, parent company to Speedring, in 1959. At the time, the company was so small; its work so new, Joe had to teach himself how to do it.

After working for Schiller Industries for a few years, the place began to grow and expand. The company made plans to locate a plant in Cullman.

It was Joe and one other man who made the trip to Cullman from Michigan. The two found a building and before long, Speedring was established.

Many people in Cullman County worked for Speedring over the years, and to think Joe was there at the very beginning is amazing.

Through his interest in his work and lapidary, Joe became more involved in operations that allowed him to lap at home.

After moving to Cullman, he heard of several companies in the Huntsville area that needed his special skills. Using those skills, he began repairing micrometers and special gages for three companies. The gages and micrometers have precise dimensions that are necessary for the gages to function properly.

His love for gems and minerals, combined with his lapidary skills led Joe to working with quartz.

He has built a machine that laps, polishes, and brings quartz parts into size. During his time at Speedring, he made gyros for Minuteman missiles and airplanes, jaws/clamps for the Hubble Space telescope, and he lapped and polished the mirror that was put on the moon during the Apollo missions.

In his later years, Joe has done extensive work with Stanford University.

He made the housing for the spheres (gyroscopes) for Gravity Probe B (GP-B), and did all the final lapping and finishing on the large Quartz block. GP-B was designed to measure two key predictions of Einstein's general theory of relativity by monitoring the orientations of ultra-sensitive gyroscopes relative to a distant guide star.

His work on this was so perfect and beautiful he was called the Rembrandt. He is the only person that can do this kind of work on quartz by hand. When he dies, this knowledge will die with him.

"I'm just lucky God gave me the talent to do what I do," Joe said very modestly.

Full of wit, charm and dedication, Joe continues to work his craft from his shop at home. Over the years, his wife and daughter have worked alongside him in his lapping work. Currently, Joe is teaching his skills to his grandsons who will hopefully carry on his trade. Most people have no idea how much this man has contributed to the community, to Speedring, Stanford University and NASA. Not only is his family very proud of him, but after reading this, the rest of the community will be proud too.

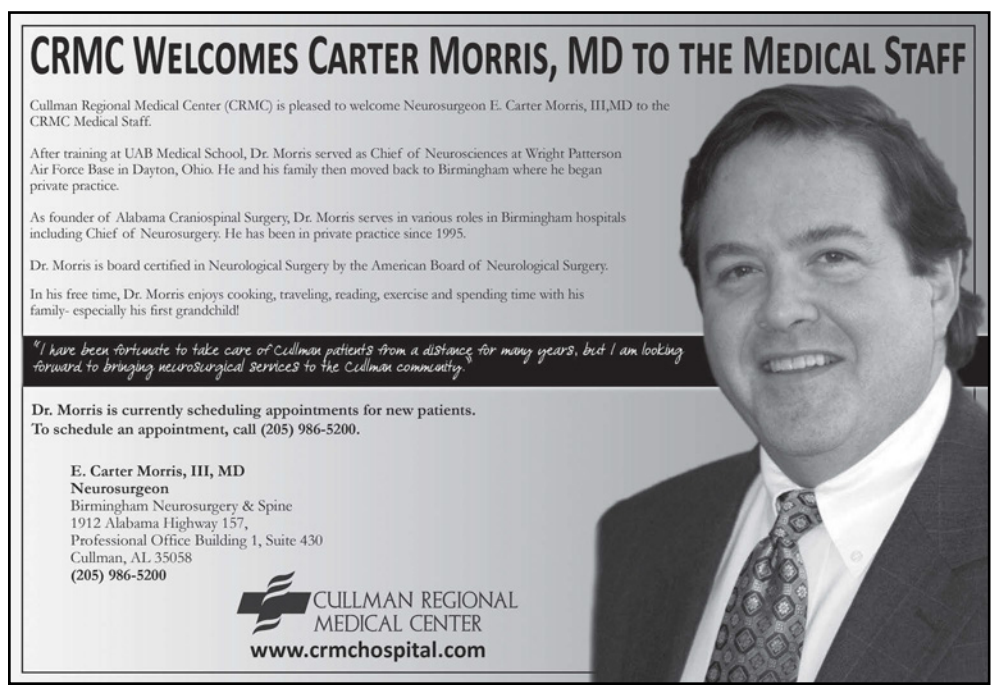
"He knows he has all of our respect," said Joe's wife, Judy, beaming happily as she looks at her husband.

Cullman is an amazing place to live and people like Joe Hayden are a part of what makes it that way. Hard workers, talented individuals and humble souls such as Joe are quite common in these parts. At 85 years of age, he continues to make jaws drop and eyes widen with his precision and design – in everything he sets his mind to do.

POSITION AVAILABLE

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





HISTORIC DOWNTOWN HANCEVILLE: THE HAMMOCK BUILDING

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE – Downtown Hanceville is truly a sight to see, there are so many buildings lining the streets that are filled with old memories. Take for example, the current Marie's Flowers or the Hammock Building. Large, white and quite impressive, the old place has seen more than its fair share of Hanceville history over the years.

The building was originally built in the 1920s as directed by Miss Anna Rauchman. It was constructed after a tremendous fire burned a major portion of Hanceville. The fire happened on March 17, 1920 and had been extremely destructive. It left the town's people devastated and 16 buildings destroyed.

Miss Rauchman's new building was the first masonry constructed structure in Hanceville. It really stood out and looked very impressive. The original door opened to the corner of Bangor Avenue and Commercial Street. There was a second door near the back of the building, along with two small arched windows. Years later the same windows were filled in with brick, completely enclosing them. Today, if you look closely you can still see their outline along the old wall.

The upper part of the building had been an apartment for the business owner, Miss Rauchman, to live in. It had three bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen, pantry and a bathroom. A wide hallway ran the whole length of the apartment, and the place had two lovely fireplaces, which are still there today.

When the building was completed, Miss Rauchman and her sister Lizzie lived in the apartment and opened a dress shop on the main floor. Later, the building became a funeral home.

During the 1930s and 1940s, brothers Wallace and George Green bought the place and the dress shop became Green Brothers General Merchandise. It was the only meat market in town at the time. Wallace "Wally" and wife Edna lived in the apartment upstairs.

Years later, during the 1950s, first cousins Carl and Thelbert Bland bought the store and opened up shop.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The Hammock Building was the first masonry constructed structure in Hanceville.

Bland & Bland Merchandise was one of Hanceville's favorite places to shop at the time. It is not known if the Blands lived upstairs or not back then.

Sometime during the 1960s, Grover and Lou Burks opened Western Auto in this building. It remained there until the late 1970s when the store was relocated to where Finders Keepers is today. It is said that Western Auto had many great buys, and children loved their bicycles, wagons and other neat things that they got there while shopping alongside their parents and grandparents.

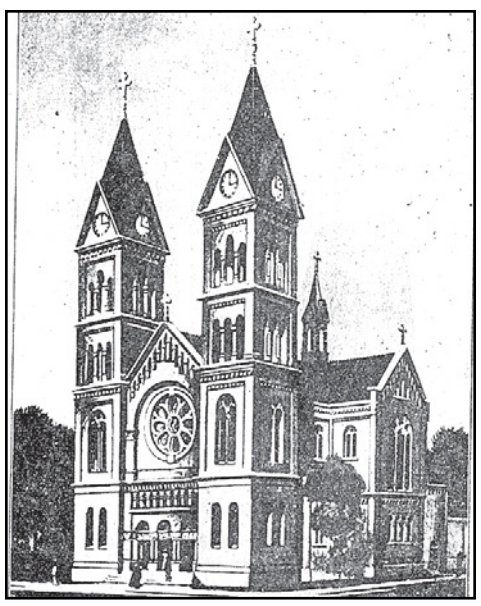
The building was purchased by Faith Moody Hammock from her father, Jim D. Moody, around 2000. Today it is home to Marie's Flowers.

As with anything of age, a few places that had occupied the old building, such as the funeral home, did not contain specific dates. If walls could talk, I wonder what these historic walls would say.

MIRRORING HISTORY: SACRED HEART

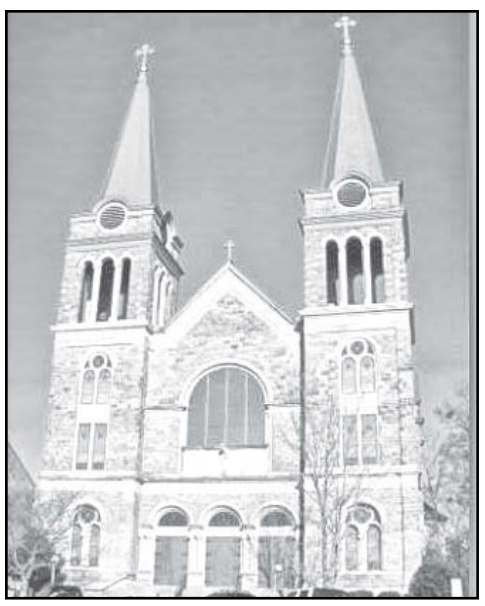
Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Sacred Heart Church came to be in 1877 under the leadership of Fr. James Meurer, a German-speaking priest. The present stone church was dedicated in 1916 while the matching stone school was built in the years following World War II. The current rectory was constructed in 1961. Current Pastor Rev. Patrick Egan, O.S.B. began studying for the priesthood in 2003 after retiring as a Colonel in the United States Army. He was ordained in June 2008 and was assigned as Pastor in August 2009.



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Sacred Heart Church was created in 1877.



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The church continues to serve the community today.

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A STUDY OF HANDS

LEE NABORS ART COLLECTION JOINS SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT AT WSCC MUSEUM

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE – The Smithsonian Exhibition "The Way We Worked" is now open and taking crowds of people through a tour at Wallace State's Evelyn Burrow Museum. This large exhibit highlights the achievements of everyday workers and industry from the past to the present. Another part of this exhibit comes from a talented artist by the name of Lee Nabors whose collection is entitled "A Study of Hands".

Lee Nabors never expected to become an accomplished artist, but well after starting her family with her husband Rip Nabors, an enjoyable hobby has turned into much more.

"I have enjoyed painting since I was a child," Nabors said.

"But I didn't start to seriously paint until much later in life. I am lucky to have a husband who supported me and wanted me to have a hobby that I loved. I never expected it to go to this level, but I am thrilled that it did."

Nabors' works was chosen to be included in the exhibit by a member of the Alabama Humanities Foundation.

"Kim Mitchell at the Carnegie Visual Art Center in Decatur was discussing the Smithsonian Exhibit with a person from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, and she told them that they may want to look at the hands exhibit because it goes well with the Smithsonian exhibit," Nabors said.

"So I sent him the book, and then he presented it to each county that was hosting the exhibit and they had the option to show the collection in conjunction with the Smithsonian."

The Study of Hands Collection features 51 oil paintings of various people in a multitude of different people all working with their hands to make their community and world a better place.

From preachers and politicians to teachers and pharmacists, the exhibit catalogs the work of a few to represent the work of hundreds more Nabors says.

"I wanted this to fit a cross section of any community," Nabors said.

"It takes all different kinds of people and all different gifts and talents to make a community. I wanted to show people who have went above and beyond in their professions and life to make a better community, but each one of these people represent hundreds more."

Nabors has received several notable awards and recognitions from notable groups like the Alabama Pastel Society, Hoover Art Alliance and the Montgomery Art Guild.

In a Study of Hands, the powerful message is one that anyone can appreciate whether they are those who serve or have been served. According to Nabors, those who are shown in the collection were not selected by her, but by a committee.

"A committee actually picked the people for me," Nabors said. "Then I went and interviewed and photographed all of them myself."

One of the paintings shown is of Nabors' own hands intertwined with her family.

"Most everyone wants a piece that represents the artist," she said.

"Well the 51st painting in the group I decided would be my 'about the artist' piece. I decided to do it of my hands with my family. So you have my hands, my husband's, son and daughter's hands all on top of each other like a team. I did it that way because my family is my team, and that is my support and who I am."

Nabors' works can be seen at the Evelyn Burrows Museum located at 801 Main St. NW in Hanceville until March 20 in conjunction with The Way We Worked Smithsonian Exhibit. More information on Lee Nabors can be found at leenabors.com.

"I am thrilled to have my works shown at the Evelyn Burrow Museum. It is an absolutely lovely venue, and I feel honored to be a part of it."



CHELSEA SPARKS/CULLMANSENSE

The paintings of Lee Nabors catalog the work of 50 prominent people through portraits of their hands.

Recycling (from Front)

recycling easier and more accessible to everyone.

"We started the company last year with a sort of 'soft' start to figure everything out," said co-owner Wes Pugh.

"We are from this area, but we were in Auburn where recycling is a lot more common, and we realized that we wanted to see that happen here. No one was offering a service out in the county so we decided to give it a shot. What we do is we offer pick up of materials for both residents and businesses to anyone in Cullman County."

This is exciting news given that there has not been a service like this available to county residents.

There are different options of places to take your recycling, but with the convenience of a pickup service, it is easier than ever.

Pugh says that they are able to accept most any material.

"We are able to pick up the materials you would expect like cardboard, paper and metals like aluminum," he said.

"We are also able to take glass and recycle it. No one else in Cullman accepts glass."

The process is simple and affordable with the service costing $20 a month for residential pick up and $30 for businesses.

Clients need only separate their materials appropriately and place in an accessible location according to Pugh.

"We have bins that we can order for our clients," said Pugh.

"But typically we just let everyone use trash bags or their own bins, or they can rent some from us. It is pretty much limitless as far as that goes. Then they just tell us where they will set it on their property like the front porch or by the road. As long as it is accessible we will get it."

For Pugh and his partner Cody Nuss, their goal is simple, to make it easier to recycle and to help protect the environment and planet we all call home.

"We want people to know that we are here to help," Pugh said.

"We have our truck and trailer ready to go and will pick up everyone's recycling. We take most of our materials to JCR, and our glass goes out to a place in Albertville."

The company is still in the early stages, but Pugh says that the clients they serve now are great, and it is there hope to serve many more.

"We are still new and learning a lot," said Pugh. "We are not profitable yet, but we have met some great people. Our customers are fantastic, and we are hoping to keep growing in the community."

Visit Osirisrecycling.com for more information on how to subscribe and pick up dates, or call 256-615-2510.

Unemployment (from Front)

growth and great industrial projects. We also have had a lot of retail development, which not only brings in more jobs for the store, but helps the construction industry as well."

Cullman's current unemployment rate as December 2014 sits at 4.2 percent, according to the United States Department of Labor.

The only two counties with lower rates are Lee County with 4.1 percent, and Shelby County with an unemployment rate of 3.7 percent, placing Cullman at third lowest statewide.

According to Greer, a strong work ethic from a history of agriculture plays a large role in why industries choose to come to Cullman.

"I believe that a lot of it has to do with having a strong work ethic in this community," Greer said.

"I think some of that comes from our agricultural background. Farming requires a strong work ethic and I think that has come through our heritage today. Businesses that come here expect that they will get hard working and skilled workers."

Greer went on to state that with several expansions that have happened over the years, and future expansions coming such as REHAU and Cash Acme, along with retail development, we can anticipate even more jobs to come.

"There are a lot of good opportunities in this area," said Greer.

"We see approximately 1,000 jobs on the immediate horizon. REHAU needs to hire more than 100 people, Topre and Yutaka are also hiring some. Cash Acme has already announced that they will add 130 jobs with their $50 million expansion they have. Then you have the new Walmart coming in on the north end of town with an excess of 300 employees, as well as all of our other retail developments."

With so many developments and expansions happening in the area and more on the way, Greer stated that it is a great time for Cullman.

"This community has so much going for it," Greer said.

"We are strategically located between Huntsville and Birmingham, which allows people to commute easily to and from Cullman. It also allows us to bring in skilled workers from those areas like engineers. We have research and development centers here and that just helps to solidify the industrial aspect of our community. It's an exciting time for Cullman."



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Volunteers fill bowls for the annual chili and grilled cheese dinner at FIrst United Methodist Church.

EMPTY BOWLS OF CULLMAN COUNTY CELEBRATES 12TH YEAR

CULLMAN CARING FOR KIDS FOOD BANK BENEFITS FROM CHILI DINNER

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

"Every dollar we raise, we give to Cullman Caring for Kids and they can buy seven pounds of food with every dollar that is given to them."
Bobby Nolan, Chili Cook Volunteer for Empty Bowls

CULLMAN – The 12th Annual Empty Bowls of Cullman County dinner was held at the First United Methodist Church on Monday. Despite the cold and rainy weather, people filled the place, eager to pick out a bowl and enjoy some delicious chili and a grilled cheese sandwich. Benefits from the night's event went to the Cullman Caring for Kids Food Bank.

"Empty Bowls was started 12 years ago by a small group of people and myself. We got together and wanted to raise money for the food bank," explained Tanya Shearer, volunteer at First United Methodist Church. "God's hand was in it from the beginning; he brought the people together – the potters, Bobby Nolan, who made the chili, the students and everybody. It takes a lot of people to make this happen."

The Empty Bowls program got its start in 1990 with John Hartom, an art teacher in Michigan and his students. The group put their heads together and held the first Empty Bowls dinner to raise money for their local food bank.

The students made bowls and offered their guests a simple meal of soup, served in the bowls, along with bread. The guests were allowed to keep the bowls, which would serve as a reminder of the many hungry people in the world. A wonderful tradition began that night, a tradition that has traveled throughout the United States and around the world since.

Thankfully Cullman participates in the program, with preparations for the meal beginning months ago, but the actual food began cooking early in the day.

"Bobby Nolan and Clint Creel started early this morning at 7 a.m.," Shearer continued. "They picked up the ground beef, went over to Saint Bernard and cooked the meat and chili in the huge kettles over there. Then they transported it back to the church. Several volunteers have been in there making the grilled cheese sandwiches since 1 p.m. this afternoon."

"We had a great turnout," said Nolan. "We were a little worried about the weather, but it seems to be doing well. We sold a lot of meals before we even opened up! We just have a good group of people who come every year and support it. Every dollar we raise, we give to Cullman Caring for Kids and they can buy seven pounds of food with every dollar that is given to them."

Potters from throughout Cullman County worked diligently to make over 1,000 bowls to donate to the night's event. The bowls are considered treasures to everyone who receives them.

"We have a lot of supporters who just donate money, and we also have people who buy the tickets just for the bowls," Nolan smiled.

The Empty Bowls program may be contacted at cullmanemptybowls@gmail.com.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Handmade bowls were given to attendees as a reminder of the many hungry people in the world.



Looking for a Super Opportunity?

Wallace State Community College and community partners will host the

Cullman Jobs Fair

College of Nursing Center

February 28th

8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Industries represented include:

- REHAU Incorporated
- Topre America Corporation
- Alabama Cullman Yutake Technologies

Participants are strongly encourage to preregister by visiting

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and complete the online application

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For more information call the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce at 256-734-0454

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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 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.

Tuesday

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

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

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

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

Wednesday

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

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

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

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

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.

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

Friday

'Wii Bowling' at the Donald E. Green Senior Center
The entertainment for senior citizens is 'Wii Bowling' at the Donald E. Green Senior Center starting at 1 p.m. Everyone is invited. Come enjoy some exercise (but not too physical!) and fellowship with friends. They bowl every Wednesday and Friday afternoons at 1 p.m.

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

Little Black Dress Charity Bash
Save the date! Saturday, Feb. 28 at Top of the Town – don't miss out on this fun evening with special entertainment. Contact WSCC for more information at 256-352-8000.

Disney Through the Decades
The Wallace State Singers will present "Disney Through the Decades" this month, with special performances Friday and Saturday, Feb. 27 and 28, at 7 p.m., in the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre. Tickets are $7 for adults and $5 for students and children 6 and up. Call 256.352.8277 for more information.

Saturday

Disney Through the Decades
The Wallace State Singers will present "Disney Through the Decades" this month, with special performances Friday and Saturday, Feb. 27 and 28, at 7 p.m., in the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre. Tickets are $7 for adults and $5 for students and children 6 and up. Call 256.352.8277 for more information.

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

Next Monday

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

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LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT
Sponsored by Busy Bee Café

MONDAY
- 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.
- Trivia Night at Rodney G's at 7 p.m.
- Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY
- Karaoke Night at Grumpy's at 7 p.m.
- Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-7 p.m.
- Karaoke Night at Cadillac Ron's at 7 p.m.
- Ladies' Night at Cadillac Ron's from 5-8 p.m.

THURSDAY
- Open Mic Night at Brothers from 8 p.m. to close
- Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-7 p.m.
- Karaoke Night at Cadillac Ron's at 7 p.m.

FRIDAY
- Live Music at Brothers
- Live Music at Moe's
- Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-6 p.m.
- Live Music at Cadillac Ron's from 8 p.m. to close
- "Disney Through the Decades" at WSCC Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre at 7 p.m.

SATURDAY
- Live Music at Brothers
- Live Music at Moe's
- Happy Hour at Moe's from 3-6 p.m.
- Live Music at Cadillac Ron's from 8 p.m. to close
- WSCC Little Black Dress Charity Bash at Top of the Town
- "Disney Through the Decades" at WSCC Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre at 7 p.m.

NEXT MONDAY
- 79 cent wings at Rodney G's Hickory Grill from 6-9 p.m.

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NEW BUSINESS

FANCHER TUTORING SERVICE

CULLMAN'S ONLY LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED PROFESSIONAL TUTORING SERVICE

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Cullman County is home to some pretty impressive schools. But as great as a school may be, there will always be children that could use a little extra help with their studies. Now, there is a new tutoring service in town. Fancher Tutoring Service is Cullman's only locally owned and operated professional tutoring service.

"My affinity for mathematics at all levels stems from understanding the genuine importance of learning and being able to apply those skills," explained Cherrelle Fancher, owner and tutor of Fancher Tutoring Service.

"Though I frequently had to struggle to learn such concepts in school, I persevered and eventually came to love and appreciate the method behind the madness. I realize that math is often a subject that can be overwhelming and confusing for parents as well as students."

Fancher has earned degrees in business and mathematics, as well as training through Athens State University in secondary education. She has worked with Volunteers of America Southeast as a 1:1 teacher for adults with disabilities, and has also worked as a substitute teacher in three different school systems – tackling any grade that was thrown at her.

She has accepted several long-term assignments working as both a self-contained and inclusion special education facilitator.

She has recently resumed her work as a substitute teacher in her hometown school district, and she also teaches several weekly, personal finance classes in a district nearby.

"I find that because of my previous struggles, I am able to relate to my students and help them overcome their hopelessness in a way that many tutoring services do not," Fancher said.

"When my assignments did not come easily to me, I researched and discovered new ways to learn and teach myself, which led to a greater understanding of the material that I was able to pass on to my classmates. I bring the same dedication and research to every student that I work for now and strive for excellence in each and every session, no matter the subject."

Cullman holds a special place in Fancher's heart. She sincerely appreciates all the wonderful things it has to offer, especially when it comes to education.

"I love Cullman," she began. "Our school systems are amazing. But not everybody wants to be in the school system. I'm all about investing in the people of Cullman, to learn the way they want to, to learn the way they need to, to be the best they can be for our town. Cullman is a fantastic place," she smiled widely.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Cherrelle Fancher specializes in K-12 math and special education assistance.

Fancher offers sessions in-home, in-office or online. She specializes in K-12 math and special education assistance. Her initial consultation is free and she has extremely competitive rates.

For more information, call 256-706-7180 or e-mail tutor@fanchertutoring.com. Visit the company's website at fanchertutoring.com and follow them on Facebook at Facebook.com/FancherTutoringService.

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

INDIVIDUALIZED TREATMENT IS ON THE HORIZON WITH PRECISION MEDICINE

Chelsea Sparks
chelsea@cullmansense.com

One of the more exciting features of the State of the Union Address this year, which may have been overlooked by many, was the mention of funding for the Precision Medicine Initiative.

"Tonight, I'm launching a new Precision Medicine Initiative," President Obama said in the State of the Union Address in January.

"To bring us closer to curing diseases like cancer and diabetes, and to give us all access to the personalized information we need to keep ourselves and our families healthier."

Typically, treatments today for disease are very much a one-size-fits-all standard. While this has been successful for some, many have not been so lucky and would greatly benefit from a tailored treatment plan.

"Advances in precision medicine have already led to powerful new discoveries and several new treatments that are tailored to specific characteristics of individuals, such as a person's genetic makeup, or the genetic profile of an individual's tumor," stated a press release from the Whitehouse.

"This is leading to a transformation in the way we can treat diseases such as cancer. Patients with breast, lung and colorectal cancers, as well as melanomas and leukemias, for instance, routinely undergo molecular testing as part of patient care, enabling physicians to select treatments that improve chances of survival and reduce exposure to adverse effects."

The 2016 budget will provide a $215 million investment for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), together with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC).

Other organizations, like the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), are thrilled to hear the news of this advancement and to work on the project.

"We applaud President Obama's announcement of a new 'Precision Medicine Initiative' intended to better embrace the potential of precision medicine, which would advance a new approach to healthcare by tailoring therapies for patients to maximize clinical benefit while reducing the risk of side effects," BIO said in their press release.

"We look forward to working with the Administration and the National Institutes of Health – in addition to the Congress – to develop public policies that will support the implementation of precision medicine."

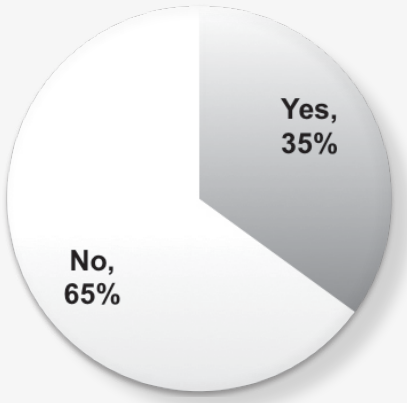
A lot of pieces will need to fall into place to make the vision of Precision Medicine a mainstream reality, but with the backing of the Presidency and organizations like the National Health Institute, we have taken a giant leap in the right direction.

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Poll

Should same sex marriage certificates be offered in Cullman?



This Week's Poll

Have you ever tried online dating?

Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

cullman city parks & recreation

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

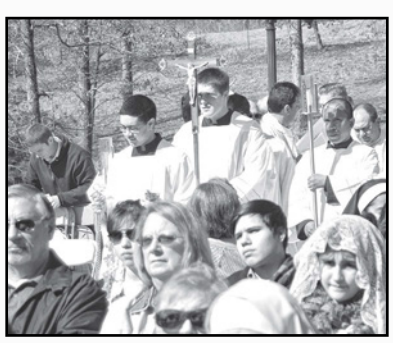
www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

- **Baseball & Softball Registration** for boys and girls ages 4-14 will take place Jan. 15-Feb. 15 at the Cullman Civic Center. Cost is $90 which includes jersey, hat, and trophy. Games will be played through the week at Heritage Park and the Field of Miracles; practices start first of March. For more information, call 256-734-9157.
- **CP&R Photography Classes** will begin February 24, 2015 at the Cullman Civic Center. Classes will be held for a 6 week session on Tuesday and Thursday nights each week at 6pm. Cost is $45; must bring your own camera to the class. Class will focus on taking quality pictures, action and still shots, and other techniques. Limit of 25 for the class, register at the Civic Center now.
- **CP&R Adult Archery Classes** will begin in March 2015. Classes will be offered on Tuesday nights at 6:30pm; cost is $40 per month. Instructor is professional archer Robin Green. Register now at the Civic Center or call 256-734-9157 for info.
- **Community Garden Coming Soon.** CP&R's Community Garden will open in March at Nesmith Park. The garden will feature plots to rent and use throughout the year with community supplies, provided water, and other perks. Gardening Classes will also start March 31 with participants receiving a free gardening plot to use when they register for the class. Call 256-734-9157 for info.
- **Adult Flag Football Registration** is open Jan. 15-February 15 at Heritage Park. Cost per team is $500 which includes the season and single elimination tournament. For more information, call 256-739-9931
- **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.
- **CP&R Youth 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

HUNDREDS FLOCK TO THE SHRINE FOR HEALING SERVICE

People came out in droves to attend a special healing Mass in Hanceville on Wednesday. The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament hosted the service at their beautiful Lourdes Grotto.



qrne.ws/321

ALABAMA VACCINATION RATE RANKS 6TH HIGHEST IN NATION

There has been much fear and controversy over the past several years in relation to vaccines and growing outbreaks in different parts of the country. New laws have been passed in several different states in regards to vaccination requirements in schools, with some laws...

qrne.ws/322

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER NEW PROCEDURE THAT COULD POTENTIALLY REVERSE AGING

The process of aging has been a scientist's subject of interest for several years. What we have known is that as we age, our body's cells begin to break down and are unable to replicate effectively. Now, a University of Stanford study has figured out...

qrne.ws/323

WSCC HOSTS 'DISNEY THROUGH THE DECADES' CONCERT

Will Hogue
will@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE – This Wednesday, Feb. 25 through Saturday, Feb. 28, the Wallace State Singers will be performing "Disney Through the Decades". The show will feature songs from films such as "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" and "Mary Poppins", as well as songs from the modern classic "Frozen".

Tiffany Richter, director of the Wallace State Singers, outlined the "three-fold mission with this show." Firstly, the Wallace State Singers hope to bring families together, reaching each generation with hits from Disney films; secondly, to highlight an evening of fun, family entertainment at minimal cost.

And the last part of the mission is "to bring a sense of childhood magic to those who might have forgotten that all you need to fly is a little pixie dust, and when you wish upon a star, your dreams come true," which is dripping with keywords that have come to define Disney and anything related to the company.

Savannah Adams, a freshman at Wallace State and a member of the Wallace State Singers said that she and her fellow singers have been practicing for several months.

"We started preparing back in August, about two weeks before school started," Adams said.

The Wallace State Singers have been practicing 4 to 5 days a week since those first days back in August, and each practice lasts for about 2 hours, according to Adams.

As for the "three-fold mission" that her director, Tiffany Richter, spoke of, Adams said that the mission was the first thing the director told the students at the beginning of practicing for the show.



WSCC

The Wallace State Singers have been practicing for their upcoming performance since last August.

"She stressed that as soon as we started practicing," Adams explained.

"Because almost everyone grows up with Disney, whether young or old, its music connects everyone," Adams finished.

From Feb. 25-27 the Wallace State Singers will be performing for Kindergarten, third grade, and fifth grade audiences.

However, at 7 p.m. on the evenings of Friday, Feb. 27 and Saturday, Feb. 28, the Wallace State Singers will be performing for public audiences.

Tickets for the Friday and Saturday shows are priced at $7 for adults, $5 for students, and for children 5 years of age and younger, admission is free.

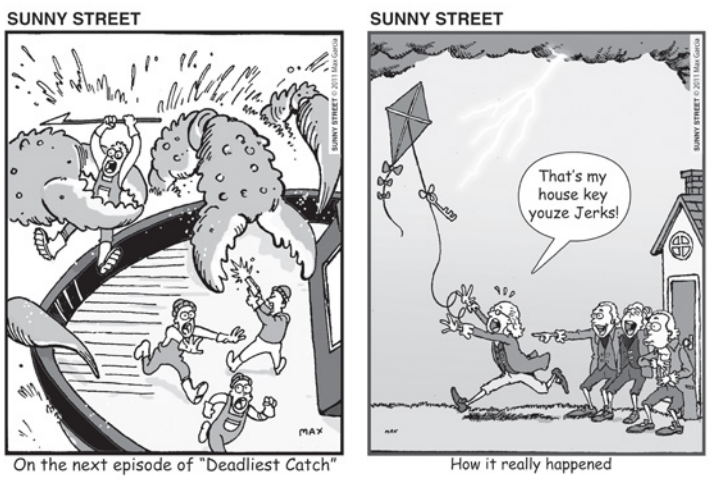
There are special themes for each night's show as well. The Friday evening show will be Daddy-Daughter Date Night, when fathers, grandfathers, brothers and uncles are encouraged to bring their daughters, granddaughters, sisters or nieces to the show.

The Saturday evening show will be Disney Dress-Up, where audience members young and old are encouraged to dress up as their favorite Disney character. Those who dress up will receive a $2 discount on their admission.

The performances will all be at the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre at Wallace State and tickets will be available for purchase at the theatre on the night of the event.

COMICS





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OPINION

RAISE THE WAGE

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There has been a growing campaign over the past few years over the present wage gap in the country. Over 40 million American citizens live at or below the poverty line, according to the Census Bureau, and millions more of middle class citizens barely scrape by, living from pay check to pay check. The fight to raise the minimum wage has sparked lively debates and often exposes the ignorance of many as to why people are poor to begin with.

We have always been told that as long as you work really hard, you can make it in this country and achieve the American dream. To some extent, this is true – a good work ethic is essential to anyone's financial well-being, but to say that this is all that accounts for one's socioeconomic status is simply untrue. Contrary to the belief of some, there are a lot more factors that play a role than simple work ethic or even education.

Like it or not, there is a growing wage gap in our society. During the peak of the recession, there was barely a middle class at all, and all the while the wealthiest in the country took home even more money. This is not a liberal issue, or a conservative issue, it is simply an American issue. The hard truth of the matter is that it is impossible to live in today's world off of $7.25 an hour.

There are two lines of thought on this subject that simply must stop. One is the thought that only teenagers and college students work minimum wage jobs. No, full grown adults work in these positions far more often than one might think.

They attempt to support themselves and their families on said job. The second line of thought is that those who work in minimum wage jobs need only go to school to get a degree or seek more gainful employment.

This argument is weak as well, seeing as how college in this country is terribly expensive, and even a federal funded Pell Grant will not cover all of it. So those that go this route are left with two options, do not attend school, or take out student loans and live under debt as soon as they get out.

Over 600 economists signed a petition for the Economic Policy Institute, stating their desire to see the minimum wage set to $10.10 an hour by 2016.

More than 20 states have already raised their wages above the federal limit. One such state was New Jersey, who raised their minimum wage at $8.38 as of January 1, 2015, and other states will also be raising wages later in the year.

In Alabama, the cost of living is lower than most any other state in the U.S., which means that the minimum wage goes further here than almost anywhere else. While that may give the impression that there is no reason to increase the wage, consider if the wage were to be increased, the average Alabama worker would account for 55.2 percent of their families' income. Alabama workers would benefit greatly from a said increase, and while there is always those who fear the price of commodities will go up, that fear is largely over exaggerated. Many studies across the country and in other parts of the world have shown that a wage increase would only affect prices of products by cents, not dollars.

One State Representative from Selma, Darrio Melton, is once again presenting legislation in the state to increase the minimum wage. According to Melton, economic data showcases that the minimum wage of $9.80 would create 1,800 new jobs and half of Alabamians would receive a raise as a result. Not only that, but many Alabamians would have the opportunity to ease their dependence on government assistance. Paying a few extra cents on a cheeseburger at McDonald's seems well worth it given the larger implications.

The end question is this: while the minimum wage here in Alabama goes a little further than other states, is that reason enough to not create the best environment possible for everyone to thrive in?

WITH THE BUDGET, THE PRESIDENT CALLS THE SHOTS

Lee H. Hamilton
Contributor

It may not be obvious from the news coverage, but a good bit of Congress's 2015 agenda just landed on Capitol Hill with a thud. I mean this literally. The federal budget that President Obama recently submitted runs to 2,000 pages.

This is the most important government document produced each year, so its heft is more than physical. The budget is how we decide what share of this country's economic resources we should devote to government—and how we should spend them.

Which is why the political maneuvering begins the moment it arrives. I've lost count of the times I've heard a budget declared "dead on arrival."

Yet here's what you need to remember: Congress changes only a small portion of the budget. In general, all but five or ten percent of the White House's spending blueprint will make it through intact. The President's budget, in other words, is never "dead on arrival."

This is not to say that what Congress does will be unimportant. The debate from here on out will be specifically about taxing and spending priorities—about how much money should go to defense, or homeland security, or social welfare—and more generally about who has the best ideas for addressing the country's needs.

Congress faces important questions. The deficit, which in past years was the focus of furious debate, holds less attention this year because we've made so much progress in reducing it.

On the other hand, the federal debt—what we owe to creditors who financed our accumulated annual deficits—is higher than it's been for generations.

We do not need to panic about our finances, but we can't afford to be complacent either.

There will be voices in Congress over the next few months urging that we curb spending sharply.

In a recovering economy still beset with income stagnation, I'd argue that slamming hard on the brakes would be a mistake.

Instead, we need to shift our spending toward investment, focusing on areas that generate or underpin economic growth: infrastructure, research and development, education.

Congress used to reign supreme in budget-making. Now, the President has become the chief budget-maker. The maneuvering on Capitol Hill over the next few months will nudge the country in one direction or another.

But our basic course was already set by the time those 2,000 pages hit lawmakers' desks.

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

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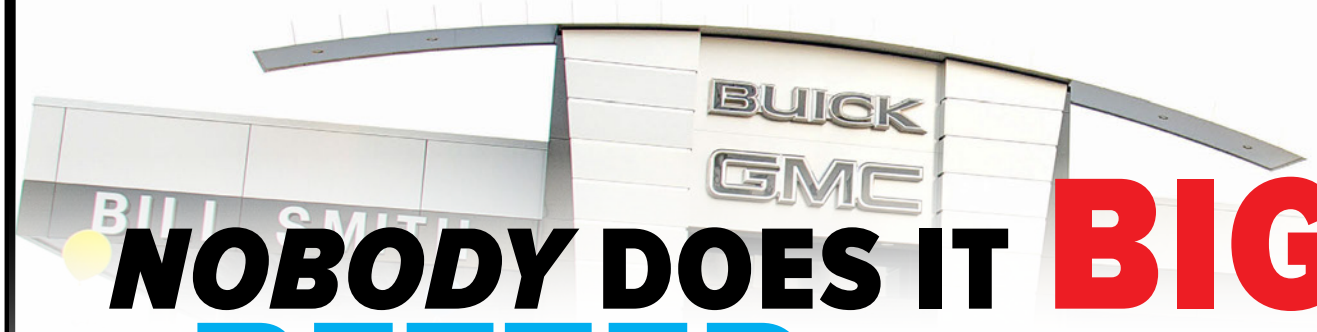


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