SERIES 5 • ISSUE 28 • JULY 13, 2015
CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS


WILL HOGUE/CULLMANSENSE

STONY LONESOME OHV PARK HOSTS ANNUAL 'DIRT THERAPY' EVENT P6


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'CULLMAN CONFESSIONS': ANONYMOUS FACEBOOK PAGE HAS RESIDENTS TALKING

Mary Standifer
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CULLMAN – With the rise of social networking, Cullman related groups and pages have been popping up all over Facebook. Some of the most popular groups/pages are Cullman Online Yard Sale, Cullman Boutique Bargains, Cullman Disc Club, Cullman Jobs and Cullman County Gun Trading and Selling. One of the more creative pages is Cullman Confessions.

Cullman Confessions began in September 2013, and currently has 4,482 "likes". The concept for the page is simple: to give Cullman residents a venue to anonymously confess something and see feedback from others. The page is run by anonymous administrators who use code names to identify themselves.

"All confessions are sent in through Google Docs, that way, the original poster can remain 100% anonymous," says an administrator known only as 'Inferno', "We receive the confessions via a spreadsheet that only show the confession, date, and time it was sent in." The link to Google Docs can be found in the page's description.

Confessions fall P12

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CONFEDERATE FLAG SALES ON THE RISE AT WILBORN OUTDOORS





WILL HOGUE/CULLMANSENSE

A confederate flag waves outside Wilborn Outdoors as a 'Demo'.

CHRISTMAS IN JULY HELPS FEED THE LESS FORTUNATE

Noah Chandler
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CULLMAN – For the third year in a row the Cullman Wellness & Aquatics Center opened its doors Friday, but rather than the typical $10 entry fee residents were encouraged to bring in canned food and other food items to help Cullman Caring for Kids restock their shelves.

"It seems that the event becomes larger each year, with more and more donations coming in," Cameron Everett, director CWAC, said. "It is im-

P10


NOAH CHANDLER/CULLMANSENSE

Residents that brought in canned food and other items to CWAC had their entry fee waived.

CITIZEN OF THE WEEK
JOANN WALLS


JOANN WALLS

Joann Walls is one of Hanceville's most respected citizens. P2

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COUPLE ARRESTED FOR SEXUAL ABUSE TO MINOR CHILDREN

Bradley Williams
CCSO

CULLMAN – On July 8, 2015 the Cullman County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) arrested Amber Maritta Cartwright, 24 years old of Crane Hill, Ala. and Zachary Levi Burns, 23 years old of Cullman, Ala. for several counts of sexual abuse of two minor children.

The two victims, who are both under the ages of 12, reported the sexual abuse to a relative who alerted CCSO investigators. Ms. Cartwright and her boyfriend Mr. Burns, who have an association with the children, would engage in sexual acts with one another and force the children to participate in the acts with them as well.

Due to the graphic nature of the crimes and the crime involving minor children there is limited details CCSO can release.

"It's safe to say this is one of the worst child sexual abuse cases I have seen in my career. These children are very brave for coming forward to help us put these predators behind bars. There is no punishment severe enough for these two that fits this crime", said Sheriff Matt Gentry.

Amber Cartwright is being charged with Sodomy 1st degree, and 2 counts of Sexual Abuse of Child Less than 12 years old. Two counts of Enticing a Child for immoral purpose and Incest are pending on Ms. Cartwright.

Zachary Burns is being charged with Sodomy 1st degree, and 2 counts of Sexual Abuse of Child Less than 12 years old. Two counts of Enticing a Child for immoral purpose are pending.

CCSO investigators worked in cooperation with the Department of Human Resources, Child Advocacy Center, and the Cullman County District Attorney's Office.

Both are currently being held in the Cullman County Detention Center with no bond.



CCSO

Zachary Levi Burns



CCSO

Maritta Cartwright

DRUG BUST NETS DRUGS AND GUNS

Bradley Williams
CCSO

CULLMAN – On Sunday July 5, 2015, Agents with the Cullman Narcotics Enforcement Team (CNET), arrested Fasha Jade Deans, 26 years old of Cullman, Ala. and Michael Ruben Evans, 44 years old of Cullman, AL.

Ms. Deans was arrested for Unlawful Possession of Control Substance, Unlawful Possession of Marijuana 2nd, Two counts of Attempting to Elude, Reckless Endangerment, and Certain Person Forbidden Possess Pistol.

The drug bust originated in Fairview, AL where Mr. Evans was arrested at the scene for an outstanding warrant.

Ms. Deans fled in her vehicle, a white Cadillac CTS, and CNET agents pursued with the assistance of Cullman Police Department and Cullman County Sheriff Deputies, and arrested her just outside of Hartselle, Ala. after her vehicle struck a road sign and short foot chase.

The arrest led to the seizer of Meth, Marijuana, a 12 gauge shotgun and a 380 pistol.

"I am proud our law enforcement officers were able to arrest the two individuals and to do it safely. This is yet another example of our tireless effort to pursue drug offenders that are hurting our community," said Sheriff Matt Gentry.

Ms. Deans and Mr. Evans are currently being held in the Cullman County Detention Center.

As the investigation continues other charges may be pending.



CCSO

The arrest led to the seizer of Meth, Marijuana, a 12 gauge shotgun and a 380 pistol.



CCSO

Zachary Levi Burns



CCSO

Maritta Cartwright

CPD AND CCSO REPORT SAFE FOURTH OF JULY WEEKEND

Hannah Ward
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CULLMAN – "It was a pretty quiet July 4th weekend," according to Bradley Williams, Director of Communications at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. The Cullman County Sheriff's Office patrolled the Smith Lake Park Fireworks and Music Festival on Saturday. No arrests were reported at Smith Lake Park. The Sheriff's Office only had three DUIs the entire weekend.

The Cullman Police Department had seven arrests and investigated five accidents from July 2nd-5th. Most of the arrests were alcohol related, which the Police Department claimed is normal for an extended holiday weekend.

"Those numbers are typical for a regular weekend. The rain may have kept some at home," explained Craig Green, Assistant Chief of Police at the Cullman City Police Department.

"Locally, Desperation Church held their annual fireworks event at Heritage Park. As usual their fireworks event drew a large crowd," Green said. "We work well together with the staff of Desperation Church and Heritage Park, which makes the event safe and family-friendly."

Walls (from Front)

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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HANCEVILLE – Hanceville's Joann Walls may be a petite little lady, but she's been a huge part of the town for many years. She has served on the Hanceville City Council; she's a member of the Civitan Club and the city's Culture Club. She is an active member of Hanceville First United Methodist Church, has competed in the Sr. Mrs. Cullman County Pageant and even has a mini mall named after her. She never meets a stranger and greets everyone with that big beautiful smile of hers.

Mrs. Walls enjoys spending time with her sister, Marie Brittain. She retired from Alabama Power after working for them for thirty-seven years. She currently works part time at the Hanceville Library with her dear friends Shirley Burden and Carolyn Shelton.

A Civitan at heart, Mrs. Walls is dedicated to helping people in her community. She can usually be found offering help wherever the need arises and was instrumental in the forming of Hanceville's own chapter of the Civitan Club.

"I joined the Civitan Club in 1983 while I lived in Birmingham," she smiled.

"After my husband Glenn died I moved to Hanceville to be near my sister. With the help of the Cullman Civitan Club, Herman Reid, Marie and I chartered the Hanceville Civitan Club in 1990," she explained.

"I have held every office on the club level, and on the district level I served as Area Director, District Treasurer & Secretary. In 1998 and 1999 I was elected to serve as District Governor."

When not working with the Civitans, Mrs. Walls was a member of the Hanceville City Council. She was dedicated and took her place on the Council very seriously. During that time, she attended and completed a great deal of training concerning city government.

"Having served on the City Council for twelve years, I will say it was a wonderful experience serving the wonderful and kind people of Hanceville," she beamed.

"There is no place on earth like it. The beauty of Hanceville and caring people is the best kept secret - and that needs to be told," she grinned proudly.

Mrs. Walls has touched the lives of many people and as a result Hanceville has a mini mall named in her honor.

The Joann Walls Center, located on Bangor Avenue NE, stands as a special reminder of what a remarkable woman she is.

"Having places in Hanceville named after me wasn't something I deserved," she humbly stated.

"A dear friend of mine Faith Hammock, a woman who dearly loves Hanceville, offered the Mini Mall property to the City of Hanceville provided they name it after me. I am so blessed to have such a grand lady as a friend," she blushed.

The Joann Walls Center is not far from the Hanceville Library, which is where Mrs. Walls spends a great deal of time these days.

Whether she's putting away books, helping with book signings or showing people how to use the computers, she always wears a smile and truly enjoys being there.

"The most fun I have at the Hanceville Library is meeting and laughing with the folks that come into the library," she giggled.

"I've just started helping Shirley and Carolyn with the Children's Summer Reading program. That is really a lot of fun. At the library we are very fortunate the Hanceville Mayor Kenneth Nail supports the programs that make the library the best in the Cullman County Library Systems," she added.

Joann Walls is an inspiration to everyone she meets and has worked hard to make Hanceville a better place to live.

Her dedication and sense of community are second to none.

Her humble spirit and friendly nature has allowed her to put others before herself, as proven in all her years of public service. When asked for a few words of advice, she smiled and simply said, "My advice is to never give advice but set a good example for the younger generation."

POSITION AVAILABLE

Program Facilitator needed for local domestic violence intervention program.

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

EMA DIRECTOR: 'WE ARE NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANYONE HAVING A FUNDRAISER'

Will Hogue
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CULLMAN – Recently the Cullman law enforcement began getting complaints of people claiming they were being solicited by people claiming to be associated and/or affiliated with the Cullman County EMA.

"We are not affiliated with anyone holding a fundraiser," said Phyllis Little, Director at the Cullman County EMA. "We have no knowledge of any fundraisers that we are involved with at this time," she continued.

Little, who said she takes exception to anyone claiming to be affiliated with her organization, said that she was made aware of the issue when her office received a phone call.

"The Assistant Director received a call from a family member," said Little, who has since contacted law enforcement. Little assured them that the Cullman County EMA are not affiliated with any door-to-door fundraisers right now and also made a Facebook post on the Cullman County EMA page stating the same.

There is precedent for this situation. Years ago, according to Little, something similar happened.

"Someone was going around saying they were with the EMA, and the law enforcement put a stop to that," Little said. "I don't know how, but they did," she added."

Although one might assume whoever is responsible for this 'fundraiser,' going door-to-door, asking for money and claiming affiliation with the EMA is doing this maliciously, Little suspects otherwise.

"I think it's not malicious, or at least I hope it isn't," Little said, explaining that it's most likely someone who is innocently and, perhaps naively claiming the EMA is affiliated with them, when in fact it's not.

Little explained how the EMA has only 2 employees and that they never solicit for money, nor do they accept cash.

"It's illegal and unethical for us to accept cash," Little said.

One wouldn't expect that the guise of the Cullman County EMA to be a con-person's first choice, thus Little believes it is an innocent mistake that she is hoping is righted.

CullmanSense has reached out to someone directly contacted by the door-to-door solicitor and is gathering further details.

CCEMA RECEIVES AWARD FROM AAEM

Hannah Ward
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CULLMAN – The Cullman County Emergency Management Agency received the Preparedness Program of the Year 2014-2015 award. It was given to them by the Alabama Association of Emergency Managers (AAEM) at their Annual Conference in Mobile on June 22, 2015.

The Preparedness Program of the Year Award recognizes a program that has developed a structure in preparing for disasters. By developing a plan, exercising a plan, developing a volunteer management program, working with the community to better prepare – i.e. Be Ready Day, Storm Spotter, Continuity Plan, Mass Casualty Planning, etc. One award is be presented to a small county (rural), to a medium county, and to a large county.

Cullman County Emergency Management Agency was approached by the Alabama Funeral Directors Association in early 2005 for help in establishing a disaster mortuary response team. The Funeral Directors Association volunteered to provide the manpower if Cullman County EMA could find fund source to provide equipment.

Cullman County Emergency Management Agency wrote and submitted the first grant requesting funding thru the Department of Homeland Security in February, 2005. The original grant for $150,000.00 was approved in September, 2005 following Hurricane Katrina.

The Alabama State Mortuary Operations Team was born. The team began with a mobile morgue, a small refrigerated trailer, a small equipment trailer and a handful of volunteers with big hearts and a passion for public service.

The Alabama State Mortuary Operations Team is available to respond, by request of the local coroner, to incidents resulting in mass fatalities that overwhelm local resources.

The team became a part of the Alabama Mutual Aid System shortly after equipment was received and training began. Since that time, the team has expanded to include the Alabama Coroners Association and has become a member of the Alabama Department of Public Health Mass Fatality Management Committee. Now ten years later, the team has expanded to include two additional response units; SMORT-2 is based in Lee County and maintained by the Lee County Emergency Management Agency and SMORT-3 is based in Mobile County and maintained by the Mobile County Emergency Management Agency.

Members of the team include coroners, funeral directors, emergency management personnel, and medical personnel (safety officers).

Training has been provided by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Bureau of Investigation (ABI), Alabama Department of Forensics, and Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA). Additional response resources have been provided by the Alabama Mutual Aid System and the Alabama Department of Public Health Preparedness Division in the form of supplies, equipment, training, and funding.

All activities for training, activation of team members, and deployment of equipment for response are coordinated by the Cullman County Emergency Management Agency who also is tasked with grant management and maintenance of the Alabama State Mortuary Operations Team 1 equipment.

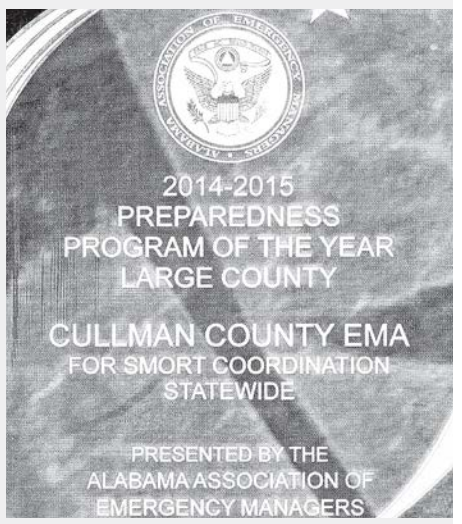
The team Commander is Mr. Doug Williams. Mr. Williams also serves on the Alabama Department of Public Health Mass Fatality Committee and is a driving force for the team.

He brought the request to Cullman County Emergency Management Agency in 2005 and has continued to be our go-to person for anything dealing with training, equipment, etc. Other states have contacted both Mr. Williams and CCEMA for information on establishing teams as well as information regarding the team's capabilities. Alabama State Mortuary Operations Team has become a model for others considering a similar program.

Phyllis Little, Director of the Cullman County Emergency Management Agency, stated, "Without the support of the Cullman County Commission and the many volunteer SMORT members, this project would have died on the vine. The Commissioners, past & present, have supported this project without hesitation. All funding has been provided 100% thru grants from AEMA/DHS and ADPH, but the time it takes for Assistant Director Kelly Allen to maintain equipment in a readiness state and the time it takes for the two of us to train with the team has been supported by the Commission. Volunteers provide the man-power taking time away from their jobs and families to train and respond. I was honored, and very surprised, to accept the award on June 22 at the AAEM Annual Conference in Mobile. I had no idea that CCEMA had been nominated and to be recognized for a project that is so close to our hearts is truly an honor. We began with an idea and it's amazing to see how that has grown to fill a need few even realized was there."

"I had no idea that CCEMA had been nominated and to be recognized for a project that is so close to our hearts is truly an honor."

Phyllis Little, CCEMA Director



HANNAH WARD/CULLMANSENSE

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RELIGIOUS SPOTLIGHT: AL BARTON, PASTOR OF OLE TIME WAY BAPTIST CHURCH

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN – Ole Time Way Baptist Church, located on Hwy 157 in Cullman, is a wonderful place to worship. The church's congregation are devout followers of Jesus and strive to be Christ-like in everything they do. Brother Al Barton, the church's pastor, has proven to be a tremendous leader over the years and treats his position as pastor with reverence.

Brother Al is happily married to the lovely Sandra Barton. The couple has two children, daughter Chasity and son Jay. Chasity is married to Thomas Jordan, and they are the proud parents of son, Landon. Jay is the father of two children, Morgan, and Weston.

Brother Al attended school at Cullman High School and worked for many years at Hannah Steel in Birmingham. Now retired, he serves full-time as pastor of Ole Time Way.

"I was called to preach many years ago, on July 7, 1977, when my daughter was born," he explained. "God let me know that if I did not obey my calling that He would take my baby girl Home - I've been preaching ever since," he grinned.

"Before I came to Ole Time Way, I have been the pastor at Midway Freewill Baptist Church in Hanceville, Macedonia Baptist Church, Emmaus Baptist Church, First Freewill Baptist Church in Blountsville and First Freewill Baptist Church in Cullman."

Being the leader of a church is not always easy, but Brother Al seems to take it all in stride. Although he admits a few struggles, he is always happy to help and enjoys seeing the people of his flock find the Lord.

"There are many challenges to being a pastor," he admitted, "but the biggest challenge for me is standing before and trying to lead a congregation that is one day bound for Judgement. I am always striving and doing all I can do to uplift the Kingdom of Christ."

"There are many rewarding moments," he continued, "but by far the most rewarding is when I help lost souls get to know Jesus as their personal Savior!"

In speaking about his church, Brother Al happily chatted away. Like a proud father, he described his congregation with a tremendous amount of love.

"Ole Time Way Baptist Church is an Independent Baptist Church," he explained.

"We have classes for all ages, a wonderful youth program and we welcome all to come and worship with us. We also have 'Hands in Praise' puppet ministry," he beamed. "This ministry involves members from youth to adults. We don't have any set program at Ole Time Way, we just like to 'Let Go and Let God!'"

Al Barton has been a blessing to Ole Time Way Baptist Church. His love for God and desire to help others grow to love Him are remarkable.

Ole Time Way Baptist Church is located at 1530 Hwy 157, Cullman, AL 35055. For more information, call 256-739-3328 or follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/pages/Ole-Time-Way-BaptistChurch/1418106675108806.



AL BARTON

Brother Al was called to preach on July 7, 1977, when his daughter was born.

"There are many rewarding moments (in preaching) but by far the most rewarding is when I help lost souls get to know Jesus as their personal Savior!"

Brother Al Barton, Ole Time Way Baptist Church

Flag (from Front)

Will Hogue
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CULLMAN – With the controversy around the confederate flag swirling, the management at Wilborn Outdoors saw a business opportunity. They began stocking confederate flags about three weeks ago, and the results have been impressive.

"We can't keep them in," says Tommy Holcombe who works at Wilborne Outdoors.

He says the national situation with the confederate flags has undoubtedly made people want to buy the 'stars and bars.'

"They never came in asking for them before," he said.

The store, located at 505 Main Avenue has two different versions of the flag in stock: a large version, which features an eagle graphic in the center which costs $10, and a small flag on a wooden pole which costs $2.99. There is also a bumper sticker at the store which reads, 'Keep It Flyin' with the confederate flag on it.

Holcombe said that The Tool Shed had always stocked confederate flags, but had also recently put in an order for 1,500 flags. He typically orders much less, about 50 per order he said.

"We got an order in yesterday and are down to 27 flags left today," he said.

He doesn't know if the frenzy behind the flags will continue, plateau, or drop off, but he likens the situation to a couple of years ago in the aftermath of a school shooting that had national media speculating a federal ban on assault rifles.

"We couldn't keep them on the shelves. Which was new for us because we had only ever stocked hunting rifles, but people came in asking for ARs because they didn't think they'd be able to buy them much longer," Holcombe said.

He explained that it seems like this is a similar dynamic; people believe something might be taken away from them.

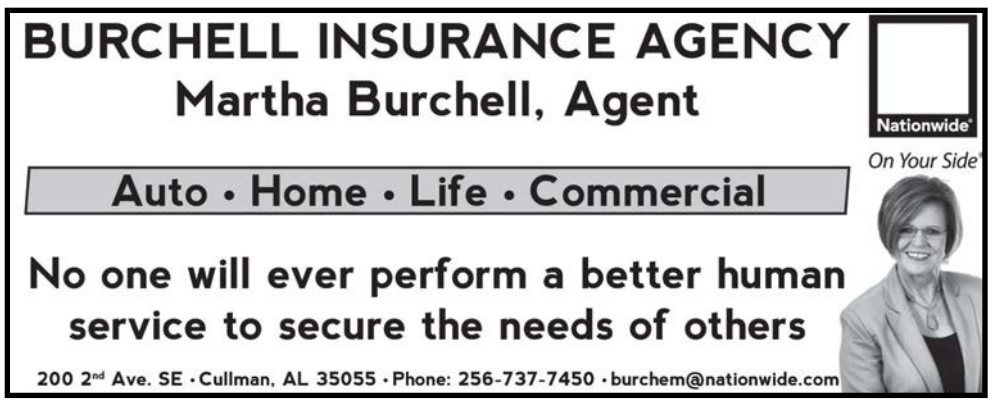
"No one comes in here talking about hate," he said, "It's always about heritage. One 70 year old lady came in and bought one because of her pride in the confederacy. 19 year old kids seem to come buy them because of the way it looks," Holcombe said.

He went on to say that no one comes in and purchases a flag in order to fly in to spite anyone or has any animosity behind their reasoning.

Holcombe said he's not the one to fly a confederate flag, but because of the opportunistic nature of the business world, they began stocking the flags.

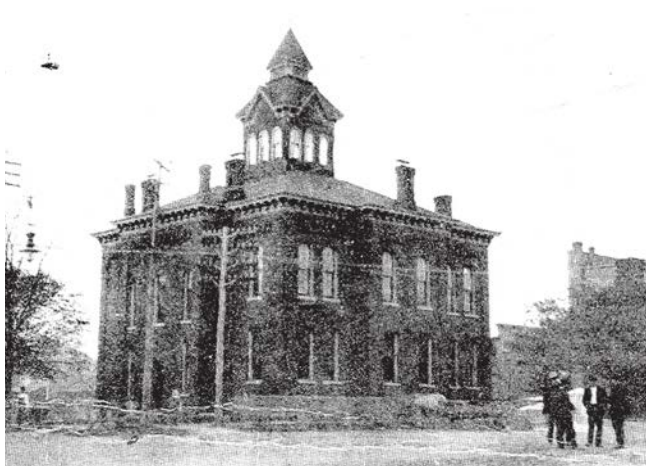
"The flag flying out front is only flying as a demo," he said.







THE HUMBLE BEGINNING OF CULLMAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE







IMAGES BY CULLMAN COUNTY MUSEUM

Cullman's first official courthouse was built on land that was donated to the city by a member of one of Cullman's original five pioneer families.

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN – Before Cullman became a county in 1877, court and all official transactions were held in the Blount County Courthouse. Later, when Cullman became an official Alabama county, court took place at Ambruster's Hall. Before long it was relocated to a building adjoining the European Hotel that the town rented for $8.00 a month. Eventually, the citizens of Cullman County agreed that a real courthouse was needed, and in March 1878 steps were taken to do just that.

Cullman's first official courthouse was built on land that was donated to the city by Mr. Christopher Scheuing, a member of one of Cullman's original five pioneer families. The building stood on the corner of Second Avenue West and Fourth Street and was completed in February 1879 at a cost of $5,600.00.

It was constructed using locally manufactured bricks. At the time it was considered to be one of the finest courthouses along the railroad line and in all of North Alabama.

According to Margaret Jean Jones' book, Combing Cullman County, before the courthouse was built, the land was used as a potato farm.

As the story goes, it was a fine spring morning in 1878 and local farmer John Fromhold had worked diligently preparing the soil.

He then planted a whole crop of potatoes on the land which was right next to the old Pioneer Hotel.

Once he finally finished, he stood up, wiped his brow with a semi-clean handkerchief and admired his handiwork.

It was about that time when several of the town's officials came walking up. They stopped on either side of Fromhold and broke the news to the poor guy.

"We have just chosen your potato patch for the site of the new courthouse," one announced.

"Construction will begin right away," another man added.

Mr. Fromhold became angry and without missing a beat; he turned around, hitched his mule right back up to the plow and got busy. By nightfall, all the potatoes he had worked so hard to plant had been dug up and put right back where they came from – their sacks.

"It was the quickest harvest on record," a reporter from the Cullman Tribune had chuckled. Unfortunately there was no increase in return.

Sadly that courthouse was damaged by a raging fire in 1894.

An abandoned schoolhouse served as the courthouse until 1912 when what was left of the building was torn down.

A brand new courthouse was then built at the same location. The second courthouse served Cullman County for the next fifty-three years until a bigger; more modern building was constructed in 1965.

Located on 2nd Avenue S.W., the third courthouse still stands. With three stories and a basement, it is by far the largest Cullman County Courthouse to date.

Made of white shiny marble, the $1.5 million building's final inspection was passed in February of 1965 and immediately offices were transferred to the new building.

Dedication ceremonies were held on July 3, 1965 and U.S. Senator John Sparkman, U.S. Representative James D. Martin and former U.S. Representative Carl Elliott attended and gave speeches during the event.

Tuesday, July 7, 2015, city officials and area residents gathered together on the courthouse steps to celebrate the Cullman County Courthouse's 50th anniversary. The original marble walls have been replaced with bright red brick. Even though the courthouse looks a lot different than it did when it was first built, it continues to stand tall and ready to be of assistance to the residents of Cullman County.

MIRRORING HISTORY: ANDERSON BOATS

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN – Bill and Frances Anderson started Anderson Boats and Motors back in 1959. It was a successful business that lasted nearly 50 years. People from all over the county shopped at Anderson Boats and Motors in search of their dream boats and snazzy life jackets.

Today the building, located at 5155 AL Hwy 157 in Cullman, is home to TriGreen Equipment, a John Deere dealership. People now visit to purchase tractors, combines, cotton pickers and lawn mowers.

From boats to tractors, the building has been a great place to visit over the years.



CULLMAN COUNTY MUSEUM

Anderson Boats and Motors was founded in 1959.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The building is now home to TriGreen Equipment.

cullman city parks & recreation

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

www.cullmanrecreation.org
256-734-9157

- **Friday Nights at Festhalle** will take place on Friday, June 5th from 4pm-9pm. The event will feature live bands, free kids games and activities, and fresh produce at the Farmer's Market. Event is FREE to attend!
- **Women's Self Defense Class** starts June 9 and will take place for 4 weeks at 6pm on Tuesday nights through June 30. Cost is $45 which includes a manual; register through June 8 at the Cullman Civic Center.
- **Just Play!** This FREE program for children 5-12 years old will start Friday, June 12 at Culpepper Park. Organized games such as capture the flag, relay games, and more will be held from 1pm-3pm. The program will take place every Friday in June and July . See our website for a full lineup.
- **CP&R Arts Classes** will be offered for homeschoolers and pre-school age students in our Mommy & Me Class starting in June. Call 256-734-9157 for more information.
- **FREE Exercise in the Park** will take place every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month at 2pm. This Sunday, May 7 will feature a FREE Pilates Class at Heritage Park. Meet at the recognition gardens!
- **Archery Camp** will be held June 29-July 1 at the Cullman Archery Park. Registration is now open at the Cullman Civic Center; call 256-734-9157 for more information.
- **Speed & Agility Camp** will be held this summer for ages 6-14. Starts June 9; two week sessions are available for $60 or 6 weeks for $135. Camp will be taught by Steve Johnson. Call 256-734-9157 or come by the Cullman Civic Center to register.
- **Jr. Golf Clinics** are registering now at the Cullman Golf Course. Clinics will be held every Tuesday in June starting June 2. Cost is $60 for the 5 weeks and includes instruction from PGA Golf Pro Ches Harris. Call 256-739-2386 for details.
- **Cullman Gymnastics and Cheer** is registering now for summer classes in cheer, tumble, and gymnastics. Classes are filling up FAST, so stop by the gym to signup today. Summer classes start June 8. Call 256-739-5567 for more info.

STONY LONESOME OHV PARK HOSTS ANNUAL 'DIRT THERAPY' EVENT

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CULLMAN – Last Saturday, Cullman's public OHV park, Stony Lonesome OHV Park, held its annual 'Dirt Therapy' day for the third year. Incorporating events for riders of offroad vehicles and pedestrians alike for a oneofakind event for the portion of the Cullman community that prefers playing in the mud.

"The name, and the idea for the event, 'dirt therapy', actually came from one of our regulars," said park manager Tyler Dosey. "We just wanted to have one day a year where we just gave back to the community."

Stony Lonesome, a park that has garnered regional respect since its grand opening in 2009, according to Dosey, is only growing in popularity and recognition.

"I'd say one in ten of the people who come here are from Cullman," Dosey said, highlighting the outoftown attention the park gets. The park operates year round, but one day out of the year the park sets aside for special events and activities.

'Dirt Therapy' day is a day in which there are 'mud bogs' (which is when a handful of offroad vehicles drive around in a swampy area), there was a mud slide, there was even a drag race on one of the main roads at the park.

All the events were overseen by park authorities and were kept safe and civil.

One of the things Dosey and his crew have learned over the past three years of running the 'dirt therapy' day is that dust can become an issue on the road.

The vehicles driving around the tracks and roads can stir up dust, making it difficult for the drivers to see.

To counteract this, Dosey has trucks drive across the roads pouring water on the dirt, dampening the ground and insuring that dust won't be a problem.

When 3.5 acres of offroad park are entrusted to the people behind the wheel, one could suspect things get out of control often.

"Actually, we rarely have any trouble," Dosey says. "People really behave. They just want to come out and have a fun, family time. That's why you don't see alcohol around here. You don't want to be with your family and kids and see someone drinking, so we don't allow alcohol here."

Dosey went on to say that people from Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, and especially Florida frequent Stony Lonesome, adding to the arsenal of attractions Cullman has begun to accumulate in the recent years.

"This is a great thing for Cullman to have," Dosey said. "Cullman's parks [and recreation] is second to none in the state."

Events like the 'dirt therapy' day at Stony Lonesome, along with things like Rock The South allow Cullman to express its southern roots while urban life continues to develop in areas such as the Warehouse District and the south side of Cullman where the currently operating Walmart anchors a burgeoning shopping scene.

Just another notch in the belt of Cullman events and attractions making the county such a quality destination for work, play, and life.



WILL HOGUE/CULLMANSENSE

'Dirt Therapy' attendees take a ride down a mud slide.

PREMIER PRODUCTIONS TOPS NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL TICKET SALES

Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – What started out as a one man local operation in 1996, Premier Productions has quickly grown to a company employing more than 30 people across the nation and promoting the largest names in Christian music. In 2015 alone, the production team will be involved in 400 concerts worldwide.

"Formed in 1996, Premier Productions is the largest producer of Christian concert events in the nation and the co-founder of the Winter Jam Tour Spectacular - Christian music's largest annual tour," Shane Quick, co-owner, said.

"Premier promotes award-winning artists with No. 1 hits such as - TobyMac, Skillet, Casting Crowns, Hillsong Live, Hillsong UNITED, Bill Gaither & Friends Homecoming, Jesus Culture, Lecrae, Kari Jobe, Matthew West and many more!"

Quick partnered with Gary Gentry and Roy Morgan to ensure Premier Productions would continue to thrive and prosper

As Quick said, "They (Gary and Roy) are some of the most amazing men I've ever met."

"They established Premier as a company dedicated to hard work and honesty," Quick continued.

"Premier also has this culture where we truly believe we can do anything. An atmosphere of dreaming and going for it is one of the main reasons for our explosive growth."

One of the benefits of working at Premier Productions is the comradery which has been built over time.

"It's rewarding spreading a message of HOPE to people all over the world. It's also very rewarding working alongside people you love and admire," he said.

The company has grown so fast that four distinct formats of promotions that offer dfferent services:

• Premier Festivals provides an incredible live festival experience nationwide and abroad. Premier Festivals takes the top names in Christian music and brings them to some of your favorite festival locations - from amusement parks and beaches to universities.

• Premier Experience offers innovative cruises and land-based vacations with outstanding artists, nationally known speakers and world-class comedians in exotic and fun locations around the world. With specialty cruises that target married couples, music lovers, and other niche markets, Premier Experiences offer a wholesome, uplifting and exciting vacation experience that's just right for everyone.

• Camp Electric is the nation's first rock and worship camp for serious minded musicians in three locations during the summer. This is the place where teenagers learn the importance of band dynamics and the art of leading worship while honing their live and studio performance skills – all with the help of top artists in the industry.

• Premier Foundation is an international Christian nonprofit organization committed to being a voice for the disadvantaged. It exists to love and serve the impoverished by meeting their physical, spiritual, educational, social and emotional needs; thus, empowering them to be agents of change in their own communities.

For more on Premier Productions, visit premierproductions.com or facebook.com/premierproductions.







FACEBOOK.COM/PAGES/GRACE-CHAPEL/1416481178660425

Eighteen students gave their lives to Christ and followed Him in baptism during the Homecoming Concert at the Beech Center.

GRACE CHAPEL'S TRAVELING YOUTH CHOIR RETURNS TO CULLMAN

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – On Sunday, July 5th hundreds of people filled the Beech Center to welcome the Grace Chapel Choir home and listen to them sing. The choir, made up of teenagers who love to worship God through song, had just returned from a twelve day tour and the concert was their grand finale. More than 650 people were there to welcome the kids home, listen to them sing, and praise God for their safe return.

"These students have worked extremely hard and would love to share their passion," said Chad Witcher, parent.

The group left on June 23rd and returned to Cullman July 5th where they sang their

"They went to Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Roanoke, and Memphis. They held VBS with a small church in Boston, sang in several homeless missions and other places," he smiled.

hearts out for friends and family.

The trip proved to be a life changing event, and after their return 18 students were baptized and over 20 others re-dedicated their lives to Christ. The homecoming concert celebration, topped off with the many baptisms was simply heavenly.

"It was an amazing night of worship that couldn't have ended any better," said Witcher.

"These 18 students gave their lives to Christ and followed Him in baptism. That is something to get excited about - Praise the Lord!"

The choir is under the direction of Mr. Brian Witcher, who also serves as Grace Chapel's pastor. Clearly great things are happening within the church and the Holy Spirit is burning brightly in the hearts of its youth.

Select songs from the concert can be seen by going to the church's Facebook page at facebook.com/pages/Grace-Chapel/1416481178660425.





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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. Nonperishable food items are needed, and of course cash enables them to purchase needed products to fill their empty shelves. Please call 256-739-1111 to see how to help or mail checks or money orders to Cullman Caring for Kids, P. O. Box 698, Cullman, Alabama 35056-0698. Thanks in advance for anything you can do.

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

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

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.

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

Bosom Buddies Support Group
The Bosom Buddies Support Group offers support to individuals affected by breast cancer. The group will hold its next meeting on Monday, March 16th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Cullman Regional Medical Center's Ave Maria Room in the Community Education Center located in Professional Office Building 2 (1890 AL Highway 157, Cullman, AL 35058).

Cullman Kiwanis Club
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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.
- 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

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

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

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Fill'er Up Fridays • Sudsy Saturdays
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SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The farmers market has extended hours for the community's convenience.

FESTHALLE STAYS OPEN LATE

MARKET'S NEW HOURS GIVES BUSY SHOPPERS OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE LOCAL PRODUCE

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Those that love fresh fruit and vegetables but have a hard time getting to Festhalle Market Platz in time to get them are in luck. The farmers market has extended their hours and now residents can purchase local, homegrown produce on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 3:00 p.m. till 7:00 p.m.

"Cullman is so lucky to have so many top quality farmers in our area," said Sallie Wilhite.

"Fresh fruits and vegetables are now available in the evenings too. I think it's great for all you folks who don't get a chance to come by during the day. Peaches, blueberries, and fresh tomatoes are coming on strong, so now you'll have a chance to stop by on your way home from work."

Shopping at Festhalle in the evening provides a relaxing atmosphere; shoppers and vendors are able to enjoy the milder weather.

"Here at the farmers market night market, I'm set up beside a lady selling some amazing baklava and baked goods, kale, chow chow, peaches, tomatoes, squash, and Sophie the soap baby approved peach Popsicles," smiled Elizabeth McDowell, owner of Hippimama Bath & Beauty.

Buying produce from the farmers market supports local farmers. Cullman County is number one in agriculture in the state of Alabama and the quality of the fruit and vegetables available at Festhalle is second to none. Festhalle Market Platz is located at 1st Ave & Arnold St, Cullman, AL 35055

Festhalle Market Platz Hours:
Monday 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Tuesday 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Wednesday 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Thursday 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Friday 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Sunday CLOSED

REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN SHOW COMING TO AGRIPLEX

Will Hogue
will@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – On Tuesday, July 14 at 6 p.m. Daphne Mowland, an educator with Wheeler Wildlife, will put reptiles and amphibians on display at the North Alabama Agriplex.

Rachel Dawsey, Director at the Agriplex, has overseen the Living Landscapes program for the past two years.

She recruits speakers to come and show off animals for educational events that anyone and everyone in a family would enjoy.

Last year, Dawsey and the Agriplex hosted an event centered around birds of prey. The speaker explained how the birds positively affect the environment, and how people can, unknowingly and unintentionally do harm to the birds.

This year at the Agriplex there will be a more grounded presentation, as the event will center around things that slither and crawl in the dirt, rather than those that soar through the sky.

"The event will feature animals that can be found in your backyard. [Mowland] will be bringing reptiles and amphibians that are native to Alabama," Dawsey said.

As far as the inspiration for having an event about snakes, something people are usually trepidatious about, Dawsey says that the snakes were requested.

"We're focused on doing family-oriented events that support backyard sustainability. I called about having the snakes because they were requested," Dawsey said.

Dawsey hopes this event helps people to see the positive effects of snakes.

"A lot of people are afraid of snakes," she said.

"People might be kinder if they understand, you know, be more considerate. Rat snakes, you know, kill rats. But they don't do that if you kill [rat snakes] every time you see one in your yard, you know," Dawsey said.

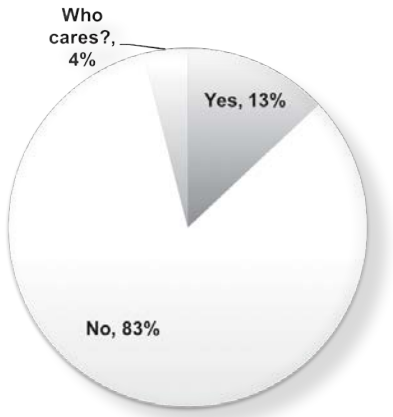
This is an opportunity to learn more about the creatures that are commonplace in everyone's backyards in Alabama. Dawsey said she found several differs kinds of reptiles and turtles in her backyard, "And I don't even live in the county, I live in the city," she said.

The event will be $5 per family. A family can be 2-10 people. There are no reservations necessary for the event.



Poll

Should the Confederate flag be banned from NASCAR events?

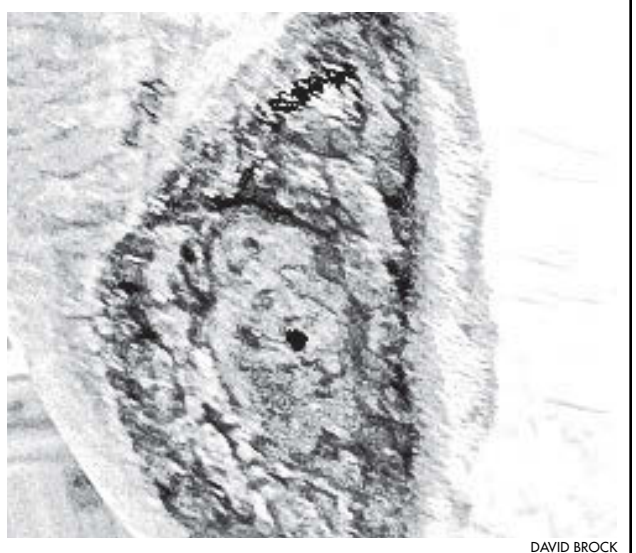


This Week's Poll

Have you or your children ever had a lemonade stand?

Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

WHAT'S ONLINE



DAVID BROCK

SUMMER MONTHS BRING OUT SNAKES AND SPIDERS AROUND CULLMAN COUNTY

As the summer months roll on gardening and adventures in the woods become a pastime. Unfortunately, this also means a higher likelihood of coming into contact with dangerous snakes and insects. Insects such as spiders are... **QRNE.WS/373**



MARY STANDIFER/CULLMANSENSE

MEET FOLK-ART CRAFTSMAN, ERNIE PANNELL

In a tiny lot on the side of Highway 278 West often sits a gentleman selling wooden furniture and fixtures out of a home-made trailer pulled by a gray pick-up truck. This man is craftsman, Ernie Panne. Pannell is known by locals mainly for his handcrafted, child's rocking chairs. **QRNE.WS/374**

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LOCAL MUSICIAN MONTGOMERY MILLER BEGINS SOLO WORK



MONTGOMERY MILLER

Miller recently released his first solo acoustic track.

Mary Standifer
mary@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Montgomery Miller just released his first solo, acoustic single entitled Forever in My Hands. Miller previously sang in the bands Abandon Disclosure and I Am Surrounded.

Abandon Disclosure had an opportunity to be signed with a record label named Solid State. The band released a four track ep entitled Shower of Red before calling it quits. "After breaking up, all [of] our 'watchers' from the company disappeared with the dying breath of Abandon Disclosure," said Miller.

Miller then went on to sing for I Am Surrounded. The band began focusing on recording songs rather than performing immediately. Miller began sending recordings to various record labels.

"With many unviewed and unresponsive messages, Matchless Records gave us a long message with their company number," explained Miller. Unfortunately, I Am Surrounded hit a rocky patch when two members of the band attempted to kick Miller out.

"Part of the reason for the exile of me was being a Christian band and different outlooks," Miller continued, "Me and the drummer were the only ones who wanted to be a devoted Christian band, or nothing at all, and that's all I'll say about that. When I left, I tried to tell them to pursue Matchless. Whether they did or not, I don't know, but very shortly after my departure they broke up."

Forever in My Hands is a beautiful piece with melodic guitar parts and warm, ambient string instruments.

Although Miller has mainly sung metal which often calls for screaming, Forever in My Hands showcases his ability to expertly adapt his voice to a different style.

The song uses instrumental harmonics and powerful guitar riffs that help to convey the emotional message of the song.

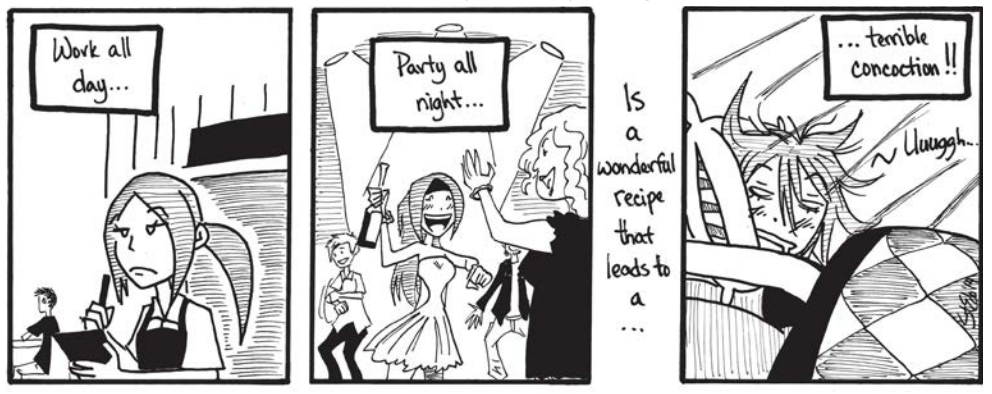
"The inspiration to Forever in My Hands is the fear of being alone. The woman I mention in the song is the 'girl in the stars' so to speak. The one 'I want to know more' is the girl I dream about and wake up upset because I can't even remember what she looks like," explained Miller, "The feeling of comfort is all I know about her. I feel like I'll never end up alone because I know who I am, my goals and morals, but people are so judgmental. I feel my past will always haunt me, and I begin to change my mind and start to fear I'll be alone. My soul mate could be scared off from my past mistakes."

> **"My plan is to always write music..."**
> Montgomery Miller, Musician

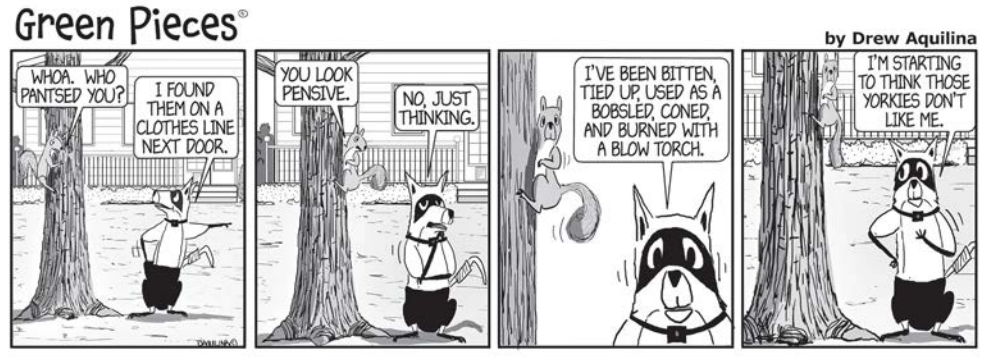
Today, Miller is focusing on going to college and, of course, writing music. "My plan is to always write music. I'm trying to get a band to start touring again, but I will continue to go to college and have a 'back up plan'," said Miller. To listen to Forever in My Arms, visit soundcloud.com/ontgomeryillerontyy/forever-in-my-hands.

COMICS

WHITE & BLACK • **"Work All Day and Party All Night"** • st.edo@cullmansense.com











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CULLMANSENSE

Christmas (from Front)

portant for the Wellness Center to do its part to help out those less fortunate."

Everett said the outpouring of support this year was expected but he said the staff was shocked with how many residents came out to help Cullman Caring for Kids.

"It's truly amazing when you walk in the conference room just a couple of hours into the event and seeing the table completely covered, in multiple layers, of canned goods and other food items," he said.

"It just shows you how much the residents here are willing to give year-round, not just at the holidays. So thank you all for the amazing turnout!"



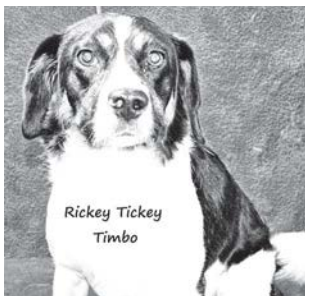
PETS OF THE WEEK

DESPERAUX



Hello my name is Desperaux and I am about 3 years old. I am a Dachshund/Beagle mix. I am available for adoption at this time. My adoption fee is $90 and that includes my spay/neuter, vaccines, wormer, and also covers my general exam at the Vet, the rabies vaccine, microchip, free 45 day health insurance policy and our local Pet Depot will give you a free bag of food (you pay the taxes) in support of you adopting a Shelter animal. That is an incredible deal and I will give you a lifetime of love!

RICKEY TICKEY TIMBO



Hello my name is Rickey Ticky Timbo and I am about 3 year old. I am a Spaniel Mix and I currently weigh 28 lbs. I am full of life and I love to play. My adoption fee is $90 and that covers my first set of vaccines and wormer at the Shelter. It also covers my general exam at the Vet, the rabies vaccine, spay, microchip, free 45 day health insurance policy. Pet Depot will give you a free bag of food (you pay the taxes) in support of adopting me.

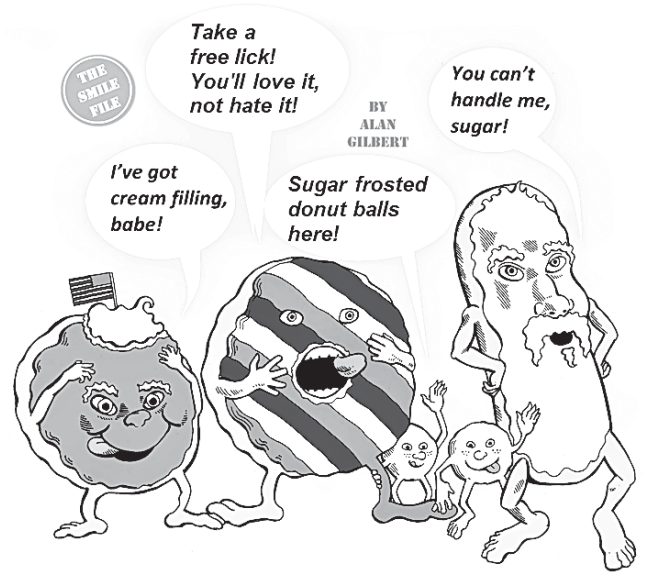
ADOPT THESE PETS TODAY

Both of these dogs have an adoption fee of $90 that will include their general exam at the Vet, vaccines, wormer, rabies shot, microchip, spay/neuter, and free 45 days of pet health insurance. Pet Depot will give you a bag of food (you pay taxes) as their way of supporting adoption.

If you know the owner of either dog or if you are interested in adopting one of the dogs, please call 256-734-5448 or come by the Animal Shelter.

EDITORIAL CARTOON

Ariana Grande Had *Her Say*.
Now The Donuts Fight Back:



HOW ARE WE DOING?

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

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OPINION

A COLLEGE EDUCATION INSTEAD OF MINDLESS MILITARIZATION

Adam Vogal
PeaceVoice

As the United States military continues to sell the idea of joining its ranks to high school students throughout the nation as the best way for many poor students to get financing for college, the will to create true social responsibility for our nation's underserved and underprivileged children is getting further out of reach.

Many democratic governments throughout Europe offer their children a free college education.

Some, like Denmark, even pay their children a living allowance of around $1000 to go to college. In South America, the government of Brazil offers its students a free college education.

The United States, conversely, charges students exorbitant fees for education which has forced many poorer students to either join the military and utilize the GI Bill or take out huge loans in order to go to college.

In the richest country in the world, for the people in the poor districts throughout America, the only possibility of a free college education comes with the costs of possible loss of life, possible disfiguring injury, possible increases in mental illnesses like PTSD, increased incidences of suicide both during and after military service, and if you're a female, possible sexual harassment and increased incidences of rape.

Why can countries like Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Brazil and others send their students to college for free while American students have to choose between a continued existence in poverty and debt, or death on the battlefield, the increased possibility of rape, and/or higher incidence of mental illnesses if they want a college education?

The reason is actually quite clear if you compare America to the other countries that offer free education.

Unlike those countries, America has a failed economic and political system that favors enriching the elites behind the Military Industrial Complex over ensuring that America has a well-educated populace free from the necessities of wasteful spending that war making creates.

Unlike the common sense shown in other countries, our representatives choose the military over education every year when they make the federal budget.

According to National-Priorites.org, the American taxpayers will spend $598.5 billion of the discretionary spending on the military in 2015 while only spending $70 billion on education.

This is 54 percent of the total discretionary budget going to the Military Industrial Complex and only 6 percent going to educate our children.

Only 6 percent is going toward building a future that has an educated people to run it.

Only 6 percent being used to ensure that our people are educated and able to find work in a struggling economy.

Only 6 percent is being spent to ensure that American children have a brighter future.

An economic system that gives children the choice between remaining in poverty and being indoctrinated into a kill and maim or be killed and maimed situation is a very broken system.

Priorities are clearly out of place when these are the only choices poorer American children have if they want to have the better future gained through a college education. In the land of plenty, that our children have to choose between these pitiable choices is both atrocious and deplorable.

Have Americans really become so complacent that they will let this injustice to our children continue indefinitely? I, for one, sure hope not.

Adam Vogal, Associate Editor of PeaceVoice, is a Conflict Resolution master's candidate at Portland State University.

OPINION

THEY'RE OFF AND RUNNING

Lee H. Hamilton
Contributor

The presidential election is 16 months away, but already we're smack in the middle of the usual media scrum of campaign coverage, prognostication, and strategizing by many of us who have nothing much to do with the real campaigns. I've been following the rhetoric of both parties, and there are a few points that stand out enough to tell us something about what we have to look forward to.

To begin, the country is not in a sunny mood. The website Real Clear Politics keeps a running average of various polls, and its average of questions asking what Americans think of the country's direction shows some 62 percent believe we're headed in the wrong direction. That's not an all-time high — the figure was up in the 80s in the weeks before the 2008 election, and stood at 76.5 percent in October of 2011 — but it suggests that the electorate is in a wary mood.

There is a sense that America is adrift, that we don't quite know how to deal with the forces of globalization, technological change, economic uncertainty, or terrorism. Americans are looking for a leader who can restore confidence.

The economy in particular weighs on ordinary Americans' minds. There's widespread agreement that the growing economy has done very little to help people of ordinary income — not just in recent years, but really for the past generation.

Americans may feel better about the economy now than they did a few years ago, but that hasn't lessened their long-term anxiety that it's harder than ever to get ahead, and certainly harder than it was in their parents' generation.

Still, the improving economy may be responsible for one interesting aspect of the campaign: Republicans thus far have made national security a centerpiece issue — perhaps responding to polling that shows that Republican voters consider it a key factor in deciding among the plethora of GOP candidates.

This emphasis could change with world events, but right now candidates are pressing the argument that President Obama is not tough enough when it comes to foreign policy; they don't think highly of his leadership in the world, and in particular want to see more of a military buildup. It's a little less clear what they want to do with that military power.

Of course, national security and terrorism aren't the only issues that figure prominently in the Republicans' array of issues. So do the budget deficit, cutting taxes, and, as always, pulling back on the reach of government.

They want to eliminate Obamacare as well as to cut Medicaid, move Medicare to a voucher system, repeal the estate tax, cut domestic programs, roll back financial reform and efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions, and eliminate further consumer protections.

For the Democrats, meanwhile, addressing income inequality, maintaining social security and other entitlements, improving the country's decaying infrastructure, job creation, college costs, immigration and energy reform, and climate change all loom large.

They want to preserve Obamacare, move forward on climate change, retain taxes on high-income earners, and preserve the financial reforms of the last decade.

The stark differences in priorities between Republicans and Democrats will probably be exacerbated by the primaries.

Despite agreement on the general sense of unease among the population at large, just reciting the parties' rhetorical positions suggests there will be a huge gulf between the parties, with no agreement on how to bridge it.

The campaign will be characterized by heavy emphasis on the impact of money on the process, and by record-breaking spending by the candidates.

So with no incumbent president, a large number of candidates, no clear favorite, and major differences in outlook on which issues to address and how to address them, this will be in the grand American political tradition a lively, contentious, long, expensive, maybe even pivotal election.

Who gets to answer the biggest questions we face — the appropriate U.S. role in the world, what the reach and purpose of government should be, which path will best secure Americans' prosperity and world peace — is up for grabs. We've got an interesting election ahead as a nation. I'm looking forward to it. I hope you are, too.

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University; Distinguished Scholar, IU School of Global and International Studies; and Professor of Practice, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

CULLMAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

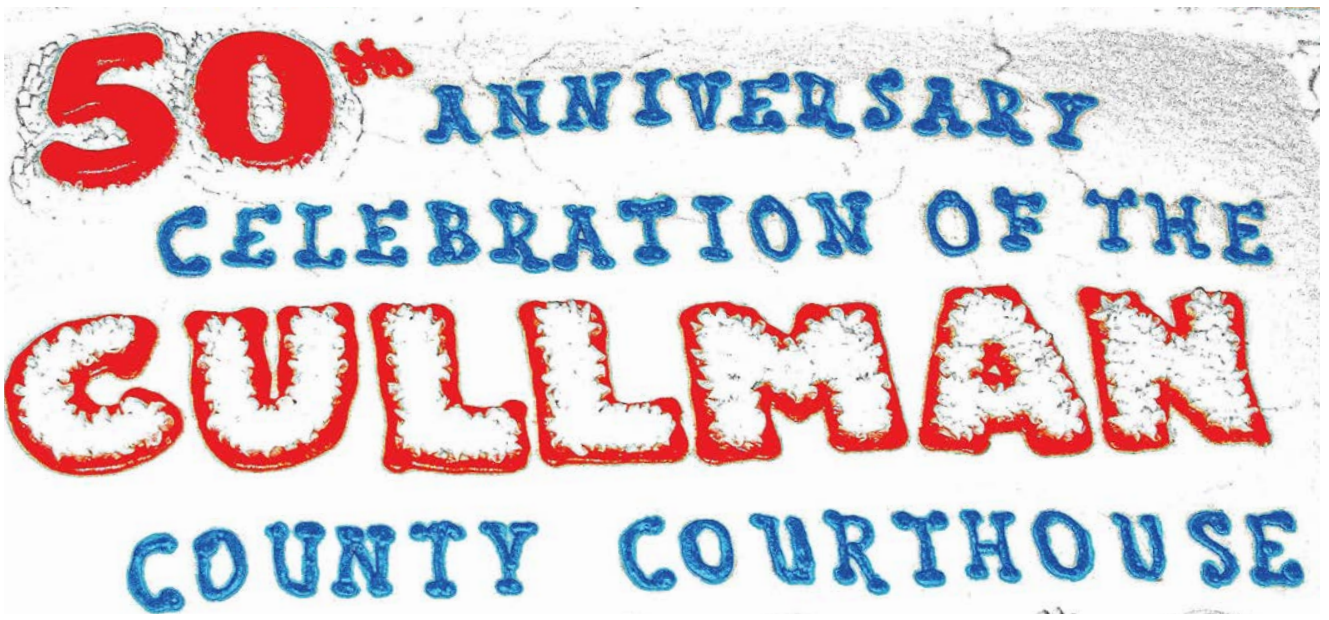
Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN – On Tuesday, July 7, 2015, residents and officials from throughout Cullman County gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Cullman County Courthouse. The group met on the Courthouse steps to celebrate the occasion and listen to a variety of officials. Before and after the ceremony the Cullman Brass band played patriotic music. Afterward, refreshments were served, and attendees were encouraged to view the historical time capsule that was on display just inside the doorway.

"On July 3, 1965, the Courthouse was dedicated to serve Cullman County," said Kenneth Walker, Cullman County Commission Chairman. "Since then much has changed, not only the Courthouse but the county itself. In 1965 the population was 46,000, and there were 1,346 miles of road – and only 525 miles of those roads were paved. The major companies were King Parr Canning, Golden Rod Broilers, Cullman Lingerie, Bennett's, Westinghouse, Alabama Box Company and Cullman Products."

"Fifty years later over 81,000 people live in Cullman County with over 50 major industries calling Cullman County home," he continued. "We're number one in Alabama for broiler production, egg production, cattle and hay and number two in sweet potatoes."

"We (city officials) have come and gone, but the Courthouse stays," said Senator Paul Bussman. "And the Courthouse stays because it is the cornerstone of Cullman County. It is where justice is served. This is where people are treated fairly. This is where people can come and find a solution to problems. This is where we collect taxes. It is so important that we maintain the cornerstone of Cullman County. It's so important that we maintain justice. It's so important that we treat everybody equal. And it's so important that we remember this has been here for 50 years. And we need to be here 50 more years to be able to tell our children and their children and grandchildren that what is here is good. What is here is right. What is here is just."



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

People from all over Cullman County celebrate the Cullman County Courthouse's 50th anniversary.

With three stories and a basement, the current Cullman County Courthouse is by far the largest to date. Made of shiny white marble, the $1.5 million building's final inspection was passed in February of 1965, and immediately offices were transferred to the new building. Dedication ceremonies were held on July 3, 1965. U.S. Senator John Sparkman, U.S. Representative James D. Martin, and former U.S. Representative Carl Elliott delivered speeches during the event.

The Cullman County Courthouse took a beating in 2011 when massive tornados trashed the area. Despite all the destruction and devastation, the citizens of Cullman County came together and cleaned up the city. Since then many homes and businesses have been rebuilt and reestablished. As for the Courthouse, repairs were made, and bright red bricks replaced the old white marble. The Courthouse has stood the test of time looks to serve the community for the foreseeable future.

COWBOYS BBQ: BRINGING BARBECUE TO VINEMONT

Will Hogue
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VINEMONT – Cowboys BBQ, a restaurant that opened on January 1 in the shadow of the Vinemont red and white striped water tower, is bringing a new wrinkle to the barbecue scene in Cullman.

According to owner, Jerry Siegel, establishments in Cullman don't have 'real' pulled pork.

"They call it pulled pork, but I don't call it pulled pork. They have chunks of meat, including fat in it," Siegel said. "I think we have the best." He continued, referring to his restaurant, Cowboys BBQ.

The restaurant is more like a stand-alone drive through, the barbecue equivalent to the shaved ice shop, Sno-Biz, which is in downtown Cullman. Siegel said he purchased the building, which is a converted storage building, and modified it to make it compliant with food preparation guidelines.

Siegel has had a barbecue restaurant before. When he lived in Mississippi he ran a similar operation on the grounds of a Piggly Wiggly that his friend owned. When his friend went bankrupt and new ownership of the Piggly Wiggly increased the rent, Siegel was unable to keep his restaurant running.

He had friends who lived in Cullman, however, and that is who he has partnered with to open the new business. Siegel moved to Cullman mainly to run this restaurant.

When asked when he began cooking and preparing food, Siegel said, "I've been cooking ever since I was old enough."

Siegel says that the patronization of his restaurant improves every week. "We had a real good Fourth of July weekend," Siegel said. He went on to say that as word of mouth spreads news of his business, more people come to give it a try.

"Word of mouth has been our only advertising. And there really isn't much in the way of eating out here [in Vinemont]," Siegel said.

There are two ways to order food at Cowboys BBQ, one can walk up to the walk-up window at the small porch attached to the building, or one can drive up to a separate window on the side of the building.

There is one picnic table for sitting at, but Siegel says he wants to have canopies and more seating available in the future. "I wish I would've done this 11 years ago," Siegel said. "I could have several [restaurants] scattered around by now."



WILL HOGUE/CULLMANSENSE

Business partner Teak Baker prepares some ribs to be cooked while her granddaughter watches.



WILL HOGUE/CULLMANSENSE

Owner Jerry Siegel prepares his famed brisket.

Along with producing what he calls, "real pulled pork," which is devoid of pieces of fat and much stringier than other local dishes, Siegel heralds his brisket as the best in town.

"I think Jim 'N Nicks is the only other place that has [brisket]."

Siegel says to come and give his restaurant a try. It's a different kind of barbecue experience for Cullman that might also mean better.

Confessions (from Front)

from a wide range of topics; everything from confessions of love, heartbreak, depression and anger can all be found on the page's Timeline. "The page was started as a fun way for people to let out all of their feelings without the fear of being directly criticized for how they feel," said 'Inferno'.

The administrators have had to deal with a few cases of cyber-bullying as well as suicidal thoughts. "I created it to be a fun page," says page creator, 'Wicked Witch', "We also try [to] help those that say they are suicidal. If we can help one person a day, that helps us." "We all have that desire to help other people out no matter the situation. Each of our administrators have gone through a lot in our personal lives, and if we can help just one person through a difficult situation then it is a win in my book," explained 'Inferno'.

The page is intended for users of 19 years of age or older due to profanity and mature content.

To leave a confession or read through others' confessions, like the Facebook page at facebook.com/pages/Cullman-Confessions/512922705453519.