SERIES 6 • ISSUE 1 • JANUARY 4, 2016
CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS


CRMC

CRMC'S ONE REHAB EXTENDS HOURS P10


WILL HOGUE/CULLMANSENSE

REGISTER FOR SPRING SEMESTER NOW AT
WALLACESTATE.EDU
BE ONE OF US

ESCAPED BLOUNT COUNTY INMATE APPREHENDED JUST MILES FROM JAIL

Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

BLOUNT COUNTY – The inmate who escaped from the Blount County Jail Saturday evening has been caught. He was apprehended less than 12 hours after escaping, just miles from the jail.

Justin MacNeill, who was being held at the facility on murder charges, was last seen around 5:10 p.m. Saturday evening. MacNeill, a 6'1" white male weighing 195 pounds, was apprehended at 2:03 a.m. Sunday morning.

According to our media partner WBRC FOX 6, MacNeill is accused of killing 51-year-old Myron Brian Beavers with an axe in Blountsville back in July.

Officer Tim Kent with the Blount County Sheriff's Department confirms he kicked a fire door open to gain P3


Justin MacNeill CONTRIBUTED

ART FAULKNER, STATE EMA DIRECTOR, ADDRESSES AUDIENCE IN CULLMAN- DISCUSSES STORM DAMAGE P12

FOUR ARRESTS MADE IN JOPPA POST OFFICE BURGLARY P2

HAPPY NEW YEAR – BUT WHAT'S UP WITH THE BABY? P5


CHRIS PETTIT

RELIGIOUS SPOTLIGHT

CHRIS PETTIT, DEVELOPMENT PASTOR AT LIFE CHURCH P7

SIGN-UPS UNDERWAY FOR CP&R'S SPRING 2016 PROGRAMS P6

CLARKSON COVERED BRIDGE PARK REMAINS TEMPORARILY CLOSED




Large amounts of water flooded Clarkson Covered Bridge Park during the Christmas 2015 rains. PHOTOS COURTESY FACEBOOK/CLARKSON COVERED BRIDGE P6

UPDATE: ASSESSMENT OF CULLMAN'S FLOOD DAMAGE

Will Hogue
will@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Cullman and its surrounding areas are still recovering following the floods of Christmas week. According to John Lang, head engineer at the Cullman County Road Department, there were 75 roads and/or bridges that were completely impassable when the storms first hit.

As of New Year's Eve, all Cullman County roads have been reopened, according to the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. In town, portions of Larkwood Drive and surrounding streets near Larkwood Falls remain closed.

"My initial projection for the damages caused by the storm was $526,000," said Lang.

Lang thinks that now, however, that number seems very low.

Lang said that there were a couple of situations that caused people to be stuck because roads on either side of them were flooded.

"The hardest hit areas of the county are the northeast part of the county and the south of the county, near Arkadelphia," Lang said.

He also said that the main thing that is needed now is patience from the residents of Cullman.

"We expect to get everything as close to as it was before the storms and repaired, but it won't be overnight. I estimate it will take about six months, so please bear with us and be patient."

As far as P12

JOIN SEN. RICHARD SHELBY FOR BREAKFAST AND A WASHINGTON UPDATE

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com


Sen. Richard Shelby will be in Cullman on Tuesday, Jan. 5. SHELBY.SENATE.GOV

CULLMAN – The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce will host a breakfast with special guest U. S. Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala. on Tuesday, Jan. 5 at 7:45 a.m. at the All Steak Restaurant, where the senator will give an update on Washington, D.C.

"As the largest business organization in our area, the Chamber serves as a lead advocate for business issues, representing the interests of business to local, state and federal governmental leaders," said Leah Bolin, president of the Chamber. "The Chamber works closely with the City of Cullman, the Cullman County Commission, local school P7

PRINTED LOCALLY @ PRINTING Alabama Web Press

FOUR ARRESTS MADE IN JOPPA POST OFFICE BURGLARY

Bradley Williams
Cullman County Sheriff's Office

CULLMAN – On Monday, Dec. 28, the Cullman County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) arrested Andrew Cleveland Rogers, 28, of Arab, Tessa Jean McCay, 24, of Vinemont and Brett Michael Baker, 34, of Albertville for burglary of the Joppa post office.

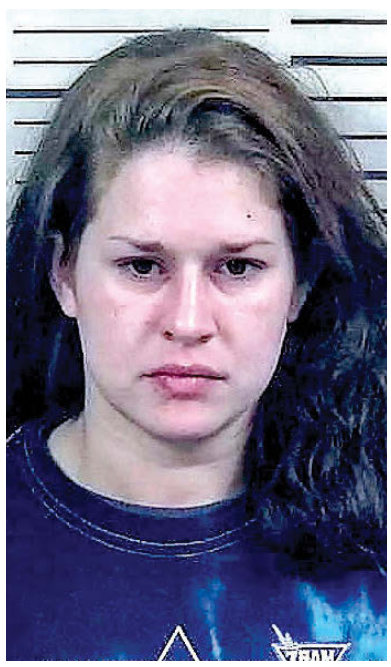
A joint investigation between the CCSO and U.S. postal inspectors revealed that at about 3 a.m. on Dec. 28, the suspects traveled to the Joppa post office. Once there, the suspects broke the south-side lobby window with a hammer. The suspects then entered the post office where they used a crowbar to pry open the door leading into the mail storage/sorting area.

Once inside, the suspects used the crowbar to force open the safe.

They then removed one HP computer and HP monitor, a cash register, two hand-held postal scanners, cash, U.S. postage stamps, U.S. postal money orders and assorted mail and packages.



Brett Michael Baker



Tessa Jean McCay



Clay Austin Parker



Andrew Cleveland Rogers

CCSO

While responding to an unrelated incident a few hours later, CCSO obtained information identifying the suspects as persons of interest in the post office burglary.

Additional investigation by CCSO investigators established probable cause to obtain a search warrant for a residence located on County Road 1838.

A subsequent search of the residence resulted in the recovery of the computer monitor, hand-held postal scanners, numerous postal money orders and hundreds of dollars of U.S. postage stamps that were taken in the burglary.

McCay and Baker have both been arrested and charged with third-degree burglary and are currently being held at the Cullman County Detention Center, each on $5,000 bond.

Rogers has been arrested and charged with third-degree burglary, third-degree domestic violence and unlawful possession of a controlled substance.

Another suspect, Clay Austin Parker, 34, of Arab, was arrested on Dec. 28 by the Huntsville Police Department on unrelated charges and is pending extradition to Cullman County Detention Center.

"I would like to commend the investigators and deputies for their hard work in solving this case in less than 24 hours," said Sheriff Matt Gentry.

"We also appreciate the assistance we received from the United States postal inspectors," added Gentry.

There may be additional suspects and charges pending.

POLAR BEARS PLUNGED ON JAN. 2

WELLNESS AND AQUATIC CENTER'S SECOND ANNUAL COMMUNITY WELLNESS DAY DRAWS BIG CROWD

Will Hogue
will@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – On Saturday, Cullman Parks and Recreation (CP&R) held its second annual Community Wellness Day at the Wellness and Aquatic Center (CWAC), complete with the popular Polar Bear Plunge.

"It is a great chance for us to help everyone get on board with their New Year's resolutions," said CP&R Marketing, Programs and Events Coordinator, Waid Harbison.

In years past, CWAC held a Polar Bear Plunge along with the Frosty 5k race. Harbison said, for efficiency's sake, the Frosty 5k was scrapped and Wellness Day was introduced two years ago.

The Polar Bear Plunge is still a part of the New Year's event, along with free admission to all of CWAC's facilities and an on-site health fair.

"Being free to the public is good for the community because it allows those who may not be able to afford to have memberships to come and see the facility and use it," Harbison said.

The health fair was given a boost this year with the addition of two retailers new to Cullman: Dick's Sporting Goods and Publix.

"We had much better vendors in the health fair this year, much better participants," Harbison said. "We had the hospital here conducting blood pressure tests and some of our trainers here giving advice."

Wellness Day is, according to Harbison, CWAC's biggest yearly event.

"Last year we broke our single-day record for memberships with 76 new sign-ups. I'm pretty sure we broke it again this year with 80, 90 or maybe even more memberships," Harbison said.

On Wellness Day new members get a $50 discount on their memberships.

According to Harbison, attendance at the event was way up this year.

"As with any event, the more people start to find out about it and the better we get with it, the more people will come," he said.

Harbison estimates that between 2,000 - 3,000 people were there.

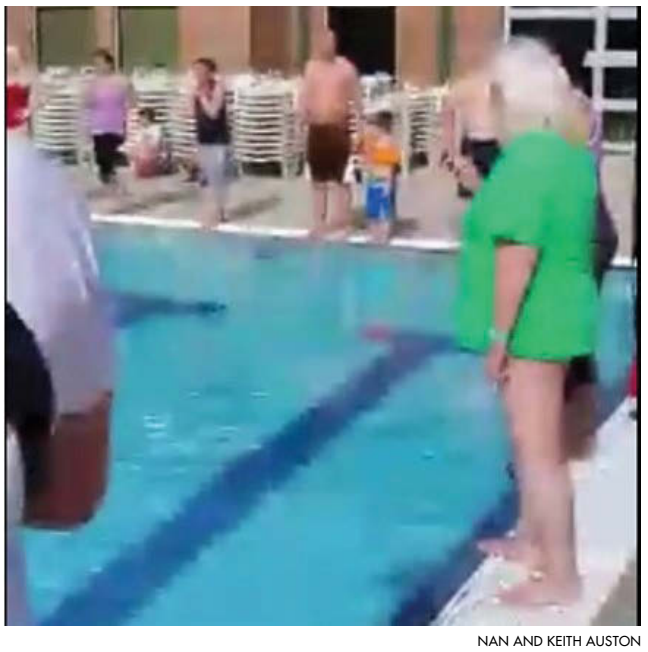
The Polar Bear Plunge went well, according to Harbison. There were 55 participants in the plunge, which featured warmer water than usual at 46 degrees.

"That's cold, but not close to our coldest ever of 27 degrees," said Harbison.

Of the 55 participants, one won a free year-long family membership to CWAC through a random drawing.

Harbison says that Community Wellness Day will always be held on the first Saturday of January.

"This event will continue to go on and will grow in the years to come," he said.



NAN AND KEITH AUSTON

Local resident Nan Auston prepares to take the Polar Bear Plunge.

Your protection is personal.

Get a quote today from:



Martha A Burchell
Burchell Ins Agency Inc
(256)737-7450
burchem@nationwide.com

Auto. Home. Life. Business.

Nationwide®
is on your side

Products underwritten by Nationwide Mutual Company and Affiliated Companies, Columbus, Ohio. Subject to underwriting guidelines, review and approval. Nationwide and the Nationwide N and Eagle are service marks of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. NPO-0194M1.1 (09/14)

FARMERS STILL GROUNDED WITH FAA REGISTRATION RULE

A.J. Watson
Contributor

MONTGOMERY – Farmers interested in using unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) will have to wait a little longer despite the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA's) recent announcement of web-based aircraft registration for drone technology.

The Alabama Farmers Federation's Carla Hornady said the rule only applies to hobbyists and for recreational drone use.

"We think this is a step in the right direction, but the largest beneficiary from UAS technology—the business sector— is stalled on the ground," said Hornady, Cotton, Soybean and Wheat & Feed Grains divisions director.

"Farmers have an excellent track record when caring for their livestock, their land and their communities, and the same applies to U.S. airways."

The new registration rule applies to UAS weighing over 0.55 pounds and less than 55 pounds including payloads such as on-board cameras.

The registration process may clear the way for UAS to be used for agriculture in the future, Hornady said, noting the technology remains banned for most commercial uses.

Few Alabama farmers have touched the control sticks due to the FAA's usage limits.

Lee County farmer Mitch Lazenby said he's glad UAS rules are becoming clearer, but hopes regulations don't become invasive.

"I think the registration isn't that bad," he said.

"If all we have to do is register so they know who's using the technology, that's fine. UAS are very beneficial tools. I think people need to know where they are, because they could also be misused. On the front end, it's very benign and basic, but I'm also cautious about how the information could be used in the future."

Under the rule, any owner of a small UAS who operated a model aircraft prior to Dec. 21, 2015, must register no later than Feb. 19, 2016.

Owners of any UAS purchased after Dec. 21, 2015 must register before the first flight outdoors.

Owners may use either the paper-based process or the new web-based system at www.faa.gov/uas/registration.

Owners using the online system must be at least 13 years old to register.

The FAA is developing enhancements that should allow for business registrations by spring of 2016.

"Make no mistake: unmanned aircraft enthusiasts are aviators, and with that title comes a great deal of responsibility," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

"Registration gives us an opportunity to work with these users to operate their unmanned aircraft safely. I'm excited to welcome these new aviators into the culture of safety and responsibility that defines American innovation."

Registrants will need to provide their name, home address and email address.

Upon registration completion, the web application will generate proof of ownership that will include a unique identification number for the UAS owner, which must be marked on the aircraft.

Owners using the model aircraft for hobby or recreation will only have to register once and may use the same identification number for all of their model UAS.

The registration is valid for three years.

The normal registration fee is $5, but the FAA is waiving the fee for the first 30 days (from Dec. 21, 2015 to Jan. 20, 2016).

ADPH OFFERS INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS WITH SEPTIC TANKS AND PRIVATE WELLS DURING FLOODS

Thad Pittman
Contributor

MONTGOMERY – During heavy rains and floods such as those currently being experienced in Alabama, the ground can become saturated. Residents who use an onsite sewage disposal system (a septic tank system) may be experiencing performance problems due to these rain-soaked conditions. Also, those who depend on well water are advised to take caution.

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) offers the following suggestions for septic system owners:

• Limit water usage when possible by reducing toilet flushing, dishwashing, clothes washing and showering.

• Consider laundering at commercial establishments, as this will significantly reduce the demand on private systems.

• Inspect disposal areas for depressions where rainwater ponding may occur. Adding soil to these depressions will aid in surface drainage.

• Inspect roof draining and gutters to ensure that rainwater runoff is diverted away from the disposal area.

• Consider having septic tank pumped out. This may provide temporary relief and may help with maintenance for long-term system performance. (ADPH recommends having septic tanks pumped out every three - five years to eliminate sludge buildup.)

After weather conditions improve, the septic systems should return to normal functioning.

Residents who continue to experience problems with their septic systems should contact their local health department environmentalist for assistance.

Signs that a septic system is not working properly include the following:

• Sinks drain slowly

• Toilets drain slowly

• Floor drains overflow

• Sewage becomes visible outside the home

Precautions related to septic systems include:

• Avoid contact with any septic system electrical devices until they are dry and clean.

• Do not pump out the septic tank more than halfway or the tank may float out of the ground.

• Reduce all nonessential water use (for example, dishwashing, clothes washing, showering).

• Flush toilets as little as possible or use a temporary toilet.

If residents suspect septic system damage, they are advised to get systems professionally inspected and serviced.

ADPH well water precautions:

• Severe flooding can put drinking water wells at increased risk for contamination from floodwater that may contain sewage.

Avoid contact with any standing water that may contain sewage. Persons in areas where there may have been flash floods should test their private water wells before consuming water from them.

• Private wells that have been covered by flood water should be assumed to have been contaminated. Do not drink water from your well or feed it to your animals until you have tested it and have received a satisfactory test result.

• Sample kits may be obtained from local health departments and state health department laboratories, which are equipped to sample well water for bacteriological contamination. Once a satisfactory sample is obtained, the well should be monitored by continued sampling to ensure the quality of the water supply.

• Until water is known to be free of contaminants, residents should only use clear water which has been brought to a full boil for one minute.

Cullman residents are advised to contact the Cullman County Health Department for well water sample kits or for a list of septic system contractors who work in the Cullman area.

The Cullman County Health Department is located at 601 Logan Ave. S.W. Contact them at 256-734-1030 or http://www.adph.org/cullman.

Inmate (from Front)

outside access.

"There was a ladder outside, and he put it up against the fence and went over," said Officer Kent.

Kent explained the ladder was left by someone who was doing some maintenance to the outside of the correctional facility.

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



FACEBOOK.COM/
CULLMANSENSE

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



CULLMAN, FAIRVIEW GIRLS CLOSE OUT YULE TIDE CLASSIC WITH WINS

Johnny Thornton
Sports Correspondent

HANCEVILLE – Even though the Cullman Bearcats and Fairview Lady Aggies didn't claim a championship trophy in the 4th annual Mitch Smith Yule Tide Basketball Classic Wednesday, both teams ended the 2015 portion of their schedule with solid performances to be victorious.

Both prevailed in the fifth place game at Tom Drake Coliseum. Cullman shook off a double digit deficit in the first quarter to top Holly Pond 73-58.

That came after the Fairview Lady Aggies downed Priceville 60-51 in the early afternoon.

Both went 2-1 in the tournament, finishing with consecutive victories after falling in the opening round on Monday.

Cullman got caught by a Holly Pond blitz with the Broncos ahead 11-0 before the Bearcats scored their first field goal of the contest. Cullman stayed close, trailing 23-14 when the period came to a close.

In the second, the Bearcats got hot while the Broncos struggled. Cullman went on a 23-6 spurt and took a 37-29 lead to the locker room.

The second half was highlighted by senior Seth Swalve.

Swalve got free for 23 points in the final two quarters and had the best performance of the tournament, a game high 35 points.

Cullman led 52-45 going to the fourth and tallied 21 points in the final period to finish with a double digit win after trailing by double digits less than halfway into the opening quarter.

Supporting the 35 points from Swalve was Gage Goodwin with 15, Jacob Heatherly 10 and Nick Handley eight.

Holly Pond was led by Matt Cahoon with 19, Bailey Smith 12, Caleb Jones nine, Drew Jones and Landen Walker seven.

The Bearcats enter January with a 12-4 record while the Broncos are 13-4. These two have another meeting, January 30 on the campus of Cullman High School.

Fairview blitzed the basket with a 20-point first period, hitting four shots from long distance.

Three came by Jada Golden and the Lady Aggies were ahead of Priceville 20-6 when the period ended.

Priceville made a comeback and narrowed to 29-26 late in the second. It was time for a three from Golden to give Fairview a 32-26 edge at the half and momentum they needed to put away the Lady Bulldogs.

Ahead 48-43 after the third, the Lady Aggies were able to mix in good free throw shooting with Golden's fifth trey of the game and two shots in the paint by Abbi Taylor to keep Priceville at arms length.

Taylor would score 16 in this fifth place contest with Golden getting 15 and Taylor Yeager 12.

Skyler Benson's 17 was the high for Priceville with Kathleen Wheeler scoring 13.

Fairview improved to 14-4 while Priceville entered the New Year at 11-6.

Athens Lady Golden Eagles defeated Cullman 61-43 in the third place game. Cullman was down 13-8 after the opening frame and stayed close, trailing 28-21 at halftime.

But Athens was too strong in the second half, moving the lead to 47-32 heading into the final period of play.

Jakayla Bridgeforth tossed in 23 for the No. 8 team from Class 6A who is 16-3 on the season. Leading Cullman was Taiya Ponder with 14 and Christina Skinner 10.

WEST POINT CHRISTMAS TOURNAMENT WRAPS UP

Josh McBrayer
Sports Correspondent

WEST POINT – The annual West Point Christmas Tournament concluded Tuesday with four match-ups.

FAIRVIEW 72, RA HUBBARD 74

Both Fairview and RA Hubbard shot well in the first quarter, matching each other shot for shot. The only difference in the quarter was a buzzer beating three-point basket by Tyler Ball that gave Fairview an 18-17 advantage after one.

The second quarter was as close as close could be with both teams putting up impressive shooting performances. When the dust had settled the Aggies and the Chiefs were knotted at 35 heading to the half. The third quarter was won by the RA Hubbard Chiefs thanks in large part to a 12-2 run midway through the period. Fairview was able to cut into the lead, finishing the quarter on a 4-0 run but still trailed by seven heading into the fourth.

The fourth was a back and forth affair with the lead changing hands on each and every possession down the floor. With 22.8 seconds left to play and down by two, Austin Fletcher tipped in a Fairview miss to knot the game at 65.

The Chiefs hustled the ball down the floor and took a timeout with 7.7 seconds on the clock in regulation, looking to set up a winning play.

As the teams returned to the floor, it was Fairview who called a timeout to set up their defense and tried to force overtime by taking a long inbounds play and not giving the Chiefs a good look at the hoop. As in the previous four quarters, the action was back and forth in the overtime period. Fairview knocked down a huge three with 20.4 seconds left in OT to tie the game at 72.

With just 10.3 seconds left, RA Hubbard's Orr knocked down a pair of game-winning free throws to give the Chiefs the 74-72 win.

DANVILLE 48, LAWRENCE COUNTY 35

The Lawrence County Red Devils were overmatched in the second game on day three of the West Point Christmas Tournament. They fought hard for the entire 32 minutes but ultimately fell to the Hawks of Danville by the final score of 48-35.

WEST POINT 50, PRICEVILLE 73

In the most highly anticipated matchup of the day and arguably the entire tournament, West Point and Priceville locked horns in game number three of day three and it was a matchup that did not disappoint.

The action was fast and furious in the opening stanza. It was filled with steals and fast breaks, long range threes and short range jumpers and a plethora of ties and lead changes. Much to the chagrin of West Point, it was Priceville who hit the last bucket and took a 19-17 advantage after one. The second quarter was much like the first. Nine lead changes and two ties layer, the West Point Warriors and Priceville Bulldogs were all even at 34 heading to the halftime break.

To no one's surprise, the third quarter was just as evenly matched as the first two but it was the outside shooting of Priceville late in the quarter, with back to back threes, that gave them a five-point advantage going to the fourth. The Bulldogs quickly extended their lead to seven with a lay-up to start the fourth, prompting a timeout from the Warriors. Out of the break, Priceville scored the next five to extend the run to 7-0 and put West Point in a 12-point hole.

The Warriors had a tough time getting anything going in the fourth while Priceville continued to pour in points. The Warriors fell 73-50.

GOOD HOPE 51, BREWER 69

After missing the first day of the West Point Christmas Tournament, the Brewer Patriots were determined to make up for lost time, and they did just that when they downed the Good Hope Raiders in the final game.

The Raiders just could not seem to get anything going on the night, and they never got closer than 11 points after the first quarter, falling to Brewer 69-51. However, it was Good Hope that would have the last laugh as they claimed the trophy for the best record of teams from Cullman County, beating out Fairview and the host, the West Point Warriors.

Cullman County first place: Good Hope Raiders

Non-County first place: Danville Hawks

PREP BASKETBALL SCORING WRAP-UP

YULE TIDE CLASSIC

BOYS

Newton (GA) 75, Winfield 54
Holly Pond 59, Athens 64
Cullman 55, North Panola (MS) 56
Thompson 59, West Morgan 48
Holly Pond 80, West Morgan 72
Newton (GA) 73, North Panola (MS) 33
Thompson 49, Athens 40
Cullman 69, Winfield 60
West Morgan 64, Winfield 49
Cullman 73, Holly Pond 58
Newton (GA) 72, Thompson 50

Newton wins championship
JD Notae of Newton (GA) MVP

GIRLS

Cullman 58, Brooks 32
Arab 61, Priceville 40
Fairview 53, Thompson 59
Athens 41, West Morgan 40
Priceville 55, West Morgan 45
Fairview 50, Brooks 19
Thompson 68, Cullman 47
Arab 62, Athens 55
West Morgan 71, Brooks 40
Athens 61, Cullman 43
Fairview 60, Priceville 51
Arab 38, Thompson 37

Arab wins championship
Shyan Flack of Arab MVP

WEST POINT CHRISTMAS TOURNAMENT

Danville 52, Fairview 49
Good Hope 60, Lawrence County 49
Priceville 70, RA Hubbard 46
Fairview 72, RA Hubbard 74
Danville 48, Lawrence County 35
West Point 50, Priceville 73
Good Hope 51, Brewer 69

Good Hope wins best record trophy for Cullman County teams

Danville wins best record trophy for non-county teams

PREP BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

JANUARY 4 - 8

All games to start at 6 p.m. for girls and 7:30 p.m. for boys

MONDAY
Holly Pond @ West Point

TUESDAY
Cold Springs @ Falkville
Cullman @ Decatur
Fairview @ Russellville
Good Hope @ Oneonta
Holly Pond @ Vinemont
St. Bernard @ Whiteburg
West Point @ Hanceville

THURSDAY
St. Bernard @ Athens Bible
Vinemont @ West End

FRIDAY
Cold Springs @ Gardendale
Fairview @ West Point
Good Hope @ JB Pennington
St. Bernard @ Brilliant
Vinemont @ Hanceville



HAPPY NEW YEAR – BUT WHAT'S UP WITH THE BABY?

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Now that all the parties and celebrations are over and a brand new year is in full swing, we can all settle down and concentrate on fulfilling all those New Year's resolutions. But here's a question (or two): Who exactly is Baby New Year and where did he came from?

Baby New Year, the chubby little tyke, is normally seen all over the place on New Year's Eve.

Always dressed for the occasion, he wears nothing more than a sash representing the new year across his chest, a diaper and either a top hat or party hat on top of his head.

The most curious thing about Baby New Year is how quickly he grows up.

By the end of the year he has morphed into an elderly man with a full white beard, Father Time, and represents the year that is coming to an end. That is when he passes his duties to the next Baby New Year.

According to legend, the custom of using a baby to depict the beginning of New Year began in Greece around 600 BC.

Back then the Greeks honored Dionysus, their God of Wine, by parading a baby all over the place in a basket.

The ritual was said to represent the annual rebirth of Dionysus as the spirit of fertility.

Early Egyptians are also said to have used the baby as a symbol of rebirth, but early Christians rejected the practice of using a baby because they felt that the custom was Pagan in nature.

Later, the church was forced to reevaluate its position because, let's face it, nothing really symbolizes rebirth quite like a baby.

Eventually, it was decided that church members would be permitted to celebrate the New Year using a symbolic baby, provided it represented the birth of the baby Jesus.

Pictures of babies used as decorations during New Year celebrations were brought to America by the Germans, who had used the images since the 14th century.

Much like Cullman's earliest German settlers, today we see Baby New Year as a representation of happiness, strength, good luck and prosperity.

Many cities and towns have a tradition where the first baby born in the new year gets to be Baby New Year. The child receives local news coverage and lots of surprises and gifts such as savings bonds and free diapers.

Baby New Year is more than just a sweet little face. He has a big job to do in the 365 days he is given! It takes a lot of work to represent happiness, luck, prosperity and strength, and at the end of the year, it shows.

From Baby New Year to Father Time, here's one person who definitely knows the old saying, time flies!

FARMER-FUNDED RESEARCH SHOWS PROMISE FOR CATFISH INDUSTRY

A.J. Watson
Contributed

DEMOPOLIS – A research study, partially funded by Alabama catfish farmers, could save tens of thousands of fish each year that die from common bacteria. Results of a six-month research project conducted by Auburn University (AU) on the Aeromonas bacteria were presented to catfish farmers Tuesday in Demopolis.

The survival rate for infected fish increased from 5 percent several years ago to 99.6 percent for fish given a new vaccine developed through the project. Survival was also higher for fish fed a probiotic feed, the AU report said.

"Usually we don't see these kinds of results for field trials," said AU's Jeff Terhune.

"The question now is, how do we move to a vaccination method that is more commercially and economically feasible."

The research project, funded in part by $65,000 in checkoff money from the Alabama Farmers Federation Catfish Producers, tested an Aeromonas vaccine developed by the AU School of Fisheries Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences (SFAAS).

In this study, the vaccine was administered by hand to nearly 18,000 young fish.

The bacteria typically affect mature fish near harvest, and experts estimate it has cost U.S. catfish farmers about $72 million in losses since 2009.

The vaccinated fish were released in raceways at Hale County farmer Randy Hollingsworth's farm.

The four-prong research project included vaccinated fish, those given probiotic feed, hybrid catfish and traditional catfish.

Survival rates for vaccinated fish and those given probiotic feed showed the most promise.

Terhune said researchers hope to conduct more assessments on older fish next year.

Catfish farmers and processors at the meeting said they are cautiously optimistic about the study results, adding they are eager to see more research on mature fish.

"Losses from Aeromonas have cost our farm a lot of money," said Alabama Catfish Producers Chairman Will Pearce of Dallas County.

"I feel like we're making headway, but we need to see results on fish 18 to 24 months old, which is when Aeromonas is more prevalent."

Federation Catfish Division Director Rick Oates said the checkoff program is funded by catfish farmers who contribute $1 per ton of catfish feed they purchase.

Catfish farmers voted in February 2015 to fund the research project, he said.

"Aeromonas is a serious issue facing our farmers," Oates said.

"The record number of farmers and industry professionals who attended this meeting indicates the amount of interest in this research."

Most of Tuesday's meeting focused on the research report.

However, the 130 farmers and processors at the meeting also heard reports on the state of the catfish industry and discussed water aeration, water quality and catfish genetics.

Federation members David Pearce and Randy Hollingsworth were honored for contributions to the catfish industry at AU's Aquaculture and Fisheries Business Institute awards luncheon that was part of the meeting.

For more information about the research project, visit the AlfaFarmers.org.



Alabama Catfish Producers Chairman Will Pearce of Dallas County talks to farmers and processors at a meeting in Demopolis in mid-December.

CONTRIBUTED

IF THIS CAUGHT YOUR EYE, WHY AREN'T YOU ADVERTISING HERE?

NOAH@
CULLMANSENSE.COM



SIGN-UPS UNDERWAY FOR CP&R'S SPRING 2016 PROGRAMS

Hannah Ward
ward@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The City of Cullman Parks and Recreation Department (CP&R) has an activity to meet almost every Cullmanite's need. Buckle up for a year packed with programs and events for all ages. Whether you are a parent, a college student who wants learn a new hobby or just someone looking to get out and get active, CP&R has an activity for you.

Here is an assortment of events and programs to look forward to in early 2016:

Baseball, Softball, and T-Ball
Registration: Jan. 15 – Feb. 15
When: Practices start in March, with games in April
Who: Open to boys and girls, ages 4-14
Cost: $90

Missoula Children's Theater Presents "Little Red Riding Hood"
Auditions: Monday, Jan. 18 at 3:30 p.m. at the Cullman Civic Center
When: Selected cast members will practice during the week, after school.
Two performances: Saturday, Jan. 23 at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Archery
Session I: Jan. 18 – March 1
Session II: March 14- April 25
Where: Classes held in the afternoons at the Cullman Civic Center
Who: Classes for beginner, intermediate and advanced archers, ages 7 & up
Cost: $60

After-School Art Program
Session I: Jan. 19 – March 1
Session II: March 15 – April 25
When: Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m.
Where: Cullman Civic Center
Who: Ages 6-14
Cost: $60

Mommy & Me Art Class
Session I: Jan. 19 – March 1
Session II: March 15 – April 25
When: Tuesdays at 10 a.m.
Where: Cullman Civic Center
Who: Ages 5 & under
Cost: $60

Kayaking Clinics
Where: Wellness & Aquatic Center
When: Mondays in January and February from 7-9 p.m.
Who: Beginner and experienced kayakers welcomed
Cost: $5 with your own boat or $10 to use CP&R boats and gear
ACA Certified instructor will be onsite.

Youth Outdoor Adventure
When: Starting in April, date TBA, on Saturday mornings at 9:30
What: Includes six weeks of different adventures (hiking, rock climbing, rappelling, kayaking, wilderness survival and more)
Cost: $75

Spring Kayaking Class
When: March 29 - April 26; Class I – Tuesdays at 7 p.m. and Class II – Thursdays at 7 p.m.
Where: Wellness & Aquatic Center
Cost: $100, spaces limited to five per class, includes use of kayak, all gear/ and a trip down a Class II+ whitewater river

Community Garden at Nesmith Park
What: 18 gardening plots will be rented
When: Starts in March
Cost: $35 for the year or $75 for the year for premium members; premium members will be invited to weekly gardening classes on Tuesday nights at 6 p.m. and group work sessions on Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. – noon with the CP&R gardening instructor.

Photography Classes
When: Starting in March; six-week class on Mondays and Thursdays at 6 p.m.
Where: Cullman Civic Center
Cost: $50

Adult Flag Football
Registration: Jan. 15 – Feb.15 at Heritage Park
Cost: $500 per team
Where: Games will be played at the Football Complex by West Elementary

Youth Tennis Lessons
When: Offered monthly
Where: Cullman High School tennis courts
Registration: Ongoing at the Cullman Civic Center

Men's Spring League Softball
Registration: Feb. 15 – March 15 at Heritage Park
When: Starting in April
Where: Heritage Park
Cost: $425 per team

Mother/Daughter & Father/Son Nights Out
When: Feb. 19 from 7-10 p.m.
Where: Father/Son Night will be at the Wellness & Aquatic Center and will include: dodge ball, capture the flag and other games.
Cost: $30 per parent/child pair

Mother/Daughter Night will be at the Cullman Civic Center and will include: a pajama party, movies, makeovers and more.

Kamp Cullman 2016
Registration: Opens April 1 at the Wellness & Aquatic Center; Space is limited to first 80 registrants.
Where: Wellness & Aquatic Center
What: Will include: weekly field trips, games, camp activities, swimming, arts & crafts and much more

Be sure to check out CP&R's website at http://qrne.ws/cpandr for the most up-to-date information, including registration dates and activity costs.

For more information, contact Waid Harbison, marketing, programs & events coordinator at CP&R, at 256-734-9157 or wharbison@cullmanrecreation.org.

2016 STATE OF THE COMMUNITY SCHEDULED FOR JAN. 14

CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO HOST EVENT

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's Governmental Affairs Committee will host its 2016 State of the Community panel presentation on Jan. 14. at TP Country Club.

The forum, which will be from 5 - 8 p.m., will provide the City and each municipality in the County the opportunity to share information from their communities with both Chamber members and the Cullman business community.

"On Jan.14 we will have our State of the Community," said Leah Bolin, Chamber president, "in which we will have our mayors as well as the Cullman County Commission talking about the future of Cullman County and what we can expect. This is your (Cullman County residents') opportunity to meet with them. We will have a meet-and-greet prior to that where you can sit down, maybe have a drink and talk to these people face-to-face and then hear from them corporately."

The cost for the event is $15 for Chamber members and $20 for future members.

Reservations and payment are required before Jan. 13. Attendees are asked to RSVP by calling the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce at 256-734-0454 or registering online at http://qrne.ws/shelby-breakfast. TP Country Club is located at 700 Pine Hill Drive in Cullman.

Bridge (from Front)

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The Christmas floods closed many roads and areas around Cullman County. One area that is still closed is Clarkson Covered Bridge Park.

"With all the rain we have had today, we have closed Clarkson Bridge (Park) until further notice due to damage that has occurred to walkways and park surroundings," Park Manager Tony Harris announced on Christmas evening.

"Please, for your safety, do not cross the rock wall to get in. We will address all the issues when the rain subsides, and open the park back up as soon as possible. Thank you for all your cooperation!"

Once the rain finally let up, Harris and his crew were able to go in and see the damage.

"Thankfully there was not actual damage to the bridge itself; the waters didn't get up that high," he began.

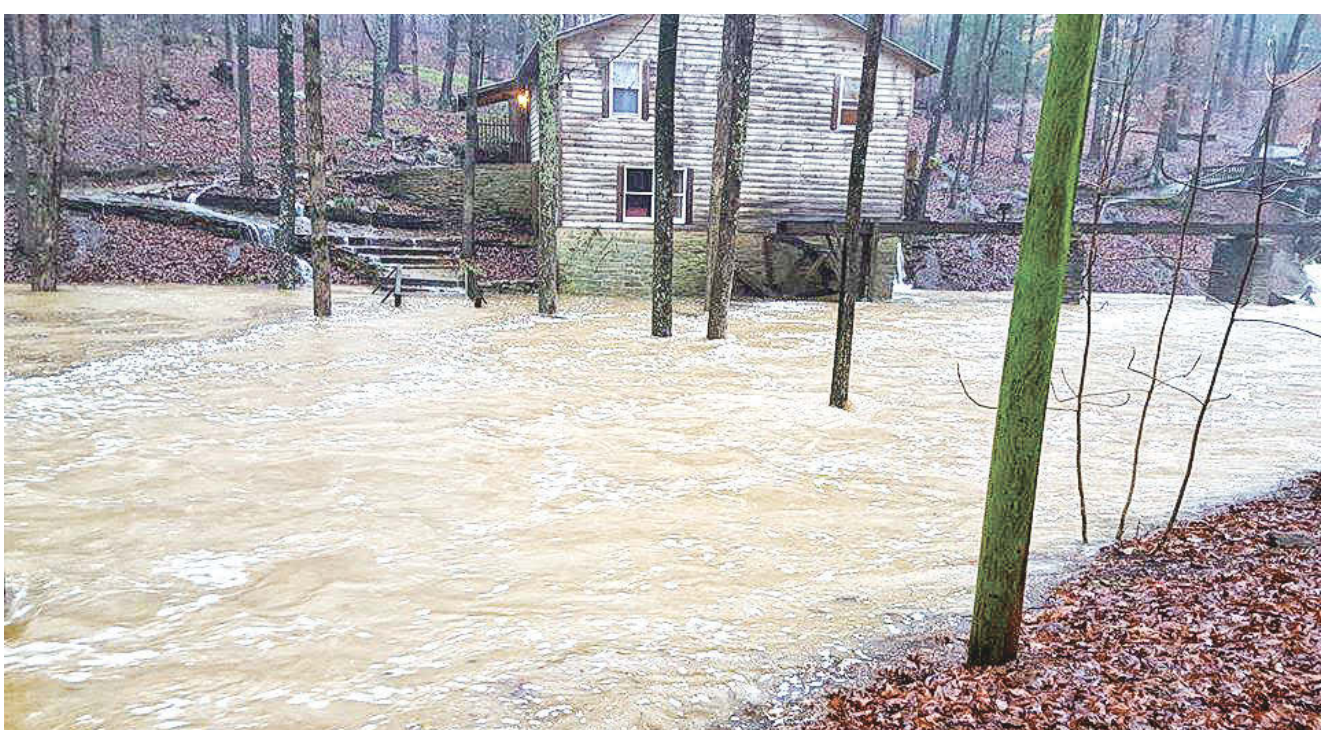
"Also, there was no damage to the cabin, although water did get into the basement some. The actual park is what sustained all the damage. For example, the catwalk that goes over the dam, a 125-foot span, half of it washed off into the water, but we will have to replace the whole thing. When that section fell off it knocked off the trough that feeds the waterwheel, which was about 30 to 40 feet. It went right down with it.

"There is a little bridge that goes over to the cabin," he continued. "The waters took that away too. The water also washed away three barbecue grills and eight picnic tables. A lot of erosion took place, and all the gravel from the drive is gone. Overall, we've got a mess to clean up," he chuckled while shaking his head.

When asked about when the park would open back up, Harris said, "We are already working on cleaning everything up. We have been burning brush and cleaning up the debris. You know, the government issued a state of emergency, so we are waiting to see if we will be getting any kind of funding from that and from the County before we can put it all back together. Hopefully we will only be down a month. That is, if we can get some pretty weather to work on it."

Clarkson Covered Bridge was built in 1904. The park is located 1240 County Road 1043.

For more information, visit the park's website at http://qrne.ws/bridge or find the park on Facebook at http://qrne.ws/h.



RELIGIOUS SPOTLIGHT

CHRIS PETTIT, DEVELOPMENT PASTOR AT LIFE CHURCH

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

HANCEVILLE – Life Church in Hanceville is all about helping people move beyond their pasts and leading them into God's great plan for their lives. They call it Living Life Forward. They believe God created each person with a purpose in mind and it's Life Church's goal to help people find those purposes. Development Pastor Chris Pettit has been in ministry for more than 10 years.

Pettit and his wife Jacqueline have two young daughters, Jane and Joni. The couple met while attending a ministry training program called Master's Commission, which is like a trade school for going into the ministry.

Pettit also took certification courses through Global University in Springfield, Missouri and is certified through the Assemblies of God.

Outside of pastoring Life Church's Cullman campus (Life Church also has a Hartselle campus), he works for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation as a certified driving instructor, teaching people with disabilities how to drive.

"I became a follower of Christ at the age of 12 and pretty much knew right away that I wanted to preach the Gospel," said Pettit.

"It had made such an impact on me; I couldn't imagine doing anything more important with me life," he smiled warmly.

"I preach at Life Church of Alabama's Cullman campus, where I have been since we planted it over four years ago."

> "When you come to our church, you won't feel judged. We are all in the same boat. What you will find is hope for a better life in Christ."
>
> Chris Pettit

Before his time at Life Church, Pettit was a youth pastor in Beaumont, Texas and a junior high pastor in Decatur.

"I think my biggest challenge as a pastor is the same challenge we all face, which is time," he continued.

"I have two small kids, a job where I put (in) 40-50 hours a week, and then the church on top of that. But it's my passion. So learning to balance the time of it all can be tough, but we make it happen," he chuckled.

Pettit says his most rewarding moments as a pastor are when people give their lives to Christ.

"It's powerful," he beamed. "We are doing our best to build a church that people who aren't churchy or religious are open to going to. We all have a past and we can all find hope in Jesus. When people that would normally never go to church come into our church and experience God, it's life changing for both them and us.

"When you come to our church, you won't feel judged," he added. "We are all in the same boat. What you will find is hope for a better life in Christ. We are a fun, energetic church that pursues God and people who don't yet know him at all costs, with no apologies! It's a great place to check out no matter where you're at in life."

Some upcoming series at Life Church include:

- January series: The Family that _____ Together. This series will deal with how to build a family that lasts.
- February series: Questions. In this series, church members, along with their friends and family who don't go to church, will be polled on what topics they want to hear about. (e.g., What does the Bible say about this or that?) The top six questions will be the topics discussed over the following six weeks.

Life Church is located at 471 AL Highway 69 S. in Hanceville. For more information, call 256-297-1115 or visit http://www.livelifefwd.com.



Pastor Chris Pettit delivers uplifting messages about living life forward and letting God into your life. CHRIS PETTIT

ADPH URGES SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND TETANUS PREVENTION IN AREAS AFFECTED BY FLOODING

Corey Kirkland
Contributor

MONTGOMERY – In the aftermath of flooding conditions in the state, the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is advising citizens and emergency responders involved in cleanup efforts to use safety measures to reduce risk of injury. Part of injury prevention is following recommended precautions as well as being up-to-date on the tetanus vaccination.

Some injury prevention advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) includes staying away from damaged buildings or structures until they have been examined and certified as safe by a building inspector or other government authority. Also, waiting to return to buildings during daylight hours, when it is easier to avoid hazards, particularly if the electricity is off and there are no lights.

Further advice includes:

- Leave immediately if you hear shifting or unusual noises that signal that the structure may fall or if you smell gas or suspect a leak.
- Use teams of two or more people to move bulky objects. Avoid lifting any material that weighs more than 50 pounds (per person).
- Wear hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves and watertight boots with steel toes and insoles (not just steel shanks) for cleanup work.
- Wear ear plugs or protective headphones to reduce risk from equipment noise.
- Avoid wading in water. Glass, metal fragments and other debris may be in the water.
- Pace yourself and get help to avoid both physical and emotional exhaustion.

According to experts in disaster response, in most settings, a disaster does not increase the risk for tetanus; however, the risk of tetanus among disaster survivors and emergency responders can best be minimized by following standard immunization recommendations and providing proper wound care.

ADPH recommends a tetanus vaccination for individuals if it has been more than 10 years since their last booster or if they cannot remember when they received their last booster.

Patients can contact their local physician or health department for advice regarding tetanus boosters. Disaster relief workers and citizens affected by flood waters can visit their local county health departments to receive tetanus vaccinations without making appointments.

Shelby (from Front)

boards and superintendents, our state elected officials and our congressional leaders in Washington, D.C. to ensure that the interests of the business community are well represented in public policy decisions."

The cost of the event is $15, and prior reservations are required. Guests should RSVP no later than Dec. 30 by calling the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce at 256-734-0454 or at http://business.cullmanchamber.org/events/details/2016-senator-shelby-breakfast-13819.

The All Steak Restaurant is located at 323 Third Ave. S.E. in Cullman.

Monday

Cullman Caring for Kids- United Way Food Bank
The food bank is open every Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 9 a.m. - noon and 1 - 3 p.m. for eligible families. Located at 402 Arnold St. N.E. Ste. W-1. For more information, or to make a donation, call 256-739-1111. www.cullmancaringforkids.com.

Cullman Senior Center Bingo
Play Bingo at the Cullman Senior Center every Monday and Wednesday. Activities from 8 a.m. - noon. A hot meal is served at 11:30 a.m. daily. For more information, call 256-734-0145. The Cullman Senior Center is located at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road N.W.

Overeaters Anonymous
Overeaters Anonymous will be meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Carriage House, located behind Grace Episcopal Church. For more information, contact 724-376-2124 or 256-352-1143.

Free Online Tutoring
The Cullman County Library is offering students of all ages free one-one-one help live online from professional tutors. Sessions are offered from 3-10 p.m. For more information, visit homeworkalabama.org and click on the K-College Student Centers button. Online tutoring is available Sunday-Thursday. Visit the library's downtown branch at 200 Clark St. N.E. to learn more.

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

Domestic Violence Survivors' Support Group
Victim Services of Cullman's Domestic Violence Survivors' Support Group meets every Monday from 5-7 p.m. at the old County Board of Education Building (310 Third Ave. S.E.) Childcare is available. Call 256-775-2600 for more information. Crisis Line: 256-734-6100.

Tuesday

Cullman Caring for Kids- United Way Food Bank
The food bank is open every Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 9 a.m. - noon and 1 - 3 p.m. for eligible families. Located at 402 Arnold St. N.E. Ste. W-1. For more information, or to make a donation, call 256-739-1111. www.cullmancaringforkids.com.

Board Games at the Library
Each Tuesday the Cullman County Public Library will host a gaming program from 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. A variety of board games, cards and dominoes are available for play at the library for teens and adults.

Free Online Tutoring
The Cullman County Library is offering students of all ages free one-one-one help live online from professional tutors. Sessions are offered from 3-10 p.m. For more information, visit homeworkalabama.org and click on the K-College Student Centers button. Online tutoring is available Sunday-Thursday. Visit the library's downtown branch at 200 Clark St. N.E. to learn more.

Yoga Classes
The Cullman City Parks and Recreation Senior Spirit Program will offer free yoga classes from 9:30 a.m. -10:30 a.m. for men and women 50 years and older. The classes will be held at the Donald E. Green Senior Center. Fabian Holland will conduct the classes. Participants may use a mat or chair. To register, contact Angie Jochum or Catherine Hasenbein at 256-734-4803. The center is located at Ingle Park at 1621 Cleveland Ave. S.W.

Cullman Knifty Knitters
Members of the Cullman Knifty Knitters group meet each Tuesday afternoon at 3 p.m. in the Cullman County Library. Everyone is invited to 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 are also invited to take part in these weekly meetings. Please call Lesia for more information at 256-734-2720 ext. 23.

Ladies' Auxiliary VFW Dance at Post 2214
The Ladies' Auxiliary of VFW Post 2214 invites the community to their weekly Tuesday night dances at the VFW Post building. The country line dance starts at 7:00 pm each Tuesday night, with admission of only $5 per person. Concessions are available, and all proceeds benefit the Auxiliary's local projects.

Special Needs Bowling Night
Individuals with special needs and their families are invited to the Cullman Area Special Needs Bowling Nights, every Tuesday from 6-8 p.m. at the Cullman Bowling Center. Please RSVP before 12 noon the days of the events. The charge is $3 per person. For more information, contact Rhonda at 256-962-2208.

Wednesday

Cullman Senior Center Bingo
Play Bingo at the Cullman Senior Center every Monday and Wednesday. Activities from 8 a.m. - noon. A hot meal is served at 11:30 a.m. daily. For more information, call 256-734-0145. The Cullman Senior Center is located at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road N.W.

Free Online Tutoring
The Cullman County Library is offering students of all ages free one-one-one help live online from professional tutors. Sessions are offered from 3-10 p.m. For more information, visit homeworkalabama.org and click on the K-College Student Centers button. Online tutoring is available Sunday-Thursday. Visit the library's downtown branch at 200 Clark St. N.E. to learn more.

Kid Konnect
Spirit Life Church of God offers a way for young people to meet at Kid Konnect. The group is for children 12 and younger and meets at 7 p.m. For more information, please call 256-739-3326.

Saint Monica's Group
Saint Monica's Group is for those who are addicted to drugs or alcohol. The meetings begin at 7 p.m. each week in the Rectory basement of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church. For more information, please contact either Brian at 256-595-5015 or Rita at 256-507-0358.

Wii Bowling at the Donald E. Green Senior Center
Wii Bowling at the Donald E. Green Senior Center starts at 1 p.m. and everyone is invited. Come enjoy some exercise (but not too physical) and fellowship with friends. Wii Bowling is every Wednesday and Friday afternoon at 1 p.m. The center is located at Ingle Park at 1621 Cleveland Ave. S.W. Call 256- 734-4803 for more information.

Wednesday Lunch Buffet at TP Country Club
Lunch Buffet at TP Country Club from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Call 256-739-0738 for more information.

Thursday

Free Online Tutoring
The Cullman County Library is offering students of all ages free one-one-one help live online from professional tutors. Sessions are offered from 3-10 p.m. For more information, visit homeworkalabama.org and click on the K-College Student Centers button. Online tutoring is available Sunday-Thursday. Visit the library's downtown branch at 200 Clark St. N.E. to learn more.

Overeaters Anonymous
Overeaters Anonymous will be meeting at 1:30 p.m. in the Carriage House, located behind Grace Episcopal Church. For more information, contact 724-376-2124 or 256-352-1143.

Cullman Senior Center Live Band and Karaoke
The Cullman Senior Center will have a live band or karaoke every Thursday from 8 a.m. - noon. For more information, call 256-734-0145. The Cullman Senior Center is located at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road N.W.

Friday

Cullman Caring for Kids- United Way Food Bank
The food bank is open every Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 9 a.m. - noon and 1 - 3 p.m. for eligible families. Located at 402 Arnold St. N.E. Ste. W-1. For more information, or to make a donation, call 256-739-1111. www.cullmancaringforkids.com.

Dulcimer Lessons
Senior Spirit Program now offering lessons at the Donald E. Green Senior Center at Fridays at 1 p.m. Lessons given by Craig Mann. The cost is $10. Call Angie or Catherine at 256-734-4803 for more information. The center is located at Ingle Park at 1621 Cleveland Ave. S.W.

Cullman Senior Center Gospel Singing
The Cullman Senior Center will have a Gospel Singing beginning at 9:30 a.m. every Friday. Special guests share devotions at 10:30 a.m. A hot meal is served at 11:30 a.m. daily. For more information, call 256-734-0145. The Cullman Senior Center is located at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road N.W.

Wii Bowling at the Donald E. Green Senior Center
Wii Bowling at the Donald E. Green Senior Center starts at 1 p.m. and everyone is invited. Come enjoy some exercise (but not too physical) and fellowship with friends. Wii Bowling is every Wednesday and Friday afternoon at 1 p.m. The center is located at Ingle Park at 1621 Cleveland Ave. S.W. Call 256- 734-4803 for more information.

Friday Night Dance at the VFW
Cullman's VFW Post 2214 invites everyone to their weekly Friday night dances at the VFW Hall from 7-10 p.m. The cost is $5 per person and music by the Golden Oldies and Country with the Midnight Highway Band will be filling the air. Funds raised go toward the building rental. Get your dancing shoes on and come out for a great evening of fun and entertainment.

Saturday

Saturday Night Dance at the VFW
Cullman's VFW Post 2214 invites everyone to their weekly Saturday night dances which begin at 7 p.m. and last until 10 p.m. The Boogie Night Band provides music on Saturday nights. Entrance fee is $5 for each individual. Come on out and bring your dancing shoes and enjoy an evening of great music, fun and fellowship!

Food Assistance
Every second Saturday at Harmony Word of Life Church. NEW HOURS: 1 - 3 p.m. Take Highway 157 to Battleground, turn right onto County Road 1212, go half mile to County Road 1204, turn left and drive a half mile. 256-739-2956

Sunday

Free Online Tutoring
The Cullman County Library is offering students of all ages free one-one-one help live online from professional tutors. Sessions are offered from 3-10 p.m. For more information, visit homeworkalabama.org and click on the K-College Student Centers button. Online tutoring is available Sunday-Thursday. Visit the library's downtown branch at 200 Clark St. N.E. to learn more.

Sunday Brunch Buffet at TP Country Club
Sunday Brunch Buffet at TP Country Club from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Call 256-739-0738 for more information.

Announcements

Aluminum Can Donation Drive
The Cullman County Animal Shelter is asking anyone with aluminum cans to please make a donation to their recycling bin, located at 935 Convent Road N.E. For more information, please call Candie at 256-734-5448.

First Source for Women
The First Source for Women Center provides free pregnancy tests, pregnancy and abortion and counseling Tuesday- Friday from 9:30 a.m. -2:30 p.m. If you need to speak with someone, but are unable to do so during normal hours, you can make an appointment. Please call 1-800-712-HELP.

WSCC Alumni Foundation 2016 Trips
The WSCC Alumni Foundation is planning a number of trips to popular tourist destinations throughout 2016. Please contact Gail at 256-352-8604 or gailcrutchfield@wallacestate.edu.

Church's New Gathering Place
East Battleground Baptist Church will now be hosting services in a mobile chapel on the home site. Members and visitors will be in this location until the new church is completed.

Church's New Gathering Place
Due to a fire in the Bread of Life Church in Holly Pond, members will now attend services in the old New Life Worship Center building, located at 721 Brooklyn Road in Holly Pond until further notice. Please contact Brenda at 256-507-2650.

Bob's Grief Support Group
On the last Thursday of each month, Bob's Grief Support Group meets at the Chapel at Smith Lake Park. For more information, please call 256-595-7331.

Relay For Life of Cullman County: 2016 Calendar Announcements
- Relay For Life Kickoff, 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 21, First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall; contact Helen Allen, 256-709-4019; www.relayforlife.org/cullmanal
- Relay For Life Team Spirit Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 4, First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall; contact Helen Allen, 256-709-4019; www.relayforlife.org/cullmanal
- Relay For Life Team Spirit Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Thursday, March 10, First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall; contact Helen Allen, 256-709-4019; www.relayforlife.org/cullmanal
- Relay For Life Team Spirit Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 7, First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall; contact Helen Allen, 256-709-4019; www.relayforlife.org/cullmanal
- Relay For Life Team Spirit Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 28, First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall; contact Helen Allen, 256-709-4019; www.relayforlife.org/cullmanal
- Relay For Life Survivors' Breakfast, 7 a.m., Wednesday, May 4, Cullman Church of Christ; contact Helen Allen, 256-709-4019; www.relayforlife.org/cullmanal
- Relay For Life of Cullman County, 6 p.m.-midnight, Friday, May 6, Cullman County Fairgrounds; contact Helen Allen, 256-709-4019; www.relayforlife.org/cullmanal

Senior Trips
Cullman Parks and Recreation is sponsoring two trips for seniors in 2016. Destinations are Orlando, Fla. in February and Santa Fe and Albuquerque, N.M. in May. Contact Angie at 256-734-4803 for details.

Project Closet
At Longview Church of God, on the second Wednesday of each month from noon - 6 p.m., the public is welcome to come and shop for clothes at no charge. Donations of clothing are accepted, and shoppers can swap donations for any clothing in the closet. Call 256-734-2566 for more information.

Archery Classes
4-H and J.O.A.D. (Junior Olympic Archery Development) classes are being offered in Hanceville. Call Barbara at 256-339-4787 for more information.

Alabama Career Center
The Alabama Career Center has moved back to its old location at 1201 Katherine St. N.W. behind the North Shopping Center. The new phone number is 256-734-5580.

Free Online Tutoring
The Cullman County Library is offering students of all ages free one-one-one help live online from professional tutors. Sessions are offered from 3-10 p.m. For more information, visit homeworkalabama.org and click on the K-College Student Centers button. Online tutoring is available Sunday-Thursday. Visit the library's downtown branch at 200 Clark St. N.E. to learn more.

Upward Basketball and Cheerleading
Registration is still open. Grades K5-7; Cost is $95; Register online at upward.org or at Cullman First Church of the Nazarene, 5414 AL Highway 157, next to the new Wal-Mart. Call 256-734-8937 for more details.

Cullman Senior Center Creating Cookbook
Cookbook will be created this summer. The center is asking for seniors age 60 and older to submit their favorite recipes. You can also submit a recipe in memory of a loved one. Mail recipes to: Cullman Senior Center, 1539 Sportsman Lake Road N.W., Cullman, AL 35055. Please include your name and phone number.

Clothes Closet
Open as needed at Blair Congregational Methodist Church. Contact Myrl Wynn at 256-747-2483 for an appointment.

Food Assistance
Every second Saturday at Harmony Word of Life Church. NEW HOURS: 1 - 3 p.m. Take Highway 157 to Battleground, turn right onto County Road 1212, go half mile to County Road 1204, turn left and drive a half mile. 256-739-2956.

Cullman County Republican Breakfast
Everyone is invited to attend on the first Saturday of each month. Elk's Lodge at 7:30 a.m.

Cullman Senior Center Weekly Programs
Activities, fellowship and a nutritious meal every Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - noon for ages 60 and over. Local homebound meals offered to seniors who qualify. Bingo on Mondays and Wednesdays, live band or karaoke on Thursdays, gospel singing or devotion on Fridays at 9:30 a.m. Exercise, computer rooms and library. Center located at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road N.W., Cullman, AL 35055. Call 256-734-0145 for more information.

Special Needs Bowling Nights
Individuals with special needs and their families are invited to the Cullman Area Special Needs bowling nights, every Tuesday from 6-8 p.m. at the Cullman Bowling Center. Please RSVP before 12 noon the days of the events. The charge is $3 per person. For more information, contact Rhonda at 256-962-2208.

Commission on Aging- Volunteers Needed
Volunteers are needed for community service meal deliveries. Call 256-734-1241 for more information.

Cullman Caring for Kids- United Way Food Bank
The food bank is open every Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 9 a.m. - noon and 1 - 3 p.m. for eligible families. Located at 402 Arnold St. N.E. Ste. W-1. For more information, or to make a donation, call 256-739-1111. www.cullmancaringforkids.com.

Cullman Parks & Rec Community Classes at the Cullman Civic Center
Yoga- Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.; Ballroom, Latin and Swing Dancing - Thursdays, $10 per class; Oil Painting and Acrylics - Mondays from 6:30 - 9 p.m.; Nia Dance Fitness / Ageless Grace - Tuesdays at 9 a.m.; Rock Climbing (at Hurricane Creek Park) - Saturdays at 10 a.m., $25, call to register at 256-734-2125; Wilderness Survival Course - Sundays with reservation, call to register at 256-734-2125. For more information, contact Waid Harbison at 256-734-9157.

2016 State of the Community Meeting
The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce's Governmental Affairs Committee will hold a panel presentation on the State of the Community on Jan. 14 from 5 - 8 p.m. at the TP Country Club, 700 Pine Hill Drive in Cullman. The purpose of this forum is to provide the County and each of the municipalities in Cullman County the opportunity to share information from their communities with Chamber members and the business community. Reservations are required. Cost is $15 for members and $20 for future members. Call 256-734-0454 for more information.

SUBMIT YOUR *FREE* CALENDAR LISTING
Church Events • Club Meetings
E-mail calendar@cullmansense.com

Medical Arts Apothecary
Living Well Natural Store
124 7th Street, S.W.
256-734-4933
"Serving Cullman Families for over 50 Years!"
SUSAN SKINNER ADKISON, R.P.H.
Living Well natural store
Rx Health Mart PHARMACY

FOCUS ON: CULLMAN COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

ANIMALS IN NEED OF HOMES AND SHELTER IN NEED OF VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The Cullman County Animal Shelter takes in many animals each month. They come from area citizens, as well as city and county animal control officers. The shelter's goal is that all of the animals that find their way to them find a good home. Unfortunately, the animals usually outnumber the adopters. The shelter needs help from the community. Citizens can help by volunteering at the shelter or by becoming foster or adoptive parents.

"We take in hundreds of unwanted animals each month, and we strive to find them homes," said Candie Horsley, who works at the shelter. "However, we still have to euthanize due to lack of space, foster homes and because we take in so many more than we are able to adopt out," she explained. "We do maintain a higher adoption rate of all our adoptable pets and we are very proud of that."

Horsley advises that if citizens are missing a pet or know someone who is, please check the shelter. Stray dogs are held for seven days before they are put up for adoption.

Adoption fees are $90 for dogs or puppies and $65 for cats or kittens. Fees cover a general veterinary examination, spay or neuter procedure, microchip, first round of shots, dewormer, Bordetella and rabies vaccines, free 45-day 24 Pet Watch health insurance policy and a free bag of pet food from Pet Depot (tax on food not included).

"We need foster homes and volunteer transporters badly," Horsley added. "If you can do either of these, please get with us asap. We are down to the bare minimum of active foster homes and transporters. Not everyone can adopt, but everyone can help the unwanted and neglected animals of this county in some manner."

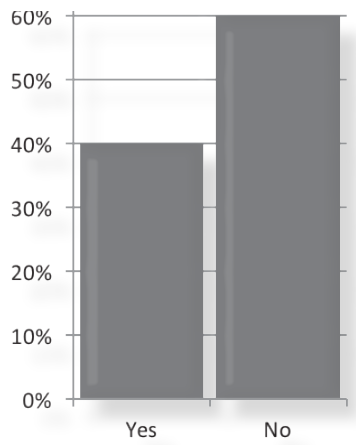
Volunteers are also needed to help with the everyday upkeep of the shelter and care for animals, including walking dogs, grooming and assisting with off-site adoption events.

Donations of paper towels, laundry detergent, dog and cat shampoo, dish liquid (citrus- or lemon-scented), latex gloves, pet taxis or crates (all sizes), non-clumping cat litter, dry kitten food and dog or cat treats are always welcomed. Monetary gifts help the shelter provide vaccines, medicines and microchips, as well as run the adoption sponsor program. Donations are tax-deductible.

The Cullman County Animal Shelter is located at 935 Convent Road N.E. For more information, stop by or call 256-734-5448 Find them online at http://qrne.ws/g.

Poll

Do you think people should be required to register drones?



This Week's Poll

Does cheaper gas cause you to drive more?

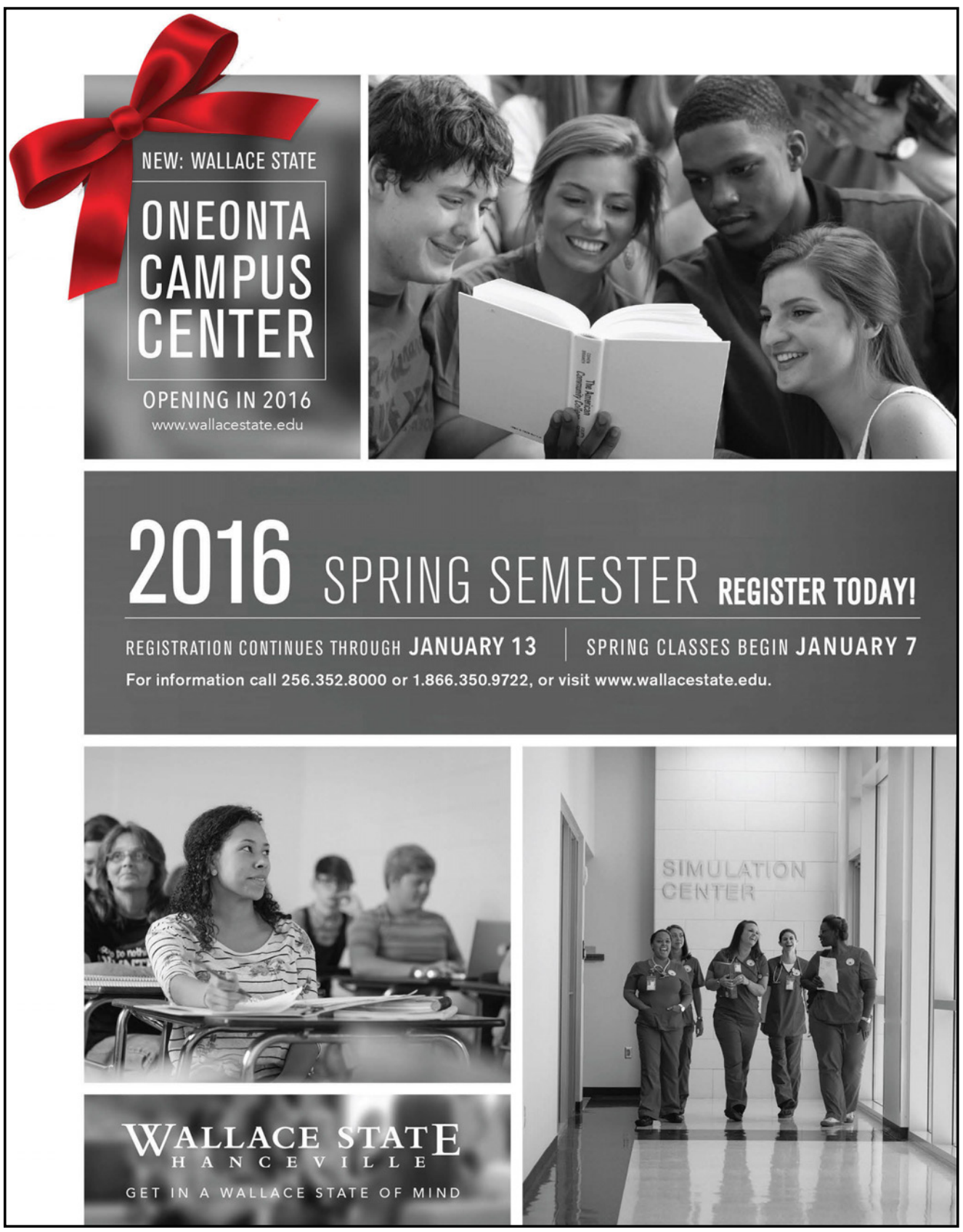
Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

ON INSTAGRAM









CRMC'S ONE REHAB EXTENDS HOURS



CRMC

Cullman Regional Medical Center's ONE Rehab Services employee Jason Doty, PTA, works closely in a one-on-one physical therapy session focusing on strengthening and range of motion exercises.

Lindsey P. Dossey
CRMC Contributor

CULLMAN – Beginning on Monday, Jan. 4, Cullman Regional Medical Center's (CRMC's) ONE Rehab Center will have extended outpatient rehabilitation hours in order to accommodate the schedules of busy patients and their families. The new hours are Monday - Thursday, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Fridays from 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.

"Our patients and their families have requested extended hours and we are happy to accommodate them," ONE Rehab Director Mike Tucker, PT, CSCS said.

In addition to physical and occupational therapy, speech therapy and work hardening, ONE Rehab offers a unique service to Cullman area residents — aquatic therapy.

This innovative therapy has proven to be effective in the rehabilitation of stroke victims, arthritic patients, people with chronic lower back pain and patients with sports injuries.

Members of the ONE Rehab staff also offer individualized exercise guidance on Cybex equipment.

Specialty programs available at ONE Rehab include:

• Aquatic Rehab: Using the warmth and support of the water as a relaxing environment, specially trained personnel provide therapy for patients with chronic pain or other conditions that make traditional exercise difficult for them.

• Cardiac & Pulmonary Rehab: Nursing and respiratory staff take patients recovering from cardiac or pulmonary illnesses through a supervised program.

• Hand Therapy: A certified hand therapist oversees rehabilitation of hands following injury or surgery.

• Industrial Rehab or Work Hardening: Designed to provide services specific for the industry, such as work conditioning, job site analysis, ergonomic consultation and post-offer screening.

• Lymphedema Management: A comprehensive program following breast cancer surgery.

• Sports Rehab: Sport-specific rehab gets athletes back in the game quickly and performing at the highest level.

• Wound Care: Care to speed the healing for a variety of wounds such as diabetic ulcers, amputation, burns, cellulitis and severe abrasions/cuts.

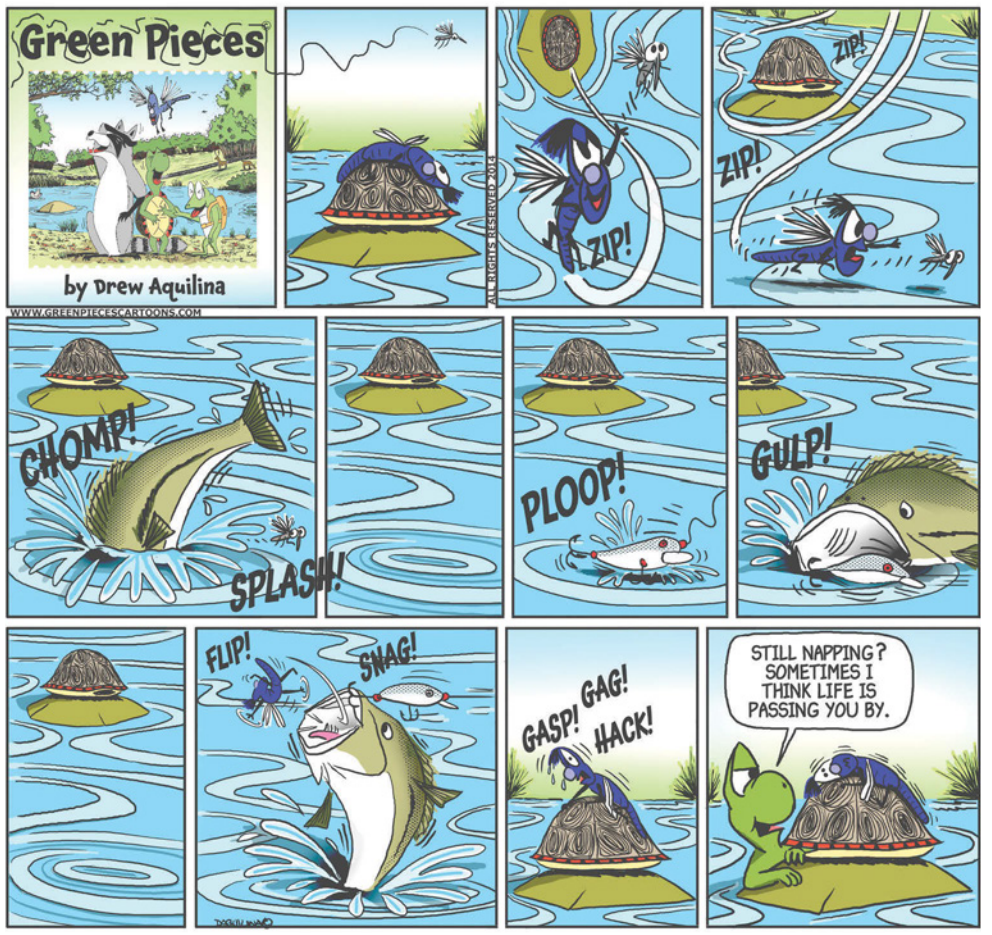
The ONE Rehab Center is located on the CRMC campus at 1912 AL Highway 157 in Professional Office Building I. For more information, call 256-737-2271. For a complete list of services available at CRMC, visit www.crmchospital.com.

COMICS

WHITE & BLACK • "Emojis" • st.edo@cullmansense.com











LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



FACEBOOK.COM/CULLMANSENSE

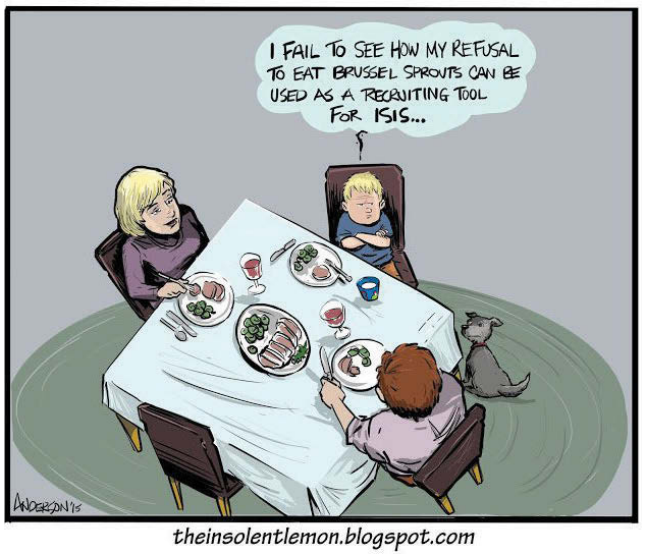
OBITUARY ANNOUNCEMENTS
DECEMBER 28 - JANUARY 3
SPONSORED BY CULLMAN FUNERAL HOME

VAN STEVEN MANER
L. D. CADLE
KAREN KEEL KNIGHT
WENDELL KEEN GABLE
FRED ALTON CLAY
JOSEPH ANTHONY WOOD
LOU CHRISTINE ODELL GREEN
DIANA DEAN TANNER
VELMA MAE STORY
KATHRYN WALKER MADDOX
BLANCHE MINER TANNER
JOSIELENE RIDER ADAMS
GARY LEE TANKERSLEY
EVON JOHNSON
PATRICIA MOUDINIA VEAL
DONALD JEFFERY BULLARD
PEGGY JOYCE HENDRIX
CHARLES REX BURNS

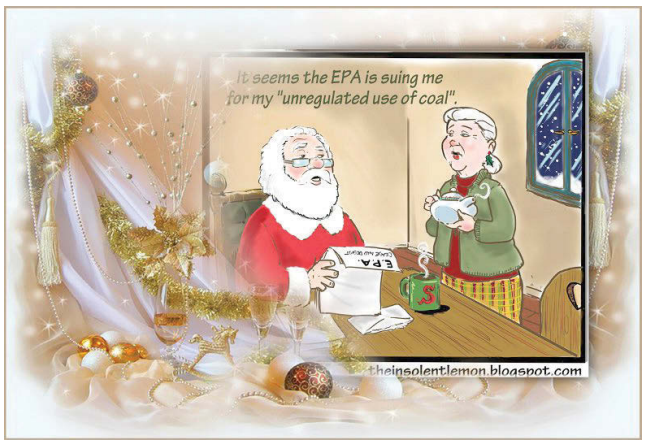
Cullman Funeral Home
461 U.S. Hwy. 278 E. Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-3144 • CullmanFuneralHome.com
Sincere Compassionate Care
Complete obituaries may be found free of charge at CullmanSense.com/obituaries.

CPC Cullman Primary Care
Multi-Specialty Group
Busy Psychiatry Practice in Cullman, AL seeking a
PSYCHIATRIC CERTIFIED NURSE PRACTITIONER
Excellent Compensation and Benefits
Monday-Friday, Outpatient Practice Only
SEND RESUMES BY EMAIL TO SHICE@CPC-PC.COM OR FAX TO 256-739-0027

EDITORIAL CARTOONS



theinsolentlemon.blogspot.com



Follow us on Twitter
@CullmanSense

HOW ARE WE DOING?

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

E-mail feedback@cullmansense.com
or Call 256-297-1847

CULLMANSENSE
Community Matters

Founder Noah Chandler
Editor Wendy Sack
Tips news@cullmansense.com or 256-297-1847
Visit cullmanstore.com for our full digital archives.
Reporters Hannah Ward, Sharon Schuler Kreps
Sports Josh McBrayer, Johnny Thornton
Address 412 1st Ave. SE, Ste. 103, Cullman, AL 35055
Back Issues issues@cullmansense.com
Cartoonist Anthony Saint
Contributors Will Hogue

OPINION

YOU SAY ISIL, I SAY ISIS, LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF

Tom H. Hastings
PeaceVoice

John McCain frequently justifies his most war whacky ideas with, "I'd rather fight them over there than fight them here." As if those are the two choices. As if presenting a non sequitur null set false dichotomy is a response would ever work.

Right, well, the joke is on us. It works all the time—not to actually fix the problem, but rather to extend it for the benefit of those who profit from it. It is a horrific piece of false logic that has many nodding their heads and ceding authority and dominant opinion to an elite group who profit in money or power or status when they lead us into more bloody hell. After Obama gives in, they all pile on and screech "Too little! Too late!" Obama is not barreling fast enough in the wrong direction for them.

And McCain is simply typical, not a bit out of lockstep with this woefully incomplete consideration of options.

There are excellent reasons that most Iraqis believe that the U.S. government provides support for ISIS. The evidence may be circumstantial but the old adage, There is no such thing as a coincidence, is one that militates toward generation of such conspiratorial notions.

Based on lies, we invade a relatively stable country—Iraq—driving it into receivership. We fire their military from their jobs with nothing to which they can transition—of course they are going to self-organize and seek financial and trade backing to set up shop as a violent insurgency. We ludicrously claim to be productively training in the Iraqi police and soldiers, none of which takes. Indeed, they present a tempting target for anyone with an idea of political power.

Who benefits? Who loses? U.S. elites benefit. Owners of military contractors benefit the most ($711,000,000 the last day of 2015 alone, nearly $40 million per hour around the clock), and they share their largesse with those who serve them best—friendly bellicose politicians, persuasive media, high-level military officers.

Iraqis, now Syrians, and by extension even the Europeans who are now awash in refugees from the wars we help foment, and the US taxpayer, and, documented by a Brown University study, the US job seeker—these are the losers. Every billion spent on the military is a significant job loss, since taxpayer money spent on education, health care, clean energy development, or infrastructure upkeep creates many more well paying jobs for Americans. May 2016 be the year we turn this around.

OPINION

THE CIRCULARITY OF HATING THE HATER

Robert J. Gould
Contributor

Has civil discourse been buried by a positive feedback loop of hate?

Timothy Egan, writing for The New York Times, says that Donald Trump is getting the "Hitler vote" (NYT, December 12, 2015), as Trump has become part of the American neo-Nazi campaign to "Make America White Again." Egan exclaims, "I hate these guys (neo-Nazis)," in ironic parallel with the neo-Nazi hatred toward non-White, non-Christian Americans. This symmetry of emotion might make us wonder whether Egan, and other liberals, are adding to the amount of hate in the world, just as we suspect that the campaigns of Donald Trump, and even Bernie Sanders, add to the amount of global hate by demonizing others—foreigners or bankers. Can there ever be a political campaign based on compassion and understanding, rather than finding subjects of hatred that seduce the most voters?

Imagine a political campaign that has sympathy for the devil (apologies to the Rolling Stones). Even Egan admits that neo-Nazis are likely victims of a global economy that has "run them over" (and) "who need a villain" to explain their experience of a country that has abandoned them. And the bankers, demonized by Democrats, are just following what they take to be the American Dream of success in a competitive financial jungle. Would such a campaign of compassion be a futile as the Dalai Lama reclaiming Tibet from the Chinese?

Maybe the Dalai Lama has not been such a failure. He may not have regained Tibet as a Buddhist religious state (not a particularly democratic goal, anyway). However, Tibetan Buddhism and culture has continued to grow in its global influence. Find any large American town without a seminar on Tibetan Buddhism, and a thriving Tibetan community.

Perhaps the best way to transform the politics of hate is to spend time with someone who is a hater, and have a conversation about the source of their hate. I have a friend who grew up in an Idaho, Aryan nation, stronghold, and though he has become a respected liberal Sociologist, he continues to spend time with neo-Nazis, finding common ground and searching for the sources of their hatred.

I am a liberal ethicist, who continues to hang-out with conservatives who resonate with the analysis of Fox News, searching for the sources of their hate.

Making friends with diversity has long been an American value—let's not lose it in an age of internet-fed neo-conformity.

OPINION

A FEW NEW CHANGES: LESSONS LEARNED, CHANGES MADE, BUSINESS BOOMING

Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

The last couple of years were rough ones, personally speaking, and I shall do my damnedest to ensure that this year will be much better than 2014-15.

First off, I've finally realized life is entirely too short to hold grudges against individuals, even though many have poked the bear a few too many times, so for all those who lied, backed out of contracts or were just terrible human beings in every aspect possible, know I don't care about you anymore. With saying that it doesn't diminish the damage many inflicted during the time period, but that's alright because all I have to say is, "Bless your little hearts."

For the next portion of information about my life, it was debated heavily among family and friends whether or not to disclose my ridiculous actions. Here it goes. Yes, I was a drunk from roughly March 2014 until September 2015, and I do mean daytime drinker until the sun went down. A personal incident caused me to snap out of the idiocy that I was drowning in, literally.

Now, I'm not all anti-alcohol, but by the same token no bar should serve an individual 16 beers and five shots, no matter the length of his or her stay. And no, I don't regret it as a whole because I met some interesting people from all around Cullman County.

The only parts I regret from that time frame were some of the people I allowed into my life, because when toxic meets atomic it's bound to be explosive. I also regret the loss of respect from several people whom I hold up highly in this life. To you few, I sincerely apologize for my actions and thank you for helping pick me up from the bottom just enough where I could finally see light again.

Now some of you may be wondering... did I quit drinking, go to rehab or am I still a daily lush? Well, I haven't had a drop of alcohol since that fateful night and shan't have another for quite a long while. Alcohol was never my problem. It was my anger, hatred and hurt that fueled the nearly two-year long bender.

As far as business goes, CullmanSense is doing better than I could have imagined five years ago. Yes, CS is now in its fifth year of online/smartphone apps and fourth year of print. Not bad for a publication that was considered a joke, mocked and ridiculed by some in the area. Despite their loathing, multiple attempts at slamming the business and even sending local officials emails directing them "not to speak with bloggers because we aren't journalists," here we still are, standing tall with a huge grin as we wait on our Periodical Postage Code to be approved.

Now I just get to laugh as I know life is improving on this end. The newest change is that of my name. Many of you have known me as Noah or Zeb Chandler for 34 years now. Well, after much contemplating, prayer for guidance and a talk with my father before he passed away, I am no longer a Chandler. I am Noah Zebulon Galilee.

CULLMANSENSE.COM
January 4, 2016

ART FAULKNER, STATE EMA DIRECTOR, ADDRESSES AUDIENCE IN CULLMAN- DISCUSSES STORM DAMAGE

Will Hogue
will@cullmansense.com



Art Faulkner speaks to Cullman EMA on Monday afternoon.

WILL HOGUE/CULLMANSENSE

CULLMAN – On Monday at 3 p.m., Art Faulkner, director of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), visited the Cullman County EMA to speak about the state's flooding situation.

Faulkner explained how Cullman and the state could receive federal EMA (FEMA) emergency financial assistance by meeting eligibility requirements.

"There is a $7 million threshold that must be met," Faulkner said, "and that is statewide, total cost of damages and cost of emergency response."

While noting that it is unfortunate, Faulkner said that Cullman is experienced in managing extreme weather.

As far as the total damage statewide, Faulkner said "we (AEMA) have 23 counties that we have gotten reports from that have damage. That's all the way down from the Florida state line in south Alabama, to the Tennessee state line in north Alabama."

Faulkner said that he and his colleagues will assess which areas in the state were hit the hardest over the coming days.

"I got (sic) to tell you," Faulkner said, "I think Cullman is going to be a very hard-hit county in north Alabama. All indications are that (Cullman is) going to have more flooded roads and roads that have washed out, and bridges along with this other damage than most places."

The final cost of damages in Cullman and the state are unknown, but Faulkner hopes to get those figures as soon as possible to expedite the emergency funding process.

During the storms of April 2011, Faulkner said that proof of damage was not needed to request funding from FEMA.

"The damage was so massive that it just took a look around to see that we have met our threshold. The FEMA administrator was actually in Cullman after those storms."

Faulkner emphasized that the safety of individuals is the number one priority.

After that, the short term goal is to ensure that emergency funding is secured so all damage can be repaired, and everything can get up and running again.

Sen. Paul Bussman, R-Cullman, also attended the meeting and inquired about specific numbers and needs of the community.

Faulkner said it was important for citizens of Cullman and Alabama to understand that it is possible for funding to be given in some areas and not given in others, merely based on county or state lines.

Even if Alabama qualifies statewide for assistance by reaching the $7 million-dollar threshold, individual counties must reach a variable per capita threshold.

The threshold for Cullman County per capita, according to Cullman County EMA Director Phyllis Little, is $287,049. "We have met that, and we have documented the damages," Little said.

The process of receiving funding will be slightly longer than in 2011, but, as Faulkner noted, "that can be a good thing, because during this (2015) storm Cullman does not have any deaths."

Damage (from Front)

the city is concerned, Scotty Tally of the Cullman City Street Department said that in 18 years on the job he has never seen anything like this.

Tally had the same message for Cullman citizens as Lang, "Bear with us," he said.

"I know it sounds rude, but stay out of the way and let us work. It's for the safety of everyone involved."

Mayor Townson spoke about the storm, saying, "First of all, we feel for everybody, because this affects us all. And this situation here at the Larkwood Bridge, it's the worst I've ever seen."

Townson said that the bridge will be closed indefinitely, also saying that there is a new bridge to replace this one in 2017.

"This bridge has flooded, I believe, about four times since I have been the mayor, so we have to get it higher up."

For those in need, whose homes have been destroyed by the storms, Townson said that "our hearts go out to them. Red Cross is available; EMA, United Way. We went through this in 2011, and we will come back."

Noah Chappell, Red Cross volunteer, said that the official American Red Cross Disaster Assessment of Cullman County found a total of 44 homes affected by the storms.

That includes: six destroyed, five with major damage, 23 affected and six apartment units affected.

"We gave out clean-up kits to those who requested them," Chappell said. "The clean-up kits include bleach, a mop, a commercial broom, chemicals for cleaning and a squeegee."

Chappell, who has volunteered in Oklahoma, South Carolina and Kentucky, along with Alabama, said that he has never seen anything like the flooding at Larkwood Falls.

Dale Greer, assistant director of the Cullman Economic Development Agency and instrumental agent in moving the Duck River Dam project forward, said that the reports about the damage to the dam are greatly exaggerated.

"The dam is not overflowing," Greer said.

While the dam was expected to take a year to fill up, it took less than a week, and according to the engineers onsite at the dam, all the equipment is running as designed.

"They did lose a generator and a welder," Greer said. "The cost of the generator is about $1 million, but I don't know the cost of the welder."

According to Greer, there were gauges in Vinemont that recorded eight inches of rain on the day after Christmas. "Which approaches the qualification of a 100-year flood," Greer said.

A 100-year flood is a flood event that has a one percent probability of occurring in any given year.

