SERIES 6 • ISSUE 4 • JANUARY 25, 2016
CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS


SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD VISITS CULLMAN P6

EXIT 305 OFFICIALLY OPENS: RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY DRAWS INFLUENTIAL CROWD

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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GOOD HOPE – On Friday, Jan. 22, exit 305, the new I-65 interchange at County Road 222 in Good Hope officially opened. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) opened the new exit to traffic after a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Topre America Corporation. The event was sponsored by the city of Cullman, the city of Good Hope, the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce and the Cullman County Commission. Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley, U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, R-Ala., Alabama Sen. Paul Bussman, R-Cullman and Alabama Rep. Corey Harbison, R-Cullman were in attendance.

Good Hope Mayor Jerry Bartlett said he believes the new exit is going to be a huge positive for the city, especially because all four corners around the exit are in Good Hope city limits.

"I believe it will eventually attract new business, therefore having an economic impact in the form of sales tax, gas/fuel tax and/or possibly lodging tax. It is also a gateway for Smith Lake and Smith Lake Park. It is really wide open

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Gov. Robert Bentley and many others attended Friday's ribbon cutting ceremony for the new interchange.


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EES TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE MEETS, ADOPTS STATE-APPROVED SCIENCE TEXTS P2



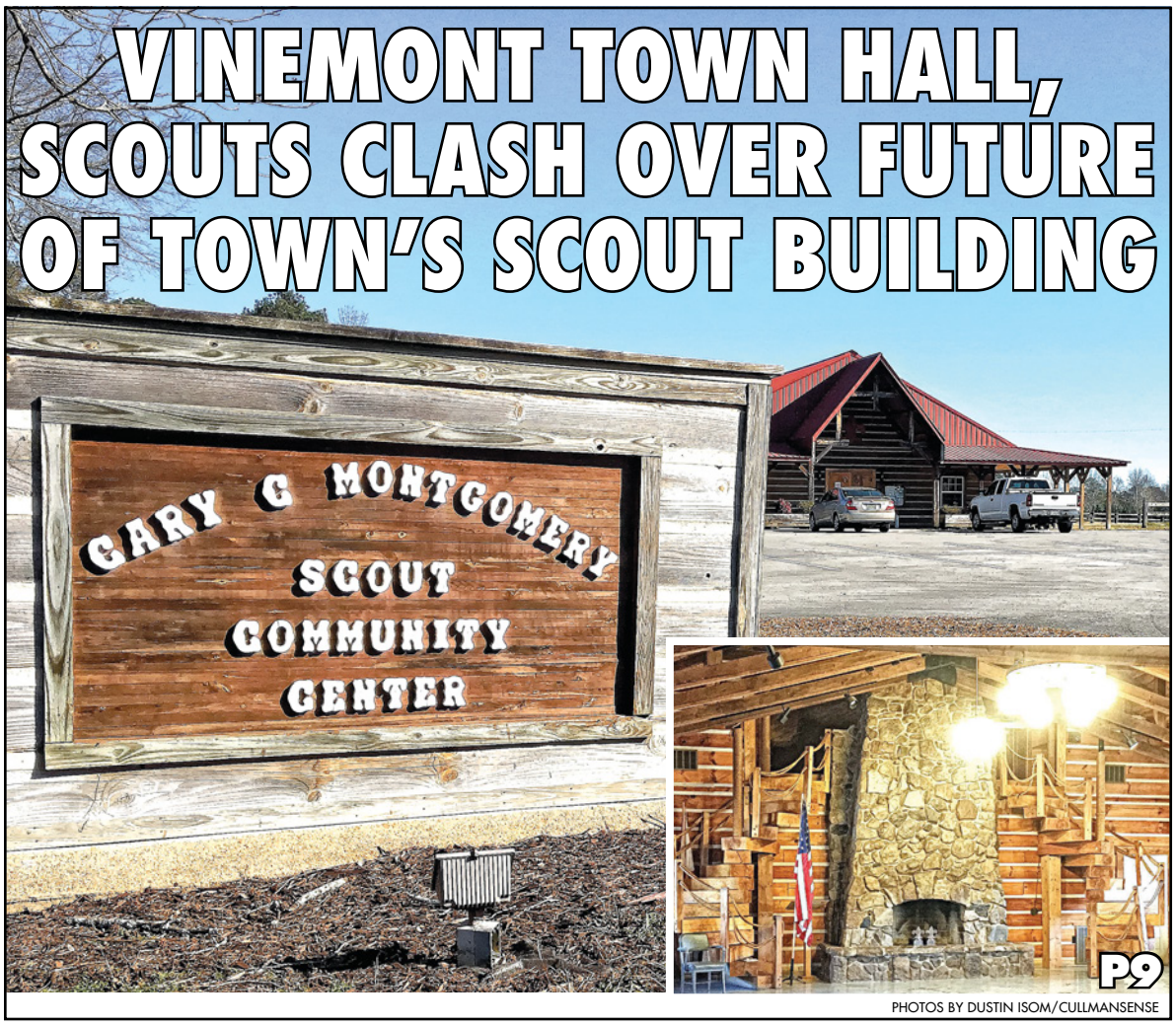
DONNY YARBROUGH

PROFILES IN FAITH

DONNY YARBROUGH, PASTOR OF SARDIS BAPTIST CHURCH P7

FLORIDA-GEORGIA LINE TO PERFORM AT ROCK THE SOUTH 2016 P10

VINEMONT TOWN HALL, SCOUTS CLASH OVER FUTURE OF TOWN'S SCOUT BUILDING



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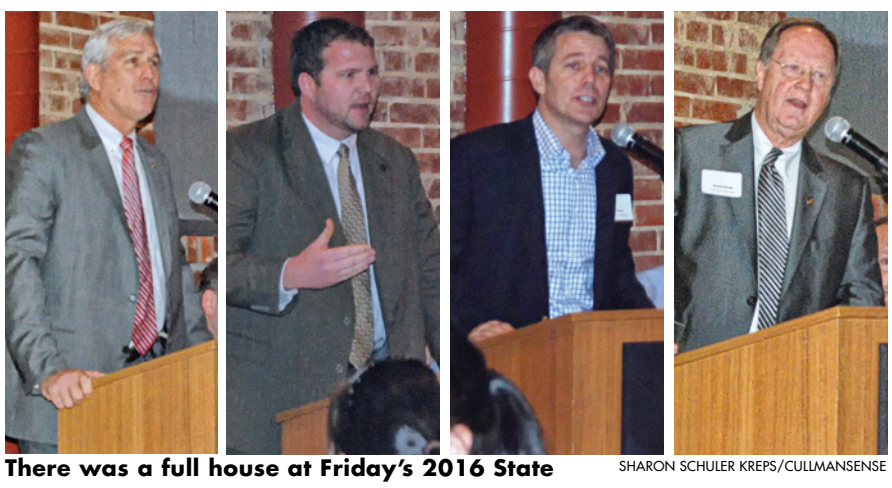
PHOTOS BY DUSTIN ISOM/CULLMANSENSE

TOUGH TALK AT 2016 STATE OF THE STATE

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN – At Friday's 2016 State of the State, Cullman's legislative delegation had some tough words for the crowd gathered at the All Steak Restaurant. The Cullman Area Chamber of Com-merce's January community luncheon was a forum to discuss issues in Cullman County, as well as the latest in-

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SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

There was a full house at Friday's 2016 State of the State community luncheon at All Steak.

FOOD BANK ADDS HOURS DUE TO INCREASED DEMAND

Wendy Sack
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CULLMAN – On Jan. 21, the Cullman Caring for Kids United Way food bank began opening on Thursdays from 9 a.m. - noon in addition to its regular weekly schedule of Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. - noon and 1 - 3 p.m.

Cullman Caring for Kids Executive Director Javon Daniel says that steadily increasing need in the community is the reason behind the extended hours. The food bank's board of directors voted for the extension.

"Since April of 2015 we have had over 550 families per month. In November of last year, we helped 624 families. We have talked about this for a few months, but the deciding factor was one day the first few days of November we helped 111 families in one day," Daniel said.

Daniel said that the food bank hasn't had one month since April of last year with less than 550 families served. The number of families steadily increased all through 2015.

"There is a huge need in Cullman that most of us are unaware of," he said. "Many children go to bed hungry; they don't have breakfast before school, a lot of the elderly on fixed incomes struggle to make ends meet with medical costs rising and utilities, so they turn to the food bank. That's why we want to be more available to the community."

The food bank serves

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MARCH PRIMARIES FULL OF REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES; DEMOCRATS SPARSELY REPRESENTED

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CULLMAN – On Wednesday the Cullman County Probate Office released sample ballots for the March 1 primaries.

"Sample ballots give the public the opportunity before the election to view what exactly will be on the ballot. There is a constitutional amendment on the ballot that voters may not be aware of," Cullman County Probate Judge Tammy Brown said.

While voting in primaries, voters must choose either the Democrat or Republican ballot. Brown said those not wanting to declare either party are still permitted to vote. Just on a smaller scale.

"For all primary elections, the voter must declare to vote in the Democrat or Republican Primary. In the event the voter will not choose there is a constitutional amendment on the ballot and the voter may choose to vote for that only," she said.

As far as an expectation of registered voters showing up to the polls on March 1, Brown said she cannot determine a number of registered voters who will vote.

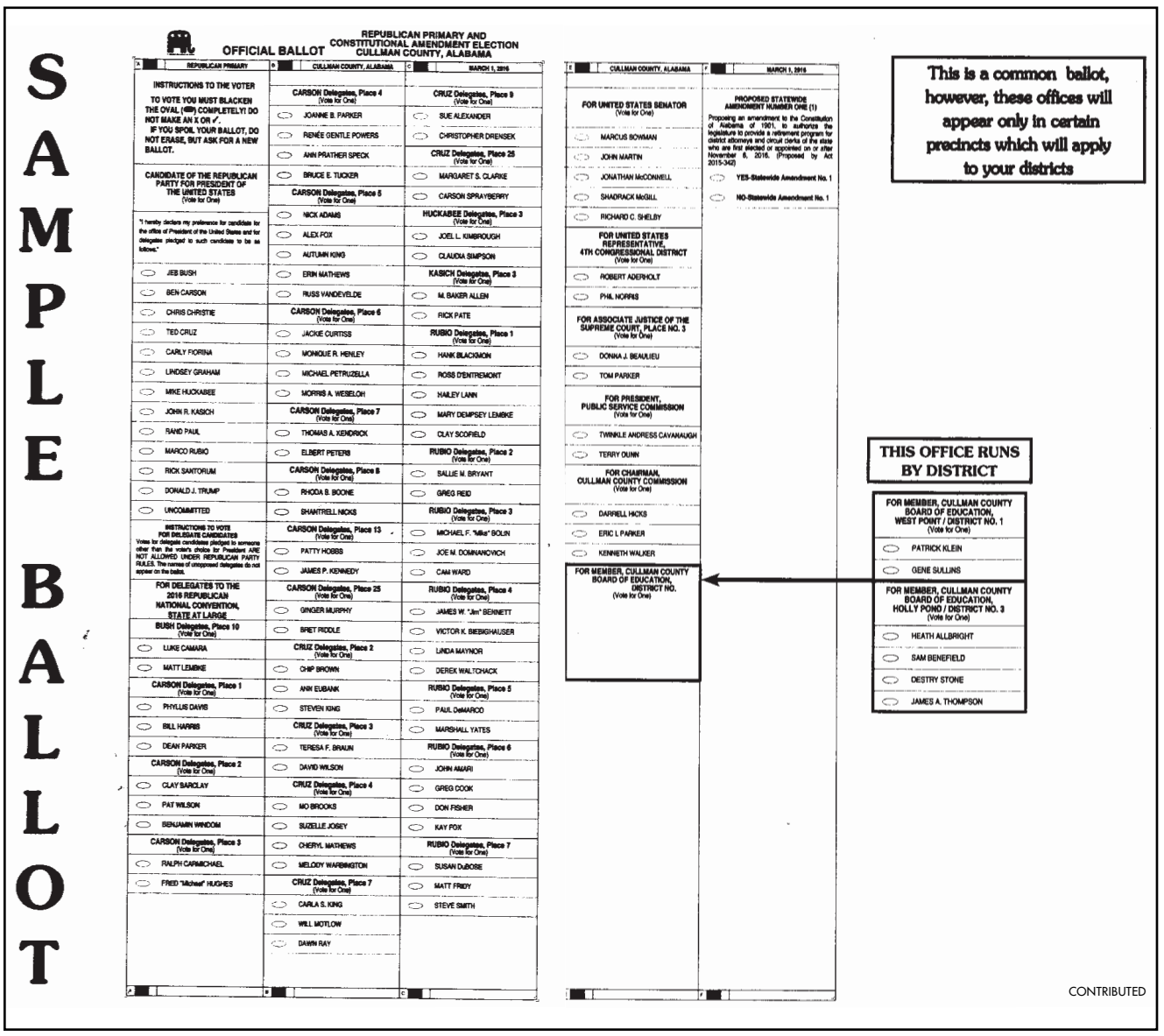
> **"I am reluctant to determine the number of voters that will actually vote. It would be great if all registered voters actually did vote on Election Day."**
>
> *– Cullman County Probate Judge Tammy Brown*

"It would be great if all registered voters actually did vote on Election Day," she said.

Brown said registered voters, "must provide current identification to vote (Driver's License, State-issued ID, etc.) A list of acceptable identification may be viewed on the Secretary of State website."

For a complete list visit http://www.sos.alabama.gov/downloads/press/photo-voter-id-rules_FINAL.pdf .

For more information, visit http://www.cullmancourts.org/probatecourt.html#elect.



CONTRIBUTED

EES TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE MEETS, ADOPTS STATE-APPROVED SCIENCE TEXTS

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CULLMAN – The East Elementary School (EES) Textbook Committee met on Wednesday, Jan. 20 in the school's Reading Resource Room to discuss the adoption of new science texts for the school. The committee also discussed the state's upcoming textbook adoption cycle as was referred to the State's approved textbook list.

The committee members present voted to adopt the entire list of science textbooks approved by the Alabama State Department of Education. The committee voted unanimously to adopt the list.

"We had our first textbook meeting back in September where each of us signed the Oath of Office," Lindsay Brannon, Textbook Committee chairman, explained. "Today, our second meeting, we have to adopt the entire state-approved textbook list, so we went over that. Then we look at the rejected list; we are not allowed to order anything from the rejected list. If something is not on the approved list, we can still order it, but it has to be (school) board-approved beforehand. So now the next step is we go to Athens and attend an expo. The committee will go there and look at the different textbook options. We will meet again and decide what we want to purchase."

The members of the East Elementary Textbook Committee are Lindsay Brannon, David Wiggins, Penny Clark, Sheree Parris, Alex Patterson, Cassie Bowen, Kristi Jackson, Amy Brown, Meighan Earnest, Laura Brock and Ashley Roberts.

For more on Alabama's textbook laws and adoption process, visit the Ala. State Dept. of Education's website at http://qrne.ws/book.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Members of the EES Textbook Committee adopted the state-approved textbook list after school on Wednesday.

TICKETS ON SALE FOR THIS YEAR'S LITTLE BLACK DRESS CHARITY BASH

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HANCEVILLE – Tickets are on sale now for this year's Little Black Dress Charity Bash, the annual Wallace State event benefiting the WSCC Alumni Association's Outstanding Women Scholarship. The bash will take place on Saturday, Feb. 27 at the Cullman Civic Center, with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. Dinner will be catered by Designs by Grace and The Flashbacks will provide entertainment.

In addition to the new location, this year, instead of the silent auction, door prizes will be awarded and guests will have the opportunity to shop from local vendors.

"We are excited about the move to the Cullman Civic Center," said WSCC Alumni and Special Projects Coordinator LaDonna Allen.

"The new venue provides more room for everyone to spread out and enjoy visiting with each other. It also allows us the opportunity to offer new experiences for our guests, including the new shopping area featuring wonderful items from local businesses.

"We're looking forward to the event and hope we will have many returning guests and vendors, as well as new guests who want to have a girls' night out with their friends and new sponsors who want to reach our audience," she added.

As always, there will be local 'celebrity' waiters, men from the community who accept tips for their excellent table-side service. All tips and proceeds from ticket sales and vendor fees will go to the Outstanding Women Scholarship fund.

Each year through this fund, the Alumni Association provides financial assistance to deserving applicants so that they may meet their educational goals. In the past, the scholarships have helped women pay for tuition, books or exam fees in order to receive certification required to obtain employment.

Ticket options for the Little Black Dress Charity Bash are $65 for a single ticket, $520 for a table of eight and $650 for a table of 10. Admission includes a catered four-course meal, which features a dessert bar.

A coffee bar will be offered to top off the meal. Each guest will receive a gift bag containing coupons provided by sponsors.

For more information about the event, to purchase tickets or to inquire about sponsorship and vendor opportunities, visit www.wsccalumni.org/lbd2016 or contact LaDonna Allen at 256-352-8071 or ladonna.allen@wallacestate.edu or Natalie Godwin at 256-352-7808 or natalie.godwin@wallacestate.edu.

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SIMCOE WORSHIP CENTER'S YOUTH PASTOR SPEAKS ABOUT RECENT CHURCH FIRE

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CONTRIBUTED

SIMCOE – On Jan. 18, a terrible fire ravaged the Simcoe Worship Center (SMC). Firefighters were on the scene quickly, battling the blaze and eventually extinguishing the flames. There were no injuries, but there was considerable damage to the church as a result. SMC's youth pastor, Justin Truett, talked to us about it today.

"The fire was called in a few minutes before 7 a.m. yesterday, Jan.18, 2016, by one of the deacons that lives right down the road from the church," he began. "We are officially unsure of how it hap-pened as of now, but we believe it possibly had something to do with the wiring in the older part of the building. This is purely speculative, and hopefully we will know more soon as the investigation continues. We are pleased for the hard work that was done during the fire by all firefighters that came and all police personal that were there to lend a helping hand."

Truett says that the damage to the church was extensive.

"One part of the church, where the youth department, the children's church and the nursery area were, was completely burned and destroyed. Eventually the second story, the one that housed the children's department, collapsed on the basement where the youth room was. This used to be the church's main sanctuary years ago," he added.

"There was also devastating damage due to the part of the building that connects the youth facilities and the main sanctuary area.

"The main sanctuary, fellowship hall, offices, classrooms and other areas of the church were affected by a lot of smoke damage and extreme heat from the fire. The main entrance, the foyer area, both upstairs and downstairs, was jet black with smoke damage and debris. Thankfully, there was no one hurt during this fire," he smiled.

Justin and his wife Chelsea are the new youth pastors at SMC, and just a few weeks ago, they start-ed renovating the outdated youth facilities.

"I truly believe with all my heart that this will NOT have a devastating impact on our youth ministry," he said.

"We believe that everything that happens - the good, the bad and the ugly - happens so that MANY PEOPLE will see the goodness and love of Jesus Christ! I am solely looking at this from a very biblical and faith-filled point of view. I believe that God has greatness planned for not only the youth and children we meet with at this great church, but more importantly, I believe that this will be the thing that launches us deeper into the community, to help, assist, bless and reach more people, so that the good news of the Gospel of Jesus will be heard loud and clearer."

Now that we know what the damages are, what's next for the church? Will they rebuild? Relocate? Truett had the following to say.

"Plans moving forward are to be discussed; there will be many things we will have to decide. We will seek the Lord's guidance and do what's best for the church and for the community, which will come in time as the days, weeks and months follow. Our temporary solution is as follows: We have had several churches in the community so graciously reach out to us and offer their buildings and facili-ties for us to gather to worship and do whatever we need to make plans to grow past this situation.

"We will be meeting at First Baptist Church in Fairview this Wednesday to have a meeting on what the future holds," he said.

"We will also discuss our gathering place for worship and prayer for the future. We are eternally grateful for the pastor and the staff at First Baptist in Fairview for their love and generosity to us for this Wednesday!"

As people watched the church burn yesterday, via online sources and news stations, many have asked what they can do to help.

"We at SWC ask that everyone who reads this will pray for us," he smiled warmly.

"That through all of this, we will listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, as this is the most important thing any of us could do, and follow his lead for our path moving forward."

SMC is located at 4442 County Road 1635. Visit them, and follow the progress, on Facebook at http://qrne.ws/smc.

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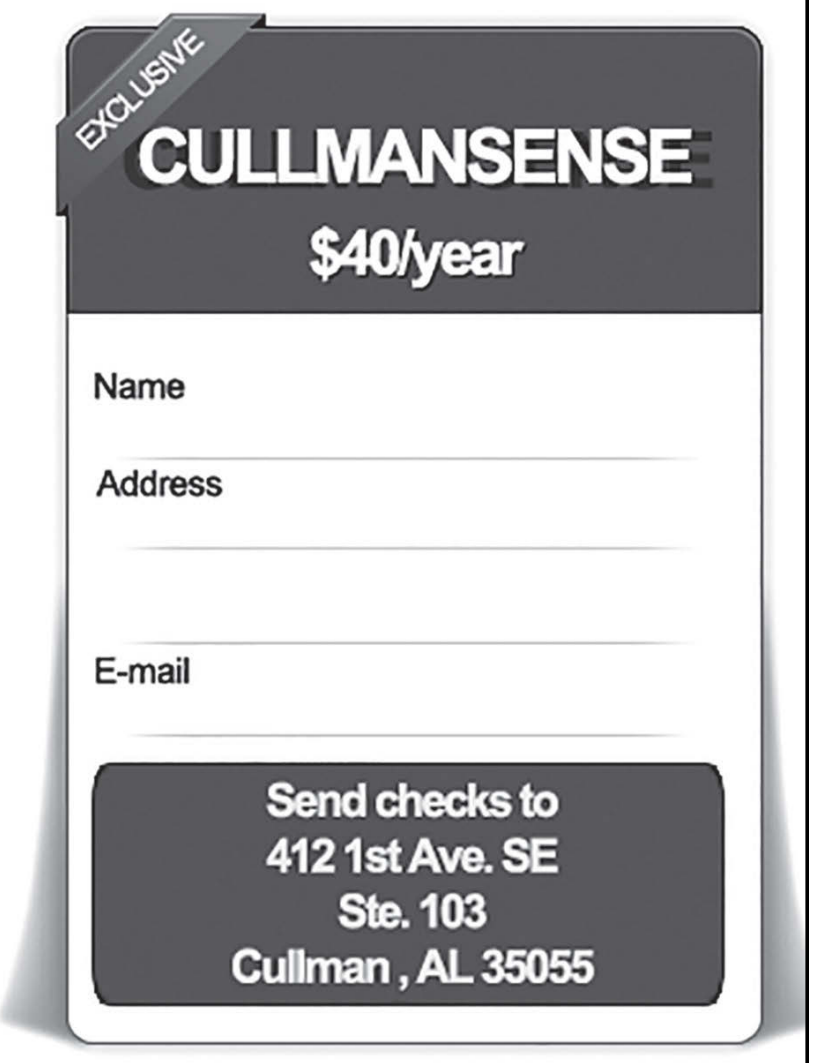
RELAY FOR LIFE KICKOFF CELEBRATION FEATURES HERO OF HOPE



GAIL CRUTCHFIELD

Helen Allen, left, of Relay For Life of Cullman County, with Bettye and Sam Janis. Bettye Janis is an American Cancer Society Hero of Hope speaker. She addressed those attending the 2016 Kickoff Celebration of Relay For Life of Cullman County.

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CULLMAN GRAD BECOMES FIRST WALLACE STATE MEN'S TENNIS SIGNEE

Russell Moore
WSCC

HANCEVILLE - Clint Watson is the first Wallace State men's tennis signee in the program's new era.

Watson, a 2014 Cullman High School graduate, signed a letter of intent recently to play for the Lions beginning in the fall 2016 season. Wallace State is reintroducing its men's and women's tennis programs this fall after they were discontinued in 2004.

"I'm super excited to be the first one to sign, and I'm just glad I can continue to play tennis. I took a year off from it and really missed it. I think this opportunity presented itself at the right time. I came to Wallace State as a student not knowing a tennis team would be started. It all just fell into place," said the 6-foot-4 Watson. "It's truly an honor to be the first one on board."

Watson carved out a stellar high school tennis career with the Bearcats, finishing as a three-time state champion and compiling a 141-29 record.

He became a force on the courts as early as eighth grade, when he won a Class 5A individual state championship as the Bearcats No. 4 singles player in 2010. He also won a pair of state titles in doubles action throughout his career.

Watson, who plans to major in education, didn't pursue a collegiate tennis career after graduating from Cullman and spent one year at UNA before enrolling at Wallace State.

Before the Wallace State tennis programs were discontinued, they accounted for four of the seven NJCAA national titles earned by the college. The men's program won NJCAA Division II titles in 1995 and 1996 and the women in 1995 and 1999.

Watson is proud to be joining the rich athletics tradition at Wallace State.

"Paul (Creech) has been explaining to me how successful the tennis program was before. They always competed for championships," Watson said. "I'm proud to be part of the process to get Wallace State tennis back to where it once was." Creech is serving as Wallace State's tennis recruiter.

For more about the programs, contact Creech at 256-352-8370 or paul.creech@wallacestate.edu. For more about Wallace State athletics, visit http://athletics.wallacestate.edu.

PREP BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

WEEK OF 1-25-16

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

MONDAY
Hanceville vs Holly Pond
West Point vs Lawrence County
Fairview vs Good Hope

TUESDAY
St. Bernard vs Southeastern
Vinemont vs West Point
Good Hope vs Cold Springs
Cullman @ Austin

THURSDAY
Fairview vs Hanceville
Cold Springs vs Vinemont

FRIDAY
Hanceville @ Walker
Good Hope vs Winston County

PREP BASKETBALL SCORING WRAP-UP

MONDAY
Boys
Cold Springs 72, Fairview 39

Girls
Holly Pond 59, Vinemont 15

TUESDAY
Boys
West Point 45, Good Hope 34.

Girls
Cold Springs 50, West Point 41

WEDNESDAY
Boys
Hanceville 61, Vinemont 18

Girls
Good Hope 42, Hanceville 32

THURSDAY
Girls
Good Hope 28, Fairview 24
Cold Springs 44, Holly Pond 40

SATURDAY
Boys
Cold Springs 68, Holly Pond 47
Hanceville 84, West Point 83 (4OT)

CULLMAN COUNTY VARSITY CHAMPIONSHIP SET

Josh McBrayer
Sports Correspondent

HANCEVILLE - After a solid week of blowouts and nail-biters, the championship games are set for the varsity bracket of the Cullman County Basketball Tournament. Here is a rundown of the games and how each team got to the championship.

Boys
Cold Springs vs. Hanceville
Cold Springs has been red hot throughout the entire tournament and they showed that in their opener against Fairview.

Tristian Chambers and Josh Freeman each scored 20+ points in their 72-39 first-round win.

Next they faced the No. 1 seed Holly Pond Broncos and they picked up right where they left off vs. Fairview.

The Eagles could do no wrong as they built a big lead to open the game and stayed firmly in control for the entire game, coasting into the championship game.

Hanceville opened their tournament with a 61-18 victory over Vinemont.

Their second game was against the West Point Warriors and it was an instant classic.

It was the longest game in Cullman County Tournament history, with four overtime periods and a buzzer beating three-point basket to punch their ticket to the finals.

Girls
Cold Springs vs. Good Hope
The Cold Springs Lady Eagles started their run to the championship by defeating West Point in a 50-41 contest.

The Lady Eagles were down going into the fourth quarter, but they were near perfect from the line in the final frame allowing them to advance.

They then had to go on to face the Lady Broncos of Holly Pond in a thrilling contest. Cold Springs trailed by 12 at the half but turned the offense and defense up in the second half.

Cold Springs held Holly Pond to just eight points in the third and fourth quarters, allowing themselves and chance to take the lead and head to the championship.

Good Hope had a little easier road, but not by much.

The Lady Raiders' road started with the Hanceville Lady Bulldogs and the game was a barn burner.

With the game neck and neck in the early going, Good Hope found their rhythm and finished the game with a big run to advance to the semi-final game.

Here they would face the No. 1 seeded Hanceville Lady Bulldogs.

In a low scoring affair, Good Hope did just enough to pull out a win and advance to the championship final.

Make your plans to attend the championship games on Wednesday, starting at 4 p.m. at Tom Drake Coliseum on the campus of Wallace State Community College.

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Part of a huge crowd at G.W. Ponder's Store for a $500 drawing in the late 1920s.



Ponder's Bonded Warehouse in 1964 at 3rd Avenue and 5th Street, SW.



G.W. Ponder, Sr., 1880-1954

HISTORICAL PROFILE

G.W. PONDER, BUSINESS TYCOON

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Mr. George Washington (G.W.) Ponder was one of Cullman's most prominent citizens in the early 1900s. In fact, his name still marks a building downtown, a marking left to pay homage to one of the city's most successful businessmen.

Ponder was born in the western part of Cullman County near Logan on Feb. 20, 1880. He was the son of pioneer settlers, Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Ponder and, as one of a large family of children, started making his own way in the world at an early age.

His parents, natives of Georgia, moved to Cullman County when the western part of the county was still primarily wilderness.

Schools were few and the terms were short, causing the opportunities for education to be very limited.

He received his education at Logan and other county schools and later took a business course at a Birmingham college.

G.W. married Miss Pearl Sims of the Logan community when he was a young man. The happy couple had four children, A.A. (Pete), E.E., Melda and G.W. Jr.

When he was a young man, it was apparent G.W. had an unusual knack for business.

His practical application of business methods, as well as his appreciation of the art of business, was significantly reflected in his success.

He had an innate ability to grasp opportunities and possessed powers of keen observation which were assets that aided him in his climb up the ladder in the business world.

Leaving his father's farm at the age of 21, he began his business career in Birmingham as an employee in a railway shop. He returned to Cullman two years later and took a job as a clerk with G.W. Johnson, a merchant in the city.

In 1909, he and W.O. Kelley started a business venture of their own selling goods. The store was called Ponder and Kelley Mercantile.

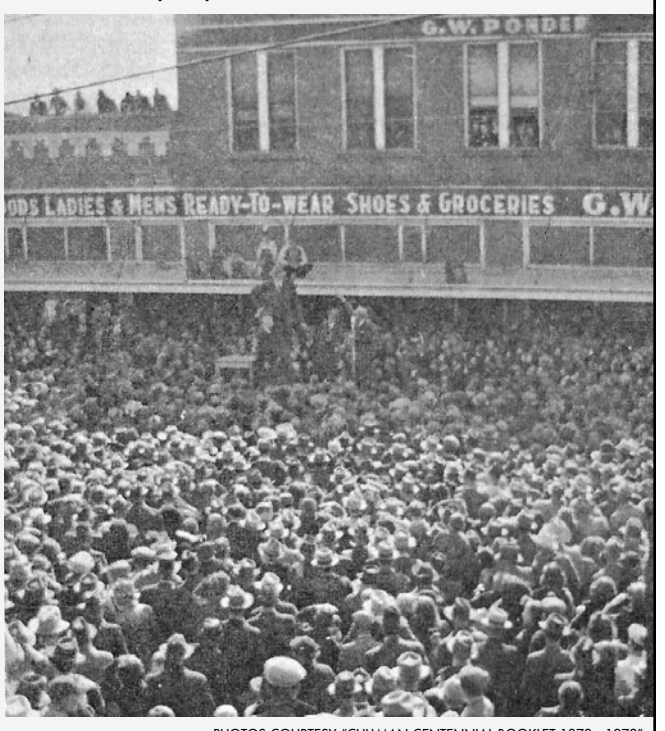
They set up shop in an old wooden structure and specialized in farm supplies. It was amazingly successful. New lines were added, and they quickly outgrew their first location. Their place of operation became one of the largest mercantile stores in the county.

A very busy man, Ponder was on duty twelve hours each day, but also found time to take part in civic and church activities.

He had a wide circle of friends across the state of Alabama and was also very popular in state mercantile circles.

Ponder spent his spare time working as a booster and promoting the Alabama Merchants Association, with which he had long been associated.

Ponder was considered to be an all-around good citizen and one of the state's most outstanding businessmen.



PHOTOS COURTESY "CULLMAN CENTENNIAL BOOKLET 1873 - 1973"

A crowd gathers at G.W. Ponder's store for one of his special attractions.

State (from Front)

formation out of Montgomery.

Alabama Rep. Ed Henry, R-Cullman, Alabama Rep Randall Shedd, R-Cullman, Alabama Rep. Corey Harbison, R-Cullman and Alabama Sen. Paul Bussman, R-Cullman spoke to the audience about the particular items they are working on in Montgomery. Medicaid, pay raises for teachers and overall budgets were some of the biggest issues addressed.

"Medicaid has asked for $150 million more than we gave them last year," Henry said. "At this point we are going to be doing good if we can level fund them. I know anybody that's in healthcare, like the hospitals, you are looking for a Medicaid expansion or at least a full funding of Medicaid. But the problem in the state is every year Medicaid comes and needs more money. So they need $150 mil-lion this year, next year they are going to need that $150 million plus another $150 million to proba-bly $180 million, nearly $200 million, and the following year they are going to need that $300 million that we gave them plus another; it's never ending. Our economy is not growing fast enough to sub-sidize that growth in Medicaid."

Henry's comments came after a contentious budget meeting in Montgomery on Jan. 13, where the Alabama Medicaid Agency asked for a $157 million increase.

The Agency is the largest beneficiary of the state's General Fund, and the request would be an increase of 23 percent from this year's $685 appropriation for Medicaid.

Shedd also decried Medicaid spending and spending in general. He spoke highly of the sales tax system in Cullman County.

"My goal this year is to amend and defend legislation in this session," said Shedd.

"Medicaid is a se-rious problem and spending in Alabama state government is a serious problem. Yesterday I told the people at the Decatur Chamber of Commerce about the great system we have here in Cullman County. Many years ago we decided to share a system of sales tax to share with everybody so we wouldn't have a reason to fight; I'm talking about the governmental entities. We set up a formula where everybody benefits when there is business activity. The more business we have in Cullman County, the more business we do creates revenue without raising taxes, and that is revenue stream we need in Montgomery."

Harbison, also the former mayor of Good Hope, shared details about a possible pay increase for Al-abama educators based on their performance.

"One issue we've discussed during our first session is a pay raise for teachers," he began.

"There is a bill called the Raise Bill, I believe, that's coming up. I'm sure there are some good things within that bill. In Montgomery, sometimes they have to include bad things in with the bill to get them to pass along with the good things. I know there is a lot of emphasis on education, but I think we need to appreciate all state workers. I don't believe in singling out a specific group to give raises to or not give them to. In this raise bill, I believe they are going to try to give raises to teachers based on sheer per-formance. I'm all about accountability for teachers, but I do have a problem with giving someone their salary based on performance of the student."

Bussman talked about the overall budget problems facing the state.

"I think the biggest issue is going to be the budgets," Bussman stated.

"I have a tremendous concern for the way we budget in Alabama. We work of a fifteen-sheet spreadsheet, $50 million dollars for this and $30 million dollars for that and $700 million for this, and there is very little information in that budget that tells us what that money goes for. This last year it became very clear to me that we're going to have to look into these budgets to figure out what the money is being spent for, if these programs are working, if it's wasteful and what we need to do with it."

Preliminary budget hearings were held in Montgomery the week of Jan. 11, with the outlook dismal.

In all, state departments have requested more than $200 million in additional revenue, the Medicaid request the largest, followed by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) and Department of Corrections. State budget hearings begin Feb. 1. For more information, visit http://lfo.alabama.gov.

For more information on Chamber events, visit http://business.cullmanchamber.org/events/calendar.



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD VISITS CULLMAN

Missoula Children's Theatre Production Features Area Youth

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CULLMAN – The Missoula Children's Theatre (MCT), through a program with Cullman City Parks and Recreation, presented "Little Red Riding Hood" at the Cullman Civic Center on Saturday, Jan. 23. With the help of a few actors and directors from MCT, over 60 area children were able to turn the classic fairy tale into an entertaining performance with lots of twists, turns and giggles along the way!

During Saturday's performances, pre-teen Red Riding Hood and her friends tried to stay on the straight and narrow path as they made their way toward Grandma's house. Pesky raccoons, a gang of young wolves and troublesome dark shadows kept Red and her friends on their toes as they struggled to keep up with Grandma's basket of goodies.

Surprisingly, well-known characters weren't quite their usual selves during the show; the Big Bad Wolf wasn't such a bad guy and the best quality of the handsome Woodsman was his dashing good looks. Red Riding Hood's family took part in the show and everyone loved them. Mother Hood, Sister Hood, Brother Hood, Baby Hood and Robin Hood made appearances throughout the performance.

"This is our first time to work with the Missoula Children's Theatre," said Carol Lawrence, whose daughter was in the play. "We loved it; I wish they (MCT) would come around more often," she smiled. "It's been a busy week. They had auditions Monday and then they started Monday night with practices for the older kids and then they had practices every night since then except Friday night due to the weather. It's almost like a theater camp, an intensive week-long theater camp where they come in and do their thing and put on a show. It's great!

"My daughter Parker is one of the raccoons," she added. "She absolutely loved it! She thought it was so much fun. I don't think she fully realizes that this is the end of it," she chuckled. "She wants to keep going and keep doing it. She will be doing it again next year for sure!"

"I liked the play. I tried out but didn't get a part - I got stage fright," 10-year-old Piper Lawrence grinned shyly. "I am going to try it again next year."

The children worked very hard, and in the end, performed like professionals.

MCT is a nonprofit organization that fosters enrichment and education in children of all ages through theater. They are best known for their tour project, which is the largest touring children's theater program in the United States. They work with more than 65,000 children in nearly 1,200 week-long residencies each year and cover all 50 states, as well as 16 other countries.

Each week, up to 45 teams of two tour actors/directors travel to new towns, audition and cast 50-60 local children for an original musical production. They then run rehearsals and teach workshops. At the end of the week, the children perform a full-scale musical, including full costumes, sets, lights and props that the directors bring along with them.

For more information about MCT, call 406-728-1911, visit http://mctinc.org/ or follow them on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/MissoulaChildrensTheatre. For more information about Cullman Parks and Recreation programs, visit http://cullmanrecreation.org.



More than 60 area youth worked all week to deliver two wonderful performances of "Little Red Riding Hood" at the Civic Center on Saturday.

SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

> **"My daughter Parker is one of the raccoons. She absolutely loved it! She thought it was so much fun. I don't think she fully realizes that this is the end of it. She wants to keep going and keep doing it."**
>
> – Carol Lawrence, parent

Exit (from Front)

for growth and just an all-around win-win situation for the whole of Cullman County," he said. "I'd like to thank Gov. Bentley, (our) state senators, (our) state legislators, ALDOT, City of Good Hope council members and Planning Commission, the city of Cullman, the Cullman County Commission and the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, just to name a few."

Cullman Mayor Max A. Townson shared Bartlett's enthusiasm over the project.

"The future looks very bright for all of Cullman County and the new 222 interchange," he said.

"Creating jobs and establishing parks and rec around the new interchange is about improving the quality of life for all of our citizens. What's good for the city is good for the county, and what's good for the county is good for the city," said Townson.

Townson said that one of most positive benefits of the new interchange will be the increased reve-nue from both industry and tourism, the latter particularly around Smith Lake, for Good Hope, Cull-man County and the city of Cullman.

"The Cullman Chamber of Commerce will also benefit from lodging taxes, but the full impact could be several years down the road. We never abate school taxes, so schools will also benefit from the fu-ture development in this area," he added.

Townson also said the development of 222 could provide some relief from the other interchanges as far as traffic concerns go. Business-wise, he doesn't think there will be a decrease in sales taxes, but the interchanges could become a destination point for travelers on I-65.

Assistant Director of the Cullman Economic Development Agency, Dale Greer said, "A new interchange routinely opens property for retail and commercial development. From a government perspective, that means new jobs, new business and a source of new tax revenue that continues the growth of a community. It often increases the retail offerings in a community and creates hotel and lodging opportunities. Everyone benefits.

"Because of the proximity to the industrial parks," Greer continued, "I see great potential for the new 305 exit to become a key tractor trailer truck route and the potential to reduce some of the traffic congestion (particularly around the school opening and closing (times)) at the 304 exit."

Gov. Bentley talked about the new interchange and spoke of the finances that allowed it to come about. He said he was extremely proud of how everyone worked together to accomplish the day's event.

"I am proud to be here with you all today," said Bentley. "I like to cut ribbons for new factories and new roads because that means we are making good progress. In this part of the state, up here, you all are doing fantastic," he said.

"I am proud of what you do here in Cullman and all of you in this ar-ea. You do a great job and have great representation. You've got a good senator; you've got good representatives here that do a great job."



This 4-hour course will also provide community leaders with an understanding of the necessary plans and tools needed in planning for natural disasters, and will help them to better understand and identify personnel best equipped to address response and recovery requirements in the case of an actual disaster. This course will assist community leaders to identify and define the roles and responsibilities they may be expected to assume in the event of a natural disaster given their leadership positions, as well as those of the first responders and support personnel in the response and recovery phase.

February 23, 2016
8:00 am - 12:00 pm
Cullman, AL

LOCATION AND DETAILS:
Cullman County EMA Training Room (Basement)
2020 Beech Avenue SE
Cullman, AL 35055

FOR REGISTRATION: https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/1265

FOR REGISTRATION ASSISTANCE:
Herman Utoafili • 808-725-5237 • utoafili@hawaii.edu

MODULES
- ✓ Hazards Overview
- ✓ Community Preparedness and Mitigation
- ✓ Value of Partnerships
- ✓ Preparation of an Emergency Operations Plan

NDPTC
NATIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING CENTER
at the UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I

828 Fort Street Mall • Suite 320 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: 808.956.0600 • Fax: 808.536.9110
website: ndptc.hawaii.edu

As a member of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, the NDPTC is a DHS/FEMA training partner dedicated to providing critical all-hazards training throughout the United States and its territories with an emphasis on natural hazards and island and coastal communities

FEMA

PROFILES IN FAITH

DONNY YARBROUGH, PASTOR OF SARDIS BAPTIST CHURCH

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

TRIMBLE - Sardis Baptist Church was founded by settlers in 1882 because they wanted a Baptist church that would serve as a spiritual light to the Smith Lake community. Today, Sardis Baptist is committed to being a church that reaches out to the community and helps people see they don't have to have everything figured out, because God already does; all you have to do is trust in him and follow him.

The church is under the direction of Pastor Donny Yarbrough.

Yarbrough and his wife Rachel, married almost seven years, have two little boys, 3-year-old Justus and 18-month-old Jalon. After graduating from J.B. Pennington High School in Blountsville, Yarbrough attended Mississippi State University, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Broadcast Meteorology with a minor in Communications.

"I never had a call to ministry until late 2007 into 2008," he began. "I had continued to pursue a career in broadcast meteorology, but that all changed in the late winter/spring of 2008 when I attended a tent revival with my mother."

Yarbrough witnessed to his mother about Christ for many years, and after praying for his mother to become a Christian, little did he know that his faith would become sight that night.

"Mother began weeping during the time of invitation, so I asked her if she wanted me to walk to the front with her and pray with her, and she nodded her head yes," he continued.

"As we knelt at that small altar under the tent, we had the whole community of Walter praying with us. We prayed for my mother to be saved from her sins and that she would give her life to Christ.

"That night, I felt as though I heard God speak to me more loudly and clearly than ever before," he smiled warmly.

"It was as close as one can come to hearing God speak audibly. He said, 'This is what I want you to do for the rest of your life.' I felt it deep in my heart. The rest, as they say, is just details. I preached my first message shortly thereafter and haven't looked back since," he chuckled.

Yarbrough has been a pastor for a little over seven years now. He has been a full-time pastor for about three and a half years.

"I am blessed to pastor Sardis Baptist Church in Trimble," he said.

"They placed their faith in me as a young and inexperienced pastor in December of 2008 and made it official in March of 2009.

"One of my biggest challenges as a church leader is overcoming the obstacles in an ever-changing culture," he stated.

"One has to always be forward-thinking and seeking God's heart for what the future needs to look like for their church to continue to be effective. We have the greatest message that anyone could ever hear, but being creative and effective in getting that message to those who could truthfully care less is something that continually keeps my heart and mind burdened."

When speaking of his church, Yarbrough lights up like a Christmas tree. It is obvious he truly loves his work as well as those to whom he ministers.

"Our church has been around for a long time here in Trimble, over 125 years actually," he beamed.

"We are grateful for the heritage of faith many wonderful Christians have established over the decades. Over time, we have transitioned from a predominantly older congregation to one that is truly multi-generational. It is filled with kids, teens and college-age students, all the way to an outstanding group of seniors," he grinned. "We have exciting, powerful praise and worship music and we strive to preach and teach the Bible in a practical manner. We want people (to) come and leave knowing they have learned what they need to learn to become better for Christ in their everyday life. Simply, we are committed to making disciples through a process we call LOVE, GROW, SERVE."

Yarbrough encourages his congregation to love God with all their hearts and help others to do the same.

The church is located at 6645 County Road 813 in Cullman. For more information, call 256-739-5300 or email sbc@sardisbaptistcullman.com. Visit them online at http://www.sardisbaptistcullman.com/ or http://qrne.ws/0.



Donny Yarbrough, pastor of Sardis Baptist Church, his wife Rachel and sons Justus and Jalon. DONNY YARBROUGH

CPC Cullman Primary Care
Multi-Specialty Group



CULLMAN PRIMARY CARE
CENTER FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT
1800 Ala. Highway 157, Suite 201
Cullman, Alabama 35055
Open Monday – Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

CPC WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME DR. BALJINDER K. BRAR TO THE FAMILY!
"I believe successful patient care is born from collaboration, honest dialogue, and always keeping patients informed about their diagnoses and treatment options. My goal is to improve patients' health and quality of life using a personalized, multidisciplinary approach." - Dr. Baljinder K. Brar

Call 256-775-7246 to schedule an appointment
REFERRALS FROM YOUR PRIMAY CARE PHYSICIAN ARE REQUIRED

Board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, she is expertly trained in a variety of diagnostic specialties and treatments include:

√ Occipital Nerve Blocks
√ Epidural Steroid Injections
√ Trigger Point Injections
√ Facet Joint Injections
√ Kyphoplasty
√ Joint Injections
√ Botox for migraines
√ Spinal Cord Stimulator Trial



CULLMAN PRIMARY CARE WELCOMES
BALJINDER BRAR, M.D., FAAPMR

Dr. Brar began her services at CPC Center for Pain Management in January 2016 after relocating to Cullman.
–
Dr. Brar completed her fellowship training in Interventional Pain Management at Alabama Orthopedic, Spine and Sports Medicine Associates in Birmingham, Al.
–
Dr. Brar received her Doctorate of Medicine in 2002 from Karol Marcinkowski University of Medical Sciences in Poznan, Poland.
–
Dr. Brar completed her residency training in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. During her residency, she served as a department representative for both the Committee on Graduate Medical Education and the Committee of Interns and Residents. She interned in general surgery at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons at Harlem Hospital in New York.
–
She is an advocate for continuing education, therefore Dr. Brar dedicates considerable time to learning about advanced pain management techniques and breakthrough therapies. She has also trained in using ultrasound guidance for multiple procedures.

Monday

ARSEA/APEAL Meeting
Alabama Retired State Employees and Public Employees Action League meet at 10 a.m. at the Cullman County office building- 402 Arnold St.

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. and Thursdays from 9 a.m. - noon for eligible families. Located at 402 Arnold St. NE 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 Cull-man Senior Center is located at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road NW.

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 homeworkala-bama.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. NE to learn more.

Kiwanis Club
The Cullman Kiwanis Club invites all local men and women who are interested in taking part in com-munity service along with great fellowship, fun, networking, and learning to attend their weekly meet-ing 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. SE) Childcare is available. Call 256-775-2600 for more information. Crisis Line: 256-734-6100.

AA Meeting
The Cullman Downtown Alcoholics Anonymous will meet at 1519 St. Joseph St. NW. Every day at noon will be an open discussion meeting, Sunday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion and speaker meeting, Tuesday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion meeting (with meal at 6:30 p.m.), Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday at 10:30 a.m. is women's big book study; and Friday at 7 p.m. is a closed discus-sion meeting (no card signed). All meetings are non-smoking. The last Tuesday of each month is open speaker meeting/ birthday night. For more information, contact the AA coordinator at 256-736-6000.
Free English Classes
The Link of Cullman County hosts classes, 10 a.m. on Mondays and 6 p.m. on Tuesdays. Beginner and Advanced classes available. Call 256-775-0028 for information.

Tuesday

Human Trafficking Awareness and Investigation Presentation
This presentation, open to the public, is sponsored by the Cullman County Human Trafficking Task Force, District Attorney Wilson Blaylock, Judge Kim Chaney and Cullman Savings Bank. Guest pre-senter will be Scott Santoro, senior training advisor for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign. The event will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 26 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at Daystar Church, 200 Daystar Drive in Cullman.

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. and Thursdays from 9 a.m. - noon for eligible families. Located at 402 Arnold St. NE 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 homeworkala-bama.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. NE 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. SW.

Cullman Knifty Knitters
Members of the Cullman Knifty Knitters group meet each Tuesday afternoon at 3 p.m. in the Cull-man 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 admis-sion 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 Bowl-ing 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.

AA Meeting
The Cullman Downtown Alcoholics Anonymous will meet at 1519 St. Joseph St. NW. Every day at noon will be an open discussion meeting, Sunday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion and speaker meeting, Tuesday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion meeting (with meal at 6:30 p.m.), Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday at 10:30 a.m. is women's big book study; and Friday at 7 p.m. is a closed dis-cussion meeting (no card signed). All meetings are non-smoking. The last Tuesday of each month is open speaker meeting/ birthday night. For more information, contact the AA coordinator at 256-736-6000.

Celebrate Recovery
Meets at Holly Pond Methodist Church on Tuesday nights. Free meal at 6 p.m. Program starts at 6:30 p.m. Two court stamps available. Open to everyone with a Hurt, Habit or Hang-up. 37851 AL Highway 91 in Holly Pond.

Addiction Recovery
The Link of Cullman County hosting Christ-centered, 12-Step Addiction Recovery meetings on Tues-days and Thursdays at noon. 1101 Third Ave. SE in Cullman. Call 256-775-0028 for more infor-mation.

Free English Classes
The Link of Cullman County hosts classes, 10 a.m. on Mondays and 6 p.m. on Tuesdays. Beginner and Advanced classes available. Call 256-775-0028 for information.

Wednesday

2016 State of Hospital Address/ Healthcare Professional of the Year
CRMC CEO James Clements will present information on the current State of the Cullman Regional Medical Center. The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce will present the Healthcare Professional of the Year award. The event will be held in the Colonel Cullmann Room in Professional Office Build-ing II from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. There is no cost, but reservations are requested. Please register by calling 256-737-2754 or via email at news@crmchospital.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 Cull-man Senior Center is located at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road NW.

Free Online Tutoring
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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 infor-mation, 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 Wednes-day 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.

AA Meeting
The Cullman Downtown Alcoholics Anonymous will meet at 1519 St. Joseph St. NW. Every day at noon will be an open discussion meeting, Sunday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion and speaker meeting, Tuesday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion meeting (with meal at 6:30 p.m.), Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday at 10:30 a.m. is women's big book study; and Friday at 7 p.m. is a closed discus-sion meeting (no card signed). All meetings are non-smoking. The last Tuesday of each month is open speaker meeting/ birthday night. For more information, contact the AA coordinator at 256-736-6000.

Thursday

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. and Thursdays from 9 a.m. - noon for eligible families. Located at 402 Arnold St. NE Ste. W-1. For more information, or to make a donation, call 256-739-1111. www.cullmancaringforkids.com

Free Online Tutoring
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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 NW

AA Meeting
The Cullman Downtown Alcoholics Anonymous will meet at 1519 St. Joseph St. NW. Every day at noon will be an open discussion meeting, Sunday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion and speaker meeting, Tuesday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion meeting (with meal at 6:30 p.m.), Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday at 10:30 a.m. is women's big book study; and Friday at 7 p.m. is a closed dis-cussion meeting (no card signed). All meetings are non-smoking. The last Tuesday of each month is open speaker meeting/ birthday night. For more information, contact the AA coordinator at 256-736-6000.

Southwest Cullman Historical Society
Meeting at 6 p.m. at Brushy Pond Community Center at 2729 County Road 143 in Bremen. Call Joan at 256-615-9249 for more information.

Information Meeting for Group Trip to Australia
Evelyn Burrow Museum at WSCC at 5:30 p.m. for those interested in learning more about the trip, July 1-12. For more information, call Kristen at 256-352-8118.

Addiction Recovery
The Link of Cullman County hosting Christ-centered, 12-Step Addiction Recovery meetings on Tues-days and Thursdays at noon. 1101 Third Ave. SE in Cullman. Call 256-775-0028 for more infor-mation.

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. and Thursdays from 9 a.m. - noon for eligible families. Located at 402 Arnold St. NE Ste. W-1. For more information, or to make a donation, call 256-739-1111. www.cullmancaringforkids.com

Dulcimers Lessons
Senior Spirit Program now offering lessons at the Donald E. Green Senior Center on 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. SW.

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 NW.

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 Wednes-day and Friday afternoon at 1 p.m. The center is located at Ingle Park at 1621 Cleveland Ave. SW. 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.

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Saturday

Southern Gospel Winterfest at Stonebridge Farms
Featuring The Perrys, The Kingsmen and New Ground. Starts at 5 p.m. Doors open at 3 p.m. In the Browne Stone Center at Stonebridge Farms, 281 County Road 717 in Cullman. Tickets are $10. For more information, call 256-734-9765.

Loomis Bros. Circus
World-renowned circus featuring acrobats, clowns, daredevils, white tigers, elephants and more! Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center, 17645 U.S. Highway 31. Saturday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m.; Monday at 4:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Full-price admission is $20 for adults and $8 for children ages 2-12. Children 2 and under are always free. Coupons for Free Kids Tickets are available at many merchants throughout Cullman County. Coupons can also be found on the show's Facebook page located at facebook.com/loomiscircus. http://www.loomiscircus.com

Frosty Pines 2-Man Scramble
Starts at 11 a.m. Call the ProsShop for more Information. 256-739-0720

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!

AA Meeting
The Cullman Downtown Alcoholics Anonymous will meet at 1519 St. Joseph St. NW. Every day at noon will be an open discussion meeting, Sunday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion and speaker meeting, Tuesday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion meeting (with meal at 6:30 p.m.), Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday at 10:30 a.m. is women's big book study; and Friday at 7 p.m. is a closed discus-sion meeting (no card signed). All meetings are non-smoking. The last Tuesday of each month is open speaker meeting/ birthday night. For more information, contact the AA coordinator at 256-736-6000.

Sunday

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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 infor-mation.

AA Meeting
The Cullman Downtown Alcoholics Anonymous will meet at 1519 St. Joseph St. NW. Every day at noon will be an open discussion meeting, Sunday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion and speaker meeting, Tuesday at 7 p.m. is an open discussion meeting (with meal at 6:30 p.m.), Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday at 10:30 a.m. is women's big book study; and Friday at 7 p.m. is a closed dis-cussion meeting (no card signed). All meetings are non-smoking. The last Tuesday of each month is open speaker meeting/ birthday night. For more information, contact the AA coordinator at 256-736-6000.

Announcements

Aluminum Can Donation Drive
The Cullman County Animal Shelter is asking anyone with aluminum cans to please make a dona-tion to their recycling bin, located at 935 Convent Road NE. 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 through-out 2016. Please contact LaDonna Allen at 256-352-8071 or ladonna.allen@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 Team Spirit Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 4, First Baptist Church Fellow-ship 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 Fel-lowship 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 Fellow-ship 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 Fel-lowship 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 Fair-grounds; 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, Florida in February and Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico 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 pub-lic 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 at Wallace State offers assistance if you are looking for a job, need help with your resume or are looking for assistance to go to college. Call 256-352-5538.

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 homeworkala-bama.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. NE to learn more.

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: Cull-man Senior Center, 1539 Sportsman Lake Road NW, 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 NW. Call 256-734-0145 for more information.

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

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.

Pumpkin & Watermelon Meeting for Commercial and Hobby Growers
Saturday, Feb. 20, from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Whether you are interested in growing pumpkins & water-melons to sell or want to try your hand at growing giant varieties for fun, everyone is invited to attend. There is no cost to attend this meeting. It will be held at the North Alabama Agriplex Heritage Center, 1714 Tally Ho St., in Cullman. https://www.smore.com/efrc5-pumpkin-watermelon-meeting

Little Black Dress Charity Bash 2016
Benefitting the WSCC Alumni Association Outstanding Women Scholarship. Will take place at the Cullman Civic Center on Saturday, Feb. 27 from 6 - 11:30 p.m. Dinner, dancing to The Flashbacks, door prizes and much more. Tickets on sale now! Visit http://www.wsccalumni.org/lbd2016 for more information.

CP&R Youth Baseball, Softball and T-Ball
Registration starts Jan. 15 at the Cullman Civic Center and ends on Feb. 15. Open to boys and girls ages 4-14. The cost is $90 and includes a hat, jersey and trophy at the end of the season. Volunteer coaches are also needed. Those interested are asked to register at the Civic Center from Jan. 15 – Feb.15 as well. Visit www.cullmanrecreation.org. Call 256-734-9157 for more information.

Ms. Senior Cullman County 2016 Pageant at WSCC
The new Ms. Senior Cullman County will be crowned on Saturday, Feb. 13 at Wallace State Com-munity College. The annual pageant, sponsored by the Cullman County Commission on Aging (COA), will be at the Betty Leeth Haynes Theater from 2 - 4 p.m. The deadline to enter is Tuesday, Jan. 19. Contestants can register at the COA office at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road NW in Cullman. Contestants must be age 60 or older.

CRMC Surgical Symposium- 'Sewing' the Seeds of Knowledge
Cullman Regional Medical Center will host a Surgical Symposium, "'Sewing' the Seeds of Knowledge," on Saturday, Feb. 27 from 8 a.m. - noon in the Colonel Cullmann Room of Professional Office Building II. Breakfast will be provided; registration and breakfast will begin at 7:30 a.m. Cost for the symposium is $15 for students with a student ID, $20 for non-licensed CRMC employees, $25 for licensed CRMC employees, $40 for non-CRMC employees and $50 for registration at the door. Non-CRMC employees can register by calling 256-737-2383. For more information, contact Kim Rooks, OR Educator, at 256-737-2383 or Wendy Taylor at 256-737-2892.

Natural Disaster Awareness Training
On Tuesday, Feb. 23, from 8 a.m. - noon, the Cullman County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) will host Natural Disaster Awareness for Community Leaders at its facility at 2020 Beech Ave. SE in Cullman. While the four-hour course is free, registration is required. For more information, visit http://www.cullmanema.org or call 256-739-5410.

Red Door Coat Project
The Red Door Art Cafe's "Warm Coats for Neighbors" Project is to collect donations of new or like-new coats you may have outgrown, or are a wee bit out of style, for those in need. Drop them off at The Red Door Art Cafe, weekdays from 7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Located at 324 Fourth Ave. SE in Cullman.

American Red Cross in Need of Volunteers
Disaster Action Team, call 256-734-0921 or visit redcross.org/Alabama for more information.

Pilot Light Home Collecting Used Cell Phones
Deposit sites: Cullman Museum, BCA, Hospital Discount Pharmacy, Central Communications, Para-dise Cellular, First Baptist Church, St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church and The Shopper's Guide.

Baby Bottle Blast
Project to benefit substance-exposed newborns. Purchase baby bottles, fill them with change and turn them in. Benefits The King's Cradle. For more information, call 1-888-722-2426.

Become a Volunteer
Be a court-appointed advocate for a child who has been abused and/or neglected. For more infor-mation, contact Cullman Caring for Kids at 256-739-1111 or email cullmancountycasa@msn.com.

Free GED Classes
Sponsored by Wallace State Community College Adult Education Program. Call 256-352-8077 or 1-866-352-WSCC for more information.

Hanceville First United Methodist Church
Will pick up anyone living between Cullman and Hanceville who wishes to attend worship services at Hanceville First United Methodist Church. Contact Tonia at 256-531-3083.

Masonics of Cullman County Meetings
Held at 7 p.m. at the following locations: Baileyton 472 (first and third Thursday, call 256-796-6611); Cullman 421 (Mondays, call 256-734-1231); Logan 500 (second and fourth Tuesday, call 256-747-4243 or 256-747-2908); Simcoe 854 (second and fourth Thursday, call 256-796-5794 or 256-796-5018); Vinemont 562 (first and third Thursday, call 256-796-7244).

Clothes Closet
Addington Chapel UMC in Bremen has clothes available free to those in need. No qualifications or paperwork needed. Call 256-287-1791 or 256-287-1828,

Divorce Care Support Group starting Feb. 3
Will meet every Wednesday night from 6 -7:30 p.m. at The Link of Cullman County. For more infor-mation, please call Denise at 256-590-3719.

Love My Library Month
Cullman County Public Library System is granting amnesty during "Love My Library" month, Feb. 1 - Feb. 29, 2016. The library will forgive all overdue fines on patrons' records. Only overdue fines will be waived, not fees for lost or damaged items. For more information, contact the main library branch at 256-734-1068.

Building (from Front)

Wendy Sack
wendy@cullmansense.com

VINEMONT – Tension and emotions ran high at this month's South Vinemont town hall meeting, with town and Scout leaders disagreeing over the future of Vinemont's Scout building, located at 88 Ridgeway St. At issue is ordinance 2016-01-01, which names the building as the new home of South Vinemont Town Hall and the site of all municipal business and meetings. The ordinance passed a preliminary vote 5-1 at the meeting and will go to a final vote on Feb. 9. Councilman Radginal Dodson was the only one to vote against the move.

The town has already removed one wall to enlarge the only room that South Vinemont Mayor J.D. Marcum said will be off limits to the Scouts and locked. They have also taken one-half of the storage space in the building and removed a number of Boy Scout signs and markings. Scout leaders contend that the town is kicking them out of the building that was built solely for their use. Marcum says that the Scouts are free to use any of the rooms in the building, outside of the one locked room.

"We had to remove everything off the walls Scout-related. We even had to cut the emblems off the inside doors," said one Boy Scout leader.

A Girl Scout leader said, "The Girl Scout room was torn down two days after we were told about this. Any pictures or posters or anything with the Scout logo has been removed. No history whatsoever has been preserved."

The "Scout House," as it's been known in the community for more than 20 years, has up until very recently been home to Boy Scout Troop 227, Cub Scout Pack 227 and Girl Scout Troop 10288. It is a large, log cabin-type structure that was built by Scout volunteers with purchased and donated materials on property belonging to the Town of South Vinemont. Its official name is the Cary C. Montgomery Scout Community Center. It is named in honor of long-time Troop 227 former Scoutmaster and current Committee Chair Cary Montgomery.

Montgomery and Jim Oden, Troop 227's current Scoutmaster, declined to comment for this story.

Marcum said that the reasons behind the move are that the Scout House will provide more room and is handicap-accessible, where the current town hall is not. He said, "I don't see why we can't share it. The town paid for the building to be built. The boys use it four times per month and the girls two times per month. Rather than building a new building and putting the city in debt...I think it will be better for them (the Scouts). We are trying to make the best decisions we can based on the facts we have. That's how we operate."

Marcum said the town plans to lease the current town hall after the move, in an effort to bring in money. He says that the town pays for all of the maintenance at the Scout House, from cleaning up after Scout activities to taking care of the grounds, which are approximately 2 acres. He stated that the town also pays for all of the utilities.

"We are trying to avoid raising taxes," said Marcum. "This will save the town money. I'd love to meet with them, the (Scout) leaders, and walk through this building. We'd also like to use the building for senior citizen meetings sometime in the future."

"Last night (Jan. 12) in the town meeting, we were told that the Boy Scouts would be allowed to continue to meet there and that no one was "kicking" them out. The Girl Scouts had a spokesperson, and he presented a request to the council to continue to meet there, but nothing was approved or even discussed among the council about the status of the Girl Scouts in that facility," said concerned resident Katie Loyd.

The specifics of the original agreement between the Scouts and the town are the point of biggest contention between all parties involved.

The Scouts believe that there was a lease giving them the property for $1 per year, for a period of 99 years. No copies of this agreement could be located by the Scouts of town officials.

Loyd continued, "My son did use the Vinemont Scout Center from about 5 or 6 years old until he was 18. He began as a Tiger Cub Scout and went on to obtain Eagle. I have not ever seen the original documents, but I was told that (former Mayor) Mr. Elton A. Hall, that assisted with getting this built, had a contract that stated the Scouts could use the building for 99 years for $1 a year. Now, the Town of South Vinemont cannot find the documents and are wanting to move the Town Hall into the Scout building. The girls have already been made to vacate their room."

On Sep. 13, 1990, then-Councilwoman and future Mayor Melba Patton made a motion, seconded by Councilman Calvin Cadle and approved by all, in the monthly town hall meeting, "to support the Boy Scouts Troop 227 by leasing them a small parcel of city property for their use in erecting a building providing the proper piece of property can be agreed upon, and a lease agreement can be reached."

CullmanSense obtained the original lease on file at Vinemont Town Hall, a notarized document that was signed on April 11, 1991 by then-Mayor Elton A. Hall and Troop 227 Scoutmaster Gary N. Powell. This document states:

"This lease is for a period of ten years commencing on March 1, 1991, with the first yearly payment of $10.00 and other valuable considerations, due on or before March 1, 1991, and nine consecutive yearly payments thereafter beginning March 1, 1992, in the amount of $10.00 and other valuable considerations, with the final payment due on March 1, 2000."

The document goes on to list other points agreed upon, including: description of the property; that the property cannot be subleased for any other purpose besides supervised youth activities; that the lease includes the option to renew for another 10-year period at the end of the current term; that the Lessor approves the erection of a building and that it "will be donated to the Town of South Vinemont upon completion by Mr. Del Brock and will be included as a part of the lease;" that upkeep, repair and maintenance are the responsibility of the Lessee; that "on termination of the lease, "the Lessor will then obtain possession and ownership of all permanent structures and improvements;" that the Lessor is not liable for anything that happens on the property; that the club and any activities there are not the responsibility of the Lessor; that the Lessor must keep the premises clean, mowed, maintained and visually-appealing; that the property is "being leased for the sole use of the Boy Scout Troop 227" and that any default on any provisions in the lease will make the lease null and void. A full digital copy of the lease can be obtained from CullmanSense.

Construction of the Scout House by Brock and other volunteers began in April 1993. In January 1994, Brock, according to town hall minutes, reported that construction was on schedule and that the Scouts had borrowed $40,000 to help with the project.

In May 1994, the council approved a transfer of $25,000 to the Scouts to help complete the building. In October 1994, according to town hall minutes, Brock and Cary Montgomery (for whom the building is now named) reported that the building was being used by 40 children, with 100 expected within the month. Additional expenses, including lighting and heating/cooling were discussed, and the Scouts stated that they had applied for grants, but still owed $65,000 to the bank and $2,500 to D&S Building.

On Oct. 19, 1994, a special meeting was called, in part to discuss helping with the completion and debt against the building, in the amount of $30,000.

On Nov. 9, 1995, Mayor Hall discussed a dinner to retire the Scout's $60,000 debt. On March 14, 1996, a motion for the town to procure a loan to retire the debt on the building was made and passed.

Over the years, the Scout House has also been rented out to the public for occasions such as weddings, family reunions and community singings. The outside area is also used by the Vinemont High School marching band for practice.

John Roy, who was appointed to speak to the media by Girl Scout Troop 10288 on its behalf, said, "Do I feel the Town of Vinemont has the right to do this? Yes, through legal loopholes I believe what they are doing is legal; however, I do not believe it's fair or just. I understand if the Town of Vinemont needs to narrow its budget. But, that is not what this is about. When you look at the amount of money the town makes off the sports complex (and) add to it the fact they intend on renting the old town hall after they move...it's all greed, not the need to narrow a budget.

"At the (January 2016) council meeting, Mayor Marcum made the statement they needed to move because of the town hall is not handicap-accessible, but the Scout House is, and they needed more room than the town hall has," Roy continued.

"They are moving to a smaller space (than they occupy) and outside of the town hall (Scout House) not needing a ramp to enter, it is not ADA-compliant, the bathrooms are nowhere in compliance, there is only fire exit from the upstairs. So all of these things will have to be in compliance, which costs money.

"The town also stated that there were only a few Scouts that even lived in the Town of South Vinemont. In a population of a little over 700, there really isn't (sic) going to be that many eligible to even be in the Scouts, but, in my opinion the very fact that you have kids traveling from West Point, Falkville, Eva, Jones Chapel to be a Vinemont Scout should be praised, not condemned," Roy said. "So everything that Mayor Marcum has said only takes away from the integrity of his word. It is not about needing extra room, it's not about narrowing a budget and it's not about being ADA-compliant. It is about greed and status. What happens when the town decides it needs more space? They just push the Scouts out altogether, that's where it leaves the Scouts.

"I am not angry at the mayor or the town council, but more than anything I am ashamed of them and their attorney (Roy Williams) for how the decision was made, legal or not," Roy said.

"Cary Montgomery and the Scouts built that house, not (Mayor) J.D. Marcum or any member of the town council. I will end with this: I have never had a Scout lie to me. It used to be that a Scout's honor was all they needed. A politician, on the other hand, always has an agenda. The Scout House is just that. The name says it all. The town should be investing in the future of these young citizens rather than pushing them away, but I suppose you learn far more from poor leadership than you do good leadership, for it is then that you see exactly how not to lead people."

The Town of South Vinemont and the Scouts have been heavily involved since the construction of the building, with the relationship becoming somewhat strained over the years.

Records show that in November 2001, the town council discussed concerns over renting the Scout House and that the current rentals did not even cover the monthly utility costs of the building. There was also frustration because the town believed the Scouts were not properly maintaining the property or doing enough community services projects.

It was decided that the council would, as the Scout's charter organization, appoint a new Scout Master and Troop Committee, all from South Vinemont.

This led to additional unrest between the Scouts and the town council. In 2002, many of the town council's meetings were devoted to Scout business, with many Scout leaders concerned over dwindling numbers and the fear of the programs going away.

Town hall records show a complex relationship between the groups over the years between 1990 and today. All records are available digitally from CullmanSense.

The Town of South Vinemont was the charter organization for the Scouts up until Nov. 10, 2015, when, after 22 years, the council passed Resolution No. 2015-11-10-01, severing ties with both the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, effective Dec. 31, 2015. Oden's Glass is the new charter organization.

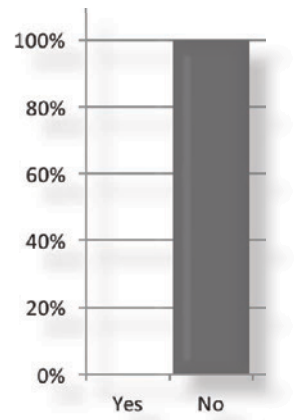
The next Town of South Vinemont Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 9 at 6 p.m. at the current town hall.

Ordinance 2016-01-01 is expected to pass, but it will most certainly not be without a fight.

CullmanSense will continue to follow this developing story. All documents related to this story, included all lease agreements recovered, are available digitally from CullmanSense.

Poll

Have you had car trouble due to the cold weather?



This Week's Poll

What teams do you think will advance to the Super Bowl?

Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

FLORIDA-GEORGIA LINE TO PERFORM AT ROCK THE SOUTH 2016 FESTIVAL

New Artists to be announced each morning at 7:15 a.m. on 102.5 The Bull and 102.1 WDRM

Jeri Willoughby and Courtney McCormick

CULLMAN – Rock the South, the Southeast's fastest growing country music festival, returns to Cull-man with a vengeance June 3-4, 2016, and today announced multi-platinum superstars Florida-Georgia Line! Banking on the heels of the success of 2015, when over 41,000 people descended upon Cullman to party to Brantley Gilbert, Alan Jackson, Tyler Farr, Travis Tritt and many more, Rock the South will return in 2016 with a massive statement with Florida-Georgia Line and many, many more. Continuing tomorrow, Tuesday, Jan. 26, artists will be announced every morning at 7:15 a.m. by Rock the South's exclusive radio partners, 102.5 The Bull (Birmingham) and 102.1 WDRM (Huntsville).

Rock the South continues to be less than half the price of any other country music festival in the Southeast. For 24 hours starting Feb. 4 at 10 a.m., fans can buy tickets at last year's prices.

At 10 a.m. on Feb. 5, Early Bird Pricing will begin and last until March 31st.

All information will be available on http://rockthesouth.com/ and https://www.facebook.com/RockTheSouth.

Founder Shane Quick said, "Our fans have been asking for Florida-Georgia Line for three years. These guys know how to have fun and so do our fans. FGL is definitely going to bring it in Cullman at Rock the South 2016. Our team is from right here in this area and couldn't be more excited to bring this level of talent to Cullman. From the beginning, this festival has been about giving back to this area. To date, we have given over $200,000 in four years to our area, and we couldn't be more honored to continue the tradition with Rock the South 2016."

Pepsi returns to Rock the South as title sponsor with a multi-year deal in a strategic partnership between Buffalo Rock Company and Pepsi-Cola Decatur.

Florida-Georgia Line BIO

Fueled with three scorching consecutive No.1 hits – Gold-certified "Sippin' On Fire" and "Sun Daze" and two-time Platinum-certified "Dirt" – and the recently-released title track, Florida-Georgia Line radi-ates with the Gold-certified sophomore album "Anything Goes" (Republic Nashville).

Their latest al-bum soared to a No. 1 debut on the all-genre Billboard 200 and Billboard Top Country Albums charts with music critics and fans alike embracing the superstar duo's fresh sound.

FGL has skyrocketed to stardom, becoming the only artist in history to join Brooks & Dunn in achieving four back-to-back, multi-week No.1 singles; breaking the record for longest No.1 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart and selling over 21 million tracks worldwide of their two-time Platinum debut "Here's to the Good Times" and "Anything Goes."

Taking their undeniable songwriting skills to the next level and discovering new talent, FGL recently formed publishing company Tree Vibez Music, whose moniker was aptly inspired by Kelley's custom treetop recording studio built by Pete Nelson for the hit show Treehouse Masters.

In addition to col-laborating across genres with sensations like Nelly and Jason Derulo, FGL has racked up a plethora of industry awards, closing out an epic 2014 topping four of Billboard's year-end charts and leading Forbes "30 Under 30" list.

The accolades continue to pour in: FGL brought home two ACM Awards – their second consecutive Vocal Duo of the Year title and Vocal Event of the Year ("This Is How We Roll" featuring Luke Bryan) – a CMT Music Award for Duo Video of the Year ("Dirt") and tallied four Billboard Music Awards nominations.

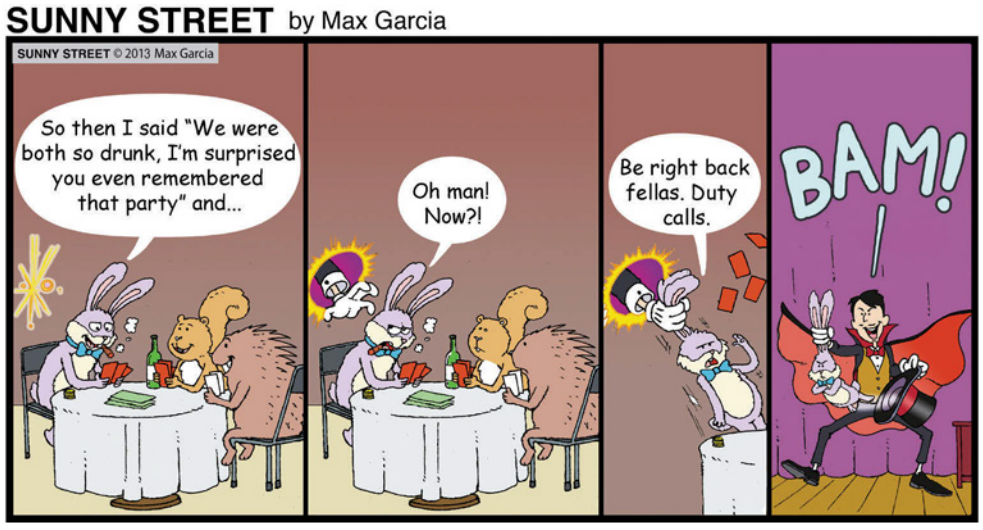
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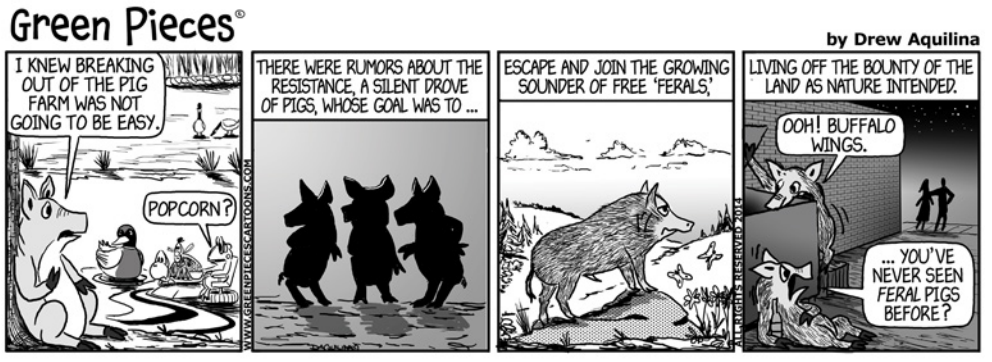
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SUNNY STREET by Max Garcia







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JANUARY 17 - 24

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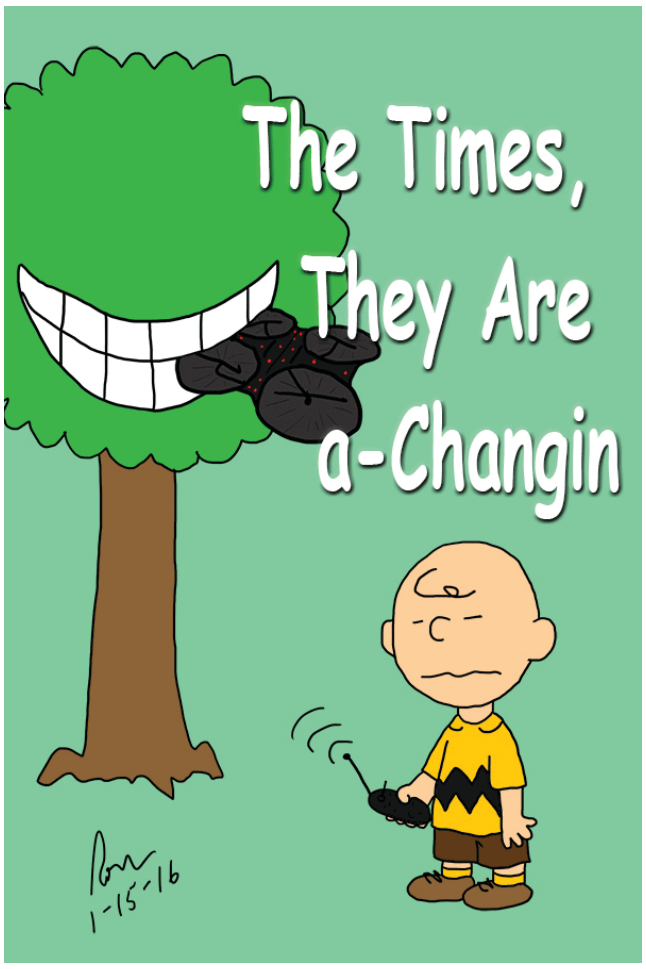
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Will Hogue

OPINION

WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO ADDRESS INCOME INEQUALITY

Lee H. Hamilton
Contributor

When the history of this year's presidential campaign is written, one of its more remarkable features will be that candidates of both parties feel it necessary to talk about income inequality. Surely that makes this a watershed moment.

The issue is hardly new. As historian and writer Jill Lepore pointed out last year, income inequality in the United States has been rising since the late 1960s. As she put it, "The evidence that income inequality in the United States has been growing for decades and is greater than in any other developed democracy is not much disputed."

More notable is that it has become a defining issue of our day, with Republican candidates seizing on it just as avidly as Democrats — though with different views of its causes and solutions. Some reformist Republicans have argued for some time now for the right mix of public policies to give poor and middle-income Americans more opportunity without shifting power to the federal government. On the Democratic side, as expected, both Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton press for a firmer public stance to redress the problem. No one suggests there are easy solutions.

To be sure, there are politicians, especially on the right, who believe there's not much room for public action. Market forces will sort it all out, they argue. In this telling, inequality has come about because of globalization and technological changes that are unstoppable and that on the whole have raised living standards. Eventually, they believe, the gap between the highest earners and the rest of us will diminish. Instead of fighting inequality, we should be protecting and expanding the rewards for skill, leadership and entrepreneurship.

This argument assumes that the very wealthy won't act to tilt the field even more in their favor. Yet as the New York Times noted last month, they are doing just that. "With inequality at its highest levels in nearly a century," the newspaper wrote, "the very richest Americans have financed a sophisticated and astonishingly effective apparatus for shielding their fortunes.... Operating largely out of public view... the wealthy have used their influence to steadily whittle away at the government's ability to tax them."

Yet some reform-minded conservatives agree with Democrats on at least one point, which is that government needs to act to achieve greater fairness and opportunity in the economy. The stresses we see in our political system today — free-floating public anger and distrust of government and large institutions — stem at least in part from the widespread perception that economic insecurity has become entrenched in our system and there's very little ordinary people can do about it. If inequality continues to grow, the stress on the system will ratchet ever tighter.

No one is arguing for a straight-ahead equalization of economic resources, which would not just require extreme restrictions on personal freedom, but would almost certainly hamstring economic growth. Nor, however, should government make the problem worse — which is what some politicians' call for further tax reductions on the richest would do.

There are some broad directions we should be moving to ensure a degree of fairness. Current trends are not inevitable if citizens are determined to reduce the influence and power of money on the system. We need to shift resources to education and workforce training, though that will take time to produce change. Encouraging technological change that boosts unskilled employment — rather than stripping it away — will matter. So will protecting the progressivity of the income tax, encouraging the well-to-do to follow the excellent examples of their peers who are sharing their wealth, focusing on trade deals that favor workers and not just the business community, and providing incentives for people of ordinary means to save and invest.

We need to promote policies that help all children advance, and discourage efforts to further concentrate wealth. These are incremental changes requiring limited government action.

A reduction in inequality is an essential ingredient in a healthy democracy. To let the gap between rich and ordinary Americans grow larger will allow political pressures to build in our economic and political systems. We should aim for a country where opportunities are more equal and the distribution of wealth and income is fairer.

POWER IN THE WORD: THE GOSPEL THAT WORKS!

UNDERSTANDING THAT SALVATION COMES ONLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Dr. Henry W. Roberts II
Contributor

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12) Many times people are asked the question, "Are you saved?" "Have you been born again?" "Have you received salvation?"

Each and every individual in the world today needs to understand that God has a plan for his or her life.

In modern day society, we often hear the expression "higher power." Men and women everywhere need to know that this "higher power" has a name. The Bible states in Acts 4:12 that "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The Bible is nothing more than God revealing Himself to man. From the very beginning, God began not only to reveal Himself to man, but He also began to reveal His plan for man's total welfare.

Many people in the world (as well as in churches) have no idea what salvation is. The Bible is our clear source of reference of this point. Understand that salvation is a Biblical issue.

Many times you may have found yourself in a church, tent meeting, or maybe someone has come to your door to talk to you about Jesus, the Bible, eternal life or the after life. Well, if they do not give you a strict Biblical plan, example or answer, then you (just as many others) have probably been misled.

Here is a list of things that salvation is not: We cannot obtain or inherit salvation by joining a church or some religious organization.

Often we may have heard this expression, "The doors of the church are open."

Beloved, we cannot inherit salvation by joining the church and shaking some minister's hand. Nor can we inherit salvation by being a candidate for baptism.

We cannot obtain or inherit salvation by our parents belonging to a certain church or religious organization and therefore having us baptized when we were babies.

We cannot obtain salvation this way because human bloodline or church affiliation does not allow us to inherit salvation.

We cannot obtain or inherit salvation by accepting the "way of holiness."

Holiness is a way of life for an individual who has already received salvation.

We cannot obtain or inherit salvation by being a "good person."

Sorry but there will be a lot of "good people" in hell. We cannot obtain or inherit salvation by becoming a member of some religious sect or cult such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslim, Buddhist, etc.

We may very well learn some great principles for living, and we may expand our spirituality, but there is no salvation in it for us.

It is sad to say, but no Scripture can be found to substantiate these methods in which many churchgoers have been led to believe can cause us to be saved.

For an enlightened view on what salvation is, let's examine some terminology that we may or may not have heard: born again, eternal life, saved, salvation.

All of these terms mean the same thing. When an individual receives salvation, he or she is born again. St. John 3:3 says, "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus tells Nicodemus that except a man be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

In I Corinthians 5:17 it says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

We understand that when we get saved, we become new creatures in Christ. Life is eternal.

Where you will spend eternity depends on whether or not you are saved or have received salvation.

For a free book by Dr. Roberts, entitled, "What Is Salvation," write 351 S. Craft Highway, Chickasaw, AL 36611.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING- PUBLIC AWARENESS AND INVESTIGATION TRAINING ON JAN. 26

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CULLMAN – This month is Human Trafficking Awareness Month nationwide. It has a been a month full of advocacy activities locally, with Cullman Mayor Max A. Townson declaring Monday, Jan. 11 as Human Trafficking Awareness Day and the Cullman County Commission declaring January 2016 Human Trafficking Awareness Month in Cullman County. Next up will be a Public Awareness and In-vestigation Training on Tuesday, Jan. 26.

"There will be a public training on Human Trafficking Awareness and Investigation on Tuesday, Jan. 26 from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at Daystar Church," said Kathy Wilson, Cullman County Human Trafficking Task Force chair. "This is where any concerned citizens, the public – anybody can attend. We want everyone to spread the word about this public training, it is very important."

Presenting at the event will be Scott Santoro, who provides training for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. He is the senior training advisor for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign. A former attorney, he currently trains state and federal law enforcement on human trafficking. The event is being sponsored by the Cullman County Human Trafficking Task Force, District Attorney Wilson Blaylock, Judge Kim Chaney and Cullman Savings Bank.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. It is a crime that happens when a person uses force, fraud or coercion to control another person. The person being controlled is forced into commercial sex acts and/or soliciting work or services against his or her will. The average age of entry into the U.S. sex trade is 12 - 14. It is happening all over the world and right here in the United States. Sadly, it is going on right here in Cullman County. "I wish I could say this didn't happen in Cullman County, but it's an issue that we have here," said Chaney, who is a member of the Task Force. The training is free to the public. Daystar Church is located at 200 Daystar Drive in Cullman.

"Jan. 26 is going to be for individuals and families that want to learn how to keep their children safe," Chaney continued. "The average age of a (human trafficking victim) is 13-years-old; so you have young people who make connections online who are lured away with promises. Those promises soon turn to exploitation."

The Task Force says it needs all the help it can get to prevent both children and adults in our area from becoming victims. Everyone is encouraged to get involved. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 2, at noon in Chaney's courtroom on the second floor of the Cullman County Courthouse.

For more information, email endtrafficking25@gmail.com or visit http://qrne.ws/taskforce.

Food (from Front)

families in Cullman County. Requirements are a valid photo ID for each adult in the home, proof of address, Social Security cards for each person in the home and SSI amount/Social Security notice (for fixed income families), pay check stub (for working families) or letter stating amount/reason for denial (for families on food stamps).

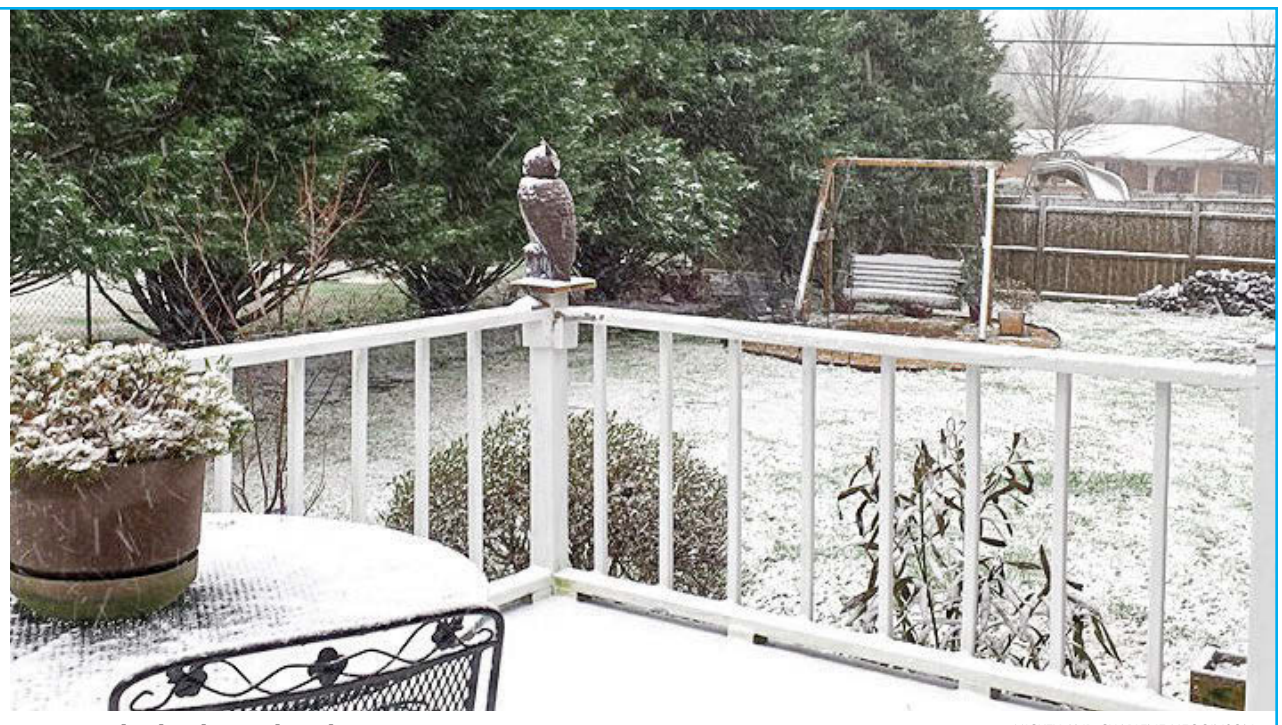
Cullman Caring for Kids is located at 402 Arnold St. NE Ste. W-1, next to the County Board of Education building, directly across the street from Hospital Discount Pharmacy. The food bank is in need of non-perishable food items or monetary donations. Items can be dropped off or checks mailed to Cullman Caring for Kids, P.O. Box 698, Cullman, AL 35056.

For more information, call 256-739-1111 or visit http://www.cullmancaringforkids.com/programs/unitedwayfoodbank.

CULLMAN GETS FIRST SNOW OF THE YEAR

CullmanSense Readers Share Winter Photos On Social Media

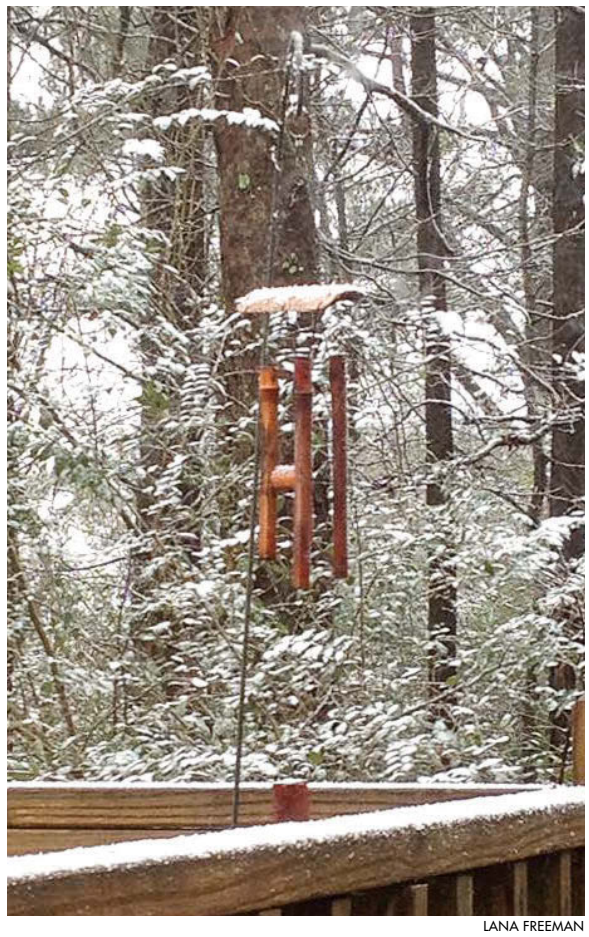
Frigid temps and a little bit of the white stuff blew into the area on Friday. Though there wasn't much snow, residents enjoyed it while it lasted.



"Loving the back yard with snow." MICKEY AND CHARLENE MEGGINSON



MICHELLE ROBINSON MORRING



LANA FREEMAN



"Ellieanna's first snow. She wasn't sure what to think about it.... She was so still and just looking. She is almost 5 months old." TAYLOR TUBBS CONE