SERIES 6 • ISSUE 11 • MARCH 14, 2016
CULLMANSENSE
COMMUNITY MATTERS


SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

LUYBEN & BOIKE SOON TO BE ONE OF CULLMAN'S FONDEST MEMORIES P5

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EAST AND WEST ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SHOWCASE ARTWORK P7

RYAN'S RESTAURANT CLOSURE PART OF COMPANY BANKRUPTCY: CULLMAN LOCATION ONE OF 92 CLOSED WITHOUT NOTICE P2

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THE SOUTHERN ROCK RACING SERIES INVADES STONY LONESOME P6

WARRIORS REIGN IN COUNTY BASEBALL TOURNEY P4


FACEBOOK
Wesley Shannon Taylor

BATTLEGROUND: 22-YEAR-OLD WESLEY SHANNON TAYLOR VICTIM OF WEEKEND HOMICIDE

19-year-old Isaac Wayne Hill in custody in connection with killing

Wendy Sack
wendy@cullmansense.com

BATTLEGROUND – A shooting over the weekend left one man dead in the community of Battleground in northwest Cullman County. The Cullman County Sheriff's Office has formally charged Isaac Wayne Hill, 19, of Battleground with the murder of Wesley Shannon Taylor, 22, also of Battleground.

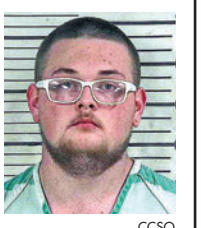
The incident took place at approximately 5 p.m. Saturday evening, March 12, in the 5800 block of County Road 1101 in the Battleground community.

"Our hearts and prayers here at the Cullman County Sheriff's Office go out to the family of Mr. Taylor," said Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry.

At approximately 5 p.m., March 12, the CCSO received a call about a shooting incident in the 5800 block of County Road 1101.

"Once deputies arrived, we did confirm that this was a homicide," Gentry, when

P3


CCSO
Isaac Wayne Hill



BEST PROMPOSAL EVER?

Fairview High student pulls off epically romantic invite

Photos taken Friday, March 11, at Fairview's water tower, where Luke Macias asked Anna Hampton to be his prom date.

AMANDA HAMPTON

P10

13TH ANNUAL EMPTY BOWLS CHILI DINNER SEES BEST YEAR YET

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN – Despite the rainy, nasty weather, the people of Cullman turned out in droves for the 13th Annual Empty Bowls Chili Dinner on Monday, Feb.15, and as a result, the event saw its best year yet. The dinner, which was held at Cullman First United Methodist Church, raised a total of $15,368 for the Cullman Caring for Kids United Way Food Bank. Over the event's 13 years, a total of $131,468 has been raised.

"We praise and thank God for this wonderful blessing," said Tanya Shearer of Empty Bowls of Cullman County. "We are grateful for the community's support and the giving of your gifts and talents to make this wonderful night possible!

"Each dollar will buy 7 lbs. of food," she continued, "so the food bank will be able to purchase 107,576 lbs. of food from the proceeds. That equates to over 53 tons of food for people in need!"

The annual Empty Bowls Dinner is great fun and features delicious chili, which is served in beautifully handcrafted pottery bowls. There is a silent auction and southern gospel music by local entertainers as well. It is a wonderful way for the community to work together to put an end to hunger for those less fortunate right here in Cullman County.

For more information, call Cullman Caring for Kids at 256-739-1111 or email them at cullmancaringforkids@msn.com. Find Empty Bowls of Cullman County on Facebook at facebook.com/

P3

Tour of WSCC School of Nursing proud moment for local woman


WSCC
Deborah "Pepper" Hoover reads the certificate she presented to Pauline Whaley declaring her an honorary nurse after a tour of the WSCC School of Nursing and Center for Science.

Gail Crutchfield
WSCC

HANCEVILLE – When she was a young girl, Pauline Whaley dreamt of being a nurse. "From the time that I could read, I've wanted to be a nurse," said Whaley, 83, a resident of Brookdale Assisted Living Facility in Hanceville. "I read a book about Florence Nightingale and from that time on I wanted to

P5

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JOPPA BURGLARY SUSPECTS ARRESTED; PROPERTY RECOVERED

Bradley Williams
CCSO

JOPPA – On Thursday, March 10, Cullman County Sheriff's Office deputies arrested Jacob Aaron Kidd, 19-years-old, of Decatur and Corey Lance Parker, 22-years-old, of Hartselle for one count each of burglary in the third degree.

Kidd and Parker were burglarizing a home in the Joppa community in Cullman County on Thursday, March 10, when a witness saw them and called 911. A Be On the Look Out (BOLO) was placed by the CCSO to the Morgan County Sheriff's Office and the Somerville Police Department.

A short time later, the SPD located and detained the suspects until CCSO deputies and investigators arrived on the scene. Once there, investigators located the stolen property in the suspects' truck; this included a 74-inch television in the truck bed.

All of the stolen items were recovered by investigators and returned to the property owner.

"First off I would like to say thank you to the witness who saw the burglary taking place and called us. (sic) We were able to arrest the suspects and recover the stolen property for the homeowner," said Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry. "I would also like to say I am proud of the job the deputies and investigators did and also thank the Somerville PD for their assistance in catching these guys."

Kidd and Parker are currently being held in the Cullman County Detention Center without bond.



Corey Lance Parker



Jacob Aaron Kidd

PHOTOS COURTESY CCSO

EXECUTION OF SEARCH WARRANT LEADS TO ARREST; DRUGS SEIZED

Bradley Williams
CCSO

CULLMAN – Investigators with the Cullman City Police Department (CPD) and Cullman County Sheriff's Office (CCSO), along with agents with the Cullman Narcotics Enforcement Team (CNET), arrested Jammie Dewayne Thompson, 42, of Baileyton, for trafficking in methamphetamine, unlawful possession of marijuana, first degree and unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia.

The operation that led to the arrest was executed in the Holly Pond community late Thursday, March 10, 2016. Investigators made entry into the residence where they located Thompson and numerous amounts of drugs.

CPD and CCSO seized approximately 1.5 ounces of methamphetamine, 3.75 ounces of marijuana, a .32 Cal pistol and $1,844 in cash.

"These are drugs that won't make it to our children and also the money that was seized won't be able to buy more drugs to go out into our community," said Sheriff Matt Gentry. "I would also like to commend all those who worked on this case for the good job they did on this arrest."

Thompson is currently being held in the Cullman County Detention Center on a $1 million bond.



Jammie Dewayne Thompson



PHOTOS COURTESY CCSO

CPD and CCSO seized approximately 1.5 ounces of methamphetamine, 3.75 ounces of marijuana, a .32 Cal pistol and $1,844 in cash.

LAST WEEK'S RYAN'S RESTAURANT CLOSURE PART OF COMPANY BANKRUPTCY; CULLMAN LOCATION ONE OF 92 CLOSED WITHOUT NOTICE

Wendy Sack
wendy@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Ryan's Restaurant on Cherokee Avenue in Cullman closed without notice or warning on Sunday, March 6, leaving employees and customers alike looking for answers. The following day, the chain's parent company, Food Management Partners, released a statement saying, "Buffets, LLC, comprised of Ryan's, Fire Mountain, Country Buffet, Old Country Buffet, Tahoe Joe's Famous Steakhouse and Hometown Buffet, is set to file Chapter 11 bankruptcy so that it can restructure its debts and liabilities, strengthen its operations by closing certain weaker restaurants and recapitalize its business."

Food Management Partners acquired Buffets, LLC, also known as Ovation, Inc., last August. This bankruptcy is the third in eight years for Buffets, LLC.

On Feb. 4 ,2016, 74 other locations were closed. Those included Ryan's Restaurants in Huntsville, Decatur, Fort Payne, Florence and Jasper.

At the time, Ovation stated that "the plan is to continue operating the remaining Ovation Brands' restaurants as they are financially viable."

Employees at the Cullman location said they believed their store would not be affected. Even the store's management believed it.

"I worked there for 14 years," said one former employee, who requested not to be named.

"We were told we would stay open. Most of us found out in a text early Sunday morning. A lot of people had been there 18 years. No severance, no offers, no nothing! Our mangers had no idea!"

On the same day as the bankruptcy filing, Monday, March 7, the contents of the Cullman location's store could be seen being moved out and loaded onto trucks.

Later that day, CullmanSense was contacted by the online auction site, Auction Nation, and told, "We are currently liquidating the assets of the stores that closed Monday for OCB, Ryan's and Hometown Buffet. Feel free to update your article accordingly! Here is the link for the auctions: https://auctionnation.com/auctions/nationwide-multi-restaurant-liquidation-auction/."

The auctions have since closed.

But employees in Cullman and other cities in Alabama are not the only ones who have been affected.

A former employee from Moline, Illinois reached out to CullmanSense, and had this to say:

"I came across your website today. I was employed as a server at the Ryan's Buffet located in Moline, IL. I was supposed to open the store for breakfast Sunday at 8 a.m. I got a call at 6:30 in the morning saying not to go to work, we are closing the store. Come in Monday for a team meeting at 2-4 p.m. where you will get your final paycheck.

"They had a note posted on the doors saying we were closed for inventory and would reopen Tuesday. Then today at 1 p.m. I got a phone call saying that the team meeting was being canceled and that I would receive my final paycheck on the next scheduled payday.

"From what I know, our store managers were not aware of the closing either. Our GM got to work at 6 a.m. Sunday morning and a 'corporate representative' (who was actually a GM from a store three hours from here) was already at the store, and a U-Haul truck showed up shortly after. The corporate rep allowed the manager to go into the building to get his belongings from the office, then got told to hand over his keys and go home.

"What sort of company does this to their employees on a Sunday morning at 6 a.m.?! All day Sunday and today they had people there with vans and pickup trucks taking EVERYTHING out of the store. One of the loaders told me that food items were being donated to a local church for their food pantry, and some of our dishes were also going to the church.

"We are all in shock here. No warning. No heads up. Just boom! I'm sorry to tell you we are shutting the store permanently...thank you... have a nice day now.

"So my thoughts and prayers go out to the employees in your area who are going through this same thing. Just try to keep our chins up and hold our heads high and remember that when God closes one door, He opens another floor for us that leads us to something better."

Indeed, those sentiments are echoed by the former employee in Cullman.

"Most (employees) have been crying since they found out, (but) we are a family; they can't take that from us."

In a statement, Peter Donbavand, vice president for business development with Food Management Partners said, "The Chapter 11 is prompted by the discovery of liabilities, or alleged liabilities, that we believe were not disclosed in our negotiations. We intend to investigate the propriety of the disclosure, and intend to consult with our counsel regarding any remedies we may have."

Donbavand also commented that in addition to a precipitous decline in sales at the restaurants that, in his experience, was unusual, several large, long-term contracts were only recently determined to be, or alleged to be, in arrears and have had to be addressed in order to continue restaurant operations.

"All of these issues are being reviewed by financial and legal professionals," said Donbavand.

"However, we are completely committed to the continued operation of these brands, and this is a necessary step for us to take to make this happen."

For our original article, and to see the full statement from Food Management Partners, as well as court documents, visit http://cullmansense.com/articles/2016/03/07/ryans-restaurant-closes-no-notice-company-bankruptcy-uncovered.



ALABAMA HOUSE PASSES $6.3 BILLION DOLLAR EDUCATION BUDGET WITH TEACHER PAY RAISE AND ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM FUNDING

Rachel Adams
Office of Speaker Mike Hubbard

MONTGOMERY – By a 105 to 0 margin, the Alabama House on Tuesday passed a $6.3 billion Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget that includes a generous, yet affordable, teacher pay raise, decreases classroom sizes and provides significant investments in proven classroom programs.

"As a result of the responsible spending practices that have been utilized since Republicans took leadership of the Legislature, this budget is able to reward teachers and support personnel with a needed pay raise that also closes the salary gap between administrators and classroom educators," House Ways and Means Education Chairman Bill Poole, R-Tuscaloosa, said.

"This budget, coupled with ongoing reforms, represents an investment in our children and our education employees, in our workforce development and job creation efforts, and consequently, in our future prosperity. This budget truly focuses on solutions that will lead us to a better future."

Under the House-passed budget, teachers and support personnel, such as bus drivers, lunchroom workers and others, earning less than $75,000 a year will receive a four percent salary increase while administrators and others earning more than $75,000 will now receive a two percent raise.

The proposed ETF budget includes a four percent across-the-board pay raise for all community college employees.

The budget also fully funds health insurance and retirement program funding requests.

Speaker of the House Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn, noted that Republican passage of the Proration Prevention Act in 2011 allowed the quicker-than-expected repayment of more than $400 million that Democrats had siphoned from a rainy day account.

The repayment freed up significant funding that can now be redirected to successful classroom programs.

"This budget also includes significant increases in classroom spending for priorities like First Class Pre-K, distance learning, school technology and Advanced Placement courses," Hubbard said.

"When coupled with the funding we are providing to make us the first state in the nation to offer wireless broadband access in each of its K-12 public school classrooms, this education budget may be considered among the best ones passed in Alabama's history."

The highlights in the Fiscal Year 2017 Education Trust Fund budget include:

• Providing funding for an additional 475 teachers in 7-12 grade classrooms, where the need is greatest.

• Increased spending for textbooks ($8 million for FY2017 and $20.8 million over the past two years combined) and transportation ($13.5 million for FY2017 and $18 million over the past two years combined).

• Expansion of Alabama's nationally-recognized voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program, known as First Class, with an additional $14 million in funding in FY2017 and $24.3 million over the past two years combined.

• A $3.1 million increase in funding for student materials ($6.1 million over the past two years combined) to prevent teachers from paying out-of-pocket for needed classroom supplies.

• Allowing local school systems to set priorities and meet urgent needs by providing an additional $47 million in discretionary "Other Current Expense" funding.

• Providing full funding for the Public Education Employees' Health Insurance Program (PEEHIP) with a $20 million increase that is intended to avoid premium increases.

The ETF budget will now go to the State Senate for consideration

Bowls (from Front)

Empty-Bowls-of-Cullman-County-310529778993633/.

For details of February's event, visit http://cullmansense.com/articles/2016/02/16/nasty-weather-can-t-dampen-13th-annual-empty-bowls.

Homicide (from Front)

reached by phone for comment shortly after the shooting, said.

Gentry also emphasized that "this is an isolated incident, so there's no danger to the community."

Details of the shooting and what led to the incident have not been officially disclosed; however, friends and family members of the victim and the alleged shooter claim that the two were best friends who had an altercation over a female.

Hill is currently being held in the Cullman County Detention Center with no bond.

Check www.cullmansense.com for updates as they become available.



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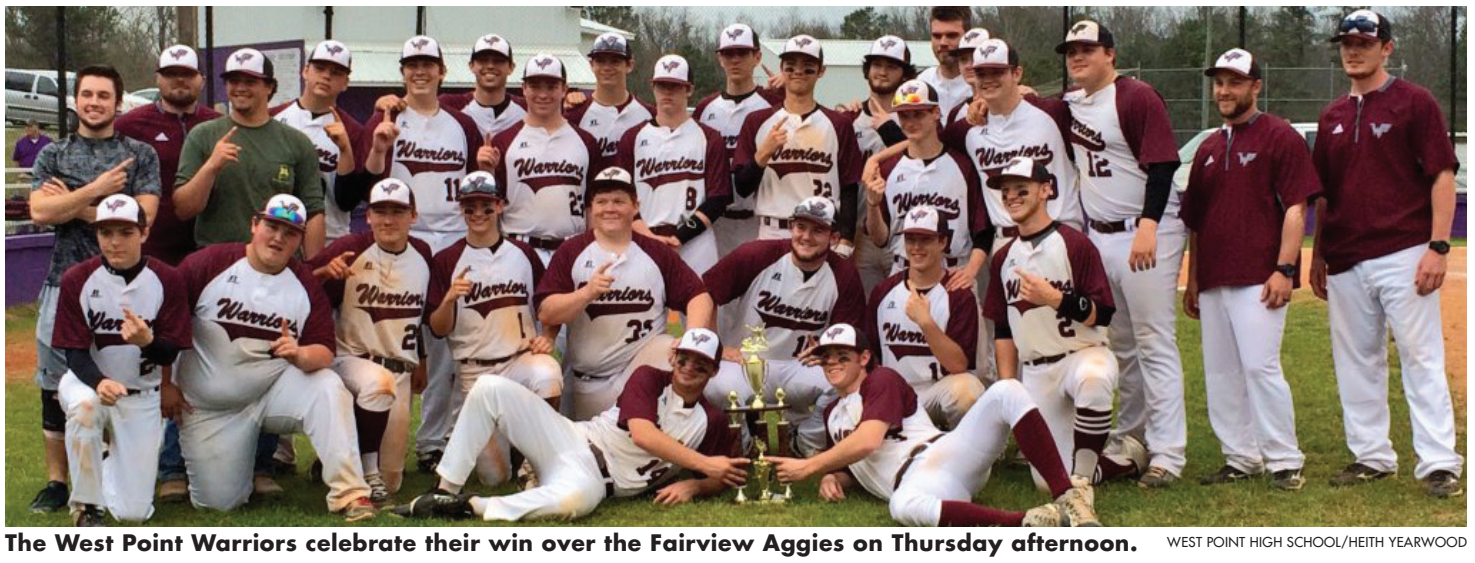
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PREP BASEBALL

WARRIORS REIGN IN COUNTY BASEBALL TOURNEY

Sixth inning scores key to West Point's win



The West Point Warriors celebrate their win over the Fairview Aggies on Thursday afternoon. WEST POINT HIGH SCHOOL/HEITH YEARWOOD

Johnny Thornton
Sports Correspondent

FAIRVIEW – Insurance runs in a baseball game are very important when a contest enters late innings; they served their purpose tremendously for the West Point Warriors Thursday afternoon. The Warriors broke open a tight affair with Fairview thanks to six runs coming home during the sixth and claimed the 2016 Cullman County Baseball Tournament championship title by a final score of 12-4.

West Point was looking for a little insurance in its half of the sixth, leading the Aggies 6-4, knowing Fairview was still in contention to come back when they got to the plate the next inning.

The sixth began great for the Warriors, not so good for the Aggies. Tanner Rusk doubled into the gap in center field, then took third base when the relay throw from the outfield never got to shortstop Preston Moore, resulting in an error.

Hunter Persall gave the Warriors a run when he singled in Rusk to make it 7-4. That was the beginning of West Point getting control of the game, finally.

Kolton Easterwood singled, then Sam Breihn walked to load the bases. Moore, who relieved left-hander Chandler Schnittker, got the next two outs.

Unfortunately, he issued a walk to Tanner Young that forced in a run and another base on balls, this one to Jaxson Garrison, sent Breihn in and the lead grew to 10-4.

Matthew McDonald's ground ball to second turned into an error for Fairview, as Young and Garrison came in and gave the Warriors an eight-run cushion at 12-4. McDonald was thrown out trying to advance to third on the play.

Dave Doss went to the mound for the Warriors, finishing a good performance in which he threw a complete game. He gave up a base hit to Braden Grandstaff with two outs, then got Schnittker to line to left field to end the game at 3:09 p.m.

The time of the championship was two hours, 11 minutes. Fairview managed four runs against Doss in the first two innings. A balk on Doss was called with Tyler Ball coming in to make it 1-0. Then Clay Lanier flied to left scoring Ragan Ashley.

In the second, the Aggies regained the lead after giving up three runs in West Point's half of the first. Ashley blasted a single up the middle that sent in Jones and Dunn, and Fairview went up 4-3.

But the Aggies could not stay on top. A sac fly by Ryan Smith and a run-scoring double from Levi Allred in the third allowed West Point to go back on top at 5-4.

Rusk lifted a fly in the fourth that was deep enough to score Garrison and extend the margin to 6-4.

Garrison crossed home plate three times in the championship game.

Doss shut down the Aggies in the final five innings, allowing them just four hits, and struck out two. He was never in serious trouble as he got stronger with plenty of power left in his pitches by the time the game reached the seventh.

Poe Holmes was charged with the loss. Holmes worked five innings for the Aggies, allowing six runs on nine hits with a pair or strikeouts.

West Point is now 7-1 on the season after getting three wins in the county tournament, two against Fairview. The Aggies drop to 7-7 overall.

Both teams will focus on the start of 5A, Area 14 play next Tuesday. Fairview will play at Lawrence County while West Point heads to Russellville the same afternoon to meet the defending 5A state champion Golden Tigers.

COUNTY SPORTS SCHEDULE

WEEK OF MARCH 14

MONDAY
Baseball
Cullman vs Austin 4:30 p.m.
Vinemont @ Brindlee Mountain
4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.

Softball
Vinemont vs Brindlee Mountain 4:00 p.m.
Holly Pond @ Cold Springs 4:00 p.m.
Cold Springs @ Holly Pond 4:00 p.m.

Soccer
Cullman @ Grissom 5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
West Point vs Priceville 5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
Fairview @ Mortimer Jordan
5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.

TUESDAY
Baseball
West Point @ Russellville 4:30 p.m.
Fairview @ Lawrence County 4:30 p.m.

Softball
Cullman @ Austin 4:30 p.m.
West Point @ Russellville 4:30 p.m.
Vinemont @ Decatur Heritage 4:30 p.m.
Hanceville vs Holly Pond 4:30 p.m.
Holly Pond @ Hanceville 4:30 p.m.
Cold Springs @ Addison 4:00 p.m.

Soccer
Cullman @ Florence 5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
Fairview @ Oneonta 5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY
Baseball
Fairview vs Lawrence County
4:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.

Softball
West Point vs Lawrence County 4:30 p.m.
Hanceville vs Cleveland 4:30 p.m.
Good Hope @ JB Pennington 5:00 p.m.
Cold Springs @ Tanner 4:00 p.m.

Soccer
Fairview @ Brewer 5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.

FRIDAY
Baseball
Fairview @ TR Miller 4:00 p.m.

Softball
Vinemont @ Cleveland 4:30 p.m.
Cold Springs @ Lindsey Lane
Christian Academy 2:30 p.m.

Soccer
West Point @ Westminster Christian
5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.

Compiled by Josh McBrayer

PREP SOCCER

WEST POINT STILL LOOKING FOR A WIN

Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

WEST POINT – It was a beautiful day for soccer in West Point as the Warriors welcomed the Danville Hawks to town on Monday.

Danville 5, West Point 0 (girls)
The Lady Warriors looked superb in the first half, hanging with Danville, who was 4-0 in section play heading into the game. The Lady Hawks were relentless taking shot after shot, putting 10 of them on goal, but the quick thinking and agile movement of Lady Warriors' keeper Melissa Lee kept the back of the net clean for West Point for the majority of the first half.

The one and only goal in the first half came off the foot of Danielle Nevins, who drove a shot into the net via a penalty kick for a handball in the box under the diving Lee with 1:34 left in the first half.

Lee had five saves in the half. West Point High School Principal Heith Yearwood tweeted that it was the best half of the year so far.

Unfortunately for West Point, the second half was all Danville, as they would put four more goals on the scoreboard, including a hat trick by Kelsie Hanline with goals at 12:41, 6:02 and 2:19.

Hayle Bryson scored the first goal of the second half at the 16:20 mark.

Lee saved 13 of the 17 shots on goal.

Danville 2, West Point 0 (boys) In the nightcap, the boys took the field, and it was a thrilling contest from start to finish.

Danville got on the board barely three minutes into the game with a nice boot from Blake Ray, but West Point played shutdown defense the rest of the half and trailed by just a single goal going to the half.

Danville added a second goal at the 13:42 mark of the second half to push the score to 2-0. West Point had several opportunities to score, but they could not find the net.

PREP BASKETBALL SCORING WRAP-UP

MONDAY
Softball
West Point 9, Fairview 5
Cold Springs 1, Vinemont 0
Hanceville 3, Cleveland 1

Soccer
Danville 5, West Point 0 (G)
Danville 2, West Point 0 (B)

TUESDAY
Baseball
Decatur 5, Cullman 4
Cullman 13, Decatur 6

Softball
Cullman 4, Hayden 2
West Point 9, Brewer 7
Holly Pond 1, Hanceville 0
Cordova 6, Good Hope 4

Soccer
Cullman 4, Madison County 2 (G)
Cullman 10, Lee-Huntsville 0 (B)
Brewer 8, West Point 1 (G)
Brewer 9, West Point 0 (B)
Danville 5, Fairview 0 (G)
Danville 4, Fairview 2 (B)

WEDNESDAY
Baseball
Decatur 3, Cullman 2
Cullman 17, Decatur 9

Softball
Fairview 4, Good Hope 1

THURSDAY
Softball
West Point 12, Fairview 4

Soccer
Cullman 3, Thompson 0 (B)

FRIDAY
Soccer
Pelham 3, Cullman 2 (B)

Compiled by Josh McBrayer

FROM SALOON TO APPLIANCE STORE, WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE CORNER OF FIRST AVE. AND THIRD ST.

Luyben & Boike soon to be one of Cullman's fondest memories

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com



Doug Boike stands with his father, George, many years ago.



PHOTOS COURTESY SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

Once home to a saloon, then an appliance store, this corner of Cullman is about to see another change.

CULLMAN – For the past 60 years the corner of First Avenue and Third Street has been home to an appliance store, and before that, a saloon. Soon it will be something completely different, as Luyben & Boike, Inc. will become one of the community's many fond memories. The longtime and much-loved store is set to close its doors later this year.

"We started out with wringer washers, that's how long we've been here," Owner Doug Boike chuckled. "We have a generation now that doesn't even know what a wringer washer is," he shook his head nostalgically. "We've come a long way since those days."

Luyben & Boike opened in February of 1956 when Doug's father, George Boike, and George's business partner, John Luyben left their jobs at Leigeber Sales and decided to go into business for themselves. But just like the old wringer washers, most of us around Cullman this day and age have no idea what Leigeber Sales was.

"Leigeber Sales was an appliance business," Boike explained. "It was one of our earliest appliance dealers. Prior to the war, people didn't buy refrigerators or washers or anything like that. But when they started getting electricity here in Cullman, Leigeber Sales would load up a truck with wringer washers and they would drive out to Bremen and other places out in the county. Dad would drive that ole truck really slow up and down the dirt roads. When people saw that truck they knew what it was for," he grinned, "and if they wanted a washer, they would go out to the truck and buy themselves a washer – right then and there off the truck!"

The Luyben & Boike building has seen its share of Cullman history over the years. Not only that, but it has seen some Alabama history come through its doors as well.

"We've had a few governors shop with us in the past," Doug smiled. "They were Big Jim Folsom and his son, Jim Folsom, Jr. and Guy Hunt. I can't think of anyone else famous that has bought anything from us," he said as he tried to think. "I remember when Hank Williams Jr. came to Cullman, and I know where he lived and everything, but I don't think he ever came in."

Luyben & Boike is a local, family-owned company that considers their employees to be family as well. The small group of friends has stuck together for many, many years. There's something to be said about a business that has the ability to keep its employees happy for an extended length of time.

"When the store officially closes, there will be four of us that will be retiring," Boike admitted. "They are my wife Judy and I, Donald Hunter, my service tech and Dovella Gardner, our bookkeeper.

"Donald has been working here for 52 plus years.... 52 PLUS," he smiled warmly.

"Dovella has been here for 16 years and I've been here, full-time for 45 years, although I've really been here since day one. My delivery guys have been working for us for a good while, too. Lee Thomas has been here for 15 years and B.J. Widner has been here over 10. Keith Crumbly, our salesman, has been here better than 10 years. We all just kinda grew old together," he mused.

What's the Luyben & Boike secret to keeping their loyal employees happy? How did they manage to maintain a successful appliance business going strong despite their big box store competition? Doug didn't hesitate to explain.

"Just keep it simple and treat people right. It's not that difficult. People just want a fair shake and somebody that respects them.

"We've had our niche in the marketplace and that has allowed us to survive," he added. "It was a combination of things: new sales, fixing up used items and selling them to supplement the new sales, parts and service. It all just works together."

Retirement is just around the corner and soon the doors will close forever. While thinking over his decision to close the business his father started long ago, Boike slowly smiled and explained.

"I can't say that I've got any regrets. I think we've done a good job over the years. We're going out at the top of our game, nobody ran us out and everybody had a shot at it."

The closing date has not yet been set, so customers still have a chance to stop in, say hello and enjoy a bargain to boot. Luyben & Boike has been treating their customers right for 60 years.... they're not going to stop now!

Moment (from Front)

be a nurse."

Life had other plans for Whaley, who opted to focus her innate nurturing abilities as a homemaker, caring for her husband and their three children, one of whom did live out her mother's dream of becoming a nurse.

This week, Whaley received a glimpse of what today's students experience as they train to be nurses when Sharon Ellis of Brookdale arranged for a special tour of the Wallace State Community College School of Nursing and Center for Science. "Mrs. Whaley has been with us for a couple of years, and she's always talked about how much she wanted to be a nurse," Ellis said, "so I thought it would be a nice surprise if she was able to tour Wallace State's nursing school."

Whaley was greeted by Deborah "Pepper" Hoover, director of the WSCC Nursing program, and Mechelle Baker, secretary for the nursing program. Baker led Whaley on a tour of the facility, which included the state-of-the-art Simulation Center, labs and lecture halls. She was then treated to lunch in the Wallace State Café.

"This has been amazing," Whaley said, "I'm so thankful for this opportunity."

A special treat for Whaley came when Hoover found the photo of Whaley's daughter, Vickie Whaley Jackson, on a composite photo of the nursing program's graduating class of 1993 and provided Whaley with a copy of the same grouping. Hoover followed that with a certificate created especially for Whaley.

The certificate read:
University of Compassion and Caring
In recognition of lifelong dedication to compassion and caring, having gained knowledge from personal experience and through the example set for others, Ms. Pauline Whaley has gained expertise and mastery in this chosen field. With the approval of the Faculty and Staff, we declare Pauline an Honorary Nurse for a lifetime of gentleness and kindness shown to all who came across her path.

"You're going to make me cry," Whaley said with a catch in her voice as she accepted the certificate.

Hoover said she was delighted to meet Whaley, to provide the opportunity for her to tour the college and to learn that Whaley's daughter was a graduate of the WSCC Nursing program and how she's succeeded in her career. Whaley said her daughter, Vickie Jackson, was a recipient of the Florence Nightingale Award while at Wallace State and is now employed with Dr. Chris LeGanke, helping in a groundbreaking study for the treatment of multiple sclerosis.

"It's great to hear about the legacies, the success our students have experienced and how Wallace State has touched so many lives," Hoover said.

While she didn't get to be a nurse herself, Hoover said Whaley's support of her daughter while she studied, was just as important. "Being a parent and being supportive of our students allows them to be a success," Hoover told her. "To be honest, it's a make-or-break factor in their success. So the fact that you were so supportive of your daughter is a credit to you as parent."

While this was Whaley's first opportunity to tour the nursing building, this was not her first time to be on the campus of Wallace State. Whaley said she previously took art and upholstery classes at Wallace State, even creating cushions for the couches first used in the Student Center when it was built. She's also returned for graduation ceremonies for children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

"I wasn't supposed to, but I yelled so loud," she said with a wide smile of her daughter's pinning ceremony when she graduated the nursing program.

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CAUSE OF MONDAY NIGHT FIRE AT WALKER BROTHERS BUILDING SUPPLY IN BAILEYTON STILL UNKNOWN

Truss Manufacturing Building a Complete Loss

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

BAILEYTON– On Monday, March 7, a fire completely destroyed part of Walker Brothers Building Supply, located on School House Road in Baileyton. The fire is thought to have started around 9 p.m. and was contained a couple hours later around 11p.m. with the help of firefighters from Baileyton, Fairview and Joppa. As of Tuesday evening, the cause of the fire, which completely destroyed the company's truss manufacturing building, is still unknown.

"The fire departments from Baileyton, Joppa and Fairview got here pretty quick last night. They kept the fire from spreading to other areas of the business," said Terry Walker, owner. "We had about eight or nine trucks here at the same time."

In time, Walker Brothers will rebuild their truss building, but for now, Walker had the following to say about their immediate plans.

"Of course we are still trying to figure out what we're going to do. For trusses, we will probably be buying them from somewhere else. We have a little deal going with a place in Tennessee. It's a place someone bought for the property and not for the machinery on it, so we're going to go up and look at it. Hopefully it won't be too old and there will be something reasonably priced we can purchase."



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

What's left of the truss manufacturing building's rubble continued to smoke late into the day on Tuesday. In the meantime, it's business as usual at Walker Brothers Building Supply.

CullmanSense will continue to follow this story and provide updates as they occur.

THE SOUTHERN ROCK RACING SERIES INVADES STONY LONESOME

Josh McBrayer
josh@cullmansense.com

BREMEN – It was wet, muddy and dreary but that did not stop a plethora of racers and droves of fans from flocking to Stony Lonesome OHV Park Friday afternoon for the first race in the 2016 Southern Regional Series.

"This is the biggest and baddest of the racing on the East Coast," said Stoney Lonesome Park manager Tyler Lindsey. "It is second only to NASCAR, really."

The NASCAR element was felt as Southern Rock Racing will implement a points system just like NASCAR's cup series.

In all, 28 racers braved the elements, the trails and each other for the Utility Task Vehicle, or UTV, race that kicked off the two-day event.

"They will race a one-and-a-half-minute side-by-side technical race," said Lindsey. "The top six or seven places are actual paid places."

Despite the weather, the UTV side-by-side race went off without a hitch, with the trails holding up well.

The top 10 results of the first race of the series were:

- 1st Tim Cameron 50 points
- 2nd Stacy Wilhoit 46 points
- 3rd Josh Cannon 43 points
- 4th Justin Pierpoint 43 points
- 5th Austin Pruitt 41 points
- 6th Coltin Hoback 40 points
- 7th Nick Martin 39 points
- 8th Edgar Black 38 points
- 9th Jack Porter 37 points
- 10th Melvin Veach 36 points

Saturday brought even more fans to the park as the rock bouncers took center stage.

"The rock bouncers are what everyone comes to see," Lindsey told CullmanSense. "They are the biggest of the big and the baddest of the bad. They climb the nastiest hills and terrain you could ever imagine in your life."

The rock bouncers took to a hill well-known to the patrons of Stony Lonesome. It's the hill they call Who's Your Daddy.

See a video of Who's Your Daddy here: http://qrne.ws/whosyourdaddy.

"The spectators here come to see these (hill climbers) crash and burn. That is what they thrive on, to see crashes just like NASCAR. You don't watch NASCAR for the first 450 laps, you watch it for the last 20," said Lindsey. "But they are safe. Southern Rock Racing is the first to regulate their drivers with RI boxes which is a safety box controlled by Clyde Bynum, the man over the Southern Racing Series. He can turn off their machine at any time with this little box."

Thankfully, there was no need to use the RI box as the rock bouncers finished their event and posted some impressive times and point totals for the two-heat climb.

Results for the top 10:

- 1st Brandon Davis 92 total points
- 2nd Team Underrated 91 total points
- 3rd Ethan Spegal 86 total points
- 4th Tim Cameron 81 total points
- 5th Travis Lovett 79 total points
- 6th Kyle Crouch 79 total points
- 7th Adam Ringer 75 total points
- 8th Jake Burkey 74 total points
- 9th Craig Hughes 74 total points
- 10th Team Dark Knight 74 total points

The massive racing event not only helped Stony Lonesome, funneling money into the park for maintenance and general upkeep, but also injected the local economy with out-of-town and out-of-state dollars, making the Southern Rock Racing Series a success for all involved.

Find out more about Stony Lonesome and all of the park's upcoming events at http://www.stonylonesomeohv.us/. The park is located at 10075 Alabama Highway 69 South in Bremen.

For more details on the Southern Rock Racing Series, visit http://southernrockracing.com.

32ND ANNUAL BLOOMIN' FESTIVAL APRIL 16-17

Amy Leonard
amy@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Celebrating its 32nd year, the Bloomin' Festival is scheduled for April 16-17 at St. Bernard Prep School. The festival will feature over 140 artists, a 5K and 10K race, 2016 Jeep Patriot raffle and its infamous monk bread.

On average, over 25,000 people attend the festival, which is held on the prep school and abbey campus, each year. As the festival is located next to Ave Maria Grotto, a reduced admission is offered at the Grotto for attendees to appreciate its historical and artistic wonder.

Bloomin' Festival admission is a $5 donation and children under five are admitted for free.

Not only are festival goers looking forward to Bloomin's 32nd year, but the artisans are excited as well.

Crane Hill artist Donna Peters of Deep South Studio explained, "I have really enjoyed the community atmosphere it offers. Cullman is such a diverse community, but we only get to know how much so when we get out to be a part of other activities. This is great family fun that offers a great opportunity to see what artists and craftsmen are creating from other places."

Peters has shown her art at different festivals for "close to 50 years" and has participated at the Bloomin' Festival for "close to 15 years." She appreciates our local festival, citing, "It is unique in flavor. The location is the best! Visitors from other places are always so excited about visiting the Grotto and seeing the talent this festival draws."

Beth Harrison of Sheer Pleasures Soap is another return artisan to the festival. Specializing in cold-process soaps made in small batches, Harrison's variety of soaps cater to every skin need. Ginger lemon soap and lilac soap are a few favorites, but the jewelweed soap holds the key to surviving southern summers. Jewelweed, which grows in the wild near poisons ivy, oak and sumac, naturally dries the oils of the skin irritant poison trio and soothes the skin. Harrison is hopeful to be in her usual spot at the festival and is praying for cooperative weather.

Each year the festival is the largest fundraiser for the upkeep of the local prep school, whose mission is "as a Catholic, college preparatory, residential school is the cultivation of a love of learning and a life of virtue in young men and women within a community of faith and scholarship."

To register for the 5K/10K run, visit https://www.raceit.com/Register/?event=36580.

St. Bernard Prep School is located at 1600 St. Bernard Drive SE in Cullman off of Highway 278 East. For more information about Bloomin' Festival, call 256-739-6682, ext. 7133 or 800-722-0999. Find the festival online at www.bloominfestival.com.

The Ave Maria Grotto, located at the same address, is open daily from 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. and can be reached at 256-734-4110 or online at www.avemariagrotto.com.

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EAST AND WEST ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SHOWCASE ARTWORK

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – The annual East and West Elementary Art Show was held Thursday night, March 10 at the Civic Center. This year's theme was Fairy Tales, Fables, Tall Tales and Legends. Dragons, fairies and a whole host of colorful characters adorned the walls as their young creators proudly pointed out their work to their parents, siblings and other visitors.

"This is my fifth year to do the art show," said Mrs. McBrayer, East and West Elementary art teacher.

"We do this so that the parents and the community can come by and see what the kids have been doing. They do such great work; I am so proud of them. The parents are always very positive when they come; they will look at the various artwork and say things like, 'Oh my gosh!' and 'This is great!'" she giggled.

"It takes almost the whole year to put the show together, the students doing the art projects and everything," she continued.

"I originally started out by doing the show by grade levels, but this year I thought I would do something different, so I let each class do something different," she grinned, "so tonight we have 55 different exhibits!"

In preparing for the show, students learned about several different fairy tales and the moral lessons of fables.

The kids enjoyed the tall tales and were able to understand the importance of legends.

Best of all, they were able to be creative and bring these amazing stories to life through their artwork.

"When Mrs. McBrayer approached me with the idea of an elementary art show five years ago, I knew that it was something that needed to be supported and promoted," said David Wiggins, East Elementary principal.

"The influence of the arts in education cannot be discounted and I am so happy that Mrs. McBrayer goes to such lengths to highlight the talent of students at both East Elementary and West Elementary. I am in awe of Mrs. McBrayer's skill as an art teacher, and we are so fortunate to have her at our elementary schools."

"They did a magnificent job all the way around," said Beth Collicott, West Elementary parent.

"I am very impressed and I really love the theme. Every single year is just amazing. I usually go around taking pictures of other people's artwork. I'm a sucker for kid art," she mused.

"I did the owl," said William, a third-grade student at West Elementary, as he proudly pointed to his picture.

"I really liked working on it. It was fun."

Despite the dreary weather, this year's Art Show was a huge success. It was a wonderful way for the community to spend the evening and enjoy the work of some very talented kids.



Students from East and West Elementary showed off their terrific talent at this year's art show at the Civic Center. PHOTOS COURTESY SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE





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Dr. Schroeder has a special interest in helping catch lung-cancer early and save lives. He is proud to bring the first Lung Nodule Clinic to Cullman.

The Lung nodule clinic can biopsy small nodules found in the lung as an outpatient procedure.

Benefits of the procedure are early detection of lung cancer and to save patients from unnecessary surgery.

Monday

American Legion Post 4 Monthly Meeting
Join us for our monthly meeting held at Veterans Hall, 112 Veterans Drive, at 6 p.m. Dinner is served at 6 p.m., meeting to follow beginning at 7 p.m.

Cullman City Council Meeting
7 p.m. at City Hall Auditorium

Free Seminar on the Adjustable Lap-Band System Procedure
Dr. Mac Cottingham, Horizon Surgical, is offering a free informational seminar on the Adjustable Lap-Band System procedure at Cullman Regional Medical Center on Monday, March 14 from 6-8 p.m. in CRMC's Ave Maria Room located in Professional Office Building II. The seminar will include an explanation of the Lap-Band System procedure, information on nutrition and other lifestyle changes required for success with the system, a chance to ask questions about the procedure and information on insurance and financing options. As part of the Horizon Surgical's commitment to patient care and good clinical outcomes, we require all patients considering gastric band surgery to attend a free one-hour informational seminar prior to a consult for surgery. For additional information, or to register for this seminar, please call 256-736-BAND. For a complete list of upcoming support groups and events at Cullman Regional Medical Center visit the online Calendar of Events at www.crmchospital.com.

Good Hope City Council Meeting
Monday, March 14, Good Hope City Hall, 6:30 p.m.

Storytime at the Library
Storytime at the library every Monday and Tuesday at 10 a.m. Join us for fun! Listen to stories, learn songs and make crafts. Contact 256-734-1068 for more information.

Little Lambs Preschool Registration
St. John's Evangelical Protestant School is accepting registration for Little Lambs Preschool beginning March 7. For ages 18 months through 4 years. Abel curriculum is used. Church is located at 512 2nd Ave. SE. For more information, contact Gyzelle Warren at gyzellew@sjepc.com or text 256-595-2755 or visit www.sjepc.com.

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 Cullman 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.

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

Domestic Violence Survivors' Support Group
Victim Services of Cullman's Domestic Violence Survivors' Support Group meets every Monday from 5-7 p.m. at the old County Board of Education Building (310 Third Ave. 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 discussion 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

Berlin Community Meeting
7 p.m. at the Berlin Community Center

Public Interviews for New CCBOE Superintendent
The Cullman County Commission on Education has scheduled the following public interviews for the position of Superintendent of Cullman County Schools on Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at the Cullman County Board of Education central office board room, 402 Arnold Street, Northeast, Cullman:
5 p.m. Mr. Shane Barnette
6 p.m. Dr. Donald Snow
7 p.m. Dr. Elizabeth Swinford
8 p.m. Dr. Rick Carter

ABC 33/40 Basic Storm Spotter Training
Tuesday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m. at the Cullman Civic Center. FREE. Training will be taught by Meteorologist Brian Peters. Special appearances by Chief Meteorologist James Spann, Meteorologist Charles Daniel and Meteorologist Meaghan Thomas.

North Alabama Agriplex Book Club
On March 15 our next book club meeting will be on Nick Trout's NY Times Bestseller "Tell Me Where It Hurts". The book club will meet at 6 p.m. at the Agriplex, located at 1714 Tally Ho Street SW.

Alzheimer's Support Group Meeting
Find meaningful advice and support from a community of fellow Alzheimer's Caregivers. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 15 at 5:30 p.m. at Westminster Assisted Living, located at the intersection of Main Avenue and Olive Street. For more information or to RSVP, contact group coordinator Jane Burchfield at (256)737-2033 or jane.burchfield@crmchospital.com. For a complete list of upcoming support groups and events at Cullman Regional Medical Center visit the online Calendar of Events at www.crmchospital.com.

The Link of Cullman County's GROW 2016
The Link of Cullman County's annual event and auction, GROW 2016, will take place on Tuesday, March 15 at 6 p.m. at Loft 212, located at 212 Fourth St. SW. Doors will open and the silent auction will begin at 5 p.m., with dinner following at 6 p.m. Shane Quick, of Premier Productions and founder of Rock the South, will be the night's guest speaker. Tickets are $25 per person. Tickets can be purchased online at https://goo.gl/Lgb9iY. For more information about the event, call 256-775-0028 or email info@linkingcullman.org.

Storytime at the Library
Storytime at the library every Monday and Tuesday at 10 a.m. Join us for fun! Listen to stories, learn songs and make crafts. Contact 256-734-1068 for more information.

Dodge City Senior Citizen Luncheon
Every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. Come enjoy fun, food and games at Dodge City Town Hall.

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.

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

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

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 discussion 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 Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon. 1101 Third Ave. SE in Cullman. Call 256-775-0028 for more information.

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

March 2016 Morning Blend
8 a.m. at Karma's Coffee House. Chamber Staff will welcome members and visitors to Karma's every month to discuss the hottest topics in business and share tips, ideas and viewpoints.

Good Hope Senior Center Meeting
Seniors meet every Wednesday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Pot Luck Lunch at 11 a.m., games, crafts, special speakers and more Contact Gene Bradford at 256-636-2100 or Jackie Gentry at 256-739-0403.

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

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

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 discussion 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.

Divorce Care Support Group
The Link of Cullman County, 6 p.m. Call Denise at 256-590-3719 for more information.

Thursday

Healthy Food Retail Workshop
On March 17 at the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, store owners and anyone with an interest in creating a healthier food retail environment are invited to attend a Healthy Food Retail Workshop from 9 a.m.-noon. Other topics to include What is SNAP? and Creating a local food hub.

Swamp John's Dinner
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church. 17478 U.S. Highway 31, March 17, 4-7 p.m. $11 per plate.

Cullman County Local Emergency Planning Committee Meeting
Cullman County EMA training room. 10 a.m. March 17. Contact Phyllis for details. 256-739-5410.

The Cullman County Commission on Education Board Workshop
The Cullman County Commission on Education will have a board workshop on Thursday, March 17, 2016 beginning at 5 p.m. at the Cullman County Board of Education central office board room, 402 Arnold Street, Northeast, Cullman. This is an informational only meeting.

YPCullman (Young Professionals Cullman)
March 17, Karma's Coffee House at 6 p.m. YPCullman is an outlet for the next generation of leaders to channel their energy and enhance their leadership potential. This new program is designed for young professionals, ages 22-39. Over time, we envision YPCullman members to take strides in several facets of the Cullman area, including but not limited to: community awareness and concern, committee involvement, entrepreneurial roundtables, and eventually leadership roles. Employers please send this to your employees ages 22-39! If you would like to sign up, email mbartlett@cullmanchamber.org.

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

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 discussion 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.

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

Friday

Living Stations of the Cross
All are warmly invited to join us on Friday, March 18 at 7 p.m. for a live performance of the Living Stations of the Cross. The Stations will be performed by the Cenacolo Community (www.hopereborn.org) in the piazza of the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, AL. This powerful event is open to people of all faiths and ages. For more information on this free event, call: 205-795-5717, http://olamshrine.org/event/living-stations-of-the-cross/.

Lenten Fish Fry Supper
Cullman Knights of Columbus will sponsor Lenten Fish Fry Suppers each Friday leading up to Easter. To be held in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Family Life Center, the supper, either eat-in or take-out, will run from 5-6:45 p.m., leading up to weekly Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m. in the church. Meals are $8 a plate or a family can eat for $25. Baked or fried fish with traditional accompaniments will be served, with all proceeds used for the Knights of Columbus church and community projects. All are welcome to attend the dinners. For more information, call Barbara G. Ragsdale at 256-347-3471.

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 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.

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 discussion 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.

Saturday

$10,000 Drawdown
March 19 in new lunchroom at Fairview High School. Tickets are $100 each. Sponsored by FHS Alumni Association. Proceeds go to scholarship fund and other school projects. For more information, Call Marshall at 256-734-8068, Mark at 256-347-5996, Sherrie at 256-339-2202 or Jamie at 256-734-1174.

Easter Celebration
Garden City First Baptist Church from noon-2 p.m. Games, food, fun.

Short Track Race at Stony Lonesome OHV Park
Stony Lonesome OHV Park brings Short Track Racing with Payouts to Cullman County. These races are open to UTVs and ATVs only and ages 10 and up. Starts at 9 a.m. For full details including prices and registration, visit http://www.stonylonesomeohv.us/short-track.html.

FREE Smoke Alarm Installations in South Vinemont
Saturday, March 19, from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. To schedule an appointment or for more information, contact the Cullman American Red Cross at 256-734-0921. The American Red Cross and Vinemont-Providence Fire Department are teaming up to reduce home fire-related injuries and fatalities. Volunteers will be installing smoke detectors AT NO CHARGE, as well as replacing batteries and providing Life Saving Education. Volunteer opportunities are available for this event as well.

Walk MS: Cullman
March 19 at 9 a.m. at Heritage Park. Walk MS: Cullman: Ending multiple sclerosis for good will take all of us. It's why Walk MS matters so much. And it's why you matter so much. Walk MS helps us team up with friends, loved ones and co-workers to change the world for everyone affected by MS. Together, we become a powerful force. And with every step we take, every dollar we raise...we're that much closer. Together, we will end MS forever. http://qrne.ws/ms. A variety of volunteer opportunities are available for all ages:
- Site set up
- Coffee station
- Pre-registration & Walker registration
- Volunteer check-in table
- T-shirt distribution
- Rest area/handing out fruit & water to walkers
- Food Service area
- Entertainment area (kids bounce house, corn hole, MS Experience)
- Site breakdown

For more information:256-457-5618

Berlin Community Easter Egg Hunt
The annual Berlin Community Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by the Berlin Sunshine Club, will be held on Saturday, March 19 starting at 2 p.m. at the Berlin Community Center (3309 Highway 278 E., Cullman, Alabama 35055). Participants must be members of the Berlin Community and children must be age 0 to 12 to participate in the egg hunt! The Easter Bunny will be available for pictures (please bring your own digital camera or cell phone). Easter-themed games and light refreshments will be provided.

County-Wide Yard Sale at Sportsman Lake Park
On Saturday, March 19, Sportsman Lake Park will hold its semi-annual County-Wide Yard Sale from 7a.m.- 3p.m. Registration is open now for those who wish to secure a spot. Reserving a 10'x10' area in the grass costs $10, and reserving a pavilion is $20. Sportsman Lake Park is located at 1544 Sportsman Lake Rd. NW in Cullman and can be reached at 256-734-3052.

Hanceville QB Club Turkey Shoot
March 19. 9 a.m.-noon. Highway 31 South next to Domino's Pizza. $5 meat and money shots.

War Recovery
From 1-2 p.m. at Redemption Assembly of God. 516 Shaeffel Rd. Cullman. We have court refer. in Cullman Co. Call Susan, 256-620-6966 for more info.

Saving Forgotten Warriors
Organization helps area disabled Marine and Vietnam veteran Cpl. Kenneth Beasley and other area veterans in need. Clean-up days for Cpl. Beasley are each Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Beasley's home at 185 Co. Road 823. Volunteers are needed and donations are accepted. See Facebook page "Saving Forgotten Warriors" for more info or call Jeremy (352-440-4076), Tammy (256-286-3136) or Josh (256-615-5263).

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 discussion 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

Former Crimson Tide player Siran Stacy at Cornerstone Church of the Nazarene
Join us Sunday March 20th to hear special guest, former Alabama football great, Siran Stacy! Service begins at 10 a.m. with a potluck and egg hunt to follow! See you then!
321 Third St. SE.

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

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 discussion 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 and Upcoming Events

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

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

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

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 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.

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

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

Renew Our Rivers Lake Cleanup
Friday, March 25, 8 a.m. - noon; Smith Lake, sites to be determined. Contact Eddie Hand at 256-287-1545.

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).

Cullman County Commission Meetings
The Cullman County Commission meets every second and fourth Tuesday, except in cases where the meeting date falls on a holiday, in which case the meeting is moved to the following day. Meetings are scheduled for 10 a.m. in the Commission office conference room, first floor, Cullman County Courthouse, unless otherwise specified.

Cullman County Community Development Commission Meeting
The Cullman County Community Development Commission (CCCDC) will meet on April 7 at 6 p.m. at the North Alabama Agriplex,1714 Tally Ho Street SW.

2016 Strawberry Festival
May 6-7, 2016, at the Festhalle Farmer's Market and Depot Park, a host of local farmers will offer strawberries to purchase both days of the event. Strawberry-themed foods, ice cream, drinks and more will also be a part of the festival. Huge lineup of music to be announced on April 1, free kids' games and rides, dozens of craft vendors and a car show. Food trucks will also be on-site both days. The event will kick off during the day Friday with Senior Day from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; the festival will run from 4-10 p.m. on Friday, and 8 a.m.-10 p.m. on Saturday. For more information on CP&R's 2016 Strawberry Festival, visit www.cullmanrecreation.org or call 256-734-9157.

Cullman Pilot Club Spring 2016 Charity Fundraiser
The Pilot Club of Cullman will host its spring 2016 charity fundraiser, Professional Women's Fashion Show and Luncheon: "Dancing in the Street," on Wednesday, April 27 at the Cullman Civic Center. The event will be "a way of celebrating Administrative Professional's Day." Doors will open at 11 a.m. so attendees can shop the booths set up by area businesses. Boxed lunches provided by Sweet Peppers Deli will be served at 11:30 a.m., with a fashion show beginning soon thereafter. Door prizes will be given away during the show. Tickets for the event are $20 and can be purchased at the Cullman County Museum or the Cullman Civic Center.

Colors of Cancer Day
April 2; We will start off the day with a 5K at the Fairgrounds. Registration is at 7 a.m., 5K run will start at 8 a.m., and awards will be handed out at 9 a.m. The parade will begin at 10 a.m. in the North Shopping Center and be lead up Highway 31 by Cindy, the pink firetruck, to the Fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds will host a Drum Line Competition between area high schools at noon. Vendor Booths, Food and a Bounce House will be available during the afternoon. There will be a Balloon Release at 2 p.m. to end the day. More info: Amanda Rogers at amanda.rogers@crmchospital.com or Becky Richardson at brichardson1957@yahoo.com.

Color Me Cullman 5K
April 9 at 8 a.m. at Sportsman Lake Park; The Color Me Cullman 5K is a colorful experience where we promote healthiness and happiness. Our event is all about people of all different speeds, ages, shapes, and sizes ready to get COLORFUL! Come on out to Sportsman Lake wearing a white T-shirt as your blank canvas and get ready to become a piece of artwork!

2016 Bloomin' Festival Arts & Crafts Fair
Saturday and Sunday, April 16-17, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The 32nd Annual Bloomin' Festival Arts and Crafts Fair to be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 16-17, 2016. St. Bernard has been recognized by the Southeast Tourism Society consistently in the past nine years as a "Top Twenty Event in the Southeast."

"Arts in April Celebration" 2016 at WSCC
Wallace State Community College is seeking artists to participate in an exhibition of local community artworks Monday, April 4 - Saturday, April 30 as part of the annual 2016 Arts in April Celebration. In conjunction with WSCC's Earth Week Celebration, participants for this year's Arts in April Community Exhibition "Spring Upcycle" are invited to create artworks based on general themes of nature, its beauty and its conservation. More specifically this year participants are encouraged to use repurposed, recycled and found materials to create "upcycled" artworks which will become creative, imaginative, and lasting reminders of our everyday roles as recyclers and partners in conservation. The deadline for submitting is March 18. All entries should be ready and suitable for display when submitted. Contact Adrian Scott at 245-352-8145 or adrian.scott@wallacestate.edu for complete rules and guidelines or the Burrow Center for the Fine and Performing Arts front desk at 256-352-8277.

March Events at the North Alabama Agriplex
We have some great programs coming up in March! On March 15 is our next book club on Nick Trout's NY Times Bestseller "Tell Me Where It Hurts". The following week is a Living Landscape class on apple trees by Linda Steele of Steele Orchard on March 22. The last week of March, on March 29, we have a Heritage Skills class on natural body care taught by our own VISTA Nicole. You can register on our website at agriplex.org under the registration tab. Please register and share!

Bosom Buddies Support Group
The Bosom Buddies Support Group offers support to individuals affected by breast cancer. The group will hold its next meeting on Monday, March 21 from 6-8 p.m. in Cullman Regional Medical Center's Ave Maria Room in the Community Education Center located in Professional Office Building 2. Donna Shanklin will be speaking about nutrition. For a complete list of upcoming support groups and events at Cullman Regional Medical Center visit the online Calendar of Events at www.crmchospital.com.

"Althea" at WSCC
The Evelyn Burrow Museum at Wallace State Community College presents "Althea" as part of the South Arts Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers at the Burrow Center for the Fine and Performing Arts on Thursday, April 14 at 9:30 a.m. Following a screening of the film, the filmmaker will engage the audience in a discussion about the film and their work as filmmakers. Admission is free and the event is open to the public.

Dancing for a Cause
April 2 at 6 p.m. in the Cullman High School auditorium. Join us for the inaugural Dancing for a Cause charity event hosted by The Factory Dance Productions! Set up like a local version of Dancing with the Stars, Cullman County and City favorites will compete to raise money for various charities. Each set of contestants will represent the charity of their choice. Out of town judges will score the contestants on overall entertainment value, not dance technique. The winners will receive a large donation towards the charity of their choice! The runner-up and our "People's Choice" winners as voted on by the audience will get donations towards their charities as well! Remaining money will be distributed amongst our Company dancers to help pay for regional and national traveling expenses! Please check our website for a list of sponsors and contestants! www.thefactorydance.com

"Beauty and the Beast" Presented by Cullman High School
On Friday and Saturday, April 8-9, the Cullman High School drama and choral departments will present their rendition of Disney's Broadway musical "Beauty and the Beast." CHS Theater Director Wayne Cook and CHS Choir Director Sarah Driskell will lead the production. Opening night is Friday, April 8, at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 9, showtimes are 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are priced at $10 for adults and $5 for children under the age of 12. Senior citizens and children under the age of 12 will receive $3 tickets at Saturday's 12:30 p.m. show. For any more information, call 256- 734-3923 or visit http://chs.cullmancats.net/.

Men's League Softball
Registration open at Heritage Park through March 15. For ages 15 and up. $425 per team of 10 or more. Call 256-734-9157 or email heritagepark@cullmanrecreation.org for more info.

Cullman City Head Start
Now accepting applications for the 2016-17 school year. Must live in city limits and be 3-4 years-old on or before Sep. 2 and meet qualifications. Call 256-734-0234 for more info.

Rock the South
June 3-4 at Heritage Park. Check out www.rockthesouth.com for more details.

4D Farm Spring Celebration
Visit the farm on March 25-26 for a fun-filled day of egg hunts, visiting with the Easter bunny and enjoy all the exciting farm activities that we have to offer. You can zoom down our 80-ft slide, take a ride on our 250-ft zipline and jump on our HUGE jumping pillow! We will also open April 2. Easter bunny and egg hunts will only be taking place the weekend of Easter, but we will have all other spring farm favorites on April 2 as well! See you on the farm!! 7182 County Road 703, Cullman, Alabama 35055

Art in the Park
Cullman City Parks & Rec's FREE Art in the Park event will take place April 9 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Heritage Park! Dozens of craft vendors will be on site as well as an art show, sidewalk chalk contest, free crafts for the kids and more!

Swamp John's Dinner
Seventh Street Baptist Church will hold a Swamp John's dinner, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 30, in the church fellowship hall. Plates are $11, with fish, chicken, shrimp or a combo. Dine-in or carry-out. Tickets are available at the church office or can be purchased at the door. 256-739-8724

Cullman County Democrats
The Cullman County Democrats meet on the second Saturday of each month at 8 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 9 at 8 a.m. in the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room. April's meeting will feature special guest Ron Crumpton, who is running for U.S. Senate against longtime incumbent, Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Alabama.

Easter Egg Hunt at Sportsman Lake Park
On Saturday, March 26 at 9 a.m. Sportsman Lake Park will hold its traditional Easter Egg Hunt. The event is free to attend and will feature everyone's favorite floppy-eared rabbit, the Easter Bunny himself.

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

Internet Safety Training
Thursday, March 31 at 6 p.m. Daystar Church Good Hope Campus. FREE event. Presented by Assistant U.S. District Attorney Jackie Hutzell, this Internet Safety presentation will include discussion on: Cyber Bullying, Cyber Security, Social Networking, Dangers of Sexting, Social and Legal Consequences. This event is sponsored by: Cullman County Human Trafficking Task Force, Judge Kim Chaney, Cullman Children's Policy Council and the U.S. Attorney's Office Northern District of Alabama.

Cullman City Schools Foundation Distinguished Alumni Awards Luncheon
On Friday, April 1 the Cullman City Schools Foundation will hold its Seventh Annual Distinguished Alumni Awards event. The luncheon will take place at St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Doors will open at 11 a.m. Tickets can be purchased individually for $25 or groups can reserve tables of eight for $200. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Businesses may purchase sponsorships of $100-$1,000. For additional details or to buy tickets, visit http://qrne.ws/ccsf or visit the central office at Cullman High School.

CRMC Foundation Gala XV
Saturday, April 16 at 6 p.m. at the Cullman Civic Center. Gala will honor Mr. Del Brock and Dr. Jim Hoover. For more information, contact the CRMC Foundation at 256-737-2565.

Appointment of New CCBOE Superintendent
The Cullman County Commission on Education will meet on Tuesday, March 29, 2016 at 6 p.m. for the purpose of appointing the Superintendent of Cullman County Schools at the Cullman County Board of Education central office board room, 402 Arnold Street, Northeast, Cullman.

Senior Spirit

A program sponsored by the City of Cullman Parks and Recreation Department that focuses on recreational, social and leisure opportunities for individuals 50 & over. There is no membership fee and programs are offered at the Donald E. Green Senior Center.

Exercise Area
An exercise area with several types of equipment is available for seniors to use provided they have a release form signed by their physician.
Date: Mon., Tues., Wed., and Fri.
Time: 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Fitness for Life
Walking and light cardio stretching classes that help boost your energy.
Date: Year-round
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
Time: 8-9:15 a.m.
Instructor: Catherine Hasenbein

Line Dancing
Date: Year-round
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
Beginners: 9:15-10 a.m.
Adv. / Kickers: 10 a.m. - noon
Instructor: Sherry Boatright
Cost: FREE

Senior Spirit Singers
Join this group that sings old time Gospel Hymns. The group is available for Special Events, Revivals, Assisted Living facilities and Nursing Homes throughout the Community.
Date: Mondays
Time: 10 a.m.
Instructor: Helen Orr
Cost: FREE

Sacred Harp Singing
(Fa-So-La)
Learn this old style of traditional singing that took root in the Southern region of the United States as a part of the larger tradition of shape note music.
Date: 1st & 3rd Wed. of each month Time: 9-11 a.m.

Monday Jam Session
Come together with other seniors to listen to pickers as they play old time country music or try your talent at picking and singing with them.
Date: Every Monday
Time: 1- 4 p.m.
Group Leader: Barbara Whitehead

Fun & Games
Bring a friend or make new ones with a fun filled day of fellowship, card playing or dominos.
Date: Tuesdays
Time: 9 a.m.-until

Bingo
Date: Tuesdays
Time: 1 p.m.
Play a minimum of 12 games

Art Classes
Art classes in oils, acrylics and other venues. This is a relaxing and rewarding activity. Seniors are responsible for furnishing their own supplies.
Date: The 1st Tues. of each month
Time: 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Instructor: Nance DiPiero
Cost: $10 per class

Bunco
A parlor game played in teams with three dice.
Date: 1st Wednesday of each Month
Time: 1 p.m.

Yoga
Health benefits associated with Yoga are improved flexibility, more strength, improved posture, and relaxation. Classes can be done from a mat or in a chair.
Date: Tues. 9:30-10:30 a.m., Thurs. 4-5 p.m.
Instructor: Fabian Holland
Cost: Free

Dulcimer Classes
Take lessons to learn the Appalachian dulcimer, generally regarded as one of the easiest string instruments to learn. The traditional way to play the instrument is to lay it flat on the lap and pluck or strum the strings with the right hand, while fretting with the left.
Date: Every Friday
Time: 1 p.m.
Instructor: Craig Mann
Cost: $10 for 1 hour

Pool Table
Pool table is available for play from 8 a.m. -5 p.m. Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.

WII Bowling
Date: Wednesday & Friday
Time: 1 p.m.
WII bowling is also available when the room is not being used for other activities.

BASEBALL AND PANCAKES

Vinemont Eagles Baseball Second Annual Pancake Breakfast & Silent Auction

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

VINEMONT – The Vinemont Eagles Baseball team hosted its second annual Pancake Breakfast & Silent Auction on Saturday, March 12, in the school lunchroom. The auction had something for everyone - shampoo gift sets, jewelry, tools and much more. All money raised during the event will go to support the baseball team throughout the upcoming year.

"The money we raise goes to pay for the season-equipment, the field and whatever the team needs," said Renee Hoffman, team mom. "Last year we used the Pancake Breakfast money to purchase new uniforms, which they needed terribly.

"We had more than 40 people and businesses donate items for the auction today," she continued. We even had our home economics department to make and donate some really cute things," she smiled. "We are very thankful for all the help we've had in putting this together again this year."

Everyone pitched in to make the day a success. From the team members selling drinks to the parents flipping pancakes and maintaining the silent auction, a lot of hard work turned into fun and fellowship.

"I'm very proud we have an organization that is working this hard to raise funds for our baseball players," said Ferrell Runge, Vinemont High School principal. "We get a lot of support from the community, and that's just a tribute to their hard work. They do a tremendous job. If only all our booster organizations worked this hard," he chuckled.

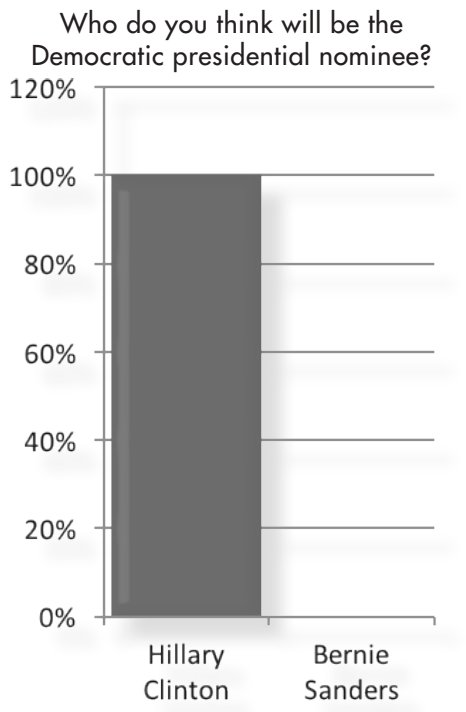
Keep up with the Eagles on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/vinemont.eaglesbaseball.



SHARON SCHULER KREPS/CULLMANSENSE

The Vinemont Eagles baseball team worked hard at their second annual Pancake Breakfast & Silent Auction. Members from the community enjoyed the day and filled up on yummy pancakes!

Poll



This Week's Poll

Will you be filling out a bracket for the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament?

Vote Today at CullmanSense.com/Poll

BLOOD FEUD: AMERICAN LEGION VS. VFW

Local Veteran Organizations Compete in Blood Drive

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – On Saturday, March 12, the American Legion and the VFW joined forces and hosted a "blood feud." From 11 a.m.-4 p.m., members, family and friends of both organizations came by and gave blood. The event was a little different than most blood drives because the veterans turned it into a competition.

"Today we are having a blood drive, but we call it a blood feud because blood will be spilled," said Dan Raley, commander of American Legion Post 4 in Cullman.

"It's the American Legion vs. the VFW; two veterans' organizations working together to get blood donations for Cullman County. We are here to help the people.

"We are learning to cooperate more with each other better than has been done in the past," he continued.

"We are taking blood donations from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and having a contest. The loser of the contest between the American Legion and the VFW has to serve dinner to the winner at their next meeting. So the VFW may be serving dinner to the American Legion or we could be serving it to them," he chuckled.

"We are very excited about it; they are great people."

"We are saving lives today," Ryan Phillip Schlachter, vice commander of Sons of the American Legion Post 4 in Cullman, added.

"My wife has had a few problems so she is low on blood from a pregnancy so I am here to donate blood. I figure it will come back around, you know?"

"I hope everyone comes out and supports us today by giving blood and helping other people," Jerry Willibey, VFW Alabama District 1 commander, commented.

As the blood feud wrapped up, the American Legion just barely edged out the VFW, so it looks like the members of the VFW will be strapping on the aprons at the Legion's next meeting.

A little friendly competition never hurt anyone, and in this case it will save lives!

For more information about the American Legion call Dan Raley at 256-347-4732. For information about the VFW contact them at 256-739-6611.

CP&R COMMUNITY GARDEN SEASON BEGINS MARCH 15

Waid Harbison
CP&R

CULLMAN – Nothing's more exciting than the warm, crisp air of spring, and that spring-time sun means it's gardening season. Plot rental for CP&R's Community Garden, located at Nesmith Park, is happening now at the Cullman Civic Center and online at http://cullmanrecreation.org/online-registration/ and is limited to the first 14 registrants. The cost for rental through October is $35; for $75, participants also receive weekly gardening classes and can participate in work sessions.

The Community Garden has 18 wood-framed beds, each 4 ft. x 8 ft. in dimension.

For those who signed up for them, classes will take place on Tuesday nights at 6 p.m., with a work session on Saturdays from 8 a.m.-noon with the CP&R gardening instructor.

Participants taking the classes will be provided with all seeds, fertilizer and tools needed for their beds.

Registration is now open at the Cullman Civic Center and limited to the first 14 who register; online registration is also available at http://cullmanrecreation.org/online-registration/.

For more information on the Community Garden, contact Waid Harbison at 256-734-9157 or by email at wharbison@cullmanrecreation.org.

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

Light a Candle, Spread HOPE

RELAY FOR LIFE American Cancer Society

Join your community in the fight against cancer! At Relay For Life, teams take turns walking or running around the track. Teams consist of people representing companies, churches, clubs, organizations and families. During Relay For Life, team members enjoy games, food, music and camaraderie while camping out on the surrounding grounds.

Participants also share in a special luminaria ceremony to remember those individuals who have been affected by cancer. Candles are lit in honor or memory of those touched by cancer and placed around the track. You are invited to support this effort by making a luminaria donation and having a candle lit in honor of a loved one who has been touched by cancer. Simply fill out the back of this form and return to a team member, team captain or mail your order to the address listed on the reverse side.

Thank you for your support. For more information, call 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

Luminaria Order Form

Minimum donation: $10.00 each

Yes, I would like to make a luminaria donation in honor of or in memory of the following:

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Cullman, Al 35055

Promposal (from Front)

Wendy Sack
wendy@cullmansense.com

FAIRVIEW – On Friday, Luke Macias asked Anna Hampton to be his date for his senior prom. No big deal, right? It happens in every high school in every town across the country around this time each year. But this was a big deal. Actually quite a large deal! When Macias, 18, asked Anna, 15, he did it by pulling off the most epically romantic fete in, well, certainly Cullman County prom history. He used the Fairview water tower.

Macias called on friends and family to make the special moment happen.

"I was aware that Luke had a special surprise for my daughter Anna," said her dad James Hampton. "He called me and asked if I could bring her out to the water tower that afternoon to ask her to the prom, (to) which I agreed."

As for Anna Hampton herself, she says she didn't have a clue what Macias had planned.

"Absolutely not," she said. "We had already talked about going together, but he hadn't officially asked me yet. I knew he was going to do it; I just didn't know when."

Macias tells us how his plan came to fruition. "Me and a buddy of mine, Armando Guiterez, were hanging out on Thursday night. I asked him how I should ask Anna to prom," he confessed. Macias says he'd already told Anna his first idea, because at first Anna's parents weren't on board with their 15-year-old daughter going to the senior prom.

"Armando said I should use the water tower," Macias continued. "We heard a song, 'Water Tower Town,' by Jason Aldean, that had the first part of the promposal in the lyrics, so we decided to use that."

Exactly how does one get permission to scale a water tower for such a thing? Macias had that covered. Turns out Guiterez works for the man in charge of repainting that water tower, so Guiterez gave his boss a call on Friday morning and asked for permission to put the promposal on the tower.

"Considering I did not have permission to be up there, Armando spelled out the phrase on the tower using duct tape. It took him about two hours," smiled Macias.

With everything in place, the only thing left to do was get Anna Hampton to the water tower without her becoming wise to what was happening.

"I called her dad around lunchtime on Friday, asking if he could bring Anna to the tower around 4 p.m. that afternoon," said Macias. "I asked if he could take a specific way so she could see the phrase when they drove up."

"Anna had no idea or had any suspicion of what was taking place," her dad told us. "As we got close to the tower I set the tone by asking if Luke had asked her yet, (to) which she said 'No.' At that point we were approaching the tower, so I looked at her and said, 'Well sweetheart, I believe this is your invitation,' as I pointed to the question."

James Hampton says that as his daughter began to read the message on the tower, she began to cry happy tears.

I was utterly shocked," said Anna Hampton. "I figured he would've had a cute poster with a cheesy pun on it, but it ended up being far better that I ever thought. At one point I was even crying!"

And the most romantic part of all? Macias had had Guiterez add 'check yes or no' boxes beside the message!

"At this point, the yes or no boxes hadn't been checked," said James Hampton. "So when she accepted, Luke had his hook-up (Guiterez) climb up to the top to officially check the yes box, which I thought was the icing on the cake!"

"She was very surprised, practically crying," added Macias. "I felt extremely happy!"

Luke's message to Anna read:

"Anna, A Water Tower is Like A Light in the storm
How About U show me The Way ... to PROM?"

As for Anna's mom, Amanda Hampton, "I am excited for the young couple," she shared. "They are both wonderful, respectful young people with hearts after God."

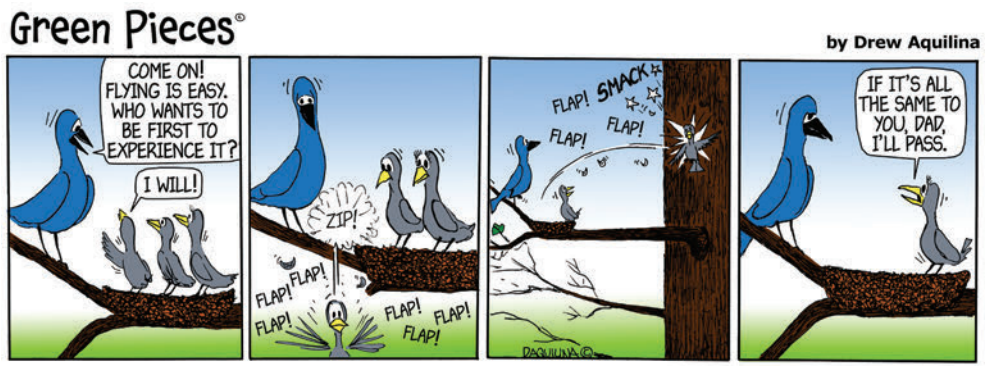
Anna's father echoed her mother's happiness. "I have to say I was flattered for my daughter. The smile that this put on her face was and still is priceless. With that said, way to go Luke!" So, would Anna have said yes if Macias had asked her the old-fashioned way? "Absolutely, without a doubt," she beamed.

When asked if he had advice for other high school guys who might want to create their own epic promposals, Macias told us, "When you find someone that you'd go above and beyond for, it'll be worth all of the trouble. I know it's not the advice you want to hear, but the advice, the true advice you want is build a relationship with everyone. Eventually you'll find the one that's was worth all of the wait."

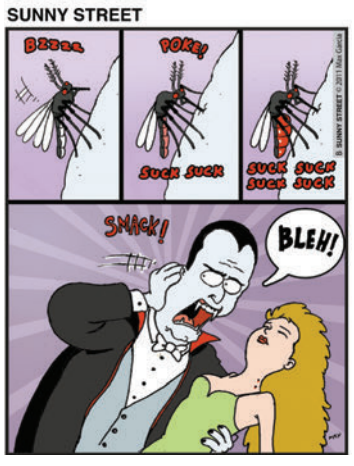
Anna Hampton, a sophomore at Fairview High School, is the daughter of James and Amanda Hampton. Luke Macias, a senior at FHS, is the son of Hortencia Macias Juarez.

Find the original water tower photos on Facebook at http://qrne.ws/prom.

COMICS









At home with Jay-Z and Beyonce'



OBITUARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

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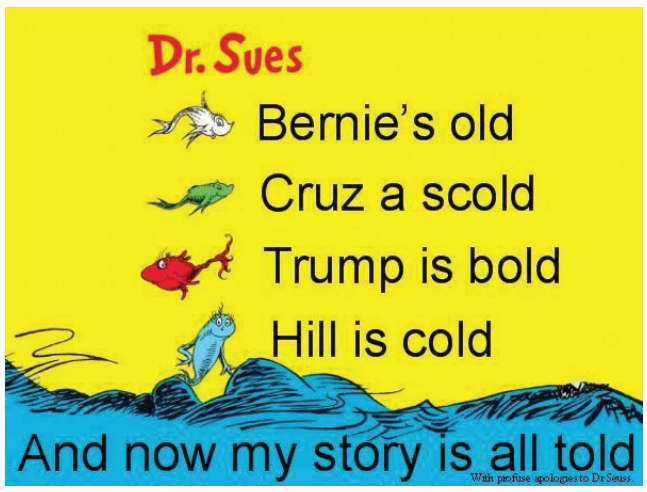
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OPINION

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF CULLMAN, REGARDING THE DISMISSAL OF TOURISM DIRECTOR CECELIA SMITH BY THE CULLMAN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

To the Citizens of Cullman:

I want to let you know what an asset we had in Cecelia Smith, the Tourism Director for the Chamber. Cecelia Smith devoted her life to selling Cullman and bringing people and trade to Cullman City and County. Many of you may have never heard of her, because she did her job with efficiency and effectiveness and did not command attention to herself, but to businesses in the Cullman area. She encouraged businesses to come to Cullman in many ways, some being:

• Helping develop a new tourism website and Facebook page, www.VisitCullman.org
• Planning and organizing the Annual Cullman Area Tourism Awards and Community Improvement Awards to recognize success in our local tourism industry and preservation/promotion of community
• Publishing the annual Visit Cullman Guide in collaboration with Classic Cullman/The Cullman Times
• Developed a new city tear-off map
• Representing Cullman in trade shows, which helps sell Cullman
• Working to complete her Southeast Tourism Marketing College program, which she will do this year
• Working to purchase "Cullman Welcomes You" signs
• Purchasing billboard skirts, a less expensive way to advertise Cullman
• Developing an economic health booklet for Cullman, with AML
• Producing brochures about Cullman
• Purchasing ads in southeastern publications to promote Cullman
• And, many, many more ways

For those of you who do not know Cecelia, I am sorry. You missed knowing someone who loves Cullman and Cullman County as much as we all do. She is someone who wants Cullman to succeed, because she believes in the greatness of Cullman.

There are many of you who are lucky enough to know her, and you have told me all about your experiences. Everywhere I go, business people tell me their personal stories about how Cecelia helped them. Many tell me they had very little business until she came to visit and began promoting them, resulting in increased business.

I am one of the lucky ones who does know Cecelia; I have served on the Tourism Board with her. She is business-minded, smart, effective and efficient. Our board works as one unit; we are together and work as one to promote Cullman and Cullman County. We are asked to express our opinions and concerns freely so we can work as a group to solve problems in an effective manner. We are asked to discuss all the good things we know are happening. We share in each other's successes and mourn each other's defeats. Cecelia has encouraged us to build that kind of relationship. Having this relationship enables us to work better and harder promoting Cullman, for we, too, love Cullman.

The news that Cecelia Smith was asked to leave her position has devastated our board. We feel Cullman will now be taking a step backwards in starting over with a new person in this position. Our board had no say in her being asked to leave. We had just completed her annual review, which I am attaching to this letter. You will note that we all think Cecelia Smith was great at her job as the Tourism Director for Cullman and Cullman County.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to voice my sadness over this unfortunate event.

Jackie Walker
Concerned citizen of Cullman County

OPINION

DOD WOE: PENTAGON'S WAR ON THE EARTH

Tom H. Hastings
PeaceVoice

We are waging war. We are the Nation of War. We destroy. We kill. Everyone fears us. Fewer and fewer admire us. But our fighting forces—and their attendant industries which manufacture the bombs, bullets, and ballistic delivery devices—also wage a war on the clean air, clean water, and clean soil many Americans falsely regard as protected by legislation fought for by those trying to protect our environment.

Recent reports from around the country show the party most likely to toxify our land is our own military. These are just a small fraction of the reports from the past couple of weeks:

• **California:** New model homes are open for viewing in a beautiful canyon west of Los Angeles despite the land there being "stained with radioactive and toxic chemical waste."
• **New Hampshire:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is stepping in to monitor the health and toxic exposure of those living near or on the Portsmouth, New Hampshire former US Pease Air Force base after tests showed terrible contamination.
• **Kentucky:** There is an ongoing effort to clean up the site of the uranium enrichment facility in Kentucky, the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant. It is costing hundreds of millions of dollars and the feds are slowly trying to get back a bit of it from responsible parties with settlements, the most recent a $5 million deal with Lockheed Martin for its contamination of the site.
• **Maryland:** The Army is claiming immunity from its killer pollution from Fort Detrick, with the Army as defendant in a class action law suit claiming numerous wrongful deaths from the site where toxins, biological weapons, radiological materials and hazardous waste contaminated the area for decades. U.S. Attorney U.S. Attorney "Rod Rosenstein, representing the Army's interests, asked Monday that the case be dismissed. In online court documents, Rosenstein argued that the government has no particular duty to respond to hazardous substances and the Army can use its own judgment to decide whether to clean up."
• **Louisiana:** A private contractor will burn 16 million pounds of M-6 propellent, the largest burn of explosives in the history of the world, at Camp Minden in April and May.
• **New York:** Fort Drum is contaminated. Proposed remedies would inject other chemicals into the groundwater to try to neutralize the "chlorinated volatile organic chemical (CVOC) groundwater plume."

The Pentagon is relentless in seeking immunity from federal environmental protection laws.

One wonders, since the list of environmental disasters created by the military and its contracting producers would extend to multiple current issues in every single US state and dozens of foreign countries with US bases, with friends and protectors like these, who needs enemies?



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