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The Cullman Tribune

SERVING CULLMAN – IN THE HEART OF DIXIE – SINCE 1874

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32-PAGE COMMUNITY MATTERS SPECIAL ISSUE!

– LOCAL GOVERNMENT –

Automated sanitation pickup to begin in city Nov. 9; new carts delivered beginning Oct. 19

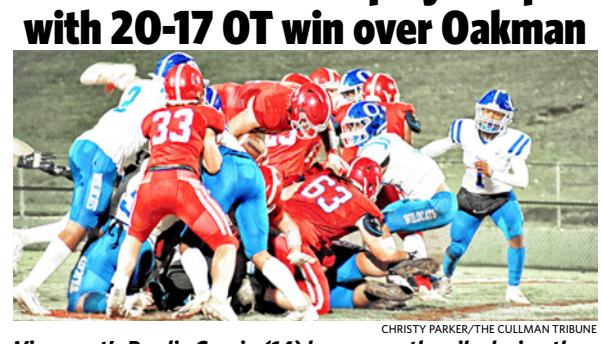


CITY OF CULLMAN

Each City of Cullman Sanitation customer will receive one (1) 96-gallon cart. » PAGE 7

– PREP FOOTBALL –

Vinemont clinches playoff spot with 20-17 OT win over Oakman



CHRISTY PARKER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Vinemont's Brodie Curvin (14) leaps over the pile during the Eagles' 20-17 OT win against Oakman Friday night. » PAGE 4

SCOREBOARD

ATHENS 28 – CULLMAN 0
WEST POINT 49 – DOUGLAS 0
FAIRVIEW 49 - BREWER 16
ASHVILLE 38 – HANCEVILLE 14
SUSAN MOORE 35 – HOLLY POND 6
VINEMONT 20 – OAKMAN 17
WINSTON CO. 46 – COLD SPRINGS 21
HAMILTON 21 – ADDISON 7
PICKENS COUNTY 38 - MEEK 14

City, County, Chamber come together for 30th annual Christmas Open House Nov. 13-15



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Left to right are Cullman Chamber Tourism Board Chairman Josh Wiggins, Cullman Chamber Board Chair Kay Shabel, Cullman County Commissioner Gary Marchman and Cullman City Council President Dr. Jenny Folsom at Friday's announcement.

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – Cullman's Christmas Open House, which traditionally kicks off the local holiday shopping season, this year will be a joint effort and local businesses can register to participate for free. Joining the City of Cullman in the annual event, this year dubbed the Cullman Area Christmas Open House, are the Cullman Chamber of Commerce and the Cullman County Commission.

Representatives from all three entities made the joint announcement Friday atop the Cullman Savings Bank parking deck downtown. The 30th annual Cullman Area Christmas Open House will be held Nov. 13-15, 2020. Patrons shopping at participating businesses will find Christmas deals, festive decorations and special promotions/events.

"For years Cullman has kicked off the Christmas season with Christmas Open House and I can remember coming back home from Huntsville just for this weekend," Chamber Board Chair Kay Shabel said.

"I'm so happy this is back; it's going to be a great event for everyone.

"Everyone is welcome to sign up and be a part of it: hotels, retailers, salons, everybody.

"Let's all be a part of this and help unify Cullman together. I think everybody is ready to get out. This has been a strange year, so let's have the best Cullman Christmas Open House ever."

Commissioner Garry Marchman, speaking on behalf of the Cullman County Commission, shared his excitement for the upcoming festivities as well.

"He said he believes this group effort can have a positive effect on the entire community and help make this as fun a Christmas season as any.

"On behalf of Cullman County and the Cullman County Commission I just want to say thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak and also to encourage this unity that we're looking for in our county, cities and municipalities to come together and have a wonderful time this Christmas," he said "Like you've heard people say, it's just been a crazy time for us. We have looked to federal government, state government and local government for answers to this craziness, but you know there's only one real answer to everything going on and that's unifying people.

"It's about you and about me and about us because our government can't fix these problems, so this is something we have to look at it and I'm just proud to be a part of it because it's an effort to unify Cullman."

Cullman City » PAGE 8

STATE

Alabama's September unemployment rate 6.6%; Cullman County lowest in state at 3.8% » PAGE 8

Jack Aces RC donates more than $11K to Shop with a Cop program



CHRISTY PERRY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Left to right are Jack Aces President Derrick Barton, Cullman Police Sgt. Adam Clark and Jack Aces member Jamie Carpenter.

Christy Perry
christy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – Representatives from Jack Aces on Friday presented the Cullman Police Department's Shop with a Cop program a check for $11,755, money raised at the sixth annual Jack Aces Bike & Car Show at Depot Park in September.

Cullman Police Sgt. Adam Clark accepted the check on behalf of the program and presented Jack Aces President Derrick Barton and Jamie Carpenter a wooden Thin Blue Line flag handcrafted by Officer Brian Medlock.

Despite the Jack Aces having to postpone its bike and car show due to COVID-19, this year's event saw the club's largest turnout.

Said Barton, "We had a record turnout. There was a minute there when if we had five more cars show up, we would have had a problem. It was a lot of work but a lot of fun, and we were able to raise a record amount for this important cause."

Clark thanked Barton and Carpenter for their continuing support of the Shop with a Cop program, saying, "We appreciate y'all. If it weren't for y'all, we wouldn't be able to do half of the things we do. We've had so many of our community events canceled this year."

Shop with a Cop provides Christmas for less fortunate children, nursing home residents and the Margaret Jean Jones Center. Each year, children are able to shop with an officer, promoting positive interactions and relationships with law enforcement.

"That's really why it was started," said Clark, "so we could have a good relationship with the kids. Each year we usually get a list from a local nursing home and shop for them, too."

THANK YOU CULLMAN FOR MAKING US THE #5 VOLUME DEALER IN THE COUNTRY!
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CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported Oct. 16

Cullman Tribune staff
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – Below are the arrests and incidents reported Oct. 16, 2020. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

GJ = grand jury; **FTA** = failure to appear

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
No incidents or arrests reported.

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
INCIDENTS
Oct. 15
• fourth-degree theft of services; person; 2nd Ave. SW; utilities
• third-degree domestic violence- harassment; person; Hwy. 278 E
• third-degree forgery; Warehouse Discount Groceries; Town Square SW; forged checks
• leaving the scene of an accident; person; Olive St. SW; damage to '13 Lexus; $500
• fourth-degree theft of property; Wal-Mart; Hwy. 157; general merchandise; $45
• third-degree domestic violence- harassment; person; Meadowbrook Pkwy. SE
• third-degree domestic violence- harassment; person; 2nd Ave. NW

ARRESTS
Oct. 15
Moore, Tammy R., 33
• FTA- fourth-degree theft by deception

Hopper, Natalie G., 19
• fourth-degree theft of property

League, Cobie T., 21
• third-degree forgery (2 counts)
• third-degree possession of a forged instrument (2 counts)
• identity theft

Davis, Austin B., 25
• fourth-degree theft of property (11 counts)

Blocker, Matthew S., 27
• unlawful possession or receipt of a controlled substance
• second-degree unlawful possession of marijuana

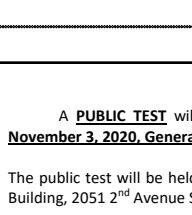
Curvin, Joshua A., 24
• third-degree domestic violence- harassment
• resisting arrest

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT
No incidents or arrests reported.

Find arrest reports online Monday-Friday at www.CullmanTribune.com.

THE BARN
Portable Storage Buildings
Hanceville, AL
352-2737

EARL'S BODY SHOP
2251 Decatur Ave., N.W.
734-2406



A-1 Battery Supply
AUTO – TRUCK – TRACTOR
Quality Batteries For Every Need
Since 1979
2152 Co. Rd. 1169 • Cullman, AL 35055
Phone: (Office): 256-734-9438

COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS

Friday, Oct. 16, 2020 COVID-19 update from the Alabama Department of Public Health's COVID-19 Data and Surveillance Dashboard

• Total confirmed cases in AL: 149,724 (+1,065 since yesterday)
• Probable cases in AL: 20,650 (+147 since yesterday)
• Total confirmed deaths in AL: 2,618 (+28 since yesterday)
• Probable deaths in AL: 168
• Total confirmed cases in Cullman Co.: 1,847 (+18 since yesterday)
• Probable cases in Cullman Co.: 343 (+4 since yesterday)
• Total confirmed deaths in Cullman Co.: 19 (+0 since yesterday)
• Probable deaths in Cullman Co.: 4
• Total tested in Cullman Co.: 18,683
• Total tested in the last 14 days in Cullman Co.: 1,642
• Cases in the last 14 days in Cullman Co.: 267
• Total tested in Alabama: 1,241,182
• Cases in the last 14 days in Alabama: 14,277
• Total tested in the last 14 days in Alabama: 95,719
• Currently hospitalized in Alabama: 859
• Cumulative no. of hospitalizations in Alabama: 18,855
• Presumed recoveries in Alabama (reported weekly): 74,238

See more details at https://bit.ly/2VjCQbP.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Submit your calendar items or public notices to wendy@cullmantribune.com

Power of Produce (POP) at Festhalle Cullman
• Saturdays through October at the Festhalle from 8 a.m.-noon
• Children ages 14 and younger can pick up a recipe and receive POP market money of $4 per person to spend on fresh produce, until we run out!

Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings
The Grace of God group of Alcoholics Anonymous has open AA meetings (all are welcome) Monday and Thursday nights from 7-8 p.m. at the Carriage House, located next to Grace Episcopal Church, 305 Arnold St. NE Cullman. Contact phone numbers: 256-347-1097, 256-841-2209 or 256-708-1340

Spirit Life Church of GOD
Spirit Life Church at 1650 St. Joseph Dr. NW will have video streamed services Sunday, Oct. 18 and resume live services Wednesday, Oct. 21 at 6 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 25 at 10 and 11 a.m. The services for Wednesday, Oct. 14 are canceled. The food bank will not be open Saturday, Oct. 17. We should have a complete supply of food next month so we can resume the monthly drive-thru food bank.

Dead End Haunted Trail
• Fridays and Saturdays at dark through Halloween at 191 County Road 741 (As long as it's not storming, a little rain will not stop the fun.)
• The trail time varies depending on the group. Depending on the level of fear, it could take five minutes, or it could take 15 minutes. If you get lost, don't worry. There are people there to help guide you through the woods.
• Admission to the Dead End Haunted Trail is a new or gently used toy (to be given to the Cullman County Sheriff's Office) or canned goods (in date) to help those in need during the holidays. Selvage and Cox will also take monetary donations in order to purchase toys.
• For more information, visit https://bit.ly/36Rko0z.

Smoked Turkey & Ham Fundraiser
• Proceeds support the Cullman County Bosom Buddies Foundation.
• Let Freddie Day Catering cook your Thanksgiving ham or turkey! Order your delicious, slow-smoked 11-13 lb. turkey or 8-9 lb. ham and support the Cullman County Bosom Buddies Foundation.
• When: Pre-orders accepted until Nov. 13 (must be paid in full when order is placed)
• Cost: Turkey $25 Ham $35
• Curbside pickup: Nov. 21 from 10-11 a.m. and Nov. 25 from 4-5 p.m.
• Location: Freddie Day Catering 1628 2nd Ave. NW
• For ordering information, contact Louise Cole at 256-503-5301 or Judy Grissom at 256-347-5993.
• Email us at ccbbfinc@gmail.com or visit www.CullmanBosomBuddies.com.

Cullman County Fair
• Through Oct. 17 at the Cullman County Fairgrounds
• Find out more at www.cullmanfair.org.

5th Annual Angling for Autism Bass Tournament
• Saturday, Oct. 17 from safe daylight to 3 p.m. at Smith Lake Dam
• Registration is $125 per boat. Make checks payable to Angling for Autism. Send registration to Wesley Sams, 3140 County Road 1223, Vinemont, AL 35179.
• Proceeds will benefit programs that support autism and special needs.
• Payout based on participation due to COVID-19. Payout will also be determined by 1 in 10 boats.
• For more information, contact Wesley Sams at 256-385-1825 or Roger Sams at 256-595-3918.

Swamp John's Dinner
• Tuesday, Oct. 27 from 4-7 p.m. at the Johnson's Crossing Volunteer Fire Department, 1599 County Road 617, Hanceville, AL 35077
• Your choice of fish, shrimp or chicken with a side of coleslaw, fries, hushpuppy and pickle, with sweet or unsweetened tea to drink and desert- $12 a plate

4th Annual Bernard Blues and BBQ
• Saturday, Oct. 31 and Sunday, Nov. 1 at St. Bernard Prep School and Ave Maria Grotto in Cullman, AL.
• The event features some of the best artisans in the Southeast to include: pottery, wreaths, door hangers, flowers, wood turned bowls, clothing, birdhouses, honey, jewelry, soap, brooms, metal art, glass art, freshly ground cornmeal and grits, and much, much more. While shopping, enjoy live music and the best pulled pork in the Southeast as well as ribs, hamburgers, brats, and chicken wings.
• On Saturday, children 12 and under are invited to wear costumes, and plan to trick or treat. On Sunday at 4 p.m. St. Bernard will give away cash prizes totaling over $12,000! Bring the entire family for a weekend of fun, socially distanced, on our 800+ acre campus! Hours for the event are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is a $5 requested donation. No pets, please! Festival guests can also tour our world-famous Ave Maria Grotto at a reduced admission of $4 all weekend.
• Vendor applications are still being accepted. Please note, all work must be handmade. Commercial products are considered through sponsorships only. For more information, click the buttons below, contact Festival Director Joyce Nix at 256-255-5860, or email her at jnix@stbernardprep.com. All proceeds benefit St. Bernard Preparatory School.

St. Paul's Lutheran School Fall Flea Market
• Saturday, Nov. 7, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. in the back parking lot of the church and inside the gym. Santa Claus will be making a stop between 9 a.m.-noon for those who would want to get their lists to him early!
• Forty vendor spots are available: $15 for space outside or $30 for a space inside the gym with an option to set up the night before. Spaces are going quickly. If you or your business is interested in renting a booth for the Fall Flea Market, contact Emily Trahan at emilytrahan@stpaulscullman.com.

Holly Pond Bronco Band Swamp John's Dinner
• Sunday, Nov. 8 from 11 a.m-2 p.m. in the Holly Pond lunchroom
• $11 per plate, carry out or walk in (drive-thru not available)
• See www.facebook.com/HPBroncoBand for more information.

LEGALS

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
DRUCILLA ADAMS HAGEMORE * CASE NO PC 2020-285
Deceased *

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT TO BE PUBLISHED BY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Letters Testamentary of said deceased having been granted to **Daisy L. Glover,** as Personal Representatives of the Estate of Drucilla Adams Hagemore, deceased, on the 1st day of October, 2020, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate Court of Cullman County, notice is hereby given that all persons having claims against said estate are hereby required to present the same within time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Daisy L. Glover
Personal Representative

G. Edward Coey
Attorney for Personal Representative
PO Box 834
Hanceville, Alabama 35077

TO: The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the foregoing notice once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks and send an Affidavit of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

10/6/2020 9:38 A
25-CV-2020-90025
CIRCUIT COURT
CULLMAN COUNTY, A
LISA MCSWAIN, C

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

DYER ROY,)
DYER TERESA,)
Plaintiffs,)
)
V.) Case No.: CV-2020-900258.00
)
SMITH SANFORD,)
Defendant.)

Order of Publication and Notice of Pendency of Suit

TO: ANY AND ALL PERSONS, HEIRS OR DEVISEES OF SANFORD SMITH, claiming any right, title and interest to the following described real property, to-wit: **Parcel # 10-02-10-001-005.002 in Cullman County, Alabama.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 2nd day of October 2020, a Complaint in Rem to Quiet Title was filed by Plaintiffs Roy Dyer and Teresa Dyer, by and through their counsel of record, Seth B. Thompson, wherein all parties at interest were given notice and wherein it was alleged that said Complaint was filed against the property described above, and it was alleged that Plaintiffs were the owner in fee simple of said real property.

The parties al interest are further notified that Plaintiff avers in said Complaint that it claims title to the real property by reason of the following chain of title, to wit:

(a) On the 8th day of March, 2017, a decree was rendered by the Revenue Commissioner of Cullman County for the sale of land herein described and conveyed for the State and County taxes of Sanford Smith, the owner of said land for the cost of expenses thereto and thereunder.

(b) On the 2nd day of May, 2017, said lands were duly and regularly sold by the Revenue Commissioner of said county for taxes, costs and expenses and at said sale Plaintiffs
purchased said lands at and for the sum of said taxes, costs and expenses and forthwith paid said sum to the Revenue Commissioner, and received from said Revenue Commissioner a certificate of said sale.

(c) The time of redemption of said lands has elapsed and said certificate of purchase had been returned to the Revenue Commissioner of said county.

(d) On or about the 12th day of May, 2020, Plaintiffs came forward and notified the Revenue Commissioner that they had taken lawful possession of the land and were due a deed pursuant to the Code of Alabama, specifically, but not limited to Title 40-10-29 and act number 84-493. Plaintiffs have met all requirements under these two statutes and other provisions of Alabama Law.

(e) Title to the real property described hereinabove stands upon the records in the Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama, in the name of the Plaintiffs.

YOU ARE HEREBY DIRECTED to answer this Complaint on or before thirty (30) days from the 31st day of October, 2020, or on failure to do so, suffer a default judgment to be rendered against you.

DONE this 6th day of October, 2020.

/s/ MARTHA E. WILLIAMS
CIRCUIT JUDGE

FILED IN OFFICE
OCT 06 2020
LISA McSWAIN
CIRCUIT COURT
CULLMAN COUNTY

NOTICE OF PUBLIC TEST

A **PUBLIC TEST** will be held for the Precinct Ballot Counter for the **Tuesday November 3, 2020, General and Constitutional Amendments Election.**

The public test will be held on October 21, 2020 at the Cullman County Court Referral Building, 2051 2nd Avenue SW, Cullman, Alabama 35055.

Tammy Brown
Judge of Probate

NOTICE SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION
General and Constitutional Amendments Election
November 3, 2020

There will be a School of Instruction held for all election workers at Camp Meadowbrook, 2344 County Road 747, Cullman, AL 35058, Monday, October 20 and 21, 2020, pursuant to Code
§ 17-8-9 (a). The designated time to attend will be sent to each Election worker by Notice of Appointment. All election workers selected by the Appointing Board are required to attend one of these schools.

Thank you for your service.

Tammy Brown
Judge of Probate

CITY OF HANCEVILLE, ALABAMA

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Sealed Bids for the construction of **PLANING AND RESURFACING ON COMMERCIAL STREET FROM CHURCH AVE TO DEAN AVE** will be received by the **CITY OF HANCEVILLE**, at City Hall located at 112 Main Street SE, Hanceville, Alabama 35077, until 10:30 A.M. local time on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, at which time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read.

The Project generally consists of planing existing asphalt pavement, placing an asphalt wearing surface layer, removal of curb and gutter, construction of concrete valley gutter, partial removal of inlets and partial construction of inlets.

Bids will be received for a single prime Contract. Bids shall be on a lump sum basis as indicated in the Bid Form.

The Issuing Office for the Bidding Documents is Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Inc., 2701 1st Avenue South, Suite 100, Birmingham, AL 35233, Attn: Lauren Faulkner (lauren.faulkner@gmcnetwork.com). Prospective Bidders may examine the Bidding Documents at the Issuing Office Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and may obtain copies of the Bidding Documents from the Issuing Office as described below.

Printed copies of the Bidding Documents may be obtained from the Issuing Office, during the hours indicated above, upon payment of a one-time administrative fee of $20.00 for digital access/file sharing access and/or payment of $50.00 for each set. Said cost represents the cost of printing, reproduction, handling, and distribution, therefore no refund will be granted. Checks for Bidding Documents shall be payable to "Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Inc." Partial sets of Bidding Documents will not be available from the Issuing Office. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for full or partial sets of Bidding Documents, including Addenda if any, obtained from sources other than the Issuing Office.

Bid security shall be furnished in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders.

The Owner reserves the right to waive any informalities, or to reject any or all bids, and to award the contract to the best and most responsible bidder. All bidders shall be required to submit their qualifications along with their bid. All bidders must comply with requirements of the Contractor's Licensing Law of the State of Alabama and be certified for the type of work on which the proposal is submitted. Each bidder must deposit with his bid, security in the amount, form and subject to the conditions provided in the Instructions to Bidders.

All Bidders bidding in amounts exceeding that established by the State Licensing Board for General Contractors must be licensed under the provisions of Title 34, Chapter 8, Code of Alabama, 1975, and must show evidence of license before bidding or bid will not be received or considered by the Engineer; the Bidder shall show such evidence by clearly displaying the license number on the outside of the envelope in which the Proposal is delivered.

No bidder may withdraw his bid within 60 days after the opening thereof.

Owner: **City of Hanceville**
By: **Kenneth Nail, Mayor**

+ + END OF ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS + +

DOCUMENT 9

ELECTRONICALLY
10/6/2020 10:27
25-CV-2020-90025
CIRCUIT COURT
CULLMAN COUNTY, A
LISA MCSWAIN, C

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

DYER ROY,)
DYER TERESA,)
Plaintiffs,)
)
V.) Case No.: CV-2020-900257.00
)
SUGGS CHARLES D.,)
Defendant.)

Order of Publication and Notice of Pendency of Suit

TO: ANY AND ALL PERSONS, HEIRS OR DEVISEES, claiming any right, title and interest to the following described real property, to-wit: **Parcel # 10-05-22-0-001-006.007** in Cullman County, Alabama.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 2nd day of October 2020, a Complaint in Rem to Quiet Title was filed by Plaintiffs Roy Dyer and Teresa Dyer, by and through their counsel of record, Seth B. Thompson, wherein all parties at interest were given notice and wherein it was alleged that said Complaint was filed against the property described above, and it was alleged that Plaintiffs were the owner in fee simple of said real property.

The parties at interest are further notified that Plaintiffs aver in said Complaint that it claims title to the real property by reason of the following chain of title, to wit:

(a) On the 8th day of March, 2017, a decree was rendered by the Revenue Commissioner of Cullman County for the sale of land herein described and conveyed for the State and County taxes of Charles D. Suggs, the owner of said land for the cost of expenses thereto and thereunder.

(b) On the 2nd day of May, 2017, said lands were duly and regularly sold by the Revenue Commissioner of said county for taxes, costs and expenses and at said sale Plaintiff's predecessor in title purchased said lands at and for the sum of said taxes, costs and expenses and forthwith paid said sum to the Revenue Commissioner, and received from said Revenue Commissioner a certificate of said sale.

(c) The time of redemption of said lands has elapsed and said certificate of purchase had been returned to the Revenue Commissioner of said county.

(d) On or about the 12th day of May, 2020, Plaintiffs came forward and notified the Revenue Commissioner that they had taken lawful possession of the land and were due a deed pursuant to the Code of Alabama, specifically, but not limited to Title 40-10-29 and act number 84-493. Plaintiffs have met all requirements under these two statutes and other provisions of Alabama Law.

(e) Title to the real property described hereinabove stands upon the records in the Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama, in the name of the Plaintiffs.

YOU ARE HEREBY DIRECTED to answer this Complaint on or before thirty (30) days from the 31st day of October, 2020, or on failure to do so, suffer a default judgment to be rendered against you.

DONE this 5th day of October, 2020.

CIRCUIT JUDGE

The Cullman Tribune
Cullman County's Oldest Business, Serving the area since 1874
Publication Number USPS-139-700
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Dustin Isom - Associate Publisher
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Christy Perry - Lifestyle/Reporter
W.C. Mann - Senior Reporter
Sammy Confer-Youth/JVSports Editor
Nick Griffin -VarsitySports Editor
JoeMcElroy -Photographer
Bill Piper - Photojournalist
Howard Cole - Photojournalist
Martha Needham - Photojournalist
Robin Winton - Newsroom Manager
Janet Chandler - Marketing Specialist

STATE OF ALABAMA
CULLMAN COUNTY

TO THE PROBATE JUDGE OF SAID COUNTY AND STATE:

We, the undersigned, constituting the Appointing Board of Election Officials of Cullman County, Alabama, hereby certify that this is a true and correct list of the Election Officials to hold a General and Constitutional Amendment Election, to be held Tuesday, November 03, 2020, in Cullman County, Alabama.

Absentee Box

Susan Richardson	Inspector
Lisa Andrews	Chief Clerk
Debbie Nelson	Clerk
Debra Ball	Clerk

Arkadelphia Fire Department **Precinct 7**

Doug Weeks	Inspector
Joan Weeks	Chief Clerk
Kristy Gable	Clerk
Diane Boyd	Clerk
Taylor Gable	Clerk

Baileyton Senior Center **Precinct 20 Box 1**

Ruth Rose	Inspector
Bobby Martin	Chief Clerk
Rhonda Ryan	Clerk
Joan Weaver	Clerk
Myra Martin	Clerk

Baldwin Family Life Center **Precinct 33**

Bonnie Marty	Inspector
Patricia Moore	Chief Clerk
Alva Ray Marty	Clerk
Ginger Laws	Clerk
Caroline Marty	Clerk

Battleground Fire Department **Precinct 16**

Billy McCravey	Inspector
Vernell McCravey	Chief Clerk
Randy Wynn	Clerk
Rhonda Wynn	Clerk
Ryan Woods	Clerk

Beat 8 Community Center **Precinct 8**

Carolyn Calvert	Inspector
Rita Light	Chief Clerk
Frankie Fields Williams	Clerk
Barbara Woods	Clerk
Julie Mauldin	Clerk

Berlin Community Center **Precinct 23**

Jim Barnett	Inspector
Tony Duke	Chief Clerk
Jennifer Lambert	Clerk
Marie Sanford	Clerk
Roger Jones	Clerk

Bethel Community Center **Precinct 14**

Lyrie Joe Kent	Inspector
Patricia Kent	Chief Clerk
Laura Brown	Clerk
Carolyn White	Clerk

Bethsadia Fire Department **Precinct 13**

Hilton Angle	Inspector
Sandra Rhodes	Chief Clerk
Maxie Grant Rhodes	Clerk
Michael H. Brown	Clerk

Bolte White Grove Church **Precinct 36**

Ben Jester	Inspector
Sheila Jester	Chief Clerk
Mitchell Beshears	Clerk
Stanley Sandlin	Clerk

Bremen Fire Department **Precinct 10**

Donna Calvert	Inspector
Freda Dooley	Chief Clerk
Avery Dooley	Clerk
Jean Shelton	Clerk

Brooklyn Community Center **Precinct 20 Box 2**

Elgin Guthrie	Inspector
Bobbie Guthrie	Chief Clerk
Sara Gilbreath	Clerk
Jearldean Randolph	Clerk

Brushy Pond Community Center **Precinct 26**

Hilda Garrett	Inspector
Ellis Garrett	Chief Clerk
June Campbell	Clerk
Dwight Campbell	Clerk
Myra Johnston	Clerk

Center Hill Community Center **Precinct 31**

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Donald Law	Chief Clerk
Sherry Polly Bradford	Clerk
Diane Corbin	Clerk

Cold Springs Community Center **Precinct 9**

Ann Freeman	Inspector
Debra Graves	Clerk
Tammy Banks	Clerk
Kay Lenard	
Rebecca Marks	Clerk

Colony Education Complex **Precinct 6 Box 2**

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Earlene Johnson	Chief Clerk
Evelyn Timmons	Clerk
Margaret Dimbo	Clerk
Mary A. Hall	Clerk

Courthouse Conference Room **Precinct 1 Box 6**

Carolyn Branch	Inspector
Sondra Nassetta	Chief Clerk
Toby Monts	Clerk
Lynn Bradford	Clerk
Patricia Owens	Clerk

Crane Hill Fire Department **Precinct 12**

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Betty Goddard	Chief Clerk
Linda Anderson	Clerk
Alice Burrow	Clerk
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Kitty Warren	Chief Clerk
Catherine Haggard	Clerk
Scott Graham	Clerk
Seth Thompson	Clerk

Cullman County Health Department **Precint 34**

Dale Moody	Inspector
Denise Schuman	Chief Clerk
James Laminack	Clerk
Clara Laminack	Clerk
Diane Smothers	Clerk

Cullman Office Building Basement **Precinct 1 Box 4**

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Mary Griffis	Chief Clerk
Judy Boike	Clerk
Susan Ryan	Clerk
Joan Calvert	Clerk

Dodge City Community Center **Precint 2 Box 2**

Monica Wesson	Inspector
Jan Layfield	Clerk
Terri Wix	Clerk
Silvia Weibelt	Clerk
Toni Hale	Clerk
Nyoka Chandler	Clerk

Donald E. Green Senior Center **Precint 1 Box 1**

Linda Romine	Inspector
Becky Kirk	Chief Clerk
Debra Reynolds	Clerk
Sarah Brown	Clerk
Donna Schulte	Clerk

Donald E. Green Senior Center **Precint 1 Box 2**

Rebecca Parker	Inspector
Susan Jones	Chief Clerk
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Kim Masters	Clerk
Cletus Fitzgerald	Clerk

Donald E. Green Senior Center **Precint 1 Box 3**

Peggy Harris	Inspector
Robert Allison	Chief Clerk
Judy Fitzgerald	Clerk
James Amos	Clerk
Patricia Angle	Clerk

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Leslie Calloway	Inspector
Tim Sellers	Chief Clerk
Ronald Barnes	Clerk
Dean Gregory	Clerk
Rebecca Stevens	Clerk
Virginia Pattillo	Clerk

Fairview Fire Department (A-K) **Precint 28 Box 1**

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Sherry Bailey	Chief Clerk
Jason D. Bryan	Clerk
Jimmie Grimes	Clerk
William Jones	Clerk

Fairview Town Hall (L-Z) **Precinct 28 Box 2**

Gene Pinkard	Inspector
Doris Pinkard	Chief Clerk
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Carol Pearson	Clerk
Wallace Pearson	Clerk

Friendship Methodist Church **Precinct 17 Box 2**

Mary Jones	Inspector
Judy Echols	Chief Clerk
Albert Jones	Clerk
Cody Jones	Clerk
Glenda Cobb	Clerk

Garden City Town Hall **Precinct 4**

Sheila Kretzschamr	Inspector
Mary Swann	Chief Clerk
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Cherrie Haney	Clerk

Gold Ridge Community Center **Precinct 19**

Cody Derek Smith	Inspector
Wilma Smith	Chief Clerk
Karon Graham	Clerk
Anthony Graham	Clerk

Good Hope City Hall **Precinct 2 Box 1**

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Wendy Waldrep	Chief Clerk
Cynthia Shabel	Clerk
Gary White	Clerk
Charlene White	Clerk

Grandview Community Center **Precinct 29**

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Jana Turner	Clerk
Laura Reeder	Clerk

Hanceville City Hall **Precinct 3 Box 1**

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Dianne Johnson	Chief Clerk
Diann White	Clerk
Yvonne Grund	Clerk

Hanceville Civic Center **Precinct 3 Box 2**

Kevin Larue	Inspector
Brenda Carter	Chief Clerk
Wayne Nichols	Clerk
Sharron Nichols	Clerk
Latrice Colvin	Clerk

Holly Pond Fire Department **Precinct 22**

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Tanya Hays	Chief Clerk
Vickie Alldredge	Clerk
Carol Watts	Clerk
Joe McNulty	Clerk

Johnson Crossing Volunteer FD **Precinct 27**

Candy Reeves	Inspector
Beverly Wright	Chief Clerk
Frances Boike	Clerk
Laura Cone McDaniel	Clerk
Courtney Duke	Clerk

Jones Chapel Fire Department **Precinct 15**

Ellen Pigg	Inspector
Robin Sterling	Chief Clerk
Carol McKoy	Clerk
Wanda Sterling	Clerk

Joppa Fire Department **Precinct 21 Box 1**

Joan Creel Harper	Inspector
Floyell Harris	Chief Clerk
Brenda Creel	Clerk
Caroletta Scofield	Clerk

Kelley Community Center **Precinct 30**

Gary Mitchell	Inspector
Joe Kampis	Chief Clerk
James (Scott) Sarich	Clerk
Deborah Davis Hood	Clerk
William Ellis Folsom	Clerk

Logan Fire Department **Precinct 14 Box 1**

Elaine Johnson	Inspector
Terry Michael	Chief Clerk
Charlotte Brock	Clerk
Jeanette Duke	Clerk
Bill Fisher	Clerk

Moody Town Union Hill Church **Precinct 6 Box 1**

Melanie C. Gamble	Inspector
Terry Lee Gamble	Chief Clerk
Kerri Wigley	Clerk
Wanda Mahaffey	Clerk

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John Casey	Clerk
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Providence Fire Department **Precinct 18 Box 2**

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Sherry England	Clerk
Mona Brown	Clerk

Stouts Mountain Baptist Church **Precinct 5**

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Joan Lee Moore	Clerk
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Ronnie Chamblee	Clerk

Trimble Fire Department **Precinct 11 Box 1**

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Beatrice Whitlock	Chief Clerk
Wanda Woody	Clerk
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Stephanie Buchanan	Clerk

Valley Grove Community Center **Precinct 11 Box 2**

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Zelda Turner	Clerk

Vinemont Community Center **Precinct 18 Box 1**

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Judy Dodson	Chief Clerk
Jo Ann Oakley	Clerk
Ernestine Linton	Clerk
Rick Garrison	Clerk
Debbie Garrison	Clerk

Walter Community Center **Precinct 24**

Phillip Hicks	Inspector
Wendi Henderson Crum	Chief Clerk
Linda Duke	Clerk
Debra Delamont	Clerk
Angela Robertson	Clerk

Welti Mt. Zion Church **Precinct 25**

Doris Patterson	Inspector
Wynona Gambill	Chief Clerk
Merry Duke	Clerk
Joyce Allen	Clerk

West Point Community Center **Precinct 17 Box 1**

Derinda Jones	Inspector
Linda Blackwood	Chief Clerk
Wayne Blankenship	Clerk
Vicki Blankenship	Clerk
Timothy Laney	Clerk

Done this 14th day of October, 2020.

Tammy Brown, Probate Judge
Lisa McSwain, Circuit Clerk
Matt Gentry, Sheriff

Signatures on file in Probate Office.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

In accordance with Section 17-9-5 of the Code of Alabama, notice is hereby given that a GENERAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION will be held in Cullman County, Alabama on November 3, 2020. The following offices and amendments will be on the ballots:

FEDERAL OFFICES
- For President and Vice-President of the United States
- For United States Senator

STATE OFFICES
- For United States Representative, 4th Congressional District
- For Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Place No. 1
- For Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Place No. 2
- For Court of Civil Appeals Judge, Place No. 1
- For Court of Civil Appeals Judge, Place No. 2
- For Court of Criminal Appeals Judge, Place No. 1
- For Court of Criminal Appeals Judge, Place No. 2
- For President, Public Service Commission

COUNTY OFFICES
- For Cullman County Commission Chairman
- For Cullman County Revenue Commissioner
- For Member, Cullman County Board of Education, West Point/District No. 1
- For Member, Cullman County Board of Education, Holly Pond/District No. 3
- For Member, Cullman County Board of Education, Cold Springs/District No. 5

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO APPEAR ON THE BALLOT STATEWIDE
- Proposed Statewide Amendment Number One
- Proposed Statewide Amendment Number Two
- Proposed Statewide Amendment Number Three
- Proposed Statewide Amendment Number Four
- Proposed Statewide Amendment Number Five
- Proposed Statewide Amendment Number Six

TAMMY BROWN
JUDGE OF PROBATE

Bulldogs drop road matchup at Ashville 38-14

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

ASHVILLE, Ala. – Hanceville hit the road to take on the Bulldogs of Ashville Friday night and was sent home with a 38-14 loss. Ashville built an early lead in the first half and by the time Hanceville began to find the end zone, it was too late to mount a comeback.

Ashville jumped on top 7-0 in the first quarter, but it was the second quarter where the home team began to create separation.

Ashville tacked on a pair of touchdowns and knocked through a field goal just before the half to take a 24-0 lead into the locker room at the break.

Hanceville got on the board in the third quarter to cut the lead to 24-6 but Ashville answered and got the points back with another scoring drive that made it a 31-6 game going into the fourth quarter. Both teams found the end zone in the final frame, but Hanceville wasn't able to continue chipping away, falling on the road 38-14.

The Bulldogs fall to 1-7 on the season with the loss and have a non-region matchup with Section at home next week.

Warriors punch playoff ticket in 49-0 blowout

Chris Pugh
Tribune Correspondent

WEST POINT, Ala. – If you were wanting any late-season pre-playoff drama, you needed to be somewhere else Friday night, because from start to finish this one was all West Point, with the Warriors winning 49-0.

The Warrior defense got things started with a quick three-and-out, one of five in the first half. West Point allowed only a single first down before halftime, with Douglas mustering just 43 yards on 30 plays. The biggest defensive play, though, belonged to defensive lineman Kenyan Baker. At the end of the first quarter on a third-and-long Douglas tried a halfback screen that Baker sniffed out. With pressure applied to the quarterback he threw an errant pass to the running back, and Baker was there to make the interception. That's not where this play ended. Baker broke the tackle from the running back and took off 50 yards for every lineman's dream: a touchdown.

The Warrior defense wasn't the only thing on fire. The West Point offense took only four plays to go 64 yards and find the end zone. Running back Kelton Washington was the first to find it on a 12-yard run to give the Warriors an early 7-0 lead. Following a handful of three-and-outs and Baker's pick six, West Point put together a five-play, 72-yard drive with senior quarterback Will Cochran running it in from 3 yards out.

The onslaught continued after another Douglas three-and-out. Five plays and 70 yards later and West Point put up 6 more after Cochran found fellow senior Kobe Bowers on a 51-yard deep ball.

West Point came out and pooch kicked the kickoff, which was fumbled by Douglas and recovered by the Warriors. With the short field, West Point needed just three plays to move the ball 36 yards and put up its fifth touchdown of the first half, Washington's second of the night, this time on an 8-yard run, putting the Warriors up 35-0.

Just when Douglas thought things couldn't get worse, senior Swiss Army Knife Carter Thornton blocked a punt and West Point went three plays and 18 yards to take a 42-0 lead at the half, with Cochran running for his second rushing touchdown of the night, this time from 4 yards out. When West Point received the ball after the break, Thornton thought he'd join the touchdown club for the night returning the second-half kickoff all the way back for 6. Logan Selby was a perfect 7-for-7 on the night on extra points.

With a running clock and JV time the rest of the second half, West Point turned in its most impressive game of the year with the 49-0 win.

The season started with several heartbreaking losses, but the Warriors responded with what is now a three-game winning streak. They will take their hot streak on the road next week to face the undefeated, no. 1 ranked Guntersville Wildcats.

Big plays doom Dawgs at Hamilton

Todd Walker
Tribune Correspondent

HAMILTON, Ala. – Addison traveled to Hamilton to take on the 4A Aggies and Addison came away with a frustrating 21-7 loss. Big plays, penalties and mental lapses doomed the valiant Bulldog effort.

Addison took the opening kickoff and did absolutely nothing against the Aggie defense. Three plays totaled a whopping -1 yards and the Dawgs punted.

Hamilton took over and it looked like it was going to be a long night for the Dawgs. Hamilton went 14 plays for 55-yards for the touchdown. Hamilton converted a third and 11, a fourth down conversion, a third and 10 and last but not least a third and goal from the Addison 16-yard line. Hamilton scored on a 16-yard touchdown pass. The extra point was no good and Hamilton led 6-0 with 3:03 left in the first quarter.

The Dawgs responded with a 11-play 68-yard drive of their own. Cannon "TNT" Hiller ran it in from 11-yards out for the score. Weston "Big Game" Smith contributed 22-yard on four carries during the drive. Eli "Curly" Howse added the extra point and with 9:47 left in the second quarter Addison led 7-6. The second quarter continued with Addison dominating the line of scrimmage on running plays but were unable to pass protect all night. QB Christian "Ice Man" Roberts was running for his life all night when he dropped back to pass. Addison would get a few first downs but would get a costly penalty or give up a sack and would be unable to put points on the board.

The "Dawg Pound Defense" played well for most of the night, but mental lapses and costly penalties hurt the Dawgs on this night. After a Xavier "Mr. Smooth" Barley interception with only 3:33 left in the opening half, it looked like the momentum was with Addison. The Dawg offense could get nothing going and had to punt the ball back to Hamilton who took over with only 1:42 left in the half and at their own 41-yard line. It only took Hamilton 6-plays to go 59-yards for the score. They ran it in from 2-yards out and after the 2-point conversion was good, Hamilton took a 14-7 lead into the half.

Hamilton took the second half kick-off and looked to be stopped facing a third and 17 from their own 49-yard line. That is when they connected on a 51-yard touchdown strike down the sideline giving them a 21-7 lead with plenty of time left in the game for the Addison comeback.

Roberts then took the Dawg offense from their own 20-yard line into Hamilton territory when Addison was called for three penalties in a five-play span. This forced an Addison punt which was blocked, and Hamilton took over at the Dawg 41-yard line.

The Addison defense then stuffed the Aggies and the game ended with Addison and Hamilton trading possessions with no one scoring.

Addison took a hard, 21-7 loss but dominated the Aggie offense most of night.

Addison falls to 5-4 (4-1 region) and will travel to region foe Sulligent 2-6 (2-3 region) next Friday. Addison will need to beat Sulligent and hope that archrival Double Springs can defeat Aliceville in order for Addison to win the region championship. An Addison win and Aliceville win puts Addison as the no. 2 seed.

Aggies race past Brewer, 49-16, on the road

Gary McGriff
Tribune Correspondent

SOMERVILLE, Ala. – One week after securing a playoff berth, the Fairview Aggies traveled across the Morgan County line to Somerville to take on the Brewer Patriots in a non-region game. Coach George Redding's Aggies are ranked no. 10 in AHSAA Class 5A. The Aggies left James R. Tucker Stadium with a 49-16 victory.

Fairview entered the game with leading rusher Tyler Simmons sidelined with an injury. The Aggie defense took the field with the Patriots starting the game on offense. Brewer was forced to punt after three plays. The Aggies took over on Brewer's 36-yard line after a short punt. Hard running by Fairview quarterback Parker Martin put the Aggies deep in Brewer territory. After a holding penalty helped stall the drive, the Aggies attempted a 14-yard field goal by Elijah Guyton. The kick was no good and the Patriots took over on their own 20-yard line.

Brewer quarterback Wyatt Styles led the Patriots on a 15-play drive that looked to give Brewer its first lead of the night. A yellow penalty flag once again stopped a promising drive when the Patriots were called for holding that backed Brewer almost back to midfield. Facing a fourth-and-long, the Aggie defense stiffened and gave the ball back to its offense at Fairview's 20-yard line. Another penalty against the Patriots aided the Aggies as they completed a nine-play scoring drive of 80 yards that extended into the second quarter. Martin completed a 21-yard touchdown pass to give the Aggies the lead 7-0 with 8:58 left in the second quarter. A pass interference penalty against Brewer was enforced on the kickoff.

The Aggies defense forced a quick punt by Brewer. Taking over on its own 32, Fairview's offense looked to add to the lead. Martin continued his strong running and Jameson Goble scored the touchdown on a 5-yard run with 5:23 left in the first half. Fairview's lead was now 14-0.

Brewer fumbled the ball on the kickoff return and Eli Speegle returned the fumble for a 21-yard touchdown. It took only 17 seconds for the Aggies to score 14 points, and with 5:06 left in the half Fairview's lead was 21-0.

The Patriots went on another long drive and looked to score. After a trick pass from Cutter Eidson to Styles came up short of the goal line, Brewer faced a fourth-and-5 from the Fairview 5-yard line. A 1-yard run by Styles run came up short and the Aggies took over deep in their own territory.

On the second play, a bad snap forced Martin to fall on the ball and gave the Brewers a safety The half ended with the score 21-2.

A nice second-half kickoff return by Preston Ryan gave the Aggies great field position near midfield. A long run by Martin was followed by a 1-yard touchdown run by Martin and after two plays the Fairview lead was 28-2.

The Aggies defense forced another quick punt from Brewer. On the second play after getting the ball back, Fairview's Martin hit Speegle on a 69-yard touchdown pass, and with 9:12 to go in the third quarter Fairview's lead was 35-2.

Brewer turned the ball over on downs when another fourth-down play fell short. A long run by Goble looked to set the Aggies up for another quick score. Martin's pass was intercepted by Caden Childers and returned for 30 yards.

The Fairview defense stiffened again as Martin intercepted the pass from Styles and the Aggies were in business at the Brewer 49-yard line. On the sixth play of the drive, Martin completed a 10-yard touchdown pass to Ryan, and with 2:03 left in the third quarter the Aggies lead was 42-2.

Brewer took an 11-play drive that extended into the fourth quarter and scored its first touchdown of the game on a 34-yard pass from Styles to Childers. The two-point conversion try was no good, and with 9:47 left in the game the score was 42-8, Fairview.

On the fourth play of Fairview's next drive, Ryan scored a touchdown on a 56-yard run play. With 8:29 left in the game Fairview's lead was 49-8.

After forcing a quick kick, the Aggies fumbled the punt and the Patriots looked to capitalize. Once again, the Aggie defense showed its toughness, forcing a fumble that was recovered by Fairview's Cale Foster.

Brewer's defense responded and forced the Aggies to turn over the ball on downs and the Patriots took over near midfield. The drive was capped off by a 7-yard touchdown run by Gonzalo Ramirez and a successful two-point conversion completed the game's scoring and gave the Aggies a 49-16 victory.

Martin finished the night with 10 rushes for 123 yards and was 8-of-11 passing for 132 yards.

After the game, Fairview Coach George Redding said, "We got off to a slow start. We had to overcome some injuries. Our young guys stepped up and played hard. I'm very proud of a total team effort."

Fairview was slated to travel to Sardis next week; however, Sardis has suspended its program for the remainder of the season due to COVID-19, forfeiting the game to the Aggies. Guntersville defeated Boaz Friday night, and the Aggies wrapped up second place in the region, guaranteeing them a first-round home game in the playoffs.

Vinemont (from Front)

Ryan Guthery
Tribune Correspondent

VINEMONT, Ala. – The Eagles hosted the Oakman Wildcats Friday night and came away with a thrilling 20-17 overtime victory, sending Vinemont to the playoffs for the first time since 2014. "We are playing better and better each week," said Eagles coach Stephen Robinson. "After the Pennington game the guys decided that's not good enough and all bought in and responded." Oakman was forced to punt on its first possession, and the Eagles came up short on fourth down. Vinemont perked up, however, and the stingy Eagle defense of late stepped up to force a three-and-out. On their ensuing possession, the Eagles flew down the field on a 14-play drive capped off by a 1-yard touchdown run by Brodie Speer to put Vinemont up 7-0 with 6:07 remaining until halftime. Oakman was able to find the end zone late in the first half to pull within 1 at 7-6, the score at the break. On the third play of the second half, Colby Miller found his way to the end zone from 86 yards out to put the Eagles ahead 14-6. The Eagles defense forced another three-and-out, but Vinemont couldn't find a rhythm and was forced to punt. After a big pass play for the Wildcats set them up first-and-goal, the Eagle defense was having none of that, and on four straight plays kept Oakman out of the end zone. The teams swapped punts until late in the game when Oakman tied it up at 14 with just under three minutes to play in regulation. Vinemont was forced to punt the ball back to give Oakman time for a potential game-winning drive, but the Eagle defense didn't let that happen. Heading into overtime, Oakman was unable to gain a single yard, settling for a field goal to give the Wildcats their first lead of the game at 17-14. Knowing the only thing that stood in the way of a huge playoff clinching victory was finding the end zone, the Eagles wasted no time, taking just two plays before Brodie Curvin muscled his way in, giving the Eagles a 20-17 victory and propelling them into the post season for the first time in six years. Vinemont will head to Holly Pond next week to take on the Broncos.

Cullman Christkindlmarkt

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11TH
3:00PM - 9:00PM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12TH
10:00AM - 9:00PM

DOWNTOWN CULLMAN
ACROSS FROM THE FESTHALLE

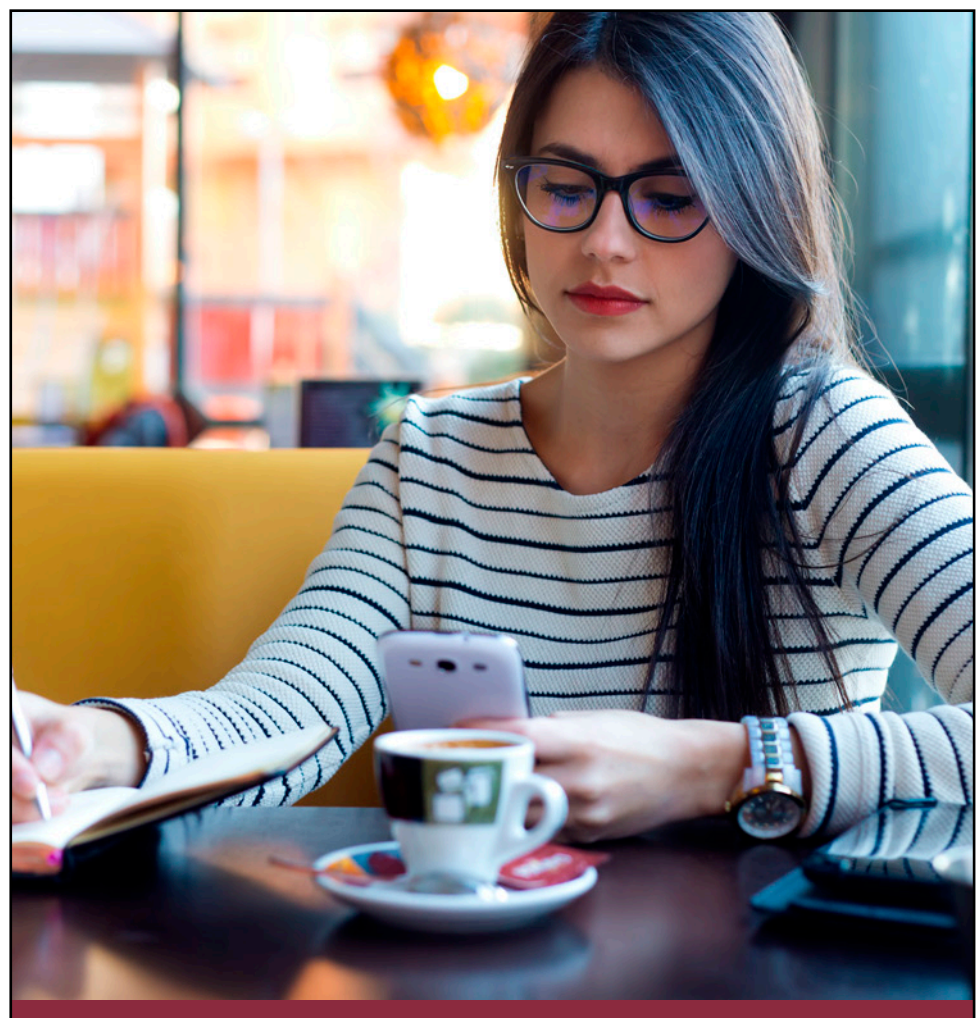
CHRISTMAS in Cullman

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

DOWNTOWN CULLMAN & DEPOT PARK
5:00PM - 9:00PM

PARADE BEGINS AT 7:00PM
TREE-LIGHTING BEGINS AT 7:45PM

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Tornadoes pull away from Tigers, 38-14

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

ARLEY, Ala. – After collecting a huge win over Lynn last week, the Tigers returned home Friday night the host a strong Pickens County team. Meek hung with the Tornadoes early, but they were eventually able to create separation and pull away to defeat the Tigers 38-14. Meek struck first in the game and scored early in the opening quarter to take a 6-0 lead. However, Pickens County answered with a touchdown of its own to tie the game and just before the start of the second quarter, the Tornadoes found the end zone again to take a 14-6 lead. Pickens County got on the board again early in the second to go on top 22-6, but the Tigers bounced back with another score to cut the deficit to 22-14. Unfortunately, the Tornadoes were able to wipe out that momentum with another touchdown just before halftime that made it a 30-14 game at the break. Neither team was able to get on the board again in the third quarter and the Tigers went into the fourth trailing by just two scores. However, Pickens County was able to tack on another touchdown in the final frame to pull ahead 38-14 and the lead became too much for Meek to overcome.

The Tigers fall to 1-7 after the loss and they'll be back on the road next week to face Berry in another regional showdown.

Bearcats suffer 28-0 loss at Athens

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

ATHENS, Ala. – Cullman hit the road Friday night for another region matchup against the Golden Eagles of Athens and it was a tough night on both sides of the ball for the Bearcats. After a scoreless first quarter, Athens scored twice in the second quarter and twice in the third quarter to secure a 28-0 win over Cullman.

After punting on their first possession, the 'Cats forced a fumble and recovered it on the ensuing Athens possession to take over in Eagles' territory. However, Cullman wasn't able to get on the board after missing a 40-yard field goal attempt with three minutes to play in the opening quarter. Athens was able to move the ball more effectively on its next drive, converting several third downs before punching one into the end zone from 2 yards out to take a 7-0 lead early in the second quarter. Cullman's struggles continued on the offensive side of the ball and after being forced to punt the ball again, the Golden Eagles went to work on extending their lead. They capped off another scoring drive with a 16-yard touchdown pass on a screen play that made it 14-0 with just under seven minutes to play in the half. Both teams got another possession before the break, but neither could get on the scoreboard and the 'Cats went into the locker room trailing 14-0. Athens continued to add to its lead in the third quarter, scoring on an 8-yard touchdown pass midway through the period to make it a 21-0 game. Cullman's ensuing possession was cut short by an interception and the Eagles took advantage with another scoring drive that was capped off by another 8-yard touchdown pass. The 'Cats went into the final frame trailing 28-0.

Neither team was able to move the ball effectively in the fourth quarter but with the lead in hand, Athens was happy to let the clock run out and secure a 28-0 win over the Bearcats.

Cullman drops to 6-2 on the season with the loss but the 'Cats will have to shake this one off and regroup with Muscle Shoals coming to Oliver Woodard Stadium next week.

Winston County routs Cold Springs in region game, 46-21

Sammy Confer
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DOUBLE SPRINGS, Ala. – Cold Springs looked to keep its playoff hopes alive Friday night at Winston County, but a huge first-half deficit was too much to overcome for the Eagles, and the Yellow Jackets flew away with the game, 46-21.

Cold Springs started out strong on its opening possession, moving the ball inside the 25-yard line, but the Eagles got stuffed on fourth down and the Yellow Jackets took over on downs. They didn't waste any time, either, scoring on a 79-yard run on the first play and tacking on a 6-yard run on their next series. Winston County took a 14-0 lead into the second quarter.

The Eagles looked to get something going to start the next period, but they coughed the ball up on third down and Winston County took the fumble 55 yards to the end zone to make it 22-0. An offsides penalty on the Yellow Jackets on fourth down kept Cold Springs' next series alive. Brodi Wil-liams found Izaiah Estell for a 21-yard gain after the penalty, but two plays later, Williams' was in-tercepted and Winston County returned it 65 yards for the score, putting the Yellow Jackets up 30-0.

Roberto Ayala started to get the ground game going for the Eagles on their next series, picking up a pair of first downs, but a penalty quickly stalled the drive, and they were forced to punt. Cold Springs went to the locker room trailing 30-0.

Cold Springs surprised Winston County with an onside kick to open the second half and the Eagles quickly found the end zone on just three plays with Ayala scoring from 3 yards out to make it a 30-7 game. The Yellow Jackets countered with a 17-yard run, and after another interception, made it 46-7 on a 1-yard run. The Eagles scored the final two touchdowns when Williams found Ayala for a 10-yard score and Ayala found the end zone on a 2-yard run to put the final score at 46-21.

Williams passed for more than 120 yards in the game and had a touchdown. Ayala rushed for more than 100 yards on the night and had a pair of scores, plus a receiving touchdown, for Cold Springs.

Cold Springs (4-5, 2-3) will look to quickly regroup next Friday night when the Eagles host Lamar County in a pivotal region game.

Broncos fall 35-6 at Susan Moore

Doug Bates
Tribune Correspondent

SUSAN MOORE, Ala. – The Holly Pond Broncos traveled to Susan Moore Friday night to face the Bulldogs and came up short, 35-6.

Susan Moore tried to surprise the Broncos with an onside kick to open the game, but Holly Pond was ready and started with good field position at its own 49. Andrew Bell got the Broncos into Susan Moore territory with a 6-yard run before quarterback Austin Marsh called his own number and rushed for the first down. Three plays later, facing fourth down at the Bulldog 40, Marsh's pass was dropped, and Susan Moore took over on downs. Susan Moore's first play from scrimmage was a Camden Lackey pass to Zach Smith for 33 yards. The Bulldogs drove down to the Bronco 6 and on second down scored their first touchdown of the night.

At the end of the first quarter, The Bulldogs were on top 7-0. The Broncos, starting on their own 34, opened their passing game with a completion to Lane Tipton at the 45. Behind the hard running of Bell, the Broncos found themselves at the Bulldog 35. The drive came to an end as Zach Smith picks off a Bronco pass at the 25.

The Bulldogs wasted no time driving the ball down to the Bronco 12 where Lackey found Smith open for a touchdown pass, putting the Bulldogs up 14-0. On Holly Pond's next possession, backed up to its own 14, Levi Boatright punted the ball away. An excellent kick and a Bronco roll put the Bulldogs at their own 39-yard line.

Susan Moore drove the ball down to the Bronco 16, and on first-and-10, Lackey found Derek Doty for the touchdown. The two-point conversion was good, making it 22-0 at the half. The Bulldogs received the second-half kickoff in front of the homecoming crowd. They only took two minutes to drive down to the Bronco 8, and on third down Doty caught his second touchdown pass of the contest. The PAT was no good, making it 28-0, Susan Moore. The Broncos started at their own 37 on their first possession of the second half. Boatright gained 4 yards to the 41, and on second down Marsh found Landon Perkins open for a 20-yard pass to the Bulldog 39. Bell powered the ball down to the 27 for another first down, before running it in and putting Holly Pond on the board, 28-6. The Bulldogs scored their last touchdown of the night on a 13-yard pass to bring the final score to 35-6. Holly Pond will host the Vinemont Eagles next week.



FUNNY THINGS FROM YESTERDAY

He is as tough as a pine knot

Robert N. Tidwell, Sr.
robertntidwellsr@gmail.com



Our second oldest great-grandson is Alder, ("AB2" if you remember the simple way I had to have to remember our six greats). He will be 2 years old this month. He is a very tough little boy. He can fall flat on his face and get up with a smile on his face. He can bump his head on a cabinet door, and he doesn't cry. He is, as people used to say, "He is as tough as a pine knot."

Last Sunday he jumped off the couch and into the bookshelf. This split a little place on his lip and his mother sent a picture of his injury to a doctor she works with. He said it needed probably two stitches, but it would be very hard to do and be very traumatic.

He also said he couldn't use dissolvable stitches because his saliva would make them dissolve.

So, they would have to hold him down to put in the stitches and again to take them out. His mother and daddy are both nurses, so they were able to stop the bleed at home.

The next morning his mother was driving Alder and his older brother Crosby ("C.J." if you remember his easy name) to school and Alder bumped his mouth on his seat or his knee and his lip started to bleed. She carried C.J. on to school and dropped him off. She then stopped at a store and bought some liquid skin and said, "Come on, let's go home."

Alder has been a little slow to start his talking, but he has improved and added to his vocabulary. Another thing that he has added to his activities is to stomp his little foot when things don't go his way.

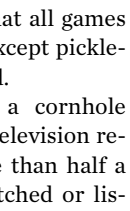
When his mother said, "Let's go home," he stomped his foot and very emphatically said, "No, school. School."

She had stopped the bleeding, but his shirt was covered with blood, so she bought a new shirt and started back to school. As they walked in the room at school, Alder said, "Hi, guys."

BILLY BOB'S STORIES AND STUFF

The games are real, but the fans in the stands aren't

Bill King
Tribune
Contributor



The Braves have swept the first two playoff series! Four of their five games were shut outs! What do you mean you don't follow soccer? Neither do I, but I have watched or listened to the Atlanta Braves play baseball since I was ten-years old, when they moved from Milwaukee to Atlanta. Yes, I know it is football season and we live in the Southeastern Conference, but the Braves are in the National League Championship Series. By the time you read my column, they may have even won the NL pennant. They haven't done that in over 20 years. I will admit this year has been most unusual.

Since my home state does not have a major-league team, I have been a Braves fan since day one...in 1966, that is. In those early years, before Ted Turner and TBS, a televised game was a rare treat. These days, it seems that all games in every sport, except pickleball, are televised.

I even saw a cornhole tournament on television recently. For more than half a century, I've watched or listened on radio to an untold number of Braves' games.

I've been present in the stands to watch a few of those games in person.

I've even come back out to get in my car after one game, only to discover that I couldn't get in my car, because someone else had gotten in my car... and drove it off! I still remained a fan...a fan without a way to get home, but a fan. Through the years, I've watched great players like Aaron, Maddux, Jones, Murphy, and now Freeman, to name a few, come and go.

I watched the team win divisional championships, especially in the 90s, time after time, a few league championships, and one World Series title. In all those years, I've never seen a season quiet like this one.

For one thing, it didn't start on time. The season usually begins in late March, but this year no one shouted, "Play ball!" until July 23rd.

Teams normally play 162 games in a season. This year they played only 60.

Even though I have another car, I have not attended a game in person in recent years. This year, neither did hardly anyone else. Because of the pandemic, when the games finally did begin, fans were not allowed to attend.

At least no one had to worry about someone stealing their car. Can you imagine a game being played without organ music or the roar of the fans in the stands?

Well, someone let the organist slip in the back gate of some stadiums, and they piped in crowd noise.

They even had fake fans in the stands. Real fans could send in their pictures, and for a small donation, have a life-sized cardboard cutout made and placed in the stands. A few cardboard celebrities were in the stands. A few seats were even filled with life-sized teddy bears.

One of those bears was beaned by a line drive hit, but it didn't appear to knock him out or his stuffing. Fake fans are not the same thing as warm bodies in the stands, but it at least gave the appearance that someone was there...that a crowd was watching.

Now, in the remaining series, there are a few real-live breathing humans in the stands.

In life, I never want to be like one of those fake fans in the stands. I challenge us all to make sure we are the real deal and not simply someone who looks like something we actually are not...just for an appearance. Be real!

Bill King can be reached at bkpreach@yahoo.com or 334-745-0588 (office).





POET'S CORNER

Hound Dog

By: Randy C. Hale

The lone black and tan
hound trots
with a spring in his step
on this autumn day.
His ears flapping as flags
in this cooler breeze
seem to say that
summer's heat is over
and it's just the right time
to loafer.



COMIC – CHIRP & FLIT



LIFESTYLE

A Round of Applause for the Joy Givers: Kinky Friedman

Ben South
Contributor

HOORAY FOR THE JOY-GIVERS! We always need more smiles, music and laughter. This fun series salutes those seriously unsolemn people, places and things that bring joy to the world. Starting during the pandemic, an oft joy-challenged time, readers are introduced to present-day joy givers and reminded of cherished joy givers of the past. Each salute will have online links to add more opportunities for happiness in the comfort of your socially-distanced home. Many installments of the series will include a salutary food or drink recipe to add another element of pleasure.

The "SHIELD THE JOYOUS" shields, which will be given to those honored or to their family, are inspired from a passage in "The Book of Common Prayer" (1662.. Prayers are lifted to "tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying...and shield the joyous." Joy givers are precious.

Let us preserve them, protect them, treasure them, smile with them, laugh with them, tap our toes with them and give them A ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

PLEASE GIVE A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR: KINKY FRIEDMAN

Kinky Friedman calls himself "The Clown Prince of Texas Jews."

He's been a popular musician and comedian for decades and was a real, or possibly surreal, candidate for Governor of Texas.

Here's a round of joyous/fun/playful quotes from Kinky:

1. Money can buy you a fine dog, but only love can make him wag his tail.
2. Politics is the only field in which the more experience you have, the worse you get.
3. Beauty is in the eye of the beer holder.
4. If you elect me the first, Jewish Governor of Texas, I'll reduce the speed limit to 69.95.
5. Something positive I can say about my political opponent is that he has nice hair. My hair is actually better; it's just not in a place where I can show you.
6. God created whiskey to keep the Irish from taking over the world.
7. I believe Willie Nelson is the hillbilly Dalai Lama.
8. I don't apologize for the truth, and the truth is racists come in many different colors.
9. True love often results in a hostage situation.
10. If you're lookin' for a helpin' hand, try the one at the end of your arm.
11. You don't accomplish much in life by swimming with the mainstream. Hell, a dead fish can do that.

DON'T YOUTUBE A ROUND OF KINKY FRIEDMAN FUN unless you are ready to embrace what some would call his, "eyebrow-raising, politically incorrect" humor. Kinky is an equal opportunity offender. For instance, a lot of feminists hated his hit song, "Get Your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns in Bed."

So, of course, he then took it to the people on a multi-state tour with that message. However, if you like your humor a little on the rascally side, Youtube-ing some Kinky music and comedy will give you the grins. His official website is www.kinkyfriedman.com where you can order his books, music and other Kinky hoohaw.

Please join us in giving Kinky Friedman "A Round of Applause" and enjoy this recipe for "Kinky Maso Ball Soup" from my friend, and his fellow Texan, Elaine DiRico, a former nun (with a dollop of nunsense. and now a nutritionist/author and a delightful and delighted first-time grandmother-to-be.



KINKY MASA BALL SOUP
by Elaine DiRico

INGREDIENTS
- 4 large eggs
- 1/3 cup club soda
- 1/4 cup fat- a neutral oil can work, but chicken or pork fat is best
- 1 cup Masa Harina
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground cumin*
- 1/2 tsp. smoked paprika (optional.
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 1/2 quarts organic low sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 cup each diced carrot and celery (with leaves, please.
- 1 cup onion, diced
- 3 minced cloves of garlic
- Cilantro, sliced serrano pepper, sliced avocado and lime wedges for garnish

* You may of course use pre ground cumin, but for maximum flavor heat a small skillet, remove from the heat, add the cumin seeds to toast, and grind with a mortar and pestle or spice grinder.

DIRECTIONS
1. Beat the eggs and combine with the soda and fat in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add the Masa Harina, baking powder, salt and spices.
3. Stir to combine; refrigerate for one hour.
4. Split the chicken broth between two saucepans. In one, add some oil, bring to heat and sauté the celery, carrots and onion just until softened. Add the 1 1/4 cup of broth and turn down to simmer.
5. Bring the second pot of stock to a simmer.
6. Have a bowl of water handy to keep your hands wet. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper. If you have a small scooper, use that, and make 1-inch balls. Once they are lined up on the parchment paper, wet your hands and roll them to uniform shapes. Let dry for 15 minutes, then add to the simmering broth and cook for 40 minutes- test to make sure they are steamed through.
7. Using a slotted spoon, divide the balls into 4 prewarmed bowls. Strain the masa broth if necessary, adding it to the broth and vegetables.
8. Pour the soup over the masa balls, serve with garnish on the side.


TREVOR PAULHUS/WWW.KINKYFRIEDMAN.COM

Kinky Friedman

Pickup (from Front)

Leanne West
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – The City of Cullman will soon be changing the way it services residential garbage. Beginning Nov. 9, 2020, all residents and commercial hand stops will be serviced using our new automated side loader trucks with mechanical arms.

Each customer will receive one (1) 96-gallon cart. The City-selected contractor will begin delivering the carts to customers Oct. 19, 2020. The contractor's process for this will be to start delivering along Monday's route first. Then they will move to Tuesday's route, Wednesday's route and Thursday's route in order to complete the delivery process as the routes are to be run.

Every household will receive one cart at the monthly rate of $16 (The $16 per month is the current sanitation charge. It's not changing. It is the same price, but a new service.). If an additional cart is needed, customers can call the Sanitation office at 256-737-7560 to request an additional cart for an additional charge of $8 per month per cart. (Charges listed are current as of the date of this article.)

Commercial hand stop customers will also initially receive one (1) 96-gallon cart at the rate of $60 per month. If needed, commercial hand stop customers can request one (1) additional 96-gallon cart for no additional charge. (Charges listed are current as of the date of the date of this article.)

NEW SERVICE GUIDELINES

- Place carts no further than three (3) feet off the roadway.
- There are arrows on the front of the cart. The arrows should be pointing toward the street.
- Cart should be placed on the opposite linear/horizontal side of your mailbox, if possible. (For example, if you stand facing your driveway and your mailbox is on the left-hand side, then your cart will need to be on the right-hand side of your driveway.)
- Place the cart at least four (4) feet from poles, fire hydrants, or any other obstacles and at least ten (10) feet away from vehicles.
- Please do not place cart on the other side of a ditch as the automated arm will not reach that far.
- All garbage must be inside the City of Cullman Sanitation garbage cart, and all garbage must be bagged. Any garbage not placed in a City of Cullman Sanitation garbage cart WILL NOT BE COLLECTED. Old trash cans may not be used as they are not designed to withstand the force of the mechanical gripper on the truck.
- DO NOT put yard debris, rocks, dirt, building and construction debris, hot or flammable items, hazardous materials, or chemicals in your cart. (The City of Cullman offers a large item pickup for an additional fee. Please call Sanitation to schedule this service.)
- Please have your cart out by 5:00 a.m. on the day of service. Garbage not out by this time will not be picked up until the following week.
- If you are moving, please call Sanitation to pick up the cart. If the cart is missing, an additional $60.00 fee will be added to your final bill for the cost of the container.
- Every cart has a serial number assigned to the address to which it is delivered. It is a criminal offense to remove a City of Cullman cart without permission from the City of Cullman Sanitation Department.
- Service days WILL NOT CHANGE. If you are unsure what day your garbage is picked up, refer to the sanitation quadrants map (available on the website – www.cullmanal.gov/depts/sanitation) or contact the Sanitation Department.

It is the intent of the City of Cullman to implement the automated cart system to provide a safer work environment for our employees as well as to provide an environmentally safer pickup for household garbage.

This system has been proven environmentally safe for employees and households.

The City of Cullman appreciates your patience during this transition. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact the Cullman Sanitation Department at 256-737-7560 or email cityhall@cullmanal.gov.

You may also visit the Sanitation/Recycling Department's page on the City of Cullman website at www.cullmanal.gov/depts./sanitation.

The sanitation quadrants map and the new service guidelines are available for download from that page.

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Obituary Announcements: Oct. 17

Clura Lavern Quick, 78, of Cullman, Alabama passed away Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020. Clura was born Feb. 2, 1942 in Alabama to Eula Mae White and Raymond Isaac (Jack) Key. Clura is survived by daughters Pamela (Bruce) Quick, Carla Quick, Shelia Quick, and Chrystie (Johnny) Cook; sisters Audrey Talley and Betty (Buford) Spain; and brother Carl Baker. Clura was preceded in death by her parents; husband Fred Rayburn Quick; brother-in-law Melvin Talley; and brothers Cordis Key, Orvis Key, and Sherril Baker. A visitation for Clura will be held Saturday, Oct. 17, 2020 from 4-7 p.m. at Moss Service Funeral Home, 1901 Second Ave. NW, Cullman, Alabama 35055. A celebration of life funeral service will be held in the chapel Sunday, Oct. 18, 2020 at 3:30 p.m. An interment to follow at Central Baptist Cemetery. Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.mossservicefh.com for the Quick family.

Stanley Johnson was born Nov. 24, 1958 and passed away Oct. 15, 2020 and is under the care of Moss Service Funeral Home.

Funeral services for Betty Sue Burton, 77, of Cullman will be at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020 at Cullman Heritage Funeral Home; interment in Cullman Heritage Cemetery. Visitation will be noon-1 p.m. prior to the service. Cullman Heritage Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Mrs. Burton passed away Friday, Oct. 16, 2020 at Cullman Regional. She was born Jan. 10, 1943 to Henry and Inez Godwin. She was preceded in death by her parents and husband, William Lester Burton. Survivors include her daughter Dana Wise (James Studdard); son David Wayne (Sherry) Carty; grandchildren Rayna (Brian) Anton and Garry (Amanda) Wise; and great-grandchildren AnnaBelle Anton, Bryant Anton, and R.J. Wise.

Funeral services for Ellen Sue Young, 55, of Bremen will be at 2 p.m. Monday, Oct. 19, 2020 at Johnson Grove Church with Tommy Graves officiating; interment in Johnson Grove Cemetery. Visitation will be from 6-9 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18, 2020 at Johnson Grove Church. Cullman Heritage Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Mrs. Young passed away Friday, Oct. 16, 2020 at her residence. She was born July 25, 1965 to James B. and Veola Cordes. She was preceded in death by her father James B. Cordes. Survivors include her husband James Young; daughters Kristen Burton (Nick Williams) and Amanda (Jeremy) Seckfort; grandchildren Peyton Seckfort, Paislee Seckfort, Sawyer Seckfort, Kloe Light, Kayleigh Light, and Ayden Light; mother Veola Cordes; brothers Gene (Anita) Cordes, Jim (Vickie) Cordes, Freddie (Nina) Cordes, and John (Becky) Cordes; sister Marlene (Tim) Fine; and a host of nieces, nephews, family, and friends.

In loving memory of Maxine Graves-Clay. Maxine died at the age of 63 at her home Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020. She was a very unique and free-spirited individual. She was also very talented and artistic. Maxine was full of life even on her most troublesome days. She loved just as much as the ones who loved her, and she will be greatly missed. Mrs. Graves-Clay is survived by her precious dog, Apollo, who was known to most as Bubba; her mother Nell Graves; sisters Faye (Dwayne) Morris, Youvon Graves-Sharp, and Becky (Kenny) White; sisters-in-love Delilah Sontag and Becky Bowers; nieces and nephews Shawn and Tracy Burgess, Austin White and Cheyenne Phillips, Houston and CarrieAnn White, and Jazzlyn Sharp; and great-niece EllieAna "Bunny" White. Mrs. Graves-Clay is preceded in death by her husband Jack Clay and her father Max Graves. In honor of Maxine, donations can be made to the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Research Foundation.

Karen Ann Jones, 63, of Jasper entered into rest at her home in Jasper. Karen was born Sept. 16, 1957. She Karen was a good cook who also had a green thumb and could make anything grow. She loved jewelry and horses. No services are planned at this time. Karen is survived by her daughters Melanie Jones and Haley (Cindy) Holloway; sisters Sharon (A.G.) Cleghorn, Rita (Ed) Herr, and Cheryl McCay; and six nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents Garland and Shirley McCay.

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House (from Front)

Council President Dr. Jenny Folsom echoed the others, hopeful for the positive impact the event might have in a year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This year the Chamber, the County and the City of Cullman are excited to be partnering in this event that we feel will be more important than ever," she said.

"In years past, we have asked the businesses to help fund this event, but this year we're excited to say we have pooled our resources and there is no charge for anyone to participate in the event. We're using these funds to promote the event statewide through print advertising, radio, social media and TV."

Business owners who want to participate in this year's Cullman Area Christmas Open House need to take the following steps:

- Register your business at www.cullmanopenhouse.com.
- Businesses are encouraged to decorate for the holiday season
- Plan a giveaway at your business. (It can be anything from a $20 gift card, a candle, popcorn, etc.)
- Share the event on your website, social media outlets, email lists or any forms of communication you have with your customers.

The first 10 businesses to register will be included in a promotional video for the event.

Folsom also reminded everyone of other Christmas events that will take place in Cullman after the Open House.

"I'd also like to share that after the Christmas Open House weekend, we'll have things going on just about every weekend until Christmas," she said.

"Nov. 21, we have Christmas in the Warehouse District, Nov. 27 we'll have the lighting of the German Christmas pyramid at the Cullman County Museum, Dec. 4 is Christmas in Cullman- and this event includes the Christmas parade (and) annual tree lighting ceremony- and on Dec. 11 and 12, we will have our first Christkindl market, which is a German Christmas market, that will be held in Depot Park.

"We hope these events will keep people coming to our community throughout the whole Christmas season."

Unemployment (from Front)

Tara Hutchison
Contributor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington announced Friday that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted September unemployment rate is 6.6%, up from August's rate of 5.6% and above September 2019's rate of 2.7%. September's rate represents 148,912 unemployed persons, compared to 125,855 in August and 61,495 in September 2019.

Cullman County has the lowest rate of any county in the state for September at 3.8%, up slightly from 3.5% in August and above September 2019's rate of 2.2%.

"As we continue to gauge the economic impacts of this pandemic, we expect to see fluctuations in our unemployment rate," said Washington. "In September, we saw fewer people entering the labor force, fewer people working, and more who were counted as unemployed. All of those factors will increase the unemployment rate. We will continue to work with employers and the unemployed to put Alabamians back to work."

"We did see an increase in the number of jobs the economy is supporting, with a gain of a little more than 9,000," continued Washington. "We hope to see hiring pick up over the next couple of months as we approach the holiday season."

Wage and salary employment grew in September by 9,300. Monthly gains were seen in the government sector (+6,100), the professional and business services sector (+4,500), and the education and health services sector (+2,400), among others. Over the year, wage and salary employment decreased 70,800, with losses in the leisure and hospitality sector (-29,400), the education and health services sector (-19,300), and the government sector (-7,800), among others.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are Cullman County at 3.8%, Randolph, Marshall, and Franklin counties at 3.9%, and Shelby, Clay, Cherokee, and Blount counties at 4.0%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are Wilcox County at 17.0%, Lowndes County at 15.9% and Greene County at 11.9%.

Major cities with the lowest unemployment rates are Homewood at 3.5%, Madison and Vestavia Hills at 3.6% and Alabaster at 3.8%. Major cities with the highest unemployment rates are Prichard at 17.2%, Selma at 14.2% and Bessemer at 12.2%.

For more information regarding how the Bureau of Labor Statistics calculates the unemployment rate, please visit www.bls.gov/bls/bls-covid-19-questions-and-answers.htm.

NOTE: Data users must be cautious about trying to compare or reconcile the UI claims data with the official unemployment figures gathered through the household survey. The unemployment data derived from the household survey in no way depend upon the eligibility for or receipt of UI benefits. In some cases, UI claims data exclude people who would be identified as unemployed in the household survey, like new entrants to the labor force with no prior work experience. In other cases, UI data may include individuals who do not meet the CPS definition of unemployment. The recent Emergency Unemployment Insurance Stabilization and Access Act of 2020, signed on March 27, 2020, allowed states to temporarily modify or suspend the "actively seeking work" requirement to respond to the spread of COVID-19.

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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

PRESENTS

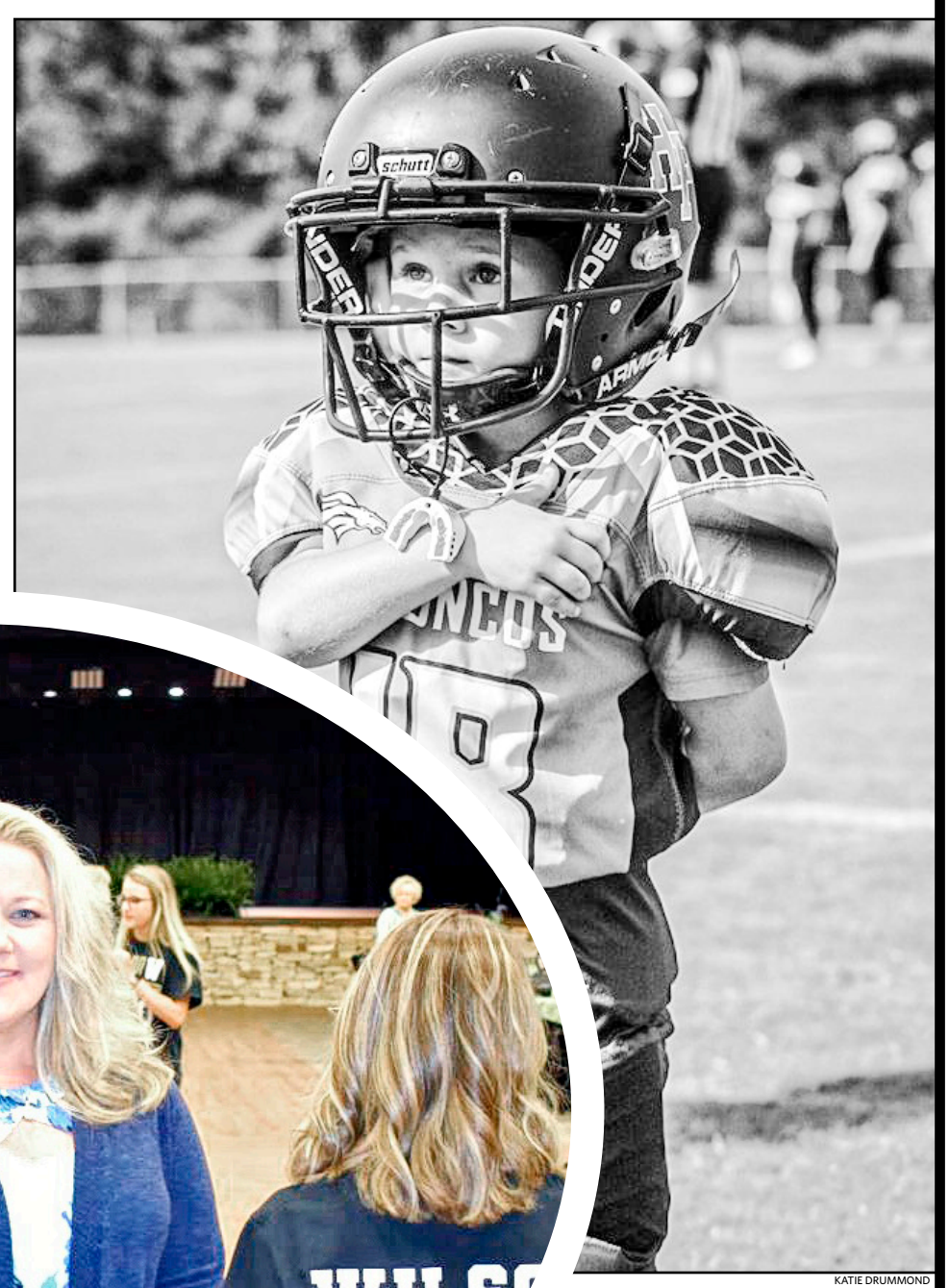
COMMUNITY MATTERS

CELEBRATING CULLMAN COUNTY

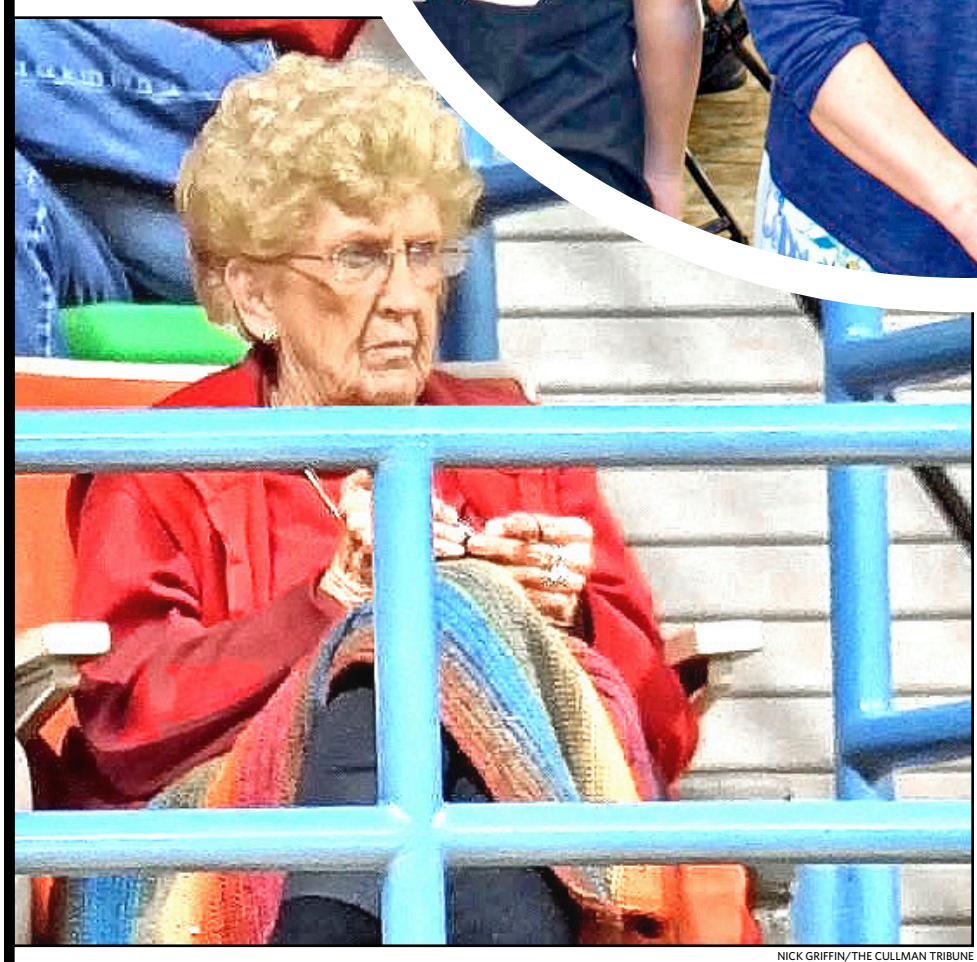
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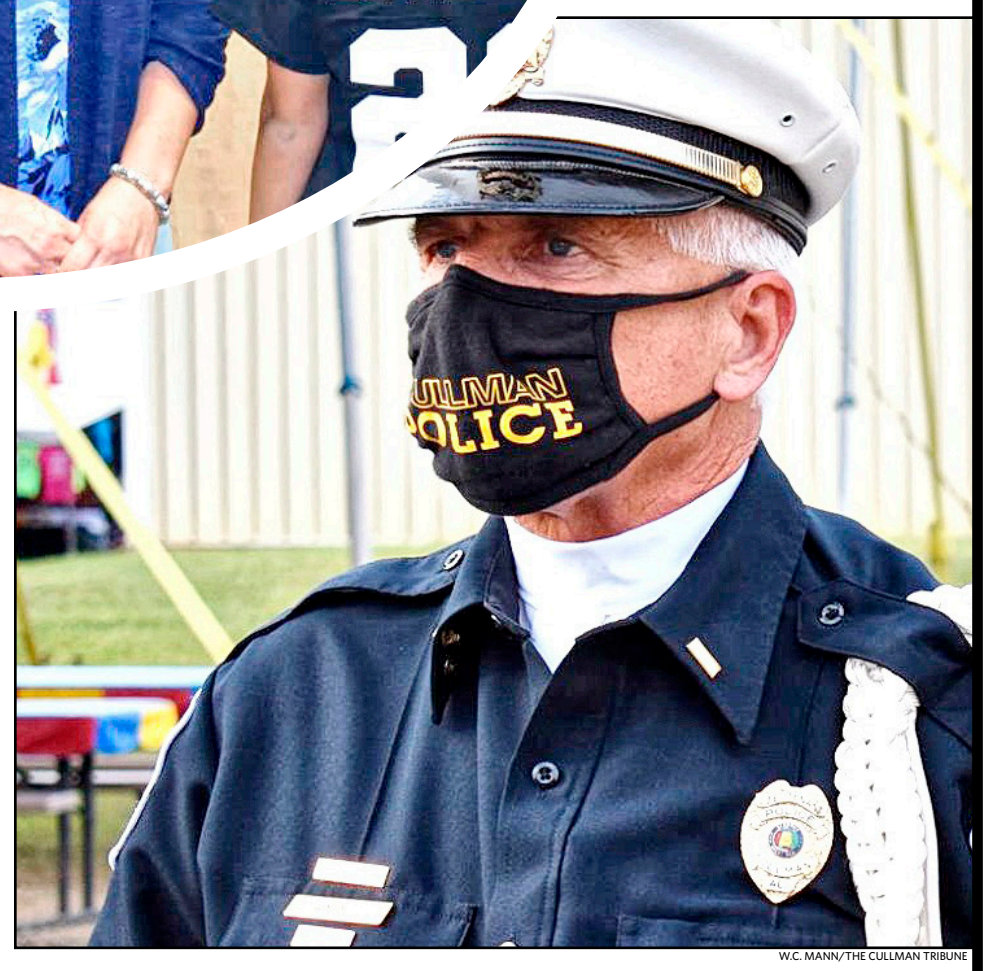
MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



KATIE DRUMMOND



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

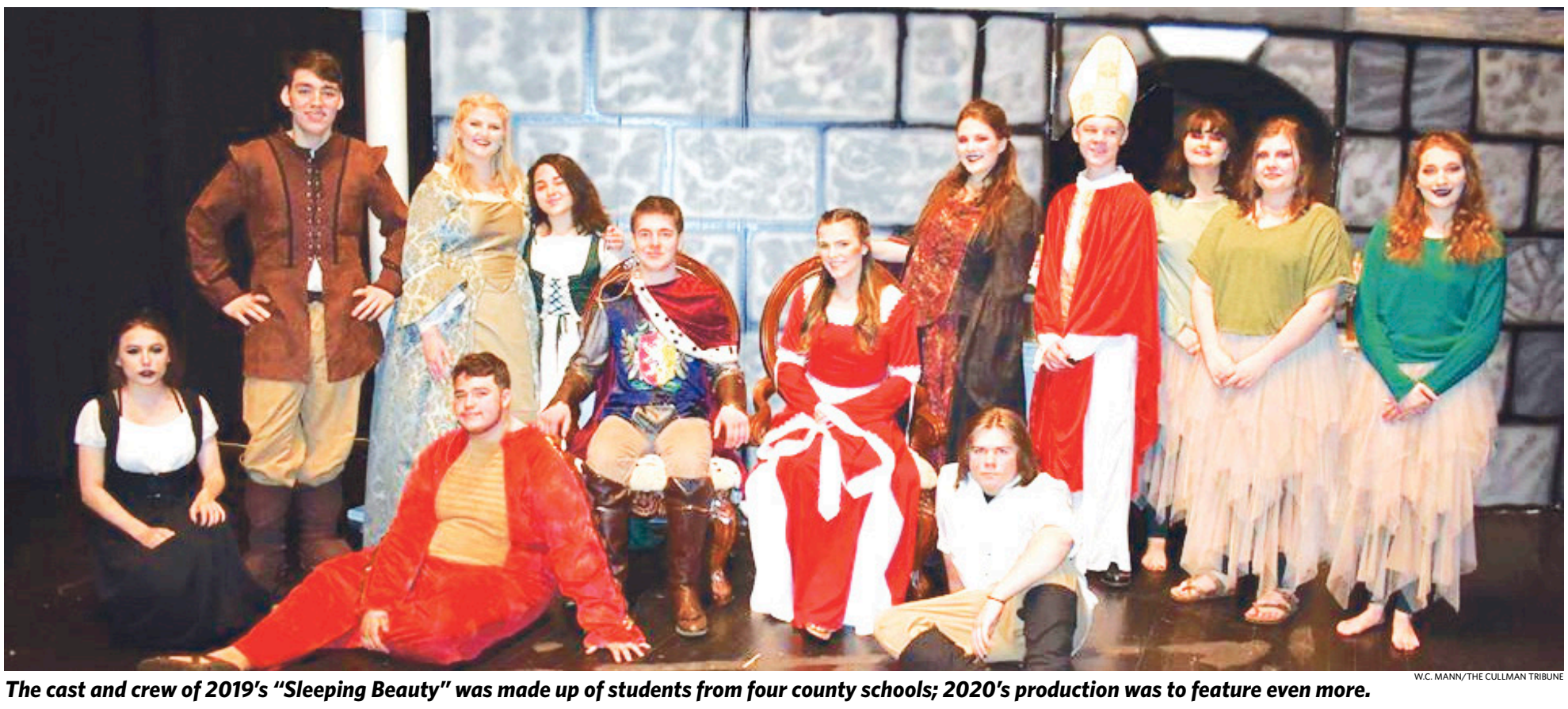


W.C. MANN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

***Center :** Ashley Wilson with student volunteers who wore Curt Wilson's Cullman High School baseball jersey number at the inaugural Clothed in Cullman event in 2019. This year's event was canceled due to COVID-19. **Top Left :** Alan Jackson on stage at his Small Town Drive-In concert in Cullman. **Top Right:** Parker Feenker, 5, son of Robbie and Amy Feenker, stands for the national anthem before a Holly Pond fireplug youth football game. **Bottom Left :** Polly Easterwood crochets at this year's Cullman County Basketball Tournament at Wallace State Community College. She and her husband Felton Easterwood are fixtures at Holly Pond games, where Polly is famous for her crocheting. **Bottom Right:** Cullman Police Department Honor Guard member Lt. Jeff Warnke at the opening of the Cullman County Fair.*

THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
OCTOBER 17, 2020

Entertainment



W.C. MANN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The cast and crew of 2019's "Sleeping Beauty" was made up of students from four county schools; 2020's production was to feature even more.

Growing area live entertainment community brought to a standstill by COVID-19

W.C. Mann
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CULLMAN, Ala. - The Cullman area was seeing a fast rise in live entertainment, especially theater, when the COVID-19 shutdown hit in March.

Multiple school productions and the revived Cullman Community Theater promised a big season that had barely launched when the live entertainment genre was grounded.

Revived Cullman Community Theatre started- and finished- third season with dinner theater

In 2018, a group of theatrically-minded people led by Cullman High School Theatre director Wayne Cook relaunched Cullman Community Theatre (CCT).

At that time, Cook told The Tribune: "I feel strongly that community theater is an important part of a community like this. It fills a need, fills a gap (with something) that we currently don't have. And, with all the things that have happened in this community: the growth, the economic expansion that we've seen–we've seen growth in so many arenas; that's the last link, in my view, of what we really need to explore. The arts in general, but I specifically come at it from a theater perspective.

"You go to a lot of communities: you go to Decatur, you go to Florence, you go to Huntsville (which) has tons of opportunities for community theater. Birmingham has gobs of opportunities for community theater. Even places like Arab and Guntersville have community theater groups. So we really need an opportunity for adults and children, and students and people to work alongside each other to do productions in the community."

In its first season, that opportunity became a summer production of "The Music Man," after which Cook reflected, "It's been fun for us, you know, and it's the beginning of what I hope will be continued community productions, because it gives opportunities to everybody in the community, all ages. A lot of people who are in this show have reminisced about their high school years or years when they were kids and they were in theater. They talked about they brought it back, and they never thought they'd get to do it again. That's what community theater does: it gives people an opportunity to continue something that they love."

CCT returned in the summer of 2019 with a production of the iconic Rogers and Hammerstein classic "Oklahoma!"

For 2020, the group planned much more, including three shows with a variety of productions for a wide range of tastes:

• "Rumors," the Neil Simon adult comedy and CCT's first non-musical, to be presented in a dinner theater format at Stone Bridge Farms in March. Jackson, who is directing, told The Tribune, "I think it's going to be funny. Neil Simon is probably the foremost comedy writer of plays in the U.S. . . . Really, you could just read it and it would be funny, but when you've got people who are actually talented and who are committed to the roles, and they make it just come alive, I think people are going to be saying, 'Wow, that was really funny!"

• The Broadway musical "Hello, Dolly!" about the misadventures of matchmaker Dolly Gallagher Levi and the circle of folks around her when she falls for the wealthy New Yorker for whom she was hired to find a wife.

• "Frozen Jr.," for students up to eighth grade, following a late-summer theater camp and rehearsals under the leadership of director Sarah Skinner.

Only "Rumors" would take place, a matter of days before the COVID-19 shutdown began.

On opening night, director Melva Jackson told The Tribune, "It has been a trial, it has really been a trial. We've just had one setback after another, and I won't go into all of it, but it's really been a trial. But this cast has pulled together and worked together; I mean, they are amazing people. I mean they have built the set, they have gotten the furniture, the props, and you see out there it looks great!

"With this, the biggest challenge was they have a lot of events here (at Stone Bridge Farms), so we were not able to build- usually, you can build the set on the stage and rehearse, but we were not able to do that, so, because they had events all the way up until- Monday night was the first night we were able to be in the theater. So we had to put the set up Monday during the day, and then rehearse that night, and we only had three nights rehearsal on the set."

In the meantime, Morgan Oil donated warehouse space for the cast and crew to construct the set and hold rehearsals.

The efforts seem to have paid off, as the cast and crew played to good-sized crowds that gave the cast all the laughs and applause one would want from such a production.

Jackson said, "It is a challenge, but I absolutely think there'll be more of these, absolutely. It's fun. It's always interesting when you're not doing it in a real theater and doing it in a dining facility or whatever, but I definitely think there will be more."

CCBOE countywide program offers theatrical opportunities to students across system

In April 2019, a new era of theater began for Cullman County Schools, when Fairview High School hosted a production of "Sleeping Beauty" featuring students who auditioned from across the entire county school system. Fairview Theatre Works director Mark Dobbs told The Tribune that the notion of a systemwide production began with Cullman County Board of Education (CCBOE) Superintendent Dr. Shane Barnette.

At the central office, Barnette shared, "Not every one of our schools have a drama program, but that is something that is growing momentum throughout the country right now.

I want every student in Cullman County- this year it's just high school students, but hopefully, next year it's going to grow, and we can have two plays: one for elementary students and one for high school students.

"But this year, even if they do have a drama program, we had districtwide auditions where anybody in the high school throughout our district could try out for a part in this play. So we are going to be hosting this play. The school board here has put up money to buy the scripts and all that stuff, the play rights.

"The board has stepped up and they're doing that because they believe in it. And I'll tell you: I believe in if there's kids out there that want to do something like this, we want to make it happen for them. I think that, for kids to be successful in life, they're going to have to be involved in things like this; we just want to continue to grow it."

Barnette and the school board gave Dobbs a budget beyond his school's regular allotment for its theater group and sent him around to the other high schools to pass the word and sign up over 80 students for initial auditions.

Dobbs said, "This would not have been possible without Dr. Barnette having the idea that he wanted to offer an opportunity for all of Cullman County to be able to get into performing arts. He didn't want them to have go somewhere else to do it. He wanted it to be by Cullman County kids, for Cullman County kids."

The joint venture put on 20 in-school and public shows, and the project was considered a success, so Dobbs decided to try again in 2020, and do it bigger, better and way outside his comfort zone.

This April, a countywide cast and crew featuring 29 students from five of the seven CCBOE high schools will take on the Broadway production "Little Shop of Horrors" from the legendary team of Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, best known for their collaboration on the Disney films "The Little Mermaid" and "Beauty and the Beast."

Dobbs told The Tribune that the move to musical theater was an anxious one for him.

He wants, both as a director and as a coach, to do things that are high-quality, but his own lack of musical background made him question his chances of success.

According to Dobbs, "We've had several of the Fairview kids each year ask and ask and ask, 'Can we do a musical?' I don't have a music background, so I was always leery of it, because I knew- and I can't sing at all- so I knew I wouldn't be able to help anyone sing. But I finally heard some kids sing outside, in other venues and stuff, and I didn't realize how many kids that we had just at Fairview that actually could sing. I began to think, 'Maybe we can do this.'"

Hannah Crider came on board with Dobbs to handle vocal coaching and choreography, and the director said that she "is doing an incredible job." The team chose the cult classic "Little Shop of Horrors."

Dobbs said of the upcoming production, "I think people are going to be really, really entertained with both the music and the choreography. There's a couple of big cast numbers; there's a couple of duos and solos that are really, really good. All the songs are catchy. I've seen some musicals that, frankly, bored me, and I'm like, 'I wish they'd quit singing and just finish this talking,' you know. This isn't like that: they're fun, they're catchy, there's enough spoof of those 50's horror movies and science fiction movies that it's fun. And it moves quickly; I don't think anybody will get bored. I don't think anybody will lose interest.

"I think, with the quick movement and the plant itself and the puppet, and the fact that there's a little bit of horror movie to it. I think the kids will be entertained. I think the adults will be entertained with the sheer entertainment value of it. The set's going to be great again. Of course, (set builder) Mr. (Justin) Miller, our agriscience teacher, he works wonders with what we have. I know last year's set was good, and this one will be even better."

"Little Shop of Horrors" public performances, scheduled for April at Fairview High School, were cancelled by the COVID-19 shutdown.

The final act: Wallace State's "Big Fish" the last pre-COVID theater production in Cullman County

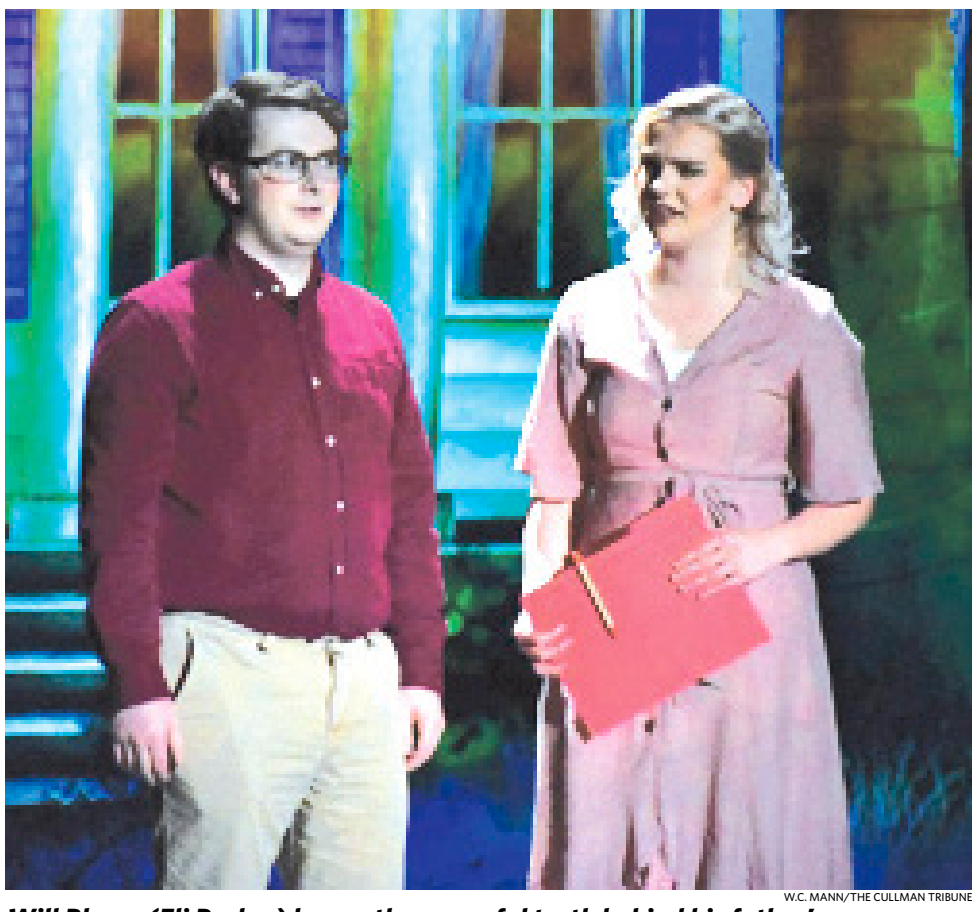
At the end of a long and dreary news day, from the revelation of Alabama's first confirmed Coronavirus cases to numerous announcements of organizational shutdowns and event cancellations, The Tribune found cars parked around the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre at Wallace State Community College on the evening of Friday, Mar. 13, as Wallace State Performing Arts was putting on its production of "Big Fish," which would turn out to be the final live theater production in the area before COVID-19 shut everything down.

With spring break coming up the next week for the community college's students and word that cancellation of campus events was underway, the audience was smaller than usual, but the show went on.

As the cast prepared to take the stage, Director Lauren Salerno told The Tribune, "We've had some challenges, but they're excited to tell the story and to show the work that they've done. And I think that, at times like this, art becomes really important, because it's our way to express ourselves and our humanity. So I think that things like theater and music become really important.

"People want to escape; they want to feel something different, so what we're hoping to do is help them feel happy. And this show has some really fun numbers and some excellent performances, so we hope we do that."

The Broadway musical version put on by Wallace State was a mix of comedy and



W.C. MANN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Will Bloom (Eli Parker) learns the powerful truth behind his father's collection of tall tales from Jenny Hill (Chloe Nutt) in "Big Fish."



W.C. MANN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

In front of a sold-out house at Cullman Community Theatre's performance of Neil Simon's "Rumors," the characters celebrate the surprisingly successful outcome of their encounter with the police after their party is interrupted by gunfire.

drama with several big musical/dance numbers.

A live score was provided by an orchestra under the leadership of Wallace State's Ricky Burks.

In putting on "Big Fish," Salerno particularly enjoyed "The styles, because there's a lot of different- it's folklore and it's myth. The tales are sort of this bigger-than-life situations that he lives. There's lots of different styles of choreography and music, and that's been fun- to get to live those different things."

Aside from having to focus on the show in the context of current events, the cast faced their own challenges from the production itself.

Said Salerno, "Most of the people are playing like seven different characters. The actors have to play multiple ages. The lead actors, Edward and Sandra, have to be teenagers, middle aged and older- like 65-ish- so finding a way to make that believable is difficult, but I think we've done a good job of it."

Rock the South canceled

On April 9, Rock the South (RTS) organizers announced, "In the best interest of our fans and our city, Pepsi Rock the South and the City of Cullman have decided to cancel this year's event scheduled for May 29-30, 2020."

"We have worked through the option of rescheduling, but have determined that the best decision is to cancel 2020. We are actively shifting our focus to building Pepsi Rock the South 2021 bigger and better than ever," said Nathan Baugh-partner/Pepsi Rock the South.

Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs added, "We appreciate Pepsi Rock the South putting the safety of our city and Rock the South fans at the top of its decision-making process. Cullman will be an incredible place to be in 2021 for Pepsi Rock the South."

Those who had already bought tickets for Rock the South 2020 were given the choice of using those tickets for Rock the South 2021, receiving a refund or donating their ticket money to RTS's charitable efforts.

Donated ticket funds were used in conjunction with Pepsi Rock the South's donations to local food banks, including Cullman Caring for Kids and the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama.

In addition, Rock the South donated thousands of masks to the Cullman County Commission on Aging to distribute to the high-risk community in Cullman County.

Alan Jackson Drive-In Concert an experiment that could go nationwide

Country superstar Alan Jackson wowed fans at his Small Town Drive-In concert in Cullman Friday night, June 12, 2020. (Mike Witcher for The Cullman Tribune)

On June 12, Alan Jackson visited Cullman for a "Drive-In Concert" at the RTS venue. Over 1,800 car- and truckloads of fans poured in, parked in socially distanced spacing, to enjoy the first live event in months. The concert was something of an experiment to find a way to restart the concert and live entertainment industry, and not just in Cullman.

Said Rock the South Founder and Premier Productions Owner Shane Quick, "The Alan Jackson event in Cullman was one of the bright spots in the entire live event industry in this country, that we did in Cullman. It was a success story, and there's been very few of those since March. We're hoping that there can be more of those, but right after the Alan Jackson event, the cases exploded. After the Alan Jackson event that we did in Cullman and Fairhope, we were looking to do several more, but right after that the cases exploded, and we started to see a lot of pushback from different cities about doing events, and resistance from ticket buyers as well."

COVID-19 impact on live entertainment

Rock the South Founder and Premier Productions Owner Shane Quick told The Tribune, "I doubt there's an industry in America that has been more affected in a negative way by COVID than (the live entertainment event) industry. There can't be. I mean it's absolutely been decimated. Most people in the live entertainment industry have been affected; no less than 90-95% of their business is gone.

"Now, when I say event industry, it's near 100%, and the music industry, I would say, the only thing left right now is streaming music like Spotify, iTunes, things like that. Most artists in our industry would make anywhere between 70 and 80% of their income from live events, and that income is completely gone. One of the main problems is there's no way to social distance inside of an arena or a theater or a club. Your traditional music venues have no way to facilitate a 6-foot social distancing protocol.

"You would be surprised how many venues are closing their doors permanently across the country. Before this is said and done, there will be hundreds if not thousands of venues- event venues from large to small- that close their doors forever.

"I don't think it's a stretch to say that the live entertainment industry has been probably affected more than any other industry. So Premier Productions, we're one of the top five event promoters in the country, and we do somewhere between 600 and 700 events a year. Our next event is in April of next year, currently on the books. We had to reschedule around 600 events from 2020 to 2021. We've had to lay off quite a few people, waiting on everything to start back."

Despite the bad timing of the spike in cases that followed the Alan Jackson concert, Quick and his team have continued to brainstorm ways to bring live events back to venues here and nationwide, coming up with their own ideas and reaching out to other promoters to see what might be working for them.

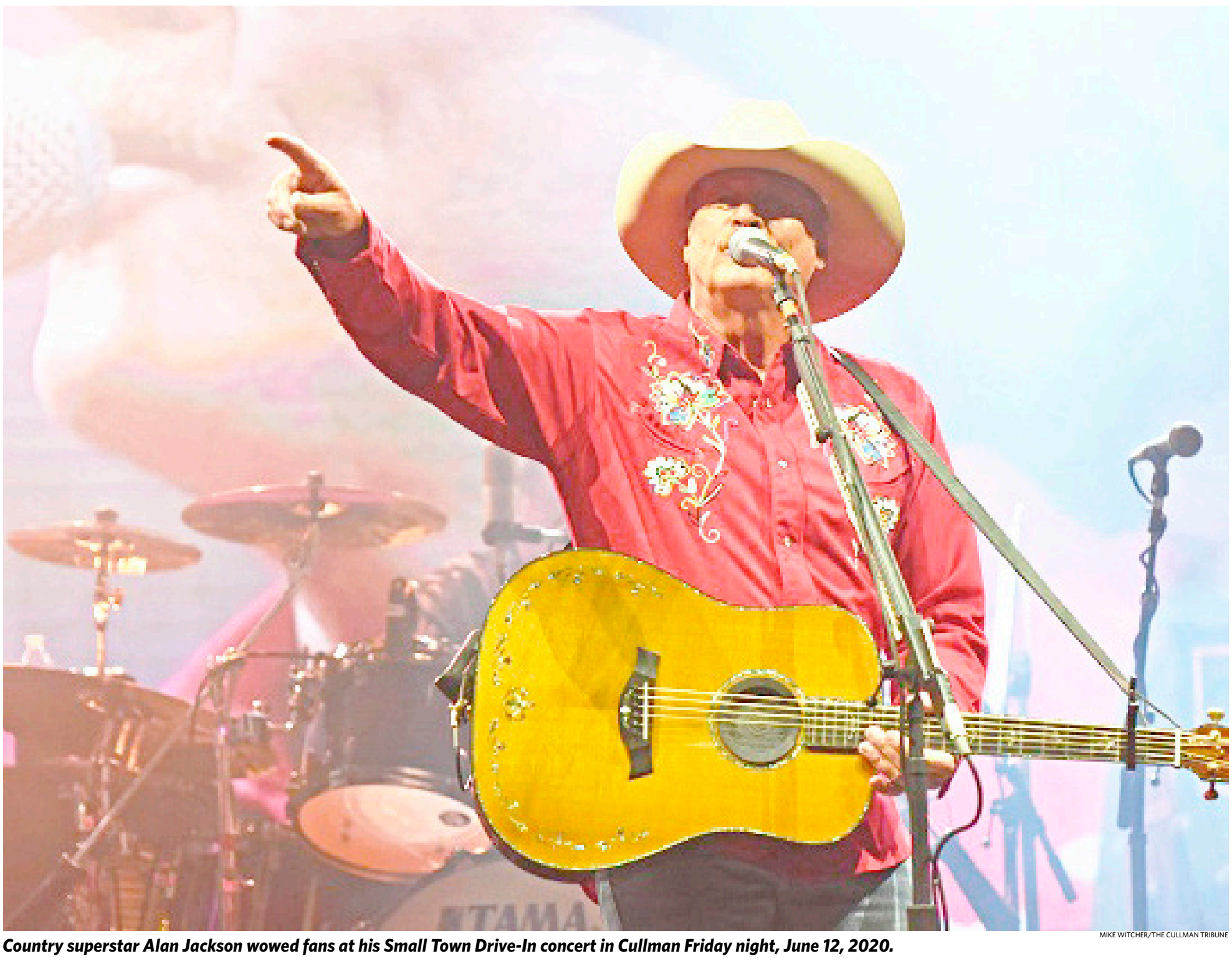
"To me, it feels like we're getting back to a place where the numbers are dropping, people are being smart- wearing their masks, social distancing- and the numbers are dropping," noted Quick. "We're hoping that, very soon this fall, that we'll be able to see more events happen, even here in Cullman. We're talking to several artists from many different genres. Some of the most well-known names in the country would like to come to Cullman and different cities, and try to entertain some people in a safe way. We've been working for the last several months to find ways to have safe events, because our number one priority is the safety of the fans. But there's no question that if we could put together some world-class events- safe events- it could make a huge impact, a huge positive impact on our hotels and on our tourism dollars that are so greatly needed right now in our local economy.

"We're working around the clock to find a way to produce safe live events in Cullman and around the country. We're putting our heads together to figure out how to bring some events to Cullman, to help boost the local economy here. Premier has nearly 20 employees in Cullman, and a lot of those people are laid off, and we sure would love to find a way to get them some work and get them back to Premier.

"You know, these are people we consider family, and we would love to have some work again to get going. It's been one of the hardest seasons in the history of live events in the world. It's not just America; it's all around the world. But we're excited to try to figure out how to get something back to Cullman."

Quick finished by saying, "We're all in this together, and nobody in our industry wants to start back before we should. All of us want to keep people safe. We love what we do, and we can't wait to get back to work, but we've got to do it safe. We're hoping (for) a vaccine and after the election that we'll see people willing to get back out, venues opening again, and festivals starting back and people getting back to being together again. I don't think that'll ever change, no matter what happens. I think people will come back together, and nothing can replace that.

"There's absolutely nothing greater than people connecting to music together, even movies. There's one thing to watch a movie together, a new movie release, watching at home versus watching at the theater. They're both great, but different. We think that will come back, and we're excited and can't wait for that to come back. We hope it comes back soon."



MIKE WITCHER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Country superstar Alan Jackson wowed fans at his Small Town Drive-In concert in Cullman Friday night, June 12, 2020.

Industry

INDUSTRY

Responding to the Need: Cullman based HomTex enjoys huge success after retooling to produce face masks

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CULLMAN, Ala. - While COVID-19 shut down businesses and industrial facilities across the country in the spring of 2020, some were actually growing. In April, Cullman-based textile manufacturer HomTex began producing a reusable and washable face mask for use by businesses and industries under the brand name DreamFit. The DreamFit mask contains a permanent filter which has a Bacteria Filtration Efficiency (BFE) rating of 95%.

HomTex has been in business in the Cullman area since 1987, producing textiles under its own name plus multiple brand names for the housewares market, plus apparel, hospitality and automotive industries. In addition to its headquarters and production center in Cullman, the family-owned company now has facilities in North and South Carolina, along with offices in China and India. DreamFit masks are made in Cullman.

HomTex CEO Jeremy Wooten talked The Tribune back in the spring about getting into the mask business:

"The main reason is that we not only saw a need, but it was becoming quite clear from speaking with local officials like Mayor (Woody) Jacobs and Dale Greer and Senator (Garlan) Gudger that the local industry and the state was not prepared, in the sense of having the face masks. The need was probably greater than we realized.

"We do a little medical business: we manufacture hospital pillows, and we do a little bit in the fabrics. We were a little familiar with it and we knew there was going to be a need. But I think over the last week or two weeks, I think people didn't realize how big a need, and we certainly didn't.

"Then all the issues that surround what the Chinese are doing and what they're allowing to come out of the country. I think one thing that's become obvious is people have seen, for particular textile products and especially medical protective gear, how much of us are dependent on foreign production, especially China."

Wooten said that officials made him aware that a need also existed among local businesses and industries, explaining, "They made us really aware how really necessary the private industry need was, and that's what we didn't really see."

Wooten added a second reason for the company's shift: "We realized that we were uniquely prepared to make a product that we were not familiar with, and that's a washable, reusable face mask. So, as we began to talk to people week before last, we learned more and more about how we know the disposables are in great need, but a lot of private industry wants something they can take home and wash, and reuse for longer use, especially when you have a limited capacity.



DALE GREER/CEDA

Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs, HomTex CEO Jeremy Wooten and Sen. Garlan Gudger, R-Cullman watch HomTex employee Marilyn Kelso sew a mask.

"We're primarily a home textile manufacturer, so we're unique in that we have a large stock of sheeting fabric, cotton goods in the country, probably one of the few people in the country who hold as much fabric: a couple of million yards of cotton sheeting fabric at any given time. And we had the machinery.

"We sat down- I have a good staff- and we designed what we thought was a comfortable, usable, reusable, washable face mask.

"And, in a few days, we had something put together, and, after showing it around earlier this week, the feedback was fantastic.

"Because of what we do in the medical world, we were able to secure the BFE-95 bacterial filtration equipment- and a lot of people probably can't; it's in high demand, but because of our relationships, we were able



to. We've been uniquely positioned to produce this product."

HomTex's entire first week's production was presold to 60 local industries and businesses before the masks even came off the line.

Said Wooten, "We want to be good stewards and good community partners, so we're prioritizing our production for local needs. But outside, the news has traveled quite quickly. I'm getting calls from all over the Southeast, and presently, my order demand far outstrips my capacity."

Cullman Economic Development Agency (CEDA) Director Dale Greer applauded HomTex's response, saying, "We always talk about the skills and the abilities of manufacturers and how quickly they can adapt to things. You think about this: last week they were producing sheets and pillowcases in Cullman; starting Monday, they'll do nothing but face masks. They won't do any sheets or pillowcases; they'll be trying to address a crisis in our county, and our state and our country, and maybe beyond that. Just think about how quickly they can make an adjustment like that and how good that is."

Greer also commended the cooperative efforts of HomTex with the city and state governments, noting, "There were a number of people who helped make that happen: on the local level the mayor, Sen. Gudger and the local legislative delegation. But that expands to the state level: Secretary (of Commerce Greg) Canfield, the governor, the lieutenant governor, everybody talking about those processes and allowing them to make those changes. We're dealing with (U.S. Rep. Robert) Aderholt's office."

Greer boasted about "How many people are trying to work together to make all of these things happen, and I just think it is such a testament to that company and to this community, and how they'll just shift in a week to do something that's protecting people."

Gudger told The Tribune, "This is a perfect example of private-public partnership that will help bring industry and jobs back to the U.S. from overseas! This local, state and federal collaboration is the type of entrepreneur spirit that makes Alabama a great place to live!"

HomTex expands to include disposable mask production

Shortly after the shift in production, the Cullman City Council approved an ordinance allowing the City to loan $1.5 million to its Industrial Development Board, which in turn loaned the money to HomTex to cover almost one-third of the cost of retooling its Cullman production facility to produce "surgical and residential mask(s) which are urgently needed to fight the COVID-19 virus." These were disposable masks made in addition to the reusable masks already in production.

HomTex's total capital investment in the project was expected to reach $5 million, and the project, according to Greer, would create around 100 new jobs and generate $8 million in annual sales with production of up to 400 million masks per year.

HomTex repaid the loan with interest in early June.

At the check presentation, Wootten said, "The temporary financial commitment by the community allowed us to make the down payment to hold the equipment when our bank and other financial institutions simply could not process a loan application quickly enough to secure the equipment. Once we had the down payment, we were assured no other company could jump ahead of us and buy the machines. HomTex had the time to work through a typical loan application and secure the entire $5 million for this project.

"We are here today to thank the City and the two industrial development boards. A minimum of 100 new jobs will be created in Cullman because of your trust in us. And maybe just as important, literally millions of people around the world will have better protection against this pandemic because you took a chance on a local company," Wootten added. "Today HomTex is here to repay the $1.5 million loan with interest for a total of $1,505,041.67. Allowing HomTex to have the loan for 55 days made this all possible because we had the expertise and the building to make it happen."

Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs said the support of the Cullman City Council and two industrial development boards is typical of the type of cooperative spirit that has made Cullman a leader in new and expanding industry in Alabama.

"Partnerships create great opportunity," said Jacobs. "We had the State of Alabama encouraging us to take advantage of this opportunity and help make this project happen. We felt the risk was worth the reward for our community and state. I am proud we could make it happen but also pleased we are being repaid two years earlier than expected."

Gudger said part of the thought process on the state level was the need for masks in Alabama and the desire to reduce America's dependence on foreign production of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

"The Department of Commerce and Governor's Office (were) excited a Cullman company could potentially be the largest disposable mask producer in the U.S. and have a 'Made in Alabama' label on every package," he said.

U.S. Capitol contract awarded

After tremendous success in sales across the country, HomTex in early October was awarded a contract to provide the United States Capitol complex with masks.

U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, R-Alabama, announced on social media:

"All this week we've been celebrating Made in America Week. Well, for our final post, I'm excited to announce that HomTex Inc. in Cullman has been awarded a contract to provide the United States Capitol complex with masks. I've been wearing their masks for a while, and now every member, whether Democrat or Republican, staff and visitors, will be soon be wearing masks made right in the 4th District and Cullman, Alabama! Congratulations!"

Aderholt's office said the masks will be supplied to members, staff and visitors.

HomTex Vice President of Apparel Maury Lyon told The Tribune, "We are obviously very pleased at HomTex.

"We've been providing washable masks since March with the pivot in our business done by our CEO Jerry Wootten, and we submitted ourselves to the U.S. Capitol-the Architect of the Capitol-for consideration for masks back in May. They did some vetting, and they gave our masks some tests, and they contacted us and we've been in contact with them.

"Later on this summer they indicated that they really liked our masks and wanted to move forward, and we were able to provide them the production capacity and the needs that they had, so our first delivery was last Wednesday.

"We're excited, and we're going to be providing weekly deliveries up there, and they're going to be providing black and white HomTex masks to all of the senators, congressmen, their staff, the visitors to the Congress and we believe also the White House. We're extremely honored to provide for the safety of our elected men and women."

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OCTOBER 17, 2020



DALE GREER

In April, two local industries- Inland Building Systems and HomTex- donated thousands of HomTex-manufactured face masks to area nursing homes. Pictured are, from left, Dale Greer, Cullman EDA director; Sen. Garlan Gudger, R-Cullman; HomTex CEO Jerry Wootten; Frank Brown of USA Healthcare; Inland/Schulte President Ron Ambrosius; and HomTex President and CFO Jeremy Wootten. The masks are manufactured at HomTex in Cullman.

Local industries experience major growth

W.C. Mann
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CULLMAN, Ala. – The Cullman Economic Development Agency (CEDA) was happy to announce that the Cullman area enjoyed over 40 industrial start-ups or expansions over the last year, placing the city high in multiple categories in the Alabama Department of Commerce's new and expanding industry report, and number one in both industrial expansion and overall industrial projects in 2019.

New industrial projects
• #11 Number of Projects-2
•#19 Jobs -2
•#23 Capital Investment-$1,013,000

Existing industry expansion projects
• #1 Number of Projects-40
• #5 Jobs-462
• #9 Capital Investment-$158,061,971

Total Projects
• #1 Number of Projects-42
• #8 Jobs-483
• #12 Capital Investment -T$159,074,971

New industries included (name, location, type of industry, new employees, capital investment)

• DB Technologies, Hanceville, Carbon Fiber Manufacturing, 1, $213,000

• Willoughby Roofing and Sheet Metal, Vinemont, Sheet Metal and Roofing Products, 20, $800,000

• Two TOTAL new projects for Cullman, $1,013,000

Expanding industries included (name, location, type of industry, new employees, capital investment)

• Advanced Heat Treat, Hanceville, Heat Treatment, 1, $64,000

• Advanced Rotors Inc., Cullman, Electric Motors, Rotors, and Stators, 2, $750,000

• Alabama Brick Delivery Inc., Cullman, Brick Sales and Distribution, 0, $30,000

• American Classics, Dodge City, T-shirts and Apparel, 27, $2,000,000

• Apel Machine & Supply Inc., Cullman, Machine Shop/Fabricated Metal, 2, $500,000

• Birmingham Fastener and Supply Co. Inc., Hanceville, Metal Fasteners and Bolts, 30, $2,100,000

• Buettner Bros. Lumber Company Inc., Cullman, Roof Trusses, 16, $200,000

• Carter Babbitt Bearings, Hanceville, Machine Shop/ Fabricated Metal, 0, $50,000

• Cullman Automation Inc., Cullman, Custom Machine Design and Build, 0, $30,000

• Cullman Cabinet & Supply Company Inc., Cullman, Cabinet Doors, Laminate Counter, 5, $250,000

• Cullman Casting Corp., Cullman, Industrial Gray Iron Castings, 0, $311,230

• DCA Ready Mix Inc., Cullman, Ready-Mix Concrete, 0, $300,000

• Flotation Systems Inc., Cullman, Aluminum Boat Docks Manufacturing, 1, $35,000

• Goat Island Brewing, Cullman, Craft Brewery, 2, $200,000

• Golden Rod Broiler, Cullman, Poultry Processing, 0, $815,000

• HessAire Products Inc., Holly Pond, Industrial Fan Blades, 2, $43,000

• I-Core Composites LLC, Cullman, Balsa Wood Core Material, 0, $20,000

• Inland Buildings, Cullman, Pre-Engineered Steel Buildings, 13, $300,000

• Littrell Brothers Lumber Company Inc., Cullman, Pressure Lumber Treatment, 1, $0

• Live Haul Products Inc., Cullman, Poultry Transportation, 14, $0

• Louisiana Pacific Corporation, Hanceville, Oriented Strand Board (OSB), 0, $6,900,000

• Mach III Inc., Vinemont, Aftermarket Parts for Firearms, 2, $250,000

• MRO Inc., Cullman, Machine Shop Maintenance and Repair, 24, $1,500,000

• Nexan Building Products, Cullman, Commercial Manufacturing/Residential Railings, 0, $150,000

• North Alabama Fabricating Company, Cullman, Metal Fabrication, 30, $1,500,000

• Pennington Seed of Cullman Inc., Cullman, Lawn and Garden Products, 0, $50,000

• QHA Metal Products, Joppa, Sheet Metal HVAC Products, 1, $35,000

• REHAU Inc., Cullman, Automotive Exterior Moldings, 100, $12,500,000

• Reliance Worldwide Corporation, Cullman, Pressure Regulating Valves, 50, $19,750,000

• River Valley Ingredients, Hanceville, Poultry Meal, Hydrolyzed Rendering Plant, 0, $5,000,000

• Royal Technologies Corporation, Cullman, Plastic Injection Molding, Foam, 50, $2,000,000

• Rusken Packaging Inc., Cullman, Corrugated Boxes, 25, $7,800,000

• Tee's Enterprises Inc., Holly Pond, Bulk Petroleum Distribution, 0, $500,000

• The Barn, Hanceville, Portable Buildings, 0, $20,000

• The Shaddix Company Inc., Vinemont, Concrete Forms, 6, $2,850,000

• Topre America Corp., Cullman, Automotive Metal Stamping, 50, $85,894,000

• TS Perfection Chain Products Inc., Vinemont, Weldless Chains, 0, $200,000

• Vinemont Welding & Fabrication, Vinemont, Metal Fabrication, 3, $75,000

• Webb Wheel Products Inc., Cullman, Hubs, Wheels, & Drums, 5, $2,909,741

• WestRock Packaging, Cullman, Corrugated Packaging, 0, $180,000

• 40 TOTAL expanding projects for Cullman, $158,061,971

Totals for Cullman (42 PROJECTS) – 483 new jobs, $159,074,971 capital investment

10-year totals

While year-to-year numbers show fluctuation and not consistent growth, the totals show that the area's industries have made more than $1.1 billion in capital investments and created more than 4,100 new jobs in the last 10 years.

At its 2020 industry appreciation reception, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce Chair Kay Shabel told industry representatives, "Thank you for generating employment opportunities, providing educational opportunities, encouraging advancement and innovation and better utilizing resources.

All of these benefits and more make you, our local industry, extremely valuable to our population and the local economy."

At the reception, CEDA Director Dale Greer credited the workforce here "that enables your facilities to produce quality products and services each day," and added, "Place them in a community like Cullman with a pro-business support system from city and county governments, city and county economic development agencies, city and county industrial boards, a world-class community college, a remarkable high school technical program, exceptional city and county schools and reliable companies, and there is potential to be among the best industry sites in Alabama."

Greer talked about Cullman County's low unemployment rate and noted that such a low number creates its own problems like attracting and recruiting workers for new or expanding industries, and especially housing the growing area workforce. He said that entities in the county are working on improving both housing availability and overall quality of life throughout the community.

In the face of the COVID-19 shutdown, unemployment jumped across the state, including Cullman County, but the county's rate has remained low, coming in with the second lowest in the state at 3.6% in September. Certain area industries like HomTex actually expanded their operations to respond to the coronavirus.

In attracting and creating a workforce, Greer touted local efforts, including:

• A new career and workforce development center at Wallace State Community College

• Plans for a new technology academy for Cullman County Schools

• The "World of Work" program that exposes eighth- and ninth-grade students to technical jobs and careers

• Dual enrollment programs for high school students

• Availability of apprenticeships and internships in the area

Greer told industry leaders, "We have not yet matched industry's job creation speed, but we are trying as a community to locate new people, prepare students for you faster than ever before and give them skills that match your needs. I believe when a company expands in your community, it's validation that they made a good site location, and that your workforce is good and strong and solid, you know, that they're trainable and they can do what that company needs to be profitable. I think it is a testament to the community working together to make those things happen."

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Small Business



MAGGIE DARNELL FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Decorations around the restaurant were salvaged from the previous building, gifted by customers or found in various stores.

FAIRVIEW

Brindley Mountain BBQ rises from the ashes

Maggie Darnell
Contributor

FAIRVIEW, Ala. – An iconic restaurant in Fairview, Brindley Mountain BBQ, made a comeback this year. Brindley Mountain BBQ is owned by Anthony and Jackie Garlowich.

"We opened the restaurant in May 2007. I knew it was something I wanted to do for several years. I was working in a carpet mill in Albertville. On my off days there, I worked with a restaurant owner in that area. He helped me learn about the restaurant business," said Anthony Garlowich.

"At home, my father-in-law and I built my first smoker. We started small, mostly cooking for family, friends, our church and people in the community. In 2006, some folks in the community approached us about starting a business. They knew we were hoping to open a restaurant one day and had some property that they wanted to be used to do something special in Fairview."

"We were able to purchase the property and renovate a home there that became our first restaurant. Every time I got a paycheck, I would purchase a few more pieces of restaurant equipment until we had enough to get started. We started out with about four of five employees and a little dining room that seated maybe 24 people. It was tight space, but it was a good start for us."

Garlowich said the restaurant continued to grow over the years, thanks to the community

"Over the years, we opened a drive-thru and added on to the dining area and went through several renovations. We have a great group of loyal customers and a supportive community. They are part of our family and they've been with us through all the changes and all the growing," he said.

"We've celebrated birthdays, graduations, weddings and all kinds of happy events. We've shared sad times and losses, too. We've always been very aware that this place was supposed to be something special here. We want it to not just be a part of our community but to create community, to be a place where people come together and enjoy all the parts of life together."

A fire in 2018 halted business, but the restaurant was rebuilt.

"In October of 2018 we lost the restaurant after a fire in the smoker room," said Garlowich. "In just a few minutes, pretty much everything there was gone. In an interview back then I said it was all just stuff that could be replaced but that the most important thing was to keep your loved ones and your community close to your heart, and they'll stand by you. In the year we spent rebuilding I learned just how true those words were. We did a lot of praying and God did a lot of providing during that year through friends, church family and neighbors. We won't ever forget that."

Brindley Mountain BBQ reopened full-time Dec. 6, 2019 in a new building.

"I'll tell you this," said Garlowich, "I'm not a builder. I'm a barbecue-er. I learned a lot about the building process, but I hope this is the last time I have to use what I've learned. I'm going to try and stick with the barbecue side of this business from now own. I learned a lot about the value of family and friends who are family through this process. We would have loved for the process to happen faster than it did, but we trust that the timing was right, and Jackie and I are thankful for where we are today. Mike Fullilove and his construction team really helped us pull it all together. All along, customers and community members offered to help with their areas of expertise, and then they followed through and did help. They painted and cleaned and moved furniture, hauled dirt. Right after the fire, a church in Birmingham contacted us and wanted to help by donating some furniture."

"We went down to take a look, and it turned out that it was just what we would need to get the dining room going again. Those kinds of things happened over and over during the year. There were so many times during the year when we might have been discouraged and at just that time someone came along and offered some type of assistance or encouragement that kept us going for another day."

Garlowich said his late father-in-law gave him and his wife some great advice.

"During the building process Jackie's dad got sick. He loved the restaurant, but he didn't live to see the reopening. He did give us some good advice though. He reminded us to always look out for the people in our community and to support them like they supported us. I think he'd be proud."

Since re-opening, business at Brindley Mountain BBQ has been booming.

"I can't even describe what it was like when we reopened back in December. I will say that we have been overwhelmed by the support of this community. They made sure we had a packed house every day. We sold out of food every day those first few weeks," smiled Garlowich. "All along we were getting messages asking when we would be open and reminding us that we were missed. That felt good. It also felt good to be back with some of our employees who were able to return to work with us. We've added several new staff members, too, and we're glad to be able to do that. We've got a sign at the restaurant that says, 'Kitchens are hard environments, and they form incredibly strong characters.' I'd say that's pretty true about what we do. Work hard. Support each other. Provide exceptional food with excellent service. Keep doing that, and we all benefit from it."



MAGGIE DARNELL FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

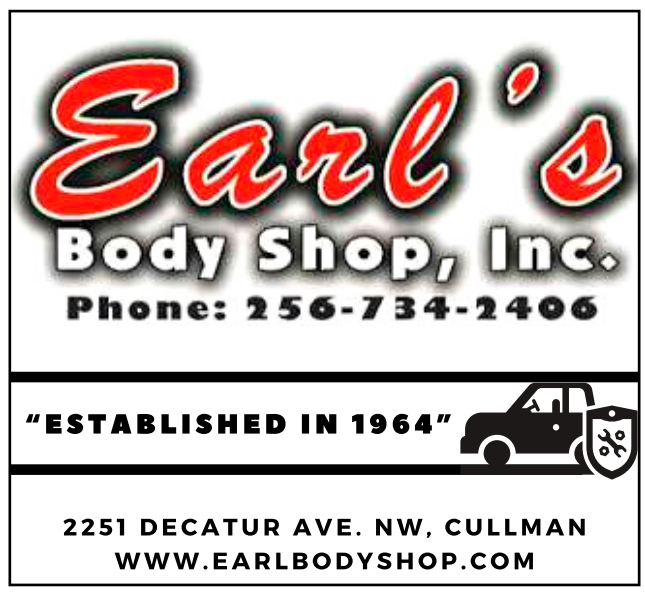
Brindley Mountain BBQ Owner Anthony Garlowich shared the knitted pig pictured was a gift from a patron. There was a pig identical to the one pictured in the old restaurant made by the same patron, but was sadly lost in the fire of the previous building.

So how does the newer building compare to the old one?

"The new place is definitely more like a traditional restaurant than the original little house was. There's more space to spread out and the taller ceilings help make it feel more open where the house felt kind of like you were eating in someone's personal dining room. We have space now for about 75 people so that's nice on those busy nights. It was nice to be able to design a flow without working around pre-existing walls and stuff," said Garlowich.

"Jackie has worked hard on decorating and creating an atmosphere that we hope still feels like you're at a friend's place. That's always been in our minds. We wanted the restaurant to be a welcoming place. We built it with a big porch that goes all the way across the front. We want this to be a place where we're not always rushing around. We can sit down and visit with our friends and they can bring their friends. It's a business, and it is our livelihood, but it's more than that. It's a place where we want to grow our relationships and strengthen our community. If we do that, we'll go home at the end of the day tired but satisfied."

Brindley Mountain BBQ is located at 7472 Alabama Highway 69 N, Cullman, AL 35058. Find out more at www.facebook.com/BrindleyMountainBBQ.





CULLMAN

O-Baby! Specialty shop owner talks doing business in Warehouse District

W.C. Mann
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W.C. MANN FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

O-Baby Owner Stevie Whitney shows off some of the locally made items offered in her Warehouse District specialty shop.

CULLMAN, Ala. - You might have heard of a store called O-Baby in Cullman. You might have even shopped there, but it may take a little looking if you go back. The infants' and children's specialty shop, opened in 2015, was originally located on the north end of town near Vinemont, before moving into the North Cullman Shopping Center near Belk. In 2019, owner Stevie Whitney relocated to a second-floor space in one of developer Shane Quick's Warehouse District properties.

She found the Warehouse District a good place to be, but the upstairs space had its challenges. Shoppers just were not accustomed to shopping via stairs or an elevator. So, when Mae's Food Hall was preparing to close last year and Quick offered Whitney that spot, putting her on street level and drastically increasing her floor space, she had to give it serious consideration.

Whitney told The Tribune, "He said, 'I want you to take the whole building.' I thought, 'What am I going to do?' I'm like, 'How big is that space?' and he said, '6,500 square feet' and I said, 'What am I going to do with 6,500 square feet?'"

After talking with her business partner and husband, Whitney decided to take the chance. She did indeed figure out what to do with the large space of the old food hall, especially when she considered a common request heard in the shop.

Said Whitney, "A lot of people asked us all the time, 'Do you know of a place to have a baby shower? A birthday party?' So we're like, 'I guess the back part can be a venue,' so that's where all that came from."

With still a little space to spare, Whitney brought in Mark Schaffer, a licensed ultrasound technician with state registries in ultrasound, nuclear medicine and diagnostic radiology, to open Mommy and Me 4D. The ultrasound studio offers high-definition live ultrasound images, gender reveals and photo packages, along with recordings of the baby's heartbeat.

Whitney has certainly enjoyed the move, saying, "I love this space, this building. I wasn't too sure when we came over: 'How are we going to do this?' But it's more gorgeous than up there (in the previous upstairs location) in a weird way, but I love this space."

The seemingly constant rain since her move in January, coupled with a streetscape improvement project right outside her door, have made for less than perfect shopping conditions, but Whitney said, "Our traffic, since we've been down here, is, like, I'm going to say it's probably the best traffic we've had. So it's good. We've just got to give it time, that's all."

What's it like to do business in Cullman?

Whitney answered, "I have never done retail anywhere other than here, but people-wise, it's great. But here-which to me is weird- to me, we have more people from out of town than we actually have local people. We have a lot of people from out of town.

"Don't get me wrong: we have a lot of customers that we see a lot, and they're locals. But when we moved down here, they were like, 'Ohhh...' And I was like, 'What?' 'The parking.' I'm like, 'I don't care where you go. The parking at a business is rough. It doesn't matter.' That didn't deter me too much."

Learning the market

Whitney told The Tribune that some of her learning in the market of infants' and children's merchandise was trial and error. The shop once carried cribs, car seats, strollers and baby furniture, but low sales volume driven by internet shopping showed that such big-ticket items were not going to be hot sellers, so the owner and her staff looked for what did work.

Even when O-Baby dealt in baby furniture, it was not the store's main business. The big seller was always clothing, and both the removal of furniture from the retail space and the expansion into Mae's gave Whitney an opportunity to grow that part of her business, along with other features.

Whitney described her store's goods as "Clothes and then just things you can't find in a big box store; things you don't find at Wal-Mart. We've tried to do a lot of people that are local." Gesturing around the shop, she noted, "The bows on that wall are all made by two girls that make those: that's a local girl and this is another local girl. And then like these crocheted animals: these are a local girl. We try to find a lot of homemade stuff, just stuff that they're not going to find (in a big department store), unique things that they can come register for their baby showers, and that kind of stuff, because some of the stuff you're not ever going to find at Wal-Mart."We are not your store that you come and fill up your school child's wardrobe with. I mean, we have cute stuff for occasions: for church, that kind of stuff. We're not your everyday wear. Now, in the infant stuff, we have everyday wear; that's some of our most popular selling stuff. But we focus on stuff that we think is neat."

Whitney's own young granddaughter has become something of a consultant to the shop, allowing her to observe firsthand what children like.

Said Whitney, "It helps, having a little one that we can interact with and know, 'Aha! That works, or that doesn't work.' Just fun stuff."

Of doing business here, Whitney said, "I love Cullman. I love the people here-we're not originally from here; we moved here in 2005- and I would have never chose any other place to raise my kids. This is the best place to raise my kids. I love the city; I mean, I love this area."

Being a good neighbor to customers and fellow businesspeople

Said Whitney, "We're known for our customer service. We're not going to be on top of you, but we are very friendly. We try to know a lot about our products, so, if you have a question, we can give you some knowledge on it. If we don't know it, we try to find out for you.

"Sometimes people will come in and be like, 'Well, I need this,' and if we know Monograms (Plus) carries it, we'll send you to Monograms. We'll send you to Rattles and Rhymes, we'll send you to If the Shoe Fits. I don't mind; if it's something that I don't have, it's something that I don't have. You know, I try to promote our other local businesses as much as I like promoting myself, because we all have to win down here to make this work."

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HOLLY POND

Cool beans! Check out Holly Pond's Alabama Mud Coffee Co.

Christy Perry
christy@cullmantribune.com

HOLLY POND, Ala. – Cullman County newcomers Bo and Katie Johnson are like so many others who sat at home during the COVID-19 shutdown, bored and trying to think of things to do. They decided it was a great time to cultivate an idea, so they started the Alabama Mud Coffee Co. at their home in Holly Pond.

The Johnsons moved to Alabama in 2019. They said they knew they wanted to move to Alabama, and after a couple of visits to Cullman County, knew they had found their new home

Bo Johnson said, "We looked online at all the cities in Alabama and Cullman just stuck out to us.

"We visited a few times to see how we liked the area and then we bought a house here."

The couple lives in Holly Pond with their three children.

The Johnsons both love coffee. Bo Johnson said it's been a big part of their life since their high school days.

As for starting a company, he explained, "It's an idea we had while sitting around during the coronavirus thing. We had some family in Florida that started one.

"I looked into how to do it myself and it kind of went from there. I have a good wholesaler in Brooklyn (New York); he does my roasting for me also."

The Johnsons started a Facebook page, and they have quickly gained a loyal following.

The couple has also decided to give a portion of each month's proceeds to an Alabama nonprofit chosen by their Facebook followers. For the month of June, fans voted for Saving Forgotten Warriors. They are currently taking nominations for July's featured nonprofit.

Alabama Mud Coffee Co. currently has four different flavors of coffee available. Bo Johnson described each:

- Swamp Mud- a dark earthy roast with a slight fruity flavor
- Black Belt- espresso, finely-ground coffee made for espresso machines
- Rocket City- super-caffeinated dark roast
- Choccolocco Fudge- medium roast with a chocolate fudge flavor



ALABAMA MUD COFFEE CO.

Alabama Mud Coffee Co. is based in Holly Pond.

The Johnsons grind the coffee to each customer's specifications and prepare it in their approved facilities.

They package the coffee and sell it in their online store. Alabama Mud Coffee is also sold at The Man Cave Market in South Vinemont and at the Holly Pond Cafe.

Expect to see some new flavors added in the future.

The Johnsons said they have thought about some cinnamon, peach cobbler and, of course, pumpkin spice for the fall.

Order online at https://alabamamudcoffee.com/. Find out more at www.facebook.com/alabamamudcoffeeco.

The Tribune highlighted small businesses around Cullman County during the COVID-19 pandemic. This story was originally published July 1, 2020.

VINEMONT

More than meets the eye: The Man Cave Market is a nursery, and so much more

Christy Perry
christy@cullmantribune.com

VINEMONT, Ala. – For years, twin brothers Pat and Chris Thompson would kick back after a long day making flower deliveries to florists around Alabama, crack open beers and share their ideas and dreams with each other. Like so many small business owners, the brothers had to make adjustments and think outside the box to make ends meet thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the Thompsons, it was the kick in the pants they needed to stop talking about their ideas and put them in motion. Now, The Man Cave Market is open for business.

From the outside, The Man Cave Market might just look like a nursery, but when you enter the doors, you feel transported. It's a beautiful place with a feeling of peace and good vibes- a place where you can learn about orchids while listening to Santana or perhaps brush up on your Galaga skills. It's a relaxing place to hang out with old friends or make new ones over a game of pool or darts while rocking to Jimi Hendrix.

Where is this utopia? South Vinemont.

"When the pandemic hit, it shut 85% of our florists down," said Pat. "We were sitting here at the bar thinking, 'What are we going to do?' We built this for parties and we have a ping pong table and pool table, we've got cornhole, we got a sound system over here you can hook a band up to or karaoke.

"We just had little parties before the pandemic hit and then, when it happened, we had to do something. So, we opened up to the public and didn't advertise or anything, but the word started spreading."

Pat and Chris describe themselves as "old hippies." When walking up to The Man Cave Market, customers are greeted with the sounds of classic rock- and surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers.

Pat said, "We are growing as we speak. Right now, I'm trying to find vendors to get products, and it's hard to find everything we want. We are going to be unique and eclectic."

The Thompsons are proud to be in the town of South Vinemont and part of the community by giving back to the Vinemont Schools. Besides supplying gorgeous ferns for this year's graduation ceremony, they are collecting supplies for the schools.

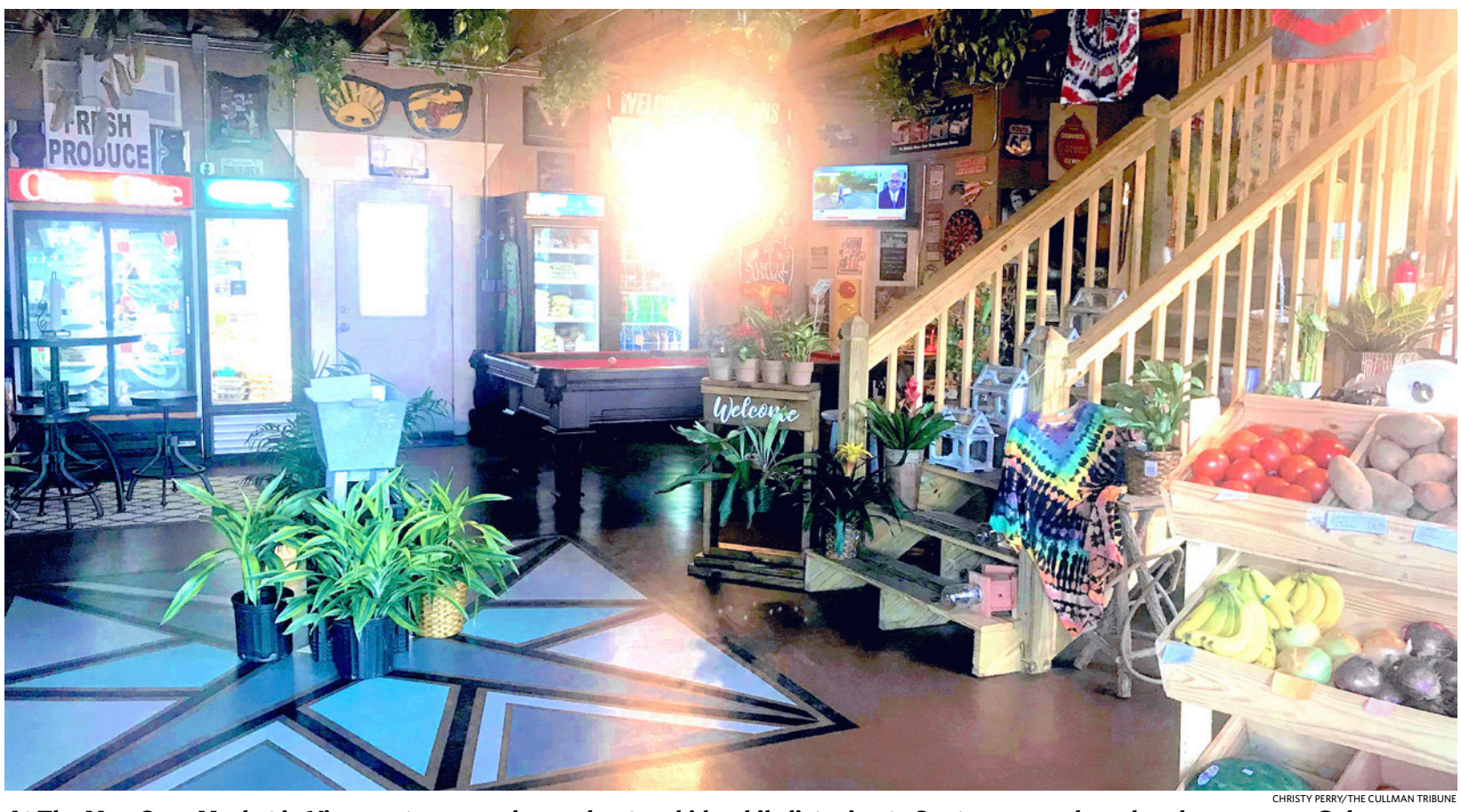
"They support us, and we support them," smiled Pat. "I am all about that."

In order to transform the space into what they had envisioned, Pat and Chris had to completely gut the old building that was once a convenience store.

"We've got a long way to go. It's baby steps, and a year from now, you're going to be amazed," said Pat. "I'm going to have a hut out here and an outdoor cooler, TVs out on the sidewalk, a great place for people to come and hang out. Get a biscuit and grab a coke and listen to music. I have TVs everywhere, but I have them on mute because I love music. I don't want to listen to bad news. It's all about good stuff."

The reason the brothers call the business The Man Cave is because they have filled the space with things they have collected for years. Pat and Chris are former boxers and have an extensive collection of boxing memorabilia and equipment. They have added arcade games that are free to play and an electronic dart board. The walls are full of original artwork by both Pat and Chris.

Plants and produce are still the primary focus of the business, and it features fruits and vegetables from local growers. The Man Cave Market has a little bit of everything- orchids, pitcher plants, birdhouses, grilling supplies, succulents, tie-dye shirts, carpenter bee traps, Dirt Road Gourmet meals, pizzas, homemade ice cream, take-home mac and cheese, casseroles, frozen vegetables and more. The brothers hope to continue adding locally-made products including honey, pottery and other crafts. On weekends, the man cave will have burgers, hotdogs and barbecue sandwiches.



CHRISTY PERRY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

At The Man Cave Market in Vinemont, you can learn about orchids while listening to Santana or perhaps brush up on your Galaga skills. It's a relaxing place to hang out with old friends or make new ones over a game of pool or darts while rocking to Jimi Hendrix.

The Man Cave Market will also begin offering gardening classes.

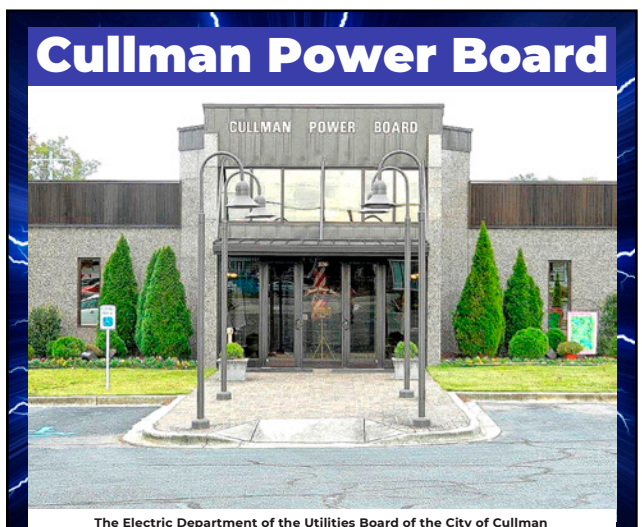
Explained Chris, "We make nature gardens or bowls for florists. We will teach people how to do that kind of thing. They will be able to take something home with them. (It's) something exciting for people to do. There will be woodworking and maybe some air plant designs."

Pat and Chris still kick back after a hard day delivering plants and running The Man Cave Market. They continue to exchange new ideas while enjoying cold beers.

The Man Cave Market is located at 17897 U.S. Highway 31, Cullman, Alabama 35058. It's open from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sundays. For more information, call 256-735-4232 or visit www.facebook.com/themancavemarket/.

The Tribune highlighted small businesses around Cullman County during the COVID-19 pandemic. This story was originally published June 18, 2020.

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W.C. MANN FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Holly Pond lunchroom was fully staffed for the first day of Cullman County Schools' food distribution.

Left to right are Debbie Howard, Barbara Pinkard, Amy Collins, Christy Collier, Corrine Whisenant and Sherrilline Deese.

Bringing out the Best

Residents, businesses, organizations respond to COVID-19

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CULLMAN COUNTY, Ala. - When large-scale shutdowns began March 13 after COVID-19 cases began to emerge in Alabama, some folks around Cullman County simply took the circumstances of the pandemic as an opportunity to do something good for others. The Tribune began a series called "Bringing out the Best" to highlight the charitable acts taking place around the area; we certainly didn't get them all, but we found an interesting sampling of the early responses to the shutdown.

Dates in headings indicate publication in The Tribune print or online editions, not necessarily the date that the activity began.

March 15 - Hygenix CSR offers free cleaning of playground equipment

The BOTB series began when The Tribune saw this post on social media Sunday, March 15:

ATTENTION CULLMAN COUNTY!!!!

The spectrum of fears over the Covid 19 virus are broad. Hygenix CSR would like to do its part in easing some of the concerns and fears. Hygenix CSR will sanitize and clean any playground equipment free of charge for any school, municipality, or church.

As a lifelong resident of Cullman County, I share in the concerns of our citizens. Please share this post and pass along this information to Superintendents, principals, pastors, etc.

Thank you,
Kenny Fisher
256-531-6135

The Tribune caught up with Hygenix Owner Kenny Fisher and employee Isaac Holmes May 1 cleaning the playgrounds at Welti and Holly Pond. Hygenix got some help when B&B Petroleum offered to donate the fuel required for the jobs.

Fisher explained, "Tithing is also 10% of your time. If everyone spent 2 1/2 hours a day helping others, the world would be a much better place."

Fisher began offering to clean and sanitize playground equipment at no charge when the coronavirus closures began. As of Friday May 1, all of the Cullman County Schools playgrounds had been sanitized, as well as playgrounds in Garden City and at St. John's Church in Cullman.

Fisher said he was born and raised in Cullman and is happy to be in a posiW W tion where he can give back and help during the crisis.

March 18 - Cullman City Schools donates perishable food to The Link

Cullman City Schools donated many of its perishable food items, which would have gone to waste in the extended school break due to COVID-19, to The Link of Cullman County, which, in turn, distributed the food to nine other community agencies.

By the time they were all done, four trailer loads of food had been picked up and distributed to The Bulldog Pantry in Hanceville, Hispanic Ministry of First United Methodist Church, Parkside Outreach, Carpenter's Cabinet (all three locations- Falkville, Holly Pond and Colony), Cullman Church of Christ (for their drive-thru lunch), The Caring Center, The Little Pantry, The Crossing and Master's Hand Food Pantry.

Link Director Julie Hall said, "What a great opportunity it was for us to be the hub and center for distribution of that food!"

Link Lead Encourager Paige Williams told The Tribune, "Because of a generous donation from Cullman City Schools of their perishable goods, The Link of Cullman County was able to share food resources with multiple community partners. We can better serve our community when we work together, so we are thankful for Cullman City Schools and their efforts to put their food that would be unused into the hands of those who need these resources the most."

March 19 - CCBOE begins food distribution to students and families after schools close

Across Cullman County the week after school closures were announced, Cullman County Board of Education (CCBOE) Child Nutrition Program (CNP) staff, school staffers and teachers, central office staff and additional volunteers prepared and passed out bags of breakfast and lunch items to student families in the first event of what would become an ongoing program.

CCBOE Learning Support Specialist Karen Pinion shared that the system had already made a low key distribution on Monday, March 16 as kids were being sent home, telling The Tribune, "We started giving out food; food started going out with our kids, in bags, on Monday from various locations and organizations that had donated either monetary funds or bought food and brought it to our central office, to our social workers on Sunday.

"But from Cullman County Schools, we had right about 590 bags of food sent home with kids, that left school with them on Monday afternoon. And those were all purchased through the churches here in the community."

The first large-scale distribution on Wednesday, March 18 at site across the county. CCBOE central office staff at West Point reported handing out 591 bags containing four meals each, for a total of 2,364 meals at that location alone.

"Turnout by families was reportedly high in all locations, with a total of distributed meals at all seven locations approaching 6,500 meals.

CCBOE Superintendent Dr. Shane Barnette declared the first distribution a success, telling The Tribune, "Today was a huge success! We had so many families coming through, picking up food from all seven different locations. They were very nice, they were very grateful. Many of them had not planned to have their kids out of school right now, so they needed this extra food.

"And then, some of the locations, we knew that there was a couple of communities that couldn't get up there to get it, so we took it out to those communities and gave it to them. Just a great day: a great day for the families to get food, but a great day for us to get to serve the families of Cullman County.

"Today was a really good day. We had a lot of volunteers from different places to come out, on top of our employees and our lunchroom ladies. Made me feel good to be a part of Cullman County, really did."

More than 11,000 meals were distributed on the second full day. The program was planned for two weeks, but was extended after schools were closed for the remainder of the year.

March 19 - The Link launches drive-through food distribution

The Link of Cullman County, a local clearinghouse for resources to combat poverty, ran a marathon of sorts on March 17. Starting early in the morning, staff and volunteers picked up, sorted and distributed four small trailer loads of perishable food items donated by Cullman City Schools. The items went out to nine other area agencies for distribution to local residents in need.

By the afternoon, they were running The Link's first-ever drive-thru food distribution day, allowing people to get needed supplies while maintaining their proper "social distance" due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Around 3 p.m., Link Lead Encourager Paige Williams said, "We have a lot going on today. We started the food bank at 1:30, and we had a lot of cars lined up, and then we had cars waiting in our other parking lot. We've probably already disbursed 30 or 40 cars."

Link Director Julie Hall told The Tribune, "We were trying to voluntarily respect the 6-foot distance required that's kind of come out through the Alabama Department of (Public) Health.

"We thought, to protect our participants in our food pantry and to provide them still with the food that they need, we decided that we would give it a shot. And it was super successful!

"We were really, really pleased with how everybody participated and how willing they were to just try something new, and so we will put this down in the books as a great success!"

March 21 - Commission on Aging modifies feeding program, begins prescription distribution

Cullman County Commission on Aging (COA) Director Dusty Baker shared some good news with The Tribune about modifications to the agency's feeding programs at its senior centers, and about its still-full-speed-ahead Meals on Wheels delivery program.

Baker said that, for seniors who usually come to centers, "We've created a drive-thru at all of our senior centers, so those that did come could still get a meal. And what they do is they just circle through and we hand it to them through the window, and they take it home or whatever they want to, to eat it. We're basically doing the same thing (in terms of food); we've just eliminated the gathering part."

Baker added, "Of course, our top priority during all this was making sure the homebound are taken care of; that's the greatest need, obviously, and the most helpless. We're still serving them, but as far as the ones who came to the centers to eat and fellowship, we're still taking care of them, too, fortunately."

New Senior Citizen Medication Delivery launched

Said Baker, "We're going to start a medication delivery for folks that can't pick up their medications. We're working with the pharmacies in the area to see if we can't work out something where we can pick up their medicine and deliver it to their doorstep, so they don't have to get out and expose themselves to the public."

Baker issued the following notice:

The Cullman County Commission on Aging will now deliver medications to senior citizens of Cullman County free of charge. There is no obligation and the only requirements are to be 60 or older.

Certain medications will be unavailable for pick-up and payment arrangements must be made with your pharmacy. It is encouraged that you contact your pharmacy first. We look forward to continuing to serve Cullman County and its senior citizens any way possible. For more information, contact the Commission on Aging at 256-734-1241.

March 21 - Hanceville resident keeps free pantry stocked

Deborah Stam did her part to respond to the coronavirus pandemic by keeping the needy among her Hanceville neighbors supplied with food and other items they might need. Stocking the Hope Pantry behind the Hanceville Library was not a new thing for her; she had been doing it for quite some time.

Stam told The Tribune, "I used to see the Little Pantry in Cullman that's right near Mary Carter. It was sitting out in the open, and I used to see it and wonder about it, and there's no instructions on it. I stopped one day, and looked at it; I started putting in there when I was in town, especially going to eat at a buffet. I'd tell my husband, 'Hey, I'm not coming here to this buffet with you unless you bring a bag of groceries,' because I don't feel right about doing that.

"We started doing that, and then they closed the buffet. But, in the meantime, I noticed just all of a sudden- I don't know why it took me so long; I've been here now three years- we moved from Texas- and we live in Hanceville. I noticed this one in Hanceville on Bangor Street, behind the library or across from Love Your Eyes. I saw it, and my questions are, 'Who started it,' 'Who can put in it?' I started putting in it."

Local grocery stores and other donors began helping out. After the COVID-19 shutdown began, United Way of Cullman County stepped in with financial support to assist the ministry.

March 21 - Frios Pops begins "Create a Card" campaign

Local chain Frios Pops' mission has always been to have "fresh, frozen fun," with "pops with a purpose."

The Tribune spoke with franchise co-owner Kristy Keiffer on the store's most recent mission: the "Create-a-Card" campaign, in which Frios will be collecting handmade cards to share encouragement with medical personnel, nursing home residents and others.

"We decided that, with our underlying motto being 'pops with a purpose,' we're always looking for ways to bring that to our community," said Keiffer. "With the uncertainties of everyone, we just wanted to be able to encourage someone and so late Saturday night I was thinking of how we could do that and I just came up with the idea of asking folks to bring cards, or if they didn't bring them, maybe we could provide it for them. That way when they come in or come through, they could just sign them and leave a little note of encouragement and then they'll gather them and send them out to people. It's just an extension of our 'pops with a purpose' mantra.

"I think oftentimes with people, when there's tons of uncertainty, people feel anxiety. Just one word of encouragement, one affirmation can make a difference for that person. So, I feel that if one person can do one thing for someone else, it's just an encouragement. Definitely the medical community is feeling a tremendous burden to care for people and there's the nursing home folks who were put on a pause from visitors, and that really tugged on my heart strings, too. Some of our very loyal customers have family that are in nursing homes and it's just difficult for them. This campaign is a way to inspire people."

March 24 - Cullman City Schools begin offering grab-and-go meals

Cullman City Schools (CCS) on March 23 began distributing "Grab and Go Curbside Meals" to students 18 and younger from the lunchroom at West Elementary School. Each student in the drive-through line received two days' worth of breakfasts and lunches.

Cullman High School Principal Kim Townson Hall, who volunteered to help, told The Tribune, "What we've done is combine the child nutrition workers from all five schools to this one location at West Elementary, and we've had teacher volunteers from Cullman High School here today and from West Elementary," Hall said. "We set up an assembly line so that

everyone can maintain their distance from one another. They're using gloves as they prepare the food: it's a grab-and-go style, so everything is in a package.

"We've made sure that all volunteers came on a voluntary basis, because we didn't want someone with a compromised immune system, or if they had someone at home with a compromised immune system who had been sick, to come today. Everyone worked on a voluntary basis. Teachers from CCPS, CMS, and EES will be rotating in to help as needed."

At 12:30 p.m., the final count of children served was 368, receiving 736 meals.

After distribution concluded for the day, Patterson told The Tribune in a message, "Cullman City Schools served takeout meals to our students today. Given the uncertainty of everything during this time it was great to provide our students with good meals in addition to the food we sent home last week. I want to thank our CNP Coordinator, Mrs. Young, our CNP staff members and the many volunteers who made this possible. It is so great to have people who are willing to work so hard to see our students get what they need."

March 26 - Daystar Church starts "adopt a senior" to care for elderly members

In the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, seniors are statistically the most vulnerable population and have to take extra precautions to guard against exposure to the disease. Recognizing the specific needs that its own seniors may have during this time; Daystar Church implemented an "adopt-a-senior" plan for its congregation.

Daystar Global Outreach Director Chris Hopper shared, "The main goal is to make sure that our older generations do not fall through the cracks and become forgotten during this unprecedented time."

Hopper told The Tribune, "We're asking a family to adopt (five) seniors. And what that would mean is that they would call them, they would make sure that they had all of their meals, and they would make sure that if they needed someone to take them to the grocery store or needed groceries (or prescriptions) picked up, that they would do that. If they just need some company, because a lot of these seniors live by themselves, or they're very isolated, because they're amongst a very vulnerable population."

Hopper specified that volunteers would abide by all distancing and quarantine regulations, and that they will keep seniors company by phone.

March 26 - Northbrook Baptist Church offers help to churches going online

As churches responded to the Coronavirus pandemic by transitioning to online services and Bible studies, Northbrook Baptist Church offered to help smaller churches continue to minister.

Pastor Keith Warden explained, "There's a lot of smaller churches, and then there's also just guys that are bivocational, and so they don't have the manpower and stuff. I know some churches are not normally doing video stuff every week or being online every week, and so this kind of puts them behind the eight ball with everything that's going on right now. So that was just a way of really, more than anything else, just saying, 'Hey, if there's any way that we can help you or serve you, whether it's video your sermon or some kind of message that you'd just like to put online for your congregation, we've got the equipment to do that, we've got some staff that can help us do that."

March 27 - Churches across county go digital to continue worshiping

As churches around Cullman felt the strain of social distancing on their worship services, many began utilizing livestreaming services to continue bringing worship and sermons to their homebound congregations – some uploading services to YouTube or their church's website, others tuning in to their pastors' personal Facebook pages for sermons streamed live from their homes.

By March 27, the Tribune was able to confirm online services from:

- Church 212, Cullman
- Center Hill Baptist Church, Hanceville
- Church at the Well, Cullman
- Crosshaven Church, Hanceville
- Cullman Church of Christ
- Cullman Nazarene Church
- Desperation Church, multiple locations
- East Side Baptist Church, Cullman
- Ebenezer Baptist Church, Vinemont
- Etha Baptist Church, between Fairview and Eva
- Faith Baptist Church, Vinemont
- First Baptist Church, Baileyton
- First Baptist Church, Cullman
- First United Methodist Church, Cullman
- First United Methodist Church, Hanceville
- Grace Episcopal Church, Cullman
- Holly Pond Full Gospel Church
- Kingdom Life Church, Simcoe
- Life Church, Dodge City
- New Hope #2 Baptist Church
- Northbrook Baptist Church, Cullman
- Oak Level Baptist Church, between Berlin and Holly Pond
- Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church, Colony
- Renovation Church, Cullman
- Rocky Mount Primitive Baptist Church, Arab
- Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, Cullman
- Saint John's Evangelical Protestant Church, Cullman
- Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, Cullman
- South Cullman Church of Christ
- Temple Baptist Church
- Vinemont Baptist Church
- West Point Baptist Church

March 27 - Feeding the Gulf Coast offers assistance locating food resources

"Feeding the Gulf Coast" (FGC) does not sound like an organization that would concern itself with north Alabama, but Outreach Senior Coordinator Carol Ann Hopper, who lives in the Cullman area and works at the agency's Huntsville office, wants people to know the FGC's services are available here and across the state.

Said Hopper, "We are a free resource for everybody in the state of Alabama. The most common misconception is that our organization is only able to assist people along the Gulf Coast, but because of the relationships that we leverage with other food banks in the state of Alabama, we are able to assist clients that are in need, regardless of where they are in the state."

Hopper added, "We have a call center that we're working around the clock, in overdrive right now, to make sure that there's somebody there to answer the phone that's an actual person- it's not a robocall- to help direct people on what they need to do in their area to get assistance, and kind of walk them through how to find food during this unprecedented chaotic time."

In a note to The Tribune, Hopper wrote:

"As families are faced with an increased need for food due to school closures, inability to work, or facing self-quarantine requirements, individuals seeking assistance can call Feeding the Gulf Coast's Benefits Enrollment Center at 877-833-2550. Feeding the Gulf Coast's outreach team works in partnership with two other large food banks in Alabama to best assist Alabamians in times of need."

Hopper concluded, "The workload has drastically increased, but I feel like anybody that goes into the nonprofit sector, they do that because they have a heart for serving the people. So, when everything else is hunkering down, we're really pressing in and moving forward.

"We all love what we do, so we get excited to step up in a time when a lot of people are backing down."

March 31 - Center Hill Baptist Church reaches out to children, nursing home residents

Center Hill Baptist Church members spent two days in late March distributing activity and gift bags to community children and placing leftovers in Hanceville's Hope Pantry. The bags contained coloring books, crayons, sidewalk chalk, bubbles, snacks and Bible story books. Between distribution at the church and the Hope Pantry, Riggs estimated that the church gave away at least 75 bags.

The following weekend, a group from the congregation went to Hanceville Nursing and Rehab Center, set up a sound system in the parking lot and sang to the residents inside.

Pastor Heath Riggs told The Tribune, "You probably have seen it on Facebook, so I guess we're all using this phrase, that the Church is not this building; you know, His sons and daughters, His people are the Church. We're just trying to be the hands and feet. It all goes back to scripture and just trying to, even though all we can do is livestream now, we're thinking about a drive-in: bring the church members in, in their cars and I'll be out at the pavilion, and that kind of thing.

"But we're just still trying to show that, during a pandemic like this- the coronavirus- that we can still minister and love on people, be the hands and feet of Christ.

April 1 - "Bear-hunting" breaks safe-at-home monotony

Bear hunting fever swept the Cullman community in late March and April. Young hunters, armed with cameras and a little grown-up help behind the wheel, broke the quarantine monotony by searching neighborhoods around town and across the county for plush teddy bears of all shapes and sizes, then posting their finds to the Cullman Bear Hunt Facebook page.

Tonya Hall saw friends participating in similar activities in other parts of the state, and decided to give it a try. '

She set up the social media group on a Friday, and by the following Monday, saw the membership skyrocket to almost 600.

Hall told The Tribune, "Between my senior getting the news that we don't know when graduation will be, and my 11-year-old finding out sixth grade is over, and my oldest having to drive cross-country back from law school, last week has been kind of a rough week. I just said I'm either going to have to get off social media or I'm going to have to do something to see some joy."

Hall added, "You may not be able to go 'out-out,' but it's definitely a creative way to get the kids out!"

April 9 - Local pastors come together for online Holy Week prayer service

Pastors and other ministers from across the Cullman community came together on Apr. 9 for "One Cry Cullman," an online prayer event to mark Holy Thursday/Maundy Thursday, Christianity's traditionally recognized night of the Last Supper.

Northbrook Baptist Church Pastor Keith Warden, whose church hosted the event, told The Tribune, "It's several of our pastors that were able to just get connected during all of this and wanted to come together to pray over our community and just stand with one another through all this."

The event's hosts included Warden and other local pastors John Richter of St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church, Tom Richter of First Baptist Church Cullman, Andy Heis of Desperation Church, Jason Murphree of Crosshaven Church and Kip Potter of Daystar Church.

As final preparations were underway, Warden said of the state of faith in the Cullman area under the pandemic, "I think that it's been strengthened, because- we talk about this all the time as a body of believers- that the way that our faith is strengthened is through seasons of testing and through seasons of trial. And what we've been seeing in our people here at Northbrook, and I know even as I've talked with other pastors and connected with other churches, is the Church stepping up and leaning into this challenge, and finding ways to connect with people, finding ways to serve."

April 10 - SERVPRO sanitizes Cullman Police vehicles

Technicians from SERVPRO's Cullman office spent Apr. 9-10 sanitizing vehicles for the Cullman Police Department (CPD), free of charge. The company approached the CPD to offer the cleaning as an act of community service.

CPD Capt. Gene Bates said, "We appreciate it. I think every officer appreciates it. It's just the little things like we sometime take for granted. Transporting prisoners in the vehicles, normally, we don't think about anything; we just put them in the vehicle, we take them to jail. A lot of times, we don't really think about possibly getting a disease or anything like that.

"The coronavirus, obviously it's on everybody's mind. At least, this way, it gives the officers peace of mind to know that their vehicles are disinfected, they're clean."

SERVPRO's Galon Miller told The Tribune, "We're concerned; we try to help out where we can, regardless. They just needed our services. This is donated, and we're not trying to make any kind of headway either way, and we're not trying to show off or anything else. We're trying to help out."

April 11 - Easter Bunny visits Cullman's south side

On Apr. 11, a curious character identified only as "Mr. E. Bunny" was spotted in neighborhoods on Cullman's south side, leaving eggs and other treats in the yards of several local homes with elderly residents or children.

Bunny told The Tribune, "Since tomorrow is going to be stormy, and everything on social media is so negative, I just wanted to bring a little joy and see some smiling faces," but noted, "I kept my distance from them all as well."

Bunny also shared, "Find joy in your life, and bring joy to others. Every day we have something or someone that brings us happiness; we just have to find it, and thank God for it."

April 23 - First Baptist Church Cullman offers "daily calm"

In a time of emotional turmoil for many, Cullman First Baptist Church (FBC) Pastor Tom Richter decided that a regular dose of encouraging calm might be just what folks need, so he and the FBC tech crew created "Daily Calm," a social media video series that runs each weekday on the church's Facebook and YouTube pages.

Richter told The Tribune, "I produce just a short video every weekday, and we put it out on social media, on Facebook and we also upload it to YouTube. It just kind of happened. We did the first one right as the coronavirus news was really breaking wide open, and so the first one- I went back and looked- was on March 19. The idea was simple: I mean, I thought a lot of people are accessing news on their social media feeds. They're scrolling, and my goodness, you scroll endlessly through social media posts, it's pretty easy to get overwhelmed. You start to get overwhelmed with anxiety, potentially.

"I thought if we could insert some daily calm right in the midst of hearing all this news, if we could get some calm inserted, based on the truth of God's Word, that'd be a good thing to help our folks. My initial goal was to bless the people. And, knowing too that we couldn't meet physically, try to keep folks connected and encouraged each day. I said, 'Well alright, I'll just do it.' I did some and folks seemed to appreciate it, and I did some more. Then one thing led to another, and I've done them every weekday since then- March 19. You know, it's nice: folks are kind of sharing it, and obviously, social media allows you to have a broader reach."

April 24 - Generous donation funds feeding efforts

Dr. Ginger Holt, a surgeon in Nashville, who often visits her hometown of Cullman and makes regular stops to treat herself at Rumors Deli, stopped by to present owner Annette Harris with a check for $7,500 to support the local business and to help Rumors provide meals to others around the area.

Harris said of Holt, "One day she texted me and just said she wanted to help and she wanted to give back to Cullman, and she wanted to help a small business- she wanted to help us- and what could she do.

She wanted to start by giving a donation, and she wanted to leave it up to me to figure out who to help. But she did specify that she would like to help the elderly and people, maybe, that are not really getting help."

Harris, who had already begun sharing the wealth, said of the experience of giving, "I almost feel a little guilty, because I feel so good by doing this. I'm getting something out of it, by taking these things. Even though my money itself is not donating- she's letting me choose who gets it- and I get to pick who gets this, and I'm so excited because they are so happy and grateful to have it. I've been happy to do that.

"I thought that was pretty neat, that she trusted me with such a sizable donation to not only help the community, but to help me and my business. I've been really excited about it, and I just feel so good every time I take a box. I love to do it because it makes me feel good. It's a positive, with all the negative you see, and there needs to be that."

April 28 - United Way establishes COVID-19 response fund

With increased numbers of people out of work during the COVID-19 shutdown, organizations that work to meet the basic needs of those hardest hit are doing crucial work- in current parlance, we can call it "essential"- and as the days go by, those organizations can run low on the resources they seek to provide. UWCC created the COVID-19 Community Response Fund to support such groups that are working to support others.

In a message to The Tribune, UWCC director Becky Goff wrote: "In March, United Way created the COVID-19 Community Response Fund and committed $5,000 to establish the fund. This fund provides Cullman County with an opportunity to give with the reassurance their donations will be responsibly invested and quickly deployed where they are needed most. In addition to individual donations, we are thankful to Trust Foundation Grant (formerly Sun Trust/BB &T) for their donation of $2,600; The Daniel Foundation for their gift of $2,885, The Lions Club of Cullman, $1,000, and Regions Bank for their donation of $5,000 to support our COVID-19 Community Response Fund."

UWCC approved several local organizations for the first round of $500 grants to support feeding programs, including Cullman Caring for Kids, Pilot Light Home, Victim Services, Parkside Outreach Program, The Link of Cullman County, Daystar Church, First United Methodist Church, North Alabama Agriplex Foundation, Restoring Women Outreach and Cullman Little Pantry. Additionally, Brooks' Place Child Advocacy Center was approved for a grant to help purchase technology that will allow counselors to continue providing services online by video conference.

In a note to The Tribune, Goff wrote, "Living UNITED, means helping ALL of our Cullman County neighbors, especially the most vulnerable, as we navigate this pandemic. Our staff, board of directors and volunteers have been working collectively to offer support and resources to our community and are proud of our accomplishments to date. There is no doubt that this is a difficult time for our community, but we are doing all we can to make it better."

Goff also shared, "We have established the Food Pantry Forum which has been meeting virtually. These community conversations allow nonprofits across our community to connect, explore collaboration, share resources or find ways to support each other."

May 2 - Jeeps, motorcycles bring joy to nursing home residents

Approximately 100 Jeeps and motorcycles showed up on May 2 for the Cullman County Wranglers' parade of area senior facilities in Cullman, Hanceville and Falkville.

Residents of the facilities were able to come outside and wave as the parade came by. They were thrilled to see the outpouring of love and support, as senior care facilities have not been allowed to have visitors for the past six weeks.

The parade was organized by Cullman County Wranglers and Sheila Johnson, who explained, "I work with USA Healthcare. I'm the director of clinical and education services. The idea got started because I'm a member of several Jeep pages on Facebook. I saw across the U.S., people were doing Jeep parades."

Johnson said she felt this was something that could be done for local residents and reached out to the Cullman County Wranglers.

The call went out on Facebook for Jeep owners in the area and the response was huge. Wranglers from Marshall County, Huntsville, Birmingham and all over north and central Alabama came out to join in the fun.

The Saints Motorcycle Club also came out to be a part of the loving gesture.

May 21 - Rumor's Deli feeds patients at Good Samaritan Clinic with help from a total stranger

Rumors Deli paid a flavorful visit to Good Samaritan Health Clinic on May 21, delivering 100 meals for the clinic staff to give to its patients, thanks to a gift from a stranger in Virginia.

Rumors Owner Annette Harris explained, "Working late one night at the deli, I got a phone call. I normally don't answer the phone that late, but just thought I would. Answered the phone, and it was a man named Michael Wendel with AVW Technologies out of Virginia. I thought that was kind of strange, but he just told me that he wanted to help our business during this time, and he also wanted to let me help the community somehow. He just wanted to let me decide who needed the help, since I live here.

"So I thought about it, and wanted to help somebody that maybe has not had help. I thought about it, and he kind of wanted to help people that (are) less fortunate, which led me to call the Good Samaritan Clinic. I spoke with (Good Samaritan Executive Director Jolanda Hutson) and decided to do free lunches for these people. We were excited about it, and so we came up with this."

Wendel is president of AVW Technologies, a Chesapeake, Virginia-based defense contractor providing engineering analytical services to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. According to Harris, he has a son at the University of Alabama but no previous connection to Rumors, and no connection to Cullman of which Harris is aware.

May 29 - Cullman Savings Bank supports Good Samaritan Clinic, local businesses

Cullman Savings Bank (CSB) donated $1,000 to Good Samaritan Health Clinic on May 29, as part of the institution's Cullman Savings Bank Giving Back program.

CSB President John Riley explained, "We've got a long-standing relationship with the Good Samaritan Clinic. I served as chairman of the board, was on their board for a while, so I saw the good work they do. And now we've got this Giving Back program because of the current situation with this virus. A lot of people think toward small businesses and their people there, but we can't forget the different charities in town and different things that they do, also, because a lot of people aren't giving right now, so we can't forget those people either, and the good work that they do."

Starting in late April, the Cullman Savings Bank Giving Back program supported numerous local businesses, including Dreher's Cocktail Bar and Restaurant, Rice and Soy Chinese Restaurant, Handz On Therapeutic Massage, The Factory Dance Productions, Branham Tire and Accessories, Berkeley Bob's Coffee House, Wonderfully Made Massage, Werner's Trading Company, All Steak Curbside Market, Sportsworld Skate Center, Cullman Sign and Banner, Sweet Threads Boutique, Karma's Coffee House, Augusta's Sports Grill, Mad Dog Mike's BBQ, Seven Winds Kitchen, Carson's Confections, Wacked Out Weiner, Frios Gourmet Pops, The Added Touch, Guthrie's Chicken, Cullman Florist, Kernel Kullman, Steele Orchard, Uniform Place, Busy Bee Cafe, Southern Eats, Rumor's Deli, Coraline J., JK Taylor and Platform.

When the bank started the Giving Back program, its announcement read, in part, "After making many Payroll Protection Program loans and loan deferrals, the Board of Directors of Cullman Savings Bank felt it is crucial for the Bank to help stimulate the local economy. Therefore, Cullman Savings Bank is going into the community to help support local businesses."

COLONY

Colony gets long-sought Dollar General

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W.C. MANN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Colony Mayor Donnis Leeth in front of his community's new Dollar General.

COLONY, Ala. – Since he became mayor of Colony four years ago, Donnis Leeth had been telling the people of his community that he was going to bring them a Dollar General store, and in 2019 he, Dollar General and the Colony town government fulfilled that promise. The new store didn't open inside Colony, but just across the interstate, close enough for the town's residents to make quick shopping runs without having to drive miles away to another municipality.

The move was in keeping with the company's views, as well.

A Dollar General representative previously told The Tribune, "I think Dollar General's mindset is to make somebody have to pass a Dollar General on their way to Wal-Mart, at least once, so they'll stop."

In January 2019, Leeth got a call from the developer, telling him the store was finally coming.

It would take time to gather the resources, prepare the site along Alabama Highway 91 and erect the building. Creative Concrete, which was handling the site prep, broke ground in June, and the Colony Dollar General opened its doors Sept. 19, 2019, becoming the 15th store in the chain to open in Cullman County.

Business since then has been good. Leeth reported in December that the store was constantly busy and that a company representative had said it was "the best Dollar General they said they ever put in Cullman County."

Leeth was working toward getting the Dollar General annexed into the town. He told the town council that he hoped to bring in a Jack's fast food restaurant next, and has also expressed interest in seeing a laundromat and carwash in Colony.

While the Dollar General was still in the works, the mayor said of his vision for Colony's future, "We're just trying to make the Colony be something.

"All these years I was in the military, 21 years. When I left, there wasn't nothing; when I come back, there wasn't nothing.

"Same thing we had, they still got it. I've been trying to put something in the Colony for the young people and the elder people."

In August 2020, Leeth was defeated in his bid for re-election by Councilman Curtis Johnson, who said that he would not promise to bring any new businesses to Colony, but would consider any business proposals presented to him.

– BERLIN –

Windows, doors and more at Martin Door and Millwork

Maggie Darnell
Contributor



MAGGIE DARNELL FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Any of the product pictures: Martin Door and Millwork has been offering custom residential doors, windows and other home décor products since 1987.

BERLIN, Ala. – Since 1987, Martin Door and Millwork has been offering custom doors for homes, garage doors, home décor, lawn decorations and custom windows. Owned by Roney and Patty Martin, the business is located at 3220 U.S. Hwy. 278 E in Berlin.

Patty Martin shared the business's story, "We were both born and raised in Cullman County, Roney grew up in the door business, his dad had a business like this and he retired, and we took it over in 1987 in a different location.

"We started out in a little small gas station-sized building and added on nine times in the first 10 years."

Explaining what the business offers, Martin said, "We specialize in residential doors and windows, garage doors, stair parts, moldings, most anything you'd need for a new house except for lumber and sheetrock; we don't sell that.

"We've grown and evolved over the years to meet the demands the competition puts out.

"We do a lot of specialty doors; people who are replacing doors sometimes have to have custom sizes, but we sell residential and replacements, both doors and windows.

"We can do custom creations or create a look that they want- we can get that done for them."

Martin said the business' location along the highway in Berlin has been good for sales, but it's more about word of mouth.

"We have a lot of customers from all over, even from within say 50 to 100 miles. A lot of our business has come from word-of-mouth.

"We were born and raised here so a lot of people know us, they know from what other people have told them that have done business with us," she said.

""We have a pretty good sized showroom of doors and windows to let people see what we have when they do come by."

Find out more at www.martindoorcullman.com.





GARDEN CITY

Bargain hunt at Treasures by Hea

Maggie Darnell
Contributor



MAGGIE DARNELL FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Most visitors say it's a bargain hunt at Treasures by Hea in Garden City.

GARDEN CITY, Ala. – Garden City's Treasures by Hea offers like-new to brand new items and great deals. The store opened Jan. 14, 2020 and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 640 Old Hwy. 31.

Each day, items are a set price. Tuesdays, items are $3 per plus tax. Wednesdays, it's $1 per item plus tax. Thursdays are 50 cents per item plus tax, and Fridays and Saturdays are $5 per item plus tax.

Treasures by Hea is owned by Heather Millwood Hudson, who runs the store with help from family members like mother Brenda McSpadden.

Said McSpadden, "We started in January- my daughter wanted to open a business. She had lots of help that she used, so she just started this where she got all Amazon items, and we have different days for different things (on sale in the bins) for different prices. Her husband is in the military; we just do this to help her."

Why Garden City?

"We looked at Cullman and Garden City, but we thought that Garden City would be a good place for the business because there was nothing like that here, so she thought that would be good too," said McSpadden.

"We've met lots of nice people and I think everybody loves it, because everybody comes out and they shop and everybody's been so, so friendly.

"We like it here because it's just country people like us, and we give them discounts and all kinds of things and they love it.

"We appreciate Garden City, they welcomed us in, especially her, to open up the business and they come out and support us, and I really appreciate that; I'm sure Cullman does, too. We've had all kind of people from different cities."

Treasures by Hea offers a large variety of discounted items.

"Just a variety of things at a discount," said McSpadden.

"People come here, and they leave with a bag of items for like $10, whereas you go to a chain business and get a bag of items and you'll spend like $40, $50.

"We have things like clothes, electronics- we have books, we have plenty of books. Right now, all of our books are free because we have so many.

"We just offer people some-where to go and get stuff at discounted prices and what we offer is 99% new stuff."

McSpadden said the store is a family affair.

"I'll just come up here and sit with her a little bit and help her whenever she can't work," she said. "My mom helps; it's just a family thing. We love it here, we really do. It's a lot of fun, she says it's a lot of hard work, but I think it's worth it."

So where did the name come from?

McSpadden said of her daughter, "Her name is Heather, so it's Treasures by Hea, and the reason she did that is because her nephew calls her 'Hea Hea,' so she named it Treasures by Hea, short for Heather."

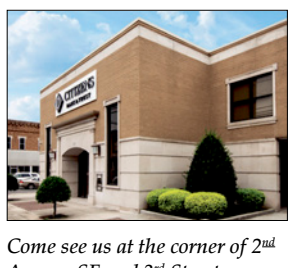
Find our more at www.facebook.com/TreasuresByHea.



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GOOD HOPE

Settle in for a slice at Adapris Pizza Buffet

Christy Perry
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GOOD HOPE, Ala. – Marco Perez had worked many years for corporate pizza chains when he finally decided he had the knowledge and positive attitude needed to run his own pizzeria. In 2016, he opened Adapris Pizza Buffet in Good Hope with his wife, Lorena Rodriguez. Despite recent challenges due to COVID-19, they made the necessary adjustments, and business is good.

"I started working in a pizza place in 1998. I was store manager for many places in Birmingham in Cullman and other places in Alabama," he said. "I started to open my own business in 2016."

The couple has three children including twin girls who will be starting second grade this year.

Perez explained, "The name of the store came from the kids. We have twins, and one is Adamary and the other is Priscila. We decided to put the names together and got Adapris."

Rodriguez also worked in the pizza business, and that's how she and Marco met.

"We worked at Cici's together," she said. "I learned how to cook and do pretty much all the stuff around there. He showed me and so we decided that we know what to do and we opened our own. You have to work a little harder, but it's good working for yourself."

Perez said the couple decided to open Adapris in Good Hope because, after years of commuting to work from his home in Good Hope, he wanted to work close to home. Now, he and his family live less than a mile from the family business. His goal is to be able to relax in the next few years.

He said, "I (have worked for) 22 years, every day, 12-14 hours each day. I'm thinking when I turn 50, (in) seven more years. Yesterday was my birthday, so seven more years I'm thinking."



CHRISTY PERRY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Adapris Pizza Buffet Co-Owner Lorena Rodriguez (who took off her mask only for the photo) poses with the pizza bought by Tribune reporter Christy Perry.

Son Marco, Jr. is 14 years old, so the hope is perhaps he can take over the family pizza business so his mom and dad can take it easy.

COVID-19 presented some unique challenges to Adapri's buffet-style restaurant. Now, plexiglass separates the customers from the pizza and salads, and the staff is required to serve each customer.

"Only my employees can touch," Perez explained. "It's not too bad, and it's still good. COVID-19 did not kill my business. If COVID-19 did not kill our business, we're good. Many businesses are still closed."

Also helping Adapris during the pandemic were its carryout and delivery options. Adapris delivers within a 10-mile radius of the store, which includes Cullman, Good Hope, Hanceville and Vinemont.

For those looking to dine-in, make sure to bring the kids. There are several fun games for them to enjoy. Adapris also hosts birthday parties.

Perez said he and his family enjoy working and living in Good Hope.

"We have lived in Good Hope for 24 years. Our kids go to Good Hope Schools, and I think they are number one in this area.

"There are very good teachers there and my son and daughter really like it. They love the teachers and they are all very nice," he smiled.

"We like it here. I have had no problem with anybody here. People, they are really nice. Good people, so no complaints."

When running a family business, even the kids can end up spending time with mom and dad at the restaurant. Perez is quite proud of his son and daughter for their positive attitudes and helpful natures. One day, he said, he hopes to take a real vacation but for now, he closes his restaurant early Sunday afternoons to make sure his family can have a little fun.

"We take the kids to Smith Lake or somewhere to go swim and just play with them," he said. "The kids, they love it!"

Perez's motto for success and life is simple: "Live positive."

He said, "Two people working positively, we hit the goal. Everybody has problems, but you have to make your way great. We are positive, always positive."

Adapris is located at 1587 County Road 437, Good Hope, AL 35055. It is open Monday-Thursday from 11 a.m.-8 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m.-9 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Find out more at www.facebook.com/adaprispizza.

The Tribune highlighted small businesses around Cullman County during the COVID-19 pandemic. This story was originally published July 2, 2020.

HANCEVILLE

For the record...A new spin on Hanceville business

Christy Perry
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HANCEVILLE, Ala. – Hanceville's Neal Watts has always been a huge music fan. He's turned that love of music into a great retirement pastime at Blue Moon Records inside the Mud Creek Trading Company in downtown Hanceville.

Watts and his wife, Laura, are both originally from Huntsville and went to school together.

"We went to school together and didn't date or anything. She was too cool for me," he laughed. "I always had a crush on her in junior high school. I moved to Cullman when I was 16 in 1974. A year later, she moved to Texas and we hadn't seen each other in 38 years."

The two reconnected on Facebook in 2012, and several months later they were married.

Watts always loved music and began collecting records at 12 years old.

He said, "I probably kept every record I ever bought until I started buying used ones at Charlemagne Records in Birmingham.

"In 1977, I bought my first used album there, I don't have the same one, but it was Neil Young's "Decade," a compilation three-record set. Back then a new record was $15-$20; I think I gave $6 or $7 for it."

Charlemagne Records closed its doors last year.

Said Watts, "It was on after that. I was getting records I didn't listen to anymore and taking them down there and coming home with three or four records at a time.

"I started going to record shows in Birmingham, Atlanta, Chattanooga and Huntsville."

His tastes in music have evolved over the decades and his collection continued to grow.

He loves the Beatles and got into country rock and fell in love with the band Little Feat when he had the opportunity to see a show in Birmingham.

He's also a huge fan of Widespread Panic and Gov't Mule.

Watts had his first record store in Cullman during the late 90s and early 2000s near the old Cullman Feed and Seed.

He's had booths at a few flea markets but mostly packed everything up until the resurgence in the popularity of vinyl records around the time he and Laura were married.

They rented a booth in the basement of Finder's Keepers where, he said, "The records started selling. People were buying them at what I thought were ridiculously high prices."

He was also in the jewelry industry, but after opening a new jewelry business, he said he was quickly reminded why he had left the business in the first place.

"It's too expensive to keep stock, and in the jewelry business you make most of your money in the month of December and the rest of the time you hope you made enough to survive," he said.

He soon returned to buying, selling and trading records and CDs.

Last year, Watts decided to open a retail location in Hanceville, and he is enjoying it.

"This is my retirement," he said. "I also worked voter registration at the courthouse so I was able to retire."

He said he's happy as long as they are able to cover the overhead, and he finds Hanceville to be the ideal location for Blue Moon.



CHRISTY PERRY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Neal Watts holds one of the vinyl records for sale at Blue Moon Records inside the Mud Creek Trading Company in downtown Hanceville.

Watts wouldn't give away any collector's secrets for finding great albums, but laughed about yard sale finds, "Most of the time it's easy listening, Lawrence Welk, bad country, and that's why they are in the yard sale. Most people when they have them, older people, their kids go through and get all the good stuff out that they wanted."

He added, "The best records I have ever got were people who were real collectors and sold their whole collection."

He recently bought a collection of 1,200 albums, complete with a card file listing all the albums, from an old buddy from school.

Mud Creek Trading Company is open Tuesday-Saturday from 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. It is located at 108 Main St. SE, Hanceville, AL 35077.

Find Mud Creek on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MudCreekTradingCompany.

The Tribune highlighted small businesses around Cullman County during the COVID-19 pandemic. This story was originally published June 20, 2020.

Sports

PREP BASKETBALL

A look back at a memorable 2019-20 season

Sammy Confer
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – Basketball season is almost upon us yet again so let's take a look back at what was another memorable basketball season for area teams last spring. Good Hope and West Point repeated as county champions, five teams advanced to regional tournaments and we had two teams in Birmingham competing this year's state tournament at the BJCC.

VARSITY GIRLS

Addison Lady Bulldogs (21-3)

Last season was a memorable one for Addison. The Lady Bulldogs rolled through the regular season behind a balanced offense and a suffocating defense and defeated Sulligent and Red Bay to take home the Class 2A, Area 13 championship. Their season would end in the Sub-Regional game against Tanner, 77-58, ending their season with a stellar 21-3 record. Macey Butler, Kaylee Brummett and Amylia Cleghorn graduated in May but with a young, talented roster coming back this season, the future is looking bright for Addison.

Cold Springs Lady Eagles (31-5)

Cold Springs played for its second straight state last spring but fell just short in the state finals to finish as the runner-up in class 2A. The Lady Eagles rolled through the regular season in dominating fashion and demolished Southeastern and West End to take home the Class 2A, Area 12 title. They defeated Sumiton Christian in the Sub-Regional round and made a return trip to Birmingham after knocking off Tanner and Hatton in the Northwest Regional. Hill then put on a show in the Final Four, dropping 37 points to lead Cold Springs past Central-Haynesville. The Lady Eagles finished with a 31-5 record and lost some great players to graduation in Elizabeth Hill (2,000 career points), Neely Ellison, Emi Harbison, Kylon Hamby and Emma Chambers. Cold Springs will have some big shoes to fill this season but don't be surprised to see another postseason run from the Lady Eagles.

Cullman Lady Bearcats (22-9)

Cullman put together another solid postseason run last season behind a mixture of young talent and experience. The Lady Bearcats had a very strong regular season once again, finishing on a 10-game winning streak and defeating Hartselle 46-37 to win the Class 6A, Area 14 championship. Unfortunately, the season ended in the Sub-Regionals for Cullman after falling to Athens and finishing the year with a 22-9 mark. Cullman is replacing three key players after graduation in A.K. Eastman (who became the all-time leading scorer in Cullman's girls' history this season), Alexandria Barker and Kinslee Borden but the Lady Bearcats have some great young talent coming back this fall that will be hungry for another postseason run in 2021.

Fairview Lady Aggies (18-12)

Fairview made another great postseason last spring and got off to a strong start, starting the regular season 7-1. After hitting a little bit of a rough patch, the Lady Aggies won six of their final eight games in the regular season. In the Class 4A, Area 12 tournament, Fairview rolled past Ashville before falling to Oneonta in the championship game for the second straight season. The Lady Aggies traveled to Jacksonville to take on North Jackson for the second straight time in the Sub-Regionals and took the game 69-52 to punch their ticket to the Northeast Regional. The run ended at Jacksonville State for Fairview when the Lady Aggies fell to Anniston in the Sweet 16, 57-35, to end the season with an 18-12 mark. The Lady Aggies lost Payton Golden, Katie Ball and Isabella McGukin to graduation in May, but will have several players returning with a wealth of playoff experience this season.

Good Hope Lady Raiders (17-11)

There were big strides made by the Good Hope Lady Raiders this season under new head coach Justin Aby. Behind some amazing young talent in Ivey Maddox, Bailey and Heather Tetro, and Rudi Derrick to name a few, along with seniors Savanna Derrick, Abby Neighbors and Bobbi Johnson, they started off the season 9-4 and kept that pace up for most of the year, finishing the regular season at 17-10. Unfortunately, Good Hope saw its season end in the Class 4A, Area 12 tournament against Oneonta. Derrick, Neighbors and Johnson will be gone next season, but with a majority of the roster returning, the future looks bright for the Lady Raiders.

Hanceville Lady Bulldogs (10-14)

The Hanceville Lady Bulldogs looked to take a big step in 2019-2020, but an up-and-down regular season ended on a three-game losing streak. Hanceville kept its season alive with a massive win over Glencoe in the 3A, Area 12 Tournament but after falling to Susan Moore in the area tournament finals, the Lady Bulldogs lost at Midfield in the Sub-Regionals to finish the year at 10-14. Kelly Pickett will be the only senior that'll graduate in May, but she'll be a big loss for the Lady Bulldogs. Hanceville has some young talent and key players coming back this season and maybe last season's playoff run can spark the Lady Bulldogs going forward.

Holly Pond Lady Broncos (11-18)

It was an up-and-down regular season for the Lady Broncos, but they kept their hopes alive in the Class 3A, Area 13 tournament with a win over Brindlee Mountain. After falling just short in the championship game to New Hope, Holly Pond dropped its Sub-Regional game on the road at Winfield to end the season at 11-18. Elizabeth Miller is the only senior missing for the Lady Broncos this fall so with most of the roster intact, they'll be primed to make another run in 2021.

Meek Lady Tigers (9-10)

The Meek Lady Tigers started the season 5-2 but couldn't sustain that mark the rest of the season, suffering key losses to Berry, Falkville and Decatur Heritage in area play. Meek saw its season end in the Class 1A, Area 13 tournament when it fell to the Falkville Lady Blue Devils 55-38 to finish with a 9-10 record. Kalin Rivers and Jessie Woodward will graduate in May for the Lady Tigers and Meek will look to have a big season with most of its roster coming back this season.

St. Bernard Lady Saints (8-13)

St. Bernard upped their win total from last season, starting out 4-4, but they suffered some tough losses after that and couldn't sustain it the rest of the way. A 48-33 loss to Lynn in the Class 1A, Area 13 tournament finished the season at 8-13 for the Lady Saints. St. Bernard will lose Claire Sanders, Emma Tafazoli and Macy Whaley all graduated in May so there will be some big shoes to fill for the Lady Saints this season.

Vinemont Lady Eagles (7-21)

With several key players returning, Vinemont looked to take that next step this season. The Lady Eagles' win total went up from four to seven, but they couldn't get past New Hope in the Class 3A, Area 13 Tournament, finishing the season with a 7-21 record. They lost Bailey Preiss, Jessica Ortiz-Perez, Sadie Stanley and Kanasta Daniel to graduation in May but with some young talent coming back this fall, Vinemont will look to continue improving.

West Point Lady Warriors (29-6)

West Point put together a deep postseason run last year after getting off to an 8-0 start in the regular season. The Lady Warriors quickly broke a mini losing streak in dominant fashion, going 17-1 in their final 18 regular season games and handling Cold Springs to win their second straight county title. They rolled past Russellville and Hamilton to add yet another area championship to their trophy case and defeated East Limestone the Sub-Regionals to return to the Northwest Regional. West Point defeated Mortimer Jordan in the Sweet 16 before falling to Madison Academy in the Elite Eight and finishing the year with a 29-6 record. The Lady Warriors will lose seven players to graduation: Brooke Brownfield, Emily Wells, Molly Pendley, Miriam Oldacre (2,000 career points), Micah Oldacre, Sheridan Bowers and Mackenzie Carter. There will be some talent and experience coming back this fall but there will certainly be big shoes to fill in West Point.



BILL PIPER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

West Point's Molly Pendley (11).

VARSITY BOYS

Addison Bulldogs (12-14)

Last season was the first for head coach Ben Mastin with the Addison Bulldogs and they started the regular season 5-1. Addison had some impressive victories along the way and went 5-3 in its last eight games, but its season ended in the Class 2A, Area 13 tournament with a loss to Sulligent. The season ended at 12-14 for the Bulldogs but with everyone coming back next year, watch out for Addison this fall.

Cold Springs Eagles (14-15)

The 2019-2020 season was a back-and-forth one for the Eagles. After starting off slow, they started to get things going midway through the season, winning five out of seven at one point, but they went 2-3 in their last five regular season games. They saw their season end in the Class 2A, Area 12 tournament to Cleveland, 58-48, finishing the year with a 14-15 record. The Eagles will only lose Logan Rice to graduation and with some great talent and experience returning this fall, they'll look to make some noise next time around.

Cullman Bearcats (16-15)

Cullman had hopes of making a deep postseason run last season and got off to a strong start at 9-3 but couldn't quite keep that roll going the rest of the way as the Bearcats finished 6-10 in their final 16 regular season games. Cullman kept its season alive in the Class 6A, Area 14 tournament, defeating Decatur in its opener before falling to Hartselle in the championship game. The Bearcats wound up falling to Muscle Shoals on the road in the Sub-Regional round to finish with a 16-15 mark. The Bearcats lost just two seniors in Noah Bussman and Jayden Sullins, but those will be some huge shoes for the 'Cats to fill this season.

Fairview Aggies (15-10)

Fairview enjoyed a breakout year last season, almost doubling its win total from a year ago. The Aggies started out 6-3 and later went on a five-game winning streak to keep that hot streak going. They won their last two regular season games and looked to make some noise in the Class 4A, Area 12 tournament against Good Hope, but fell just short to the Raiders, 73-67, to finish with a 15-10 record. The Aggies lost Mason Black, Austin Jackson, Dow Nichols, Austin Turner and Sawyer Daniel all to graduation in May so there will be some new names to learn on the court for Fairview this fall.

Good Hope Raiders (26-5)

Good Hope started the 2019 season very strong, winning its first 14 games before dropping a pair of games in the King of the Smokies Christmas Classic in Tennessee. That didn't slow the Raiders down one bit as they went 10-1 the rest of the regular season and repeated as county champions. For the second straight season, they finished as the runner-up in the Class 4A, Area 12 tournament to Oneonta but Good Hope got some revenge against D.A.R. in its Sub-Regional game, but the season ended in the Northeast Regional against Anniston and the Raiders ended up with a 26-5 mark on the year. The Raiders lost eight seniors to graduation: Eli Phares, Cole Maddox (who became the all-time leading scorer in Good Hope boys' history this season), Michael Lowe, Colton Williams, Dawson Turner, Drew Maddox, Harper Chiaranda and Max Bavar. This senior class did a lot for the basketball program at Good Hope and there will be some huge shoes to fill this season.

Hanceville Bulldogs (18-13)

Last season was one that people in Hanceville will never stop talking about. After getting off to a slow start, the Bulldogs quickly got things going, winning seven in a row at one point. It was back-and-forth after that for Hanceville, but the Bulldogs quickly got things straightened out in the Class 3A, Area 12 tournament with wins over J.B. Pennington and Glencoe to take home the area championship. They looked to make some noise in the postseason, and they did just that. Thanks to some huge shots by Tyson Bellmon and Zach Campbell, the Bulldogs survived a thriller against Locust Fork the Sub-Regionals and followed that up with some huge wins over no. 1 Piedmont and Midfield in at the Northeast Regional. Hanceville advanced to the state tournament for the first time in 20 years but fell to Pike County in the Final Four to finish the year with an 18-13 record. The Bulldogs lost Matt Cornelius, Bellmon, Raiden Morgan, Ethan Roberts and Cainon Moore to graduation in May but after last spring's dramatic postseason run, the excitement is there for basketball in
Hanceville.

Holly Pond Broncos (6-17)

Holly Pond looked to take a huge step last season with some key player returning but the Broncos couldn't quite find their rhythm and finished the season 6-17. Their season ended in the Class 3A, Area 13 tournament with a 70-53 loss to Vinemont but the Broncos did have a memorable moment during their 93-83 win over Vinemont earlier in the year when Kyler Chaney posted a school-record 48 points. Chaney, along with Jaxon Olinger, Shannon Kitchens and Jordan Allbright graduated in May so there will be some new faces on the floor looking to bounce back this season.

Meek Tigers (5-24)

Meek didn't have the greatest regular season in 2019-2020, finishing with just four wins, but kept its season alive during the Class 1A, Area 13 tournament. The Tigers defeated Lynn before falling to Decatur Heritage Christian Academy in the championship game. Meek wound up falling to Pickens County in its Sub-Regional game to finish with a 5-24 mark. The Tigers lost five seniors to graduation in May, Stuart Waldrep, Angel Chino, James Brown, Jagger Benson and Bryan Phillips. They'll have some of their roster back this season and will look to rebound in 2020-2021.

St. Bernard Saints (6-16)

Last season was for the first for Tim Burleson as the head coach of the Saints and his team fought in every game as out of their 16 losses, nine of them were decided by 10 points or fewer, including their 44-42 loss to Falkville in the Class 1A, Area 13 tournament. Caleb Guthery, Alex Shoaff and John Christian Rose graduated in May and St. Bernard will try to bounce back with some young talent this season.

Vinemont Eagles (11-20)

Vinemont more than doubled its win total from a season ago and the Eagles kept their season alive after defeating Holly Pond in the Class 3A, Area 13 tournament. Vinemont fell to New Hope in the area tournament championship game and the season ended in the Sub-Regionals when the Eagles fell to Winfield to finish the season 11-20. The Eagles lost Lucas Miller, Jordan Hall, Clark Whatley, Katch Johnson (1,000 career points), Connor Handley, Clay Rogers and Jack Hill to graduation so there will be a lot of new names and faces on the floor for Vinemont this fall.

West Point Warriors (15-16)

West Point got off to a 3-0 start last season but lost 10 of its next 13 games. The Warriors quickly righted the ship, going 9-5 in their last 14 regular season games but their season ended in the Class 5A, Area 14 tournament with a 72-70 loss to Lawrence County. West Point only lost two players to graduation in May, Tyler White and Tyler Thompson, and with almost their entire roster coming back this fall, the Warriors are poised to make some noise in this year.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Cullman Hoop Stars competing at the Ingle Park Gym/Donald Green Active Adult Center March 7



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Desperation Church cheers on the Cullman Hoop Stars.

'To see the smiles on their faces'

Successful season in the books for Cullman Hoop Stars

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – Another successful season wrapped up in the spring for Cullman Therapeutic Recreation's (CTR) Cullman Hoop Stars special needs basketball league. Eight teams of eight to nine players played a seven-week, 56-game schedule and for everyone involved including the fans, to the players, CTR's administrators and everyone in between, it was a season they won't soon forget. On one of the Saturdays during the Hoop Stars' schedule, Desperation Church brought a crowd of fans to cheer on the players and CTR Director Kelly Pulliam was excited to see the effect the crowd had on everyone in the gym.

"We have ages 5 to 65 and we try to group them off kind of by age groups, but this is really just for them to come out and play and enjoy themselves and get some exercise.

"Some of them have been doing it since the very beginning and for others this is their first year and having Desperation Church come out today, we've never had this many people here," Pulliam smiled.

"Some of them have just been putting on a show for them and I've seen kids smile today that I've never seen smile so its awesome to have all these people here."

One of the things that Pulliam wanted to try and add to the games this year was a more fun and exciting atmosphere.

Adding things like has injected some more energy into both the players and fans and Pulliam can see the effects on the court.

"I've had numerous parents and coaches come up to me and just thank us for the music and all the things that we've added.

"My goal was to make it kind of like a high school basketball game and make it fun because they feed off of the energy so much, you can just tell," Pulliam said.

"Like I said, to see the smiles on their faces and have all these people cheer them on has been great.

"Today has been great and I've had goosebumps since the moment everyone got here, and it's been fantastic."

The Hoop Stars benefit a lot from the energy of the crowd and the excitement of playing but there are great physical benefits from them that come from basketball as well.

"Obviously its really good for hand-eye coordination and everything but really its just to get them up and moving because for some of them, this may be the most exercise they get all week," Pulliam said. "So just getting them up and moving is the main thing."

The community has shown a lot of support for these players as well. Several local teams made their way to the games to cheer them on and that Pulliam believes that support is invaluable.

"We've had the Cullman Middle School boys basketball team come out and help and the Cold Springs boys and girls teams came out and led a whole thing for us.

"I'm hoping to get the Cullman High School boys to come out too, but people even just come sit on the bleachers and cheer," Pulliam said. "That is all that we're asking is just for people to come out and help put smiles on their faces."

Desperation Church Student Pastor Maison Goodwin talked about how the church got involved with the league.

The most important thing to Pulliam and the players is a crowd of fans in the stands and Goodwin is glad that Desperation could offer that.

"Somebody contacted Pastor Andy (Heis) and he just kind of found out it was going and he's already a huge basketball guy so once he found out he came last Saturday to watch a game and loved it," Goodwin said.

"He told our team that we were going to this and we're going to show up and show out because we heard just how much it meant to the kids.

"He said the first thing they asked is if fans were going to be here today so the fact we were able to come out and just watch means a lot to us."

Goodwin and Desperation Church were excited to be there for the games to show their support. It means a lot for them to be able to give back to the community in fun way.

"It's a huge deal for us to get to be out here and root them on because I know I enjoyed having people come out and watch me in high school so I cant imagine how much better it is for them to have people supporting them," Goodwin said.

"We just wanted to come out because we love our community and we love the people in Cullman, so it means a lot."

This season of basketball for the Cullman Hoop Stars provided a great deal of benefits to the players physically, mentally and emotionally and with more people in the community getting involved, next season is shaping up to be a memorable one as well.

For more information on Cullman Therapeutic Recreation and its special needs sports programs, visit www.facebook.com/Cullman-Therapeutic-Recreation-100549538105749/.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Eight teams of eight to nine players played a seven-week, 56-game schedule

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PREP BASEBALL

400 & counting - Bearcats Head Coach Brent Patterson continues to add to his legacy

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – Bearcats Head Baseball Coach Brent Patterson hit another milestone during the team's trip to Gulf Shores last spring. The 'Cats handled Saraland 7-0 to collect their fourth win of the season, but more notably, it was the 400th win of Patterson's career at Cullman.

There have been high standards in the Cullman Baseball program for the better part of two decades now ever since the 'Cats won their first state title back in 2002. After the Bearcats captured back to back blue maps in 2007 and 2008, Head Coach Bryan Bowen stepped down with three state championships, three state runner-up finishes and 318 wins on his resume. Any questions or concerns about the program's future were quickly answered before the start of the next season when Bowen's longtime assistant, Patterson, was selected as the next head coach. Since taking the head job in 2008, Patterson has collected two more state titles, four state runner-up trophies, over 400 career victories and is currently the all-time winningest coach in Cullman's history.

Bowen isn't surprised to see the continued success of the program under Patterson. The two Bearcats greats worked together for many years and have been friends even longer, so Bowen knows the type of passion he has for the game and his players.

"It was a good hire I made. It was the first hire I made when I got the head job. So, he and I have been close for a long time and he's just committed, that's the biggest thing. He's completely committed and sold out selflessly to the program and these kids," Bowen said. "He's in it for the kids and they're development and they're growth and they love playing for him because of that. They sense that. He invests so much of himself into the players and they feel that."

Patterson's work ethic and commitment to the program is what Bowen largely credits for his friend's success on the field but outside of his love for the game, Bowen admires his love for the kids as well.

"That's what he's always done. He did that as assistant coach and we kind of played a little bit of good cop, bad cop with me obviously being the bad cop because his personality is much better than mine," Bowen joked. "He just loves the kids and he consistently leads with his work ethic. He shows up early, he stays late and that's who he is and that's what you're getting."

Bowen has gotten to know Patterson as a friend, a coach and a parent over the last few decades and he feels confident in saying that Cullman High School is home to the best baseball coach in the state.

"He and I have been the best of friends for years even going back to high school, and obviously I wanted Brent to get the job, but I can tell you from being the ex-coach to working with him and to having kids - I know most all the coaches in the state of Alabama - I wouldn't want my kids to play for anybody else, hands down, bar none. It's more than just the teacher, it's the person that my kids are getting to play for," Bowen said. "They're getting a champion, they're getting a winner, they're getting a guy that's committed to them in much more than baseball and all I can say is the community is extremely blessed to have him and I'm blessed as a dad to have my kids play for him. I can only hope he coaches my third one before he hangs his cleats up. To me, he's the epitome of the best. We have the best baseball coach in the state of Alabama, and I can say that as a dad and from a coaching perspective. I wouldn't want my kids to play for anyone else."

As he always does, Patterson was quick to credit those around him for the success of the program but more than anyone else, he credited Bowen for changing the expectations at Cullman when he arrived and teaching him how to keep it going.

"We have great support, and by support I would say assistant coaches, parents, administration, community and I mean that 100% because what those people that I just named do, make it so that players are as prepared and are as equipped as they can possibly be. I think people here realized a long time ago that we could have a championship-type program here and there were coaches years and years ago when I wasn't even thought of that believed it then and started that process," Patterson said.

"Then when Bryan Bowen took the program, he had a vision and he was a strong leader and you were either going to get on board with his vision or you're getting out. I think the credit really needs to start right there. It's hard to maintain what we have, but he changed a mindset and I think about that all the time."

Obviously, Coach Patterson and the Bearcats have enjoyed a lot of success over the last 10 seasons. They have overcome a lot of adversity to make it happen, but Patterson still remembers the challenge of changing the program with Coach Bowen and establishing that foundation for years to come.

"We have our battles that we fight every single day in this program but our battles back then when I was helping him, that was different. He was so headstrong and so determined and such a visionary that he was the right person at the right time and he said 'We're going to have a championship program here.' and I even remember not being able to really think about legit championships but that's the only thing he thought every day," Patterson said.

"What he taught everybody was that you do it on a daily basis. You don't just end up in the championship. You do it on a daily basis and you outwork everybody, and you prepare, and you raise money and you improve facilities and you build pride. He was a visionary."

Patterson pours a lot of hours into his job as the head coach of the Bearcats and after 10 full seasons that included six trips to Montgomery, a lot of coaches would justifiably begin feeling drained. However, there is something that keeps Patterson coming back each season and its not the desire for another ring.

"That's easy, it's the relationships with the guys," Patterson smiled. "You literally fall in love with a new group of guys and you pull for them and become their biggest fan. You get them in eighth and ninth grade and you're trying to make them understand then in 10th grade they can take that next step and by the time 11th and 12th grade rolls around, they start to understand that all their coaches really care about is what they're doing. I would love to go and win another championship, that would be fun, but I'll speak for all my coaches, our reward is when we get to take another group and let them have that experience of their own."



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

With Cullman's win over Saraland last season, Bearcats Head Coach Brent Patterson eclipsed the 400 career wins mark since taking over the program in 2008.

Patterson continued, talking more specifically about what fuels him and makes him excited to start each new season.

"I told our kids before this season; I'll do this until the day I don't feel like I'm connected, and I don't have that relationship at that super close level. That's what keeps us doing what we're doing and that's why you're so driven. That's why you wake up excited; because you've got a guy that's been struggling for a couple or you've got guy that has been killing it for a couple weeks. You have to take that struggling guy and just love on him and build his confidence up and then you've got to take that guy who's been killing it and humble him and remind him that the game can turn around on him in a heartbeat; play the game the same way every single day. You're just helping guys grow up and we get to do it through a game that we both appreciate and love."

It's fair to say things have worked out well for Cullman baseball during the Bowen and Patterson eras but the latter isn't done adding to his legacy yet. As of today, Patterson now holds 405 total wins after the season was cut short in March due to COVID-19 and hopefully he and the Bearcats can continue adding to that number when a new season gets underway next year.



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History

– TRIBUNE ARCHIVES –

Big gray eagle killed by J.R. Martin Friday

Cullman Tribune- Jan. 11, 1917

Mr. J.R. Martin, an enterprising farmer and good citizen, who lives seven miles south of Cullman on the Bremen Pike, killed a large gray eagle near his residence on last Friday morning about 10 o'clock that measured seven feet six inches from tip to tip of wings.

Mr. Martin was at work in his barn lot when his attention was called by the screams of the crows and was surprised on looking up to see flying low was the mammoth bird that the crows were giving a chase.

He went into the house and got his gun and followed the eagle to the nearby woods on the side of the mountain where the eagle lit on a limb of a tree.

He fired and proved a good marksman, bringing the bird to the ground.

On Saturday, Mr. Martin brought the eagle to Cullman and presented it to the Tribune office where it was viewed by many passersby.

We are now having the bird mounted by Mrs. Beseh, an expert taxidermist, for preservation as it is seldom one of these rare and lofty birds are to be seen in this part of the country.

A note from Oct 2020: *According to Cullman County Museum Director Drew Green, "We used to have that bird (Golden Eagle). Grady Griffith loaned it to us, and before he died, he promised someone they could have it and we had to give it back because it was on loan."*

The bird was named "Eagle Eye" and had its own column that ran in The Tribune, keeping up with all the gossip and interesting happenings in and around Cullman.

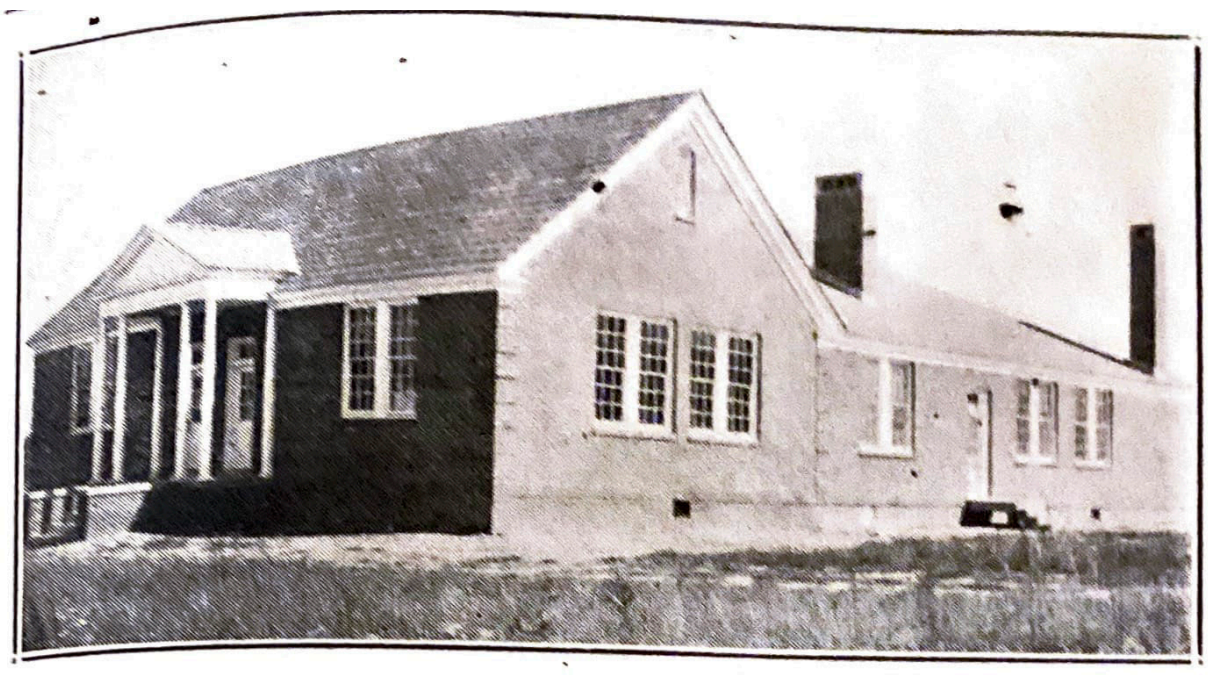


CULLMAN COUNTY MUSEUM

The bird was named "Eagle Eye" and had its own column that ran in The Tribune, keeping up with all the gossip and interesting happenings in and around Cullman.

'THE MARCH OF PROGRESS IN CULLMAN COUNTY'

Take a walk into the past with this selection of articles from the Thursday, September 28, 1939 special issue supplement of the Cullman Tribune



The vocational building at Cold Springs. This is the last senior high school established in the county to date.

MISSISSIPPIANS FOUND PLENTY OF TIMBER AND CHOSE CULLMAN AS THEIR HOME

"There's plenty of timber over in Cullman County, Alabama," commented one of the Moore brothers back in '29.

"Right you are", responded his brother, and to Cullman County they came.

A year later they were joined by W. T. Newton.

Before the days of the depression G. M. Moore was inspecting hardwood lumber in Belmont, Miss., while his brother, C. L. operated a lumber mill in Kilmichael, Miss. They had been in these separate lines of endeavor for ten years and were looking for a place to begin a business of their own when they came across Cullman.

W. T. Newton, who sold lumber wholesale in Tupelo and Grenada, Miss., was invited by the Moore brothers to join in their new enterprise in Alabama. He considered the proposal and in 1930 became a member of the firm of Moore-Newton.

The Moore families and Newton family have erected beautiful residences in Cullman. The Moorse and the Newtons are active in church, social and civic circles. Mr. Newton is serving as president of the Cullman Kiwanis Club this year.

The Moore-Newton plant which is located on the Bee Line Highway in the northern section of the city is headquarters for Genasco roofing, Gilman paints and a full line of building materials. They are equipped to furnish their patrons with rough or dressed lumber; either air or kiln dried.

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Trade Day in Cullman during the boom times of the twenties.

CULLMAN BEAUTY SHOP

The Cullman Beauty Shop on Third Street, East of the U. S. Post Office, is steadily becoming known as the beauty shop in Cullman with the famous Rilling Kool-erwave equipment.

The owners, W. L. Shaw and Mrs. Vergie Drinkard, have given to Cullman a remodeled shop with improved beauty services. This beauty shop was formerly operated by Miss Lorene Bass.

Mr. Shaw and Mrs. Drinkard invite the ladies of Cullman and the surrounding trade area to visit the Cullman Beauty Shop.

A few minutes at the Cullman Beauty Shop will give you an idea why this shop is being recognized as one of the leading factors in beauty culture in Cullman.

CULLMAN COUNTY WAY AHEAD IN FIRST PRIZES AT THE STATE FAIRS

"Cullman County has been awarded more first prizes by State Fairs in Alabama than any other county in the state," said R. C. (Bob) Calloway, Superintendent of the Agriculture Department of the State Fair Association.

Mr. Calloway, a resident of Cullman County, has served at this job since 1917. During the years, 1931 to 1933, there were no state fairs. He has been under three different managements since 22 years ago. His record of no damage suits or protests to a judge's decision in his department during his lengthy period of service is outstanding.

In answer to our inquiry for the reason for the many first prices coming to the county, Mr. Calloway stated, "My father-in-law, J. M. Crutchfield who lived three miles out from town on the Eva road carried first prize for 18 years. He made a careful study of the general county display. When one fair ended he prepared for another. In the fall of the year he would get the ground on his farm in condition and plant the different varieties of grains. About six or seven weeks before a fair he went about the county collecting the things he had not raised on his acreage. He would take an assortment of Cullman County farm products for the fair exhibit which could not be touched ordinarily by entries from other counties."

When asked what the exhibitors from the other counties thought about Mr. Crutchfield's art of getting the blue ribbons, Bob responded, "They dreaded him but there wasn't anything they could do about it."

Since Mr. Crutchfield's death in 1927, W. H. Powe of Cullman Route 2 near Center Grove, is keeping Cullman County farm products on parade at the State Fairs.

CULLMAN CREAMERY IS ONE OF CULLMAN'S PROGRESSIVE FIRMS

When thinking of the industrial side of Cullman, one can hardly overlook the continued growth and the importance of the Cullman Creamery. It was started in 1924 by C. H. Klein, who was born in Chicago, Illinois. Years ago Mr. Klein came to Cullman County with his parents and lived on a farm near Vinemont. When the call to colors was sounded, he was among the boys who served the stars and stripes in the great European conflict. After the close of the war, Mr. Klein entered Mississippi A. & M., specializing in the study of dairying. Upon completing the dairy course he chose Cullman to begin his business career.

Mr. Klein, his wife and family are identified in the progress of Cullman and Cullman County. Their cooperative spirit has placed them in the minds of the people for a wide area surrounding Cullman. Their industrious nature and the willingness of their employeers have been outstanding factors in the development of their worthwhile institution.

The steady increase in the dairy line enjoyed by the Cullman Creamery has been an inspiration to other business firms in their particular fields of endeavor in Cullman.

With the continued growth of this section of Alabama, pasteurized milk, butter milk, ice cream, orange-ade, chocolate milk, and other products from the Cullman Creamery are being consumed more and more by the folks of Cullman and the surrounding counties.

Eureka Barber Shop

The Eureka Barber Shop, located just a few steps north of the courthouse, is among Cullman's best equipped and most efficiently managed shops. Sanitary and spotless at all times, the patron's individual comfort and requirements are carefully considered and given minute attention.

The place is under the management of Leo Hamrick, who has engaged in the barbering business in Cullman for the past 12 years. He came here from Winston County, his native home, and during this period has built up a clientele which includes a large part of North Alabama.

Mr. Hamrick is a member of the well-known Hamrick family of Winston, who were among the early settlers of that county. He is married and has two children, a boy and a girl.

Hauk Family Has Been Manufacturing Ice In Cullman Since The 90s

The Cullman Ice Factory is one of the older industries in Cullman, and is said to be one of the first ice plants established in this section of Alabama.

The late Ernst Hauk, a native of Saxony, Germany, operated a meat market for a time after his coming to Cullman in 1884. While engaged in the meat business he saw the possibilities of an ice plant. In March 1895 he brought to Cullman its first ice-making machine—a unit of 5 ton capacity. On the 6th day of June he made the first ice sale. The late Mrs. A. Dinkleberg (known by children for miles around as the lady at the Santa Claus store) was the first cutsomer.

Mr. Hauk continued to improve his plant from year to year. Since his death in 1930, his son, Louis E. Hauk, has efficiently managed this industry. In recent years he has acquired special equipment for icing refrigeration cars packed with Cullman County strawberries. Additional machinery has placed the capacity of the plant at 25 tons. This makes it one of the most up-to-date ice plants in Alabama.

Telephones In Cullman Indicate Business Trend

When the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company. purchased the interests of the Cullman Telephone Company on the 25th of April, 1905, there were slightly more than 100 phones in operation in the city. By 1920 there were 392 phones. Ten years later, the peak period, before the depression had greatly spread in Alabama, there numbered 570 phones. By 1933 the total number of sets dropped to 484.

Registering a healthy increase since the dark days of business stagnation, 700 phones are now listed as being in operation in Cullman.

THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
OCTOBER 17, 2020



Ashley Wilson stands in front of a photo of her son, Curt Wilson.

W.C. MANN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

CULLMAN TRIBUNE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Ashley Wilson

W.C. Mann
craig@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. - It takes a special person to turn unthinkable tragedy into something beautiful. Ashley Wilson did it, and for that reason she is The Cullman Tribune Citizen of the Year.

The unthinkable

On May 7, 2017, Wilson's world changed forever, and for all the wrong reasons. Driving home from a shopping trip, with her son Curtis "Curt" Wilson in the passenger seat of the truck she had borrowed from her father, she approached Van's Sporting Goods on County Road 222 as Brad Meeks was approaching from the opposite direction. Evidence would later indicate that Meeks was driving drunk with a blood alcohol concentration approximately three times the legal limit. Meeks drifted across the center line on the two-lane road, narrowly missing a car in front of Wilson. When that vehicle swerved out of the way, Wilson got her first sight of Meeks' Ford Ranger coming straight at her. She also attempted to veer to her left, but it was too late. The head-on collision sent Wilson to Cullman Regional; her son was airlifted to Children's Hospital in Birmingham. Despite heroic efforts by emergency responders, the medical air crew and the trauma team at Children's, Curt Wilson was pronounced dead a little over two hours after the crash.

Meeks was indicted for reckless murder and other crimes. Earlier this year, he was found guilty on a reduced charge of criminally negligent homicide, along with DUI with a blood alcohol concentration greater than .08, unsafe lane change and third-degree assault for the injuries to Ashley Wilson. He received the maximum possible sentences for the crimes of which he was convicted, 12 years. He has appealed the convictions.

Curt

A month after the crash, Wilson talked to The Tribune about her son, saying, "Curt was absolutely amazing! He was the most loving, caring, happy child, and I'm not just saying it because he's my child. He was. He was special. He would never leave a room until you were laughing or smiling; it was just his character. He could walk into the room to ask me what was for dinner, and he would stand at the doorway until I would smile back at him.

"You could be having the worst day ever, and Curt would make it the brightest. In his own little way, he would turn any day into an amazing day. He just wanted everybody to be happy. He loved life."

The concluding statement of Curt Wilson's Cullman Funeral Home obituary would prove nothing short of prophetic: "Everyone that loved Curt needs to know that he will not die in vain. Something good, something great will carry on in his name. That is how Curtis will be remembered. He will continue to bring light and joy, just as he did in his brief but beautiful life."

Something beautiful - the founding of Curt's Closet

Two months after the crash, Wilson did something to make sure that her son's name would be remembered, founding a charitable ministry to provide clothing and accessories to children and youth of families in need, and to give it to them in a way that maintained their dignity and affirmed their worth. She created a boutique where kids and their families can "shop" free of charge.

As she was setting up the ministry, Wilson told The Tribune, "It's called Curt's Closet, and it's something that God laid on my heart many years ago. Like most of us do, I put it off due to fear of stepping out of my comfort zone, but if I've learned anything in the past two months, it's that we're not promised tomorrow. We need to do the works of Christ, because that's why we're here: to love and to give.

"I would love to collect new and gently used clothing, shoes, backpacks and lunchboxes, and have it where families in need could come and let their children pick out items new to them, so they can go back to school feeling good about themselves and knowing that others love them. As a single parent, I know the burden of the expense of getting your kids back in school. It adds up so quickly. There's a lot of parents out there that are just not financially able to do that, so their kids do without."

Wilson later explained why she wanted this type of ministry to preserve her son's memory, telling The Tribune, "Curt was the most giving, loving child I've ever known. He would have given you the shirt off of his back, if he had known you needed it, and this is just my goal: to keep spreading the love and compassion he had for everybody he met. This is my way of continuing that in God's name, and making sure my baby's name is never forgotten, and blessing this beautiful, awesome community that we live in."

In July 2017, Wilson said she hoped to be able to distribute clothing and accessories in time for the 2018-19 school year, over a year away. But some things are just meant to be: by mid-January 2018, she and friends were sorting clothes in a former church building at 1515 St. Joseph St. NW. On Thursday, March 1, 2018, Curt's Closet opened its doors.

At an open house shortly before the official opening, Wilson said, "This is all God. It is all God. Everything you see here- He has blessed this from day one. I just have to give Him the glory."

Just before Christmas, Wilson and a team of volunteers delivered more than 200 gifts, along with turkeys and groceries, to families in need.

After stopping to eat following one delivery, volunteer Misti McCombs Easter wrote that she and Wilson "got into our cars and headed to our respective homes. I'm not even sure if she knew I was still behind her when she got to the entrance of the cemetery, but I saw her turn and I knew what she was doing.

She had to go tell her precious Curt about the blessings that took place today in his memory. Of course, he already knew because his presence follows her everywhere she goes, and his spirit lives on through every act of generosity and kindness extended by her. He's never 'gone.' He's always here. And he's up there...smiling down on her and holding her place. I hope she feels his love especially BIG tonight!"

By the end of 2018, Curt's Closet had served 418 families and 662 children.

The Curtis Wilson-Stephanie Harmon Interlock Act

A new Alabama law passed during the 2018 Legislative Session increased penalties for people charged with DUI, requiring the installation of ignition interlock devices in their vehicles, even if they enter a diversion program, closing a loophole in the existing interlock law.

By a joint legislative resolution spearheaded by former Sen. Paul Bussman, R-Cullman, the law was named the Curtis Wilson-Stephanie Harmon Interlock Act, for Wilson's son and a Montgomery college student killed by a drunk driver.

When Bussman surprised Wilson with a presentation of the resolution at Daystar Church, he told the audience that efforts had been underway for years to pass such a measure, and that it was Curt's story that led to success in the 2018 session.

Leaving the church that evening, Wilson told The Tribune that she was "blown away," sharing, "I had no idea. And extremely honored, yes. I am actually speechless. I don't know what to say, because I am just blown away by this.

"And to think that Curt's death is going to help prevent any family from going through this . . . I'm thankful that something good's coming out of it."

Two years and counting

In the last two years, Curt's Closet has benefited from a community-wide outpouring of generosity: churches, schools, groups, organizations and individuals have undertaken drives to gather clothing and accessories and raise money. People have gotten creative:

• A woman challenged her relatives to bring shoes to the family Thanksgiving dinner, and the family donated 114 pairs.

• The Miss Cullman Area Pageant challenged contestants to bring donations and gave 1,663 articles of clothing.

• The Cullman Middle School Special Education class raised $515 selling and delivering coffee to faculty at the school through the school year.

• Choice Rentals hosted a classic and custom car cruise-in, raising more than $1,600.

• Numerous businesses have held item-specific donation drives for items like underwear or coats.

• Sacred Heart School held an underwear drive and donated almost 2,000 pairs, awarding a "Captain Underpants" trophy to its largest donor, the sixth-grade class.

• Cullman EMS donated more than $2,000 from its 2020 Chili Cookoff.

• Crossfit256 and Cullman County Wranglers donated proceeds from a cornhole tournament.

• When COVID-19 hit, Hygenix CSR came and cleaned the boutique before reopening.

• Monograms Plus matched clothing donations during tax-free weekend.

The list could go on extensively.

In May 2019, on the Saturday closest to the anniversary of Curt Wilson's death, the charity hosted "Clothed in Cullman," a fundraising luncheon and fashion show with 42 sponsors and donors-some even from other states-that raised more than $18,000 in one day.

A slideshow running during the event included testimonials from clients.

One read: "I don't think words adequately express how grateful I am to have found Curt's Closet in a time when I really needed it the most.

"I have several children and getting them all clothed for school is quite a challenge. Not only did I receive clothes from Curt's Closet for my children, but they were very NICE clothes, something we could never have been able to afford otherwise.

"It gives my children a sense of confidence to be able to go to school and not feel like the 'hand me down' kid. I grew up not having this opportunity and it makes me feel good to be able to provide them with that.

"I really want people to know that this is a great service and greatly appreciated by those in this community who have benefited from it."

When Curt's Closet was hit by a rush prior to the 2019-20 school year, photos of empty shelves hit social media, and the community jumped to respond. Numerous businesses and groups held drives and made material and financial donations, and in one week's time around 30 anonymous donors stopped by the boutique to drop off bags of new clothing.

By the end of 2019 Curt's Closet had served approximately 1,650 children who came through the organization's regular qualification process, plus a number of other children who were referred by the Cullman County Department of Human Resources and Victim Services of Cullman, or who faced loss from emergency circumstances like house fires.

Wilson pointed out, "1,650 children is almost three times greater than the number we served in 2018. You can see the growth of Curt's Closet since we opened in March of 2018. We could not do it without the continued support of this amazing community.

"There are so many to thank, such as Apel Steel, Traditions Bank, Bentley Masonry. There's no way to thank everyone, from the small churches that support us monthly, to the countless others who drop off donations daily to our drop-off locations. I always leave out so many when asked about our supporters. We appreciate all of them, no matter how small or how large."

Looking back

On the second anniversary of the late February open house that preceded the official 2018 opening, Wilson told The Tribune, "It's extremely humbling, because my vision for Curt's Closet was never what it is today. You know, I had a very small vision; I actually just wanted to do like one week a year, right before school. That was my vision, kind of like Kids' Mart does.



W.C. MANN FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Ashley Wilson (center) of Curt's Closet with the sixth-grade class of Sacred Heart School

"God actually gave me this vision way before Curt was taken. It was just something that was always heavy on my heart. I always had a heart for children, because they're such innocent victims in life's circumstances. And, you know, they can't help the circumstances that they live in. I guess that's where my heart for children has always been, because I see so many children hurting.

"But God actually gave me this vision many years before Curt was taken, and just- I thought it was just out of fear and out of stepping out of my comfort zone I'd never done it. But today I see that God was prepping me for a journey that He knew I was going to have to take. And thank God it was His vision and not mine, because His vision and His plan is so much better and so much bigger than what I would have done.

"I never imagined that I would be doing something weekly for Curt's Closet. The Chili Cookoff was yesterday, and then we have Buffalo Wild Wings tomorrow night; I'm speaking for the Pilot Club in a few weeks.

"I never, in a million years, though I'd be doing stuff like this. It's so much bigger and better than I ever imagined, and it's because God is at the center of it, and it's His plan, and this amazing community that has just rallied behind me from day one, and has really made Curt's Closet what it is, because without the support of this community, you know I couldn't do it. So I'm very thankful that God opened these doors for me, because it has definitely been a lifesaver for me."

Curt's Closet had to close temporarily with the onset of COVID-19 shutdowns but was back up and running soon. Along the way, Wilson raised funds for other local charities and used her growing social media presence to promote local businesses. In early October, Curt's Closet even sent clothing to victims of Hurricane Sally on the Gulf Coast.

Making a difference on the road, too

In the midst of coronavirus concerns in April, Wilson's mother Diane Harrington Lee quietly published "Chocolate Covered Strawberries: Remembering Curt," a book telling the stories of Curt's life and death, and of the aftermath for the Wilsons and related families.

Lee explained to The Tribune that she wanted to help preserve Curt's memory, but had another purpose in mind, as well:

"I want to do something to stop drunk driving. I feel like, if a drunk driver read this book, he would have to have some emotions about it; he would have to, and maybe he would think twice before he drove drunk again. So, my goal is to get it into the hands of the offender in these programs that they have for them. Why wouldn't they let them read that book?

"The other thing is: I want it to be in driver's ed classes in high school, because kids can relate to Curt through reading this book, and I want it to impress upon them to not drive drunk when they grow up or when they're in high school."

Seeing the signs

In June, as country star Alan Jackson prepared to visit Cullman for an experimental drive-in concert at the Rock the South venue, a dream coming out of Wilson's nightmare came true. She had wanted to do something to promote safe driving and prevent drunk driving around the RTS event site, and friends Camilla and Willy Hendrix- along with some anonymous supporters- stepped up and placed four permanent signs on the approaches to the site, signs saying "Don't drink and drive" and "In memory of Curt Wilson."

Camilla Hendrix told The Tribune, "If it stops just one person, just makes one person stop and say, 'You know what? I don't need to drive home; I need to find somebody to drive me home' or 'I need to call somebody,' or stay put or find a different way, if it just makes them stop and not attempt to drive home, then it's worth it. One person at a time- if it can stop one person at a time, we can make a difference."

The Tribune and RTS founder and head of Premier Productions Shane Quick visited one of the signs ahead of the Jackson concert and recorded a public service announcement encouraging concertgoers to enjoy themselves wisely.

Looking ahead

Asked what is next for Curt's Closet, Wilson said, "The board members and I have discussed over the last few months: we do have some future plans of- we have definitely outgrown where we're at. We're all in agreement that we love the location. I love that it used to be a church. It's in a great location, but we've outgrown it, because it's so amazing.

"So we do have some plans in the works, hopefully, for a bigger building. We hope to announce our vision in that by the end of the year; there's a lot of planning that goes into that step. I personally, you know, I would love to see it grow maybe in different locations, different counties. Now, that's a five- or 10-year plan.

"We've got to work out all the kinks here in Cullman first, but, so far, God has seen everything fall into place.

"I would love to start, if we do get a bigger place, I would love to be able to do sporting equipment, because that was a passion of Curt's, and I know the expense of putting your child into a sport, and the expense of the equipment and even the clothing, the treats. So I would love to be able to extend from just the clothing and shoes into sporting equipment."

Citizen of the Year

When The Tribune staff met to plan its Community Matters edition, the floor was opened to nominations for Citizen of the Year. Wilson was the first suggested, and there would be no other nominations. The choice was unanimous.

After a little time for the shock to wear off, Wilson reacted, "I'm extremely honored and humbled by this, that I can think of so many others that's so more deserving. I was in total shock when I heard this. I'm actually speechless when it comes to this; I don't know how to- I'm the type of person, I do not know how to accept those kinds of things, because I don't see it. I'm just doing what I love and what brings me joy, and I actually feel selfish because I get so much joy out of what I do. I tell people all the time that I feel guilty because I feel like Curt's Closet's more of a blessing to me than (to) the people that come in.

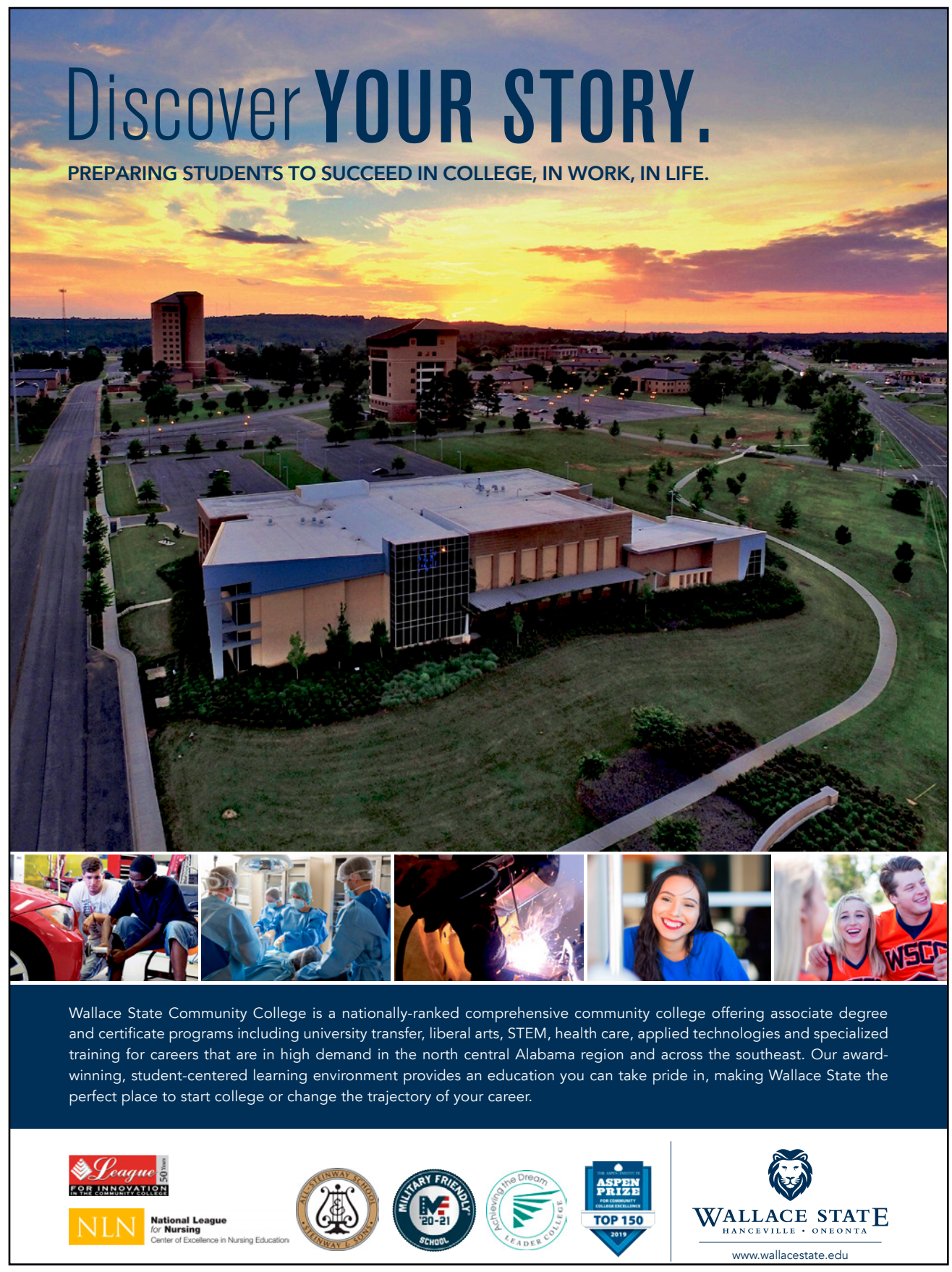
"But I'm very honored that my name was even mentioned and brought up for this."

Curt's Closet board member Helen Lewis told The Tribune, "I think that, in the face of something as tragic as what happened, I think that you really see the true nature of a person. I think that Ashley has just really shown this community what she is. She is that good, she is that selfless and has always been, but now it shows even more."

Get involved!

As Curt's Closet continues to grow, so does its need for help. Volunteers are gladly accepted and will undergo orientation and training for the things they will be asked to do. The boutique is in constant need of tennis shoes, blue jeans and new underwear, as these are the items that leave the shelves most quickly.

To make a donation or to find out more about volunteering, visit www.facebook.com/cw20curtscloset/.



THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
OCTOBER 17, 2020

Seniors

Year in limbo for area seniors

Christy Perry
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SETH MILLER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Part of the cast of "Hee Haw" is seen at a February performance at the Donald E. Green Active Adult Center in Cullman.

CULLMAN, Ala. - The optimism and hope that come with each new year certainly existed as people across Cullman County welcomed the new Roaring 20s. For a couple of months, 2020 seemed like it would be another great year, but whispers of a new strain of coronavirus were beginning to grow louder and louder. Soon, life seemed more like a bad sci-fi movie, and every single facet of life was turned upside down. For Cullman area seniors, this year has been exceptionally cruel, but it comes as no surprise that they continue to handle this pandemic in stride and with grace.

In January, residents at Westminster Assisted Living were busy collecting cans of soup for Cullman Caring for Kids as a way to give back to the community they are still very much a part of. In hindsight, the smiling, laughing and fellowship of that day were enjoyed but perhaps taken for granted. As of Oct. 17, 2020, it has been 220 days since residents at nursing and assisted living facilities were locked down and 220 days since friends could gather at the senior centers they love.

Also in January, The "Has-Beens" of the Good Hope Sizzlin Seniors celebrated their first ever bean bag baseball victory against their senior center rivals, the Sizzlin' Ladies. News spread to the Fairview Senior Center of the up and coming Sizzlin' Senior teams and a showdown was set.

Still in January, friends and family gathered at Woodland Nursing Home to celebrate the 100th birthday of Idell Williams. The joy it brought her to see some of her 11 children, 32 grandchildren, 43 great-grandchildren and four great-great grandchildren was beyond measure. Ms. Idell passed away March 23, 2020, nine days after Alabama nursing homes were ordered to halt all visitors.

We met Mr. Virgil Henry at Hanceville Nursing and Rehab Center shortly after his 101st birthday. Henry spoke about his "sweetheart" Ruth. He and Ruth were looking forward to celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. He said of Ruth, "She is a doll. She's my sweetheart and I love her! She comes to see me about every day. She's a good one." Mr. Henry also passed away March 23, 2020.

In February, the Cullman High School Jazz Band's Big Band Dance was held at Stone Bridge Farms. Cullman's World War II veterans were in attendance and honored. They also enjoyed a night of 40s era swing and jazz while some showed the kids how to dance. It was a magical night. Many of the heroes honored that night were soon in self quarantine to protect themselves, and they remain at home today.

One of the heroes honored that night was Spud Campbell, a member of the Merchant Marines and a war hero who helped save the lives of many Norwegian refugees and 28 crew members of the S.S. Henry Bacon when the ship was sunk off the Northern Coast of Norway. Mr. Campbell, a resident at Morningside Assisted Living, passed away April 13, 2020. He is survived by his older brother Julian Campbell who had celebrated his 100th birthday in February with Spud by his side.

Senior centers across the county had a great Valentine's Day. Many of the centers crowned Valentine Kings and Queens. In Baileyton, Janese and Jerry Mead were crowned while in Fairview Cora Harris and Michael Stidham were voted Valentine's Day Royalty. Over at Westminster Assisted Living, residents selected Martha Ashbaugh and Louis Prince as their queen and king of the Valentine's Day Sock Hop.

In late February, the showdown between the Sizzlin' Seniors of Good Hope and the Recycled Teenagers of Fairview was set. Fairview, the veteran beanbag baseballers, had homefield advantage and boy did they take advantage of it! The Sizzlin' Seniors took the loss well as that meant they were first up in the line for food. Everyone was excited about the possibility of continuing the meetings throughout the year and talked of plans of having other centers join in on the fun.

Days later, the senior centers were closed, but not before Fairview was able to crown the 2020 "Queen" and other winners of its womanless beauty pageant. Katherine "Kenneth" Graham was selected as the loveliest of them all!!

Perhaps the last large event was the always fantastic "Hee-Haw Show" put on by Senior Outreach. In 2020 these talented seniors performed two shows to standing room only crowds. One show was at the Donald E. Green Active Adult Center and the second at the Hanceville Senior Center. One of the amazing musical talents in the Hee Haw cast, Gary (Buddy) Nunn, portrayed George Jones and Wille Nelson and was a crowd favorite. Nunn, who was retired from the Air Force and a former schoolteacher, passed away June 8, 2020 at the age of 70.

Entering into March, the buzz and concern over the coronavirus and the new term COVID-19 grew by the hour. The uncertainty about this new virus led to what so many people thought would be a short postponement of activities and events. Postponements turned into cancellations and temporary closures morphed into long-term, and in some cases, permanent shutdowns. The most stringent of COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions would be, and continues to be, placed on our amazing seniors.

The Ms. Senior Cullman County Pageant and the Strawberry Festival and Senior Days at the Strawberry Festival and Cullman County Fair did not happen this year. No more bingo, bean bag baseball, dominoes or other wonderful activities. Daily socializing and meals were no longer available, and seniors were told to stay home.

Nursing homes and assisted living facilities quickly created new ways to keep morale high in while keeping residents safe from the spread of the virus. Families visited through windows and dedicated workers helped facilitate Facetime and other means for families to stay in touch. Pen pal campaigns were started, and activities directors worked non-stop thinking of new and fun activities.

Then, in May came the car parades. Each and every car parade was a blessing and an act of love that brought joy and hope to countless people. The Cullman County Wranglers assembled more than 100 Jeeps from around north and central Alabama and were joined by the Saints Motorcycle Club. They decorated their vehicles and visited multiple nursing home facilities in Falkville, Cullman and Hanceville. Families loaded up in the backs of trucks and packed into cars for a brief chance to yell "I love you" to their loved ones. They honked, waved, held signs and cried tears of joy upon seeing their family members.

By May, hopes of restrictions being lifted were fading and the realization that the senior centers that so many loved, their livelihoods, would remain closed. The sadness and frustration could be seen and heard when The Tribune sat down with Cullman County Commission on Aging Director Dusty Baker, who said, "We are ready to see them and hug their necks."

The Commission on Aging continues to serve hot meals via drive-thru services as well as delivering meals to those who are homebound. Center directors took time to deep clean and make improvements to the centers in anticipation of the seniors' return. The dedicated staff at the Commission on Aging and Donald E. Green Active Adult Center brainstormed ways to keep seniors engaged during the shutdown.

Long-term care facilities also got creative and found ways for their residents to see their familes, even if it was from a distance.

The Folsom Center wasn't going to stand in the way of true love. Caregivers helped plan a wonderful "sunshine visit" with the family John and Jerry Brindley so they could celebrate 65 years of marriage.

As the loving couple sat socially-distanced, masked and separated by plexiglass, one couldn't help but be frustrated while oddly joyous at the same time. The lovebirds enjoyed cupcakes while their family waved and took photos from a distance while understanding and appreciating the effort the staff at Folsom Center put in to make sure the celebration could happen.

Across town at Morningside Assisted Living, the family of Barbara Faye Speegle formed a parade, decorated their vehicles with balloons and streamers and drove through the facility's parking lot as they said Happy Birthday to their beloved Nana. She was thrilled to see all her grand-, great- and great-great grandbabies, but nothing can replace receiving an actual hug.

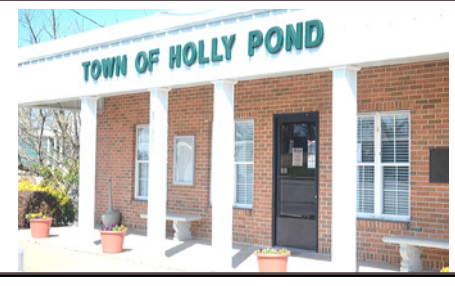
Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day and Independence Day came and went. Others began to return to some normalcy, but not the seniors. Restrictions were relaxed regarding retail stores, bars and events, but the restrictions placed on seniors remained tight. The Senior Shindig, Senior Day at the Strawberry Festival, Senior Fishing Day are just a few of the highly anticipated events that did not happen in 2020.

As late summer approached, it became clear that Senior Day at the Cullman County Fair and Senior Day at Oktoberfest would not be happening either. Veterans Day is quickly approaching and many of those brave men and women typically enjoy a week of events honoring their service to our country. The handful of World War II veterans the community is blessed to have might be sitting this year's celebrations out due to the ongoing pandemic.

Cullman Parks, Recreation and Sports Tourism and the Cullman Commission on Aging have found ways to bring the game of bingo back for seniors to enjoy. Drive-thru and outdoor bingo allows for social distancing. Walking groups have been gathering, utilizing the many walking trails around Cullman County. All of these activities are fantastic and those making them happen deserve a huge thank you. Their love and creativity are a breath of fresh air.

However, nothing can take the place of sitting down together and sharing a meal. Nothing can replace a hug or a handshake. Nothing can replace visiting with family and loved ones. Nothing will be normal until our seniors are free to return to normal.

We miss you and we love you!

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Festivals

Fewer festivals in pandemic year

Most festivals in Cullman County were canceled this year, with the COVID-19 pandemic leading organizers to instead look toward 2021. Two events that did take place recently were a scaled-back Oktoberfest celebration and the Cullman County Fair. Enjoy a few photos from each, and join The Tribune in looking forward to a bigger and better 2021 festival season.

OKTOBERFEST



W.C. MANN FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

2020 Cullman Oktoberfest Burgermeister Steve Sides cuts the ribbon to officially open the festival.



W.C. MANN FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Former Cullmanite Kurt Heinecke, now with the band Polkawagen, gets up close and personal with the crowd Friday afternoon.



W.C. MANN FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Hay People welcome visitors to the biergarten.



CHRISTY PERRY FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

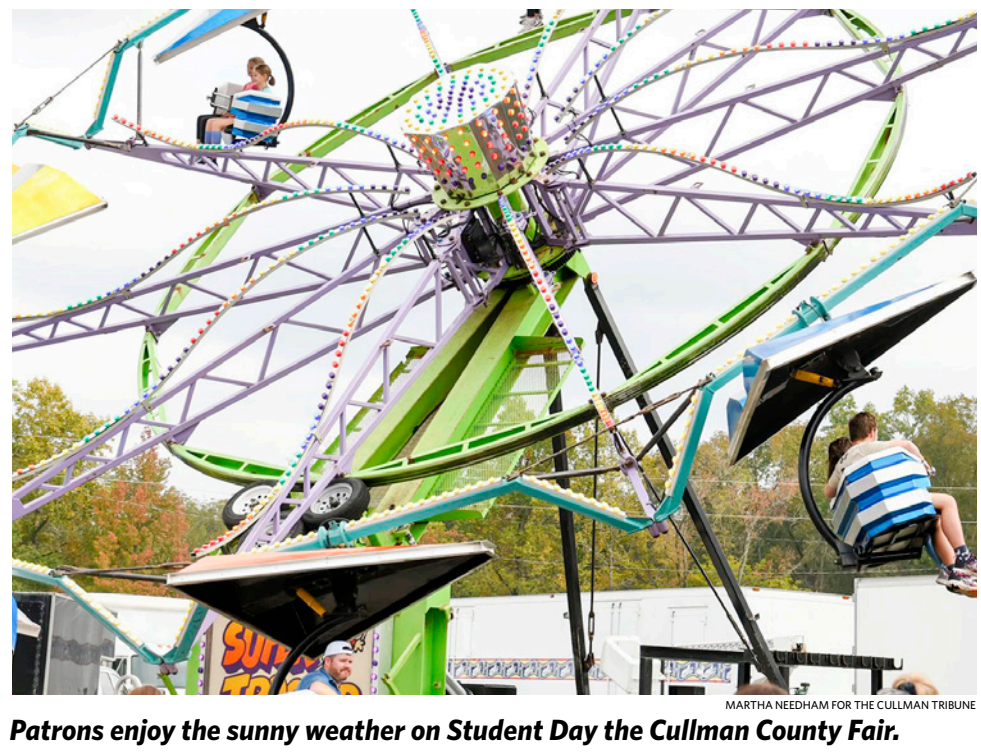
Mr. Big and coach Tia Smallwood receive their championship accolades after Mr. Big won the wiener dog race.

CULLMAN COUNTY FAIR



MARTHA NEEDHAM FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Atmos-Fear lived up to its name for these fairgoers.



MARTHA NEEDHAM FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Patrons enjoy the sunny weather on Student Day the Cullman County Fair.



W.C. MANN FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Ferris wheel is a popular draw at the Cullman County Fair each year.



JANET CHANDLER FOR THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Thomas McConnell won two first-place ribbons and one third-place ribbon for his art at the Cullman County Fair.

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MAGGIE DARNELL/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Artist Heath McClain created this centerpiece, "A Farmer," for Art Park. McClain is a Vinemont native who lives in New York City. He serves as the art director for the television series 'Forged in Fire' on The History Channel.

Art and functionality at Cullman's Art Park

Christy Perry
christy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – At the corner of Main Avenue Southwest and Second Street Southwest is the 1.8-acre Cullman Art Park. Once a bit of an eyesore, the former Cullman Park is now an inviting and whimsical space with unique features that are sure to bring out everybody's inner artist. Art Park has been a welcome change to those in the neighborhood adjacent to it.

"Cullman has a whole lot to offer as far as parks and recreational facilities. There's something for everyone! But we were lacking a little bit in the arts. So, after meeting with several local artists, our parks and recreation folks, and the Wallace State Art Department, we decided that the perfect place to highlight the arts in our community is at the oldest park in Cullman!" said Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs. "The park now features artwork including murals by local artists and a statue created by Heath McClain, which is the centerpiece of the park. The building on the property is the site of many different art programs. Art Park also features updated lighting, new playground equipment on turf that includes a 'sensory play' area, a small amphitheater and a deck suitable for various types of small events. It was a community effort to transform this property into the ideal place for folks to experience and appreciate the arts, play with friends or just relax by the creek."

One of the first things guests may notice when entering the park is the small amphitheater. The three rows of seating are perfect for a small poetry reading or even an outdoor classroom. It is also a nice place to sit with friends for lunch.

Leading from the amphitheater is an ornate bridge crossing over the creek that runs through the park. The bridge is dedicated to the memory of Samuel J. Arrington, a much-loved employee of the Cullman Street Department.

The dedication plaque at the bridge reads, "Sam was as solid as the concrete he worked with. This bridge was his final project."

Once you have crossed the bridge, get ready to make some music. The park has several outdoor instruments for you to play and enjoy. If you have a percussionist in the family, be prepared to sit a minute as the music section is perfect for the family drummer.

Just past the instruments is the first of many major focal points Art Park has to offer. The playground is probably different from any of the other playgrounds you have seen. It has a rock-climbing challenge with the polyhedral climb. These fun geometric shapes create a great play option as well as a funky art piece.

Next to the polyhedral climb is the swing set/merry-go-round hybrid that is tons of fun. The playground also has two slides built into a hill, making the slides even with the ground. You can't fall off a slide that's already on the ground!

Another unique feature of this playground is that, rather than dirt, mulch or grass, the ground is covered with soft, eco-friendly outdoor artificial turf.

Another great aspect of the park's transformation to Art Park is the brilliant landscaping that not only makes the creek a centerpiece, but also opened the park up to the sunlight. There are still many trees for shade, but by removing some and replacing them with native wildflowers and plants, the space was made incredibly welcoming. Sidewalks now flank the creek for a nice place to walk or jog.

Pets will also love Art Park. There is plenty of room for them to run, play or even jump in for a quick splash in the water. Don't forget to bring what is needed to pick up after your pet.

Art Park's clever architects found a way to incorporate three well-kept bathrooms without ruining the artsy vibe. What simply appears to be a giant graffiti style mural actually houses the three amazingly spacious restrooms. So if someone tells you the restroom is by the Mona Lisa, they aren't crazy.

Following the sidewalks closer to Main Street, you will be greeted by more artwork including a piece by Cullman native Heath McClain and more murals by local artist Donald Walker and Adrian Scott from the Wallace State Community College Graphic Art & Design program. Make sure to look under the bridge and spot the giant octopus!

There are many seating options in Art Park, including what first looks like strange round sculptures. They are actually comfy benches to lie in while reading a book or just relaxing to the sounds of the nearby water. Everything about Art Park is a combination of art and functionality, which makes this particular park a true gem.

Art Park is open from sunrise to sundown. It is a wonderful escape and a fun place to play. It is also located in a neighborhood setting, so guests are reminded to be mindful of that. Art Park is maintained by Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism.



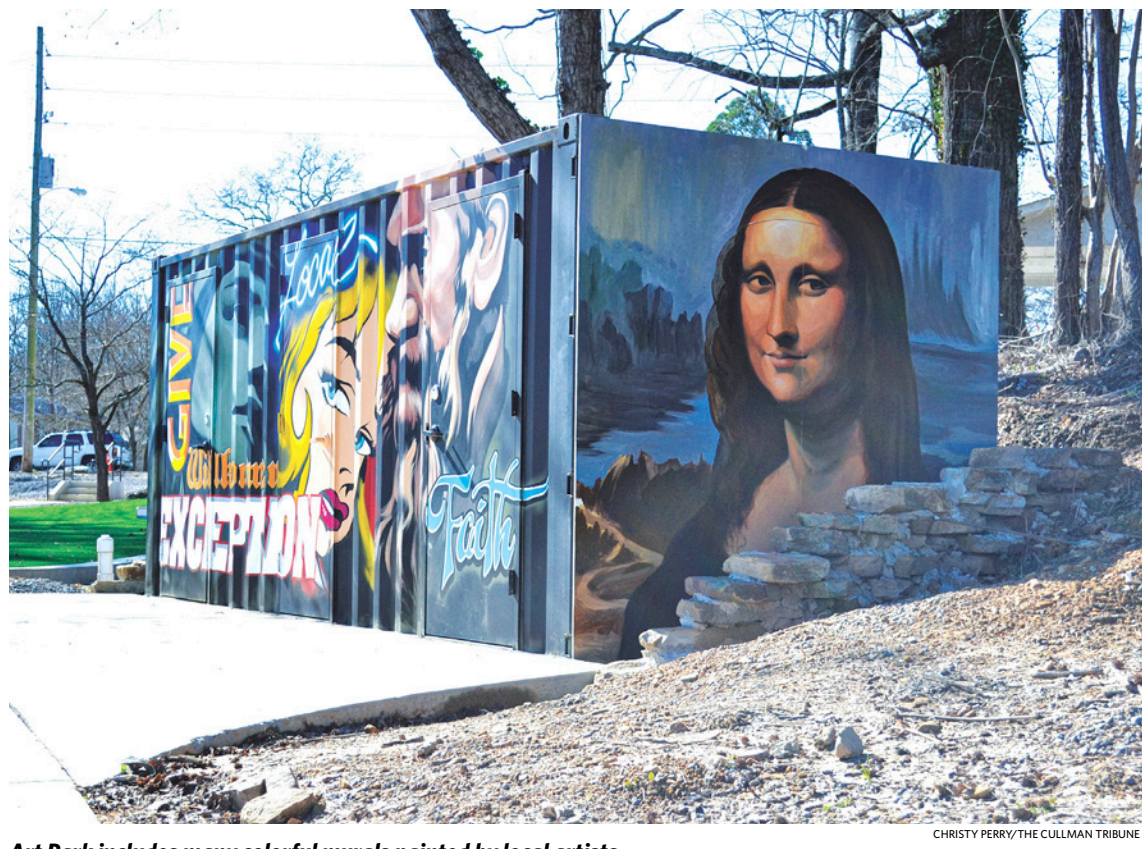
MAGGIE DARNELL/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Art Park also features new playground equipment on turf that includes a "sensory play" area.



CHRISTY PERRY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Green space runs through Art Park.



CHRISTY PERRY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Art Park includes many colorful murals painted by local artists.