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The Cullman Tribune

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NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

– SPORTS –

Bearcats earn 22nd straight postseason berth with 4-1 win over Muscle Shoals

» PAGE 6

PREP SPORTS

Meek's Miller, Hutchins, Webster announce college commitments

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

ARLEY, Ala. — Thursday morning was a special one at Meek High School. Three Tiger athletes were joined by family and friends in the library as they each committed to new destinations at the next level to continue their academic and athletic careers. Meek football standouts Blake Miller and Brayden Webster are taking their talents to Indiana to play for the Manchester College Spartans and Tigers cheerleader Evan Hutchins chose from a number of scholarship offers to continue his career at Shelton State.

Miller and Webster were big contributors to Meek High School's first undefeated season last fall and helped lead the Tigers » PAGE 7



TOMMY HUTCHINS

Meek's Blake Miller, Evan Hutchins and Brayden Webster announced their college commitments Thursday morning.

Cullman City Schools Foundation honors teachers, alumni



JANET CHANDLER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Left to right are Cullman City Schools Foundation President Steven Sides, teacher Amanda Stidham, teacher Mary Beth Cleveland, teacher Beth Collins, teacher Lori Andrews, teacher Katie McGee and Cullman City Schools Superintendent Kyle Kallhoff.

Tiffany McKoy
tsmckoy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The Cullman City Schools Foundation on Thursday, April 6, hosted its 12th annual Distinguished Alumni and Service Awards Luncheon. The event honored Teachers of the Year, as well as the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award and 2023 Distinguished Service Award winners.

"On behalf of our teachers, I want to thank those who contribute to this foundation. Because of your contributions, we're able to supplement materials and supplies. They're having a direct impact on student achievement," Cullman City Schools Superintendent Kyle Kallhoff said in his opening remarks.

Honored as Teachers of the Year for the 2022-2023 school year were:

- Amanda Stidham- Cullman City Primary School and Overall Elementary Teacher of the Year
- Katie McGee- Cullman Middle School and Overall Secondary Teacher of the Year
- Beth Collins- East Elementary School Teacher of the Year
- Mary Beth Cleveland-West Elementary School Teacher of the Year
- Lori Andrews- Cullman High School Teacher of the Year

Kris Allred, who graduated from Cullman High School in 1995 and is now the chief meteorologist at WSAV in Savannah, Georgia, was the recipient of the 2023 Cullman City Schools Foundation Distinguished Alumna Award. Allred was not able to attend the luncheon, but she did prepare a video expressing her thanks to » PAGE 10

Easter welcome



BEN JOHNSON SOUTH/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Happy Easter from the Woodlands and Wildflower Garden at Sportsman Lake. The tall vase of flowering dogwood blossoms and the antique garden bunny displayed by the Cullman County Master Gardeners welcome you to enjoy Easter brunch/lunch in the family circle picnic area!

Birmingham-Southern to remain open after Board of Trustees vote

» PAGE 8

Celebration of Nursing: WSCC event to include continuing education opportunity

» PAGE 2

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CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported April 7

Cullman Tribune staff
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — Below are the arrests and incidents reported April 7, 2023. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

GJ = grand jury; FTA = failure to appear

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INCIDENTS

April 3
- possession of marijuana; possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 1129
- assault; Hwy. 31
- harassment; I-65 SB
- theft of property; Hwy. 31
- domestic violence; Ryan Rd.
- theft of property; CR 437
- domestic violence; CR 1382
- burglary; CR 1363
- harassment; CR 1634
- harassment; CR 1428
- unlawful breaking entering motor vehicle; Hwy. 69 S
- unlawful breaking entering motor vehicle; I-65 NB rest area
- possession of controlled substance; possession of marijuana; possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 398
- criminal mischief; CR 1188

April 4
- domestic violence; CR 781
- domestic violence; CR 1664
- possession of controlled substance; Hwy. 69 N
- theft of property; CR 818
- failure to deliver title; CR 1815
- harassment; CR 818
- domestic violence; Weeks Cir.
- theft of property; CR 1118
- criminal mischief; CR 130
- criminal mischief; CR 431

April 5
- domestic violence; CR 1428
- possession of drug paraphernalia; Old Hamby Mill Rd.
- theft of property; CR 601
- possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 222
- possession of controlled substance; CR 1344
- theft of property; criminal tampering; CR 1422
- possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 490
- harassment; CR 1185
- possession of controlled substance; possession of drug paraphernalia; Hwy. 31

ARRESTS
April 3 – 5

Champion, Jennifer L.; 39
- Probation Violation-larceny/theft-shoplifting $500 less than $1,500

Farr, Larry D.; 62
- possession of marijuana
- possession of methamphetamine
- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense

Hudson, Michael S.; 48
- Motion to Revoke Bond- violation of court order

Huskey, Harold H.; 39
- FTA- assault-torture-willful abuse of child-non family

Jones, Mary M.; 32
- FTA- assault-torture-willful abuse of child-family

Little, Lyles S.; 24
- assault-domestic violence-strangulation or suffocation
- assault-domestic violence-3rd degree – criminal mischief-2nd degree
- attempting to elude police officer

Quick, Carliea; 51
- possession of methamphetamine
- FTA- possession of methamphetamine
- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- possession of marijuana-2nd degree

Raney, Maggie K.; 27
- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- possession of marijuana-2nd degree

Ray Jr., Phillip E.; 44
- Motion to Revoke-violation of a court order

Richardson, Nicholas S.; 31
- FTA- possession of marijuana-2nd degree

Scott, Haley A.; 27
- auto theft and sale

Smith, Tyler A.; 25
- assault-domestic-simple assault-family

Adams, Theresa S.; 53
- FTA- possession of methamphetamine
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense

Bates, Owain D.; 22
- possession of dangerous drugs
- public intoxication

Bircheat, Robert E.; 41
- Probation Violation- forgery-possessing forged instrument

Garrett, Wesley N.; 41
- Motion to Revoke Bond- larceny/theft of property
- Motion to Revoke Bond- receiving stolen vehicle
- Motion to Revoke Bond-stolen vehicle

Hollenack, Lyndsey N.; 29
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st degree
- FTA- possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA- attempting to elude police officer

Hunt, Nigel G.; 45
- drug trafficking

Payne, Jimmie C.; 50
- assault-domestic-harassment-family

Reno, Alison R.; 36
- assault-child abuse-simple-family

Carroll, Scottie A.; 37
- FTA- drug trafficking
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- FTA- possession of marijuana-2nd degree
- FTA- possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA- possessing forged instrument
- FTA- sale of stolen property less than $500
- FTA- ex-felon in possession of a firearm (2 counts)

Copeland, Cameron Kyle A.; 24
- FTA- assault-harassment
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- FTA- possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA- giving false identification to law enforcement

England, Garberalle Lee A.; 29
- possession of methamphetamine
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- FTA- possession of dangerous drugs

Hogeland, Leslie C.; 37
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- FTA- public intoxication

Massey, Corina L.; 22
- Bail Jumping-2nd degree-assault-aggravated assault family-other weapon

Miller, Holli D.; 29
- possession of methamphetamine
- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- FTA- public intoxication
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- FTA- possession of dangerous drugs

Moore, Christy M.; 43
- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense
- FTA- illegal possession/use of credit/debit card (3 counts)

Nave, Bobby E.; 37
- public intoxication

Williams, Blake G.; 19
- possession of drug paraphernalia-1st offense

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

INCIDENTS
March 30
- harassing communications; person

April 5
- attempted theft of property-1st degree; GLS Supply LLC, 4th St. SW; general merchandise; $3,141

April 6
- harassment; person
- criminal trespass-3rd degree; Wal-Mart; Olive St. SW
- criminal trepass-2nd degree; Wal-Mart; Hwy. 157
- theft of property-3rd degree; Pet Supplies Plus; 2nd Ave. SW; cash

ARRESTS
April 5 – 6

Perotti, Rebecca O.; 41
- theft of property-4th degree
- FTA- theft of property-4th degree (3 counts)
- FTA- criminal trespass-3rd degree (2 counts)

Uselton, Johnathan S.; 32
- FTA- theft of property-4th degree (2 counts)
- FTA- attempt to elude
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA- criminal trespass-3rd degree
- FTA- expired tag

Copeland, Cameron K.; 24
- FTA- disorderly conduct (2 counts)
- FTA- attempt to elude police officer (2 counts)
- FTA- theft of property-4th degree
- FTA- receiving stolen property-4th degree
- FTA- criminal mischief-3rd degree
- FTA- driving without license (3 counts)
- FTA- insurance violation (3 counts)

Moore, Cristy M.; 43
- theft of property-3rd degree
- fraudulent use of credit/debit card

Johnson, William N.; 65
- public intoxication

Pace, Hunter L.; 24
- FTA- theft of property-4th degree (2 counts)
- FTA- criminal trespass-3rd degree

Skinner, Paul L.; 49
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia (2 counts)
- FTA- attempt to elude police officer
- FTA- run stop sign
- FTA- speeding
- FTA- improper lane usage
- FTA- driving while revoked (2 counts)
- FTA- insurance violation

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

No arrests or incidents reported.

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

City schools placed on heightened awareness

Tiffany McKoy
tsmckoy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Cullman City Schools campuses on Thursday were placed on heightened awareness due to perceived threats.

According to Cullman City Schools Superintendent Kyle Kallhoff, there were two incidents.

The first was a Snapchat video from 2018 that resurfaced across 17 states Thursday morning. He said the Cullman Police Department worked closely with the schools and took swift action to determine that there was no real threat. Out of an abundance of caution, the CPD placed additional officers at the schools.

Regarding that threat and a second incident that took place later that afternoon, Kallhoff said in a statement, "We appreciate the swift investigation and attention from the Cullman Police Department in regards to the apparent social media threat this morning.

"While on heightened awareness today, a separate incident at Cullman High was being investigated in conjunction with the Cullman Police Department. The second incident did not include any weapon and was isolated to one student regarding a situation that originated off campus.

"As a reminder, if you hear or see anything that may cause a threat to our schools, be sure to report it to the school administration or police department immediately."

Opportunity (from Front)



WALLACE STATE

During the April 20 event, part of the evening will include a panel discussion on "The Future of Nursing," which qualified the event to count toward continuing education. The panel will include Arin Zapf of the Huntsville Hospital System, Terri Poe of UAB Medicine, Amy Shelton of Ascension/St. Vincent's, Delicia Mason of Children's of Alabama, Jackie Martinek of Brookwood Baptist, Leigh Bolton of ATI (Assessment Technology Institute) and Peggy Benson of the Alabama Board of Nursing.

Gail Crutchfield
Wallace State

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — The Wallace State Community College Department of Nursing Education's upcoming Celebration of Nursing event will offer attendees the chance to earn a continuing education contact hour while celebrating nurses and the nursing profession.

"We are extremely glad to be able to offer nurses this opportunity to earn a contact hour they can put toward their continuing education credits," said Deborah Hoover, chair of the Wallace State Department of Nursing Education. "While we're excited about gathering nurses from our area and across the state to celebrate them, we also wanted to be able to offer them something in return. So, providing a continuing education element seemed a natural fit for the event."

During the April 20 event, part of the evening will include a panel discussion on "The Future of Nursing," which qualified the event to count toward continuing education. The panel will include Arin Zapf of the Huntsville Hospital System, Terri Poe of UAB Medicine, Amy Shelton of Ascension/St. Vincent's, Delicia Mason of Children's of Alabama, Jackie Martinek of Brookwood Baptist, Leigh Bolton of ATI (Assessment Technology Institute) and Peggy Benson of the Alabama Board of Nursing.

The topics for the panel discussion will include:

- Lessons learned from the pandemic that will impact healthcare in the next five years
- Identifying important issues that must be confronted by the nursing profession of the future
- Delineating qualities of the healthcare system in the past that have been lost and can be recultivated for nursing success in the future
- Identifying skills that nurses need to develop in order to seize new opportunities on the horizon
- Outlining changes needed in nursing education for the future and how those modifications can be assessed

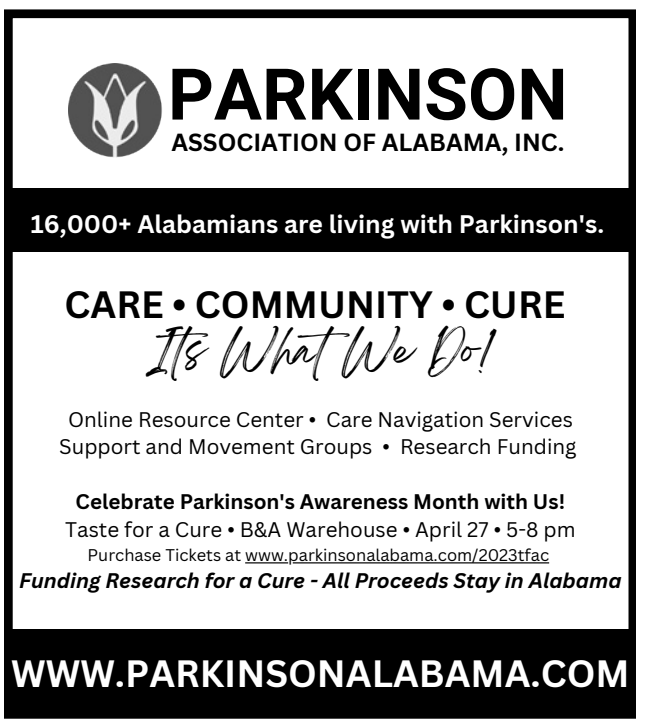
Also, during the event, attendees will hear a keynote address from WVTM 13 Chief Meteorologist Jason Simpson, who is a Wallace State alum and supporter of Children's of Alabama.

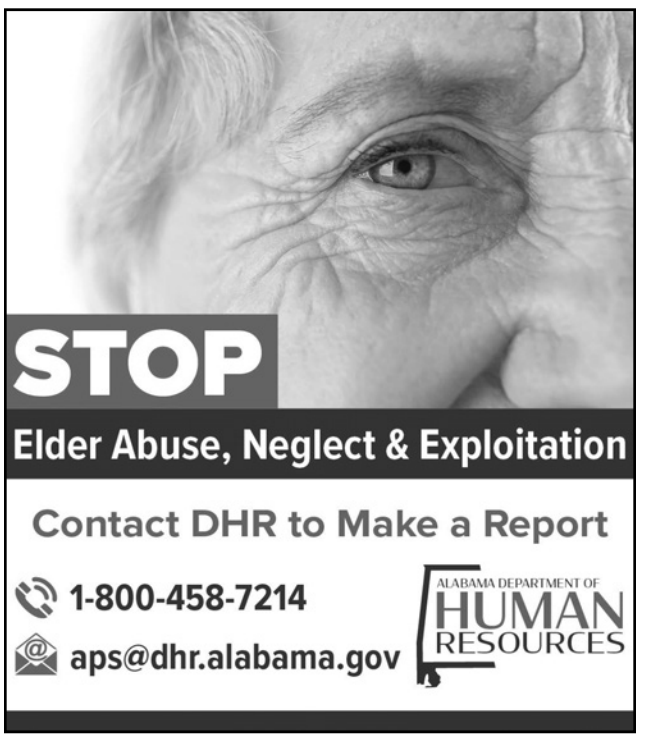
The event will include refreshments and dinner, and proceeds will benefit nursing scholarships at Wallace State.

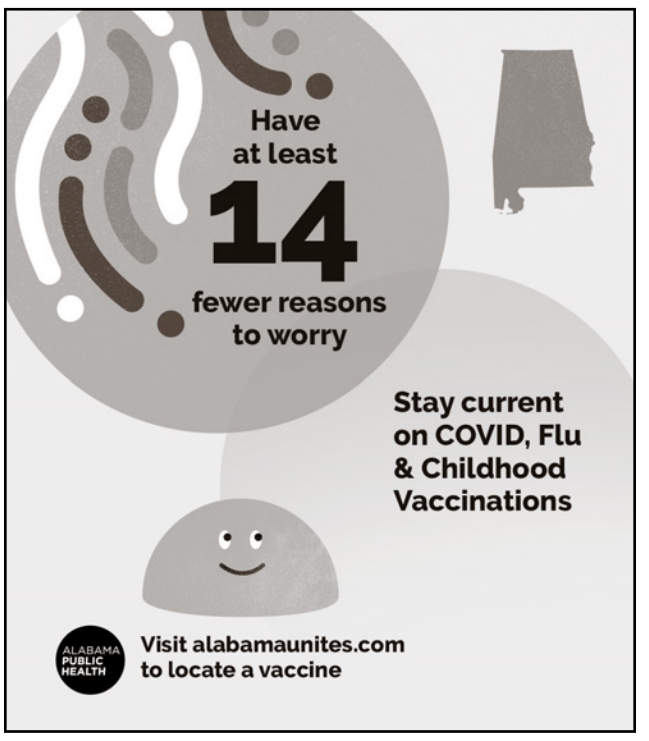
Tickets for "Celebration of Nursing: Heroes of the Past, Present and Future" are $40 and are on sale through April 14.

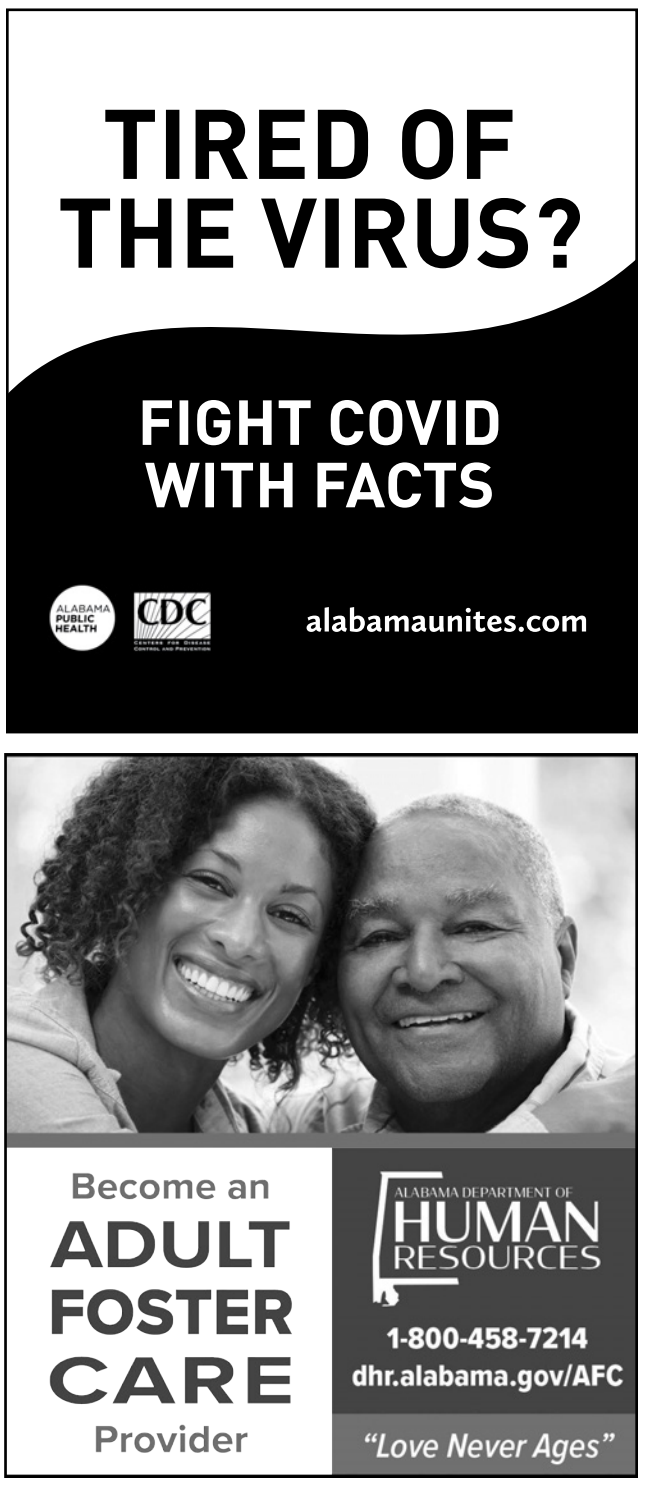
To purchase tickets or for more information, visit www.wallacestate.edu/nursing50 or contact Rachel Kreps at 256-352-8411 or rachel.kreps@wallacestate.edu.











COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

PUBLIC NOTICE: Cullman City Cemetery
Ground flowers at the City Cemetery need to be removed by April 15 to prepare for Decoration Day on May 14.

Calling All Young Singers!
Cullman Community Young Singers (CCYS) is looking for YOU! All young singers (ages 8-15) are invited to join us on Tuesday afternoons from 3:30-4:45 at the Little House at Art Park, 1031 Second St. SW in Cullman. No auditions, just come for a fun afternoon of learning music from pop to classical styles. We will rehearse and prepare to perform at a variety of events in and around the Cullman community. Bring your friends- we will have music and everything you need to get started! For more information, text or email Miss Cindy at 256-338-4404, cindypass22@gmail.com. CCYS is sponsored by Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism.

Baileyton Bargain Days
First and third Saturday of each month from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the old Baileyton fire station next to the town's park. Beauty and health products, toys, home goods, pet items, food and many everyday items. A donation of $20 will allow a shopper to fill up a bag, and for $40 a shopper can fill a large box. Some of the items of greater value will require a larger donation. There will be some restrictions and product limits on the items. Cash and checks accepted. Proceeds will be used for park improvements and capital improvements for the town.

Alcoholics Anonymous
The Grace of God group of Alcoholics Anonymous has open AA meetings (all are welcome) Mondays and Thursdays 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

Church Services- Spirit Life Church of GOD
• Spirit Life Church of GOD, 1650 St. Joseph Dr. NW, Cullman
• Mondays-Fridays- Free hot meals for children Mondays 11 a.m.- noon, Tuesdays 1-2 p.m. and Wednesdays-Fridays 11 a.m.-noon. Cullman Housing Authority Community Center 1545 Vine Circle SW. Please call Kristie 256-636-5362 for more information. Eat in or take out. Sponsored by Kids Loving Kids, Raising Arrows Ministry and Spirit Life Church.
• Kids Loving Kids Birthday Blessings serves children ages 1-18 in need of assistance to celebrate their birthdays. Register your child and pick up a birthday box with cake mix, icing, sprinkles, decorations and toys! Pickup is the last weekend of the month. Saturday (5100 Curry Highway Suite 100-B Jasper, AL 35504) from 3-5 p.m. or the last Sunday of the month at Spirit Life Church Cullman from 12:30-1 p.m. Birth certificate is required at the time of box pickup. Register at https://form.jotform.com/203435614640045. For more information, text or call 205-717-7478.
• Saturday, April 8 - Easter Community Celebration : 1-3 p.m. Free hotdogs, chips and drinks, Praisin Puppets performing, Easter Egg Hunt starting at 1, and other fun activities.
• Sunday, April 9 - 8-9 a.m. Prayer Group - Join Kevin and Pastor Bobby Sunday to pray for our church, nation and for those who need Salvation and deliverance at 8 and also join Teresa Pritchard at 9 in the prayer room to pray for our church, nation and for those who need Salvation and deliverance
• Sunday, April 9 – 9 a.m. Van runs in the 5 Points Area. Call 256-841-2060 for pickup. Breakfast @ 9:30 a.m. Bible study classes for children, youth and adults @ 10 a.m. Adult class. 11 a.m. service, message is " I AM the resurrection and life!" by Pastor Bobby Dodd.

Alcoholics Anonymous
Sundays, 3 p.m. at Cullman First Church of the Nazarene, 5415 Alabama Highway 157. CLOSED literature study. Handicap accessible.

TOPS (Take off Pounds Sensibly) Meetings
Fridays, 9:30-11 a.m., at Cullman Housing Authority Community Center (1545 Vine Circle SW, Cullman, AL 35055). The first meeting is free. TOPS, a national program, is a hands-on/pounds-off approach to weight loss and management through weekly meetings providing information, accountability, support and encouragement where you make the changes that make sense to you.

Cullman NAR-ANON Group Meetings
The NAR-ANON family group meetings are a worldwide fellowship for those affected by someone else's addiction. We offer Help by sharing our experiences, strength and hope. We carry the message of hope by letting others know that they are not alone by practicing the 12 Steps of NAR-ANON and changing our own attitudes. We Respect Your Anonymity. Our program is not a religious one, but a spiritual way of life. Meetings will be held at The Ruehl Building (Family Life Center of St. John's Church) Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. Contact Jamie Weathersby Smith 256-708-7122 or Don or Nancy McKenzie 256-736-3327 or 256-736-3470 for more information.

Master's Hand Food Pantry at The Link
• 708 Ninth St. SE, Cullman, AL 35055
• Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
• Closed for lunch noon-1 p.m.

Holly Pond Homemakers Club Spring Bake Sale
Saturday, April 8, beginning at 8 a.m. at Holly Pond Town Hall. There will be assorted cakes for $25, assorted pies for $15, delicious cookies and other items. All proceeds benefit the Holly Pond Cemetery. Donations may also be mailed to Holly Pond Cemetery Fund, ATTN: Judy Jones, P.O. Box 335, Holly Pond, AL 35083.

Kaleb's 5K Run
Saturday, April 8, 8-11 a.m. Depot Park. At 1 year old, Kaleb Phillips is a special little fighter who, due to a medical condition, had both feet amputated. The victorious tot now has prostheses and through hard work in physical therapy is taking steps to a full and energetic childhood with his cheerleaders by his side. Funds raised will go toward not only Kaleb's medical expenses, but also to another family facing similar obstacles. Registration is due by March 31 and found at www.runsignup.com/race/AL/Cullman/Kalebs5KRunwalk. The 5K run begins at 8 a.m. and the 1-mile fun run will start at 9.

Links for Literacy Golf Tournament
Monday, April 10, beginning at 8 a.m. at Terri Pines Country Club. Tournament sponsorships and team fees benefit The Link of Cullman County's education initiatives. For more information, call The Link of Cullman County at 256-775-0028.

Holly Pond Homemakers Club Meeting
Tuesday, April 11, at 1 p.m. at the Holly Pond Event Center. Speaker will be Christy Allred, who will talk about finding your balance. Hostesses will be Sue Morris and Gladys Wisener.

Heartland Quilt Guild Meeting
Thursday, April 13, at 6:30 p.m. at Christ Covenant Church, 1310 St. Joseph Dr., Cullman. All are welcome.

2023 Family Expo
Saturday, April 15, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center. Benefits the Cullman County Child Development Center.

Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church Singing and Revival
Sunday, April 16, at 5 p.m. New Ground from Scottsboro will be featured guests. The church is located on U.S. Highway 278, approximately 2 miles east of Holly Pond on the left. For more information call 256-796-5986.

Cullman Educator Retirees Association Meeting
Thursday, April 20, at 11 a.m. at Stone Bridge Farms. Our program will be presented by the Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center/WildWater, followed by lunch and fellowship for those who wish to stay. Info: mjcjcera@gmail.com

39th Annual Bloomin' Festival Arts and Craft Fair
Saturday, April 22, and Sunday, April 23, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. The two-day art festival welcomes 150 artists who exhibit their work to over 20,000 visitors on the picturesque campus of St. Bernard Prep School. Recognized throughout the Southeast as a must-visit festival, Bloomin' Fest is a favorite among locals as well. All proceeds benefit the operational support of St. Bernard Preparatory School. Admission is a donation of $10; children 12 and younger get in free. For more information visit www.bloominfestival.com or call 256-739-6682.

Holly Pond Fire and Rescue Department Pancake Breakfast
Saturday, April 29, from 6-9 a.m. at the fire department off U.S. Highway 278. Donations will be accepted at the door. Proceeds will go to the Fireman's Fund. Everyone is welcome.

Relay For Life of Cullman County's Party in the Park
Saturday, April 29, 5-10 p.m. Depot Park. Honoring cancer survivors, the Party in the Park will also remember those who lost their battle with the disease. Relay For Life benefits the American Cancer Society's research and services. Enjoy children's activities, food trucks and live music. Visit www.relayforlife.org/cullmanal to register or join a team.

Strawberry Festival
Saturday, May 6, 9 a.m. Depot Park. Hosting over 24,000 visitors in one day, the Strawberry Festival was first celebrated in 1939. The festival features live music, a large craft show, fun and games for the whole family and Cullman's famous locally grown strawberries. This year's festival will be headlined by Blues Traveler.

50th Annual Arley Day Festival
• Saturday, May 20, from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Hamner Memorial Park, Helicon Road, Arley, AL 35541. The 50th annual Arley Day Festival, Car Show and Parade is a family friendly, free event for young and old alike. Arts and crafts vendors, children's games, water slides, horseback rides, food vendors, musical entertainment, rock wall climbing, FREE hotdogs for kids and more. The parade lines up at 7:30 in the Arley Dollar General parking lot, proceeds down Highway 41, ending at Hamner Park where the car show starts. Pickleball demonstration at 10 on the park's new courts, followed by four 15-minute mini-lessons.
• Pancake breakfast at the Arley Fire Station, hosted by Arley First Baptist Church. Community breakfast at Meek Baptist Church in the fellowship hall. Both meals are open 7-8:30. Donations are appreciated and all proceeds goes to the Arley Volunteer Fire Department. The festival is presented by the nonprofit Arley Women's Club, Inc.; all proceeds remain in the communities served. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/ArleyWomensClub. To register as a vendor, or to be in the parade or car show and for schedule details, visit www.arleywomensclub.org/arley-day. Please send any questions to arleydayfestival@arleywomensclub.org.

Hamm Family Reunion
Saturday, May 20, at noon. Hanceville Lions Club. 111 Michelle St. NW, Hanceville. Please bring a covered dish.

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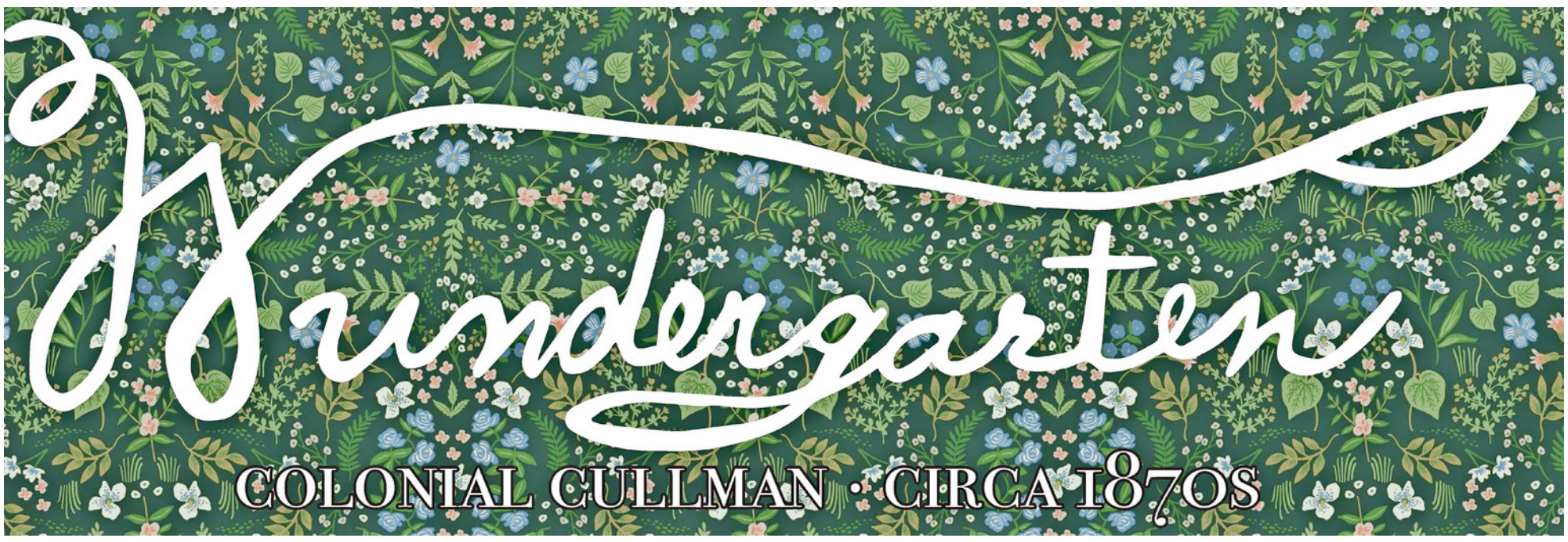
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Cayla Grace Murphy - Reporter
Nick Griffin - Varsity Sports Editor
Sammy Confer - Youth/JV Sports Editor
Howard Cole - Photojournalist
Martha Needham-Photojournalist
Bill Piper - Photojournalist
Robin Winton - Newsroom Manager
Janet Chandler - Marketing Specialist

EARL'S BODY SHOP
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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
APRIL 8, 2023



– COLUMN –

Celebrating in the Wundergarten – Osterfeuer (Easter bonfire)

Ben Johnson South
Tribune Columnist

Easter holidays in Colonial Cullman of the 1870s, the time of our folktale, "WUNDERGARTEN," were celebrated as they were in Germany, the homeland of most of the county's residents. It was both the joyful day of resurrection on the Christian church calendar, and the giddy, free-floating happiness of springtime arriving.

Good Friday (Karfitang) and Easter Saturday (Ostersamstag) were quiet days with no church bells. However, around sundown on Easter Eve, our folktale hero, Fritz, enjoyed one of his favorite celebrations of the spring traditions: OSTERFEUER (Easter bonfire).

This very old ritual in the German culture harkens back to the early Middle Ages when Christians adopted the centuries-old, pagan woodlands ceremony and weaved it into their customs. After a long winter, the German Americans throughout Cullman County came together around the OSTERFEUER to get reacquainted and catch up on the news.

OSTERFEUER would have been lit by a priest from Cullman County's Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church. Dry lumber scraps and bits of wood were collected, and the congregation arrived with bundles of kindling in their wagons. Much of the firewood was from months-old, dried Christmas trees the celebrants brought from their homes.

After the fire was torched, the priest would light the "Paschal" candle to be carried to the village church. This heralded the beginning of a new Easter vigil and celebrated the rebirth of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the "Light unto the World."

OSTERFEUER is a symbol of Earth's fertility for farmers and gardeners and works in a literal sense, as well. Once safely extinguished, ashes from the Cullman County bonfire were scattered over the meadows to fertilize the sandy, oft eroded soil.

The gardens, meadows and trees would flower and leaf out at Eastertime at the Ruehl farm in "WUNDERGARTEN." Hellebores bloomed even through a late dusting of snow in Alabama Hill Country. Crocuses, snowdrops and fragrant hyacinths would burst into beauty from the bulbs our gardener hero, Fritz, planted the previous fall. Yellow billowing branches of forsythia and perky buttercups lent their golden rays of sunshine.

OSTERFEUER on Holy Saturday traditionally meant outdoor dining with German beer, mulled wine and grilled meats. There were no jubilant bells ringing until Easter Sunday morning, but this evening gathering brought smiles, laughter, warmth and hope.

CELEBRATING IN THE WUNDERGARTEN - This storytelling culinary series imagines tasty, traditional foods from the recipe box our heroine, Frau Ruehl, brought with her from Germany when she relocated to what is present-day Cullman County, Alabama. Here is a simple but delicious treasure from an OSTERFEUER held at her strawberry farm. The celebratory flames on such pre-lamplight evenings could be seen from the village.

WUNDERGARTEN GRILLED LAMB CHOPS
(Source: allrecipes.com)

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 3/4 tsp. hot, German mustard (Dijon is okay)
- Salt to taste
- 4 (4-oz.) fresh lamb chops, boneless and trimmed to 1/8" fat, raw
- 2 1/2 tbsp. minced, fresh rosemary
- 3/4 medium lemon, inserted into the center

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk olive oil, vinegar, rosemary, lemon juice, garlic, mustard and salt together in a large glass or ceramic bowl. Add chops and toss to evenly coat. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and marinate in the refrigerator for 2 to 4 hours, or overnight.

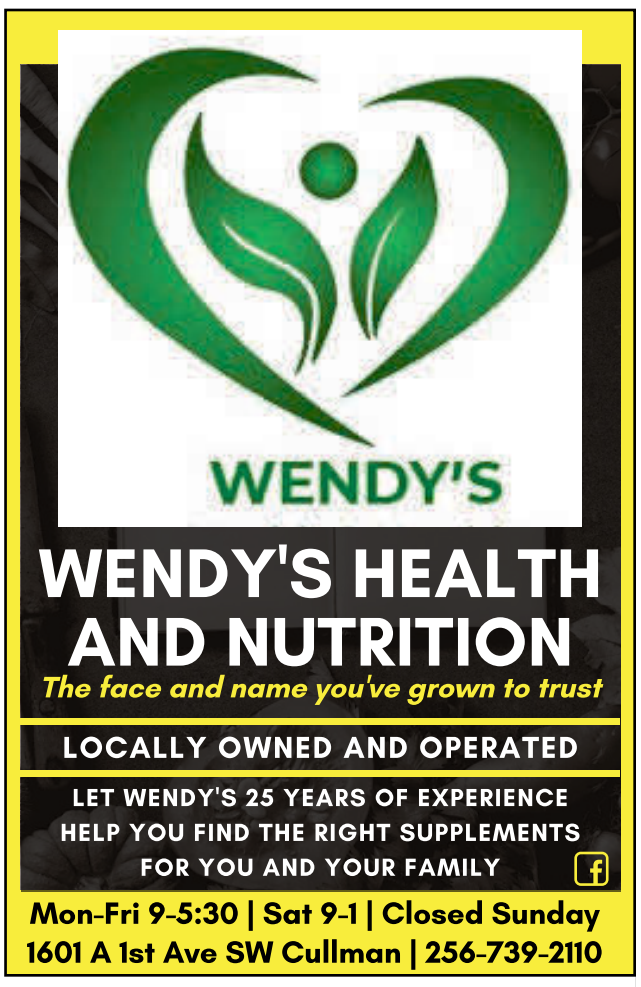
2. Preheat an outdoor grill for medium-high heat and lightly oil the grate.

3. Remove chops from the marinade and shake off excess. Discard the remaining marinade.

4. Grill chops until an instant-read thermometer reads at least 135F, 5 to 7 minutes per side.

HAPPY EASTER WEEKEND AND AUF WEIDERSEHEN Y'ALL!

Find all columns in this series at www.cullmantribune.com/tag/celebrating-in-the-wundergarten.







'THE STORY CONTINUES'

Cullman area seniors meet for faith, fellowship at Senior Egg Hunt

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

VINEMONT, Ala. — Neither inclement weather earlier in the week, nor a change in location, nor canes and walkers were going to stop Cullman area seniors from enjoying food, fellowship and fun at Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center on Wednesday for the Cullman County Commission on Aging's annual Senior Egg Hunt. Scatterings of pastel and brightly colored eggs contrasted with the rich earth tones of the clay and hay of the arena while seniors filed in, some donning their best Easter hats and bunny ears, but all ready for some fun and friendly competition.

The event began with a greeting from Commission on Aging Executive Director Stephanie Lawson, who thanked the myriad sponsors for their donations and time, with a special thanks to Cullman County Parks and Recreation, which was quick to act when inclement weather threatened the possibility of cancelation of the event. Others who gave their greetings and best wishes for luck included Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry; Cullman County Commissioners Kelly Duke, Kerry Watson and Garry Marchman; Cullman County Commission Chairman Jeff Clemons; Cullman County Probate Judge Tammy Brown; and Cullman County District Attorney Champ Crocker.

Pastor Ory Hampton of Daystar Church, Good Hope campus, shared an inspiring Easter message with the overarching theme, repeated aloud by those in attendance, "the story continues." The message was one of hope, of seeing the good and grace of being allowed to grow older in a society that may not always place much value on an older generation.

"I believe as long as someone is still breathing, God has a purpose for them," he stated matter-of-factly. "We as the Cullman community, we need you. As a pastor here in the Cullman area, I need you. I need your wisdom, I need your encouragement, I need your prayers. But I need you, more than anything, to realize that your story is continuing."

After the stirring message, seniors lined up and descended upon the center arena. The hunt for filled eggs was on. Not a single straw of hay was left unturned, and not a single plastic egg- out of 2,000 eggs!- was left.

The grand prize egg, $150 from Crocker, was drawn from tickets distributed at the door as the seniors came in. Lucky local senior Colene Wells from Crane Hill won, with Sandra Harris winning the second place prize of a $25 gift card to Cracker Barrel, which was sponsored by Gentry.

Crocker made sure to share his appreciation for being given the opportunity to make the event extra special, sharing, "The seniors are the lifeblood of this community. There's so many active groups here on-hand today, and it's just a privilege to be here."



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULMAN TRIBUNE

Seniors dig through hay to find prize eggs at the Senior Egg Hunt.

The senior centers that are operated full time under Commission on Aging's umbrella were also able to join in on the fun, with a creative and massive paper mâché egg decorating contest. The eggs all had themes of pastels and bunnies, biblical Easter references or a mixture of the two. Prizes awarded for these colossal eggs were donated by Misti Easter of First Federal Mortgage, whose team has a rich volunteer history with local seniors.

"We volunteered at the Colony center a while back, and we've been wanting to get more involved with them," she said. "They reached out to us to sponsor this, and we were so blessed to be able to do so!"

Colony Senior Center won first place, West Point Senior Center won second place and Crane Hill Senior Center won third place.

The Senior Egg Hunt was a wild success, with local senior Kathy Miller sharing, "This was my first time attending and it was very well organized. I met some new people from different senior centers and the fellowship was great!"

Lawson added, "The turnout blew me away! The seniors really showed up today which makes us all so very happy. They are the whole reason why we do what we do. This is a total group effort from Commission on Aging staff, all the elected officials who showed up and every single business that helped sponsor to make this day as special as possible for these folks."

Missed this year's Senior Egg Hunt? Don't miss out on the next event, Senior Fishing Day at Hanceville's Veterans Park on Friday, April 21, 2023.

Make sure to stay in the loop with other activities planned for seniors by following the Cullman Commission on Aging on Facebook at www.facebook.com/coacullman.



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULMAN TRIBUNE

Local senior Kathy Lee Miller shows her findings from the Senior Egg Hunt.

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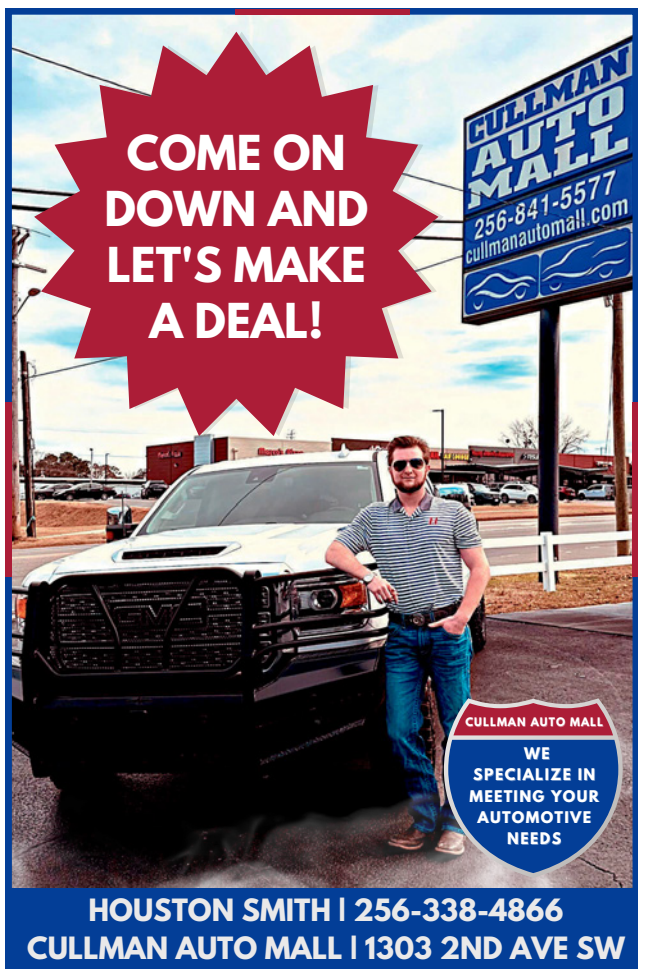
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PREP BASEBALL

Bearcats earn 22nd straight postseason berth with 4-1 win over Muscle Shoals

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — After defeating Muscle Shoals on the road earlier this week, the Bearcats returned home to Bill Shelton Field Thursday night to finish the area series with the Trojans and Cullman clinched its 22nd consecutive playoff appearance with a 4-1 win in game one. Riley Jackson earned the win on the mound, allowing just four hits in five scoreless innings and striking out four batters.

Jackson led off the bottom of the first with a double into left field and after Paxton Ponder was hit by a pitch, Cooper Loftin drew a walk to load the bases. Zane Watwood was hit by a pitch in the next at bat and Jackson came home to score and give Cullman a 1-0 lead going into the second inning.

Muscle Shoals answered with an RBI single in the top of the third to tie the game at 1 but a sacrifice fly off the bat of Jackson allowed Easton Peed to score in the top of the third and put the Bearcats back in front 2-1.

Cullman added to its lead in the third when Watwood drove an RBI single up the middle to plate Garrett Hall and make it a 3-1 game.

An RBI single from Cole Floyd brought Cody Jones home to score in the fourth, stretching the Bearcat lead to 4-1 going into the fifth inning.

Jackson cruised the rest of the way on the mound, including a three-pitch sixth inning, to secure a 4-1 win for the 'Cats and another postseason berth.

At the plate, Watwood (one hit) led the way with a pair of RBIs and Jackson (one hit) and Floyd (one hit) each drove in a run as well.

The Bearcats will be back home Saturday to host a double header against Helena and Briarwood Christian before turning their attention to an area series with Hartselle next week.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Cullman Bearcats defeated Muscle Shoals 4-1 at home Thursday night to clinch a spot in this year's 6A state playoffs.

WSCC ATHLETICS

Haithcock, Lemahieu named ACCC Players of the Week

Gail Crutchfield
WSCC

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — Two Wallace State Community College athletes were recognized as Athletes of the Week by the Alabama Community College Conference.

Women's golfer Aidan Haithcock was recognized days after she led the Wallace State women's golf team to an ACCC title. Haithcock, a freshman from Hoover High School, shot rounds of 87-76 in the ACCC Women's Golf Championship.

Men's tennis player Lennert Lemahieu was named the men's tennis player of the week. A freshman from Geluwe, Belgium, Lemahieu went 6-7, 6-2, and 6-3 against No. 15 Mississippi Gulf Coast, and his (6-7, 7-6 and 10-6 win against Spring Hill, a Division 2 university, helped seal the team's win.

The women's golf team will next play in the NJCAA South District Championship on April 10-11 on their home course of Cross Creek Golf Course.

Wallace State's men's tennis team will next take on UAB on Saturday, April 8 in Birmingham.





WSCC

Wallace State's Aidan Hathcock and Lennert Lemahieu were selected as last week's ACCC Players of the Week.

WSCC ATHLETICS

WSCC Softball's Wilken, Howard named Athletes of the Week

Gail Crutchfield
WSCC

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — Two more Wallace State Community College athletes were recognized by the Alabama Community College Conference as Players of the Week. Softball pitcher Alivia Wilken and outfielder McKinnon Howard were each recognized for the week of April 4.

Wilken, a sophomore from New Market and a graduate of Buckhorn High School, was 2-0 for the week, with an ERA of 0.0, 16 strikeouts, and only one walk. She allowed only one hit in 10 innings pitched, including a no-hitter against Northwest Shoals.

Howard, a freshman from Phenix City and a graduate of Central Phenix High School, had a batting average of 688, with 11 hits, seven runs, three RBI, two walks and eight stolen bases.

Wallace State softball is at the top of the leaderboard in the ACCC North division with an overall record of 31-5.

The team's next games are scheduled for Saturday, with a double header against Marion Military Institute starting at 1 p.m. Wilken and Howard join WSCC women's golfer Aidan Haithcock and men's tennis player Lennert Lemahieu as ACCC Players of the Week for April 4.





WALLACE STATE

Wallace State Community College Softball pitcher Alivia Wilken, left, and outfielder McKinnon Howard were each recognized as Alabama Community College Conference Players of the Week for the week of April 4.

PREP BASKETBALL

‘Keep going forward’: Hanceville’s Noah Jones talks junior season

Sammy Confer
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HANCEVILLE, Ala. — The Hanceville Bulldogs are coming off another special season. They finished 21-7, collected their first county title since 2016 and made a trip to the Sweet 16. Junior Noah Jones talked about that season, what he learned, and what it was like playing with this group of guys.

“I feel like last season went great and I learned a lot about team chemistry and gelling with the team,” Jones said. “It was so special playing with this group of guys. I learned about the brotherhood we had and how far we came together as a team and that is what made us go deep in the postseason is trusting one another, no matter who is on the floor at any point in the game.”

Jones has taken away some things while playing for head coach Stephen Chandler and he also talked about what all he learned from this year’s seniors.

“He is one of the best coaches and he has always held each one of us accountable for every little thing. Coach Chandler has not only taught me the ways of becoming a better basketball player, but he has also taught me how to be a respectful young man,” Jones said.

“It was amazing playing with them. They’re very good people and I learned a lot from them. I’m grateful to have been able to play with such great talent. What I learned from them was hard work, determination, and to always keep working on your craft.”

Jones has learned so much from the other upperclassmen on the team and will work on some things to get ready for next season. He also talked about the goals for this upcoming season as well.

“I’ve learned to trust in each other and that they will always have my back no matter what. I have played with these guys since youth ball and we just grow closer and we gain each other’s trust more and more each season,” he said.

“I will work on my ball handling and shooting. My goals are to win county again and to go even deeper in the postseason.”

Jones talked about what will make this team special to watch next season, one of his role models growing up and some the best advice that he’s been given.

“This year is going to be even more special because this team is way more mature and grown; we’ve all played the game together and know every skill level of each player,” he said.

“My dad is one of my biggest role models. The best advice that I ever got was do the right thing every time you do it. Always keep your head up and keep going forward, no matter what.”



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
Hanceville’s Noah Jones

PREP BASKETBALL

‘This season was one I’ll never forget’: Holly Pond’s Kollin Brown recaps junior year

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

HOLLY POND, Ala. — Last season saw Holly Pond have one of their best seasons that they’ve had in a long time as they collected over 20 wins, won their area, and hosted their Sub-Regional game. Junior Kollin Brown recapped that season and talked about what all he learned from this year’s seniors.

“When we had our first practices, I could tell we were going to have a great season because everyone showed up and went hard every rep. Coach Cory Glasscock and Coach Yearwood were great this year; they challenged us to be better on and off the court every day. When we started winning games, they reminded us where we were last year and not to lose sight of our goal of winning a state championship.

“It felt awesome to be no. 1 for most of the season, but I knew and the team knew that we had to keep working if we were going to win,” Brown said. “I love all the guys and coaches on our team and I’m so glad I was a part of this team with this group of seniors. We made so many great memories together this year and it sucks that we couldn’t play a few more games together, but this season was one I’ll never forget.”

He added, “This season was awesome because some of my best friends were the seniors on this team. I’m sad that I won’t ever get to play with them again, but we made so many memories this year with each other and they were awesome people that I will never forget. If my attitude got going in the wrong direction, the seniors were the first ones to straighten me up. They always made sure we had fun no matter what and I’ll be taking that into next year, because not everyone gets the chance to play this game.”

Brown has learned a lot playing for coach Glasscock the past two seasons.

“I see coach Glasscock as a person I can come and talk to any time. I have learned many things from him and it’s not just basketball. He’s taught me how to be a better man. He has helped me so much the last two years I have played for him. Any time I need someone to talk to or ask for anything, I always go to him. If it wasn’t for him, I would not have had the season I had,” Brown said. “He helped me with my attitude and my confidence so much last year and I give him a lot of credit for how I performed last year.”

Brown learned so much from making that deep run in the postseason and will work on some things to get ready for next season.

“Making a postseason run this year makes me want to work even harder so that it doesn’t end this soon next year. I’m going to continue to work as hard as I can. I’m going to push my teammates as hard as I can so that we can make an even deeper run next year and get to have the experience of playing in Wallace for a Sweet 16,” he said. “I will continue to work on my game, but I’m really going to focus on getting stronger and having a better attitude when things aren’t going my way.”

Brown has seen his game grow tremendously from two years ago until now and talked about his goals for the upcoming season.

“My game has grown tremendously over the last two years. I have gotten stronger, smarter, and all-around better over the last two years. My game has matured a lot. I feel like I’m making reads that I wasn’t making and I’m making shots that I wasn’t making. I’ve worked really hard on my skill, but I have come really far with my attitude and confidence and it has boosted me to another level. All the hard work that I’ve put in finally feels like it’s paying off and it just makes me want to work even harder so I can play even better next year.”

He added, “I really just want to be the best teammate I can be and give my team the best chance at winning possible. I really want to make it to the Sweet 16 next year as a team and see if we can make a postseason run.”

Brown talked about what will make the Broncos special to watch next season and shared some of the best advice he’s been given.

“We will be fun to watch because we play with a ton of energy, and we have fun when we play. We have a bunch of good players on our team and when we’re clicking and working together, we will be super fun to watch,” he said.

“I started training with Bailey Smith when I was in elementary, and I went to all of their games, and I loved the way he played. He played with so much energy and was always going hard. When I see myself play, I see a lot of him in me. He was definitely my biggest role model basketball-wise, and I still look up to him to this day. The best advice I’ve ever been given is definitely forget about what happened on the last play and focus on what your job is.”



MARTHA NEEDHAM
Holly Pond’s Kollin Brown

Commitments (from Front)

to a region championship. Webster, a defensive back, was selected as the winner of Coach’s award and was the two-time player of the week. Brayden will major in Sports Management and minor in entrepreneurship. Although he was a vital part of the Tiger’s rushing attack, Miller will be playing linebacker for the Spartans.

Blake was selected as team captain and was a three-time player of the week. He also received the “Head Hunter” award for his defensively play. The town of Arley will now have a favorite football team in Indiana.

Meek High School’s State Champion cheer team also had a member committing today. While entertaining scholarship offers from numerous schools including the University of Alabama, Ole Miss, Mississippi State and others, Evan Hutchins committed to join Shelton State Community College’s cheer team this fall.

Shelton State has been a perennial powerhouse in UCA College Cheerleading, winning 13 of the last 16 National Championships and Evan, a three-time UCA All-American, wants to experience and add to that tradition. While improving his skills at Shelton State, Evan plans on furthering his education before transferring to complete his goal of obtaining a bachelor’s degree in business and eventually opening his own cheer gym.



ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Picking the perfect plant for your landscape

Katie Nichols
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

AUBURN UNIVERSITY, Ala. — Spring has sprung, bringing with it a constant flurry of activity in the yard and garden. Garden centers are bustling with activity and Extension offices are receiving calls about soil testing, pruning, garden maintenance and picking the perfect plant.

Homeowners head out in droves to pick out potted plants for home-beautification projects. Bethany O'Rear, an Alabama Cooperative Extension System home grounds regional agent, said there are some basic things to look for when you're picking the perfect plant for your landscape.

Picking the perfect plants

"Everyone is excited to get back out in the yard and garden during the spring," O'Rear said. "One of the first things you should do when picking landscape plants at the store is to check for healthy plants with good color."

O'Rear said it is also important to remember that bigger is not always better because small plants can become established faster.

"Larger plants tend to take a longer time adjusting to their new site, and they will also need more supplemental water and may need more support," she said.

"For example, you may need to stake trees or large shrubs to help keep them upright during wind events."

Both box stores and local plant sales have knowledgeable salespeople. O'Rear said it is important to research which plants do best in your landscape before buying.

"Don't be afraid to pop the pant out of its pot to ensure it has a good root system," she said. "Check for spots on the tops and underside of leaves, as well as insects that may be hiding out."

Plant care

Homeowners may worry about plant care as they make purchases. It is important to consider the needs of a plant, as well as the conditions of the planting area before making a purchase.

- Sun or shade? Some plants tolerate full sun, as well as full shade. Other plants may need one or the other. O'Rear said if a plant does best in partial shade, but the homeowner wants it in a sunny area, put it in an area that receives morning sun—which is less intense than afternoon sun.

- Watering requirements. Watering is critical, especially in the first year after planting. "Each new tree or shrub needs the equivalent of 1 inch of rain every week for the first year," she said. "An irrigation system does not provide this much water. Once established, weekly water needs decrease and an irrigation system should work."

- Mature size. Choose a location with room for plants to grow and reach maturity. Choose the right plant for the right place. O'Rear said pruning is never an answer for the wrong plant in the wrong place.

- Soil pH. The right soil pH is dependent on what you plant. Azaleas and camellias like acidic soils; most other plants prefer a pH range of 6 to 6.5. It is also important to remember that different soils drain differently. Soil compaction can make it harder for roots to penetrate into the native soil.

- Freeze tolerance. Become familiar with hardiness zones and plan accordingly.

- Planting time. O'Rear said since a plant installed in spring is trying to grow roots and shoots, the homeowner will need to pay more attention to the plant regarding water and be on the lookout for pest issues sooner rather than later.

Other considerations

In addition to plant and place considerations, O'Rear said there are several other things to think about as gardeners begin planting plants in their landscape.

"Plants will transition from a nursery to a home landscape easily," O'Rear said. "Most plants come with a slow-release fertilizer in the pot or have been irrigated with liquid fertilizer. It is not necessary to fertilize during the first year."

When planting, she said to find the plant's crown where the base meets the roots.

Container and balled or burlapped plants may have too much soil covering the crown. O'Rear said to remove that soil before planting.

"Never plant too deeply," she said. "The top inch of the root ball should sit above the finished grade."

Finally, O'Rear said it's important to water.

"Not too much water, not too little—but just right," she said. "Scout for pests early and often. Long-term care should be easy for most plants if they are planted in the right places."

More information

Learn more about picking the perfect landscape plant or yard and garden maintenance at www.aces.edu, or by contacting the local Extension office.

The Master Gardener Helpline is also a source of information for homeowners and gardeners. Call (877) ALA-GROW to speak to a Master Gardener who can help you identify problems and solutions for your lawn and landscape needs.

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Vote (from Front)

Virginia Gilbert Loftin
Contributor

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Birmingham-Southern College's Board of Trustees voted unanimously Wednesday evening to keep the college open.

"The Board of Trustees has made the informed and thoughtful decision to keep Birmingham-Southern open," said the Rev. Keith D. Thompson '83, chair of the Board. "We have been working closely with our allies in state and local government to secure bridge funding."

"Thanks to their leadership, the Board felt comfortable with moving forward, and has charged President Daniel Coleman with preparing for a public fundraising campaign to restore the college's endowment," Thompson said.

Much work lies ahead for the college, Coleman said. "We are already reaching out to our prospective students and will be hiring faculty and staff to ensure that we are delivering the full BSC experience this fall," he said. "We will also be gearing up for the public phase of the endowment campaign, which will ensure our long-term financial resilience."

Thompson said it is impossible to answer with certainty every question relating to the college's finances until the Alabama legislative session concludes.

"President Coleman and so many others have been working tirelessly to secure the resources needed to take BSC forward. We are especially grateful to the elected officials who have championed this cause because of its impact on Birmingham and Alabama. And we are also deeply grateful for the outpouring of support from our alumni, students, faculty, staff, parents, the business community and friends who have written, called, emailed and met with elected officials to help make the case for public support. That has sent a powerful signal about what BSC means to Alabama.

"We will continue to work with legislators through the end of the legislative session to ensure all are aware of the significant direct economic impact BSC provides each and every year, as well as the immense contributions made by our alumni to the civic, business and political leadership of our state," Thompson said.

The decision comes as the College has experienced a six-year high in applications and has worked to address Alabama's workforce shortage through the addition of undergraduate and master's programs in data science. BSC is Alabama's only nationally ranked liberal arts college and has an annual direct economic impact of $97.2 million on the state, according to an independent study by Dr. Keivan Duravi released in February 2023.

BSC has secured nearly $46 million in pledges from private donors toward a goal of $200 million in endowment and has sought bridge funding from public sources to allow time to finish that campaign. A $200 million endowment will support 20% of BSC's annual operating budget, providing the stability needed for the long term.



CAMERON CARNES/BIRMINGHAM-SOUTHERN COLLEGE

Students rejoiced after hearing the Board's decision Wednesday, April 5.

LEGALS

PB WIL BK 115 PG 857 - 04/06/2023 01:49 PM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

STATE OF ALABAMA * IN THE PROBATE COURT
*
CULLMAN COUNTY * CASE NO. PC 2023-112

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF WILLIAM LARRELL SEGERS, DECEASED.

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT TO BE PUBLISHED BY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Letters Testamentary on the Estate of said deceased have been granted to William Clark on the 6th day of April, 2023, by the Hon. Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate of Cullman County. Notice is hereby given that all persons having claims against said estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

William Clark
Personal Representative

To the publisher of *The Cullman Tribune:*

Please publish the above notice three successive weeks in said newspaper.

Tammy Brown
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate

Steven C. Smith
Attorney for the Estate
Smith & Smith, LLP
P. O. Box 398
Cullman, AL 35056-0398
(256) 734-4721

PB MIN BK 215 PG 474 - 04/06/2023 10:45 AM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE MATTER OF)
)
JIMMIE TRUSSELL,) CASE NO.: PC-2023-106
An alleged incapacitated person.)

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF A LIMITED GUARDIAN AND/OR CONSERVATOR

TO: DONNIE DODGEN
ROGER TRUSSELL
ANY KNOWN OR UNKNOWN OR INTERESTED PARTIES

Please take notice that a *Petition for Appointment of a Limited Guardian and/or Conservator* have been filed by Cullman County Department of Human Resources, Petitioner, by and through Attorney, Diane L. Dunning. A hearing on said *Petition for Appointment of a Limited Guardian and/or Conservator* has been **SET FOR THE 3rd day of MAY, 2023, AT 10:00 A.M.**, Cullman County Courthouse, Probate Office Room 101, 500 2nd Avenue SW, Cullman, AL 35055.

DONE this 6th day of April, 2023.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY ALABAMA

Diane L. Dunning
Assistant Attorney General
State of Alabama
Department of Human Resources
P.O. Box 13248
Birmingham, AL 35202-3248

PB ADT BK 65 PG 808 - 03/30/2023 04:05 PM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE
ADOPTION PETITION OF
DOUGLAS MICHAEL LEIPERT, JR. CASE NO AD 2023-024
FOR THE ADOPTION OF

R.G.K. A MINOR.
D.O.B. 4-22-2015

NOTICE OF PETITION FOR ADOPTION

TO: CHRISTOPHER WESLEY KING FATHER OF THE MINOR CHILD R.G.K. BORN TO KAYLA SUZANNE ESTES LEIPERT

The Petition for Adoption was filed in the Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama by Douglas Michael Leipert, Jr., Petitioner. If you should contest this adoption, you must file a written response within Thirty (30) days from the date of the last notice of publication. Your response must be filed with Counsel for said petitioner, whose name and address are shown below, and with the Clerk of Probate Court, 500 2nd Avenue SW, Room 101, Cullman County, Alabama.

DONE THIS 30th DAY OF March, 2023.

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

Jerry L. Kilgo
Attorney for Petitioner
105 1st Avenue NE, Ste. G.
Cullman, Alabama 35055

WSCC Paralegal program earns American Bar Association approval

Gail Crutchfield
Wallace State

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — Wallace State Community College recently announced its Paralegal program has been granted approval by the American Bar Association. The House of Delegates of the American Bar Association (ABA), acting on the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Paralegals, granted approval to the Paralegal Program at Wallace State this spring. The approval is endorsed through February 2030.

"This announcement has been a long time coming," said Rita Nicholas, Paralegal instructor at Wallace State. "We've been working through the steps to earn approval by the American Bar Association for quite a while and are pleased that approval has been granted."

The rigorous approval process is similar to accreditation procedures for schools and colleges.

The program conducted a self-study and created a self-evaluation report, provided supporting documents and met with members of the House of Delegates for review.

"This means that we meet certain standards that are established by the American Bar Association," Nicholas said. "It shows we've reached and maintained excellence in our program."

Nicholas said students graduating as early as this May will be able to put on their resumes that they are graduates from an ABA-approved paralegal program, which indicates both the students and the program have met ABA standards.

The approval of the Paralegal program means all programs at Wallace State are now accredited or approved by discipline-specific organizations in addition to the college's longtime overarching SACSCOC accreditation.

"This prestigious ABA designation has been a goal for our college and part of our long-term vision for program excellence. I commend Program Director Rita Nicholas for the work she put into achieving it," said Wallace State President Dr. Vicki Karolewics.

"Our students will be better positioned to seek and advance their careers and our program more attractive and competitive to prospective students for it."



WALLACE STATE

Rita Nicholas

'Down by the Riverside' set for April 13-15 at WSCC

Gail Crutchfield
Wallace State

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — Wallace State Community College's Fine and Performing Arts program will present "Down by the Riverside: The Roots of Gospel Music," Thursday-Saturday, April 13-15 at 7 p.m. each night in the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre of the Garlan Gudger Student Center.

"Down by the Riverside" is a musical retrospective of the uniquely American journey of the development of gospel music, said Tiffany Richter, director of the Wallace State Community College choral programs.

The concert will include styles ranging from African American spirituals and Sacred Harp traditions to the harmonies familiar to quartets and mass choirs.

"Gospel music is a central part of the American experience, especially for Southerners," Richter said.

"Gospel is heavily rooted in African American culture as well as folk music.

"All have evolved over the years to influence gospel quartets and choirs and have moved from churches to stages across the world." The Fine and Performing Arts program will travel to Europe in May to perform "Down by the Riverside" in Germany, Austria and Italy. "We are excited to once again take our students to Europe and share our music and history," Richter said. "The response we received in 2019 when we performed the 'Stars Fell on Alabama' show in Germany and France was phenomenal and we hope they enjoy this show just as much."



WALLACE STATE

Members of the Wallace State Choir practice for their upcoming performance of "Down by the Riverside: The Roots of Gospel Music." The production will be held April 13-15 at 7 p.m. in the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre of the Garlan Gudger Student Center. Admission is a $10 donation, $5 for students and children 12 and younger.

Admission is a $10 donation for adults and $5 for students and children 12 and younger.

Other Fine and Performing Arts productions scheduled for the Spring 2023 semester include:

- Big Band Dance by the Wallace State Jazz Band, April 21 at 7 p.m. at the Burrow Center for the Fine and Performing Arts
- Spring Under the Stars by the Wallace State Fine and Performing Arts programs, April 26 at 6:30 p.m. at the Burrow Center for the Fine and Performing Arts

WSCC advisor can identify with students she counsels

Gail Crutchfield
Wallace State

This is one in a series of stories celebrating Community College Month during April.

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — When Amber Robinson, a success advisor in Wallace State Community College's Center for Student Success, sits across her desk from an incoming or current student, she can identify with what they're going through. She went through it herself as a former student of the college where she now works.

Robinson began classes at Wallace State after she graduated from high school in 1999. She took classes for two semesters before transferring to the University of Alabama.

"I hated it," she admits. "I did well grade-wise, but I just did not enjoy the atmosphere at all, so I came back home."

She took a couple of more semesters at Wallace State with a goal of transferring to UAB to complete a business degree.

"But I got going with work and work kind of distracted me," she said. "I was making good money, and everything was fine."

About a year after giving birth to her son, she and her husband made plans for her to return to Wallace to take a few more classes before transferring to Athens State University.

"A week later, everything fell apart," she said. "I had already turned in notice for my job and then I became a single mom, real, real quick. I decided I was going to stick to the plan. My job offered to just tear up the resignation letter, but I was like, no, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do it and we're going to get finished with it and we're going to do it right, we're going to get this done."

She came back to Wallace for two more semesters to get a few more classes out of the way. She made sure to stay in contact with Helen Crider of Athens State, who has an office on the WSCC campus, and built relationships with Business instructors Marcie Manning and Terri Waldrop and Psychology instructor Stacey Brunner.

"They were my biggest cheerleaders at Wallace and gave me the encouragement I needed to keep moving," she said. "Back then you really didn't have advisors, so it was like you made friends with your instructors, which I did, and just seek out information. So, Helen was on my Athens side and Marcie, Terri and Stacey were on my Wallace side.

"They will always have an important part of my story," she added. "Their kindness, encouragement, and understanding will always be remembered."

Robinson earned an associate degree in general studies with a Business concentration from Wallace State in 2011 and then double majored in accounting and management at Athens State, where she graduated in 2012. She went on to earn a master's degree from Faulkner University.

She said her time at Wallace State prepared her and gave her the confidence to continue her education.

"It prepared me for the next step," she said. "I was a single mom to a very young child. I was scared, broke, but I was determined to do better for my child.

Wallace State not only provided me with the tools and confidence to realize that I could accomplish my goals, but they also prepared me for the tests, extra assignments, learning to think outside of the box. They taught me to advocate for myself and how important a college education is."

Now, she advocates for the students she advises and feels her experiences help her commiserate with what they are going through.

"I feel like I can empathize with them when they're fresh out of high school," she said. "I know how scary that is coming in. I know you have no clue how college life is really going to be until you go through that first semester. But then, I can also empathize with those students that are coming back after making some different decisions and getting away from college. I've been through it."

Robinson said she will sometimes share her story with students, so they realize they are not alone in their struggles and how important it is not to quit.

"I share a little bit of my journey to let them know this journey was not perfect by any means," she said. "There were a lot of late nights, a lot of tears and a lot of different jobs. I went a couple of years without insurance, and you pray you don't get hit by a car or get a crazy disease or need surgery."

One of those students is Randi Gonzalez, a Medical Assisting major. A single mother who moved back home after escaping an abusive marriage, Gonzalez was six months pregnant when she first met Robinson when she visited to college to look into enrolling.

"She was sweet, gentle and attentive to me," she said. "She made me feel comfortable. She put my mind at ease."

Gonzalez told Robinson she didn't want to enroll in school so far into her pregnancy, but that she would after her baby was born. Robinson gave her information about the admissions process and gave Gonzalez her card.

"One year later, I received a call from Mrs. Robinson," Gonzalez said. "She called to check on my family and asked if I was ready to join Wallace State Community College. The next morning, I applied to the college. She will walk across the stage in May at the Wallace State commencement ceremony and complete her degree this summer.



WALLACE STATE

Wallace State Community College Success Advisor Amber Robinson

While Robinson said her time at Wallace was the hardest, most emotional time she has ever experienced, it was also the most rewarding. "I will be grateful for starting here first," she said.

Robinson has since remarried and gained three bonus children. Her son is now 14 and already has plans to enroll in Wallace State's Dual Enrollment program when he becomes eligible. Robinson said she is proud her son was able to see her succeed in college and in her career at Wallace State.

"The most rewarding thing was my child growing up, watching me do all the college things," she said. "He was there for every graduation, and he has grown knowing how important it is to keep pushing yourself."

Honors (from Front)



JANET CHANDLER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cullman City Schools. View the video at www.facebook.com/CullmanCitySchools-Foundation.

Ashley Lee Wilson, who graduated from Cullman High in 1992 and is the founder of local nonprofit Curt's Closet, was honored with the 2023 Cullman City Schools Foundation Distinguished Service Award.

Find out more about Wilson's work at www.sites.google.com/view/curtscloset.

Entertainment for the luncheon included the Cullman High School theater department, members of which performed songs from the group's upcoming show "Newies."

Learn more about the Foundation and event at www.facebook.com/CullmanCitySchoolsFoundation.

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Fortunes told, crystals sold at new metaphysical supply shop

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The weather was dreary, yet no less magical for opening day of new metaphysical supply shop Magickal Remedies. As its name implies, the focus of the shop includes a wide variety of crystal tumbles and towers, dried herbs and resins, a library of books to make any Sanderson sister jealous, tarot and oracle readings, and an overall welcoming atmosphere for crone and maiden alike. Generations of magically inclined people gathered to show their support for the new local business.

Owner Gerald Duren said the shop was moved from Stevenson to Cullman to be closer to family and also to diversify the religious offerings of the area. "We like to bring a splash of culture to any kind of area," he said.

Duren was happy to share that his focus Thursday was on crystals and gemstones, as well as brightly dyed candles made of soy wax and imbued with positive intention, all of which were hand poured by Duren.

Manager Deanna Nunley was busy all morning managing the "herb wall," a collection of dried herbs and flora that can be used for teas and tinctures, priced by the ounce.

Customers lined up in the foyer of the shop to get their fill of herbal resins, dried flowers and smoke cleansing sticks.

Nunley mentioned that due to the shop's prime location and plenty of social media attention, "This is the busiest our shop has ever been. Our old location was never like this!" as she gestured to the line at the register and measuring station.

Bri House, a local Wiccan attending the opening, shared while she was perusing the mystery bag section that she was excited not only for some of her favorite religious supplies to be closer, but also for the impact the shop could have on Cullman.

"I guess I'm really just excited for people to see that Cullman is more open and accepting than it used to be," she said.

Missed opening day? Stop by Magickal Remedies from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, at 1405 Second Ave. SW, Suite E. Find the shop on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MagickalRemediesAL.



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

At Magickal Remedies' opening day, a family gazes at colorful handmade candles created by shop owner Gerald Duren.

Obituary Announcements: April 6-7

Diane Hamrick, 65
Diane Hamrick, 65, of Hanceville, passed away Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at her residence. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the Hamrick family. Mrs. Hamrick was born Feb. 25, 1958, to Henry Lee and Sylvia Marie Nelson Turner. She was a substitute teacher for over 20 years. Crafting was her number one hobby and she loved decorating for Halloween and Christmas. She loved her family and loved children. She was preceded in death by her parents; a sister, Gail, and brothers, Henry and Bob. Survivors include her husband, John Hamrick; sons, Tuke Cadiere, Jonathan Hamrick, Austin Cadiere; daughters, Kelly and April; brother, Mike (Tammy) Turner; niece, Clara; several grandchildren and family and friends. Friends may sign the online guestbook at www.cullmanfuneralhome.com.

Fred Wilburn Bussey, 95
Funeral services for Fred Wilburn Bussey of Hanceville will be noon Monday, April 10, 2023, at East Side Baptist Church in Cullman. Reverends Matt Smith and Sam Hollis will officiate. Burial will take place following the service at Hopewell Cemetery in Hanceville. Visitation for the public will be from 11 a.m. until noon on Monday at East Side Baptist Church. Mr. Bussey was born on July 17, 1927, in Blount County, Alabama to the late Houston and Delilah (Latta) Bussey. He passed away at the age of 95 on April 4, 2023, at his residence in Hanceville. Survivors include his loving wife, Aloha Bussey; children, Frederick Bussey and Freda Curry; grandchildren, Frederick Tristian Bussey, Lauren Elizabeth Salsman and Sarah Boyd-Sparks; great grandchildren, Nolan Sparks, Murry Sparks, Quinn Sparks, Margot Salsman, Hugh Salsman, Lanagan Bussey, and Thomas Potter Bussey; and a host of nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents, Mr. Bussey was preceded in death by his son, David Houston Bussey; great-granddaughter, Infant Charlotte Amelia Bussey; 3 sisters; and 1 brother.

Teresa Ann Fortner, 56
Teresa Ann Fortner, of Holly Pond, Alabama, passed away on Thursday, April 6, 2023, at the age of 56. Mrs. Fortner was born on July 4, 1966, in Marshall County, Alabama, to Paul Edward and Dorothy May Pitts Pruett. Teresa is preceded in death by her parents; brothers, Ronald Ray Pruett, Donald Carlis Pruett; and sister, Donna Faye Pruett. She is survived by her loving husband, Ronald William Fortner; brother, Bobby Lee Pruett; sister, Tressie Bee Pruett; close friends, Darlene Griffin, Taryn Nicole Baker, Pat Thomas; Brayleigh Grace Hayes, Cayleigh Nicole Hayes, and Nova Sky Baker, all of whom were loved by Teresa as though they were her own granddaughters; and the many members of the Fortner family. A Celebration of Life will be held for Teresa at a later date. Details will be updated as arrangements are made. Holly Pond Funeral Home is honored to serve the Fortner family.

James "Junior" Wayne Miller Jr., 60
Funeral Service for James "Junior" Wayne Miller Jr., age 60, of Cullman, will be at 2 p.m. on Monday, April 10, 2023, at Cullman Heritage Funeral Home Bro. G.T. Robertson officiating; burial at Holly Pond Cemetery. Visitation will be from noon until 2 p.m. prior to the service. Cullman Heritage Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Mr. Miller passed away on Thursday, April 6, 2023, at Cullman Regional. He was born June 5, 1962, to James Wayne Miller Sr. and Chesla Miller. He was preceded in death by his father. Survivors include his wife, Belinda Miller; son, Jarrett (Olivia) Miller; mother, Chesla Gaye Miller; brother, Gary (Cherrie) Miller; sisters, Melissa (Bruce) Hancock and Margaret (Michael) Reeder; and a host of nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews, family, and friends.

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BILLY BOB'S STORIES AND STUFF

The nicest thing anyone ever did

Bill King
Tribune
Contributor



Jean and I were in our early 30s when we bought our first house. We had been married for 13 years, but had never had the opportunity to become young homeowners. We wed as college students and lived in campus apartments for married students during college and seminary. Graduation came and we lived in church-provided housing after that. I am thankful for the provided housing, but when the opportunity finally came to buy our own house, we had built no equity. We quickly realized that we didn't have enough savings for the necessary downpayment. We needed $3000 to close. I knew my widowed mother didn't have it, so I didn't even ask. I didn't know anyone else to turn to for the needed funds.

A member of the church I was leaving asked me to come see him. He asked how much I needed to close on the house. When he handed me the exact amount we needed, I said, "I can't accept this." When he asked, "Why not?" I replied, "Because I don't know how or when I can repay it." I'll never forget him saying, "Did anyone say anything about repaying it?" I thought that no one had ever given me such a gift, but actually, someone had given even more.

Wayne, a friend of mine, had a brother who was dying from kidney failure. His only hope for survival appeared to be a transplant. Although God has gifted us with a pair of kidneys, we can survive with just one. In spite of that fact, not many people are standing in line to give away one of their kidneys. Chances are, even those who might be willing to make such a sacrifice might not be a compatible donor. Wayne was a match. He knew he could save his brother's life, so he made the decision. He had a surgery he didn't have to have. He risked the possibility of his own death, and he lived the remainder of his life with only one kidney. That, my friends, is love.

Both of the gifts I've shared about were tremendous acts of kindness. They were given out of hearts of love.

I will always appreciate what my friend and former church member did for Jean and me. What Wayne did for his brother was an act that even went a step further. My friend gave out of what he had, but Wayne gave part of himself. He gave part of his body. His donation could have easily cost him his life. He lived many years after his sacrificial gift, but he was willing to die so his brother might live.

There is one who gave, so all of us might live. He didn't just give part of his body, but he gave his entire body. He gave his all.

His name, of course, is Jesus. This week, which we call Holy Week, we pause to remember and celebrate what Jesus did for you and me. When Jesus died on a cross, exactly what did he do for us? The hymn "He Paid a Debt" may say it best. It says, "He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay, I needed someone to wash my sins away." Another hymn says, "Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe." No greater gift has ever been given or ever will be.

This weekend we celebrate the sacrifice Jesus made for us, as well as His magnificent resurrection from the dead. Thank you, to all who have given, but especially to Jesus!

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

HISTORY

Files from yesteryear: 1930, 1936

From the files of 1930

Clyde Gammon, of the Logan 4-H Club, has won a trip to the National Convention in Chicago. Clyde won the trip for producing 1,020 pounds of lint cotton, on one acre of ground. This was the highest yield of any 4-H boy in North Alabama.

S.H. Green is chairman of the Community Chest drive, which will be on December 9.

A fire on Wednesday damaged the Asa B. Fuller home.

The first snow of the winter fell about 6 p.m. on Monday.

Mrs. T.E. Johnson and Mrs. W.J. Nesmith spent Thanksgiving in Birmingham with Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Thompson and Miss Vonde Lee Johnson. Mr. and Mrs. John Assell, of Birmingham, spent Thursday here with Miss Emma Assell.

Miss Georgia Higgins is visiting relatives in Calera.

Miss Helen Glasscock attended the Howard-Southern game, in Birmingham, on Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. R.C. Calloway area in Georgia at the bedside of Mrs. Calloway's mother, Mrs. Crutchfield, who is ill.

Mr. and Mrs. Talmadge Whatley announce the birth of a little daughter.

Charles Bilgere died, in Birmingham, on Friday morning and funeral services were held on Saturday at the Sacred Heart Church here.

Mr. and Mrs. McGee have arrived from Tampa, Florida, to take charge of the Alabama Hotel here.

From the files of 1936

Electric washing machines are advertised by C.A. Stiefelmeyer for $44.00 for one model and $52.50 for the other model.

Doctor Sidney Morrow, of Birmingham, spent Sunday in Cullman as the guest of his mother, Mrs. Bess Morrow.

(In the November 1916 election, these were elected: Probate Judge, Fred J. Buchmann (R), Circuit Clerk, O.S. Roden (D), Tax Collector, Lee Cochran (R), County Commissioners, L.A. Kelton (D), E.T. Knight (D), J.B. White (D) and J.A. Vickery (R).

Artie Thracher, of Panama is visiting relatives in Tennessee.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Nesmith were the Saturday night guests of her brother, the Troy Phillips of Bethsadia.

Arvie Walker has bought a fine pair of mules.

Mr. Louis Freeman passed away at his residence, near Pine Hill.

POET'S CORNER

Jesus and the Donkey | By: Randy C. Hale

At the crossroads he waited
for the disciples to arrive
foretold in the scriptures
the son of God would ride.

Just a normal little colt
who had never borne a man
took the master of the world
across a journey planned.

And down the trail he went
and on his back God's son,
who created all of nature
that picked him as the one.

Jesus rode this little donkey,
God planned it that way.
The King of Kings so humble,
you and me to save.

Believers cried Hosanna
waved palm leaves on the way
Some laid their coats and clothesto walk on that day.

What can I do for Jesus
the question you may ask?
A helping hand to offer
for some devoted task?

Make available your kindness,
be ready and you will see.
There's an opportunity waiting
and a service you can be.

Give the time and who you are,
the best that you can do.
Just be willing for the moment
when God has chosen you.



CULLMAN TRIBUNE WORD SEARCH

APRIL 8

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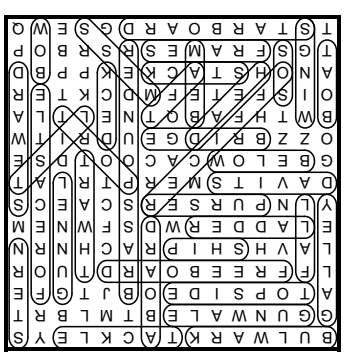
Aboard
Aft
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Brass Pounder
Bridge
Bulwark
Davits
Deck
Fall
Forecastle
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Galley
Gunnel
Gunwale
Head
Ladder
List
Mess
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Port
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CULLMAN TRIBUNE SUDOKU

APRIL 8

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ANSWERS:



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3	7	6	4	5	9	1	2	8
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7	4	3	8	5	6	9	1	2
9	6	2	1	4	3	8	5	7

Jacobs proclaims April Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Cullman

Leanne West
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — April 2023 marks the 22nd anniversary of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). On Monday, April 3, 2023, Mayor Woody Jacobs officially proclaimed the month of April 2023 Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the city of Cullman. On hand to accept the proclamation from Victim Services of Cullman (VSOC) were Client Intake Advocate Lacey Lemley and Domestic Violence Facilitator Susan Jones.

"We are happy to support Victim Services in increasing awareness of this issue that affects many in our community," said Jacobs.

About SAAM

SAAM was first nationally observed in 2001. But even before that, advocates held events and observances to bring awareness to the issue of sexual violence.

In the beginning, the primary goal of SAAM was awareness. But gradually, SAAM began focusing on ways that individuals and communities can stop sexual violence before it happens by changing behaviors and promoting respect. Today, SAAM is about both raising visibility about sexual violence and sharing ways that it can be prevented.

The symbol for SAAM is the teal ribbon. Individuals and communities in Cullman and across the country are encouraged to show their support for survivors of sexual violence by wearing denim on April 26 and posting a selfie on social media with #denimday2023.

VSOC personnel will be placing teal ribbons throughout the city. They will also be posting information on other events and observances taking place throughout the month at www.facebook.com/victimservicescullman.

This year's SAAM campaign theme is "Drawing Connections: Prevention Demands Equity."

This campaign calls on all individuals, communities, organizations and institutions to endeavor to build a foundation of racial equity and respect.

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) calls on everyone to "take ownership of this moment to build up their own understanding of the ways in which systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism and others contribute to higher rates of all types of sexual violence."

About sexual violence

Sexual violence can have long-lasting psychological, emotional and physical effects on survivors. The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) defines sexual violence as any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim. Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity, and it should happen every time.

Some perpetrators use emotional coercion, psychological force, manipulation or intimidation to coerce a victim into non-consensual sex. Some will use threats, such as threatening to hurt the victim or their family. And some will use physical force.

Examples of sexual violence include attempted or completed rape, unwanted sexual touching, child sexual abuse, incest, drug-facilitated sexual assault, stalking, sexual abuse of people with disabilities, sexual harassment and more.

Preventing sexual violence

Risk factors: According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), there is a combination of individual, relational, community and societal factors that can contribute to the risk of becoming a perpetrator of sexual violence. Individual risk factors include (but are not limited to) alcohol and drug use, aggressive behaviors, and acceptance of violent behaviors, lack of concern for others, exposure to sexual-explicit media, hostility toward women, a family history of conflict and violence, a childhood history of abuse, poor parent-child relationships, association with sexually-aggressive peers and prior sexual victimization or perpetration. Community and societal risk factors include a general tolerance of sexual violence within the community, societal norms that support sexual violence, weak laws and policies related to sexual violence and high levels of crime and other forms of violence.

Protective factors: Protective factors can exist at individual, relational, community and societal levels and may lessen the likelihood of sexual violence. These protective factors include families who work through conflicts peacefully, emotional health and connectedness, academic achievement and empathy and concern for how one's actions affect others.

Engaged bystanders: There are actions bystanders can take to help prevent sexual violence. While it may not be safe or effective to directly confront someone directly, bystanders can be involved before, during, or after a situation when they see or hear behaviors that promote sexual violence. Some strategies and tips from NSVRC include:

• Disrupting the situation. When someone is being harassed, threatened, or followed by someone, a bystander can try to distract the harasser (by asking for directions, for instance) or can insert him/herself into the interaction to help the targeted person get out of the situation (by pretending to know the person being harassed and starting a conversation with them, for example).

• Getting support from other people by calling on others to help. If it's not safe to confront the harasser, a bystander can contact police and report the harassing actions.

• Confronting the harasser. Telling the harasser in a respectful, direct and honest way that their words or actions are not okay.

• Ensuring the target of the harassing words or actions knows that it's not their fault.

• Taking action online. Responding to online comments that blame victims of sexual violence or that contribute to an online culture in which sexual violence is tolerated and not taken seriously. Responding to victim-blaming, rape jokes or other like comments online. Linking to educational resources about sexual violence prevention.

Reporting sexual violence

VSOC has a 24-hour crisis line serving residents of Cullman, Marshall and Winston counties. That number is 256-734-6100.

RAINN organizes the National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline, a referral service that puts callers in contact with local rape crisis centers. That number is 1-800-656-4673. It also has an online chat service at www.rainn.org/get-help.

National sexual assault statistics

According to the CDC's latest National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) – an ongoing nationally representative survey that assesses sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization among adult women and men – one in five women and nearly a quarter of men in the U.S. experience completed or attempted rape or some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime. Statistics compiled by the NSVRC also show that:

• Approximately 1 in 3 female victims and approximately 1 in 4 male victims in the U.S. first experienced completed or attempted rape or other sexual assault between the ages of 11 and 17.

• About half (51.1%) of female victims and over half (52.4%) or male victims in the U.S. reported being raped or sexually assaulted by an intimate partner; 40.8% by an acquaintance.

• RAINN statistics show that approximately 8 out of 10 sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim.

• RAINN reports that there are approximately 321,500 people aged 12 and older who are victims of rape and sexual assault yearly. They also state that the actual total may be higher since it is believed that most sexual assaults are not reported to law enforcement.

• More than 1 in 4 non-Hispanic Black women (29%), more than 4 in 5 American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3%), 1 in 3 Hispanic women (34.8%), 32.9% of adults with intellectual disabilities and 47% of transgender people in the U.S. have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetimes.

About VSOC

VSOC was established in 1991 for victims of domestic violence. In 1996, VSOC began providing services to victims of sexual violence. VSOC provides crisis response, recovery, and prevention programs for families impacted by domestic and sexual violence. Some of the services VSOC offers victims of sexual violence include free and confidential crisis counseling, information and referrals to other services and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner. VSOC also provides community outreach and education programs in an effort to reduce the risk of sexual violence.

Sexual violence prevention and recovery resources

For more information on sexual violence, contact:

• Victim Services of Cullman (VSOC) www.victimservices.online Phone: 256-775-2600

• Alabama Department of Public Health: www.alabamapublichealth.gov/injuryprevention/sexual-assault-and-rape.html Toll-Free: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) TTY: 1-888-232-6348

• National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) www.nsvrc.org TTY: 717-909-0715 Toll-Free: 877-739-3895 Email: resources@nsvrc.org

• Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) www.rainn.org Toll-Free: 1-800-656-HOPE(4673)

• Alabama Coalition Against Rape (ACAR) www.alabamacoalitionagainstrape.org

• Phone: 334-264-0123 Toll-Free: 1-800-656-HOPE(4673) Email: ACARinfo2022@gmail.com

If you are a victim of sexual violence:

• Confide in a trusted friend or family member

• Contact local law enforcement

• Call VSOC's 24-Hour Crisis Line at 256-734-6100

• Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673 or by chat at www.rainn.org/get-help





– FAITH –

Feast of Divine Mercy



BARBARA RAGSDALE

Barbara Ragsdale
Contributor

All are invited to attend the annual Feast of Divine Mercy services at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church on Sunday, April 16, starting at 2:30 p.m. This religious event celebrates Jesus' offering His mercy, powerful graces and love freely to His followers, as told to Saint Faustina Kowalska, a Polish Sister to whom He appeared.

Asked by The Lord to spread word of His absolutely free Divine Mercy, Sr. Faustina spent her life doing just as requested. Jesus appeared to her in the image pictured above on the Altar at Sacred Heart of Jesus, saying that the white rays depict the Water of Baptism which cleanses the soul, while the red rays represent the Precious Blood which He shed on the Cross to save humanity.

Held each year on the first Sunday after Easter, everyone is welcome to attend the service and seek Jesus' Divine Mercy, lovingly and freely given to His believers.