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# The Cullman Tribune

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– SPORTS –

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# Ribbon cut on new Cobblestone Hotel in Cullman

**Cheyenne Sharp**
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

**CULLMAN, Ala.** — On Thursday, March 28, Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs, Cullman Economic Development Agency Director Dale Greer, other community officials and members of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce gathered at the new Cobblestone Hotel and Suites to officially cut the ribbon and welcome the business to Cullman.

"This has been a fun project," said Jacobs. "Thank you for building this here, we have always wanted something in this area. We feel like this will be a win."

The project has been in development for close to two years, and was announced in August of 2022. Greer touched on the work of City leaders, advancement of Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tour- » PAGE 5



CHEYENNE SHARP/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

*The ribbon was cut on the new Cobblestone Hotel in southwest Cullman on Thursday, March 28.*

# 'A true hero of the force' Tribute to retiring CCSO Capt. Ricky Blackwood




CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

*Captain Ricky Blackwood and Sheriff Matt Gentry*

**Lauren Estes**
lauren@cullmantribune.com

**CULLMAN, Ala.** — Captain Ricky Blackwood joined law enforcement in 1988 as a Reserve Deputy for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office. March 31, 2024, will mark his retirement.

In 1991, Blackwood went full-time with the sheriff's office and that's where he has remained and rose through the ranks for more than 30 years.

Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry said as long as he has served Blackwood has been there and he has always been loyal to the CCSO.

"You don't find that a lot of times – someone this consistent, this loyal, this hard-working," Gentry said. "Talking about our relationship, over the last » PAGE 2

## Experience the solar eclipse with Cullman Electric Cooperative while supporting a local cause

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## Cullman Veterans Hall of Fame seeking nominations




DON FALLIN

*Retired U.S. Army Colonel and Fairview High School alumnus Don Fallin holds a banner recognizing the Cullman Veterans Hall of Fame.* » PAGE 5

## 40th annual Bloomin' Festival coming April 20-21



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

*The Bloomin' Festival is a community favorite event each year, drawing thousands.* » PAGE 4

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CRIME

# Arrests and incidents reported March 29

**Cullman Tribune staff**
Contributor

**CULLMAN, Ala.** — Below are the arrests and incidents reported March 29, 2024. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

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

**CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

**INCIDENTS**

**March 25**

- Possession of drug paraphernalia; Hwy. 278E
- Criminal mischief; CR 1435
- Theft of property; CR 541
- Permitting dogs to run at large; CR 1330
- Assault; Young Rd.

**March 26**

- Possession of dangerous drugs; possession of drug paraphernalia; Hwy. 278E
- Harassment; CR 46
- Assault; CR 1223
- Theft of property; CR 1196
- Theft of property; CR 1141

**ARRESTS**

**March 25-27**

**Akers, Nicholas J.; 50**
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- PAROLE VIOLATION/ REVOCATION - soliciting a controlled substance crime (2 counts)

**Ball, Brittney L.; 36**
- FTA - homicide - manslaughter
- FTA - assault - child abuse - simple – family

**Ball, Johnna M.; 23**
- FTA - driving under the influence (combined substance)

**Cain, Nathan W.; 40**
- assault - domestic - harassment – family

**Doyle, Kenneth W.; 38**
- forgery - counterfeiting (2 counts)
- theft - miscellaneous less than $500 (2 counts)
- FTA - possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA - possession of drug paraphernalia

**Eason, Joseph C.; 37**
- assault - domestic - simple assault – family

**Hitt, Cody L.; 33**
- retail theft-3rd degree

**James, Timothy L.; 63**
- possession of methamphetamine
- possession of drug paraphernalia

**Johnson, Ollie J.; 28**
- violation of a domestic violence protection order

**Lewis, James B.; 45**
- burglary - residence - force
- FTA - possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA - possession of drug paraphernalia

**Loggins, James B.; 44**
- PROBATION REVOKED - stolen vehicles - unauthorized use of other vehicle - no force (2 counts)
- PROBATION REVOKED - burglary - residence - force (2 counts)

**McLeod, Randy I.; 41**
- FTA - driving while suspended revoked or cancelled
- FTA - no/improper tag light

**Slaten, Alexander C.; 23**
- assault - simple assault

**Smith, Timothy M.; 37**
- FTA - forgery - counterfeiting (2 counts)

**Speegle, Jonathan S.; 53**
- FTA - possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA - possession of drug paraphernalia

**Speegle, Julia A.; 59**
- FTA - possession of dangerous drugs (2 counts)
- FTA - illegal possession of prescription drugs
- FTA - possession of drug paraphernalia (3 counts)
- FTA - possession of marijuana-2nd degree (2 counts)

**Stillwell, Logan J.; 26**
- FTA - possession of dangerous drugs

**West, Ammie R.; 44**
- FTA - possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA - possession of drug paraphernalia

**CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**INCIDENTS**

**March 27**
- theft of property-4th degree; person; bicycle; $300; Cobblestone LN. SE
- identity theft; person
- theft of property-3rd degree; person; wallet & contents; 4th St. SW
- robbery; person; Hwy. 157

**March 28**
- theft of property-3rd degree; Wal-Mart; miscellaneous; Olive St. SW

**ARRESTS**

**March 27-28**

**Burnett, Joshua W.; 46**
- attempt to elude
- reckless endangerment
- unlawful possession of marijuana-2nd degree

**Fitzgerald II, Alan R.; 43**
- FTA - attempt to elude
- FTA - reckless endangerment
- FTA - assault with bodily fluids
- FTA - false information to law enforcement
- FTA - possession of drug paraphernalia (3 counts)
- FTA - criminal trespass-3rd degree (4 counts)
- FTA - public intoxication

**Jones, Adrian M.; 40**
- attempted murder

**March 28**

**Gold, Dillion T.; 29**
- FTA – insurance violation
- FTA – switched tag

**Shaw, Stephanie A.; 33**
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia

**HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

No arrests or incidents reported.

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

# Wallace State earns 2024-2025 Military Friendly School designation

**Special to The Cullman Tribune**

**HANCEVILLE, Ala.** — Wallace State Community College announced recently it has earned the 2024-2025 Military Friendly School designation.

Institutions earning the Military Friendly School designation were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey. More than 1,800 schools participated in the

2024-2025 survey with 537 earning special awards for going above the standard.

The 2024- 2025 Military Friendly Schools list will be published in the May and October issue of G.I. Jobs magazine and can be found at www.militaryfriendly.com.

Methodology, criteria and weightings were determined by Viqtory with input from the Military Friendly Advisory Council of independent leaders in the higher education and military recruitment community.

Final ratings were determined by combining the institution's survey scores with the assessment of the institution's ability to meet thresholds for Student Retention, Graduation, Job Placement, Loan Repayment, Persistence (Degree Advancement or Transfer) and Loan Default rates for all students and, specifically, for student veterans.

"Wallace State is honored to once again be designated as a Military Friendly School," said Kristen Holmes, Wallace State vice president for students, of the college's 10th consecutive designation.

"We respect the sacrifices and commitments our veterans and their families have made for our country, state and community. We are privileged to count veterans among our students and alumni."

Wallace State has repeatedly earned the designation as a Military Friendly college and has also been named a Military Friendly Spouse School. Wallace State offers several services specifically for veterans such as the Veterans Corner located in the WSCC Library, where veterans can go to for quiet time or to meet with other veterans.

The college also offers scholarships for veterans and their families, college credit for prior learning and professional experience for those who qualify, as well as free tutoring, success advising, career services and more.

"Military Friendly® is committed to transparency and providing consistent data-driven standards in our designation process. Our standards provide a benchmark that promotes positive outcomes and support services that better the educational landscape and provide opportunity for the Military Community.

This creates a competitive atmosphere that encourages Institutions to evolve and invest in their programs consistently.

Schools who achieve awards designation show true commitment in their efforts, going over and above that standard," said Kayla Lopez, National Director of Military Partnerships, Military Friendly®.

For more information about Wallace State Community College student veteran programs, visit wallacestate.edu/about-wscc/military.html or call Lion Central at 256-352-8238.

# Blackwood (from Front)

10 years as sheriff we have had a very close relationship. One that I am thankful for. Whether we are in a standoff or serving at a senior citizens cook-out, he was always there."

With Blackwood retiring, Gentry said the office is going to be different, but he is so thankful for being able to work and serve with him.

"There will be no one else to wear crazy cowboy outfits, or fun attire like cowboy hats, boots and shirts, and things will definitely be different," Gentry said.

"I do look forward to his retirement – he deserves this. He has dedicated his life to the CCSO and to the community. His wife, Monica, and his family will have new adventures with retirement. He is respected and will be missed by all, but I look forward to time spent in the future."

CCSO Director of Communications Chad Whaley said in reference to Blackwood, "Beware the old man in a land where men die young."

Explaining, he said, "This quote is typically attributed to an anonymous soldier, but it can easily apply to law enforcement As a career, or a calling, law enforcement is not for the faint of heart. Especially in today's world, 30-plus year veterans are a dying breed. The stress, danger and all the pitfalls associated with the job make 'short-timers' out of most. This is one of the things that makes Captain Ricky Blackwood unique."

Whaley said Blackwood embodies "old school."

"He still believes in people and connections," he said. "He has grown with the sheriff's office and Cullman County, as both have seen drastic changes over the past few decades.

"From patrol to narcotics to investigation to supervision, he has literally seen it all. Despite seeing it all, he didn't let it make him bitter or hateful (at least not all the time!). Instead he leaned on what mattered – his people and the community. Captain Blackwood cares for the citizens of Cullman County, genuinely cares, more than anyone I have ever been around. No matter what he accomplished in his career, that is what stands out to me the most. I am better because I worked with him, and I am truly honored to call him a friend."

SRO Andy Wray said Blackwood has been his friend and mentor for over 20 years.

"The countless conversations we have shared, both personal and professional, have been invaluable to me," Wray said. "His leadership and work ethic have guided many deputies through their careers. His contributions to the sheriff's office and the citizens of Cullman County are immeasurable."

Captain Rex Sorrow said every person has their unique perceptions of others, and when he first met Blackwood several years ago, he learned the importance of being considerate.

"His temper could ignite instantly, and he would become like a furious Tasmanian devil, showing little patience for even the slightest errors," Sorrow said.

"Throughout my interactions with Captain Blackwood, I have seen him take a firm stance and instruct people to depart the county, never to return.

"Nevertheless, as I spent more time working alongside him, I could observe his true character. To my delight, I discovered a more personable and amicable side to him that reminded me of the beloved cartoon figure Foghorn Leghorn."

Sorrow said Blackwood is quite chatty, often sharing entertaining anecdotes and humor.



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"His playful nature made him lovable, and his Southern hospitality made him a genuine gentleman," Sorrow said.

"As a patrol lieutenant, I had the privilege of working closely with Captain Blackwood for several years. Throughout our time together, we handled a variety of calls, from dangerous shootings and suicides to emotionally charged domestic disputes and break-ins.

"In addition to these challenging situations, we regularly visited local businesses and senior centers.

"During these visits, I benefited from Captain Blackwood's extensive knowledge and experience. He was a remarkable leader who deftly balanced toughness with compassion.

"When confronted with difficult circumstances, he remained resolute, yet he also knew when to be empathetic and understanding.

"His ability to navigate complex and delicate situations left a lasting impression on me."

Sorrow said the sheriff's office will certainly miss Blackwood, who is highly regarded for his extensive experience, sharp humor and occasional fiery outbursts that only added to his charm.

"His amusing anecdotes and contagious laughter were a regular occurrence in the workplace, leaving a lasting impact on all those fortunate enough to have crossed his path," Sorrow said.

"I will always cherish the favorable impression he left on me.

"My father-in-law, Doug Warren, once spoke of Captain Blackwood with the utmost admiration, depicting him as the epitome of a true law enforcement officer who embodied the highest ideals of professionalism and commitment to duty.

"Captain Blackwood's unwavering commitment to serving his community with integrity and a servant's heart has left an indelible mark on everyone who knew him, and he will always be remembered as a true hero of the force."



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

**Public Notice**

Mt. Zion Cemetery: Please remove all ground flowers/decorations from graves at Mt. Zion Cemetery at Vinemont (Highway 31) for spring cleaning and mowing.

**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, March 30 - Community Easter Celebration from noon-3 p.m.! Inflatables, Easter egg hunt, food and fun!

• Sunday, March 31 - Prayer - Join Teresa at 9:15 a.m. in the prayer room to pray for our church, nation and those who need healing, salvation or deliverance.

• Sunday, March 31 - 9 a.m. Van runs in the 5 Points Area. Call Guy Sunter at 727-215-9092 for pickup. Breakfast at 9:30. Bible study classes for children, youth and adults at 10. Praise and worship and "He is Risen!" message by Pastor Bobby at 11.

**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.

**Cullman Serenity AlAnon Meetings**

The Cullman Serenity AlAnon group meets each Monday at noon at 1519 St. Joseph Dr. NE. There is also a zoom meeting each Tuesday at noon. The AlAnon family groups are a fellowship of friends and family whose lives have been affected by alcoholism. For more information, call 256-708-6645, 850-323-0490 or 256-734-2231.

**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.

•

**Fairview Lions Club Spring Fling and Car, Truck, Tractor and Motorcycle Show**

Saturday, April 6, at Randall Shedd Community Park on Wesley Avenue in Fairview. We will have a car show, vendors, games, music and bouncy houses. Registration is $20 and will begin at 8 a.m. with awards to be given out at 1 p.m. Vendor spots are $10 a spot, payable the day of the event. Must be set up by 9 a.m. Food vendors are encouraged to join us. Please register by March 28. Food vendor spots are $50. For more information, please contact Kita Chambers at 256-385-8805 or William Criscoe at 256-385-5596.

**Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church Revival**

We will be having our spring revival the week of April 7. Services will be Sunday, April 7, at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., and Monday-Wednesday, April 8-10 at 7 p.m. The evangelist will be Brother Jared Dixon. Everyone is invited. 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 or 256-338-9202.

**Cullman Chapter of The National Association of Retired and Active Federal Employees Meeting**

Monday, April 8, at the Golden Corral Buffet. The guest speaker will be Stephanie Childers. She is the executive director of the United Way of Cullman County. Dutch lunch at 11 a.m. and meeting beginning at noon. Members and nonmembers are welcome.

**Rummage Sale**

Friday, April 12, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturday, April 13, from 8 a.m.-noon at Trinity Lutheran Church, 505 Commercial St., Hanceville.

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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
MARCH 30, 2024

# COLUMN: Cornbread 101

**Joe Hobby**
Contributor

For whatever reason, I decided today was going to be the day. Without hesitation, I walked into the bedroom with purpose and called to my wife Carol, who was watching a movie on her iPad.

I got right to the point and said, "Hey, the time's come. I should have done this a long time ago. Today I want you to teach me how to make cornbread. And once you do that, show me how to make pecan pies. Then I will have no further use for your services."

She looked over her iPad and said, "Do you know the only reason I even keep you around is for lawn maintenance and minor home repair."

Touché.

She followed me into the kitchen, which is my domain now. That's because I enjoy cooking, and Carol, well let's just generously say it's more of a chore for her.

There are two exceptions to this rule. She can cook pecan pies and cornbread. I've seen the proof at many a church covered dish where her pecan pie vanishes early, and her plate of cornbread is always empty. So today I was going to force her to reveal one of her dark secrets, one that I'm sure has been passed down for generations. At last, I was going to learn the secret of making proper cornbread.

She immediately opened the pantry door and pulled out a package of cornmeal mix from a secret stash. Then from the very back of the fridge, a quart of buttermilk and an egg.

After grabbing a mixing bowl, she picked up the cornmeal package, turned it over, and said, "The directions are right here on the back, and I just follow them."

"What? That's it?" I asked incredulously. "No secret ingredients? No magical incantation passed down from little old ladies in bifocals?"

I felt like a student at Hogwarts who had been told there was no such thing as magic.

I continued by saying, "The next thing you'll tell me is the recipe for green bean casserole is on the back of a can of Campbell's Mushroom soup."

"Joe, that recipe IS on the back of a can of Campbell's Mushroom Soup."

This cooking lesson was becoming more traumatic with each passing minute.

Carol continued, "Now there is one secret, one thing you must have for good cornbread."

I perked up. And she produced an old cast iron skillet, brandishing it like a wizard's wand. "This was my grandmother's. An old, seasoned cast iron skillet is what really does it. But first, you coat it with oil, swish it around, then place it in a hot oven."

I knew there had to be some special secret to all this. The magic skillet! Of course. I felt better – that is, until I saw the next step.

While the oven heated, my wife reached in a lower cabinet, pulled out a small tub and put it on the counter. I knew what it was and I knew what she was about to do. My face turned white. The fear of eternal damnation rose in my soul. I recoiled in horror. Carol was about to put sugar in the cornbread.

"No! You can't do that!" I shrieked.

"I thought you wanted to learn how to make cornbread," she replied.

"I do, but I know enough about it to know what you're doing is so wrong." I was almost pleading. "My mom would never do this! She used to say that if you put sugar in cornbread, then you're really just making cake."

A look of mild disgust came over her face. "Well this is the way my grandmother taught me, and this is what the recipe calls for, and this is what we're going to do." Then she scooped a tablespoon in the sugar tub and dusted it over the batter.

I began to feel faint as I stepped back from the counter. I just knew that any minute Paula Deen would come crashing thru our front door and arrest us for impersonating Southerners. I could already see the crime scene tape being strung across our kitchen door. What's she gonna do next, put mayonnaise in it?

My wife looked up, shook her head, and said, "Enough with the drama, Shakespeare. How many times have you eaten my cornbread?"

"Lots of times," I replied uncertainly.

"Right. And people love my cornbread, right?"

"Um, well...yeah."

"Then what are you worried about? It's just a personal preference, not a crime against humanity."

"That depends on who ask," I replied.

Soon, the batter was poured in the hot cast iron skillet and placed back in the oven. Within 25 minutes we had a perfect pone. The top was a warm oak color, while the bottom was a rich, crisp mahogany crust because of the hot cast iron. In between was light, moist perfection. My Cornbread 101 lesson was now officially complete.

Carol washed her hands and began walking out of the kitchen, saying matter-of-factly, "That's all there is to it."

"Hey, wait! What about the pecan pie?" I asked.

She looked over her shoulder and replied, "Joe, don't push your luck."

**Joe Hobby is a barbecue-loving comedian from Alabama who wrote for Jay Leno for many years. Find more of Joe's stories on his blog: https://mylifeasahobby.blogspot.com. Follow him on Facebook at Joe Hobby Comedian-Writer.**

# FPLCC hosting Storybook Sprint 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run April 27

**Staff Reports**
Contributor

**CULLMAN, Ala.** — The Friends of the Public Libraries of Cullman County (FPLCC) will host the Storybook Sprint 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run Saturday, April 27, at 8 a.m. This unique, family friendly event promises outdoor fitness and to bring books to life. The group invites participants of all ages to run, walk and celebrate the joy of reading.

The Storybook 5K and 1-MileFun Run is not just a race; it's an opportunity to bring beloved storybook characters to life, encouraging creativity and imagination among participants. Runners and walkers are encouraged to dress up as their favorite characters from literature, whether it's a classic fairytale hero or a modern-day superhero from a graphic novel.

The event aims to foster a love for reading while promoting an active lifestyle in the scenic surroundings of Cullman County.

"We are thrilled to host the Storybook 5K and Fun Run, combining the magic of storytelling with the energy of outdoor activity," said Julie Freeman, president of the FPLCC.

"We want this event to show our commitment to promoting literacy and community engagement. It's a fantastic opportunity for families, avid readers and fitness enthusiasts to come together for a fun-filled day."

The Storybook 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run will start and end at the Cullman County Public Library in downtown Cullman. Registration for the event is now open and can be completed online at https://givebutter.com/2qBuZG. All proceeds will support FPLCC initiatives and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Get more information, including registration details and sponsorship opportunities, at www.facebook.com/fotplocc.

# Festival (from Front)

**Cheyenne Sharp**
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

**CULLMAN, Ala.** — The 40th annual Bloomin' Festival will take place Aril 20-21, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. each day on the grounds of St. Bernard Preparatory School. The event is one of the school's main fundraisers, and draws thousands each year. Admission is a $10 donation per person.

Festival Director Joyce Nix said the Bloomin' Festival is not only a community favorite event, but also a student and alumni favorite. Students, current and past, return to the festival each year, volunteering to help their alma mater or simply recounting the memories while they peruse the vendors and booths.

"It's gone on so many years; the students love coming back for it, because they remember standing out in the pasture directing traffic," laughed Nix.

Each year, when planning begins, Nix searches for ways to elevate the festival.

This year, the growth of the festival has been so incredible, the two-day event has over 180 vendors lined up.

"We've been around for 40 years, and I've been around for all 40 of them," Nix smiled.

"We started in the 1983-84 school year and it's gone from 60 vendors to around 185 now."

The vendors are the big draw, increasing attendance and monetary support for the school.

The enormous gathering is set to span the campus of St. Bernard Prep, with vendors set up in booths and tents along the way showcasing their handmade items, décor and homemade sweets and treats.

Offerings are limitless, and with so many artists and makers on-site, there will be something for everyone.

A raffle for a 2024 Jeep Compass will also take place at the festival, with any donation of $5 or more buying a chance to drive the vehicle home.

Nix talked about vendors and the items that will be on sale and display at the festival, sharing, "We feature all kind of good things like pottery, sunglass, jewelry soaps, even things like hummingbird feeders and teakwood furnishings.

"We have plants, succulents and even goat cheese."

Attendees may notice that one thing won't at the Bloomin' Festival this year: food trucks, which are typically seen at street and community festivals.

Nix said there is a reason for that. As the festival is one of the school's primary fundraisers, 100% of the proceeds from the concessions and refreshments go to directly support student life and assist with tuition and fees.

Concessions of hamburgers, Polish sausages, fried potato spirals, funnel cakes and strawberry waffles are all on the menu, along with the famous Monk Bread.

The Bloomin' Festival will take place at St. Bernard Prep School Saturday and Sunday, April 20-21 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. each day.

St. Bernard is located at 1600 St. Bernard Drive SE. Admission is a $10 donation. Special reduced admission rates will also be offered to festival attendees all weekend to visit Ave Maria Grotto.

Get more info at www.bloominfestival.com.

# Eclipse (from Front)

**Gauge Day**
gauge@cullmantribune.com

**CULLMAN, Ala.** — Cullman Electric Cooperative is gearing up to host a Solar Eclipse Viewing Party on Monday, April 8, from noon-3:30 p.m., inviting the community to witness this rare astronomical event. The Co-op aims to replicate the success of the 2017 viewing party, which saw great community participation and engagement. This year's event will be hosted at the Co-op's main office, located at 1749 Eva Road NE in Cullman.

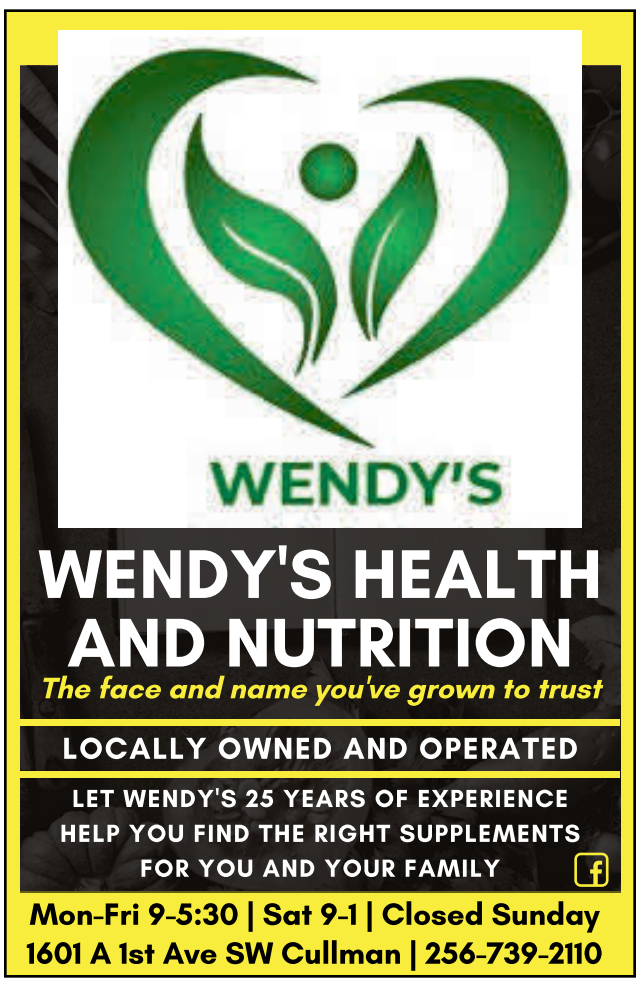
In line with the Co-op's commitment to community service, the event will double as a food drive for The Link of Cullman County's Master's Hand Food Pantry. Attendees are encouraged to bring canned food donations, as many of the local food pantries have faced shortages in recent months.

"Concern for the community we serve is an important part of Cullman Electric Cooperative," said Lindsey Dossey, manager of communications & marketing. The Co-op held a food drive for the United Way Food Bank back in February.

The Solar Eclipse Viewing Party will feature a range of activities tailored for all ages, ensuring a fun-filled afternoon for attendees. Children can participate in building their own eclipse viewers from empty cereal boxes, engage in coloring activities and enjoy moments at two eclipse-themed photo booths. Additionally, local food trucks, including The Butcher's Chuckwagon and Carnival Cravings, will be onsite to offer a variety of lunch and snack options. Educational demonstrations, such as the fiber splicing demonstration and an electric demonstration booth complete with an electric bucket truck and linemen gear, are also planned to add an informative element to the festivities. To promote safe eclipse viewing, the Co-Op will provide free eclipse glasses to the first 400 attendees who contribute a canned food donation. This initiative ensures that participants can safely enjoy the eclipse while contributing to a charitable cause.

"This is a fun community event that allows us to not only connect with our members, but also give back through our food drive. Cullman Electric is more than a utility company; we are dedicated to making sure the areas we serve thrive," Dossey remarked.

For additional information or questions, community members can contact Cullman Electric Cooperative at 256-737-3271, 256-737-3273 or info@cullmanec.com.






# Hotel (from Front)

ism and willingness to adapt and change to draw tourism and stimulate growth, saying that is what ultimately called Cobblestone Hotel and Suites to Cullman.

"You have to have an administration that is willing to take those ideas and make them happen, and we've had that for many years," said Greer. "I think that's a real compliment to Cullman and how we got where we are."

President of Development for Cobblestone Hotels Jeremy Griesbach talked about Cullman's hospitality; he said choosing Cullman as the location for a new hotel was due to the kindness and community that he encountered while vacationing from his home state of Wisconsin. Hoping to bring that hospitality and kindness to his hotel brand, Griesbach struck a deal with City officials and broke ground on the first Cobblestone property in the state of Alabama.

"What was really cool when we got to Cullman was the pride that everyone seemed to have in your town and how much you believe in your town and how excited you all were," Griesbach chuckled. "I don't want to say you were trying to sell Cullman to me, but they were. Everyone you talked to, they were genuine and true about how excited they were about Cullman, the history of it, what it is now and what it's going to be. The growth I've seen over the past two years leaves me no doubt that this is going the right way."

The new lodging accommodations are in a perfect position to support the city's sports tourism, as it is within walking distance or a short drive to Heritage Park, WildWater and the Field of Miracles. With a swimming pool, fitness center, a conference room large enough to comfortably fit 16, as well as a full-service steakhouse restaurant on property, Cobblestone plans to alleviate tourism congestion along Alabama Highway 157, while showcasing the appeal and amenities of the city's southern end. The hotel boasts 63 rooms, consisting of double, queen and king bed rooms and suites, comfortably sleeping groups of up to six people.

The location of the property is not the only first for the chain; this is the first partnership of Cobblestone Hotels and Suites and Wissota Chophouse, the upscale steakhouse that is attached to the hotel.

"The other thing that is a first for us in the state of Alabama, is Wissota Chophouse. We were very excited to bring that," said Griesbach.

Cobblestone Hotel and Suites is located at 1835 Main Ave. SW.

# Nominations (from Front)

**Cheyenne Sharp**
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

**CULLMAN, Ala.** — Displayed on the first floor of the Cullman County Courthouse are six shiny plaques. They honor the first six inductees of the Cullman Veterans Hall of Fame (VHF). The inaugural class was inducted last October, and includes Technical Sergeant (ret.) Jerry La Otto Willibey, United States Air Force; Robert R. Turner, United States Marine Corps and Army National Guard; Steven L. Larsen, United States Marine Corps; Colonel (ret.) Ken Brown, United States Air Force; Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Johnnie R. Strickland, United States Navy and United States Army Reserve; and Donald Michael "Mike" Martin, United States Marine Corps. Now, organizers are seeking nominations for the next class.

The effort to create the VHF was spearheaded by Retired U.S. Army Colonel and Fairview High School and U.S. Military Academy at West Point alumnus Don Fallin, whom The Tribune has been following for many years. After 30 years of active military service, Fallin longed for a way to give back to fellow veterans and their families, and give back he has. He partnered with the nonprofit Johnnie Mac Soldiers Fund, an educational fund for veterans and military families, with a special emphasis on serving the children of soldiers who have given their lives in service to their country. He hiked the Appalachian Trail, a nearly 2,200-mile endurance trek; reached the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro; and completed the Bataan Memorial Death March, just to name three adventures. He has raised thousands of dollars for his cause.

These incredible feats of physical and mental stamina earned Fallin an invite to the Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame.

"I was invited to the Cullman Sports Hall of Fame and from that, I started asking around about a Veterans Hall of Fame. Having spent time at the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars), there are a ton of amazing people in our county," Fallin said. "So, I took it on as a task; I went out and looked around, there was no hall of fame for the veterans. Then I asked if there was interest. There was overwhelming interest if someone would take it on."

So he did. The inaugural class of the Cullman VHF was chosen in 2023 through community nominations as well as consideration and approval from the VHF's five committee members. This year, Fallin is on the search for a new crop of veterans to honor and recognize. Nominations are open for the 2024 class.

Said Fallin, "The Mission of the Cullman Veterans Hall of Fame is to recognize and pay tribute to our veterans who honorably served our country, displayed great character and continued a lifetime of service to our county, our state and its citizens. The Cullman Veterans Hall of Fame is not just a military hall of fame, but also seeks to recognize veterans for their contributions to our community after their service. We aim to educate our local county citizens on the historical service and sacrifice of this county's veterans as well as their service to make our community stronger."

To be eligible for the Cullman VHF, nominees must have served their country honorably in a branch of military service. The focus of each nomination should center around the nominee's continued service to the community, fellow veterans, country and state that carried over past discharge from service. The nominee must have been born, raised in or remained a resident of Cullman County for at least 10 years.

The nominated service member must have received an honorable or general under honorable conditions discharge from any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. They may be asked to verify honorable service such as a DD 214, to be submitted with the nomination packet. If discharge papers for historical figures are unable to be retrieved, proof of service, as evidenced by historical accounts or military history, may be submitted. Posthumous nominations are accepted and considered.

Contact Fallin, Brian Monk with VFW Post 2214 or Keith Johnson with the American Legion to pick up nomination packets. Completed nomination packets can be dropped off at the VFW or American Legion, emailed to Fallin or turned in to one of the VHF committee members.

**VHF committee members are:**

- Don Fallin, US Army, COL (ret), VFW Post 2214
- Garry Marchman, US Army, CSM (ret), VFW Post 2214, Alabama Legion Post 4, DAV Post 101
- Keith Johnson, Master Sergeant (ret.) Minnesota Air National Guard, VFW Post 2214, American Legion Post 4
- Brian Monk, US Army, VFW Post 2214, American Legion Post 4
- Chris Dutton, US Navy, Commander DAV Chapter 101, Boy Scouts of America – Committee Chair, Assistant Scout Master Troop 92

Fallin can be reached at 910-308-4197 or donald.fallin@gmail.com.

Monk can be reached at 256-841-2392 or commandervfwpost2214@outlook.com.

Johnson can be reached at 218-310-2222 or keith.johnson96@gmail.com.

VFW Post 2214 is located at 112 Veterans Dr. SW in Cullman.

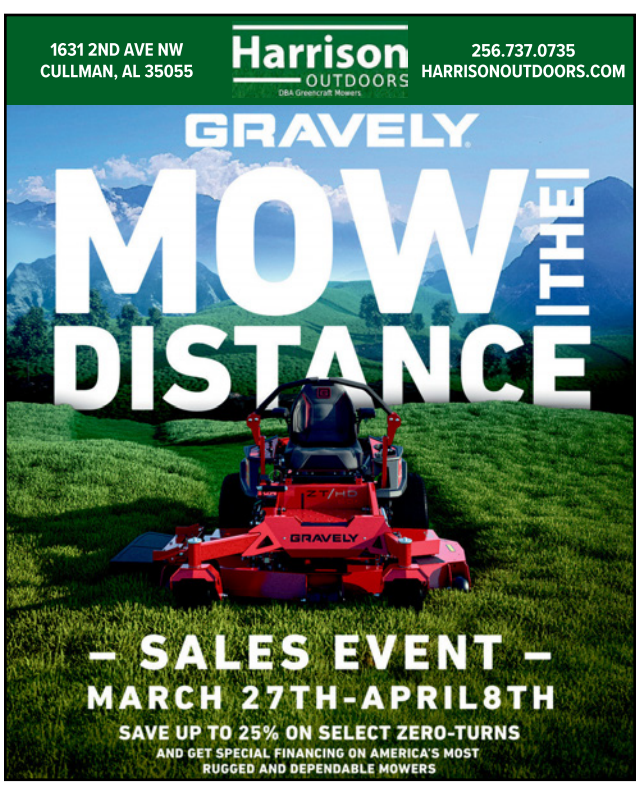
The American Legion Post 4 is located at 181 Reid Road in Good Hope.


















PREP BASEBALL

# Bearcats down Chelsea in 10 innings, Wednesday scoring recap

**Sammy Confer**
sammy@cullmantribune.com



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUBNE

*The Cullman Bearcats defeated Chelsea on the road 6-3 in 10 innings Wednesday.*

**Cullman 6 - Chelsea 3 (Baseball) (10 innings)**

Cullman got off to a quick start in their game against Chelsea. Jonah Inman reached on an infield single, moved to second on an error, and later scored on an RBI single by Carson Stancil to put the Bearcats on the board. Later that inning, Brooks Heatherly hit a two-out RBI triple and later scored on a wild pitch to give them a 3-0 lead. Chelsea got on the scoreboard in the bottom of the third on an RBI single to cut it to 3-1. The Hornets made it 3-2 in the fourth on a fielder's choice. Cullman looked to hold them off in the seventh, but a passed ball tied the game up at three. It ended up going into extra innings.

Neither team broke the tie in the next two innings, but the Bearcats broke it in the 10th inning. They had runners on first and second with one out. Bennett Johnson hit an RBI single to center field to give them a 4-3 lead. One out later, an error allowed Johnson and Caleb Heis to cross the plate to make it 6-3. Case Edwards retired Chelsea on just five pitches in their half to end the game, and Cullman ended up getting a huge 6-3 win over the Hornets on the road.

Stancil (two hits), Johnson (one hit) and Heatherly (one hit) each finished with an RBI for Cullman (7-14). Inman added two hits, while Tanner Gaines and Copper Loftin collected a hit of their own in the win.

Loftin went 6 1/3 innings as he allowed just three hits and three earned runs, walked five, and struck out six. Fysher Dahlke gave up a hit and struck out one in his 2/3 innings of work, and Edwards went the final three innings, allowing just one hit and striking out one.

**Fairview 9 - Benet Academy 5 (Baseball)**

Benet Academy put up the first two runs of the game in the second inning to grab an early 2-0 lead, but Fairview got on the scoreboard in the bottom of the third. Nicolas Gregory drew a one-out walk and Colton Jennings drove him in on an RBI groundout to cut it to 2-1. Conner Scott later scored on a wild pitch to tie the game up at two. The Redwings scored twice in the top of the fourth to take a 4-2 lead, but Isaac Elrod scored on a wild pitch to make it a 4-3 game in the Aggies' half of the fourth.

Fairview got the lead for good in the fifth. They loaded the bases to start out the inning, and Gregory scored on a fielder's choice to tie the game up at four. Lucas West hit a two-run single with two outs, and Bryceson Turner followed that up with an RBI single of his own to give the Aggies a 7-4 lead. Turner later scored on a passed ball, and Gannon Black added an RBI single to make it 9-4. Benet Academy cut it to 9-5 in the seventh, but Gregory struck out the next hitter to end the game, and Fairview ended up defeating the Redwings 9-5.

West finished with a hit and two RBIs for Fairview (17-6). Turner added a pair of hits and an RBI, while Jennings (one hit), Black (one hit) and Elrod each ended up with an RBI of their own in the win.

**Lexington 2 - Good Hope 1 (Softball)**

A sacrifice bunt and an RBI single in the bottom of the second gave Lexington an early 2-0 lead. Good Hope got on the scoreboard in the top of the fifth. Addyson Burgess reached base on an infield single, moved to second on an error, and scored on an RBI single by Maggie O'Neil to cut it to 2-1. They didn't get any closer after that, though as they ended up falling to the Lady Bears in a pitcher's duel 2-1.

O'Neil finished with two hits and an RBI for Good Hope (7-5-1), while Kynzlee Garmon and Burgess each added a hit of their own in the loss. Molly Benefield went the distance for the Lady Raiders, allowing just four hits and two earned runs and striking out three.

**Oakland 6 - West Point 1 (Softball)**

Oakland jumped out to a quick 6-0 lead to start out the game. West Point cut it to 6-1 in the bottom of the third on an RBI double by Macie Brown, but that's as close as they would get the rest of the way as they ended up dropping the game to the Lady Patriots 6-1.

Brown finished with a hit and an RBI for West Point (10-8-1). Macayla Wilkins, Brinlee Phillips, and Kara Jones each collected a hit in the loss.

**Muscle Shoals 8 - West Point 4 (Baseball)**

After a scoreless first inning, Muscle Shoals put up five runs in the top of the second to take the early lead, but West Point put up a run in their half to cut it to 5-1. The Warriors made it 5-2 in the third on an RBI single by J.D. Cochran, but the Trojans added two more runs in the sixth to push their lead to 7-2. An RBI double by Deacon Stutchman and an RBI groundout by Boston Freeman made it a three-run game in the Warriors' half of the sixth. Muscle Shoals made it 8-4 in the seventh, and the Warriors went down in order in their half to end the game. The Warriors ended up falling to the Trojans 8-4.

Stutchman led the way for West Point with a pair of hits and an RBI. Cochran added a hit and an RBI, while Freeman ended up with an RBI of his own in the loss.

**Naperville Central 6 - West Point 2 (Baseball)**

West Point struck first in its opening at-bats against Naperville Central as an RBI single by Cochran gave them the early lead. Naperville Central answered with five runs in its half to take a 5-1 lead. The Warriors cut it to 5-2 in the top of the second on an RBI single by Cooper Howard, but they didn't get any closer after that as Naperville Central added a run in the fifth and ended up defeating West Point 6-2.

Cochran and Howard each finished with a hit and two RBIs for West Point (8-10), while Cade Welborn and Titan Thornton each added a hit in the loss.

# Alabama advances to second-ever Elite 8 with 89-87 win over top-seeded North Carolina

**Steven Gonzalez**
UA Athletics




UA ATHLETICS

*Alabama defeated North Carolina 89-87 Thursday night to advance to its second Elite Eight in program history.*

**LOS ANGELES** – The Alabama men's basketball team advanced to the program's second-ever NCAA Tournament Elite 8 thanks to an 89-87 upset victory over No. 1 seed North Carolina Thursday night inside Crypto.com Arena. With the victory, the Crimson Tide will face No. 6 seed Clemson Saturday with the winner advancing to the 2024 Men's Basketball Final Four.

Grant Nelson played arguably his best game in an Alabama uniform, as he finished with 24 points, 19 of which came in the second half, to go with 12 rebounds and five blocks in the contest. Rylan Griffen and Aaron Estrada each added 19 while Mark Sears added 18 points in the win.

With the victory, the 2023-24 Crimson Tide (24-11) joins the 2003-04 squad as the only two teams in men's basketball program history to reach the Elite 8.

North Carolina (29-8) was led by Armando Bacot's 19 points and 12 rebounds to top four players in double figures.

**Head Coach Nate Oats Postgame Comments**

"Our guys showed some character. They've been showing some character these last three games. We've been questioned all year on defense, probably rightfully so, but our defense showed up particularly in the second half. You've got to give North Carolina credit.

"They're a very good team. They've played well all year.

"Sometimes stuff doesn't go your way. They didn't hit that many threes, but we stuck with our game plan. Our word has been "next," this whole tournament - next play, next shot. We stuck with that. We made adjustments, and these guys just kept making plays.

"We've got a short-lived celebration. I told them they can celebrate about 30 minutes. As soon as the media is out of the locker room, we've got to get moving on to Clemson."

**TEAM STATS**

- Head coach Nate Oats improves to 7-3 (.700) in NCAA Tournament games while at Alabama, making appearances in two Sweet 16s (2021, 2023) and an Elite 8 (2024)
- With his 18 points on the night, Mark Sears now has scored 750 points this season and became the program's single-season scoring leading leader passing former standout Reggie King (747 points in 1979)
- The contest featured 13 ties and 12 lead changes throughout
- Grant Nelson became the first player since Kevin Love in 2008, and the first SEC player since Joakim Noah in 2006, to record at least 20 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks in a NCAA Tournament game
- Nelson finished the contest
- The win was even more impressive considering the Crimson Tide played without starting guard Latrell Wrightsell Jr., who was out due to a head injury
- After trailing by eight at halftime and outscored the Tar Heels 43-33 in the second half

**FIRST HALF**

- The teams combined for 100 total points in the opening 20 minutes of action, as UNC led Alabama 54-46 heading into the locker rooms
- After North Carolina built a 10-point halftime lead, Alabama used a 17-5 run that turned a 26-19 deficit into a 36-31 Crimson Tide lead with just over five minutes remaining
- The Tar Heels ended the half on a 11-2 run over the final 3:31 which resulted in taking an eight-point halftime lead
- Rylen Griffen (15), Mark Sears (14) and Aaron Estrada (10) combined to score 39 of the team's 46 points in the half

**SECOND HALF**

- Alabama began the second half on a 13-5 run to even the score at 59-59 at the 12:49 mark
- The Heels responded with a 9-3 spurt to regain a six-point advantage
- Trailing 72-67 at the 7:17 mark, the Tide went on a massive 15-5 run, with Nelson scoring 10 of those points, to take an 82-77 lead at the under four-minute timeout
- UNC answered right back by scoring the next eight points to take an 85-82 lead with 1:32 left
- UA ended the game by outscoring the Tar Heels, 7-2, with the last five points coming from Nelson to secure the victory

**UP NEXT**

- Saturday's Elite 8 contest will be played against No. 6 seed Clemson Tigers, who defeated No. 2 Arizona, 77-72
- The contest will tipoff at 7:49 (5:49 PT) and will be televised on TBS and truTV







# Join State Parks for Hike 24 in 24 Alabama

**David Rainer**
Ala. Dept. of Conservation and Nat. Resources

Lace up your hiking boots and get ready to join the naturalists and volunteers from the foothills of the Appalachians, along the Tennessee River Valley to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico for the "Hike 24 in 24 Alabama" initiative from the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (ADCNR) State Parks Division.

The Alabama State Parks' interpretive hike schedule (www.alapark.com/hike-24-24-alabama) includes hikes led by knowledgeable State Park staff and volunteers. Each hike varies in distance and difficulty with the goal of fun, engaging experiences for participants. Whether you are an individual, group, or family, State Parks' Hike 24 in 24 Alabama offers the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of Alabama's natural resources with experienced guides leading the way.

Renee Raney, Alabama State Parks' chief of interpretation and education, said the idea for Hike 24 in 24 Alabama came from a program draft from Kathryn Gray, the Cheaha State Park Naturalist, for a variety of hikes at Cheaha. Raney realized that program could be expanded statewide.

"We have had the America's State Parks First-Day Hikes initiative for multiple years," Raney said.

"But it's hard to predict what the first day of January is going to be like. Our Park Interpretive Team decided we would try the Hike 24 in 24 Alabama, and it is statewide. All 21 parks are involved. We're going to offer more than 300 hikes that our participants can choose from. A lot of the participants may hike more than 24 in 24. It's going to be really easy for them to find a hike that fits their needs, level of endurance and the locations they want to explore all over the state.

"We have more than 250 miles of trails in the Alabama State Parks System. These trails are comfortable and accessible for people with diverse backgrounds and diverse abilities. We've been partnering with groups like Girls Who Hike Alabama and Women Who Hike to provide guided hikes for all people, whether they are comfortable hiking or whether it's their first time to be on the trail."

Raney fits in the category of experienced hiker with decades of hiking all over Alabama and the world. She has hiked the Pacific Crest Trail and summitted Mt. Whitney (California), the highest point in the contiguous U.S. She has hiked the Wicklow Way in Ireland, the Verda La Mina in Puerto Rico, the Eiffel Lake Trail in Canada and portions of the Appalachian Trail.

"None of them can compare to the beauty and biodiversity of our Alabama State Parks trails," she said. "If I had to choose trails to hike the rest of my life, and I could choose anything from across the planet, I would choose Alabama State Parks trails. You've got everything from the deepest canyon to the highest mountain to the most pristine Gulf to the most beautiful lakeside sunsets and sunrises.

"We have everything from birdwatching to fishing trails to trekking for trees. We've even developed a stuffed animal trail so we can connect those little ones in ways that make them feel safe and comfortable on the trails. They may not see a white-tailed deer or bald eagle, but if we have these stuffed animal replicas, we can stop and talk about the creature and its role in the ecosystem. They will be so excited to explore Alabama State Parks with their little hiking boots on."

Several Alabama State Parks have numerous hikes scheduled into the summer.

**CHEAHA STATE PARK**

Wildflowers Hike: Take a walk in the woods and learn to identify beautiful native flowers and why they're so important to the ecosystem.

Sensory Hike: Use all your senses to observe nature and gain a better connection and understanding of our natural resources.

Trekking for Trees: Trees are a vital natural resource and essential to our ecosystems. Learn about the trees of northeast Alabama that provide food, shelter, lumber, air purification and much more.

Teddy Bear Hike: Junior Rangers can bring their favorite stuffed animal friends from home to join them on the hike.

Friday Birdwatching Hike: See all the bird species that inhabit the highest point in Alabama.

**DESOTO STATE PARK**

DeSoto State Park is located in the far northeast corner of the state and offers visitors a glimpse of beautiful Appalachian terrain.

Early Spring Hike: Head along the West Fork of Little River to see what species of plants are starting to grow and bloom after a long winter season. Learn some natural history of the plants and some medicinal and historical uses as well.

Waterfall Hike: See DeSoto's waterfalls – Lost Falls, Laurel Falls, Indian Falls, and more water features like Laurel Creek and the West Fork of Little River.

Sandstone Glade Hike: Learn about this unique environment and explore the glades in DeSoto State Park. Check out the beautiful plants and wondrous rock formations among the natural clearings dotting Lookout Mountain's porous cap.

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) History Hike: This hike explores several CCC "unfinished" bridges built in the late 1930s. Learn the history of why the CCC left them standing and see several original structures.

**GULF STATE PARK**

Birding Hike along Lake Shelby: This hike will offer the opportunity to see a variety of wading birds, hawks, osprey, eagles and other species along the park's freshwater lake.

National Gopher Tortoise Day Hike: This guided hike begins at the Butterfly Garden and travels to Rosemary Dunes to see some Gopher Tortoise burrows and learn about the tortoise.

Highest Point in Gulf State Park Hike: Start at the Gulf Oak Ridge Trailhead for a guided hike to the highest point in Gulf State Park. Travel through a beautiful maritime forest, where the naturalist will point out some of the common plant, bird and animal species.

Rosemary Dunes Hike: Beginning at the Rosemary Dunes Trailhead, enjoy a guided hike to try to see Lefty, the female alligator. Hikers will learn about various plant species along the way. The hike ends with a brief presentation about alligators.

**LAKE GUNTERSVILLE STATE PARK**

On the Tennessee River, Lake Guntersville State Park will have numerous hikes to watch the birds along the shoreline as well as the monthly Full Moon Hike with a guided stroll on the Benny BoBo Accessible Trail to the Golf Course with expansive views of the sky and the full moon.

History of the Cutchenmine Trail Hike: This trail has a history as strange as its name, and the park naturalist will discuss all about who built it, how it was done and the old coal road it follows.

Mommy & Me Hike: This guided hike for moms and youngsters is designed to celebrate the joys of motherhood and the wonders of nature.

Kings Chapel Cemetery History Hike: The park naturalist will lead the hike up to the cemetery and provide information about the land and the families who lived here before it became a state park in the 1940s.

**OAK MOUNTAIN STATE PARK**

Alabama's largest state park, Oak Mountain offers a variety of guided hikes along the numerous trails in the 11,861-acre park.

World Health Day at Maggie's Glen Hike: Meet at the North Trailhead to explore the natural wonders at Maggie's Glen.



RENEE RANEY

*The Alabama State Parks' Hike 24 in 24 Alabama initiative offers guided hikes all over the state.*

Critters of the Night Hike: Head out on this black-light hike to see the critters that call, crawl or creep along the trails at night.

King's Chair Hike: Check out the beautiful King's Chair Overlook on this guided hike. Be aware this is a rather challenging hike that will take two hours to complete.

**WIND CREEK STATE PARK**

Spring Wildlife Hike: This 4-mile round-trip guided hike includes information about the flora, fauna, lake and forests at Wind Creek.

Great Blue Trail Hiking Challenge: This trek is for experienced hikers, who will join the park naturalist for a 15-mile journey along the Blue Trail. Due to the overall distance and variable terrain, this hike is rated difficult.

Animal Sign Hike: Travel along the Speckled Snake Trail and look for signs of the species that make Wind Creek home.

Sunday Afternoon Stroll on Campfire Trail: This is a trip along Campfire Trail for those who want to experience nature in a leisurely fashion.

Tree Frog Trek: This evening hike is a class in tree frogs as the park naturalist leads the way around the Speckled Snake Trail to look and listen for tree frogs.

**ADDITIONAL HIKES**

Meanwhile, Joe Wheeler State Park on the Tennessee River will hold several Sunsets on the River Hikes to see the stunning sunset vistas as the sun goes down on the Tennessee River. Joe Wheeler has several Call of the Wild Sundays scheduled as well.

At Chewacla State Park, the Mountain Laurel Trail Hike heads down to Chewacla Falls and then follows Chewacla Lake and Moore's Mill Creek upstream as hikers learn about the mountain laurel and other native plants.

At Meaher State Park at the head of Mobile Bay, a guided hike will explore the numerous migratory bird species that travel through coastal Alabama.

Raney said the Hike 24 in 24 Alabama initiative provides guided assistance for those who want to experience the natural world but may not be comfortable or willing to explore the trails on their own.

"I think there is this movement of wellness in nature that connects our State Parks to people in a new way," she said. "I think we have a whole new audience who wants to be in wild places, who wants to be on the trails, but they just aren't sure how.

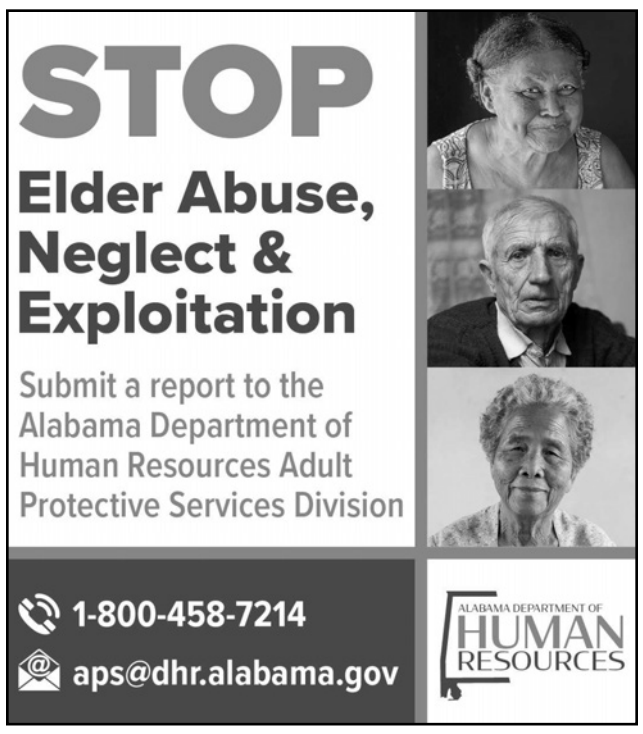
This Hike 24 in 24 Alabama initiative is going to give all of them the chance to fall in love with State Parks, like I have. That's where I roamed when I was a child, and that's where I'll be until my boots won't take me any farther."

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# LEGALS

**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA**

**IN RE: THE ESTATE OF JUDITH L. JONES, Deceased.** * **CASE NO.: PC 2024-081**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

TAKE NOTICE that Letters Testamentary having been granted to JENNIFER ANN HALE, as Personal Representative of the Estate of JUDITH L. JONES, deceased, on the 28th day of March, 2024, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all persons having claims against the said Estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Jennifer Ann Hale
Personal Representative

Michael T. Burleson
Attorney for the Estate
200 Second Avenue SE
Cullman, Alabama 35055

TO: **The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune**

Please publish the above Notice once a week for three consecutive weeks and send an affidavit of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

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

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**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA**

IN RE: The Estate of * CASE NO PC 2023-333
MARION T. KEY, *
Deceased. *

**NOTICE OF HEARING**
**PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL**

TO: JASON KEY, AND ANY KNOWN OR UNKNOWN NEXT-OF-KIN OR INTERESTED PARTIES

*Petition for Probate of Will* filed the 17th day of October, 2023, made court record the 18th day of October, 2023, by Rhonda Key, Petitioner, to admit to probate the Last Will and Testament of Marion T. Key, deceased, by and through Attorney, Pamela E. Nail, has been scheduled for the **30th day of April, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.,** before Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, Alabama.

All persons are hereby given notice to appear and contest said petition if they think proper.

Cullman County Courthouse
500 2nd Avenue SW
Room 101
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Done this the 22nd day of March, 2024

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

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the above notice three (3) successive weeks is said newspaper

Pamela E. Nail
Attorney for Personal Representative
200 Second Avenue SW
Cullman, Alabama 35055
256-734-3342

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**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA**

IN RE: The Estate of * CASE NO. PC2023-401
HAROLD DANNY CALVERT, *
Deceased. *

**NOTICE OF HEARING**
**PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL**

TO: MICHAEL RANDALL, MITCHELL RANDALL, TAMMY ALLISON, RICKEY ALLISON, LINDA HALE, AND ALL OF RESPECTIVE ISSUE THAT WOULD CONSTITUTE THE HEIRS OF THE DECEASED.

*Petition for Probate of* Will for the Estate of Harold Danny Calvert, Deceased, filed the 8th day of December, 2023, and made court record the 13th day of December, 2023, by Timothy Louis Arndt, Petitioner, through Attorney Mark O. South, has been rescheduled for the **21st day of May, 2024, at 10:30 a.m.,** before Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, Alabama.

All persons are hereby given notice to appear and contest said petition if they think proper.

Cullman County Courthouse
500 2nd Avenue SW
Room 101
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Done this the 28th day of March, 2024.

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

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the above notice three (3) successive weeks is said newspaper.

Mark O. South
Attorney for Petitioner
1207 1st Ave SW
Cullman, Alabama 35055

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**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA**

IN RE: The Estate of * CASE NO. PC2023-381
LEROY POPE , *
Deceased. *

**NOTICE OF HEARING**
**PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL**

TO: ROBERT HEATH POPE, LLOYD POPE AND ANY KNOWN OR UNKNOWN HEIRS OF LEROY POPE.

*Petition for Probate of Will* for the Estate of Leroy Pope, Deceased, filed the 21st day of November, 2023, and made court record the 22nd day of November, 2023, by Linda Gail Pope, Petitioner, through Attorney Tonya C. Palmer, has been rescheduled for the **21st day of May, 2024, at 11:00 a.m.,** before Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, Alabama.

All persons are hereby given notice to appear and contest said petition if they think proper.

Cullman County Courthouse
500 2nd Avenue SW
Room 101
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Done this the 28th day of March, 2024.

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

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the above notice three (3) successive weeks is said newspaper.

Tonya C. Palmer
Attorney for Petitioner
1939 Main Ave SW
Cullman, AL 35055

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SPECIAL NOTICE RE LOCAL LAWS

NO SPECIAL, PRIVATE, OR LOCAL LAW CAN BE PASSED, except in reference to fixing the time of holding courts, unless notice of the intention to apply therefor shall have been published, without cost to the State, in the county or counties where the matter or thing to be affected may be situated. The notice must state the substance of the proposed law and be published at least once a week for four consecutive weeks in some newspaper published in such county or counties. Such publication must have been completed prior to the day on which the bill is introduced.

Proof by affidavit (proof of publication) which verifies that notice has been properly published must be exhibited to the House of Representatives and the Senate, and one copy of such proof must be attached to the original copy of the bill which is offered for introduction.

The county or municipality affected by a local law introduced by a legislator must pay for advertising the notice, if the notice is signed by the Legislator, even though the bill is not passed. (Section 11-13-6, Code of Alabama 1975)

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY

NOTICE is hereby given that a bill substantially as follows will be introduced in the 2024 Regular Session of the Legislature of Alabama and application for its passage and enactment will be made:

«Document» «Date» «Analyst's» («Legal/Fiscal»)«Typist's»
«Project»**DRAFT DOCUMENT: NOT OFFICIAL LEGISLATION**

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to Cullman County; to amend Section 1 of Act 2023-121 of the 2023 Regular Session, now appearing as Section 45-22-190, Code of Alabama 1975; to provide further for the expenditure of monies from the Cullman County Legislative Delegation Fund.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Section 1 of Act 2023-191 of the 2023 Regular Session, now appearing as Section 45-22-190, Code of Alabama 1975, is amended to read as follows:

"§45-22-190

(a) The Cullman County Commission shall create the Cullman County Legislative Delegation Fund.

(b) The fund shall be comprised of the following monies received by the county:

(1) The additional three percent of TVA in-lieu-of-taxes payments received pursuant to Section 40-28-2.

(2) The proceeds collected pursuant to Section 35-8B-5.

~~(2)~~ (3) Any other monies provided for by law.

(c) The commission shall immediately pay amounts from the fund as the Cullman County Legislative Delegation may request.

Page 1

(d) The legislative delegation shall expend the monies on allowable public purposes at the discretion and direction of the legislative delegation, based on the proportion of the population each member of the delegation represents in the county.

(e) All decisions concerning the Cullman County Legislative Delegation Fund shall be made by resolutions adopted by the members of the Cullman County Legislative Delegation.

(f) Any funds allocated but not spent at the end of the fiscal year shall not be applied for any other purpose, but shall be carried forward and shall remain available year to year for expenditure as provided in this section.

(g) The revenue and expenditures of the legislative delegation office shall be audited on an annual basis."

Section 2. This act shall become effective on June 1, 2024.

Page 2

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DOCUMENT 13

ELECTRONICALLY FILED
3/14/2024 9:18 AM
25-CV-2024-900077.00
CIRCUIT COURT OF
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA
LISA MCSWAIN, CLERK

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA**

HUNTER KENNETH, )
HUNTER BRENDA, )
Plaintiffs, )
)
V. ) Case No.: CV-2024-900077.00
)
AVCO FINANCIAL SERVICES )
OF ALABAMA, )
Defendant. )

**ORDER FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION**

**TO: ANY AND ALL PERSONS, ASSIGNS, HEIRS OR DEVISEES OF AVCO FINANCIAL SERVICES OF ALABAMA, INC.; ALABAMA FINANCIAL SERVICES OF ALA., INC. AND ALABAMA FINANCIAL SERVICES OF ALABAMA, claiming any right, title and interest to the following described real property, to-wit: Parcel # 08-06-14-0-001-009.043 and Parcel # 08-06-14-0-001-009.035**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT ON THE 29TH DAY OF February, 2024 a Complaint in Rem to Quiet Title was filed by Plaintiffs Kenneth Hunter and Brenda Hunter, by and through their counsel of record, Beverly Paschal Poston, wherein all parties at interest were given notice and wherein it was alleged that said Complaint was filed against the property described above, and it was alleged that Plaintiffs were the owners in fee simple of said real property.**

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

(a) On the 16th day of March 2001, a decree was rendered by the Revenue Commissioner of Cullman County for the sale of land herein described and conveyed for the payment of State and County taxes of Defendant **AVCO FINANCIAL SERVICES OF ALABAMA.**

(b) On the 2nd day of May 2001 said lands were duly and regularly sold by the Revenue Commissioner of said county for taxes, costs, and expenses owed by Avco Financial Services of Ala., Inc. At said sale Plaintiffs Kenneth Hunter and Brenda Hunter purchased said lands at and for the sum of said taxes, costs, expenses, and additional sums and forthwith paid said sums to the Revenue Commissioner and received from said Revenue Commissioner a certificate of said sale.

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

(d) On or about the 17th day of November, 2004, Plaintiffs came forward and notified the Revenue Commissioner that they had taken lawful possession of the land and were due a deed pursuant to the Code of Alabama, specifically, but not limited to Title 40-1–29 and act number 84-493. Plaintiffs met all of the requirements under these two statutes and other provisions of Alabama Law and were granted a Tax Deed for each parcel and the same was recorded on November 17, 2004, in Deed Book 543, Page 798 and Deed Book 543, Page 799, in the records of the Probate Court for Cullman County, Alabama.

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

YOU ARE HEREBY DIRECTED TO answer this Complaint on or before thirty (30) days from the 13th day of May, 2024, or upon failure to do so, suffer a default judgment may be rendered against you.

**DONE this 13th day of March, 2024.**

**/s/ MARTHA E. WILLIAMS**
**CIRCUIT JUDGE**

---

**IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA**

**IN RE: THE ESTATE OF ELLEN BAILEY HESTERLEY, Deceased.** * **CASE NO.: PC 2023-419**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

TAKE NOTICE that Letters Testamentary having been granted to REGGIE D. HESTERLEY, as Personal Representative of the Estate of ELLEN BAILEY HESTERLEY, deceased, on the 21st day of March, 2024, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all persons having claims against the said Estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Reggie D. Hesterley
Personal Representative

Kenneth Weldon
Attorney for Personal Representative
PO Box 1464
Cullman, Alabama 35056

TO: **The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune**

Please publish the above Notice once a week for three consecutive weeks and send an affidavit of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

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

---

**DISTRICT COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY**
**500 SECOND AVENUE SW**
**Room 303**
**Cullman, AL 35055**

**BIVINS ECONOMY MOTORS, INC..**

**(PLAINTIFF)**

**vs** **CASE NO: SM 2019-900162**

**SHARAF, SARAH**

**(DEFENDANT)**

**NOTICE OF FILING OF LAWSUIT**

DEFENDANT, **Sharaf, Sarah**, whose whereabouts are unknown, must answer the complaint brought against her by the PLAINTIFF, **Bivins Economy Motors, Inc.** for $2,009.78 plus court cost, cause of action being: Money owed on sale/financing of automobile.

ANSWER TO THE COMPLAINT MUST BE MADE BY THE SAID DEFENDANT on or before the 22nd day of April, 2024, or a default may be rendered against her in the above styled cause.

DATED THIS THE 14th day of March 2024

Lisa McSwain
**LISA MCSWAIN DISTRICT COURT CLERK**
**CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA**

NOTICE TO PUBLISHER:
Please publish once a week for four (4) successive weeks in the Cullman Tribune beginning March 16, 2024.

# Birmingham-Southern College to close May 31

**Tucker Carden**
Birmingham-Southern College



BIRMINGHAM-SOUTHERN COLLEGE

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala.** — Birmingham-Southern College will cease operations on May 31, 2024, following an 18-month effort to obtain bridge funding from a $30 million state loan program conceived and enacted to save the 168-year-old, nationally ranked liberal arts institution.

The College Board of Trustees voted unanimously today to close the College after a 2024 bill designed to amend the 2023 legislation that established the loan program failed to win sufficient support in the Alabama House of Representatives.

The BSC community - students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and friends - was notified at 1 p.m. today.

"This is a tragic day for the College, our students, our employees, and our alumni," said Board Chair Rev. Keith D. Thompson'83. "But it is also a terrible day for Birmingham, for the neighborhoods who have surrounded our campus for more than 100 years, and for Alabama.

"Through this challenging year and a half, we have talked a lot about BSC's more than $90 million annual economic impact on Alabama, with $68 million of that right here in our city," Thompson added. "But beyond that loss - which is enormous -- the loss of a nationally ranked liberal arts college that has contributed so much to this state and to the world - and still had so much to give - is incalculable."

Daniel B. Coleman, BSC's 16th president, said the College has exhausted every option to obtain the loan through the Distressed Institutions of Higher Learning Revolving Loan Fund, established by the Alabama Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Kay Ivey in June 2023. The original Act put the State Treasurer in charge of the program, for which BSC met the statutory qualifications. After months of delay, the Treasurer denied the loan in October 2023.

On February 6, the College's legislative champions - Sen. Jabo Waggoner '60 and Sen. Rodger Smitherman - introduced a bill to amend the 2023 Act. That bill, which moved the administration of the loan program to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, added a layer of review to ensure the state's position, set the loan terms, and specified a time frame for approval or denial, passed the Alabama Senate on March 5.

On March 20, through the efforts of Rep. David Faulkner, the House Ways & Means Education Committee approved a substitute bill that further strengthened the State's position. Even so, subsequent conversations with House leadership confirmed that the bill did not have enough support to move forward.

Upon receiving that confirmation, the board meeting was scheduled for today. While holding the meeting during the College's spring break was not ideal, doing so allowed time for trustees to review all options and for those who live outside of Alabama to arrange to be present.

The $30 million set aside in 2023 for the loan program remains unused.

**Students first**

BSC has already begun planning for students who will be forced to transfer to other institutions. Their BSC scholarships will not follow them, and with housing in short supply at many colleges and universities both in-state and outside Alabama, many will face logistical and financial challenges.

"We are putting students first, and we will do everything we can to help them find the best place to continue their path to graduation," said Provost Dr. Laura K. Stultz, a 27-year veteran of the College's science faculty. "We are working with other institutions - including those in the Associated Colleges of the South as well as some in-state colleges and universities -- on agreements that will help maximize the transfer of credits to keep them on track."

Information has been distributed to students who are on spring break this week and will be updated as plans are confirmed. Individual meetings will be scheduled when students return to campus next week.

A small group of seniors who plan to complete their BSC degrees in summer 2024 will be able to complete their course requirements online and/or through agreements with other institutions.

BSC will also offer as much help as possible for employees, almost all of whom will be displaced by May 31, with the rest to follow over the summer. Information has also been distributed to them and meetings will be scheduled in the coming days to provide individualized consultation.

"If you are a college looking for incredible students and faculty, or an employer looking for profoundly loyal employees, you will not find better people than the people on this campus,' Thompson said. "They are what you hope for whenever you bring in someone new."

Additional information for alumni, current and prospective students, families, faculty, staff, and friends of the College will be provided via meetings and the BSC web site.

**Background on Birmingham-Southern College**

Birmingham-Southern College was founded in 1918 through the merger of two Methodist colleges: Southern University, chartered in 1856 in Greensboro, Ala., and Birmingham College, which had opened in 1898 in the still-new industrial city. By 1910, Birmingham College had produced the first of BSC's six Rhodes Scholars.

Through the last quarter of the 20th century, BSC maintained a steady pace of growth under the leadership of its longest-serving president, Dr. Neal Berte. As he approached retirement in 2004, the BSC endowment stood at $122 million - adequate for its time.

His successor, Dr. David Pollick, believed he could grow the College's enrollment by 50 percent to 1,800 students through significant capital investments. Pollick oversaw an aggressive building program, adding LEED-certified residence halls, athletic facilities, an admissions welcome center, and a manmade lake, among other projects.

The implementation of these ambitious capital projects - and the assumption of large debt to fund them - coincided with two factors that led to a decade-plus-long financial struggle:

- The crash of the financial markets in 2009, in which BSC sustained a $25 million loss to the value of its endowment.

- The discovery in 2010 of a material error in the budgeting of federal student financial aid, which came to about $5 million per year against a budget of $49 million.

These factors led to millions of dollars in budget cuts, the elimination of five majors and 29 faculty positions, and the suspension of the faculty and staff's generous retirement match. The crisis triggered an additional $12 million draw on the endowment by the end of the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Pollick resigned in August 2010.

**A wartime president**

When Gen. Charles Krulak was named BSC's 13th president in March 2011, he brought a skill set honed over a 35-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps, including four years on the Joint Chiefs of Staff as Marine Corps Commandant. That experience - which included two tours of duty in Vietnam and numerous commanding roles during times of international conflict - served him well as he tackled the crisis on the Hilltop. By then, BSC was on sanction from its accrediting agency and was deeply in debt.

During his four years, Krulak focused on raising enough operating funds to keep the College afloat. With his Chief of Staff, Linda Flaherty-Goldsmith, he reworked the budget to prevent further cuts to the faculty. When he retired in 2015, he had recruited the largest entering class since 2010, succeeded in moving the College off sanction with its accrediting organization, and, in the eyes of many, had saved the College.

But the endowment had dropped to $53 million by the time of Krulak's arrival, and fundraising efforts during his years were focused on spendable money. Prior to his arrival, many donors had been asked to liquidate their endowments so the College could continue to operate. Most agreed, with the expectation that BSC would restore those funds when it could.

The College continued to draw too heavily on the endowment without successfully rebuilding what was lost in the financial crash or repaying what was borrowed from the endowment's corpus. Krulak's successor, Dr. Ed Leonard, stepped down in June 2016 after just one year, and Linda Flaherty-Goldsmith was announced as president the following day.

During her nearly three years as president, Flaherty-Goldsmith successfully sought out a group of lenders who would buy BSC's debt from Regions at a deep-enough discount to reduce the overall college debt by $12 million, which reduced annual debt service by nearly $1 million. ServisFirst took the lead and remained a strong partner to the College.

**A plan for resilience**

When Daniel B. Coleman took office as BSC's 16th president in December 2018, he saw the financial issues through the lens of 30-plus years of experience in the finance industry. Too-high draws on the College endowment to cover operating losses depleted what should be the institution's most stable resource.

Coleman's plan called for raising a new endowment large enough to fund at least 20 percent of annual operating costs. To allow time to raise those funds, BSC appealed to state legislators to create a loan fund using a small fraction of a $2.8 billion surplus in the Education Trust Fund. The Alabama Legislature passed SB278 - the Distressed Institutions of Higher Learning Revolving Loan Program Act - with overwhelming bipartisan support. Although she had opposed the plan, Gov. Kay Ivey submitted executive amendments that were accepted by the Legislature with unanimous support in the Senate and a supermajority in the House. Ivey signed the bill on June 16, 2023.

The bill was conceived and written to allow for a $30 million lifeline to the College, providing operating funds for three years during which it could raise an endowment of up to $200 million to ensure its long-term financial stability. In spring 2023, BSC's Board of Trustees received assurances from legislative leaders supporting a measure to provide bridge funding that, should the bill pass, the College would be positioned to borrow the $30 million in bridge funding required to keep it open.

The College made commitments based on that assurance, including enrolling students and refilling key faculty and staff positions. With more than $45 million in commitments from private donors to the new endowment that would provide long-term stability, BSC publicly launched its fundraising campaign on Saturday, Oct. 14.

**The denial**

Although BSC met the qualifications for the loan, provided two proposals in which the State of Alabama would have had first-security position on collateral more than sufficient to back the loan, a detailed plan under which it could achieve financial stability for the long-term and repay the state loan in a timely manner, the State Treasurer denied BSC the loan in a letter dated Oct.13, postmarked October 16 and delivered on Oct. 18.

That same day, the College filed a lawsuit in Montgomery County Circuit Court to compel that action. The case was dismissed on Oct. 25 due to the Alabama Constitution's provision of sovereign immunity to state officials.

With support from the City of Birmingham, the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church, and some private donors, the College averted a mid-year closure. However, the future depended on securing the bridge loan from the State.

On Nov. 30, representatives from the College's Board of Trustees met with the Treasurer to try to move the process forward. In that meeting, first-security position was again offered by BSC. That same day, two members of the Alabama Legislature met with the Treasurer and reiterated the first-security position on collateral valued at more than the requested loan amount. The offer was extended in writing in a letter from Coleman to the Treasurer dated December 8; a letter from the College's primary creditor, ServisFirst Bank, was attached, attesting to the bank's willingness to surrender its lien on the campus in exchange for adequate substitute collateral.

In a letter dated Dec. 13, the Treasurer again denied the loan.

On Feb. 6, the College's legislative champions - Sen. Jabo Waggoner '60 and Sen. Rodger Smitherman - introduced a bill to amend the 2023 Act. That bill, which moved the administration of the loan program to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, added a layer of review to ensure the state's position, set the loan terms, and specified a time frame for approval or denial, passed the Alabama Senate on March 5.

On March 20, through the efforts of Rep. David Faulkner, the House Ways & Means Education Committee approved a substitute bill that further strengthened the State's position. Even so, subsequent conversations with House leadership confirmed that the bill did not have enough support to move forward.

On March 26, the College's Board of Trustees voted unanimously to cease operations on May 31, 2024, after 168 years.

## LEGALS

**SECTION 001116**
**INVITATION TO BID**

1.1 BID INFORMATION

A. Project: Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion
B. Owner: The City of Good Hope
C. Engineer: Canyon Engineering, LLC

1.2 ANNOUNCEMENT

A. Your firm is invited to submit a sealed Bid for the project listed above. Owner will receive Bids at the City of Good Hope City Hall, located at 135 Municipal Drive, Cullman, Alabama, 35057, until **10:00 AM local time on the 4th day of April 2024**, at which time and place the Bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids not received by the indicated time will not be opened.

B. Project Description: *Construction of a 2 basin SBR treatment plant, rated at .225 MGD with equalization basin, drum screen, compactor, controls, blowers, sludge pumps, diffused aeration, decanter, and all required appurtenances.*

C. Owner requires the Project to be completed in 365 calendar days.

D. Bidding Documents for a Unit Price contract may be obtained from the office of the Canyon Engineering, LLC, 404 1st. Street E., Fort Payne, Alabama, 35967. Electronic copies will be free to download to all potential bidders. Paper sets are available upon receipt of a $150.00 non-refundable amount per set.

E. Potential bidders may view the Bid Documents at the office of Canyon Engineering by appointment only.

F. Bidders will be required to provide Bid security according to the requirements in Document 002113 - Instructions to Bidders and Document 003100 - Available Project Information.

G. Refer to other Bidding requirements as described in Document 002113 - Instructions to Bidders and Document 003100 - Available Project Information.

H. Submit your Bid on the Bid Form provided. Bidders are required to submit the bid form, bid bond, and the E-Verify documents at the time of the bid. Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope bearing the name and address of the bidder, the bidder's General Contractor's license number, the project name, and bid date. Bidders are asked not to submit the full contract documents and specifications book at the time of the bid.

I. Bidders must carry the Municipal and Utility construction classification as listed in the roster of the Alabama State Licensing Board for General Contractors to be considered for the award of the project.

J. Your Bid will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 calendar days after submission.

K. The Owner reserves the right to waive irregularities and to accept or reject any or all Bids.







# Obituary Announcements: March 27-28

**Arthur James Wagner, 77**
Arthur James Wagner Jr. age 77 of Cullman, Alabama passed away March 26, 2024. Arthur was born to Molly Bryant Wagner and Arthur James Wagner Sr. on Dec. 18, 1946. Arthur is survived by his wife Linda Wagner, son Mark "Leann" Mosley, daughter Tracy "James" Barden, son Brian "Sarah" Frost, daughter Lara Frost, son Charles Wagner, sister Diana Broders, eight grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. He was known by many names including, AJ, Jabo, Paw Paw, Paw Paw Oscar, Big Moron, Dad, and Uncle Paw Paw. He and his wife Linda wed on April fool's day of 1988, commemorated by the song "Every time Two Fools Collide" by Kenny Rogers and Dottie West. They were happily married for 36 years. Work was Arthur's second family, from 1973 until his retirement in 2012 he worked for CSX Railroad.

**Janelle Champion Cross, 69**
Funeral service for Janelle Champion Cross, age 69, of Cullman, is Saturday, April 6, 2024, at 1 p.m. at Cullman Funeral Home Chapel. Visitation will be held the night before on Friday, April 5, 2024, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the funeral home. Interment location to be announced. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. Janelle was born to John David Champion and Olma Lassiter Champion on September 3, 1954. She passed from this life on March 28, 2024, at Cullman Regional Medical Center. She is preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her husband, Ronnie Cross; son, Glenn Champion (Rachel); daughter, Brandy Cross (Brandon Stephens); son-in-law, Aaron Bailey (Ginnie); best friend, Missy; brothers, Russell Champion, Keith Champion (Mary), Bobby Ray Champion (Melanie); sisters, Marilyn Morgan, Hazel Romie (Jeff); grandchildren, David Glenn Thompson, Kassie Wagner (Steven), Promise Champion, Rosie Bailey (Jackson Hudgins), Holley Champion, Sarah Gentry; fourteen great-grandchildren; a host of family and friends. Janelle was full of life and lived every day to its fullest. She loved nature and animals and enjoyed fishing and camping. Wolves were her favorite animal and she was always fascinated by them. She loved coloring and painting, was a huge Auburn fan, and enjoyed thrifting. Family describes her as a devoted and loving wife, mother, and grandmother, who always put others first. She will be missed by all the lives she touched. Pallbearers: Aaron Bailey, Steven Wagner, Brandon Stephens, Jackson Hudgins, Jamie "Vern" Morgan, Bud Clouse.

**Geraldine Marie Rodriguez Nelson, 87**
Geraldine Marie Rodriguez Nelson, age 87, born in New Orleans, Louisiana on Dec. 25, 1936, and resided in Cullman, Alabama, passed from this life on March 28, 2024. There are no services scheduled at this time. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. Mrs. Nelson is preceded in death by her husband of 63 years, Arthur Theodore Nelson; parents, Adam Rodriguez and Denise Franotavich Rodriguez; two brothers, Ernesto and Claude; three sisters, Delores, Elaine, and June; a grandson, Christopher Jon; a granddaughter, Madison Brittney. She is survived by her daughter Valerie (Phillip) Dunn, Arthur (Sheila) Nelson; eight grandchildren, Adrienne, Rhyann, Cassie, Meghan, Gabriel, Jana, Katie, and Maggie; and nineteen great-grandchildren. Mrs. Nelson moved to Cullman, Alabama in 2016 from Goodland, Kansas, where she was active in her church, Eastern Star, and community activities. Mr. Nelson found strength in her faith. The family would like to express our thanks to those who gave our mother loving care over the past few months. Please visit www.cullman-funeralhome.com to sign the online guestbook.

**Cameron Shane Adams, 30**
Funeral Service for Cameron Shane Adams, age 30 of Cullman, will be at 2 p.m. on Monday, April 1, 2024, at Gethsemane Baptist Church with Kent McClendon officiating; burial at Gethsemane Baptist Cemetery. Visitation will be from noon - 2 p.m. on Monday, April 1, 2024, at Gethsemane Baptist Church. Cullman Heritage Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Mr. Adams passed away on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at Gadsden Regional Medical Center. He was born, April 18, 1993, to Chi Adams and Cindy Adams. Shane is survived by his parents, his brother, Cory Adams and his sister, Kristian Adams. Growing up Shane was always quiet and shy around people until he got to know you. He would always say yes ma'am or no ma'am. even if you were a few years older than him. People would always brag about how polite he was. He was always a hard worker. He would always put in 110% into anything he done. One of the many things Shane loved to do was help his dad work on his 53 Chevy truck. Shane will truly be missed by many people.

**Ronnie J Murray, 77**
A celebration of life for Ronnie J. Murray, 77, of Hanceville will be held at 2 p.m. Monday, April 1, at Center Hill Baptist Church. Visitation will be Sunday, March 31 from 6 until 8 p.m. at Hanceville Funeral Home. Mr. Murray was born Nov. 28, 1946, in Blount County, Alabama to the late Jesse and Aline Murray. He passed away March 28, 2024, in Birmingham, Alabama. Mr. Murray is survived by his wife, Phyllis Murray; children, Dana Utrata (Gary), Christopher Murray (Callie); grandchildren, Kate Murray, Lila Grace Murray; siblings, Connie Murray, Roger Murray, Patricia Hayes, and Teresa Patterson. In addition to his parents, Mr. Murray was preceded in death by his siblings, Donnie Murray, Tommy Joe Murray, Johnnie Murray, and Priscilla Foley.

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## BILLY BOB'S STORIES AND STUFF

# Life, death, and life after death

**Bill King**
Tribune
Contributor



The older we get, the more we realize that we are not going to live forever...at least not in this world. The truth of that reality has not become realized reality to many young people. I'm sorry, but that was true of us older folks too when we were young...we just can't remember that far back! Not to be morbid, or depressing, but the death rate is 100%... always has been, always will be. That goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. No, they may not have dropped dead the day they ate the forbidden fruit, but have you seen either of them lately?

The reason we did all those dumb things we did as children, especially as teenagers, was because we had not witnessed enough death yet to take it seriously. I mean, who in their right mind would jump out of a tree and into a creek? Especially when the creek was not directly under the tree or anywhere close. I didn't say I was giving personal testimony, but I'm not denying anything either. I will tell you this, solid ground, especially with rocks, hurts much worse than water. We simply thought we could survive anything and live forever or at least until we were ancient, which we thought was somewhere around 50.

My first experience of someone I knew dying was my Grandma King. As far back as I can remember, she was sick and in bed.

She had cancer. I don't remember what kind or where, but I do remember the doctor's removed one of her arms. She lived in Tallapoosa, Georgia, which was 100 miles or so from my home in Rainsville, Alabama. We went to visit them quite often. She always had candy for me and sometimes a small toy. I was five-years old the last time we went to visit her.

In her last years she with my Aunt Lula. Her bed was usually in the living room, but this time she was still in the living room but asleep in a funny looking box. There were flowers all over the place.

My uncles, aunts, and cousins were there and a bunch of other people that I didn't know. I don't remember too much else about it, but Mama told me we wouldn't be seeing Grandma King anymore.

She said she had gone to live with Jesus. Because I loved my grandma so much, I remember being sad that she had left. She never came back and I never saw her again.

Fast forward many years and I now have more family in heaven than I do on earth. The most devastating death came when I was 15-years old when my dad suddenly died. By that age, I understood more but still not enough. I did know he wasn't coming back.

To my knowledge, everyone who has ever lived, with the exception of Enoch and Elijah, has died. Even Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, died. He did not die of natural causes, by disease, or by accident. He died at the hands of the Roman government. Although he had done absolutely nothing wrong, he was executed like a criminal. The difference between Jesus and most everyone else is that he didn't stay dead. He did come back.

Three days after he died, and was even buried, he was alive again. This coming Sunday, on the day most call Easter, people all over the world will gather to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Happy Easter!

**Bill King can be reached at bkpreach@yahoo.com or 334-728-5514 (office).**

## HISTORY

# Files from yesteryear: 1936, 1950

**From the files of 1936**

The Cullman County High School was closed on April 1, 1936, due to lack of funds. Mrs. Oldacre spoke to the student body on Monday morning in assembly. The Cullman County High School first opened in September of 1907 with an enrollment of forty-five students. The upstairs of the Bill Kelly store was used for classrooms, since no other building was available. The new school building was ready for use the following year.

The first faculty consisted of two members: J.J. Riley, principal and Oscar Hyatt, assistant. Mrs. J.M. Oldacre (Leta Weeks) was the only member of the graduating class who was present on the first day of school.

There were six graduates: Onie Lee, Mary Lee, Catherine Whitsell, Mrs. J.M. Oldacre, Cullman, Berts McConnell, who lives in Florida and Ira Bain, who is now in Washington.

The graduates were six the first year, seven the second year and thirteen the third year.

The first class chose the present school colors, the school flower and motto. There were two literary societies: Jeffersonian and Websterian.

The sports of that day were tennis and baseball. Equipment was poor, but spirit and enthusiasm surmounted all such obstacles.

The cornerstone of the Hanceville Methodist Church was laid on March 25 at 3:00 p.m. in 1916.

Mrs. Nettie Wooten died on Wednesday of pneumonia. Mrs. Wooten was the mother of nine children.

Her husband was Reno Wooten.

Services were on Thursday and interment was at Shedd Cemetery.

**From the files of 1950**

Frank Calvert's neighbors brought in twelve tractors and a dozen mules to plant his crop at Ryans Creek last Tuesday, while the ladies cooked a big meal. Mr. Calvert has rheumatism and is unable to work.

An 800 gallon still was destroyed on Tuesday, north of Sardis.

The Deverne Holloway residence, north of Fairview, burned on Thursday night, while the family was a at church.

An unusual fire burned practically all of Mrs. Avonell Whitworth's furniture, which was loaded on a moving truck. W.J. Pruitt of Fairview saw the truck smoking as it passed his home.

He stopped the driver and directed him to the Pete Christian Dairy Barn where running water was used to extinguish the blaze.

# POET'S CORNER

## After Calvary | By: Randy C. Hale

Three days after Calvary,
blood stained the cross,
It seemed the life of Jesus was gone and all
was lost.

Crude nails tossed aside,
with a homemade crown,
that pierced the head of Him
that hope within was bound.

His body laid
in the garden tomb within
But on this day, He arose
Our Savior lived again.

Then appeared to the disciples
His resurrection to confirm.
After 40 days, ascended
to His Father He returned.

And one day from the sky
we'll rise to meet him there
A host of love ones with us
eternity to share.

What a great reunion
that day shall ever be,
to gather all together
and praise our Lord and King.



# CULLMAN TRIBUNE WORD SEARCH

MARCH 30

W A I M I R I A P A C H E M F O X
Y A R A U C A N H K Z N M U R T P
A Y O R T N S A S I A V O B V T U
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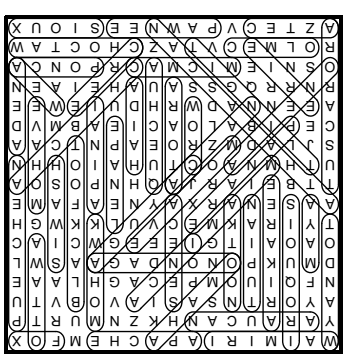
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**Apache**
**Apinai**
**Araucan**
**Arikaree**
**Athabascan**
**Atoara**
**Aztec**
**Blackfoot**
**Cayuga**
**Chibcha**
**Choctaw**
**Cree**
**Crow**
**Erie**
**Fox**
**Haida**
**Inca**
**Iroquois**
**Lenape**
**Maya**
**Miami**
**Micmac**
**Mohave**
**Mohawk**
**Mojave**
**Nazca**
**Nootka**
**Olmec**
**Omaha**
**Oneida**
**Onondaga**
**Ottawa**
**Panare**
**Pawnee**
**Ponca**
**Puelchean**
**Quechua**
**Seneca**
**Sioux**
**Siwash**
**Tlingit**
**Tupian**
**Tuscarora**
**Waimiri**
**Wea**
**Wyandot**

# CULLMAN TRIBUNE SUDOKU

MARCH 30

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**ANSWERS:**



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

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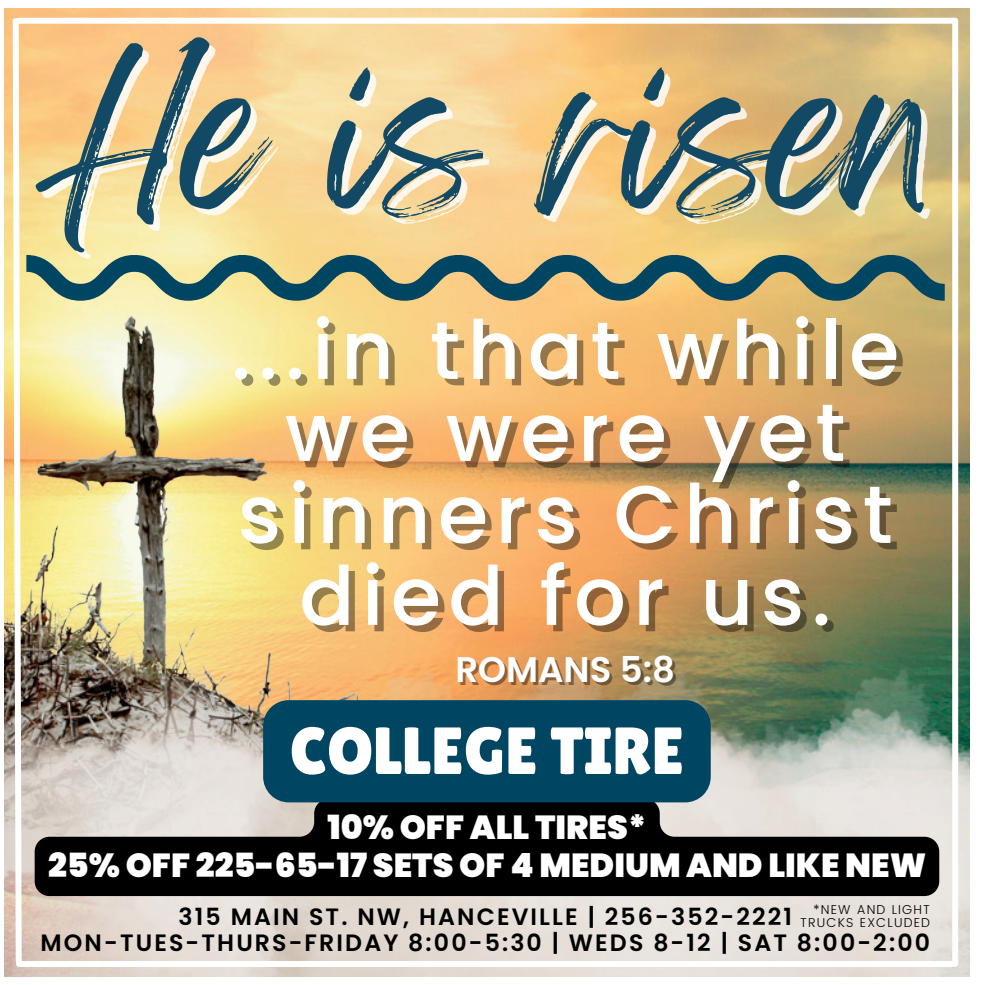
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