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WEATHER

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SOURCE: WEATHER.GOV

SHOWERS LIKELY THEN SLIGHT CHANCE T-STORMS

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NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

– SPORTS –

Good Hope eliminates Hanceville, Meek wins area championship

» PAGE 4

Chesley Oaks Open returning after multiyear hiatus

Cheyenne Sharp
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Calling all golf tournament enthusiasts – the Chesley Oaks Open will return Friday and Saturday, May 10-11, for the first time since 2019.

Chesley Oaks has undergone somewhat of an overhaul in the past few seasons, with new owners David and Shirley Chastain completing updates and upgrades to the course and greens.

One of the Open's organizers, Marty Hardman, spoke about the rebirth of the competition, sharing how a fun, lighthearted conversation about attendance at the course put a plan in motion.

Hardman shared, "Mark Eddy, one of my golfing buddies, he came up to me and asked about holding the Chesley Oaks Open again this year.

"So, here we » PAGE 6



MARTY HARDMAN

Chesley Oaks Golf Course is gearing up to host its long missed Chesley Oaks Open May 10-11, 2024.

'It's a community garden in every sense'

Logan-Cleveland community garden prepares for first plant of the season



SONYA NAIL

A group of volunteers from the Logan and Cleveland Community Garden is pictured at the garden's cleanup day. Pictured left to right are Draken, EJ, Neville, Jessica and Trista Franks, with Damian Clark in the foreground.

Cheyenne Sharp
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The southwest side of Cullman is a bustling, densely populated residential area. One lot on the corner of Logan Street Southwest and Cleveland Avenue Southwest is home to a neatly arranged series of raised concrete planter boxes – the Logan and Cleveland Community Garden. Area residents can reserve these boxes, test their green thumbs and cultivate their own gardens.

Volunteers from the Cullman County Master Gardeners and First United Methodist Church, along with residents, came out to the garden last week and performed their annual "cleanup" day in preparation of incoming planting weather, pruning shrubs, trees and bushes to perfection and pulling unsightly weeds from the beds. The garden is a community effort, from beginning to end.

Sonya Nail, one of the garden's on-site project managers, shared the importance of the community crops, saying, "The garden supports everyone in the community including the food insecure and unhoused as well. It's a community garden in every sense, tended by the community for the community."

There will be an informational meeting Thursday, May 2, at 6 p.m. at the Cullman Housing Authority, located at 1545 Vine Circle SW, for any interested individuals who wish to learn more about the reservation process or the community garden in general.

This meeting will be the only opportunity to reserve a gardening bed; the cost is $25 for the season and includes all plants and gardening supplies needed.

Pizza and drinks will be provided to guests as they hear the ins and outs of the Logan and Cleveland Community Garden, including information on the sponsorships that keep the garden cost effective and open.

With support from the North Alabama Agriplex and Cullman Housing Authority, each of the 35 » PAGE 6

1 dead after Sunday morning shooting in Bremen

» PAGE 2

Cullman man arrested following Berlin shooting incident

» PAGE 2

Clothed in Cullman coming May 9



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Curt's Closet Founder Ashley Wilson speaks at the 2022 Clothed in Cullman event.

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West Point High School Scholars Bowl team finishes 2nd in nation

» PAGE 5

Slim Chickens donates over $1.5K to The Link

» PAGE 5

A fun 'Day in the Park' in West Point

» PAGE 5

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Bill Smith

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CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported April 29

Cullman Tribune staff
Contributor

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

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

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INCIDENTS

April 25

- criminal mischief; Hwy. 69S
- possession of dangerous drugs; possession of drug paraphernalia; Hwy. 69N
- failure to deliver title; CR 622
- possession of marijuana; possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 1269
- sell-distribute dangerous drugs; Hwy. 278E

April 26

- possession of dangerous drugs; possession of drug paraphernalia; Hwy. 278E
- shooting into occupied vehicle; assault; CR 752
- gas drive off; Hwy. 278E
- possession of dangerous drugs; Hwy. 157
- criminal mischief; CR 438
- violation of protection order; CR 339
- theft of property; CR 149
- violation of protection order; CR 1094
- theft of property; Hwy. 278E
- domestic violence; CR 601
- possession of dangerous drugs; possession of drug paraphernalia; Hwy. 157

April 27

- harassment; Hwy. 91
- obstructing criminal investigation; CR 747
- domestic violence; CR 703
- attempt to elude law enforcement officer; CR 1602
- possession of dangerous drugs; possession of drug paraphernalia; possession of marijuana; CR 109

April 28

- criminal mischief; CR 587
- possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 747
- assault; Day Gap Rd.
- theft of property; CR 1136
- trespassing; Hwy. 69S
- theft of property; CR 144
- possession of drug paraphernalia; attempt to elude law enforcement officer; resisting arrest; US. 31
- theft of property; giving false name to law enforcement officer; Hwy. 69S

ARRESTS

April 25-28

Barnes, Desiree J.; 25
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of marijuana-2nd degree
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Bentley, Kenneth W.; 43
- assault-aggravated assault non-family-gun
- assault-shooting into occupied building

Branham, Nicholas W.; 44
- family offense-causing of delinquency, dependency or need of supervision of children

Brant, Jared L.; 45
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Brown, Cody W.; 32
- FTA – attempting to elude a police officer- serious Injury or death/speed exceeds 20 mph over limit
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs
- attempting to elude a police officer

Burditus, Joshua E.; 39
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia

Carden, Jamie L.; 43
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Cobble, Kenneth K.; 47
- possession of methamphetamine
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Douglas, Raymond D.; 39
- violation of a domestic violence protection order

Edwards, Brittany L.; 35
- GJ – illegal possession of prescription drugs
- GJ – promote prison contraband (drugs)
- GJ – possession of dangerous drugs

Fanning, Warren D.; 37
- FTA – negotiating worthless instrument

Freeman, Abigail B.; 27
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- possession of marijuana-2nd degree
- possession of dangerous drugs

Gatlin, Aaron S.; 30
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Graham, Adam C.; 40
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- possession of dangerous drugs

Graves, Nakia M.; 46
- FTA – theft-from residence, $500-less than $1500

Jackson, Joshua B.; 42
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Kiker, Angela M.; 46
- assault-domestic-harassment-family

King, Nicholas R.; 25
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- attempting to elude a police officer
- resisting arrest

Klosinski, Mary E.; 35
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA – tampering with physical evidence

Lawrence, Brandon A.; 28
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- possession of marijuana-2nd degree

Parker, Angela M.; 39
- FTA – using a false identity

Parris, Ethan B.; 31
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of marijuana-2nd degree
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA – tampering with physical evidence

Rentz, Michael B.; 21
- FTA – unlawful breaking and entering a vehicle (no theft of damage)
- FTA – theft from a motor vehicle-3rd degree
- FTA – theft from a motor vehicle-4th degree

Ritchie, Robin L.; 43
- forgery-checks
- possessing forged instrument
- theft-miscellaneous
- illegal possession/use of a credit/debit card

Robbins, Anthony W.; 41
- FTA – possessing forged instrument

Smith, Holly S.; 49
- causing of delinquency, dependency or need of supervision of children

Waldrop, Joshua N.; 49
- possession of methamphetamine
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Wells Jr., Calvin D.; 39
- permitting livestock to run at large

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

INCIDENTS

April 22
- theft of property-4th degree; Wal-Mart; food, $205; Hwy. 157

April 24
- unlawful breaking and entering of motor vehicle; person; pressure washer; $1,100; Sharpton Rd. NE

April 25
- domestic violence; criminal mischief-3rd degree; person; damaged window; $500; 2nd Ave. SW
- retail theft of property-2nd degree; Wal-Mart; general merchandise; Olive St. SW
- domestic violence-3rd degree; person; Hwy. 157
- theft of property-3rd degree; person; cash; $1,250

April 26
- retail theft of property-2nd degree; Books-A-Million; general merchandise; $100; 2nd Ave. NW

April 28
- burglary-3rd degree; theft of property-3rd degree; person; miscellaneous; Hickory Ave. SW
- domestic violence-3rd degree; person; Woodland St. NW
- theft of property-3rd degree; person; leaf blowers; $1,400; 3rd St. NE
- duty upon striking unattended vehicle; person; damage to '16 Toyota Tacoma; $1,000; 6th Ave. SW/4th St. SW

ARRESTS

April 24-28

Johnson, Ladonna W.; 44
- FTA - theft of property-4th degree

Sapp, Sherman R.; 44
- FTA - insurance violation
- FTA – speeding

Ritchie, Robin L.; 43
- theft of property-1st degree
- identity theft

Campbell, James E.; 60
- FTA - attempt to elude

Teague, Tanya M.; 54
- retail theft of property-2nd degree
- public intoxication

Cruz, Alyssia A.; 20
- domestic violence-3rd degree

Gilbreath, Eric D., Jr.; 18
- domestic violence-3rd degree

Fanning, Ricky D.; 32
- FTA - public intoxication (2 counts)

Gooch, Amy D.; 51
- driving under the influence

Bullard, Benjamin A.; 50
- driving under the influence

McGaugh, Douglas K.; 69
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Fanning, Warren D.; 37
- FTA - criminal trespass-3rd degree (2 counts)
- FTA - theft of property-4th degree

Stone, Adam L.; 34
- disorderly conduct

Little, Benjamin J.; 43
- burglary-3rd degree (2 counts)
- unlawful breaking and entering a motor vehicle
- criminal mischief-3rd degree (2 counts)
- theft of property-3rd degree

King, Nicholas R.; 25
- FTA – speeding

Brant, Jared L.; 45
- unlawful possession of a controlled substance
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- unlawful possession of marijuana-2nd degree

Alexander, Natosha J.; 41
- criminal trespass-3rd degree

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

No arrests or incidents reported.

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

1 dead after Sunday morning shooting in Bremen

Staff Reports
Contributor

BREMEN, Ala. — A Cleveland, Alabama, man is dead, having succumbed to injuries sustained in a shooting Sunday morning, April 28, in Bremen. Cullman County Coroner Jeremy Kilpatrick identified the victim as Walter Eugene Robinson, 46.

Kilpatrick said Robinson died at area hospital from injuries sustained in a shooting that occurred along County Road109 in Bremen around 9:45 a.m.

Another victim involved in the incident is still being treated at an area hospital.

The Cullman County Sheriff's Office described the incident as domestic, saying an argument between family members escalated to an altercation.

It said one person was possibly struck by a vehicle and another suffered a gunshot wound.

More details will be released as they are made available.

Clothed in Cullman (from Front)

Cheyenne Sharp
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Curt's Closet is on a mission to ensure children in the community know they are loved, valuable and important. This mission is achieved through the selfless work of staff and volunteers at the nonprofit, along with invaluable community donations of new and gently used clothing. Community donations are what arm temporarily or long-term struggling and underprivileged children with clean, fashionable clothing, shoes, undergarments and accessories. The closet is set up like a department store, allowing clients to "shop" for needed items.

"Curt's Closet has over 2,700 visitors to our free clothing boutique each year. Each client receives 10 items of clothing, a pair of shoes, a backpack, socks and underwear at each visit. It is a very large operation that takes four staff members and countless volunteers to operate," said Curt's Closet Founder Ashley Wilson.

"Clothed in Cullman provides the necessary funds to make our work possible! We are so grateful for this community and the way that they have rallied around our work."

Serving thousands of local children each year, Curt's Closet holds an annual fundraiser to involve the community in its outreach.

The event is not only about raising funds, but also about fostering a sense of pride and connection within the community. The fundraiser – Clothed in Cullman – will take place this year on Thursday, May 9.

The benefit, begun in 2019 by the Curt's Closet board and Wilson, is the organization's main source of monetary support.

Over the past four years, the event has quickly grown and gained community support, most recently with over 350 guests in attendance.

One of the evening's special beneficiaries is the Bless Your Sole shoe drive Curt's Closet holds during back-to-school time, providing over 2,000 brand-new pairs of shoes to local students.

Curt's Closet's holiday-themed endeavor, Curt's Christmas, will also see the benefits of the fundraiser. Curt's Christmas partners with local organizations and families to fulfill the Christmas lists of children of families in need of assistance.

A live and silent auction will be in the evening's lineup, with over 100 items up for bid including three-day Rock the South passes, two electronic passes for all Cullman High School's regular season athletic events, as well as baked goods and sweets from local bakers and artisans such as Cullman Bakehouse, The Duchess Bakery, Lana Byrd, Amber's Delights and more.

The crowd favorite Heads or Tails game will return to the 2024 event; attendees can buy a chance to play a lively game of Heads or Tails, vying for the chance to win hundreds of dollars in gift certificates and cards, all generously donated by local businesses and sponsors.

The winners of each round will continue to the coin toss, hoping that luck will be in their favor and they will win it all.

"(It's) winner takes all," laughed Wilson. "Last one standing wins, and wins big. It is so much fun."

Clothed in Cullman will take place Thursday, May 9, at Stone Bridge Farms.

Doors open and the silent auction begins at 5:30 p.m. with the live auction starting and dinner served at 6:30.

Tickets are $60 each, or tables can be purchased for $500.

Buy tickets online at https://auctria.events/ClothedinCullman.

Stone Bridge Farms is located at 281 County Road 717 in Cullman. Find out more about Curt's Closet at www.facebook.com/cw-20curtscloset.

STORAGE BUILDING SALE AT WELTI

Storage building sale at Welti, Saturday, May 4, at 9:00 a.m. Many household items available. For more information call 256-507-0488.

Cullman man arrested following Berlin shooting incident

Lauren Estes
lauren@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The Cullman County Sheriff's Office said a Cullman man has been arrested and charged with aggravated assault and firing into an occupied vehicle following an incident that happened in the Berlin community Friday, April 26.

Deputies responded to the report of a shooting in the Berlin community on Friday, and while en route were informed that a victim had left the scene in a vehicle.

The victim was located at a nearby business where deputies rendered aid until paramedics arrived.

Additional deputies continued to the original scene of the alleged crime and located Kenneth Wade Bentley, 43, of Cullman.

The CCSO said Bentley stated that the victim and two other individuals arrived at his residence earlier and an argument ensued.

The argument allegedly escalated into an altercation ultimately resulting in Bentley shooting the victim.

The victim was transported to an area hospital for treatment.



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Kenneth Wade Bentley

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Publc 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.

Public Notice: Good Hope Public Cemetery Decoration Weekend Cleanup Announcement for 2024

Good Hope Public Cemetery will hold its annual Decoration Weekend on Saturday, May 4, and Sunday, May 5. Please have all worn flowers and decorations removed from the cemetery by Sunday, April 28. Any flowers and decorations remaining after April 28 will be subject to removal by cemetery maintenance with respect to condition. We ask that all new flowers and decorations be kept as close to the monuments as possible to aid in mowing. Donations to the cemetery can be sent to Good Hope Public Cemetery, P.O. Box 355, Cullman, AL 35056, are tax deductible and help us pay for cemetery upkeep. Thanks.

Public Notice: Cullman Memory Gardens

• Attention: Those of you with relatives or friends buried in Cullman Memory Gardens or those with lots for burial there. The committee (Amy Walker, Ron Foust, Neil Culpepper and Jerry Smith) have done an outstanding job of maintaining the cemetery this year.

• The cemetery is in the best condition it has been in years and we need your help to maintain it. As a reminder, May 12 is Mother's Day and we have designated this weekend as Memorial Day for the cemetery to collect donations to maintain and further enhance the cemetery.

• We will have people collecting at the cemetery Saturday, May 11, and Sunday, May 12, and if you are unable to come by with your donation you can mail it to Cullman Memory Gardens, PO Box 964, Cullman, AL 35056. All donations will be used for the care and upkeep of the cemetery. Thanks for all that you do to help us with the upkeep of the cemetery. God bless you!

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.

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 AlAnon Meetings

The AlAnon family groups are a fellowship of friends and family whose lives have been affected by alcoholism. 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 Courage to Change AlAnon family group meets on Thursdays at 6 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church at 305 Arnold St. NE in the Carriage House, located between the church and the Arnold House on the corner. For more information call 256-734-2231 or 256-531-4429.

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.

Mt. Zion Church Yard Sale

Friday, May 3, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. and Saturday, May 4, 8 a.m.-noon at Mt. Zion Church. U.S. Highway 31 North (next to Cullman Area Technology Academy in Vinemont).

Alabama Strawberry Festival

Friday and Saturday, May 3-4, at Depot Park and the Festhalle. For details and schedule, see www.alabamastrawberryfest.com.

Holly Pond Lions Club Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, May 11, from 6:30-9:30 a.m. for our annual all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast with sausage and bacon. Donations only. Proceeds will go toward Holly Pond Cemetery Fund. The LifeSouth Bloodmobile will be on campus. Please consider helping out your community with a blood donation.

Cullman Chapter of The National Association of Retired and Active Federal Workers Meeting

Monday, May 13, at Golden Corral Buffet in Cullman. Guest speaker, State Federation official Julia Ellsbury, will cover the topic "what to do when a federal worker/retiree dies." Dutch lunch begins at 11 a.m. and meeting at noon. Members and nonmembers welcome. For more info, call 256-708-5326.



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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
APRIL 30, 2024

AREA SOFTBALL TOURNAMENTS

West Point eliminates Fairview in area tournament, Vinemont splits tournament matchups

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

SPRINGVILLE, Ala. — West Point and Fairview hit the road to Springville Friday afternoon to get this year's 5A, Area 12 Tournament underway and after dropping both their games in the opening round, the Warriors and Aggies clashed in the loser's bracket. Fairview fell to Springville in game one 16-0 and West Point fell to Hayden 4-3 on a walk-off in the bottom of the seventh to set up an elimination game between the Aggies and Warriors. West Point plated four runs in the fifth to pull ahead 6-1 and tacked on five more in the sixth to secure an 11-1 win in six innings.

Meanwhile in Blountsville, the Vinemont Eagles were competing in this year's 3A, Area 13 Tournament at J.B. Pennington and the Eagles split their Friday games to advance to day two. Vinemont handled Susan Moore 12-1 before falling to J.B. Pennington 10-0. Vinemont will face Susan Moore in an elimination game Monday at 4:30 p.m.

West Point 11 – Fairview 1
After a scoreless first inning, West Point scored on a fielder's choice and an error to take a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the second. An RBI single from Addison Phillips drove Emily Benson across the plate in the top of the third to cut the lead to 2-1 but after a scoreless fourth inning, the Lady Warriors extended their lead in the fifth.

An RBI single from Brinlee Phillips put West Point in front 3-1. Macie Brown knocked a double into right field and Kylee Quinn ripped a single back up the middle to stretch the Warriors' lead to 5-1. Katie Beth Yovino sent an RBI triple into right field to make it a 6-1 game going into the sixth and West Point's bats stayed hot when they got back to the plate.

Ella Minck laid down a sacrifice bunt to bring in another run and make it 7-1 and Brown barreled up another RBI single to stretch the lead to 8-1. Yovino drove in a run with an RBI single and two more Warriors scored on passed balls to wrap up an 11-1 win over Fairview.

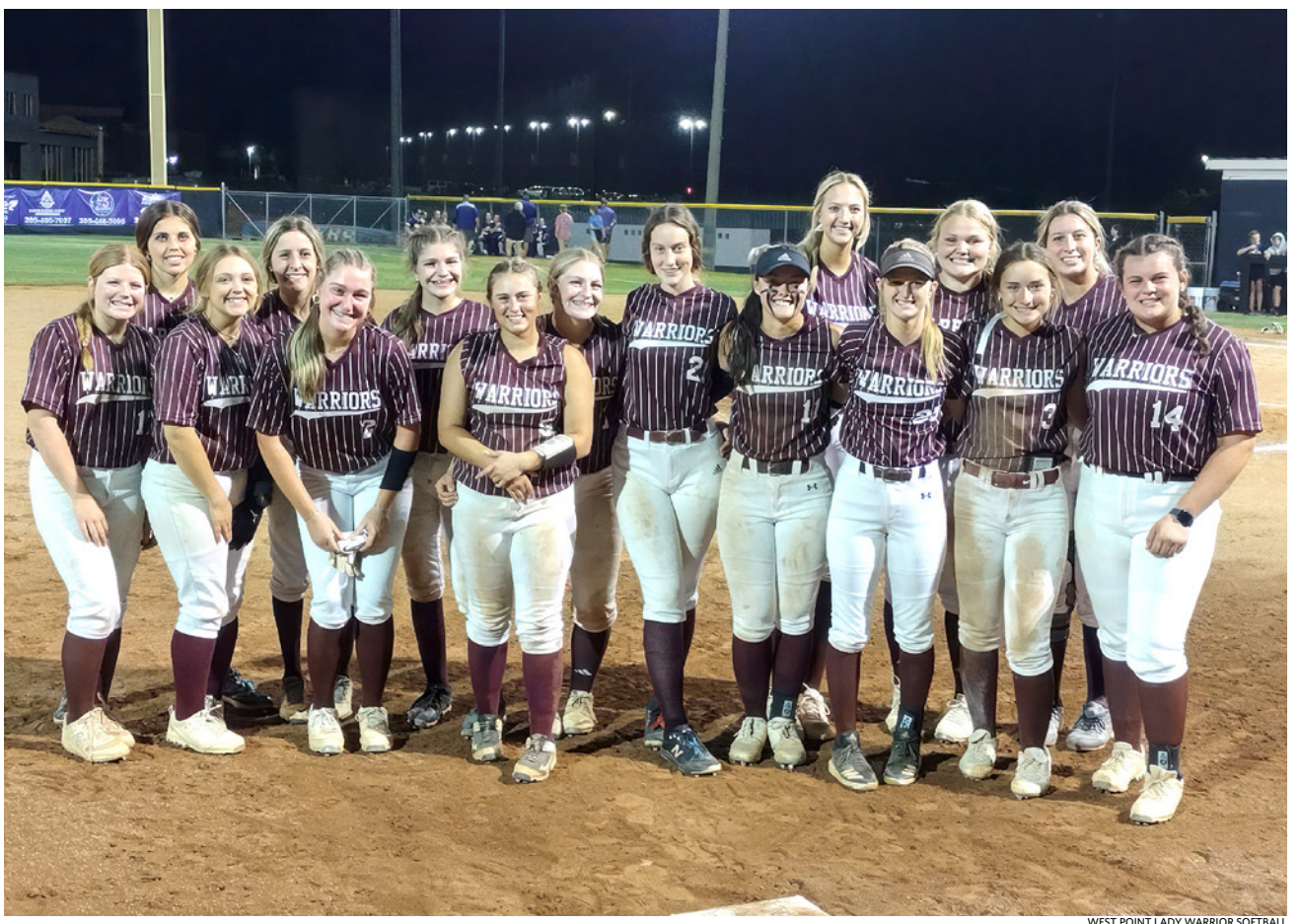
Vinemont 12 - Susan Moore 1
Vinemont didn't waste any time getting on the scoreboard in the bottom of the first inning. Arleigh Thomason got hit by the pitch to lead off the inning and came around to score on a wild pitch to put the Lady Eagles on the scoreboard first. They loaded the bases with one out, then a bases-loaded walk, an RBI single by Emma Dortch, another bases-loaded walk, an RBI single off the bat off Brinlee Pair, a two-run single by Thomason, an RBI single by Haley Millwood, and a passed ball pushed their lead to 9-0.

Vinemont made it 10-0 in the second on an RBI double by Alaina Sandlin. A two-run single by Maci Smith in the third gave the Lady Eagles a 12-0 lead. Susan Moore hit an RBI single in the fourth to avoid the shutout, but Vinemont would be too much for them in the end, as the Lady Eagles ended up knocking off the Lady Bulldogs, 12-1, to move on to the next round.

Thomason (two RBIs), Smith (two RBIs), and Sandlin (two RBIs) each finished with a hit in the game for Vinemont. Millwood, Brooklyn Knott, Dortch, and Pair each collected a hit and an RBI in the win. Thomason gave up just two hits, one unearned run, and struck out three in her five innings of work for the Lady Eagles.

J.B. Pennington 10 - Vinemont 0
It would be all J.B. Pennington in this game against Vinemont. They scored three runs in the first and second inning, added three more in the fourth, and ended the game by putting up one more in the fifth to help seal their 10-0 win over the Lady Eagles. Katelyn Evans and Knott collected the only hits of the game for Vinemont.

Sammy Confer contributed to this article.



WEST POINT LADY WARRIOR SOFTBALL

The West Point Lady Warriors split their opening matchups of the 5A, Area 12 tournament with Hayden and Fairview Friday night.

AREA SOFTBALL TOURNAMENTS

Good Hope eliminates Hanceville, Meek wins area championship

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

PRICEVILLE, Ala. — Good Hope and Hanceville traveled to Priceville for this year's 4A, Area 13 Tournament Saturday and after falling in their opening matchups, the county rivals ended up meeting in an elimination game to wrap up day one. Hanceville dropped a tight opening game with East Lawrence 9-8 and Good Hope fell to West Morgan in its first game 5-0 but the Lady Raiders bounced back with an 11-1 win over the Lady Bulldogs to keep their postseason hopes alive. Good Hope will return to Priceville Monday for another elimination game at noon.

West Point was also back in action at the 5A, Area 12 Tournament Saturday. After splitting their matchups with Hayden and Fairview Friday, the Lady Warriors returned to Springville for a rematch against Hayden. West Point jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first inning but couldn't keep up with the Wildcats down the stretch and the Lady Warriors' season ended with a 12-6 loss.

Saturday was also a big day for the Lady Tigers of Meek. After defeating Decatur Heritage, Meek faced Athens Bible in the 1A, Area 14 finals and took game two 8-6 to claim the area title.

Good Hope 11 – Hanceville 1
The Lady Raiders loaded the bases in the bottom of the first with singles from Kylee Smith, Campbell Koch and Haley Lay and after Molly Benefield put one in play later in the inning, an error allowed three runs to score put Good Hope in front 3-0 going into the second. An RBI double off the bat of Lizzy Steed made it a 4-0 game in the second but Hanceville was able to trim the lead to 4-1 on a double steal in the top of the third.

Benefield doubled in the bottom of the third to plate two more runs and stretch the lead to 6-1. In the fourth, Steed scored on a passed ball, Lay barreled up an RBI single and she and Carley Adams scored on an error later in the inning to give the Lady Raiders a 10-1 lead.

Back to back doubles from Steed and Smith capped an 11-1 win for Good Hope in the fifth inning.

Lay (one RBI) finished with three hits in the win and Smith (one RBI), Steed (one RBI) and Molly Johnson each posted two hits. Benefield (one hit) added a pair of RBIs.

Hayden 12 – West Point 6
A 2-run bomb off the bat of Brinlee Phillips gave West Point a 2-0 lead in the top of the first and an RBI single from Cabri Blackwood made it 3-0 going into the bottom half of the inning. After a scoreless second inning, Hayden played four runs in the third to pull ahead 4-3.

Kylee Quinn drove in Macayla Wilkins with a sac fly to tie things up at 4 in the top of the fifth, but the Wildcats responded with another run in the bottom of the fifth to retake a 5-4 lead. Hayden's offense erupted for seven runs in the bottom of the sixth to make it a 12-4 game and the Lady Warriors were able to put a pair of runs on the board in the final frame, but it wasn't enough to overcome the late lead and West Point's season came to an end with a 12-6 loss.

Wilkins posted three hits in the loss and Phillips added a pair of hits and RBIs. Macie Brown (one RBI) finished with two hits and Quinn (one hit) drove in a pair of RBIs. Blackwood added a hit and an RBI for West Point.

Meek 5 - Decatur Heritage 4
The Meek Lady Tigers knocked off Addison, 10-2, in the opening round of the Class 1A, Area 14 tournament on Friday. They faced off against Decatur Heritage on Saturday with a shot to move on to the championship game.

Meek struck first in the bottom of the first inning. Chloe Gilliland reached on an error, and Carmyn Daughtery hit a double to put runners on second and third with one out. On the first pitch, Annabelle Collins drove in a pair of runs on a single up the middle to give the Lady Tigers a 2-0 lead. A two-run single by Decatur Heritage tied the game up at two in the top of the third.

Meek broke the tie in their half. Gilliland hit a one-out double and came around to score on an RBI single by Daughtery to give them a 3-2 lead. The Lady Eagles tied the game up at three in the top of the fourth, but the Lady Tigers took a 4-3 lead in their half on an RBI single off the bat of Laney Phillips. Once again, Decatur Heritage tied the game up at four in the top of the fifth.

The score remained the same until the seventh inning, and Meek looked to end things in their half.

Addisyn Williams reached on an infield single to lead off the inning and stole second. An error by the third baseman allowed Williams to score the game-winning run and give Meek the 5-4 win over Decatur Heritage to move on the area championship game.

Collins finished with a pair of hits and two RBIs for Meek. Daughtery (three hits) and Phillips (one hit) each drove in a pair of runs in the win for the Lady Tigers. Marlee Mosley went the distance for Meek, giving up seven hits, four runs (two earned), walking two, and striking out six.

Athens Bible 14 - Meek 8 (Area Finals Game One)
Meek got on the scoreboard in its opening at-bats against Athens Bible. Williams drew a leadoff walk and later scored on a passed ball to give them a 1-0 lead. The Lady Trojans countered in their half, scoring four runs on a two-run double and an error to take a 4-1 lead. Marlee Mosley led off the second for Meek with a solo home run to cut it to 4-2. Gilliland scored on an error, and Mosley lined an RBI double to center field to tie the game up at four.

Athens Bible batted around in their half, as they put up eight runs to take a 12-4 lead. The Lady Tigers trimmed the deficit to seven at 12-5 in the top of the fifth on a sacrifice fly by Mosley, but the Lady Trojans got a two-run triple in their half to make it 14-5.

Meek quickly loaded up the bases to start out the seventh, and Collins ended up scoring on a double play to cut it to 14-6.

Three batters later, Williams hit a two-run single to right field to make it a 14-8 game. That's as close as they would get the rest of the way, as they ended up falling to Athens Bible in game one 14-8.

Mosley led the way for Meek with three hits and three RBIs. Williams added a hit and two RBIs, while Phillips collected a hit and an RBI in the loss.

Meek 8 - Athens Bible 6 (Second Area Championship Game)
The winner of this game would end up taking home the Class 1A, Area 14 championship. Just like in their last game against Athens Bible, Meek got off to a quick start offensively in the bottom of the first. Williams hit a leadoff single, and an error allowed her to move on up to third. Gilliland hit the first pitch she saw up the middle to give the Lady Tigers a 1-0 lead. She later scored on a passed ball to make it 2-0. The Lady Trojans cut it to 2-1 on an RBI single in the top of the third.

Meek got that run back in their half. Williams hit a leadoff triple and came around to score on an RBI single by Gilliland to give them a 3-1 lead. Athens Bible made it a 3-2 game on an error in the top of the fourth, but Kadence Cox scored on an error in the Lady Tigers' half of the fourth to make it a 4-2 game. The Lady Trojans scored three times in the top of the fifth to grab a 5-4 lead. Meek tied the game up in their half on a passed ball, and they quickly looked to break that tie in their next at-bats.

Three straight singles loaded up the bases in the sixth. With one out, Williams lined a two-run single to right field to give them a 7-5 lead.

Two pitches later, an error allowed Peyton Johnson to cross the plate to make it 8-5. Athens Bible made it 8-6 in the top of the seventh, but Mosley induced a pop out to end the game, as the Lady Tigers take home the area championship with an 8-6 win over the Lady Trojans.

Gilliland (three RBIs) and Williams (two RBIs) each finished with three hits for Meek in the win. Mosley gave up nine hits, six runs (three earned), walked one, and struck out one in her complete game effort for the Lady Tigers.

Sammy Confer contributed to this article.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Good Hope Lady Raiders eliminated Hanceville from this year's 4A, Area 13 Tournament with an 11-1 win Saturday.

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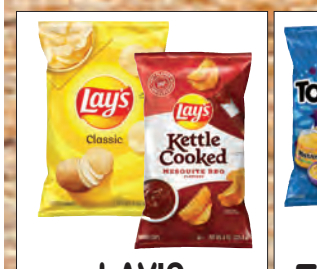


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A fun 'Day in the Park' in West Point

Cheyenne Sharp
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

WEST POINT, Ala. — The Town of West Point held its annual Day in the Park on Saturday, April 27, at the town hall and sports complex. Local baseball tournaments were in full swing, with "Hey-batter-batter" and "Strike!" ringing through the air at regular intervals, punctuated by the high-pitch squeal of the little ones who are now the designated "field babies."

The Town invited food trucks and local musicians to the park, adding snacks and live tunes to the afternoon's event, shooting to maximize the fun.

Musicians waited for their turn at the mic under the pavilion of the complex, hoping to sing to the hearts of the crowd and make lifelong fans, while West Point athletes held a bake sale and painted faces of tiny attendees.

Children meandered away from the ballgames and their parents and friends to make their way to the main draw of the day – the park's seven large inflatable play structures, which were brought in for the Day at the Park.

The giant play things included two gigantic slides, axe and football throwing and two bouncy houses. Children shrieked and giggled as they ran from structure to structure.

"I would like to personally say 'thank you' to all the vendors and trucks that came out to help celebrate Day in the Park.

"A special 'thank you' to each and every coach and assistant coach for stepping out on the field and stepping up for the West Point community's children and parents, as well as all those who stepped in to create a magical day for these kiddos," West Point Park and Recreation Director Jamie Sivley said. "Your help and encouragement does not go unnoticed and is absolutely appreciated. I hope you all had a fun Day in the Park."



CHEYENNE SHARP/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Town of West Point held its annual Day in the Park on Saturday, April 27, 2024.

Slim Chickens donates over $1.5K to The Link

Cheyenne Sharp
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — During the early months of 2024, the management and staff at Slim Chickens in Cullman started searching for ways to give back to the community and make a difference in the lives of patrons. The restaurant began a "Share the Love" campaign, with $1 of every chicken and waffles purchase in February set aside for The Link of Cullman County. The Link is a nonprofit resource for struggling community members and families.

Recently, thanks to the campaign, Slim Chickens donated more than $1,500 to The Link.

One of the restaurant's owners, Jessie Barrett, handed over a check for $1,597 to The Link on Friday, April 26.

"We first aim to be a restaurant in the community, but also a community-based restaurant," said Barrett.

"In February, we sold 1,597 waffles, so on behalf of me and my team, I am happy to present this check for $1,597 to The Link of Cullman County."

The Link Executive Director Melissa Betts expressed her gratitude for the donation, sharing, "The Link of Cullman County is so thankful for community partners like Slim Chickens.

"This donation will help continue to feed families in need in our community over the next month.

"Our pantry serves around 550-600 households per month with food, and donations from our community are the primary way the pantry is funded."

Find out more about The Link at www.linkingcullman.org.



NOAH CARPENTER

Slim Chickens recently donated $1,597 to The Link of Cullman County.

West Point High School Scholars Bowl team finishes 2nd in nation

W.C. Mann
craig@cullmantribune.com

The West Point High School Scholars Bowl team on Sunday, April 28, 2024, placed number two in the nation at the National Academic Quiz Tournament LLC's 2024 Small School National Championship Tournament, with Brodie Henry taking the second highest individual honors. Look for a full feature story soon.



LEE HENRY

Sacred Heart Altar Society recognized



LAJUAN TALLO

The Sacred Heart Altar Society was recognized at the 9 a.m. Mass on Sunday, April 28, at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church. The society, which includes all women of the parish, is responsible for the purchase of Altar linens and the vestments used during each liturgical service, Communion supplies and candles. The women also sponsor Bunco nights, the Oktoberfest German dinner and many other events during the year.



Garden (from Front)

raised beds have been maintained year-round.

There's also a permaculture garden filled with over 25 assorted fruit trees and bushes including blackberries, blueberries, grapes, figs and strawberries.

"The Logan and Cleveland Community Garden has been, and continues to be, a passion of mine that brings me true joy," smiled Nail. " Being part of this opportunity to grow and give fresh fruits and vegetables back to our community since 2015 is unparalleled."

Open (from Front)

are, trying to do it again."

The tournament will effectively be a "two-in-one" according to Hardman, with a traditional division and a new addition – the senior division.

The senior division will showcase the skills of golfers aged 60 and older. Champions from both age groups will be named and the tournament will have a flight in the second round, allowing competitors to effectively boost their chances for a win.

"We will flight that after Saturday's round, so the guys can play against their own abilities," Hardman laughed. "Not everyone wants to compete against the Eli Martys."

Eli Marty is the defending Chesley Oaks Open Champion from 2019.

The Good Hope High School alum clinched the title with a 5-under 66 score.

He, along with several other past champions and competitors, are already on the 2024 tournament's roster.

The event will be held at the Chesley Oaks Golf Course Friday and Saturday, May 10-11. The fee to enter is $125.

Hardman asks interested players to reach out to the Chesley Oaks Golf Course to express interest in participating no later than Monday, May 6, to secure a spot in the lineup.

Chesley Oaks is located at 1035 County Road 1583 and can be reached by phone at 256-796-9808.



ACES: Gardeners excited for first hydrangea blooms in 2 years

Katie Nichols
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

AUBURN UNIVERSITY, Ala. — All across Alabama, gardeners are eagerly waiting to see hydrangeas in full bloom. This year's bloom will be something that gardeners have not witnessed in a few years. Mallory Kelley, an Alabama Cooperative Extension System home grounds regional agent, said it has been two years since the old southern varieties of Hydrangea macrophylla have bloomed with their pink, blue and even purple shades of color. However, these colors will soon return to Alabama landscapes.

"In the South, two years can seem like an eternity for this southern landscape favorite," Kelley said. "Last March, right before we would have seen tiny flowers start to form, the state had a bitter blast of cold that killed most everyone's bud material on their Hydrangea macrophylla plants."

Most bushes died almost completely, all the way down to the ground. However, as temperatures increased into the summer, this tried-and-true southern plant started to grow back from the roots. This year, gardeners will see the flowers form from last year's growth.



ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Pruning with a purpose

To keep your hydrangeas looking great, there are a few key management items, including pruning. Kelley said pruning makes the blooms grow larger and more quickly.

"You could never prune hydrangeas, and they would still flower but at a slower rate, and often times the blooms are much smaller," Kelley said. "If your hydrangeas are blooming fine this season, you may wonder why pruning is necessary. But in order to have pretty summer blooms, pruning is a necessity."

Pruning promotes branching and encourages bud production and flowering for the next year. Kelley said hydrangea pruning is a common area of confusion for many gardeners because of the multiple hydrangea varieties that are common in Alabama flowerbeds. Hydrangeas that bloom early in the spring — such as mophead and oakleaf — will need pruning right after they bloom. These will produce new wood through the summer and fall to have buds for next spring.

"If you wait until winter when they are dormant, you will be pruning away the buds," Kelley said. "This removes where the flowers would bloom the next spring."

Hydrangeas that require more sun — such as 'Limelight' — will bloom much later. In central Alabama, these hydrangeas typically bloom around July 4. In contrast to the early blooming hydrangeas, prune these hydrangeas in the winter, when they are dormant. After pruning, fertilize the hydrangeas in the spring to further stimulate new growth. Blooms will grow on the plant's new growth during the spring.

Proper pruning

To start pruning, Kelley said it is best to remove any dead or diseased material first.

"Sometimes, hydrangeas can get some winter damage to tissue that did not have a chance to harden off before winter temperatures arrived," Kelley said. "You will need to remove this tissue as well."

After pruning all the dead material, mophead and oakleaf hydrangeas require no further maintenance until they finish flowering in early summer. Then, prune them back to a manageable size at the branch junctions or simply clip off the spent bloom a few inches below it. If gardeners spot a new forming bud while pruning, make sure to clip just above this bloom.

"It isn't likely that you will make a huge mistake when pruning hydrangeas," Kelley said. "Don't be afraid to prune because it will stimulate new growth and new flowers."

If the hydrangea seems to be struggling, the issue may be deeper than pruning. The issues could be associated with improper watering, lack of cleanup at the soil level or insufficient morning sun.

When in doubt about the right time to prune, Kelley said to remember it's safe to prune hydrangeas of any variety immediately after the blooms are spent.

More information

For more information on hydrangeas, read the Alabama Extension publication "Hydrangeas," available at www.aces.edu.

LEGALS

Legal Notice

Surplus property of Wallace State Community College (Hanceville Campus) will be offered for sale on the website www.govdeals.com Various sales will occur on this website, please check the www.govdeals.com website weekly to see any current sales. This is a government auction website and you MUST be registered on the website to bid on any items. You may view the surplus property to be sold without registration. The govdeals.com website will contain detailed information including descriptions and photos. Items may be inspected by APPOINTMENT ONLY: Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Contact Wesley Sams at inventory@wallacestate.edu to schedule any appointments. All items listed are to be sold "AS IS, WHERE IS". Wallace State Community College reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

PB WIL BK 123 PG 21 - 04/15/2024 09:04 AM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

STATE OF ALABAMA * IN THE PROBATE COURT
*
CULLMAN COUNTY * CASE NO. PC 2024- 128

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF PHILLIP DALE HENDERSON, DECEASED.

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT TO BE PUBLISHED BY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Letters Testamentary on the Estate of said deceased have been granted to Martha Rebecca Henderson on the 15th day of April, 2024, by the Hon. Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate of Cullman County. Notice is hereby given that all persons having claims against said estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Martha Rebecca Henderson
Personal Representative

To the publisher of *The Cullman Tribune:*

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

Tammy Brown
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate

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

PB WIL BK 123 PG 12 - 04/15/2024 08:10 AM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF)
VETRA JACKSON,) Case Number: PC2024- 133
Deceased.)

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama

In the matter of the Estate of Vetra Jackson, Deceased

Letters Testamentary upon last will and testament of said decedent, having been granted to the undersigned on the 15th day of April, 2024, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of the Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama, notice is hereby given that all persons having claims against said Estate are required to file an itemized and verified statement of such claim in the office of the said Judge of Probate within six months from the above date, or said claim will be barred and payment prohibited.

Regina Holmes
Personal Representative

Tonya C. Palmer
Attorney for Personal Representative
1939 Main Avenue SW
Cullman, AL 35055

TO: The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune

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

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

GOLD STAR STORAGE FACILITIES
CULLMAN ALABAMA is hosting an ONLINE auction.

Look for these units online on 4/30/2024 at www.storageauctions.com search zip codes 35057 & 35058
Auctions will be live for bidding thru May 7th 2024, Auctions will finalize on at the time stated for each unit.

140 Willie Burton, P.O. Box 8177, Rochester MN 55901
Microwave oven, assorted cookware, oriental vases and lamps, china set, kitchen wares, large electric roaster, new shoes, clothing, big tv. Ends at 2:00 pm. Physical location: 2330 2nd AVE NW.

207 Karli Gammon, 2519 CO RD 1043, Cullman AL 35057
Assorted pots and pans, kitchen items, Christmas decorations, guitar, crock pot, bags of clothing. Ends at 2:30 pm. Physical location: 8390 AL HWY 157.

423 Regina Lindsey, 702 Lindsey RD, Cullman AL 35055
Porcelain doll, fancy bottles, table with leaves, shadow box display. Ends at 2:30 pm. Physical location: 8390 AL HWY 157

511 Betty King, 270 CO RD 316, Crane Hill AL 35053
Bags of clothing, tools, vaccum cleaner. Ends at 2:30 pm. Physical location: 8390 AL HWY 157

509 Elisa Thompson, P.O. Box 2071, Cullman AL 35056
Side tables, lamps, suitcase, upright wardrobe, bags of stuff. Ends at 1:30 pm. Physical location: 55 Beechgrove RD

703 Heather Mccandles, 168 Atwood RD, Hayden AL 35079
Wrought iron clock, queen size bed frame, complete with head board, foot board, posts and side rails, mattress and foundation, small heart shaped table, wrought iron bed frame with head and foot boards and side rails, box of clothes. Ends at 1:30 pm. Physical location: 55 Beechgrove RD

523 Jasmine Doss, 31 CO RD 1156, Cullman AL 35057
Xbox 360 games, portable hammock, bags of pillows, large furry stuffed bear toy, Nintendo DS with charger and game, Nintendo DSI, assorted shoes, clothes. Ends at 12:00 pm. Physical location: 6790 AL HWY 157

109, Beth Morgan, 715 Cedar Lake Rd., Decatur, AL 35603
Washer, Darth Vader doll, plush dragon, poker chips set, skillet shaped like BB8, fan, vacuum cleaner, Christmas décor, Batman toaster, grandfather clock. Ends at 1:00 p.m. Physical location: 1298 CR 715, Cullman, AL 35055.

PB ADT BK 68 PG 892 - 04/15/2024 08:21 AM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

In the Matter of the Adoption Petition *
of JONATHAN W. STEADMAN * Case Number: AD 2024 - 013

NOTICE OF PETITION FOR ADOPTION

TO: WALTER ALION WHATLEY, WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN

A PETITION FOR ADOPTION WAS FILED IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA, BY JONATHAN W. STEADMAN, PETITIONER, FOR THE ADOPTION OF W.L.J.W., A MINOR. IF YOU SHOULD CONTEST THIS ADOPTION, YOU MUST FILE A WRITTEN RESPONSE WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS WITH COUNSEL FOR SAID PETITIONER, WHOSE NAME AND ADDRESS IS SHOWN BELOW AND WITH THE CLERK OF THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA, 500 2ND AVENUE SW, ROOM 101, CULLMAN, ALABAMA 35055.

DONE THIS THE 15th DAY OF April, 2024.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE

SHAY PERSALL LAW, LLC
611 7th Street SW
Cullman AL 35055
(256) 841-7800
Attorney for Petitioner





Vinemont native, AU alum Smith joins Alabama Farmers Federation field staff

Mary Johns Wilson
Alabama Farmers Federation

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Conecuh County young farmer Cameron Smith joined the Alabama Farmers Federation field staff April 29. As Area 9 organization director, Smith will serve farmers in Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Marengo, Monroe, Washington and Wilcox counties.

Smith brings a friendly demeanor and deep appreciation for agriculture to the role, said Organization Department Director Matthew Durdin.

"We are excited to have Cameron join our team," Durdin said. "I have known Cameron for a little over 10 years and been able to watch him excel in the agricultural industry. He fits our Core 4 values of Faith, Family, Integrity and Community. I'm excited for our members in Area 9 and the relationships that will be forged for years to come."

Smith was raised in Cullman County's Vinemont community, where he cultivated a love for agriculture by working for local farmers. He's called Castleberry in south Alabama home since marrying Christin, his wife of nine years.

An avid hunter, Smith is raising sons Booker, Briggs and Brier Klay to appreciate the great outdoors at Booker Farms, his in-laws' cattle operation.

The Smiths honed their agricultural advocacy efforts through the Conecuh County Farmers Federation and local Young Farmers Committee. Since graduating from Auburn University with a bachelor's in agricultural business and economics, Smith has continued to build a network of farmer-friends across the state.

He'll use that experience and understanding of the Federation's mission when visiting members, engaging with local Alfa Insurance staff and connecting county leaders to state-level resources.

"There's something about farming that draws you in, no matter what commodity it is. I think it's natural to long to do what God created us to do — to work hard and cultivate the resources he gave us," said Smith, 35.

"I am extremely thankful for the time I've had outside the Federation. I've seen the reality of farming and sat with farmers to make life-changing decisions about what their farm was going to look like the next year.

"I want whatever we're working on — whether it's a political issue, labor issues, anything — to have a positive effect on the people who are the backbone of our nation."

Smith is one of 10 area organization directors (commonly called field men). His Area 9 formerly included Crenshaw County, now served by Area 8 Organization Director Jacob Davis.

Smith joins the Federation from Americot, where he was a seed salesman whose strong relationship-building skills and understanding of seed technology led him to double regional sales and market share in just two growing seasons.

He previously spent seven years managing fertilizer operations for GreenPoint Ag in Evergreen and Atmore, where sales tripled during his tenure.

Smith brings extensive community involvement to the Federation. He's first vice president of the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts; chairs the Conecuh County Soil & Water Conservation District; and represents local alumni on the Auburn Agricultural Alumni Club board. The Smiths worship at CrossWay Ministries Church in Andalusia.



ALABAMA FARMERS FEDERATION

Cameron Smith

Obituary Announcements: April 27-29

Susan Jordan, 62
Memorial Service for Susan Jordan, age 62 of Cullman, will be at 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 4, 2024, at Renovation Church of God with Dwayne Harbison officiating. Cullman Heritage Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Mrs. Jordan passed away on Friday, April 26, 2024, at Encompass Health Lakeshore Rehabilitation Hospital. She was born, Sept. 11, 1961, to Fred Luey Bavar Sr. and Nellie Christeen Hood. She was preceded in death by her parents. Survivors include her husband of 43 years, Rocky Jordan, children; Amanda (Ben) Shockley and Richard (Andrea) Jordan, grandchildren; Chase and Trinity Jordan, Audrey, Sarah, Jay, and Jackson Shockley, Joey, Alesha and Angel, five great grandchildren, sister; Kathy Huddleston and Mary Allbritten, brother; Fred (Sherry) Bavar Jr. and a host of aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, family and friends. In lieu of flowers, please send prayers to the family.

Ricky Smith, 75
Ricky Smith born in Cullman on July 21, 1948, to Crawford and Vada Smith. Ricky loved the Lord with his whole heart. He was a dedicated member of Living Faith Baptist Church for many years and was always quick to have a conversation about something he read in his Bible. He was a handyman and could fix just about anything. He opened his own business, Smith Appliance and TV Service, around 1987. At his retirement in 2016 he estimated he had worked for 75% of the homes in Cullman County. When not at church or working, Rick could be found in the woods. He was an avid hunter and enjoyed the sport. He was a founding member of the R & R Hunting Club in Marion County, Alabama. Ricky was preceded in death by parents, Crawford and Vada Baugh Smith; and sister Elba Faye Collins. He was survived by his wife and caregiver, Dee Smith; daughters, Karla Billiot, Angie Baker Letson, Jenny Letson, Chellie Letson Wall (Jake), Mikaela Hunkapiller (Eli), and Jaisa Stephens (Griffin); sons, Tony Smith (Wendy), Brian Smith (Emily), and Joey Letson (Gail); 8 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; beloved dog, Sadie Lou; and a host of family and friends. Pallbearers will be his 6 grandsons: Joe Billiot, Adam Billiot, JJ Letson, Anthony Smith, Austin Smith, and Bailey Smith. Visitation will be at Living Faith Baptist Church on Monday, April 29, 2024, from 1-2 p.m. with services performed by Bro. Larry Brown at 2 p.m. Burial will be immediately after at Cullman City Cemetery. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. Please visit www.cullmanfuneralhome.com to sign the online guestbook.

Hugh Don Farr, 74
Hugh Don Farr, age 74, of Cullman, Alabama passed away on Friday, April 26, 2024. He was born on Feb. 13, 1950, to Henry C. "Bud" and Audie Mae Farr. He is preceded in death by his parents, sister: Eula Farr, brother: Dennis Farr, grandchild: Desirae Maddox. Funeral services will be held on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, at 2 p.m. at Moss Service Funeral Home Chapel. Interment will follow services in Center Point Cemetery in Holly Pond Alabama. Survivors are: Wife: Sally K. Farr, daughter: Angie (Jason) Russell, son: Donny Farr, sisters: Jeanette Swann, Uvone Copeland, Mary Pate, Ynema Phillips, brother: Louie Farr, grandchildren: Michael (Reanna) Maddox, Jasmine (Justin) Baldwin, Levi (Jazmin) McCall, Kendra (Dakota) Farr, Michael Sparman, Lilith Russell, Bradley Russell, Ethan Russell. Visitation will be on Tuesday April 30, 2024, from 6-9 p.m. at Moss Funeral Home. Please share condolences and memories with the family at www.mossservicefh.com Moss Service Funeral Home directing.

John Gorden Cook, 84
John Gorden Cook, age 84 of Hanceville, Alabama, died Saturday April 27, 2024. He was preceded in death by his wife, Carol Cook; parents: Louis Thomas "Tom" and Pearl Austell Cook; sister, Ima Lee Cook; and his brothers: Dwight Franklin Cook and Gilbert Cook. Gorden is survived by his daughters: Janet Leah Thomas (Jim) and Shelia Slatton (George); son, Bart Cook (Anne); sisters: Marriel Humphrey (Leon) and Mara Nell Bradley (John); brothers: Wallace Cook (Dean), Earl Cook (Joan) and Louis Cook (Martha); eight grandchildren; 13 great grandchildren and a host of other nieces, nephews, cousins, other family members and friends. The family will receive friends at Moss Service Funeral Home on Wednesday evening, May 1, 2024, from 6-8 p.m. The celebration of Mr. Cook's life will be Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 11 a.m. at Moss Service Funeral Home Chapel. Burial will follow at Oakwood Cemetery in Gardendale, Alabama, at 2 p.m. on Thursday. Please visit mossservicefh.com to leave condolences for the family. Moss Service Funeral Home directing.

Free Obituary Listings

Have your funeral home contact us

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Alabama saltwater records continue to fall

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

As saltwater fishing for 2024 heads into the peak seasons, a look back at 2023 reveals another record-breaking year for those who fish Alabama's coastal waters and the Gulf of Mexico.

The catch that went viral with news agencies around the world picking up the story was the giant blue marlin caught by "Best Trait," a 55-foot Viking sportfishing vessel owned by Scott Crump of Jasper. The marlin officially weighed 1,145.6 pounds, which is not only an Alabama but also a Gulf of Mexico record. The Best Trait marlin, which was 145 inches long, easily eclipsed the Alabama state record of 851.9 pounds caught in 2020 by Ginger Myers. The Gulf record was set in 2002 in Mississippi by Barry Carr at 1,054 pounds.

Scott "Scooter" Anderson reeled in the giant marlin in two hours, but he said it was far from easy, losing two fish before getting the big bite.

Capt. Chris Mowad went to the Blind Faith rig, Chevron's deepest rig at 6,500 feet about 160 miles southeast of New Orleans. The fishing team put down a blackfin tuna for bait, and Mowad watched the big blue marlin hit it on the sonar. The marlin came to the surface and started jumping. She came completely out of the water twice, Anderson said.

An hour into the fight, the marlin died and began to sink. A combination of a lot of reeling by Anderson and boat maneuvering by Mowad got the marlin alongside the boat. The fish was so big, they had to call a nearby boat to come help get it loaded. It took seven anglers to get the monster blue into the boat.

Scott Bannon, Director of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (ADCNR) Marine Resources Division (MRD), said a marlin weighing more than 1,000 pounds, known as a grander, is obviously an extremely rare occurrence.

"This fish was almost 300 pounds larger than the previous record," Bannon said. "We just don't see fish that big in the Gulf.

"Credit goes to those bigger boats and the tournaments hosted out of Orange Beach. We have become very well known for our offshore fishing tournaments. I think that brings awareness to the fishing in Alabama, and, naturally, it brings income to Alabama as people who are fishing spend money in the local economy. We're proud to be known as a world-class fishing destination."

Another record-breaker that caused quite a stir was the gigantic tiger shark caught during the 2023 Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo by Brett Rutledge. The tiger shark weighed 1,019 pounds, bumping the 988 pounds, 8 ounces fish caught by Larry Eberly that held the Alabama record since 1990.

Rutledge's record fish was certainly not caught by accident. He took his daughter and a friend out the day before the rodeo started to catch jack crevalle and bonitos to use for bait as well as collecting about 400 pounds of baitfish, like menhaden, for chum. When they're looking for fishing spots, it's all about the abundance of bait around petroleum rigs, artificial reefs or natural bottom.

"I also got up early every morning to build shark leaders for two weeks," Rutledge said. "I built different ones for different applications, depending on the bait we were using. We use 22/0 circle hooks for shark fishing with 700-pound stainless leader.

"We want to use big enough tackle to be able to manhandle a fish. I got that fish to the boat in 30 minutes. We had that shark roped to the boat in 36 minutes total. It took another hour and a half to get it in the boat."

Rutledge said he realized this was a huge shark about 15 minutes into the fight when fishing mate Derrick Rogers spotted the fish and said it was "real long and real girthy." David Rogers, Connor Blake and Joey Spiers were his other fishing partners.

"I didn't think the fish was 1,000 pounds, so I was happy when they called out the numbers," he said. "Derrick and Connor are really good shark fishermen. I did the easy part. I reeled it in. The hard part was what they did when they roped it and got it inside the boat."

Bannon said the shark category at the rodeo allows marine scientists access to species that are rarely available to study.

"The public likes to see those big sharks, and that was a big one," Bannon said. "On the science side of things, when those species are brought in, Dauphin Island Sea Lab and the University of South Alabama are able to obtain so much scientific data on those species they don't see very often. So, there are benefits to those limited species of sharks being landed to be used for scientific purposes."


BLAKE MICHALESK
The Best Trait drew a crowd at Orange Beach Marina when they weighed an Alabama and Gulf of Mexico record blue marlin.

Another catch that received some recognition was the huge bluefish that Rustin Musgrove caught while fishing at Perdido Pass. The bluefish weighed 17 pounds, 8 ounces, bumping a 20-year-old record of 17-4 from the record books.

"That was a monster bluefish, but it only beat the old record by four ounces," Bannon said.

Several of the records last year were deepwater species, one that had never been submitted for a record before. Bannon said more people are venturing farther into the Gulf to fish these days.

"People's efforts shift as they become more comfortable with the electronics, the dependability and fuel efficiency of boats these days," Bannon said. "They have access to information on how to fish. Social media has been a big part of that. They can see how to rig for certain types of fishing and what areas to target. With sonar you can find those bottom features you're looking for in that deep water.

"And there are good food fish in those deepwater areas. People have been targeting those because of lower bag limits on other species, so people are diversifying and expanding their techniques and the areas they are fishing. They're catching groupers, tilefish and some of the deepwater snapper."

One of the snapper species is the queen snapper, which was first accepted as a record fish when Gene Stock caught a queen that weighed 5 pounds, 8.6 ounces in February last year.

That record didn't last long. The following June, Crawford Grant Mann caught a queen that was almost double the initial record at 11 pounds, 4.6 ounces.

A sand tilefish caught by Tylor L. Finley in May last year went into the record books at 2 pounds, 10.4 ounces.

Another record for a deepwater species was the escolar caught last September by Scott Page.

It weighed a whopping 102 pounds, 9 ounces, which was more than 30 pounds heavier than the previous record.

A jolthead porgy caught by Trey Taylor last June went in the record books at 9 pounds, 2 ounces, and the latest record was a silvery John Dory, caught in March of this year that weighed 5 pounds, 6.24 ounces.

Another new species for the Alabama record books is the common snook. Dr. Richard Tarver Webb caught a snook that weighed 5 pounds, 2.6 ounces to establish the record.

"Snook is not a commonly caught fish in Alabama," Bannon said. "This would be the extreme edge of their habitat. They like clear water and warm temperatures. Pensacola has historically been considered the edge of their range, but things change."

In other Marine Resources news, a derelict crab trap cleanup is planned in Mobile Bay on Friday, May 3, and Saturday, May 4, 2024, and the public is invited to participate.

The derelict traps will be marked on Friday and removed on Saturday. There will be a post-event social at Meaher State Park in Spanish Fort on May 4 beginning around 1 p.m.

The Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program event is a coordinated effort between MRD and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and includes volunteer support by the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA).

"We have not had a derelict crab trap cleanup in a few years," Bannon said. "We're very appreciative of the CCA and Gulf of Mexico Alliance for their support for this event.

"We know this is something the community likes to do. They like taking care of the environment, especially in the Mobile Bay area. And derelict traps can damage boats and possibly injure somebody if they are in shallow water. Additionally, they ghost fish, catching fish and crabs when they're not being checked, and whatever is in the trap dies. We're looking forward to working with the public to do this."

Groups or individuals interested in volunteering should contact Jason Herrmann with the MRD at 251-968-9734 or jason.herrmann@dcnr.alabama.gov.