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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

OBITUARIES
Harold Loyd Lee
» PAGE 7

WEATHER
86 69
SOURCE: WEATHER.GOV
PARTLY SUNNY

Arrests and Incidents
» PAGE 2

Community Calendar
» PAGE 2



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

– SPORTS –

Good Hope claims back to back county titles with 11-1 win over West Point

» PAGE 4

Drake, Whaley named CCBOE Teachers of the Year

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — Hayley Drake and Amy Whaley have been named CCBOE Teachers of the Year, Cullman County Schools announced this week.

Drake, a reading specialist at Vinemont Elementary School, was named Elementary Teacher of the Year. VES Principal Kim » PAGE 6





CULLMAN COUNTY SCHOOLS

Haley Drake and family (left); Amy Whaley and family (right)

– PREP BASEBALL –

'Winning is a byproduct of doing all the little things right'

Patterson earns 500th win at Cullman



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cullman High School Baseball Coach Brent Patterson earned his 500th career win at Jasper on Tuesday, April 1, 2025.

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Since taking the reins of the program in 2009, Cullman Baseball Head Coach Brent Patterson has put together quite the resume. He's led the Bearcats to a pair of state championships in 2015 and 2019 along with state runner up finishes in 2011, 2014, 2016 and 2017. He's helped develop dozens of former Bearcats into college and professional players and in December he was formally inducted into the Alabama Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Now he has anoth- » PAGE 5

ALDOT: Resurfacing underway on Hwy. 278 near Holly Pond



ALDOT

» PAGE 7

CPD recognizes Officer Roy Bates



CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Pictured are Officers Adam Walker and Roy Bates. » PAGE 7

Good Hope's Tucker Malin signs with Stillman College

» PAGE 8

PET OF THE WEEK

Pave the way to a new life for Brick



CULLMAN COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

Brick

» PAGE 5

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CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported April 2

Cullman Tribune staff
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — Below are the arrests and incidents reported April 2, 2025. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

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

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

No arrests or incidents reported.

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

INCIDENTS

March 27

• domestic violence-2nd degree – criminal mischief; domestic violence-3rd degree – criminal mischief; person; Kim Ln. SE

March 31

• domestic violence-3rd degree; person; Hickory Ave. SW
• criminal trespass-3rd degree; person; Logan St. SW
• criminal trespass-3rd degree; Wal-Mart; Hwy. 157

April 1

• domestic violence-3rd degree; person; Hwy. 157
• criminal mischief-3rd degree; person; damage to '17 Mini Cooper; $250; Marktplatz Ctr. SW
• theft of property-4th degree; Wal-Mart; general merchandise; $26; Olive St. SW
• criminal trespass-3rd degree; Wal-Mart; Olive St. SW

ARRESTS

March 31 – April 1

Whisenent, Celestial A.; 28
• theft of property-4th degree

King, Heath A.; 24
• FTA – driving while suspended

Speakman, Tyler L.; 30
• FTA – theft of property-4th degree
• FTA – criminal trespass-3rd degree

Bishop, Rhonda K.; 52
• criminal trespass-3rd degree

Ownby, Carson S.; 27
• GJ – unlawful breaking and entering of motor vehicle (3 counts)
• GJ – theft of property-4th degree (3 counts)

Mathews, Corey J.; 32
• domestic violence-3rd degree

Richter, Morgan B.; 22
• criminal trespass-3rd degree

Grove, Andrew J.; 28
• public intoxication
• possession of drug paraphernalia

Bennett, Anna; 50
• forgery-3rd degree (2 counts)
• possession forged instrument-3rd degree (2 counts)
• identity theft (2 counts)
• theft of property-2nd degree (2 counts)

Beaird, Tarrence D.; 27
• possession of marijuana-2nd degree
• certain person forbidden to possess pistol

Estes, Gayla N.; 53
• theft of property-4th degree

Beasley, Anthony R.; 53
• FTA – theft of property-4th degree (4 counts)
• FTA – criminal trespass-3rd degree
• FTA – receiving stolen property-4th degree

Kerns, Brianna M.; 33
• theft of property-4th degree

Collins, Brenda D.; 43
• criminal trespass-3rd degree

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

No arrests or incidents reported.

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

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Music Every Thursday Night in February at the Bethel Community Center
4-8 p.m. at the center, just off U.S. Highway 278, west of Cullman on County Road 1117. Bluegrass, gospel and country music. Musicians are welcome with acoustic instruments only. Covered dish supper and everyone is invited. Please join us! No entry fee, but donations are appreciated for building upkeep.

Grief Support Group
Every Sunday at 3 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 615 Third Ave. SE. Contact Reverend Warren Ruland at 256-962 2521.

Cullman County Republican Women Monthly Meetings
Second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Cullman VFW. President Cathi Bradford: "We are going to begin training to track legislation in Montgomery. If you need information, you can directly message me on Facebook." Full meals at 5:30. Meetings start at 6.

The Crossing Food Bank
The Crossing is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-3:30 p.m. We are located at 1503 Second St. SW, Cullman (in the Housing Authority).

Cullman Low Vision Support Group Meetings
Third Tuesday of every month, from 10-11:30 a.m., at the Alabama Career Center, 1201 Katherine St. NW in Cullman. Contact Olivia Wade, case manager, at 256-389-2502.

Baileyton Bargain Days
First 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

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 the Donald E. Green Adult Active Center, 1625 Cleveland Ave. SW. 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 Al-Anon Meetings
The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of friends and family whose lives have been affected by alcoholism. The Cullman Serenity Al-Anon 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 Al-Anon 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.

The 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.

Church Services: Spirit Life Church of GOD
• 1650 St. Joseph Dr. NW, Cullman
• Friday, April 4 - Celebrate Recovery. Fellowship and testimonies. Hurts, habits and hang-ups are a part of everyone's life. Come and see how to overcome these and more! Dinner at 5:45 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30. Childcare provided.
• Sunday, April 6 - 9 a.m. Van runs in the 5 Points Area. Call Betty Hays at 256-338-3728 for pickup. Breakfast at 9:30. Bible study classes for children, youth and adults at 10. Praise and worship and message by Pastor Bobby Dodd at 11.
• Sunday, April 6 - 2 p.m. Prayer service
• Tuesday, April 8 - 6 p.m. Adult dinner and game night. Join us for food, fun and fellowship.
• Sunday, April 13 - 5 p.m. Healing service

Fairview Lions Club Spring Fling and Car, Truck, Tractor and Motorcycle Show
Saturday, April 5, from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Randall Shedd Community Park on Wesley Avenue in Fairview. We will have a car show, vendors, games, music, bouncy houses. Car show registration is $20 and will begin at 8, with awards to be given out at 1 p.m. For more info, please contact Kita Chambers at 256-385-8805 or William Criscoe at 256-385-5596.

Feed the Five, Food Drive and Singing
Saturday, April 5, at 5 p.m. At The Foot Of The Cross Church, 2101 County Road 1435, Vinemont. One Voice, Loretta Jett and The Glory Echoes will be guest singers. Admission is five cans or boxes of nonperishable food per person.

41st Annual Bloomin' Festival
April 5-6, held adjacent to the beautiful Ave Maria Grotto. Over 150 arts and crafts vendors, delicious specialty foods and a welcoming community atmosphere. Gate donation: $10 per person (Children 12 and younger – FREE!) Grand Prize Giveaway: 2025 Buick Encore GX – Sunday, April 6, at 4 p.m. (You do not have to be present to win!) NO PETS ALLOWED. All proceeds benefit St. Bernard Prep School. For more information, visit www.bloominfestival.com.

Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church Spring Revival
Sunday, April 6, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and Monday-Wednesday, April 7-9, at 7 p.m. The evangelist will be Bro. Jared Dixon. The Dixons" will be singing Sunday. Everyone is invited. The church is located on U.S. Highway 278 East, approximately 2 miles east of Holly Pond on the left. For more information, call 256-796-5986 or 256-590-1501.

Cullman County Soil & Water Conservation District Quarterly Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 8, at 9:30 a.m. at the USDA Service Center, 501-B Fourth St. SW, in Cullman.

Heartland Quilt Guild Meeting
Thursday, April 10, at 6 p.m. at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church, 1310 St. Joseph Dr. in Cullman.

Cullman Chapter of The National Association of Retired and Active Federal Employees Monthly Meeting
Monday, April 14, at The Golden Corral Buffet, with a Dutch lunch beginning after 11 a.m., followed by meeting at noon. Our guest speaker will be Jennifer Prosser, implementation manager, UnitedHealthcare Retiree Solutions. For more info, call 256-708-5326.

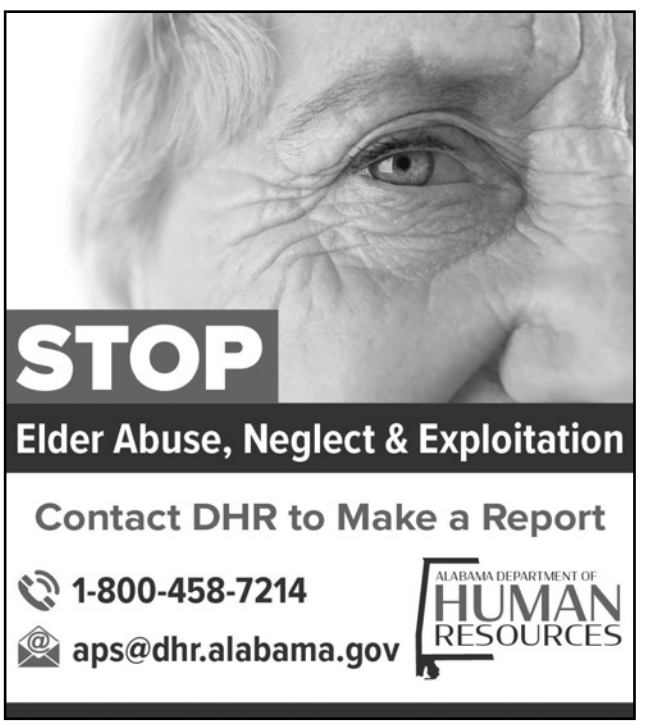
Ladies' Conference
Saturday, June 7, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., with lunch at noon. At The Foot Of The Cross Church, 2101 County Road 1435 in Vinemont. Guest speaker Kristy Garrison Harris: Trusting God through every season. There will be games and door prizes. Please join us.

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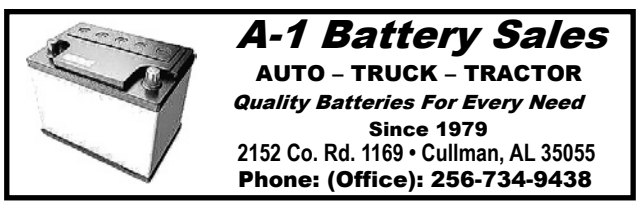
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Published daily Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 219 2nd Avenue SE, Cullman, Alabama 35055 Entered as periodical material at the Cullman Post Office Periodical postage paid at Cullman, Alabama 35055

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGE TO:
The Cullman Tribune
219 Second Avenue SE
Cullman, Alabama 35055
Email Address: robin@cullmantribune.com

ANNUALLY BASED RATES

CULLMAN.....$125.00
OUTSIDE CULLMAN.....$250.00

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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
APRIL 3, 2025

COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Good Hope claims back to back county titles with 11-1 win over West Point

Nick Griffin, Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

VINEMONT, Ala. – After Sunday night's rainy weather pushed the start of this year's Cullman County Softball Tournament to Tuesday, the Good Hope Raiders defended their title in dominant fashion, routing Cold Springs 17-2 in the semifinals and handling West Point in the championship game 11-1. Molly Benefield got the start for Good Hope in the title game, allowing just two hits and striking out eight batters to help seal the win for the Raiders.

Lizzy Steed led off the bottom of the first with a single and scored on a fielder's choice later in the inning to give Good Hope a 1-0 lead. After a scoreless second inning, West Point's Averee Folds scored on an error to tie the game at 1 in the top of the third, but the Raiders responded in the bottom half of the inning.

Maggie O'Neil was hit by a pitch to lead off the inning and Lizzy Steed knocked the next pitch into deep left field to score O'Neil and give Good Hope a 2-1 lead. One pitch later, Kylee Smith drove an RBI single back up the middle to score Steed and make it a 3-1 game. After Campbell Koch kept the inning going with another hit, Haley Lay lined an RBI single into left field to plate Smith and put the Raiders in front 4-1 going into the fourth.

Brooklyn Lambert scored on an error in the bottom of the fourth to extend the lead to 5-1 and Good Hope put things away for good in the bottom of the fifth. Three straight walks loaded the bases for Natalie Miller and she sent a bases-clearing double into center field to make it an 8-1 game. Burgess knocked the next pitch into left field to score Miller and stretch the lead to 9-1 and after two more walks loaded the bases again, Steed wrapped things up with a 2-run single, securing an 11-1 win for Good Hope and back to back county championships.

Steed finished 3-for-4 at the plate with three RBIs and Miller (one hit) recorded three RBIs as well. Smith, Koch, Lay and Burgess each posted a hit and an RBI in the win. Folds and Zailee Love recorded West Point's only two hits in the loss.

CULLMAN COUNTY ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

- Addyson Burgess, Good Hope
- Haley Lay, Good Hope
- Natalie Miller, Good Hope
- Lizzy Steed, Good Hope
- Molly Benefield, Good Hope
- Kortni Baker, West Point
- Katie Beth Yovino, West Point
- Cabri Blackwood, West Point
- Macie Brown, West Point
- Kylie Kovar, Fairview
- Emily Benson, Fairview
- Ayda Payne, Fairview
- Joci Williams, Cold Springs
- Sadie Smith, Cold Springs
- Brooklyn Ingram, Cold Springs
- Bryleigh Basinger, Vinemont
- Tori Vines, Vinemont
- Abby Kuykendall, Vinemont
- Maggie Nail, Holly Pond
- Alaina Folds, Holly Pond
- Isabella Spinks, Hanceville
- Josi Jones, Hanceville

2025 ALL-COUNTY TEAM

- Molly Benefield, Good Hope
- Lizzy Steed, Good Hope
- Addyson Burgess, Good Hope
- Campbell Koch, Good Hope
- Katie Beth Yovino, West Point
- Kortni Baker, West Point
- Macie Brown, West Point
- Brayley Phillips, West Point
- Ralie Gaines, Fairview
- Jocelyn Barnett, Fairview
- Addison Phillips, Fairview
- Adriana Young, Cold Springs
- Sadie Smith, Cold Springs
- Cloe Shelton, Cold Springs
- Alex Twitty, Hanceville
- Kynzlee Farr, Hanceville
- Bryleigh Basinger, Vinemont
- Alaina Sandlin, Vinemont
- Clara Spitzer, Holly Pond
- Maggie Nail, Holly Pond

Good Hope 17 – Cold Springs 2 (semifinals)

The game was scoreless going into the second inning, but Good Hope quickly got something going in the bottom of the second. Molly Benefield led off the inning with a walk, and Natalie Miller reached on an error. They both moved up to third and second, respectively, on a ground ball, and Brooklyn Lambert's RBI single put them on the scoreboard first. Miller scored on a suicide squeeze play by Lizzy Steed to make it 2-0, then three straight RBI singles by Kylee Smith, Campbell Koch, and Haley Lay extended the Lady Raider lead to 5-0.

Good Hope broke the game wide open in the bottom of the third inning. Benefield hit a double to lead off the third, and Natalie Miller drove her in on an RBI single up the middle to make it 6-0. A hit by pitch and a walk loaded the bases with one out, and Steed hit the first pitch she saw into right field for a two-run double to put them ahead, 8-0. Maggie O'Neil came around to score on an error to give the Lady Raiders a 9-0 lead. Koch hit an RBI single, and Lay drove in a run on a sacrifice fly to make it 11-0.

Brooklyn Ingram led off the top of the fourth inning for Cold Springs with a triple and came around to score on an error four pitches later to cut it to 11-1. Back-to-back singles loaded the bases, and Brooke Rowan hit an RBI single to center field to make it 11-2. Good Hope ended things in their half. Gracie Garmon hit a two-run double, Kenzlee Smith added an RBI single, and Calleigh Granger collected an RBI double to give them a 15-2 lead. Granger came around to score on an error to make it 16-2, and Carlee Trammell's RBI double put the finishing touches on a 17-2 win for the Lady Raiders.

Steed and Kylee Smith each posted a pair of hits and three RBIs for Good Hope. Koch added three hits and a pair of RBIs, and Garmon collected a hit and two RBIs. Six other Raider players finished with an RBI in the game. Addyson Burgess gave up just six hits and one earned run and struck out three in her four innings of work.

Rowan finished with a hit and an RBI for Cold Springs, while Aleah Addison, Kaydance Williams, Ingram, Sadie Smith, and Adriana Young all collected a hit of their own in the loss.

West Point 10 – Fairview 5 (Semifinals)

West Point struck first in its opening at-bats. Katie Beth Yovino reached on an error to lead off the bottom of the first. She moved up to third on a fly ball, and a sacrifice fly by Brayley Phillips gave them the 1-0 lead. The score remained the same until the bottom of the third. Lauren Windham reached on a fielder's choice with one out, and back-to-back errors allowed Windham and Phillips to score to make it 3-0. Cabri Blackwood followed that up with an RBI double to extend the Lady Warrior lead to 4-0, and Kylie Burks added an RBI single to put them ahead, 5-0.

Back-to-back doubles by Ayda Payne and Addison Phillips cut the Fairview deficit to 5-1 in the top of the fourth. West Point put a pair of runners on second and third in their half, and Windham's sacrifice fly made it 6-1. Three pitches later, Phillips knocked an RBI single to center field to give them a 7-1 lead. The Lady Aggies cut into the deficit in the top of the sixth inning.

A single by Payne and a double by Phillips put runners on second and third with one out, and Jocelyn Barnett lined a two-run double to right field to make it a 7-3 game. A single by Ralie Gaines put runners on the corners, and Ada Fales made it 7-4 on an RBI single. Later that inning, Emily Benson hit an RBI single to center field to trim it to a two-run game.

West Point added to their lead in their half. Kealie Harbison led off the inning with a single, and Yovino reached on an error to put runners on second and third with nobody out. Windham lined the first pitch she saw into right field for an RBI single to make it 8-5. Yovino later scored on a passed ball to extend the Lady Warrior lead to 9-5, and an error allowed Windham to cross the plate to make it 10-5. Fairview couldn't mount a comeback in the seventh, and West Point would go on to defeat the Lady Aggies, 10-5, to move on to the championship game against Good Hope.

Windham and Phillips each collected a hit and two RBIs for the Lady Warriors, while Blackwood and Burks each added a hit and an RBI. Barnett finished with a hit and two RBIs for Fairview, while Phillips (two hits), Fales (two hits), and Benson (one hit) all drove in a run as well.

Cold Springs 7 – Vinemont 6 (Game One)

After a scoreless first inning, Vinemont was able to take an early lead in the top of the second. Singles by Alaina Sandlin and Tori Vines put a pair of runners on base and Brooklyn Yarbrough drove the next pitch into left field to plate Sandlin and take a 1-0 lead. Later in the inning, Brooklyn Knott ripped an RBI single into left field to score Audriena Key and make it a 2-0 game going into the third.

Vinemont added to its lead in the top of the third when Sandlin lined an RBI single into left field, stretching the lead to 3-0. However, Cold Springs responded in the bottom half of the third. Sadie Smith led things off with a triple, Aleah Addison drew a walk and Kaydance Williams laid down a bunt single to load the bases. Two pitches later, Brooklyn Ingram drove a 2-run single into left field to plate a pair of runs and cut the lead to 3-2. Cold Springs was able to load the bases again later in the inning and an error allowed two more runs to score and put Cold Springs in front 4-3 going into the fourth.

Vinemont answered in the top of the fourth, tying the game at 4 on an RBI single from Arleigh Thomason. Later in the inning, Bryleigh Basinger barreled up a 2-run double to plate two more runs and give Vinemont a 6-4 lead. After a scoreless fifth inning, Cold Springs tied things up in the bottom of the sixth. Williams drew a walk with the bases loaded to bring Maddie Davis home to score, cutting the lead to 6-5 and Ingram was hit by a pitch during the next at bat to score Smith and tie things up at 6 headed into the seventh.

In the bottom of the seventh, a pair of walks and an error loaded the bases for Cold Springs and Addison drew a walk to score Cloe Shelton, seal a 7-6 win and advance to the semifinals.

Ingram (one hit) racked up three RBIs in the win and Smith added a pair of hits as well. For Vinemont, Knott, Yarbrough, Vines, Sandlin and Abby Kuykendall each recorded two hits in the loss.

Fairview 16 – Holly Pond 1 (Game Two)

The Aggies got off to a fast start in this one. An RBI double from Ava Pruett put Fairview in front 1-0 in the bottom of the first and another RBI double from Addison Phillips made it a 2-0 game going into the second.

The Aggies added to their lead in the bottom of the second. Josie Earl hit a lead off single into left field and Emily Benson followed with a double to put a pair of runners in scoring position. Three pitches later, Kylie Kovar knocked a 2-run double into center field to make it a 4-0 game. After Pruett drew a walk, Ayda Payne lined a 2-run single into right field to stretch the lead to 6-0. Ada Fales drove another 2-run single into left field later in the inning to give Fairview an 8-0 lead going into the third.

An RBI single from Payne made it a 9-0 game in the bottom of the third but the Broncos were able to get on the board in the top of the fourth. Alaina Folds was hit by a pitch and Olivia Smith knocked a double into left field to give Holly Pond a pair of runners. Folds came home to score on a passed ball a few pitches later to trim the lead to 9-1 but the Broncos were unable to chip away any more in the fourth. The Aggies wrapped things up in the bottom half of the fourth, plating seven runs on seven hits to secure a 16-1 win and a spot in the semifinals.

Jocelyn Barnett earned the win after pitching two hitless innings and striking out four. Mali Gregory tossed the other two innings, allowing just one hit and striking out one batter.

At the plate, Payne finished 3-for-4 with five RBIs to lead the way for Fairview. Fales added three hits and three RBIs in the win and Benson, Kovar, Pruett and Ralie Gaines each posted a pair of hits as well.

West Point 12 – Hanceville 2 (Game Three)

The Bulldogs led off the top of the first with back to back singles from Kynzlee Farr and Alex Twitty. After Farr came home to score on a wild pitch and make it 1-0, Twitty scored on a fielder's choice a few pitches later to give Hanceville a 2-0 lead. West Point responded in the bottom half of the first. An RBI double off the bat of Brayley Phillips cut the lead to 2-1 and Phillips came around to score on an error later in the inning to tie things up at 2.

The Warriors were able to pull ahead in the bottom of the second inning. Averee Folds led things off with a double and Kortni Baker brought her into score with an RBI single, putting West Point ahead 3-2. An RBI double from Katie Yovino put another run on the board to make it 4-2 and Zailee Love scored on a passed ball later in the inning to extend the lead to 5-2 going into the third.

After a scoreless third inning, West Point added to its lead in the bottom of the fourth. A pair of errors allowed Baker and Love to reach base and Baker scored on a fielder's choice a few pitches later to make it a 6-2 game.

An error during the next at bat allowed Love and Windham to score as well, stretching the lead to 8-2 headed into the fifth. After a scoreless fifth inning, the Warriors pulled away for good in the sixth. An error allowed Love and Yovino to score and make it a 10-2 game and later in the inning, Kylie Burks wrapped things up with a 2-run double into center field, securing a 12-2 win for West Point and a spot in the semifinals.

Burks (one hit) and Yovino (one hit) each posted a pair of RBIs in the win. Baker (one hit) and Phillips (one hit) each added an RBI as well. Farr led the way for Hanceville with two hits in the loss.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Good Hope Raiders defeated West Point 11-1 Tuesday to win their second straight county championship.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Molly Benefield got the start for Good Hope in the title game, allowing just two hits and striking out eight batters to help seal the win for the Raiders.

Cullman Regional Medical Group now offering robotic gynecologic surgery

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — Cullman Regional Medical Group has added a new, highly advanced capability to its surgical offerings. OB-GYN physician Lance Justice, DO, now offers robotic-assisted gynecologic surgery using the da Vinci robotic surgical system.

By combining expert surgical skill with state-of-the-art technology, Justice is making this gold-standard for gynecologic surgery more available to women in Cullman and the surrounding areas.

"Robotic-assisted surgery allows us to give patients more options and greater confidence in their care," said Justice.

"The precision of the technology combined with my experience as a surgeon helps improve the patient's recovery experience and outcomes."

Robotic-assisted gynecologic surgery is considered minimally invasive and can be used to perform pelvic organ prolapse surgery, hysterectomies, endometriosis removal and fibroid removal. Patients benefit from smaller incisions, reduced risk of complications and faster healing.

The da Vinci system's four robotic arms are controlled by the surgeon and equipped with tiny surgical instruments that move like a human hand, but with a greater range of motion.

The surgeon uses highly magnified, 3D views of the surgical area to navigate even the most delicate and complex cases with exceptional accuracy and control.

Before surgeons can use the da Vinci system, they must complete a formalized credentialing plan that includes simulation training, hands-on lab training and case proctoring.

Patients interested in learning more about robotic-assisted GYN surgery or scheduling a consultation with Justice can visit CullmanRegional.com or call 256-735-5277.



CULLMAN REGIONAL

Dr. Lance Justice

Brick (from Front)

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Meet Brick, The Cullman Tribune Pet of the Week, a Border Collie who approximately 2 years old.

This gentle guy has low energy and a complete understanding of leash etiquette. You could say he's an all 'round good boy!

This unassuming gentleman makes nary a peep in his kennel, though he loves the spacious yard to run in, while he stays close to you.

Brick is a grateful soul who takes treats from your fingers like a whisper.

His caretaker said of this sweet guy, "Once again my heart is full."

He is the quintessential companion/therapy/reading dog!

His adoption fee is $130, which includes neuter, DHLPP vaccine, Bordetella vaccines, rabies vaccine, wormer, general exam at the vet and microchip.

Visit the shelter at 935 Convent Road NE. It's open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

If you stop by to see Brick but he's been adopted, please consider his many friends just waiting for their forever homes!

Contact the Cullman County Animal Shelter at 256-734-5448 or cullmananimalshelter@co.cullman.al.us.

Patterson (from Front)

er major milestone to add to his list of accomplishments.

Cullman's 1-0 area win at Jasper Tuesday night was the 500th career victory for Patterson and he admits that when he was first named head coach 16 years ago, he didn't have win totals on his mind. The Bearcats were coming off back-to-back state titles and Patterson's biggest concern was maintaining that level of success.

"When I first became the head coach I was just trying to survive and just didn't want to be the guy that dropped the baton," Patterson said. "I wanted to continue everything that Coach (Bryan) Bowen had done and advance the program. I just didn't want to be the guy that dropped the ball. So, I never once thought about a number of wins or how long I was going to do it or anything like that. I just wanted to survive."

Patterson has certainly held onto the baton since Bowen passed it to him, but the people he credits most for the program's consistency over the years are the numerous assistant coaches he's had helping him.

"One is the consistency of the coaching staff. Coach (Jonathan) Romine has been here since 2002. Coach (Shannon) Fondren was here for so long and then we've had Coach (Aaron) Avery, Coach (Daniel) Moore and Peyton Colvard who all played here and are now coaching here. People like Coach (Bill) Griffin that are Cullman and are baseball and there are those pieces all throughout the coaching staff," Patterson said. "It's a lot of guys that are super competitive and love the game of baseball but even more so they want to do things the right way and influence kids the right way and impact lives. And of course, we have so many guys like Kalen Elam, Brandon Lee, Drew Bryson, Matt White, Jordan Guthrie, Jeremy Peek, Patrick Britton. You can just keep going. There are so many guys that played here, coached here for a while and either went on to get jobs elsewhere or that went off and weren't in education anymore. All those guys brought stability and brought pride in what Cullman baseball is. It means a lot to them; it's not just a job. It's part of who we are, and it means a lot to us."

In addition to a long list of coaches, Patterson also believes the support from the community has played a major role in the program's success.

"The other big thing is the community that just keep supporting us. Our school, our businesses, our parents and so many people that have invested in our program in many different ways. It might be working the concession stand, it might be putting up a sign or donating money or whatever, they believe in our program," Patterson said.

"Because of the way they were raised, we've had a lot of really good people that have come through our program that still love it and now they've got kids coming up and playing so they want to see it keep getting better and better too. That's the way you build some tradition and a culture. I think those two things, the consistency in our coaching staff and the consistency of our community's support."

Patterson cares a great deal about helping his players get better on the field, but he cares even more about how he and their experience in the program can better prepare them for life after baseball.

"I hope that when they leave, they start seeing why we did things the way we did them and that the way we coached, and the game of baseball really can spill over into real life. So, if we do it the right way we have played a part in helping them prepare for the next chapters of their lives beyond high school baseball.

"And hopefully it's not just college baseball, its college, its relationships and its everything. Knowing how to be a good teammate, how to be unselfish, knowing how to work hard, how to invest in something, taking pride in what means a lot to you. Hopefully when they leave here, they know that we really cared about them, even though they might've gotten yelled at or maybe they got ran some, we did it not only because we want to win baseball games.

"We want to have high standards for them and want them to realize what the potential for their life is," Patterson said. "Most importantly I hope they know I tried to model a Christ-like life and not be fake and be as real as I can possibly be. I tell them when I make mistakes because they see me every day and they know if I'm not being real with them. I want to be an example of a man in their life that lives for Jesus and is far from perfect, but quick to repent, I hope. We always say that winning is a byproduct of doing all the little things right. You may have great talent, mediocre talent or bad talent but the way you compete on the field and do those little things is what gives you a chance to win. That's kind of the way we've done it. There's no magic formula; it's just a lot of good people and guys that fight for each other."

Former Cullman High School Head Baseball Coach Bryan Bowen on Patterson,
"He's a great person who genuinely cares for his players and the baseball program. He's selfless and puts the players first," Bowen said. "He's continued this program with the foundation of discipline and dedicated himself to having a relentless work ethic from players and staff. He's an excellent teacher of the game in all phases. He's always had a great vision and had the ability to relay his vision and get complete buy in. He does it the right way. I said when I left that he was the best coach to take this program forward and I can say now that he's the best in the business."

Former Cullman pitching coach Shannon Fondren on Patterson's success,
I think its several factors, he is a teacher of the game, to watch him in practice is incredible. I loved watching him in definitive period with those infielders, he's the best I've been around hands down. Of course, we always ran over the scheduled time because he wanted more reps. He pours into those players and it's so much more than baseball," Fondren said. "He isn't afraid to share his faith, and I loved that. You are prepared for life after spending 4-5 years in the program. My boys both played for him and think the world of him and I personally wouldn't want them to play for any other person than Coach Patterson. He surrounds himself with great people and the staff has been together so long that everyone is on the same page. He's one of my best friends and I am blessed to have spent the last 13 years of my career with him. He made me want to be a better person and coach every day.

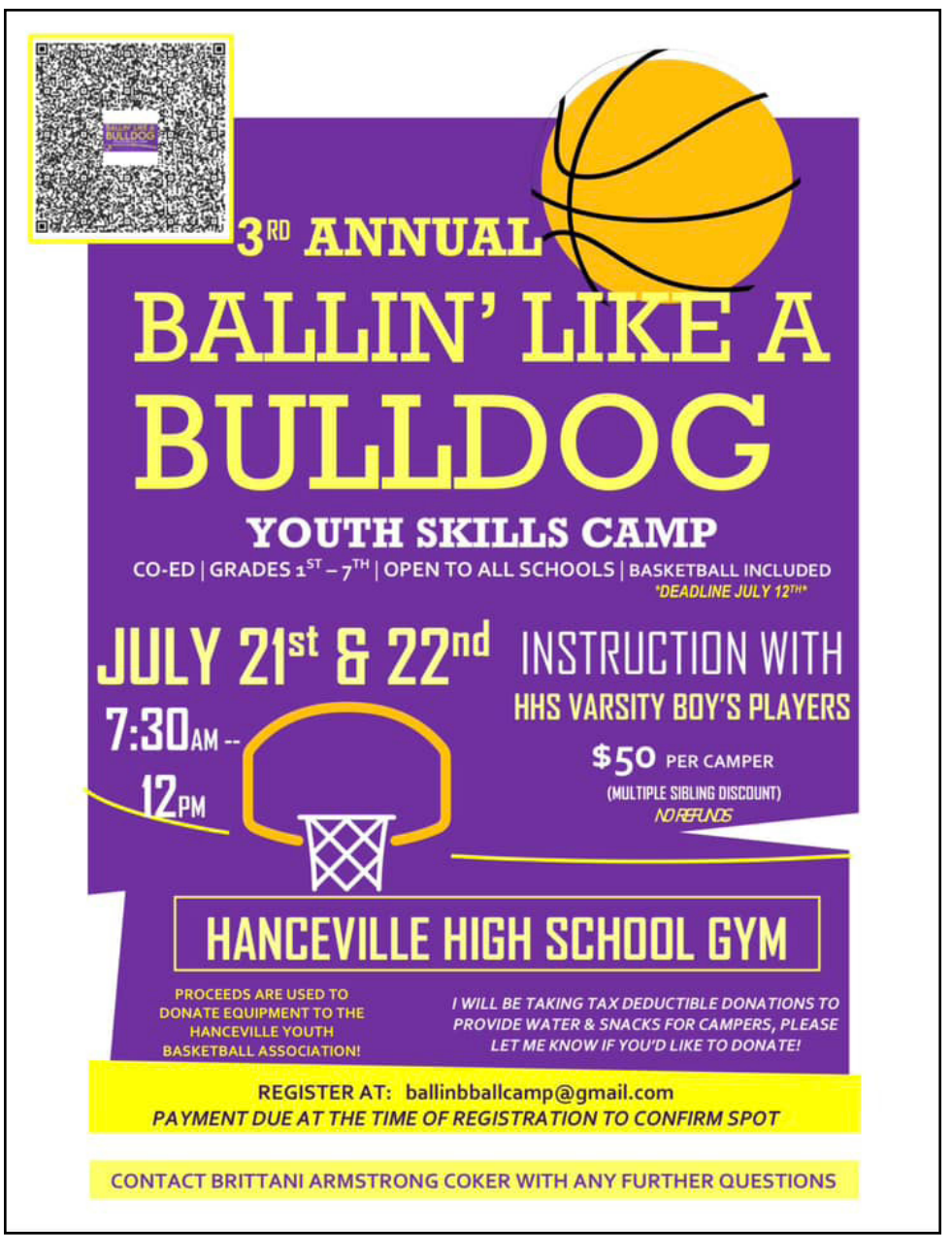


NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cullman High School Baseball Coach Brent Patterson

Former Cullman High School Football Coach Mark Britton on Patterson,
Brent Patterson is a great coach but an even better person," Britton said.

"He has had great positive influence on dozens of young men in our community including my two sons. He is a tremendous role model for young men."



OP-ED

Pause, don't stop

Lauren Estes
lauren@cullmantribune.com

If you have a minute to read an excerpt from long-winded Lauren's heart:

I run. I run often. I enjoy it. It relieves stress for me.

I think the reason I truly enjoy running is because for that moment you dedicate yourself to running — it's the only thing that exists.

Problems outside your track or trail aren't valid in those miles.

The only thing that matters is one foot strike after another.

It's just you, your sounds of choice (I listen to music) and what your body is saying to you with each stride.

Even though, to many, it's you against others, or you against miles — it's really not. It's just you and the next step you make.

You and your brain and body are just communicating over and over that you're making a conscious choice to stay in motion....

And that's like life, right...

It's liberating. It's freeing. It's peaceful.

So with injuries limiting your ability to follow through with this solitude — your heart and mind can break. You have a slow burn to return in fear of reinjuring or pain returning, losing the momentum and skill you created or worse — not finding that same freedom as before.

I say all this long-winded love to say: Pauses are good. Breaks can help you appreciate your sport of choice. They can give you the fuel you need to start back strong, improve and remove the burnout (or in my case, immobility.) Pauses can remind you how GOOD you have it.

But know the difference between hitting pause and hitting stop — in all things in life, stopping is the opposite of pausing.

• Pausing lets you catch your breath

• Pausing creates the notion of a planned and structured restart

• Pausing allows refuel and focus

• Pausing means starting again

Stopping we'll use as a synonym to quitting or taking a break without a "plan."

• Stopping provides no intention or rejoining

• Stopping, in many accounts, allows you to lose your sense of structure, accountability and overall wellness awareness

• Stopping says I don't want to prioritize my time or time management

• Stopping says I don't want to do this anymore because other things are more important, and I'll start back when things slow down

The reality is: things won't slow down. Ever. Ha-ha.

They will not.

The best time to commit to a program, to work on yourself, to RUN is when you are BUSY.

Please understand — recovery, rest days, that's all a part of a pause — those are a MUST have!

Because if you do it when you are busy — it becomes your lifestyle. It becomes your stress reliever, it becomes your safe and healthy habit of choice when life throws crazy pitches.

Pause when you're injured, pause if you need to while you're tired.

Just don't stop. Because it's SO hard to start back, when you allow stopping to become an option.

The greatest regrets I have in life started with stopping.

So here it is: Make time for wellness, or prepare for illness.

You can pause — just don't stop.

Year (from Front)

Brown said, "Hayley Drake has been an integral part of our school-wide reading transformation and our selection as an ARI Science of Reading Spotlight School in 2023–2024. Hayley helped develop and implement our schoolwide reading plan that ensures all of our students receive appropriate reading instruction. She serves as a coach and mentor for all teachers, and they are very comfortable asking her questions and seeking her advice. She works with students after school and leads our summer reading program. All of these things make her so important — but she does so much more.

"Hayley creates data documents, student data boxes, teacher instructional notebooks, enters or assists teachers in entering data into the appropriate places in PowerSchool for the Literacy Act, and completes coaching cycles with our teachers. I know that this may not sound like what one would expect in a nominee, but to me, a Teacher of the Year is someone who makes a measurable impact on students and faculty — socially, emotionally and academically. Hayley touches so many students through her efforts as a coach, her facilitation of the Walk to Intervention groups, her willingness to help problem-solve, and her simple acts of kindness. Hayley is the Teacher of the Year in my eyes because our school would not be the great school it is without her."Whaley, a science teacher at Hanceville Middle School, was named Secondary Teacher of the Year.

HMS Principal Elizabeth Watwood shared, "With 27 years of dedicated service to our school, Mrs. Whaley exemplifies excellence in education and continues to be a guiding force for both students and staff. Mrs. Whaley's passion for science education is obvious. She continuously engages her students through innovative and hands-on learning experiences, fostering curiosity and a love for STEM. Her expertise in STEM education is evident, as she holds a National STEM Certification and serves as a certified AMSTI trainer, ensuring that both students and colleagues benefit from the latest instructional strategies and best practices in science education."Beyond the classroom, Mrs. Whaley is a true advocate for student success. She goes above and beyond to support and inspire her students, always making learning meaningful and impactful. She plays a pivotal role in shaping student leadership as the coordinator of the Student Ambassador Program — a program that empowers students to be role models and representatives of our school community. As a member of the school leadership team, she collaborates with colleagues to drive positive change and foster a culture of excellence at HMS. Her expertise has also been recognized on a larger scale, as she has had the honor of presenting at the Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Conference, sharing her enthusiasm about our school's Simulated Workforce Program.

"Amy Whaley is an outstanding educator, mentor and leader. Her unwavering dedication, passion, and commitment to student success make her the ideal candidate for Teacher of the Year."

Drake and Whaley will both be in the running for Alabama Teacher of the Year.



2024 Tax Year Delinquent Parcels

In accordance with Title 40, Chapter 10, Code of Ala. 1975 (§40-10-180 through 200), Cullman County Tax Collecting official has authority to auction and sell tax liens on properties for which ad valorem property taxes are delinquent. Effective with the 2024 delinquent property tax, a tax lien auction will take place via an online tax lien auction service, The Zeus Auction Program, on May 6, 2025, beginning at 10:00. To bid in the Cullman County tax lien auction of 2024 ad valorem property taxes, visit https://www.zeusauction.com and follow the instructions to create a bidder account.

Barry Willingham, Revenue Commissioner for The State of Alabama, Cullman County and Municipalities therein.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Cullman is in the process of closing their FY23 Community Development Block Grant Project (CDBG Project #: LR-ED-PF-22-015 and ARC Project #: AL-21352). Funds from this grant were utilized by the City of Cullman to rehabilitate, reconstruct, and resurface County Road 222 from the intersection of the I-65 Exit 205 Interchange extending west to the Topre America metal stamping facility. As part of the close-out procedures the city will hold a public hearing on Monday, March 31, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at Cullman City Hall in the Auditorium to discuss the close-out of this project and accept citizen input. Any citizen who would like to attend the public hearing, but has a disability which might require special materials, services, or assistance, should notify Wesley Moore at (256) 775-7109 at least three days in advance of the public hearing.

Woody Jacobs
Mayor

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

1 Page(s)

IN RE: The Estate of *
DAVID G. ASKINS, SR., * CASE NO.: PC2025-075
Deceased. *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Letters Testamentary of said deceased having been granted to David G. Askins, Jr. on the 17th day of March, 2025 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 herby required to present the same within time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

DAVID G. ASKINS, JR.
Administrator

/s/ Lynn Campisi
Lynn Campisi
Attorney for Administrator of the
ESTATE OF DAVID G. ASKINS, SR.
3016 Pump House Road
Birmingham, AL 35243
Phone: (205)967-1010

TO: Publisher of THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

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

DONE this 17th day of March, 2025.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN
JUDGE OF PROBATE

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: *
T.C.T *
a minor child, DOB: 05-04-2024 * CASE NO: JU-2024-441.03

NOTICE

The Petitioners having made a Motion for Service by Publication on the Biological Parents in the above styled action, it is therefore:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that any unknown father of T.C.T., born on 05-04-2024, respond to the Petition by the 15 day of May, 2025 or thereafter a judgment may be rendered in favor of the Petitioners.

Contact may be made: Attorney for Petitioners: Andria Sims, 300 1st Ave SE, Ste 104, Cullman, Alabama 35055, 256-775-7757 or Clerk of Court: Lisa McSwain, 500 2nd Ave SW Cullman, AL 35055.

DONE this the 2nd day of April, 2025.

WELLS R. TURNER, III
JUVENILE JUDGE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

STATE OF ALABAMA, CULLMAN COUNTY
I, Lisa McSwain, Clerk of Circuit court in and for said County and State, hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct copy as the same appears of record in this office.
Witness my hand and official seal, this 2nd Day of April, 2025
Lisa McSwain
Clerk of Circuit Court

FILED IN OFFICE
APR 02 2025
LISA McSWAIN
CIRCUIT COURT
CULLMAN COUNTY

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: The estate of)
Kimberley Michele Johnson,) Case No.: PC-2025-097
Deceased)

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters of Administration having been granted to Brian Joseph Johnson, as the Administrator of the Estate of Kimberley Michele Johnson, deceased, on the 18th day of March, 2025 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.

Brian Joseph Johnson
Administrator of the Estate of
Kimberley Michele Johnson, deceased

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

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

Beverly Paschal Poston (PAS001)
Attorney for the Estate of
Kimberley Michele Johnson, deceased.
201 2nd Avenue SE
Cullman, Alabama, 35055
bposton@beverlypaschalposton.com
(256)739-3970

Tammy Brown
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate
Cullman County, Alabama

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF * CASE NO.: PC2025-100
BENNIE NATHAN HARVELL, *
Deceased. *

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT TO BE PUBLISHED BY EXECUTRIX

Letters Testamentary of said Deceased having been granted to April Harvell-Hulse on the 1st day of April, 2025, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama, notice is hereby given that all persons having claims against said estate are hereby required to present same within time required by law or same will be barred.

April Harvell-Hulse
Personal Representative

Alex J. Chaney
Attorney for Petitioner
P.O. Box 1052
Cullman, AL 35056
(256) 734-6330

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

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: *
T.C.T * CASE NO: JU-2024-441.03
a minor child, DOB: 05-04-2024 *

NOTICE

The Petitioners having made a Motion for Service by Publication on the Biological Parents in the above styled action, it is therefore:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the Biological Mother, Erin Kay Tackett, of T.C.T., born on 05-04-2024, respond to the Petition by the 15 day of May, 2025 or thereafter a judgment may be rendered in favor of the Petitioners.

Contact may be made: Attorney for Petitioners: Andria Sims, 300 1st Ave SE, Ste 104, Cullman, Alabama 35055, 256-775-7757 or Clerk of Court: Lisa McSwain, 500 2nd Ave SW Cullman, AL 35055.

DONE this the 2nd day of April, 2025.

WELLS R. TURNER, III
JUVENILE JUDGE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

STATE OF ALABAMA, CULLMAN COUNTY
I, Lisa McSwain, Clerk of Circuit court in and for said County and State, hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct copy as the same appears of record in this office.
Witness my hand and official seal, this 2nd Day of April, 2025
Lisa McSwain
Clerk of Circuit Court

FILED IN OFFICE
APR 02 2025
LISA McSWAIN
CIRCUIT COURT
CULLMAN COUNTY

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN THE MATTER OF *
M.K.W., * CASE NO.: JU 22-558.02
a minor, DOB: 02-11-2022. *

NOTICE OF TERMINATION HEARING

ANGEL KAY LAMEY, whose whereabouts are unknown, must answer the Petition for Termination of Parental Rights filed by the Cullman County Department of Human Resources in regards to the above referenced child born on February 11, 2022, by the 17th day of April, 2025, or thereafter a judgment terminating her parental rights may be entered against her in the Juvenile Court of Cullman County, Alabama.

Done this the 6 day of March, 2025.

Lisa McSwain
Lisa McSwain
Circuit Clerk

Petitioner:
Cullman County Department of Human Resources
P. O. Box 990
1220 St. Joseph Street NW
Cullman, AL 35056

FILED IN OFFICE
MAR 06 2025
LISA McSWAIN
CIRCUIT COURT
CULLMAN COUNTY

Perry D. Knight
Attorney for Petitioner
412 First Avenue SE
Suite 101
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-4090

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: The Estate of *
MICHAEL DANE LOWE * CASE NO. PC2025-070
Deceased. *

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL

TO: ALEXANDRA WILLIAMS, HEATHER LOWE AND ANY OTHER KNOWN OR UNKNOWN RELATIVES OF MICHAEL DANE LOWE, DECEASED.

Petition for Probate of Will for the Estate of Michael Dane Lowe, Deceased, received the 24th day of February, 2025 and made court record the 25th day of February, 2025, by Stephen Clay Lowe, Petitioner, through Attorney Dan J. Willingham, has been scheduled for the **29th day of May, 2025, 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 1st day of April, 2025.

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 in said newspaper.

Dan J. Willingham
Attorney for the Petitioner
413 First Avenue SW
Cullman, AL 35055

Bates (from Front)

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — The Cullman Police Department on April 1 said that it "proudly recognizes Officer Roy Bates for his exceptional work and dedication to public safety."

In a post to social media, the department explained, "On January 14, 2025, Officer Bates successfully apprehended a fleeing felony suspect who had stolen a vehicle.

"His swift response and commitment to protecting the community played a crucial role in ensuring the suspect was taken into custody without further incident.

"The Cullman Police Department extends its sincere appreciation to Officer Bates for his hard work, vigilance, and service to the citizens of Cullman."

Resurfacing (from Front)

Staff Reports
Contributor

Resurfacing started Tuesday, April 1, on U.S. Highway 278 in Cullman County from Duck River to Alabama Highway 91 in Holly Pond.

Rogers Group, the contractor on the $819,650 project, will mill and resurface the 4.4-mile segment of two-lane highway.

The project includes repaving both approaches to the Duck River Bridge.

Lane closures

ALDOT advises motorists to expect single-lane closures controlled by flaggers or pilot car from 7 a.m.-5 p.m. daily, weather permitting. Prepare for delays by planning additional travel time or alternate routes. For real-time traffic updates, download the ALGOTraffic app or visit ALGOTraffic.com. The project is anticipated to be completed in about two months.

Sewing Paloooza Estate Sale at Slyva McGukin's
April 4, 5 - 1513 Maple Drive NW Cullman. 7:00 a.m.
First come first serve, Sewing Machines, Sergers, Fabric, Sewing Notions, Sewing Tables, Chairs, a lot of great things for your sewing needs. You can sign in at 5:00 a.m. to reserve you a place in line.
Check out pictures on PKEstate Sales FB

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Ivey signs Paid Parental Leave Act into law

Staff Reports
Contributor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Surrounded by working parents, teachers and public servants from across the state, Governor Kay Ivey on Wednesday signed into law SB199, the Alabama Public Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2025.

"In Alabama, we are committed to strengthening families and supporting those who serve our state," said Ivey. "This new law reflects our values. No parent should have to choose between their paycheck and spending time with their newly welcomed child. Today, Alabama sends a clear message: We value families, and we value our workforce."

Sponsored by state Sen. Vivian Figures, D-Mobile, and Rep. Ginny Shaver, R-Leesburg, this law will provide paid parental leave for eligible public employees, including teachers and state workers.

Under the law:

- Female employees will receive eight weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the birth, stillbirth or miscarriage of her child.
- Male employees will receive two weeks of paid parental leave in those same circumstances.
- Adoptive parents of a child aged three or younger will also be eligible for parental leave – eight weeks for one parent and two weeks for the other at the choice of the parents, if both are eligible employees.

This law also includes a return-to-work provision, requiring employees to return for at least eight weeks after taking leave, with exceptions in certain circumstances, including serious health conditions.

Figures sponsored the bill in the Alabama Senate.

"Paid leave is an essential tool for workforce and economic growth, providing education and state employees with the opportunity to care for their newborn or newly adopted child without worrying about unnecessary financial strain," said Figures. "It was a pleasure to work with Representative Ginny Shaver and Governor Ivey to pass this meaningful legislation. I am proud that my colleagues in the Legislature joined us in making paid leave the law of the land for hardworking education and state employees in Alabama."

Shaver sponsored the House version of the bill.

"I want to congratulate Governor Ivey and my colleagues in the Legislature for helping Alabama take this significant step forward for working families in our state. By providing paid parental leave for state employees and education employees, we are not only recognizing the fundamental importance of family, but also investing in the well-being and stability of our workforce," said Shaver. "This new law embodies our values and reinforces our commitment to fostering stronger families and supporting our public servants."



OFFICE OF GOV. KAY IVEY

Gov. Kay Ivey signs the Alabama Public Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2025 into law on Wednesday, April 2, 2025.

"This is a proud day for Alabama families, and I want to thank Sen. Vivian Figures and Rep. Ginny Shaver for championing this effort from the very start," added Ivey. Their leadership and commitment to doing what's right for our teachers, state workers and most importantly, our children, made this bill a reality. Together, we're building a stronger Alabama."

SB199, the Alabama Public Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2025, will go into effect July 1, 2025.

Put your detective skills to the test at Clue-themed murder mystery dinner April 10

Gauge Day
gauge@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The Friends of the Public Libraries of Cullman County will host a Clue-themed murder mystery dinner, titled "Unraveling the Clue to the Future" on Thursday, April 10, at Camp Meadowbrook. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with dinner and the interactive show beginning at 6:30. The evening will also include live music by the Holly Pond jazz band and will feature professional actors from Atlanta participating in the murder mystery show.

Tickets are $85 per person or $650 for a table of eight and are available at https://givebutter.com/2EOJrI. Dressing in costume is encouraged to help bring the game to life.

All proceeds from the event benefit the Cullman County Public Library's capital campaign, which aims to raise funds for the renovation and expansion of the library's 1967 building.

Plans for the updated facility include bringing the building up to code, improving ADA accessibility and adding new amenities such as a designated children's area, study rooms, a STEAM lab and a community bookstore.

The estimated cost of the project is around $6 million.

"This is a great opportunity for the community to support our library while enjoying an evening of interactive fun," said Julie Freeman, president of Friends of the Public Libraries of Cullman County.

"Don't miss this unforgettable evening of laughter, intrigue and fundraising for a great cause."

For more information, contact Friends of the Public Libraries of Cullman County at 256-734-2720 or friendsofcullmanlibraries@gmail.com.

Camp Meadowbrook is located at 2344 County Road 747, in Cullman.

Obituary Announcements: April 1-2

Harold Loyd Lee, 90 Harold Loyd Lee (90) passed away in his sleep in Cullman, Alabama on March 30, 2025, and was born in Cullman on Nov. 17, 1934. Mr. Lee is preceded in death by his: parents Loyd Washington and Lula May Gentry Lee; sister Atholene Lee Goodwin; infant brother John Curtis Lee; wife Lenore Irene Machulis Lee, having celebrated over 50 years of marriage together; son Harold Loyd Lee Jr; other family members. He leaves behind his: son Brian Edwin (Cathy) Lee; grandchildren Nicole Marie (James) Anasto, Brian Edwin Lee Jr. and Justin Tyler Lee; great-grandchildren Aidan James Anasto & Ava Marie Anasto, other family members. Harold was a retired Journeyman Inside Wireman with the IBEW and was recently celebrated as a distinguished 70-year member. He traveled nationwide to work on large-scale infrastructure projects, including the construction of various power plants and naval ships. Harold went to Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) and was a longtime resident of Vinemont, Alabama, and Pass Christian, Mississippi. He was also a member of the Freemasons, Lodge #421 As a dedicated Christian throughout his lifetime, Mr. Lee belonged to multiple churches and served as a Deacon at several of them, including: First Baptist Church in Pass Christian, Mississippi, 7th Street Baptist Church in Cullman, Alabama, Macedonia Baptist Church in Vinemont, Alabama, and Panama Missionary Baptist Church in Vinemont, Alabama where he will be buried. Though Harold Loyd Lee will be deeply missed, his warmth, wisdom, and unwavering spirit will be fondly remembered by many. Please join the family at Moss Funeral Home (1901 Second Avenue NW, Cullman, AL 35055) for the viewing at 10 a.m. and the celebration of life service at 12 p.m. on Saturday, April 5, 2025 Officiated by Rev.Greg Aldridge and Rev.Billy Gable. To leave condolences for the Lee family visit mossservicefh.com. Moss Service Funeral Home directing.

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NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Malin (from Front)

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

Congratulations to Good Hope Basketball standout Tucker Malin on signing to continue his playing career at Stillman College today. Malin earned first team All-State honors and posted 21 points, 6.4 rebounds, 4.8 assists and 2.3 steals per game this season. Good Hope Head Coach Drew Adams is proud of the way Malin continued to work and develop his game throughout his high school career.

"Tucker had a great season last year and this year he took it to a whole other level." Adams said. "When it comes down to just pure scoring and getting a bucket there aren't a lot of guys from Good Hope in a long time that were able to do it that way. He's a talented player and he just kept getting better as the seasons went."

Tucker will join his brother Tanner at Stillman.



THANK YOU TO OUR ADVERTISERS!

Geoff Williams named director of new Auburn University Bee Center

Staff Reports
Contributor

AUBURN, Ala. — Geoff Williams, associate professor, graduate program officer and longtime director of the AU-Bees Lab, is director of the new Auburn University Bee Center, effective Tuesday, April 1.

In February, the Board of Trustees approved the establishment of the Auburn University Bee Center, which combines research, extension and education to advance innovative solutions for bee management and conservation. The center will advance the university's role as a leader in bee research, cultivate future leaders in the field through impactful student experiences and increase collaborations among the colleges and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

"The vision for the Bee Center is very much aligned to the long-term aspiration of Auburn University — we want to be that inspirational leader in our own field of bee health by performing meaningful research and outreach alongside our collaborators, community members and industry leaders," Williams said.

According to Williams, creation of the Bee Center recognizes the important contributions Auburn has made towards understanding and improving bee health and beekeeping, and positions it to move forward more effectively as a regional and national leader by streamlining faculty and resources dedicated to bees.

"I'm really thrilled about the new Auburn University Bee Center because it highlights the commitment the university places on supporting bees and other insect pollinators in Alabama and the broader southeast region," he said. "As someone who has worked to promote the health of bees for nearly 20 years, this kind of collaborative backing — via the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, Alabama Extension and USDA ARS Stoneville Pollinator Health Unit — is unprecedented and inspiring to those of us working tirelessly to support insect pollinators in a way that benefits the environment and our food security."

The core members of the Bee Center are faculty whose lab missions are dedicated to bees. This includes Assistant Extension Professor Selina Bruckner and Assistant Research Professor Anthony Abbate from the College of Agriculture. They are joined by Assistant Professor Stephanie Rogers from the College of Sciences & Mathematics and Dr. Laura Huber from the College of Veterinary Medicine, as well as Alabama Extension Agents Jack Rowe and Allyson Shabel, stationed at Auburn and Alabama A&M University, respectively.

Williams said his primary focus as director will be to champion the work of these amazing faculty and staff.

"I want to especially work with them to collaboratively and dynamically address critical bee health needs alongside our stakeholders and colleagues," he said. "I'm particularly excited to lead the Southeast Bees immersive learning program, which will provide undergraduate students the opportunity to gain applied bee research and outreach experience at either a land-grant institution, such as Auburn University, or a federal research facility, such as USDA ARS Stoneville. This program — which will focus on important stressors of bees — will be the first of its kind in the country."

The need for the creation of the center came about through conversations Williams had with Department Chair David Held and former College of Agriculture Dean Paul Patterson. The proposal for the board was to leverage funds from the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, Alabama Extension and the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

Held said Williams was the natural choice to direct the new center.

"Although we know Dr. Williams as our AU-Bees leader, Geoff is a leader in honey bee research worldwide," Held said. "His students are recognized for their research and extension efforts, and some travel the world doing research on species that pose future threats to U.S. beekeepers."

Williams started at Auburn as an assistant professor in 2016. He became an associate professor in 2022. Prior to joining the Auburn faculty, he was a senior research associate at the University of Bern in Switzerland. He is the vice president of the global COLOSS Honey Bee Research Association — the organization that establishes the standard protocols for honey bee research worldwide — and is also an apiculture subject editor for the Journal of Economic Entomology, one of the Entomological Society of America's peer-reviewed scientific publications.



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Geoff Williams



ALEA's promposal: Be safe and sober this prom

Staff Reports
Contributor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — As the high school prom season approaches, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) is reminding students of the importance of safe driving and making responsible decisions behind the wheel. In an effort to educate teens about the dangers of drinking and driving, distracted driving and substance use, ALEA is hosting several Prom Promise and mock crash events throughout the month of April.

April is National Distracted Driving Month, and these impactful events are designed to highlight the serious and often devastating consequences of poor decision-making on the road. Mock crash scenarios, which simulate a real-life accident, will be staged at schools across the state. These events aim to engage students in a powerful and emotional way, helping them understand that the consequences of impaired or distracted driving can be life changing.

"Every year, far too many young lives are lost in preventable crashes. The purpose of these Prom Promise and mock crash events is to ensure that students make responsible choices this prom season and beyond," said ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor. "We want teens to understand that their actions behind the wheel can have life-altering consequences, not just for themselves but for their friends, families and entire communities."

The Prom Promise campaign encourages teens to pledge to stay sober, stay safe and make responsible choices, especially during prom season.

Students who participate in these events will witness firsthand the emotional toll that impaired driving and distractions can have, as well as the significant impact it has on families, first responders and their community as a whole. Troopers will be on hand at each event to discuss driving safety, answer questions and emphasize the importance of always wearing a seat belt, avoiding distractions and never driving under the influence.

"Prom night should be a night of memories, joy and accomplishment," said ALEA's Department of Public Safety Director (DPS), Colonel Jonathan Archer.

"By having teens and parents make a promise to drive safely and responsibly, teens can protect themselves and their loved ones from the devastating consequences of impaired or distracted driving."

In addition to Prom Promise events, ALEA will also continue to host Fatal Vision events throughout the month of April. These events are primarily coordinated through ALEA's State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), where Special Agents use special goggles that simulate the effects of drugs and alcohol. This hands-on event gives students the opportunity to operate a small utility vehicle in a safe environment and see first-hand the dangers of driving impaired and distracted through a course lined with traffic cones.

"No matter what agency we serve or the uniform we wear as first responders, our goal is the same during these events. To make a lasting impact, instill responsibility and save lives," said SBI Director Chris Inabinett. "We appreciate the assistance and coordination of our local partners and school systems to make Prom Promise and Fatal Vision events a success."

ALEA encourages all high school students to participate in these events, learn the importance of safe driving, and make the commitment to be responsible on the road. These mock crash events serve as a sobering reminder that every decision made behind the wheel can have lasting impacts.

