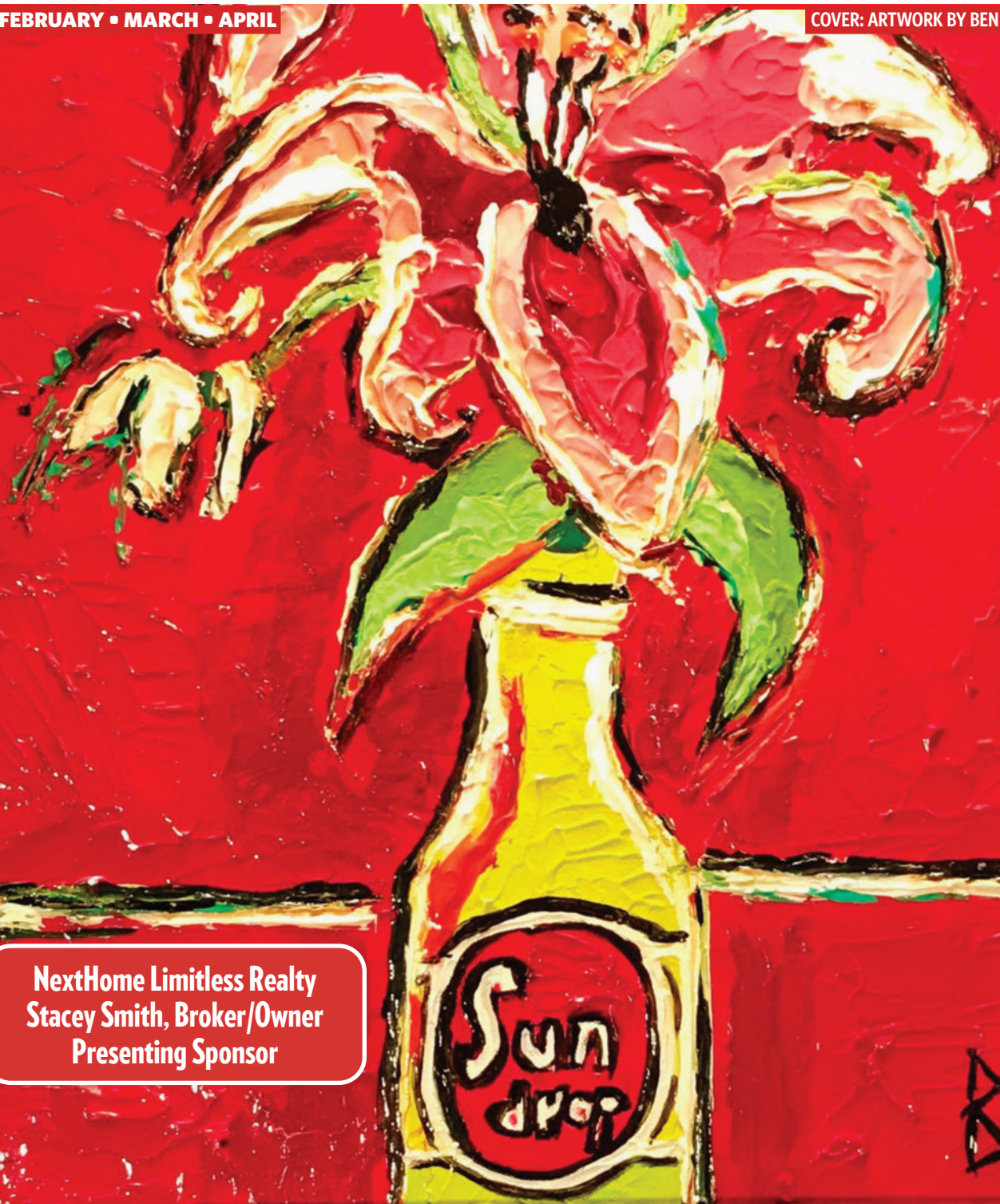


Community - 2022 - Matters

From The Cullman Tribune

FEBRUARY • MARCH • APRIL

COVER: ARTWORK BY BEN JOHNSON



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Ben South and the ‘perpetual gift of curiosity’

Heather Mann

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CULLMAN, Ala. — Over the course of its history, Cullman has been home to many great creators and artists in all mediums. One hometown “consummate creative,” as he put it, has been drawing inspiration from the natural world and the concept of “southernness” here for nearly 70 years - an inspiration so strong he now uses it as part of his professional name. With his art gracing the cover of the latest Community Matters, The Cullman Tribune sat down with local artist Ben South to get a peek into the mind of the man behind the canvas.

An Early Start

Ben Johnson South was born to Ben and Ruby Johnson in 1952, a unique family situation in that both of his parents were orphans. While South acknowledged the sadder elements of such a family unit, he claimed that it was also one of the two main experiences that benefited his creative growth. “I’m coming into the world with the benefit of people who kind of make up their own script because you don’t have that thing of ‘Oh it would just kill your grandmother if you didn’t have a day job’ or something like that,” he said, “because there wasn’t a grandmother to kill.”

The other main benefit he received was constant encouragement from both parents to use his creativity - painting, writing and coloring all day - and to be curious about the world. “My parents were both also so passionately curious

about life that it was just kind of inevitable that I would have what Buckminster Fuller called ‘the perpetual gift of curiosity,’” said South. “It just never ever stops.” In describing his parents’ curiosity about the world, he reminisced about how they both would spend their days reading, gardening and studying up to the ends of their lives - a fate South hopes to have for himself as well. “I’ll turn 70 in March and I’ve just always had this childlike curiosity about stuff, and I don’t expect I’ll lose it until my brain totally decays - which hopefully won’t be in April.”

Sharing some stories of his childhood, South recalled an early memory from the days when his father served as the principal of Baileyton School. A fear of chickens and a large rooster blocking the path between his house and the farm pump house where he colored all day led to a terrified young Ben shoving a crayon up his nose, after which his mother brought him to a dentist for tools small enough to remove it. He joked, “So I guess you could say that’s my earliest memory of being really into art or really, art being really into me!”

An even earlier memory from his time in Grandview saw a 4 or 5-year-old Ben playing under a quilt frame at a local women’s quilting bee his mother attended. “I remember at some point they unrolled and stretched the full quilt top on the frame above me and that kid. It was glorious,” he recalled. “If you come into the world very visually-oriented, it was like a cathedral window was put up above us - this



“Sunflowers In A Cobalt Vase” from Ben’s “Master & Gardener” series

splendid canopy of color above our heads.” South went on to describe how all the cathedrals he’s toured - most notably, Saint-Chapelle in Paris - bring him back to the memory of that quilt.

An International Journey

When asked about the places where his art career has led him, South recalled the many trips he took to France before all else. Creating a business that allowed him to travel there gave South the opportunity to tour museums and art galleries,

take private art lessons and work with French perfumers in Grasse and Paris. Other places in Europe he’s visited include Italy for the religious art and Renaissance influence and England for the museums of London, though he said France was more to his interests than the rest.

He’s also traveled around the United States and its territories, being featured in galleries across the Southeast and selling paintings to influential people such as Richard Dent, former NFL player for the Chicago »

Bears and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

He was even offered an invitation from the Puerto Rican government to create a museum show in Ponce. "This is a downside of always being curious: I can easily move on to the next thing, the next obsession, and that's exactly what happened. Over time, I just kept putting off doing the work for this museum show," South said, mentioning that this invitation was originally offered to him 25 years ago. "I now have that show ready, and I got back in touch with the people in Ponce two and a half years ago, and then of course COVID comes and nobody's going on a cruise ship or going on an airplane." He has been eagerly awaiting the day that travel and leisure activities are safe enough for him to go back to the island.

On where he hopes to go next, South said, "I haven't been in Asia, and that's something I'd like to do once we're over COVID. I've been thinking I'd like to go to Japan and study indigo dyeing - that's kind of an interest of mine, and I think Japan's where they do it the best - and then I'd like to go to China too, if we ever get back into China in my lifetime."

Drawing Inspiration

In terms of subject matter, anyone looking at a collection of South's work can see the interest he takes in nature and the colors found in an everyday garden. "The sun generates a lot of the color I'm interested in," he mentioned. "I'm not very good with modulated color - I want it to be vivid." Much of this interest was instilled from a young age by his parents' gardens, and it was only strengthened when he became certified as a Master Gardener (a certification gained



FACEBOOK/BEN JOHNSON SOUTH

South enjoys the atmosphere of the Grand Bohemian Hotel pool in Birmingham

by taking courses written by the American Horticultural Society).

On his technique, South said his style blends the simplistic look of Henri Matisse (his "art father") with the bold paint texture of Van Gogh. "The gift that Matisse gives to the history of art is simplifying the image, and that very simplified but rich image really appeals to me. What I try to do is combine the rich paint thickness of Van Gogh with the even-more-simplified images of Matisse," he stated. The technique he uses

to achieve this bold texture is painting with a palette knife rather than a brush.

One example of this blend of inspiration - the natural subject matter and the French style influence - can be found on the cover of Community Matters. The artwork depicts a rubrum lily from South's family's garden in a Sundrop bottle, something that South described as "very Cullman, but influenced by post-French impressionism."

However, the ultimate inspiration for his work comes from the feeling of joy. "I feel like art

should either make us think something new or make us feel something new, and great art can make you do both. I think in my works, joy is the emotion I embody the most, and I hope that's what people feel when they look at the cover of Community Matters. I hope it's just joyful."

When asked about the different mediums he's used to express his art over the years, South stated, "I think when you're creative, you want to work with everything. It all sounds interesting. I've »

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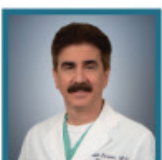
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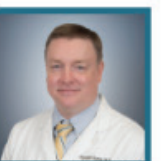
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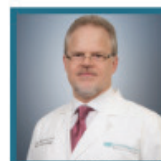
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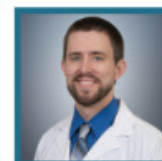
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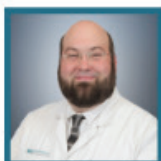
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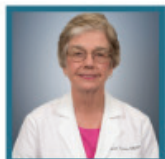
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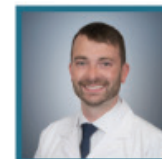
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done collage a good bit. I've done watercolors some, but it's just not very engaging to me. I want to communicate freedom in my work."

He continued, "I started out as an oil painter, but the fumes involved with that became an irritant to me. I think sometimes people who don't paint over-value oil paintings; they see oil paintings as the ultimate, but actually acrylic dries faster so it's harder to use. So once I became a better oil painter, then I could move into acrylic paint. I do sometimes miss the heady smell of the paints and mineral spirits, but I don't miss the headaches and allergies that go with that."

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Asking South about his favorite pieces to have made, his initial answer was one that most artists may resonate with: whichever ones he sold. »



South shows scenes from his story "The Reluctant Topiary," illustrated by Jack Tupper

CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO



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FACEBOOK/GRACE EPISCOPAL'S CHURCH

Ben's artwork for Grace Episcopal Church

On a more detailed note, flower pieces hold a special place in his heart because of his family's garden and his mother's work as a botanist. "I've mostly done flowers as still life painting, but actually that term isn't really accurate. We say still life because that's the term most people know, but life just doesn't stop - those things we are painting are dying."

Continuing on the topic, he said, "When my mother was dying, I came up from Birmingham and spent a week with her, knowing that she was declining and our days were limited."

"I was going to be with her when she was awake as much as I could, but when she was resting, I went to our farm and did these time studies. I would draw one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and they ended up being very modern-looking geometric images. I was drawing patterns in the algae and pine dust on top of the pond and watching the fish come up to the surface and make these ripples. That was a

series that I loved doing, I guess because I was so surprised at the changes that happened from morning to afternoon. Just looking at how the light in the passing of a few hours changes things, and how I'm looking at the passing of my mother with that."

Ultimately, his favorite paintings are the ones he's planning next. Always driven toward the future and not lingering in the past, South said that his "new baby" will always be the biggest thing on his mind. One of these new creations, a ballet based on a children's story he wrote, has made great strides in progress, and South couldn't wait to share his excitement.

The Reluctant Topiary, a storytelling ballet for children, tells the tale of a gardener who was a former slave and the importance of being who you're meant to be rather than what other people shape you to be. Current progress on the ballet has brought on Shannon Darby, a choreographer from Talladega, as both the choreographer for the ballet and the

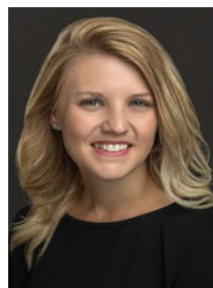
lead character. South, for his contributions, is in charge of coming up with the artwork for the set pieces and backdrops. "At the end of his career - and you know, at 70, I have to be looking at last decades for myself - Matisse no longer had the energy to stand and paint, so he was cutting out pieces of colored paper and collaging those. That's kind of how I'm approaching the backdrops of The Reluctant Topiary, as pieced-together color that might become quilted works."

As a last comment about the show, South said, "We're creating this as a community effort in Talladega, and we're planning to make it very mobile so we're looking at outdoor venues like the Huntsville Botanical Gardens, the governor's mansion lawn, and so on as potential places to perform this work. It's a project I've been working on for decades. It feels like we're really moving it forward with Shannon and Talladega, and I'm really excited about it!"

Reflections on the Self and the Environment

"I think everybody is creative, but I think that some of us have different opportunities to exercise that more. Cullman is a wonderful place for artists to focus because it's quiet, it's orderly and it's got so much beautiful nature all-around. Now for artists just starting out, I know that this isn't exactly the most exciting place to get inspiration from - folks trying to find their way might go to Birmingham or Atlanta for the excitement and variety. But for those of us who do well in the quiet, Cullman is an artist's dream."

"I don't think of myself as Cullman's all-time greatest creative because I think that's Charles Kleibacker. I think that's a name that everyone in town should know, I think there should be a marker at the house where he lived. His family ran a department store here, and he went on to become a world-class fashion designer. He had an atelier in New York and Paris, and his work »



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was known for the bias cut.

"He would just create these fluid, beautiful clothes, and his whole collection is in a museum in Ohio where he was a curator later in life. He is somebody that Cullman needs to be proud of; I don't think anybody in fashion in Alabama is as important as he was."

"I'd also like to thank The Cullman Tribune. I open The Tribune and I see poems, there's photography that comes from various people in the community; The Tribune isn't just churning out updates on sports or community stories, it's a presentation of various arts from our area.

"I was fortunate a couple of years ago to do a series for The Tribune called the '67-County Alabama Garden Party' during

the Alabama Bicentennial. I was looking in each of the counties for where plants and people come together, and I was fortunate that that won the Best Feature Series from the Alabama Press Association that year.

"What I'm writing right now is a series called '52 Odes to Joy,' and every week I'm reflecting on my work as a gerontologist over the last 40 years and the choices we can make to add joy to our lives."

Current Interests

"I became a certified gerontologist about 40 years ago, and that's the study of aging. I got the certification in my 30s, but now that I'm 70, I certainly feel like I understand aging from another perspective because

I'm living it. My interest in gerontology is not in the decline of aging, but rather how to optimize one's life. I want to encourage those readers who wish that they had been an artist when they were younger - go do it! The late Grandma Moses started painting at 78 and painted the last 20 or so years of her life. I'm not a prodigy, so I'm interested in the late bloomers."

He finished our conversation by saying, "I know this is shameless name-dropping, but I once had the opportunity to be seated at a dinner next to Paloma Picasso, Pablo's daughter. She's an incredibly talented creative with her own line of jewelry, but we ended up talking about this quote her father said that I'll probably

mangle. Something like, 'I could draw like da Vinci at 12, and it took me the rest of my life to be able to paint like a child.' Paul Cézanne was also an amazing painter, but his artwork didn't mature into his own style until later in life.

"I think that similarly, I'm continuously simplifying my art as I age and trying to recapture that child that I was in the 1950s. Always trying to recapture the joy of coloring in the pump house. At my age, there's still many nights where I'm like, 'Dang it, I don't want to go to sleep. I still want to draw this thing or write this thing.' I'm also eager to bounce out of bed and work on something I was working on the day before. I can't imagine a more joyful way to live."

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Cullman County Museum April Walking Tours preparing for five weekends

Noah Galilee

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CULLMAN, Ala. — This spring will mark the 10th anniversary of the Cullman April Walking Tours and with five weekends this year, the Cullman County Museum has much in store for visitors.

Museum Director Drew Green helped kick-start the program locally when he joined the CCM in 2012. Green said the Walking Tours are being held statewide during the month of April.

With many unknown stories about Cullman, Green said the weekend walks will be a great way for residents and visitors to learn about early Cullman.

"This is a great way to learn about the history of your town. How many times have you driven or walked passed a building or empty lot and wondered what the history of it was? For example, there is a large cement pad behind Vincent Furniture... what was in this space emptied by the 2011 tornado?" Green posed. "Esther's Opera House - Cullman had a rich tradition of appreciating culture and music. The first club was The Symphony Club and John Cullmann's niece Julia Hartung (who he convinced along with her doctor husband to move to Cullman) had studied at the Richard Wagner Studio in Germany. She, in turn, taught many of Cullman's early music teachers," he explained.

Each year, the tours are given by different local historians. Green said this year will be no different.

"I will once again direct the

tours. This year we have a bonus fifth Saturday in April. Each Saturday, a different local historian will lead the tours," he said. "As of this writing, I have not confirmed with anyone. Each guide is allowed to choose their own route based on their interest so each Saturday will be different. The Cullman County Museum provides research and information to include in the tours once the guide has chosen their route."

As a free event, Green said the importance of the tours for the museum, besides learning about Cullman's history, is to provide more exposure for the museum to folks who may not know it's here.

"Several times a month, we have a local visitor who 'didn't know about the museum.' Sometimes, the best treasures are located in your own backyard," he said. "We are fortunate that our early leaders appreciated the importance of Cullman's unique history and preserving it. I am thankful for the continued support of our current mayor and city council. The walking tours are an interesting way to call attention to this unique local treasure."s

As this story was finished before Green could solidify tour guides, he did list the stops past tours have visited.

"As I mentioned, each guide will decide on the route and stops, and they have not committed yet. In the past, we have stopped by such sites as Cullman's First Church, St. John's, Cullman's Oldest house, the Weiss Cottage (which is currently being restored), the

German Bank Building (Mary Carter Paint Store), the Depot etc. While the tours officially end, many of the leaders will continue on if there is an interest and sites those on the tour are interested in learning about can be explored," he said.

If Green had one sentence to pitch the Walking Tours to a group looking for something entertaining and informative, he said, "After almost three years of being confined by the pandemic, it is nice to get out in a relatively safe way; to tour Cullman and learn about our German heritage and the many unique characters who have lived here, starting with our

founder John Cullmann."

The walks begin at 10 a.m. on the front steps of the Cullman County Museum, rain or shine, and the museum will be open at no-charge every Saturday in April. An assorted lot of local experts will take you on a literal stroll through Cullman's history while sharing interesting facts and stories not known to many residents. The tour takes roughly one hour to complete.

Masks and social distancing are required inside the museum.

For more information about the April Walking Tours is available on the Alabama Tourism Department website at: <https://www.alabama.travel/>.

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ARTS

Cullman live music venues welcome new and diverse bands

Sara Gladney

sara@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Cullman is truly a town that embraces the arts, and the music scene here is vast, consisting of a well-connected group of artists and assisting music venues that need support from the community to continue to create spaces for creative and real expressions of local musical talent.

Shane Quick, president of touring company Premier Productions promotes concerts and “events that move the soul.” In Cullman, Quick says Premier will “traditionally do a couple Christian events a year whether it be over at Daystar or Desperation or Northbrook. We’ve been bringing Christian concerts through here for 20 years.” Quick says the company will have some concerts at the churches this year, but the date has not been set.

Quick is also the co-creator of Rock the South, one of the

largest country music festivals in the Southeast, which will be returning in Aug. 5-6. Premier typically books nationally known artists to do country-wide tours, but Quick says he would love to see an increase in live local music.

Some of the places in Cullman that are open to hosting local bands are Berkeley Bob’s Coffee House, Valley Tavern and Grille, Dreher’s, The Stash House, Moe’s Original BBQ and Goat Island Brewing.

Valley Tavern and Grille recently hosted Don’t Think Twice, Jesse Priest and Brittany Wilson. Andrew Cofield of Valley Tavern said that the members of the band Don’t Think Twice first met at their establishment. The grill hosts a wide variety of live music including country and classic rock. Cofield says, “Those two are probably our most common, but we definitely have a variety.” He adds, the venue has music that is “poppy, very contemporary, dancing music,

a lot of mashups.”

Goat Island Brewing offers a variety of live music as well. Ashley Burgess of Goat Island says they have “country, pop-rock, a little bit of everything.” They recently hosted 70s inspired band Round 2, multi-generational music group Rally Stripe, the Valley Groove Band and new bands, Generation and Justin and Tab. For bands new to the venue Ashley says, “Typically if there are new bands or duos that want to come play at the brewery, we ask them to come to an open mic night kind of like an audition just so we can hear what they sound like and if they are unable to do that, then we ask them to send us videos.” The brewery has live music every Friday and Saturday.

In the past month, Berkeley Bob’s hosted bluegrass band Another Town and the Allen Watkins duo, an acoustic band with influences from bluegrass, folk, country, Celtic and classical music.



CONTRIBUTED

Berkeley Bob's Coffee House features many artists, as well as regular open mic night events where anyone is welcome to take the stage and play.

Dreher’s recently hosted soul singer Brez, and blues musician Stephen McCullough.

Justin and Tabitha Veal of band Justin and Tab recently performed at Goat Island Brewing. Justin said, “I go to Goat Island with Jesse Priest a lot on the open mic evenings and it’s great. Really good folks. I just have a good experience every time I go out there. »

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Saturday night went over fantastically well. We had a lot of local support which is what Jesse, Daniel, Tabitha and myself, and some of the other guys around town are trying to do is really try to build a local affinity for the music scene around here." Justin and Tab has been doing live shows for about a year and are working on their first album which will be released at the end of June.

The best way to support these local artists is to simply stop by one of these great venues and join the audience. Most local restaurants around Cullman post on their social media about upcoming events featuring live music. Moe's Original BBQ regularly holds live music on Friday nights. The Stash House holds open mic nights on Thursdays and booked performances on Fridays and Saturdays.

To continue supporting the local music scene, follow these venues on social media to stay in the know of times and dates of when these artists will be holding their next show.

- Goat Island Brewery - <https://www.facebook.com/goatislandbrewing>
- Berkeley Bob's Coffee House - <https://www.facebook.com/berkeleybobs>
- Valley Tavern and Grille - <https://www.facebook.com/ValleyTavernandGrille>
- The Stash House - <https://www.facebook.com/TheStashHouseAl>
- Dreher's - <https://www.facebook.com/drehercullman>
- Moe's Original BBQ - <https://www.facebook.com/MoesOriginalBBQCullman>

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Spring calendar of events around Cullman

Hanceville Irish Festival

- Saturday, March 19, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Downtown Hanceville
- Snead's Farmhouse will be hosting the 5th annual Hanceville Irish Festival. Event organizers are looking for vendors, \$30 per booth. Interested parties can contact Snead's Farmhouse on Facebook or at judys-nead9522@gmail.com.

Cottontails Arts & Crafts Festival

- Saturday, April 9, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- 905 SE Commercial St., Hanceville
- Willow Brook Boutique & Design will host a spring arts & crafts festival in downtown Hanceville.

Bloomin' Festival Arts and Crafts Fair

- Saturday, April 23 - Sunday, April 24, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 1600 St. Bernard Ave. SE, Cullman
- Food, music and artisan crafts all weekend at St. Bernard Preparatory school.
- Admission \$7, children 5 and under get in free.

2022 Hanceville Grilled Cheese Festival

- Saturday, May 28, 9 a.m.
- Downtown Hanceville
- The Hanceville Grilled Cheese Festival is back for the second year! The festival will take place Saturday, May 28 starting at 9 a.m. Features will include vendors, food trucks, live music and plenty of activities for adults and kids alike. Most food trucks will

feature their own signature grilled cheese. There will also be a grilled cheese cook-off. Follow them on Facebook for more information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/265071822436868/>.

Performing Arts

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

- March 18-19, 7 p.m., March 20, 2 p.m.
- Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre
- Featuring Wallace State Theatre
- Info: 256-352-8277, jessica.chairez@wallacestate.edu

Dazzle Me, Disney!

- April 7-9, 7 p.m.
- Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre
- Featuring the Wallace State Singers
- Info: 256-352-8277, jessica.chairez@wallacestate.edu

Big Band Dance

- April 15, 7 p.m.
- Burrow Center for the Fine and Performing Arts
- Featuring the Wallace State Jazz Band
- Info: 256-352-8277, jessica.chairez@wallacestate.edu

Dance Spring Showcase

- April 22, 7 p.m.
- Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre
- Featuring the Allegro Dance Theatre
- Info: 256-352-8277, jessica.chairez@wallacestate.edu

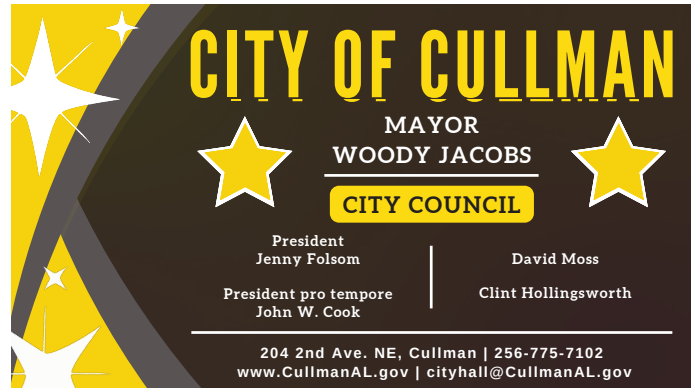
Spring Under the Stars

- April 26, 7 p.m.
- Burrow Center for the Fine and Performing Arts (bring lawn chairs, blankets etc.)

- Featuring the Wallace State Concert Choir and Concert Band

- Info: 256-352-8277, jessica.chairez@wallacestate.edu

Compiled by Heather Mann



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SPRING HOME & GARDEN | CLEANING AND ORGANIZING

Spring cleaning chores for kids

If you're embarking on a spring cleaning project, getting the kids involved can teach responsibility and other valuable life skills.

Every parent knows that sometimes teaching a child to do a chore is more work than doing it yourself, but spending a little extra time now can help set them up to be great household helpers as they grow. An older child who develops useful skills such as bike repair or lawn maintenance could even open their own summer business.

Once your kids have new cleaning skills under their belts, they'll be able to help more around the house on an ongoing basis. (This is a great time to institute a daily or weekly chore chart, if you haven't already.)

For health and safety, have kids use all-natural cleaning supplies whenever possible, such as diluted vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice and toothpaste (for polishing metal surfaces such as doorknobs and fixtures.)

Set each child up with a caddy of cleaning supplies they will need to complete their jobs. Here is a list of chore ideas for small hands to get you started.

Younger children

- Washing windows and windowsills.
- Sorting dirty laundry and removing clean laundry from

the dryer.

- Dusting baseboards and furniture and wiping down doorknobs and light switches.
- Wiping down kitchen cabinets.
- Sorting books and magazines.
- Sweeping, vacuuming and mopping.
- Pulling weeds and watering flowers and houseplants.
- Sort shoes and put away winter boots.
- Wipe down outdoor toys.
- Put away winter clothing and

put out springtime wardrobe.

- Using a broom to remove cobwebs from porches and overhangs.

Older children

- Washing and vacuuming the car.
- Cleaning bathrooms.
- Cleaning and vacuuming under couch cushions.
- Clean out and wipe down refrigerator shelves and drawers.
- Deep cleaning microwave and stove.
- Changing bed sheets and laundering linens.
- Mowing the lawn and helping with yard work, such as weeding, planting bulbs or putting down mulch.
- Sweeping the patio or deck and wiping down outdoor furniture.
- Cleaning out pet kennels and laundering pet beds.
- Perform maintenance and make simple repairs to sports equipment and bicycles, such as airing up a basketball or replacing bicycle brakes.



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SPRING HOME & GARDEN | APPLIANCES

Water heater basics

A traditional tank water heater will last about 8 to 12 years.

Understanding how a hot water heater works and performing regular maintenance can maximize its life span.

Here are some tips to keep get the most out of your water heater.

How it works

Hot water tanks have an anode rod, usually made from magnesium, aluminum, or an aluminum/zinc alloy. Through electrolysis, the rod attracts corrosive particles in the water to itself, which corrodes the rod.

Eventually the rod is no longer effective and corrosive particles destroy the lining of the tank, which causes it to need replacement.

Replacing the rod before it fails — usually in about five years — can double the life of your water heater, according to FamilyHandyman.com.

To find out the condition of your anode rod and decide if it needs to be replaced, check the rod every one to two years.

When buying a new anode rod, keep the following tips from FamilyHandyman.com in mind.

- A magnesium rod protects your tank better but doesn't last as long as an aluminum/zinc rod.

- Aluminum/zinc rods are cheaper and are recommended

if your water has an odor, but you should consult a water treatment specialist before switching to an aluminum rod.

Routine maintenance

The following routine maintenance tasks will help keep your water heater in working order. Check your heater's user manual for the steps to perform these maintenance tasks and how often they should be done.

- Check the pressure valve to be sure it's still functional.

- Flush the water tank to

get rid of sediment buildup. (A water heater's warranty usually requires that you do this annually to maintain coverage.)

When to replace

BobVila.com offers the following list of ways to know when your water heater needs to be replaced.

- A banging or rumbling noise, which can be caused by hardened calcium buildup from hard water.

- An odd smell in hot water. This could be caused by

bacteria or metal contaminating the water.

- A red or yellow tint to hot water, which can signal rust.

- A drop in water temperature or heating capacity can be caused by sediment buildup, which can require replacement if it goes unchecked for too long.

- Water pooling around the base of a water heater tank. If it's not a simple fitting or valve problem, the inside of the tank could be cracked or corroded.

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SPRING HOME & GARDEN | SEASONAL CONCERNS

Exterior inspection

After enduring the extreme conditions of winter, your home's exterior could be battered and bruised. Spring is the time to look for signs of damage and make repairs.

Some repairs you can make yourself, while others could require professional services.

Start by getting outside and walking around your house to perform a visual inspection.

Roof

With a pair of binoculars or a camera with a telephoto lens, check for missing shingles, damaged or missing metal pieces or excessive wear. Consult a roofer for any needed repairs.

Masonry and foundation

Check the foundation and masonry for deterioration, cracking and leaks, recommends E&E General Contracting. Check chimney masonry for signs of vegetation growth, water infiltration, cracked or missing bricks or stones, and have a mason make any needed repairs. You'll likely need a specialist to make any necessary repairs to the foundation, as this kind of work is difficult and critical to your home's structural integrity.

Siding and exterior structures

Check for holes or warping in siding. If you have a wood

exterior, look for signs of termite or carpenter ant damage, such as holes, or actual insect activity. This is also the time to power wash siding, provided it's in good shape. If a gazebo, deck or other wood structure is looking worse for wear, spring is a good time to stain or seal.

Windows and doors

Look for holes and tears in screen doors and windows. If they need repairs (even small

holes should be fixed), pick up a repair kit at your local home improvement store. Check the seals on windows and doors to be sure they are keeping out water and holding air.

Landscaping

Check concrete, asphalt or stone paths for damage. Check your water sprinkler system for broken, damaged or clogged sprinkler heads. If you have landscapers perform seasonal maintenance on your sprinkler

system, they will check for damage to the system and make any necessary repairs.

Air conditioning

Your AC system can suffer damage during from the winter elements. You'll want to be sure it's in working order before the warmer summer months arrive, so you aren't stuck without cooling. Schedule maintenance by an HVAC specialist well in advance, as these services book up early.

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SPRING HOME & GARDEN | STORE AND ORGANIZE

Garage storage options

The garage is a great place to store household items when they're not in use.

Basic — but sturdy — shelving units can do the job.

If you're short on space in your garage, however, consider some creative storage options to maximize your storage space.

Suspended storage

Using the vertical space in your garage helps free up floor space. Anything you don't access on a regular basis can be hoisted up. Look for bicycle storage systems that use rope and a pulley with hooks attached at the end to allow you to safely store your bikes overhead. A similar pulley system can be used to elevate a metal shelf where you can store items in plastic bins overhead. If you have access to a ladder, a fixed overhead storage shelf is also an option.

Wall storage

If you're short on floor space, look for creative options for storing items such as bikes, and sports and lawn equipment on the wall. A modular wall-mounted slat storage system allows you to customize your storage for your particular items. Add hooks, wire baskets or shelves to the slats to store items of a variety of shapes and sizes — from a rake to a garden hose to a bicycle. Even the inside of your garage door can be

made into useful storage space. Attach metal brackets to hold light sports equipment such as fishing rods horizontally.

Function over form

Of course you could go all-out with a brand new customized garage storage system, but you don't have to spend a lot to make your space functional. If you're on a budget, consider hitting the classified ads, yard sales or a resale shop for garage storage options.

If you don't mind less than perfect aesthetics, look for

quality items that might have some cosmetic defects. The key is to focus on being sure

the storage units you choose are sturdy enough to hold your items.

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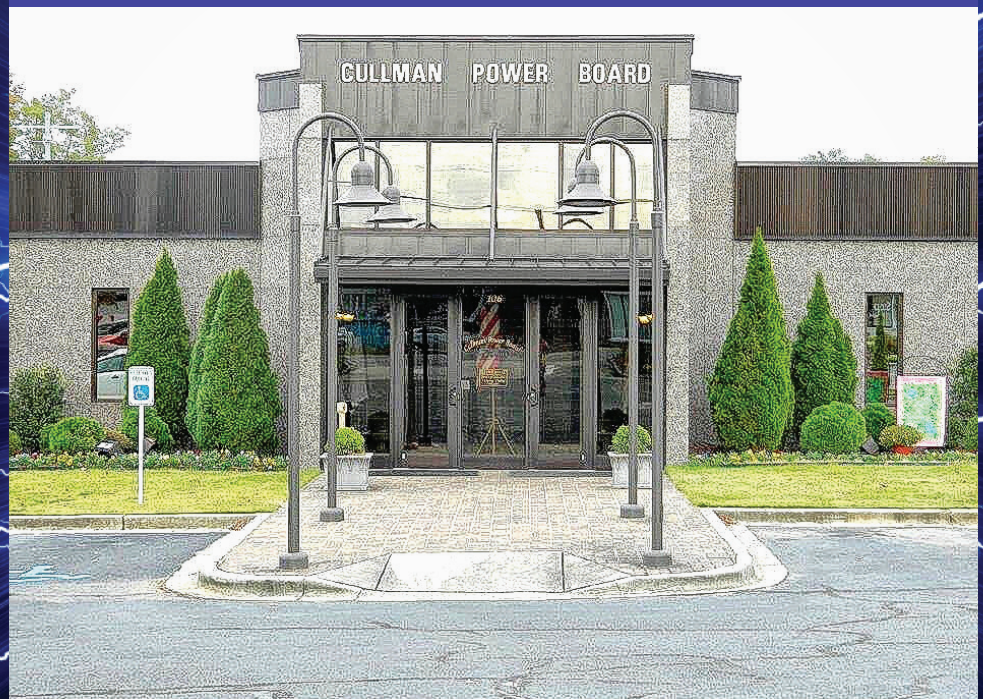
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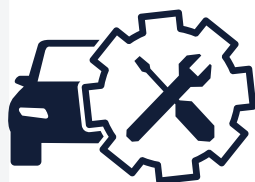
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SENIORS

Hometown Hero George Gibson: A heart for service

Sara Gladney

sara@cullmantribune.com

ARLEY, Ala. — George Gibson, of Arley, has lived in the area for most of his life. The town was named after an uncle of his, Arley Gibson, who passed away at the age of three. He is a conscientious member of the town and has served in the Arley Volunteer Fire Department for 48 years since the department was organized in 1974. He served as the chief until his retirement in 2016.

Gibson joked, “I tell everybody I got a raise. I was chief for several years and I retired from being the chief.” He still goes on most calls with the fire department, and says it is fulfilling knowing that they are serving their neighbors.

“You’re with people that, if they lose a home or lose a member of their family, you’re with them probably the two worst times of their life and you have a time to minister to them.”

He continued, “One of the things we do each year is have a fire prevention week. We bring the kids in from kindergarten through third grade to the fire station and we go over fire safety with them.”

He spoke about one of the most rewarding events to come out of those classes, saying, “We had a house burn, and a little girl’s grandfather was going to go back in the house, and she wouldn’t let him go back in because we had told her never to go back into the



Ralph Williams and George Gibson after installing new Welcome to Arley sign

CONTRIBUTED

fire.

“If he had gone in, he would’ve been dead, because if he opened the front door and

took one step, he would have been in the basement.”

Gibson was employed by AT&T for 38 years, starting in

June of 1966. His time there was interrupted when “Uncle Sam called” in August of that year and he spent five »

subsequent years in the Army.

He is now retired except for his work with the fire department and serving on the Winston County 911 Board of Directors and the Winston Baptist Association Disaster Relief Team. The 911 Board of Directors hires the dispatchers and keeps up the equipment at the communication center. The Disaster Relief Team assists people in need after natural disasters.

"We have a laundry trailer that has three washers and three dryers in it, and we also have a chain saw trailer crew.

"When you have tornadoes, hurricanes, floods or what have you, we go out and help with repairs and take our laundry trailer to wash the clothes of the volunteers and the people affected."

The self-contained laundry trailer has been in use since 2008, and the chain saw trailer, which includes various tools related to disaster recovery, has been in use since 2021.

Gibson is committed to helping people and continues to be an integral part of the community. In 2018, he addressed the Arley Town Council and expressed that the town needed an updated welcome sign.

Afterward, he and councilmember Ralph Williams built and installed the brand-new "Welcome to Arley, Heart of Smith Lake" signs.

He was also surprised by the Arley Women's Club in 2013 when they recognized him as 2013 Outstanding Citizen of the Year.

"It was an honor," he said. Gibson has spent his life in service to others, being active in the Army, fire department and community activities, and hopes to continue doing so for years to come.



George and his wife Carolyn



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SENIORS

Myrna Tuggle: Dedicated to her work

Sara Gladney

sara@cullmantribune.com

ADDISON, Ala. — Myrna Tuggle is a fixture of Addison, Alabama. She has lived there her entire life, except for a few years spent in Birmingham. She just celebrated her 82nd birthday in December 2021 and owns and operates the Addison Auto Parts Store. Her husband Jimmy Ray opened the store in 1967. They were married in 1959 just after Myrna graduated high school in 1957. After she graduated, she went to Anderson business college in Cullman and started working at State Farm Insurance in Birmingham and worked there for about seven years. She also kept busy serving as the secretary for the principal of Addison High School and working for Farm Bureau Insurance.

In the late 90s, her husband asked her to come work with him at the auto parts store. Her husband then passed away in 2005. She said, "I guess that was the Good Lord preparing me to work at the parts store, because I didn't know anything about it, you know, so when I started to work there, I had a few years of training by Him."

About her husband, she says, "He was a hard worker, he had chickens, we had a farm, he moved and raked hay, we had two broiler houses and he was just a good husband and father."

They had two sons: Kevin

and Byron. Kevin helps Myrna run the store when he is in the area. Myrna and her husband are both hard workers, and she does not have any thoughts about retiring. "I enjoy working. I enjoy helping people and providing what they need."

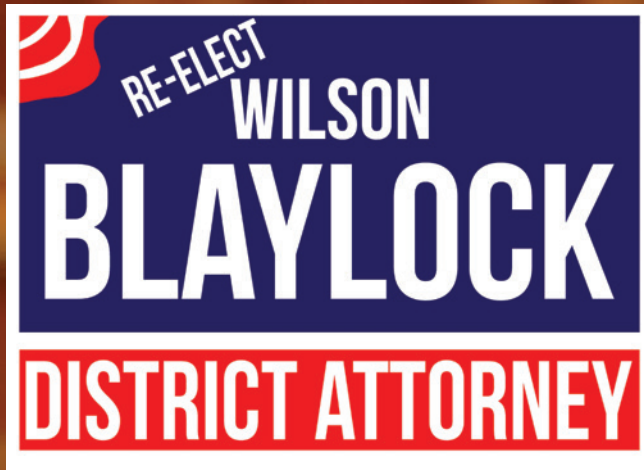
Myrna and Jimmy both went to Addison High School, but didn't date until after they graduated. Jim joined the Air Force when he was 16, but Myrna said they knew each other in high school and "he was my little sweetheart when I was in the 10th grade." She added, "He'd already got out of school, but I knew him then from when he played football. He didn't know that I was his sweetheart."

Myrna has three grandchildren – Victoria McClellan, Anna Tuggle and Will Tuggle. In the little time she does not spend at the auto store, she fills with various hobbies. She learned to crochet last year and made each of her grandchildren a chunky blanket for Christmas. She likes to grow vegetables in her raised garden beds, and she enjoys hiking at Bankhead National Forest to visit the waterfalls. Despite some hardships in the last few years—contracting COVID-19 in 2020 and having hip replacement surgery last year—she doesn't plan on slowing down with her hobbies or her work. The Addison Auto Parts store is open from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. every day except Saturday, when they are open until noon.



Tuggle poses proudly in Addison Auto Parts Store, ready to assist her next customers.

SARA GLADNEY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



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Wilson Blaylock was first elected to the District Attorney's Office in 2004. Prior to election, he served as Deputy District Attorney in Cullman from 2000-2005. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama and the Birmingham School of Law.

A life-long Republican, Wilson is an avid football fan for the University of Alabama. He is a member of the Cullman County Cattleman's Association, sits on the Board of the Cullman County Community Corrections Board, is on the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association and is one of the founding sponsors of the Cullman County Human Trafficking Task Force.

Wilson and his wife, the former Missy Wilson, have five children and three grandchildren. The Blaylock's are members of First United Methodist Church in Cullman.



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SENIORS

Sylvia Morgan: Hard at work for 50 years

Sara Gladney

sara@cullmantribune.com

ADDISON, Ala. — Sylvia Morgan is well known throughout the Arley and Addison communities. She grew up in Helicon until she got married in 1964 to John Morgan and moved to the neighboring

town of Addison. She currently works as the bookkeeper at John's Place furniture store where she works with sons-in-law Roger Parris and Bobby Everett.

Her husband John worked at Monsanto after he got out of the Army in 1964. He began selling leather products, belts

and purses out of a camper after he got off work. Sylvia said he told her, "One of these jobs is gonna have to go." She told him, "John, you're crazy if you think you are gonna quit Monsanto and go into this mess." This exchange, however, made John more inclined to quit his job at Monsanto.

Sylvia said they got into the furniture business because John began trading with the employees at Jack's Truck Stop in Cullman, and one of the employees asked John for a living room set. "John said, 'Hon, we don't have furniture.' She said, 'Get me one.'" So, they acquired a set from Roger's »



CONTRIBUTED

uncle who sold furniture. The word spread that the Morgan's sold furniture, so they began selling from their house.

"Right here, this little house, is where I started out at." The furniture store opened in 1975. They started out with small pieces, curtains and bedspreads.

They expanded their store with a staircase down into their old hayshed to make room for a showroom for their large furniture. They now sell sectionals, recliners, mattresses, dining tables and more from name brands like Bassett, Elements, Franklin Furniture and Tempur-Pedic.

John Morgan passed away 25 years ago from a heart attack at the age of 57. Sylvia, Roger and Bobby have been the only ones to work at the store since.

Sylvia is better known for her job selling tickets at Addison High School. She started working as a substitute teacher

at Addison about 50 years ago until she was offered a job as an aide to sell tickets at the Addison ballgames. She was recently honored at the school during their senior night for her many years of service to the school.

Morgan loves her job at the school and wishes she could be there all the time, saying, "I love my students. I love all these boys and girls, and I love working at that school - I love the kids. They come and hug me, even the boys. The seniors will come in and hug my neck."

Most of Morgan's family is involved at the school. Her daughters Shelia, Sherry and Nancy all work at Addison. Shelia works in the office, and Nancy has taught first grade for 34 years. Sherry is the senior high English teacher, while her husband Micah Smothers is the principal of the high school. Sylvia and her family are valued members of the tight-knit community.



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FINANCE FOR SENIORS | FINANCE BASICS

Budgeting for seniors

Budgeting for seniors isn't too different from budgeting at any other stage of life.

The difference is that many seniors are on a fixed income with no hope of raises or other prospects to boost their income. Many seniors rely solely on Social Security and other benefits, and may struggle financially after they give up working or can no longer work.

Health care

Seniors may also have concerns about health care after they

retire. The costs of health care are rising and LongTermCare.gov estimates that someone turning 65 will have a nearly 70% chance of needing some kind of long-term care service during their lifetime. When considering budgeting, retirement income and insurance coverages, seniors and families should keep that startling statistic in mind.

Avoiding scams

Seniors make easy marks for some criminals who seek to siphon off what money they do have.

Seniors and their families should be wary of unscrupulous scammers that are trying to talk

them out of their life savings. The National Council on Aging and the Bank of American Charitable Foundation created a Savvy Saving Seniors toolkit to help seniors and their families stay safe.

If you receive an email about a money transfer, the kit says, it's probably a scam. Also avoid family and friends who depend on your income to help them out of trouble and know how to protect your good credit if your wallet is stolen.

Use your benefits

There are a lot of benefits to being over 65, and we're not just talking about lower-cost coffees at your favorite

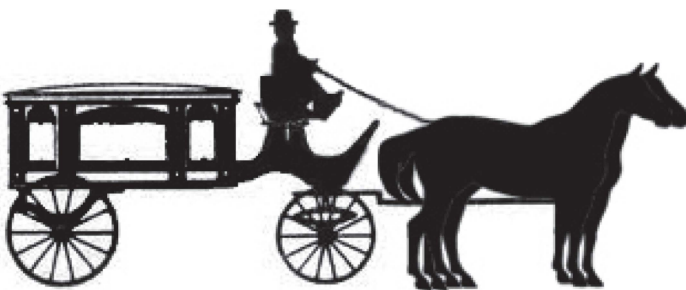
fast-food place. You can access community safety nets such as SNAP to buy food and the SCSEP — Senior Community Service Employment Program — to earn more income when you need it. You may also qualify for free tax assistance, utility assistance programs, home maintenance programs, property tax programs, senior discounts (yes, including that coffee) and more.

While many of these programs are designed to help out in an emergency, make sure you're enrolled and know about them before a crisis strikes. Visit benefitscheckup.org or call 800-677-1116 to learn more.

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NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Local baseball, softball teams preparing to get back on the diamond

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Spring sports are right around the corner and that means its about time for local teams to get back out on the diamond. Last season was full of highlights for our local baseball and softball teams, and they'll all be looking to either build on last year's success or bounce back in a big way this time around.

BASEBALL

Addison

The 2021 baseball season for Addison didn't go the way they had hoped it would go as they finished 7-19 on the season and 3-6 (third) in Class 2A, Area 13. The Bulldogs lost six players to graduation last year, but they have some key players returning in 2022, including Jesse Tuggle, Brody Dollar, Braden Luker, and Kody Estill. Addison will start out 2022

on the road against Priceville on Feb. 18 and will look to get contributions from their whole roster as they will look for a huge turnaround season.

Cold Springs

The Cold Springs Eagles had a solid 2021 baseball season as they finished 11-11 on the year and 4-3 (second) in Class 2A, Area 13 behind Falkville. Cold Springs made it to the second round of the playoffs

before getting eliminated by Westbrook Christian. The Eagles lost four seniors to graduation and will look for some new faces to step up and contribute in 2022, including Hank Harrison, Tucker Philbeck, Brodee Bartlett, and Cole Shelton. Cold Springs will start out the season at home against Good Hope on Feb. 22 as they will look to make an even deeper postseason run in 2022. »

Cullman

The Cullman Bearcats had a great 2021 season as they won the Class 6A, Area 14 championship and got to the second round of the playoffs before getting eliminated by Chelsea. The Bearcats finished with a 28-13 record and lost more than a handful of players to graduation, but they have a lot of players coming back in hopes of adding some more trophies to their trophy cases in 2022. Some of those players that are coming back are: Jake Dueland, Kaleb Heatherly, Brody Hogeland, Hayden Stancil, and Paxton Ponder. The Bearcats will be starting off the season on the road as they will go to Oxford on Feb. 18 and will look for another big season in 2022.

Fairview

The Fairview Aggies started the 2021 season slow, but they finished strong as the Aggies finished second in Class 5A, Area 14 to Gunter'sville. Fairview got eliminated in the first round by Madison Academy as they finished with a 14-18 record and lost several key players to graduation, including Preston Ryan, Levi Garner, and Tanner Bennett. The Aggies will still bring back a lot of key pieces in 2022 as they will start out the season at Madison County on Feb. 19. Fairview will look to make another postseason run in 2022.

Good Hope

The Good Hope Raiders finished second in Class 4A, Area 11, behind Curry and ended up getting eliminated by Cherokee County in the first round of the playoffs. Good Hope finished the season 11-17 and lost four players to graduation, but will bring back some young pieces in 2022, including

Braxton Marshall, Paydon Bagwell, and Tyler Cone. The Raiders will start out the season on Feb. 17 at home against Vinemont as they will look to have a bounce-back year and get into the postseason once again.

Hanceville

The Hanceville Bulldogs finished the 2021 season with a 7-19 record and lost four key players to graduation last year. The Bulldogs will look to some up-and-coming young talent to get them back on track in 2022, including Zach Campbell, Adam Copper, Drew Campbell, and Carson Garrett. Hanceville will start out the season at Oneonta on Feb. 19 as they will look for a bounce-back season in 2022.

Holly Pond

The Holly Pond Broncos started out the 2021 season very slow, but finished very strong, going 7-3 in their final 10 games. The Broncos' record was 8-14 and they lost more than a handful of players to graduation but will bring back some key players: Austin Marsh, Levi Farr, Andrew Bell, and Austin Huddleston. Holly Pond's season will start on Feb. 19 at Ider as they look to get some solid contributions from their entire roster in 2022.

Meek

Despite not winning a single game in the regular season, the Meek Tigers still clinched a spot in the postseason because it was just them and Sumiton Christian in Class 1A, Area 11. Meek got swept in the first round of the playoffs by Donoho, to finish with an 0-21 record and lost five seniors to graduation. The Tigers will look to a young roster to get things going in 2022, which will be led by Jarrett Benson,

Cam Deaver, Preston Seymour, and Braylon Roberts. Meek will start the season at Hackleburg on Feb. 21 as they will look to make some big noise in 2022.

Vinemont

The Vinemont Eagles' 2021 season went back-and-forth, but when the postseason started, they finished as the Class 3A, Area 15 runner-up and that earned them a date with J.B. Pennington in the first round of the playoffs. The Eagles dropped the series to the Tigers, 2-1, to finish the year 10-10, and three seniors graduated from the team. But they will have a lot of veteran players coming back in 2022, including Colby Miller, Ayden Thomason, Braden Boner, and Jarrett Friedrich. The Eagles will start out the season on the road against Good Hope on Feb. 17 as they will look to get back into the postseason in 2022.

West Point

The West Point Warriors' 2021 season can be best described as a season of runs. After a slow start to the season, a winning streak got them back on track. West Point finished the season as the runner-up in Class 5A, Area 15, and faced off against Sardis in the first round of the playoffs. After splitting the first two games of the series, the Warriors dropped the third and final game to the Lions, 2-1, to finish with a 20-19 record. West Point lost a lot of key players to graduation, but will bring back some key pieces, including Eli Folds, J.D. Cochran, Isaac Hoffpauir, and Cade Simmons. The Warriors will play a doubleheader on Feb. 19 against Muscle Shoals and Deshler to start out the season as they will look to make an even deeper run in the postseason in 2022.

SOFTBALL**Addison**

The Addison Lady Bulldogs quickly got things going after a slow start to the season. The Lady Bulldogs finished fourth in Class 2A, Area 11 and their season ended in the area tournament after dropping back-to-back games to Sumiton Christian and Cold Springs. Addison finished with a 13-18 record and lost just one senior to graduation: Madison Aderholt. Their whole entire roster will be back in 2022 in hopes of making a deep run into the postseason. Addison's season will start on Feb. 28 on the road at Hanceville.

Cold Springs

Cold Springs' 2021 season was a pretty good one as they finished the regular season strong. Cold Springs finished as the runner-up in the area tournament to Sumiton Christian and ended up advancing to the West Regionals in Tuscaloosa. After defeating Isabella to keep their season alive, the Lady Eagles would drop their next game to Thorsby, 2-0, to finish with a record of 19-14. Five key players graduated from the team and Cold Springs will have some huge shoes to fill in 2022 in hopes of getting back into the postseason. The Lady Eagles' season will start off at home on Feb. 28 against Fairview.

Cullman

The Cullman Lady Bearcats had a season to remember in 2021. After a slow start to the regular season, Cullman caught fire at the right time and looked to win the Class 6A, Area 14 title. Hartselle, though, had other ideas as they would end up winning the championship. The Lady Bearcats used that as motivation going »



Robin O'Berry, Megan Henry, T'aira Ugarkovich and Katrina Stephens
Matt Townson, John Riley and Robin Parson

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into the North Regionals at Florence as they rolled past Jasper, 15-2. After falling to Hazel Green, Cullman defeated Ft. Payne to keep their season alive, but ended up falling to Athens, 19-4, as they finished their season with an impressive 34-17-1 record. Sophomore Chalea Clemmons had a record-breaking year at the plate and on the mound. Nearly everyone from last year's Lady Bearcats' team will be returning and their season will start on Feb. 17 at home against West Point.

Fairview

The Fairview Lady Aggies came into 2021 with a young and talented squad looking to make some noise. They had some good moments during the season, starting out 7-5,

and finished the regular season going 4-3. The Lady Aggies' season would end in the area tournament to Brewer and Guntersville, as they finished with an 11-18 record. Fairview lost three seniors to graduation, but will bring back some young, talented players in 2022, including Jaycee Aleman, Emma Roberts, and Allie Scott. Fairview will start their season on the road at Southeastern on Feb. 21 as they will look to take that next big step in 2022.

Good Hope

The Good Hope Raiders' 2021 roster was very young, but they did pick up some impressive victories over Addison and Holly Pond during the season. Good Hope finished second in the Class 4A, Area

12 tournament to Curry, and qualified for Regionals in Montgomery. The Lady Raiders dropped back-to-back games to Etowah and Cherokee County as they finished with a record of 13-18. Everyone will be returning for Good Hope in 2022. Their season will start on March 1st at home against Dora as they will look to continue to grow and get better in 2022.

Hanceville

Hanceville looked to surprise some people in 2021, but it turned out to be a very long season for the Lady Bulldogs as they finished 0-19 on the year. Four seniors graduated from the team and Hanceville will look to some very young, talented players to get them going in 2022. The Lady Bulldogs will

travel to Curry in their opening game on Feb. 21 and will look to have a big turnaround season in 2022.

Holly Pond

2021 proved to be a historic year for the Holly Pond Lady Broncos. They had a huge regular season and ended up hosting the Class 3A, Area 13 tournament. Holly Pond rolled past J.B. Pennington and Susan Moore to take home the area title and they moved on to Regionals in Florence. The Lady Broncos defeated East Lawrence in their opening game, but their season would come to an end at the hands of Fyffe and Elkmont. Still, they finished with a 21-11 record and ended up losing just one player to graduation, but Aubrey »



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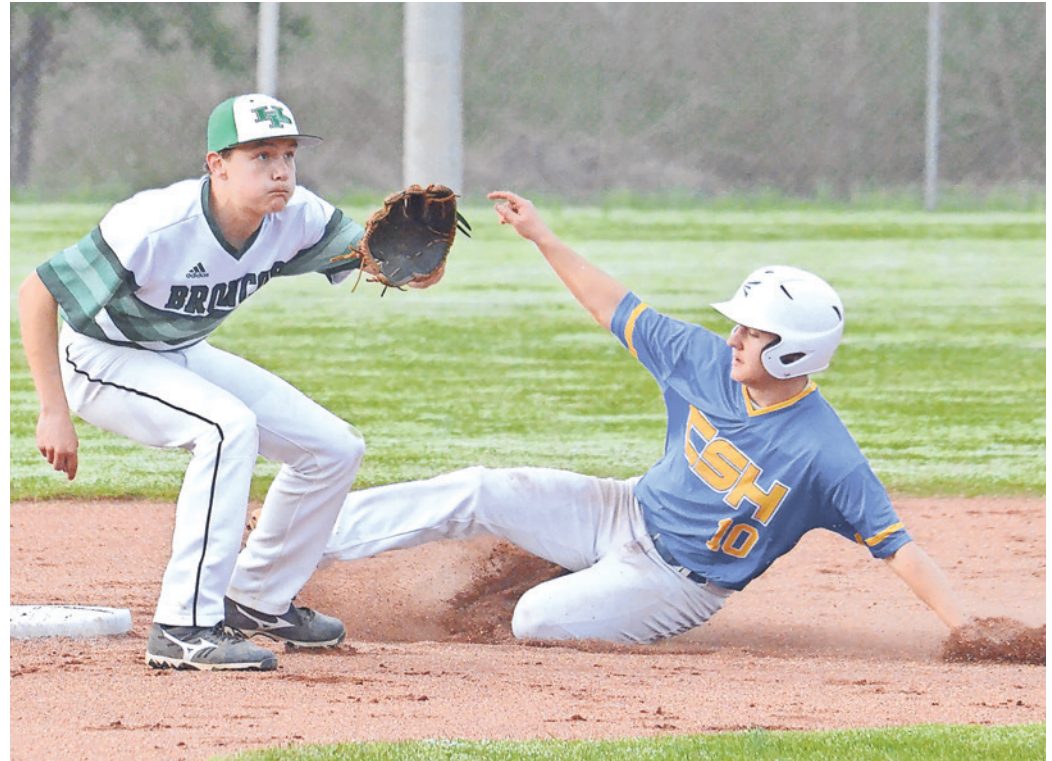
Armstrong was a key piece in their huge run in 2021. Holly Pond will bring everyone back this season and will travel to Boaz on Feb. 22 in their season opener. The Lady Broncos will look to make even more history in 2022.

Meek

The 2021 Meek Lady Tigers looked to have a big season and it started out that way, but a bad ending to the regular season quickly erased the momentum that they had up to that point. Meek looked to get things back on track in the Class 1A, Area 12 tournament. They defeated Hubbertville in an 11-10 wild back-and-forth affair, but that ended up being their last win of the season as they dropped back-to-back games to Marion County and Lynn. The Lady Tigers finished with a record of 11-15 and lost more than a handful of players to graduation. Some younger players will look to fill some huge shoes this campaign. Meek's season will start at home on Feb. 17 against Dora as they will look to some younger players to contribute in a big way in 2022.

Vinemont

Vinemont looked to have a big turnaround season in 2021, but after splitting their first six games of the season, the Lady Eagles found wins tough



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

to come by the rest of the year. They did pick up some wins over Phil Campbell, Fairview, and Meek during the regular season, but their campaign came to an end in the Class 3A, Area 15 tournament to Danville and Phil Campbell. Vinemont finished with a record of 7-16 and ended up losing three seniors to graduation. Players such as Berkley Gable, Faith Rusk and Maci Smith will look to help lead the way for this young, talented Vinemont squad this season as they will start the 2022 campaign at

home against Falkville on Feb. 17.

West Point

West Point looked to make a very deep run into the post-season in 2021. After getting off to a very slow start to the season, a winning streak quickly got the Lady Warriors back on track and they ended up finishing the regular season strong going into the Class 5A, Area 15 tournament. West Point knocked off Russellville twice to win the area title and they advanced to the North

Regionals in Florence. The Lady Warriors dropped their first game to Hayden and took on the Lady Golden Tigers in a rematch of the area tournament. West Point's season ended with an 8-4 loss to Russellville as they ended up with a record of 24-20-2. The Lady Warriors lost Lexi Shadix and Sydney Sellers to graduation last season and will have their entire roster back this season in hopes of making it back to the postseason in 2022. West Point's season opener will be on Feb. 17 at Cullman.

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COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Raiders pull away to top West Point 53-41 & win JV Boys Championship

Nick Griffin

nick@cullmantribune.com

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — This year's JV Boys Championship Game featured another heated battle between West Point and Good Hope. The Warriors led the Raiders by two at halftime, but Good Hope shot extremely well at the free throw line in the second half and that helped them pull away to collect a 53-41 win and a JV Boys County title.

Baskets by Hunter Hensley and JD Cochran gave West Point an early, 4-0 lead but Eli Clements scored and split a pair of free throws on the other end to trim the lead to 4-3. A Dakota Overton basket gave the Raiders a 5-4 lead midway through the first quarter, but Cochran responded with another score for the Warriors to put them back in front 6-5. Hensley dropped in a floater to stretch the lead to three, but Colten Whatley drilled a three just before the buzzer to tie the game at 8 going into the second.

Whatley drained a pair of free throws at the start of the second to give Good Hope a 10-8 lead but the Warriors were able to tie thing up at 11 later in the period.

Ace Stricklin knocked down a three to put the Raiders in front 14-11 and Callahan Lindsey scored inside to extend the lead to five, but Pressley Burtis nailed a three-pointer for the Warriors in the final seconds of the half to cut the lead to 16-14 at the break.

Another three from Burtis tied the game at 17 early in the third quarter and Burtis laid »



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BILL PIPER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Good Hope Raiders defeated West Point 53-41 to win this year's JV Boys County Championship.

one in on the next West Point possession to take a 19-17 lead.

Overton responded with a three-pointer of his own to put Good Hope back in front 20-19 but the game was tied at 21 once again midway through the period.

Burtis converted an and-one play at the line to give the Warriors a 24-22 lead with two minutes to play in the third and Hensley buried a three-pointer to stretch the lead to 27-22. However, the Raiders were able to chip away at the lead when Whatley drained another three and Clements sank a pair of free throws to tie things back up at 27. Burtis was able to draw a foul in the final second of the third quarter and knocked down two free throws just before the buzzer to give West Point a 29-27 lead at the start of the fourth quarter.

Good Hope got off to a fast start in the final frame, putting together a 7-0 run to move in front 34-29. TB Pendley banked home a three-pointer to trim the lead to 34-32 but the Raiders were able to pull ahead 37-32 with four minutes to play.

Clements hit back-to-back threes from the left wing to extend the lead to 43-33 midway through the fourth but scores by Hensley and Cochran on the other end made it a 6-point game with just over two minutes remaining. Another Cochran basket cut the lead to 43-39 but Whatley and Clements each knocked down a pair of free throws to make it an 8-point game with a little over a minute on the clock.

The Raiders continued to hit shots at the foul line as time

ticked away, allowing them to pull away and defeat West Point 53-41, securing this year's JV Boys County Championship.

Clements racked up a game-high 23 points for Good Hope in the win. Whatley finished with 15 and Overton added nine. Burtis led the way for the Warriors with 14 points in the loss, followed by Hensley with 11.

2022 JV Boys All-County Tournament Team

- JD Cochran - West Point
- Will Bailey - Fairview
- Colten Whatley - Good Hope
- Dakota Overton - Good Hope
- Hunter Hensley - West Point
- Pressley Burtis - West Point
- Antonio Gaitor - Fairview
- Eli Clements - Good Hope



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The West Point Lady Warriors defeated Good Hope 33-29 to win this year's JV Girls County Championship.

COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Lady Warriors outlast Good Hope 33-29 to claim JV Girls Championship

Nick Griffin

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HANCEVILLE, Ala. — The Cullman County Tournament tipped off with the JV Girls title game between the Lady Warriors of West Point and the Good Hope Lady Raiders. It was a very tight contest between the two squads in which neither led by more than four at any point, but West Point was able

to get just enough stops and sink just enough free throws late in the game to pull away and win this year's JV Girls Championship 33-29.

After a scoreless three minutes, West Point's Kealie Harbison split a pair of free throws to give the Lady Warriors a 1-0 lead midway through the first, but Reese Fox responded with a pair of free throws on the other end

to put Good Hope in front 2-1. The Lady Raiders pulled ahead 5-2 later in the opening period but Jaelyn Faulkner drove to the basket and scored to make it a 5-4 game. Lela Fisher knocked down a three to put West Point in front 7-5 with just under two minutes to play in the quarter until an Emma Thompson jumper tied things up at 7. Good Hope got one more look at the basket before the buzzer but

couldn't the shot to fall and the score stayed knotted at 7 going into the second quarter.

Bailey Keef scored from underneath the basket to give the Lady Raiders a 9-7 lead early in the second and Emma Bailey banked one in to stretch the lead to 11-7. Carsyn Blankenship sank a pair of free throws to cut the lead to 11-9 midway through the period and Patton Fell drilled a »

corner three to put the Lady Warriors ahead 12-11. Rylee Fox laid one in on the other end to retake a 13-12 lead for Good Hope but Fell split a pair of free throws to tie the game at 13 with less than two minutes remaining in the half.

Baskets by Jaelyn Faulkner and Blankenship gave West Point a 4-point lead with a minute to play in the second quarter, but Zoey Keller knocked down a big three-pointer at the buzzer to trim the lead to 17-16 at the break.

Keef scored inside to put the Lady Raiders in front 18-17 at the start of the third quarter and Jaelyn Faulkner traded baskets with Emma Bailey to make it a 20-19 game. Fell drained a mid-range jumper to put the Lady Warriors back ahead 21-20 but Reese Fox buried a three-point to retake a 23-21 Good Hope lead with a minute to play in the third. Katie Beth Yovino drilled a three on the other end to take the lead back for West Point put another Fox basket just before the buzzer gave the Lady Raiders a 25-24 advantage going into the fourth quarter.

Keller netted a pair of free throws to extend the lead to 27-24 early in the fourth but Fell answered with a three on the other end to tie the game at 27. Keef and Jaelyn Faulkner traded baskets to keep

things tied at 29 with just over three minutes remaining and Camryn Faulkner added a free throw to give the Lady Warriors a 1-point lead.

West Point maintained a 30-29 lead with less than a minute on the clock and Jaelyn Faulkner split a pair of free throws with 12 seconds to make it 31-29. Good Hope was unable to score on its next possession and Fell added two more foul shots to stretch the lead to four with four seconds to play, securing a 33-29 win and this year's JV Girls County Championship for the Lady Warriors.

Fell led West Point with 11 points in the win, followed by Jaelyn Faulkner with 10. Reese Fox posted nine points for the Lady Raiders in the loss and Keef added seven.

2022 JV Girls All-County Tournament Team

- Alana Phillips - Holly Pond
- Caitlee Simmons - West Point
- Camryn Faulkner - West Point
- Patton Fell - West Point
- Emma Thompson - Good Hope
- Reese Fox - Good Hope
- Presli Carr - Holly Pond
- Darby Nichols - Fairview
- Camryn Faulkner - West Point





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The Good Hope Raiders defeated Cold Springs 65-53 to win their third county championship in four years.

COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Good Hope downs Cold Springs 65-53 to win 3rd County Title in four years

Nick Griffin

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HANCEVILLE, Ala. — Good Hope and Cold Springs fought it out for this year's Cullman County Tournament Championship night, and it was another exciting battle between the Eagles and Raiders. The score was knotted at 25 after the first two quarters but Good Hope was able to outpace Cold Springs in the second half to

pull ahead and went on to eventually win it 65-53. The win over the Eagles gives the Raiders their third County Tournament Championship in the last four seasons.

Tanner Malin and Cody Bales exchanged baskets to get things started and after Colton Lindsey split a pair of free throws to put Good Hope in front 3-2, Bales knocked down a pair from the line to give Cold Springs a 4-3 lead. John Mark

Smith drilled a three to put the Eagles in front 7-3 and Brody Peppers sank a pair of free throws to extend the lead to 9-3. However, the Raiders were able to dominate the final four minutes of the period and thanks in large part to baskets from Noah Barnette and Tyler Cone, Good Hope finished the first quarter on a 10-0 run to take a 13-9 lead into the second.

Bales drained a three-pointer to make it a 13-12 game at the

start of the second quarter and Tanner Kilgo later added a pair of baskets to retake a 16-15 lead for Cold Springs. Another basket by Peppers and another three from Smith kept the Eagles in front 21-16 but Malin laid one in, and Lindsey knocked down a three from the corner to tie things up at 21 with just over two minutes remaining in the half. Cone and Tucker Malin each scored to give the Raiders a 4-point »

lead but a pair of Seth Williams free throws and another basket by Peppers in the final seconds of the period tied the game at 25 going into the halftime break.

A quick basket from Cone and a three by Tanner Malin gave Good Hope a 30-26 lead early in the third quarter but a three-pointer from Bales on the other end cut the lead down to one. That's when back-to-back treys from K'mal Bell and another Malin basket put the Raiders in front 38-29 midway through the period, their biggest lead of the game.

A pair of Bales free throws and a basket from Kilgo trimmed the lead to five and Seth Williams drilled a three-pointer to make it a 38-36 game with three minutes to play in the third.

Bales netted two more free throws to tie things up at 38 but Good Hope finished the quarter strong once again.

A basket by Barnette and a three from Tucker Malin in the final moments of the period gave the Raiders a 43-38 lead at the start of the fourth.

Bales' big night continued with an old fashioned three-point play at the start of the final frame that cut the lead to 43-41. Good Hope answered right away with a corner three from Lindsey that extended the lead to 46-41 and a pair of Barnette free throws made it a 7-point game.

The Eagles wouldn't allow the Raiders to create separation, and another three by Smith cut the lead to 48-44 before Kilgo laid one in to make it a 48-46 game with five minutes on the clock.

Bell responded with a three-pointer on the other end to put Good Hope back in front 51-46 and Bell scored on the next two possessions to give the Raiders

a 55-48 advantage with less than two minutes to play. Cold Springs continued to claw and fight to try and chip away at the lead, but Good Hope sank 12 consecutive free throws in the final two minutes to wrap up a 65-53 win and this year's Cullman County Championship.

Bell led the Raiders with 16 points in the win, followed by Cone with 13 and Malin and Barnette with 12. Bales posted a game-high 23 points for Cold Springs in the loss. Smith added nine and Peppers and Kilgo each finished with eight.

2022 Varsity Boys All-County Tournament Team

- Tanner Malin - Good Hope
- Brayden Harris - Hanceville
- Brody Peppers - Cold Springs
- Tanner Kilgo - Cold Springs
- Seth Williams - Cold Springs
- Cody Bales - Cold Springs
- Zach Campbell - Hanceville
- Ethan Frazier - Fairview
- Colton Lindsey - Good Hope

2022 All-County Boys Basketball Team

- Parker Martin - Fairview
- Landon Tweedie - Fairview
- Kobe Payne - Fairview
- K'mal Bell - Good Hope
- Tanner Malin - Good Hope
- Colton Lindsey - Good Hope
- Brody Peppers - Cold Springs
- Tanner Kilgo - Cold Springs
- Zach Campbell - Hanceville
- Brayden Harris - Hanceville
- Kollin Brown - Holly Pond
- Sam Wheeler - West Point
- Kolten Perry - West Point
- Colby Miller - Vinemont

Eli Thomas Memorial Scholarship Award Winner

- Cody Bales - Cold Springs High School

Joe Shults Award Winner

- Tanner Malin - Good Hope High School



BILL PIPER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



The Good Hope Lady Raiders routed West Point 73-39 to win their first County Championship since 2012.

BILL PIPER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Lady Raiders roll past West Point 73-39 for 1st County Championship since 2012

Nick Griffin

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HANCEVILLE, Ala. — Good Hope and West Point squared off for the third time in the varsity girls' championship game but unlike the first two battles of the day, this one was settled quickly. The Lady Raiders built a 26-point lead by halftime and continued to pull away until they secured a 73-39 win and their first county championship in 10 years.

As they have in most of their

games this season, the Lady Raiders got off to a fast start against West Point. Three-pointers by Heather Tetro and Kyndall Seal put Good Hope in front 6-0 right out of the gate and Rudi Derrick added a basket of her own to make it 8-0. Bailey Tetro drained a three to stretch the lead to 11-0 but Liberty Shadix scored to get the Lady Warriors on the board and make it an 11-2 game. The Lady Raiders maintained a 14-4 lead midway through the period and another three from

Bailey Tetro made it 17-4. Free throws by Shadix and Braelee Quin trimmed the lead to 17-6 later in the quarter but a pair of Bailey Tetro free throws and a buzzer-beating three by Desire Odachowski put Good Hope in front 23-10 at the end of the first quarter.

Baskets from Odachowski and Charly Johnson stretched the lead to 27-10 early in the second but Odachowski was just getting started. She scored the next eight points of the game to build the Good Hope

lead up to 35-12 with three minutes remaining in the half and the Lady Raiders continued to pull away. Derrick drained another three from the corner to make it a 38-16 game with a minute to play in the period and Bailey Tetro added four more points before the break to send Good Hope to the locker room with a 42-16 advantage.

Back-to-back Bailey Tetro baskets extended the lead to 46-17 early in the third quarter and Derrick and Ivey Maddox each scored to make »

it 50-17. Odachowski's big night continued with another three-pointer that put the Lady Raiders up 53-19 and after baskets by Derrick and Heather Tetro, Good Hope led 57-22 with two minutes to play in the third. Ryleigh Jones scored a pair of baskets for West Point in the final minute of the period, but the Lady Warriors still trailed 61-26 going into the fourth quarter.

Laklin Shadix scored inside to cut into the lead early in the fourth, but it was all Raiders after that. Back-to-back three-pointers from Maddox made it a 67-28 game and after a three by Jones on the other end, Renee McLeod scored on back-to-back possessions to keep Good Hope in front 71-31 midway through the final frame. With the hot clock running, the Lady Raiders cruised to win it 73-39 and capture their first County Championship since 2012.

Bailey Tetro led the way for Good Hope with 20 points in the win, followed by Odachowski with 16 and Maddox with 10. The Lady Warriors were led by Jones who finished with 17.

2022 Varsity Girls All-County Tournament Team

- Ryleigh Jones – West Point

- Emma Garcia – Fairview
- Kaylee Stallings – Holly Pond
- Ivey Maddox – Good Hope
- Heather Tetro – Good Hope
- Summer Mendoza – West Point
- Bailey Tetro – Good Hope
- Desire Odachowski – Good Hope

2022 Cullman All-County Girls Basketball Team

- Ivey Maddox – Good Hope
- Rudi Derrick – Good Hope
- Heather Tetro – Good Hope
- Bailey Tetro – Good Hope
- Ryleigh Jones – West Point
- Braelie Quinn – West Point
- Summer Mendoza – West Point
- Sadie Smith – Fairview
- Emma Garcia – Fairview
- Morgan Lindsay – Fairview
- Ella Bruer – Cold Springs
- Maddi Ham – Holly Pond
- Jolee McHan – Hanceville
- Maggie Burks – Vinemont

2022 Charlotte Cummings Memorial Scholarship Winner

- Morgan Lindsay – Fairview High School

2022 Bill Shelton Award Winner

- Ryleigh Jones – West Point High School



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HEALTH

Recipes for boosting immunity and overall wellness

Lauren Estes

lauren@cullmantribune.com

The road to a healthier you starts with your nutritionally-sound diet choices and making those choices a habitual lifestyle. Along with elevating your heart rate by exercising at least 30 minutes a day, three times weekly, your nutrition is key in your overall health and wellness. Managing your micro-nutrients, staying hydrated and getting appropriate sleep--not only will you feel better, but will boost your immunity, allow you to recover better, carry less stress and overall feel more rested.

One of my favorite quotes asks:

"How do you have the energy to work all day, then go work out?"

The answer is: "I have the energy to work all day BECAUSE I work out."

One way to incorporate a healthier mindset is to get others involved by having accountability from the people closest to you. Creating healthy dinner options is one step forward to a more nutritionally sound lifestyle. Here are a few family-friendly recipes with minimum ingredients:

SALMON AND ASPARAGUS SHEET PAN MEAL

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound thin asparagus*
- 1 pound salmon, wild caught if possible

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper
- Lemon
- Minced fresh herbs (like chives, mint or thyme), for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Allow salmon to come to room temperature.
2. Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a baking sheet with foil.
3. Trim the asparagus. Place it on the baking sheet and toss it with 2 tablespoons olive oil (this also oils the foil). Sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper.
4. Pat the salmon dry and place it on the foil. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon olive oil. Sprinkle the salmon with 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper. Place asparagus around the salmon. Slice the lemon into wheels and place them on top of the asparagus (but not the salmon). Squeeze juice from the two ends of the lemon onto the tray. Then add the chopped fresh herbs on top of everything.
5. Bake 9 - 12 minutes until the asparagus is tender at the thickest part, and the salmon is just tender and pink at the center (the internal temperature should be between 125 to 130 F in the center for done, or 10 degrees less if you're broiling). If the salmon is done before the asparagus (the asparagus is

thick), remove it from the tray and continue cooking just the asparagus until tender.

Notes

*Thin asparagus is best, so try to find the thinnest you can when shopping. If all you can find is thicker asparagus, you may need a little longer to roast (up to 15 minutes). Just remove the salmon from the tray if it's already done and finish the asparagus by itself.

VEGAN-FRIENDLY CAPRESE ZOODLES (or add chicken)

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large zucchinis
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup mozzarella balls, quartered if large
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- Optional: Add boneless/skinless chicken breast

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using a spiralizer, create zoodles out of zucchini.
2. Add zoodles to a large bowl, toss with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Let marinate 15 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes, mozzarella and basil to zoodles and toss until combined.

4. Drizzle with balsamic and serve.

LEMON GARLIC BUTTER CHICKEN AND GREEN BEANS SKILLET

INGREDIENTS

- 3-6 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
- 1 pound (450g) green beans, trimmed
- 3 tablespoons butter, divided or another butter option
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt and fresh cracked black pepper
- Juice of 1/2 lemon + lemon slices, for garnish
- 1/2 cup (125ml) chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce (we used Sriracha)
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red chili pepper flakes, optional
- 1/2 cup fresh chopped parsley

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small bowl, combine onion powder, paprika, salt and pepper and then generously season chicken thighs with the spice mixture, set aside.
2. Arrange green beans in a microwave-safe dish with 1/2 cup (125ml) water. Cook in the microwave for 8-10 minutes, until almost done but still crisp.
3. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Lay the seasoned chicken thighs in one layer in the skillet. Cook for 5-6 minutes »

then flip and cook another 5-6 minutes, until cooked through and a cooking thermometer displays 165 F. If chicken browns too quickly, lower the heat. Adjust timing depending on the thickness. Transfer chicken to a plate and set aside.

4. In the same skillet, lower the heat and melt the remaining tablespoon of butter. Add chopped parsley, garlic, hot sauce, red crushed chili pepper flakes and precooked green beans and cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring regularly, until cooked to your liking. Add lemon juice and chicken stock and reduce the sauce for a couple of minutes, until slightly thickened.

5. Push green beans to the side and add cooked chicken thighs back to the pan and reheat quickly. Adjust seasoning with pepper and serve the lemon garlic butter chicken thighs immediately, garnished with more crushed chili pepper, fresh

parsley, and a slice of lemon if you like. Enjoy!

Tips

- Remove chicken thighs from the refrigerator about 15 minutes before cooking to bring them close to room temperature.
- Use boneless and skinless chicken thighs because they render less fat and cook quicker than bone-in. Plus, it is easier to rub the spice mixture deep into the chicken meat.
- Season chicken thighs just before cooking to prevent drawing out moisture and drying out the meat. If you want to let it sit longer, omit the salt from the spice mixture, and add it 10 minutes before cooking instead.
- Add crispy bacon to the green beans for a nice flavor.
- For a variant of this chicken thighs recipe, you can use chicken tenders instead of chicken thighs. They're delicious and cook faster! Just keep an eye on it so they don't overcook and dry up.

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SPRING CAR CARE | ROUTINE CARE

Wash away winter

As winter dissolves into spring, a caravan of dirty cars emerge.

Dreary months of snow and slush build up a film of salt, dirt and grime that becomes painfully obvious once the sun returns. Here's how to wash away winter.

Cleaning

Snowy winters end up exposing a vehicle's underbody to highly corrosive elements, and left unattended they can impact your car's longevity and value. Areas that experience winter precipitation typically use salt to make the roadways more passable. In some cities,

two types of salt are mixed — magnesium chloride and sodium chloride — to create a kind of brine to be spread on key streets. It works as a melting agent, and the gritty consistency also helps tires adhere better to the road. But it also builds up underneath you, potentially causing huge problems down the road. Use a high-pressure sprayer at the neighborhood do-it-yourself car wash to dislodge and rinse away the build up. For particularly stubborn salt, consider hiring a local detailer.

Evaluate

Left unattended, salt deposits encourage rusting. This ends up acting as a slow-motion car

accident, eventually wrecking everything from the body and chassis to your exhaust and braking systems. After the underbody of your car is cleaned, examine the vehicle for rust. Wheel wells, bumpers and the fender area directly behind each wheel are the most susceptible because of the amount of salt-and-snow mix that collects there, according to American Automobile Association. Pay close attention as you examine each area, since even small spots of rust will continue to spread if left untreated. Sand down any area to bare metal, then paint the exposed spot with a corrosion-resistant primer. After drying, apply matching car paint and clear coat. Of

course, if you don't think you can adequately address the issue, stop by a local body shop for assistance.

Sealing

Salt saves countless lives on the highway, but it can lead to damaging rust that invades the bottom of your car. Take advantage of spring's warmer temps to apply a protective sealant to the vehicle's undercarriage. This will provide a first line of defense when snowy conditions inevitably return. As with rust remediation, you may want to discuss this sealant regimen with a local professional, since a number of important components are found underneath your car.



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SPRING CAR CARE | ROAD CONDITIONS

Navigating spring weather

As the old saying goes, spring showers bring May flowers. They also bring slippery road conditions with poor visibility, just when people are getting back outside again after a winter spent cooped up inside.

Here's how to prepare for the coming spring weather.

Be weather aware

Road conditions are typically at their worst just as rain begins. The water releases oil, dirt and grease from pavement, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, creating particularly dangerous conditions. Heavy springtime rainfall can also obstruct our ability to see the road clearly. The results are sometimes disastrous: Some 75% of weather-related crashes involve wet streets. Nearly 25% of all crashes are weather related, the U.S. Department of Transportation reports.

Lane obstructions

Early in the spring months, be prepared for occasional remaining ice patches. Continue to maintain safe distance, approaching intersections with the same winter caution. Drive slower when roads appear to be wet. Then prepare for potholes to emerge as the weather changes, the result

of wintertime applications of salt and sand, and traffic from heavy snowplows. The safest approach, of course, is to avoid a pothole. But if conditions don't allow you to swerve out of the way, slow down as much as is safely possible. Remember that erosion might have also occurred on the roadway shoulders, and could worsen through spring rains. Begin watching for pedestrians, bikers and kids. As everyone rushes to take advantage of sunnier days, they may not notice your approach.

Your windshield wipers take a beating during icy weather, potentially leaving them battered as seasonal precipitation changes from snow to rain. Neglected blades put everyone at risk, inside and outside the car. Check your tires for wear and tear, since the risk of hydroplaning because of poor treads increases during spring showers, as well. Check and refill any fluids that may have been lost during the winter.

Safe driving

Sometimes, being prepared

for spring weather is simply a matter of giving yourself more time. Slow down, and allow extra space on the roadway. Following too closely during a rainstorm can lead to late braking, which then puts your car at risk of skidding and perhaps even loss of control. Be aware of four-legged travelers as well, since some are emerging from hibernation. Prepare to stop, in particular at dusk and in rural areas where more wildlife is found. Travel in the middle lane if possible, since rainwater tends to pool on roadway edges.

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SPRING CAR CARE | ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Be aware of belts and hoses

Belts and hoses are undervalued work-horses when it comes to proper vehicle function.

Hoses provide the pathway for crucial fluids to your engine components. Belts keep pulley-driven elements of the car running smoothly. Both require thorough inspection as temperatures begin to rise, because winter may have caused unseen damage. Here's what to look for.

Belts

As conditions change, belts can develop cracks. These serpentine items may play a role in operating your car's air-conditioner compressor, alternator, power-steering pump and water pump. The failure of these items in some cases could spell disaster. The most common indicator of problems with a belt has traditionally been the sound of squeaking from the engine compartment. But modern belts are made from an upgraded material that's less likely to create noises. Instead, they begin shedding strips of rubber, as a failing tire would. If either is happening, take your car to a local auto shop for an inspection. Auto parts stores also sell gauges so you can evaluate belt wear yourself.

Hoses

Hoses likewise are sensitive to drastic weather shifts, as their natural expansions and

contractions risk creating small holes or cracks. Though hoses can look like a confusing maze around the engine, each plays its own crucial role in delivering required fluids. Hose failure can usually be detected because of a burning smell, either sweet or smoky. Coolant leaks are usually sweet, while oil leaks are smoky. If you smell gasoline when the engine is running, turn the vehicle off immediately. Unfortunately, hoses are the weakest link in the cooling

system. They absorb tremendous vibrations, while also enduring fluctuating weather extremes and atmospheric ozone, all of which degrades rubber.

Life expectancy

How long hoses and belts ultimately last varies by manufacturer, the level of use, and outside conditions. They are also dependent on the proper function of the various components to which they're

connected. Belts should generally be replaced every 36,000 miles, but that's under ideal situations. A radiator hose might last anywhere from 50,000 to 100,000 miles, depending on seasonal issues. Though it most often occurs in the summer, overheating can happen at any time. Temps under the hood are much higher, and heat can cause or accelerate the deterioration of rubber. Best to be aware of the warning signs.



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HEART HEALTH | TECHNOLOGY

Fitness trackers

Exercise is good for your heart. Studies show that using a fitness tracker can increase your steps, Johns Hopkins University says.

“Being more active and changing your habits is important,” cardiologist Dr. Seth Martin said. “Tracking likely helps a lot of people when combined with a clear goal to shoot for.”

Types of fitness trackers

Fitness trackers can be as simple as a pedometer or as complex as a smart watch.

No matter which you choose, fitness trackers can provide a record of how much you’re moving.

It can coax you into adding more activity to your day — parking farther away at the store, taking the stairs and more.

“It gives people information and empowers them to start making changes for heart health,” Martin said. “And often, their activity level was not something they were paying attention to before they started tracking.”

Where to start

The cheapest way to get started with a fitness tracker is to get a cheap (or even free; check

with your doctor’s office or insurance company, or your employee wellness plan) pedometer. It just tracks your steps as you go through your daily routine. The most common goal is 10,000 steps per day, but always check with your doctor before starting an exercise plan.

Leveling up

There are also more complex trackers that monitor your vital signs as well as distance traveled. Some models can even automatically detect what kind of exercise you’re doing. These wearables may also pair with your phone so you can use them to check messages and listen to music on the go.

There are a variety of different models on the market with different capabilities. Ask yourself what kinds of things you’d like it to track, how often you’d like to charge it and which kinds of devices you’d like it to pair with while doing your research.

Fancier trackers may also mean more money even though, again, some insurance and wellness plans may offer a steep discount in exchange for you getting more fit. Some trackers also allow you to connect with friends and family so you can create a little friendly competition to reach your health goals sooner.

“I think technology can be a very powerful tool to get people moving more,” Martin said.



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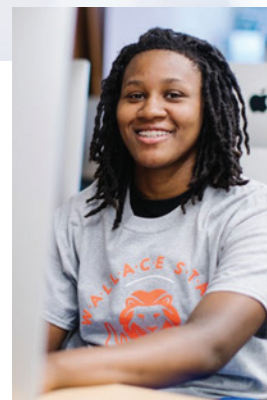
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HEART HEALTH | FOOD

Eat a heart-healthy breakfast

Eating a good breakfast increases your chances at living a healthier lifestyle.

The American Heart Association says breakfast-eaters are less likely to be overweight or obese; have diabetes, heart disease and high cholesterol; use tobacco; not exercise regularly; not get the recommended amounts of nutrients; and eat more calories and added sugars during the rest of the day.

Grab-and-go

Breakfast doesn't have to take a lot of time. You might be more likely to eat breakfast if it takes just a few minutes in your morning routine. Some quick breakfast hacks from the Heart Association include:

- Muffins with healthy ingredients like nuts, whole-grain flour, fruits and vegetables. You can make these ahead and freeze them. Thaw it out and you're ready for breakfast on the go.
- Make instant oatmeal in a mug. Buy it unsweetened and mix in walnuts, applesauce or cinnamon to add a punch of flavor.
- Grab a smoothie in an insulated go-cup. Blend together your favorite frozen fruits with low-fat milk or yogurt, nut butter, applesauce or fruit or vegetable juice.
- Hard-boiled eggs pack protein and are highly portable. You can also slice them on whole grain toast with avocado or tomato

with herbs and spices.

- Whole-grain waffles or English muffins are also a wise choice. Top them with nut butter or low-fat cottage cheese.

Pre-packaged breakfast foods

You might also choose prepackaged breakfast foods. But the Heart Association warns you to be on the look out for added salt and sugars. The products' nutrition labels can help you understand what's in your food and make better choices.

Things you want to look at

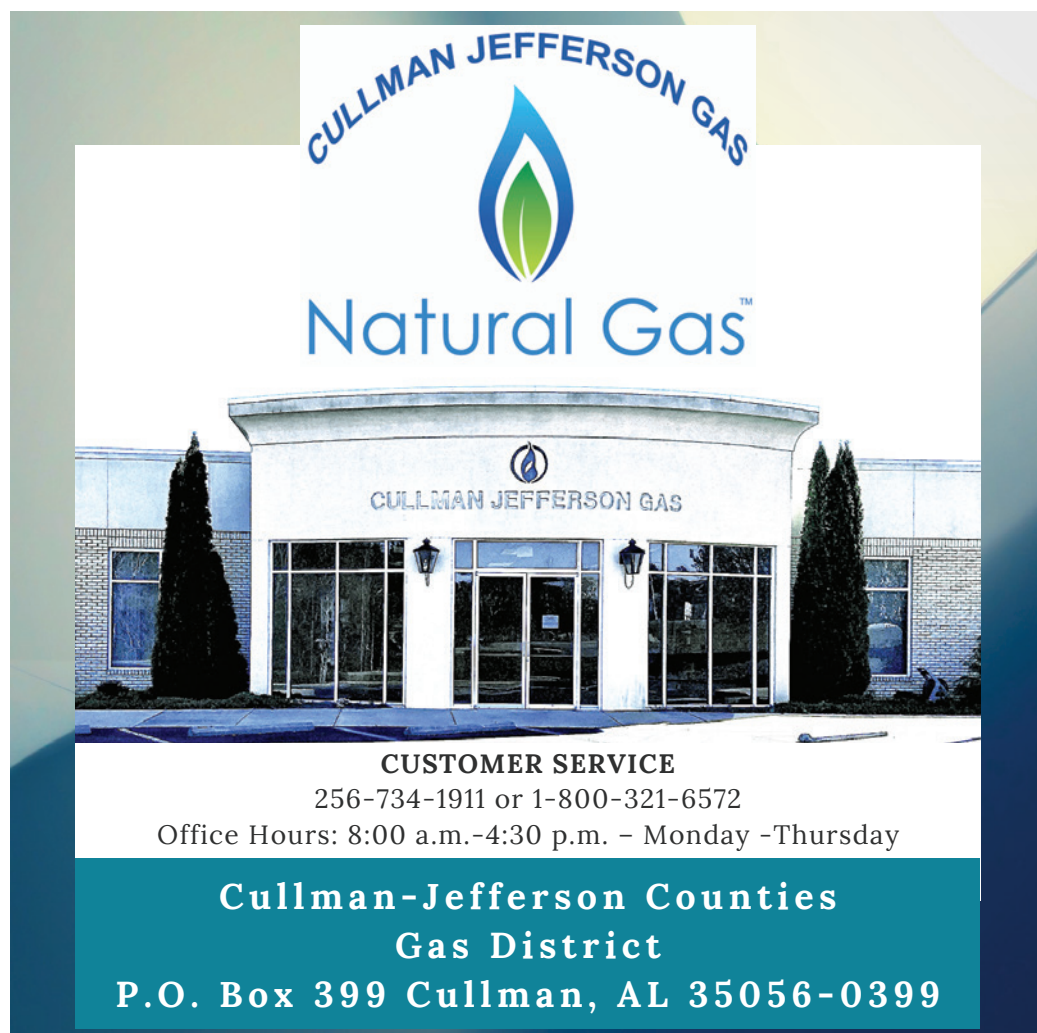
include the serving information. It should be right there on top and will give you the size of a single serving and the total number of servings per container. You also want to pay attention the total calories per serving and per container. They should be the next line down on the label.

The next part of the label lists out certain nutrients and their proportions. Remember that not all fats are bad, but you should avoid saturated and trans fats along with sugars and

sodium. Also check the amount of calcium, dietary fiber, iron, magnesium and vitamins in your food.

The Daily Value tells you the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving in the context of the daily amounts you should be getting.

Remember that each label is based on a diet of 2,000 calories per day, but you may need more or less than that depending on your age, gender, activity level and other factors. Check with your doctor.



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HEART HEALTH | FITNESS

Exercises for heart health

The heart is the most important muscle in your body.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends every adult get at least two hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week at intervals of 10 minutes or more.

Aerobic exercises

Cardio exercises improve your circulation, lower your blood pressure and help you control your blood sugar. Some moderate intensity cardio exercises include going for a brisk walk, biking on flat terrain, taking a leisurely swim, gardening and dancing.

If you're short on time, then

no worries. Just go for more vigorous intensity exercise. These exercises include jogging, biking faster than 10 mph, swimming laps, playing soccer and hiking uphill. About one minute of vigorous-intensity exercise is equal to about two minutes of moderate-intensity aerobics.

Remember to check with your doctor or health care professional before starting an exercise routine.

Strength training

Strength training or resistance training can also improve heart health. Along with cardio, resistance training can help lower your bad cholesterol and reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. You should work in some strength

training at least twice a week, the CDC says. Strength training increases the strength of your bones, muscles and connective tissues; lower your risk of injury; increase your muscle mass; and improve your quality of life.

Strength training should work all of your major muscle groups, including your arms, legs, hips, chest, shoulders, abs and back. Some examples of resistance training are pushups, situps, squats and using weights. These exercises should be done in sets of eight to 12 repetitions until it becomes difficult for you to perform another repetition without help.

Flexibility

Flexibility and stretching can

improve your flexibility and balance. This reduces your chances of getting cramps, joint aches and muscle pains. Flexibility exercises include activities such as tai chi, yoga and Pilates. And you don't have to invest in classes or fancy equipment. Just a few stretches in your living room of a morning can be a big help.

Stretch for three to five times during each session, and go slowly and smoothly into the desired stretch until you go as far as comfortable for you without pain.

Relax and breathe normally while stretching, then stretch while slowly pushing the breath out of your mouth. The stretch should be smooth and slow, never jerky or bounce. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds.

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HEART HEALTH | DOCTORS

Questions for your cardiologist

A cardiologist is a doctor who specializes in finding, treating and preventing issues in the cardiovascular system, including the heart, arteries and veins.

Your primary care or other doctor may refer you to a cardiologist if they suspect you have problems such as congenital heart defects, heart rhythm problems, heart blockages or heart failure, says the University of Iowa.

"Your primary care physician is the gatekeeper to your care," said Dr. Tarak Rambhatla at Baptist Health of South Florida's Miami Cardiac & Vascular Institute.

"Many times, primary care doctors send their patients to me because they see a risk or their patient is having symptoms.

"As a cardiologist, I work with your primary doctor and communicate back to him or her about what any tests uncover and any treatments we recommend."

Cardiologists undergo rigorous training, including four years of pre-medical education at a college or university, the University of Rochester says.

This includes four years of medical school and three years of training in an internal medicine residency program. Then, they have three or more years in a fellowship program.

Ask these questions

The University of Iowa suggest these 10 questions for your cardiologist. It suggests writing the questions down to get your concerns addressed.

1. How does my family history affect my heart health?
2. Is my blood pressure reading normal?
3. What is my cholesterol level and how does this affect my heart?
4. Am I experiencing a heart symptom due to my age, gender or weight?
5. Are my symptoms indicating a heart attack?
6. Are my eating habits causing my heart symptoms?
7. Are my exercise habits causing my symptoms?
8. Is my level of stress or anxiety increasing my risk of heart complications?
9. What are my treatment options for the heart symptoms I'm having?
10. What should I do if my symptoms persist?

Preparing for your appointment

The Cleveland Clinic also suggests getting copies of your medical records and test results. Having them on a CD is best for doctors to review along with written reports. You also want to note down your symptoms, when they occur and what makes them worse or better. Bring a list of your medications, including over-the-counter medications, vitamins and supplements.

Testing

Your cardiologist may order some testing to get a better idea of your overall health.

This can include blood work, electrocardiograms, lifestyle risk assessments and a coronary calcium score.

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SPRING CAR CARE | GEAR

Preparing an emergency kit

Warming conditions are a breeding ground for dangerous weather, from tornadoes to flooding rains to tropical storms.

It's best to be prepared for these conditions by creating an emergency kit in case you get stuck in traffic during an evacuation — or if simple bad luck finds you stranded. Here's a quick rundown on what you'll need.

First aid kit

First aid might be needed whether you're stuck because of a spring weather event or simply suffering a vehicle breakdown. An unexpected injury then becomes life-threatening.

A fully stocked first-aid kit includes sterile dressings to help stop any bleeding, antibiotic towelettes for disinfections, sterile gloves, antibiotic and burn ointments, solution to flush your eyes, bandages in a variety of sizes, a thermometer, a medicine dropper and key non-prescription drugs like aspirin or antacids.

For those who take regular medication, include several doses. (You'll have to remember to periodically switch them out, to accommodate for expiration dates.)

Weather survival items

Depending on when the car becomes stranded, you may be battling heat, rain or cold. When it comes to springtime,

all three issues could arise over the course of the day and night. Keep a blanket and sleeping bag on hand, a source of heat and light like a candle, extra winter or summer clothing, toilet tissue, rope, a flashlight and radio to follow traffic reports and emergency advisories. Pack a rain poncho and an umbrella. Don't forget some sort of insect repellent.

Food and water

If an inconvenience turns into a longer-than-expected period inside the vehicle, you'll need food and water.

Keep several days' worth of non-perishable items, focusing on foods that don't require refrigeration or heating like protein bars, peanut butter, crackers, nuts and granola. Don't forget a can opener, paper plates, cups and utensils. Store enough water for every person and pet in the car.

Charging and filling up

Keep your cellphone fully charged, since it's your lifeline for help. Likewise, don't drive around with little or no gasoline. If possible, keep your car fully fueled during the spring months when weather can be so unpredictable.

Keep family phone numbers saved on your phone, as well as other emergency contacts like a towing company and your insurance provider.

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Can happen anywhere



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IF YOU ARE UNDER A TORNADO WARNING, FIND SAFE SHELTER RIGHT AWAY

Go to a safe room, basement, or storm cellar.



If you can safely get to a sturdy building, do so immediately.

If there is no basement, get to a small, interior room on the lowest level.



Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You're safer in a low, flat location.

Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.



Watch out for flying debris that can cause injury or death.



Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

HOW TO STAY SAFE

WHEN A TORNADO THREATENS



Know your area's tornado risk. In the U.S., the Midwest and the Southeast have a greater risk for tornadoes.

Know the signs of a tornado, including a rotating funnel-shaped cloud, an approaching cloud of debris, or a loud roar—similar to a freight train.

Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts. If your community has sirens, become familiar with the warning tone.

Pay attention to weather reports. Meteorologists can predict when conditions might be right for a tornado.

Identify and practice going to a safe shelter for high winds, such as a safe room built using FEMA criteria or a storm shelter built to ICC 500 standards. The next best protection is a small, interior, windowless room in a sturdy building on the lowest level.

Consider constructing a safe room that meets FEMA or ICC 500 standards.



Immediately go to a safe location that you identified.

Take additional cover by shielding your head and neck with your arms and putting materials such as furniture and blankets around you.

Listen to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.

Do not try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle.

If you are in a car or outdoors and cannot get to a building, cover your head and neck with your arms and cover your body with a coat or blanket, if possible.



Keep listening to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, and local authorities for updated information.

If you are trapped, cover your mouth with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing dust. Try to send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.

Stay clear of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.

Do not enter damaged buildings until you are told that they are safe.

Save your phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.

Be careful during clean-up. Wear thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves.



Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to **ready.gov** and search for **tornado**. Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about preparing for a **tornado**. Find Emergency Safety Tips under Prepare.



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