



The Cullman Tribune PRESENTS
**COMMUNITY
MATTERS**
FEBRUARY - APRIL 2023

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Changes are always going to happen

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com

Since it's a new year we are supposed to make a change, right? Well at least that's what was learned watching all those sappy commercials during the Christmas and New Year's Eve holidays.

So change...what should I change? Perhaps it's best to change the general outlook from generally pessimistic to cautiously happy. Maybe this will give a change of pace to the doldrums of the past few decades. Maybe.

Though it may be a better idea to put that energy toward more work.

We have been organizing the new (redacted as to not speak about something until it's finished), so that will be a cool addition once completed.

Seriously, change at the new year has never made much rational sense to this guy. I've always seen it as a tradition that has become so laughable

it's a joke that many will never make a week, let alone the year, with whatever change they've instituted.

Now this isn't shaming those who do this, because sometimes we need a goal and a start date. Others may just be able to pick up at a moment's notice and proceed in a new direction.

Me, well, it depends on the task at hand. Sometimes it's at a drop of a hat and other times it will take decades to turn the corner.

So what's changing, or at least changing personally? The ability to adapt. It's that simple, but then again it's always been at the core of my life and the goals pursued professionally.

Make changes; don't be worried about the fallout because it could be the best decision you've made in a while. But then again, it could just be your undoing.

(Cue David Bowie's "Changes")

Community Matters

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Discovering the rich heritage of Cullman, Alabama

A journey through time



Cullman's Strawberry Festival, Alabama's oldest, has been a community favorite for decades. This year's festival, the 84th, will take place on May 6, 2023.

Ainsley Ingram
Contributor

The city of Cullman, Alabama, has a rich and fascinating history that dates back to the 19th century. Founded in 1873 by German immigrant John Gottfried Cullmann, the city has grown and developed over the past 150 years to become one of the most vibrant and thriving communities in the state.

Cullmann first came to the area in the 1850s as part of a group of German immigrants seeking new opportunities in

America.

He saw the potential for growth and development in the area, and worked tirelessly to create a community that would be a model for others to follow.

In 1873, he officially established the city of Cullman, and soon after, he began building a network of roads, bridges and public buildings that would help make the city a thriving hub of commerce and industry.

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Cullman continued to grow and expand.

The city attracted new residents and businesses,

and soon became one of the most important agricultural and industrial centers in the region.

The growth of the city was due in large part to its strategic location near the crossroads of several major transportation routes, including the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, which connected the area to the rest of the country.

As the city continued to grow and prosper, it became known for its high quality of life and its strong sense of community.

Over the years, the city has played host to a number of

cultural and civic organizations and events, including the Cullman County Fair, which is one of the largest fairs in the state.

The city has also been home to many important institutions, such as the Cullman Public Library and the Cullman Regional Medical Center, which provide essential services and resources to residents.

In recent years, Cullman has continued to evolve and change.

The city has embraced new technologies and innovative ideas, and has become a hub for businesses »

and entrepreneurs who are looking to start or grow their businesses.

The city has also become a popular tourist destination, with attractions like Smith Lake and the Ave Maria Grotto, which draw visitors from all over the world.

Despite its rapid growth and development, Cullman has remained true to its roots.

The city is proud of its rich history and cultural heritage, and continues to honor the legacy of its founder, John Gottfried Cullmann.

Today, Cullman is a thriving and vibrant community that offers its residents and visitors a unique blend of history, culture and innovation.

As the city of Cullman continues to evolve and grow, it remains a testament to the hard work, determination and vision of its founder, John Gottfried Cullmann.

The city's rich history is a reminder of the sacrifices that were made by its pioneers, and a testament to the power of community and the American spirit.

Whether you are a lifelong resident, a newcomer or a visitor, the city of Cullman is a place where history and progress come together to create a truly special community.

Noah Galilee contributed to this article.



Cullman Depot

CONTRIBUTED



The Weiss Cottage, along First Avenue Southwest, is Cullman's oldest home.

CONTRIBUTED

DEDICATION

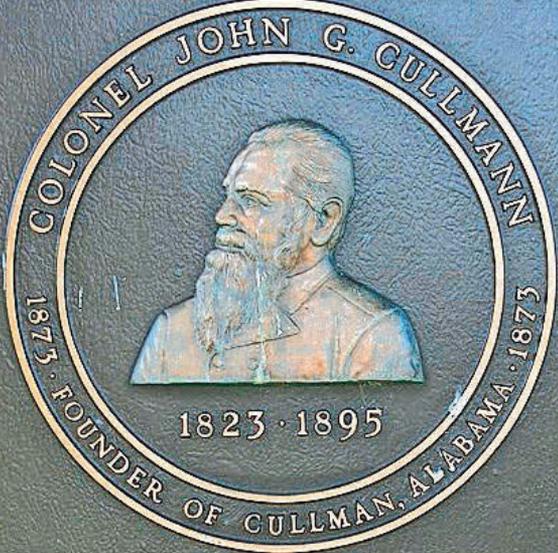


John G. Cullmann House
Cullman, Alabama

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 1975
Three O'Clock In The Afternoon

The John G. Cullman House, the Cullman County Museum, was dedicated in 1975.

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Colonel Cullmann marker

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Never a dull moment in Cullman!

Amy Leonard

amy@cullmantribune.com

After the long winter months when many chose to stay indoors and watch the often rainy, cold days languidly pass, springtime is swiftly approaching. As our daffodils and azaleas bloom and Easter Sunday is prepared for and celebrated, Cullman will be opening its doors and rolling out the welcome mat to another season of festivals, special events and classes of all kinds.

Intro to Casual Calligraphy

- The Stampin' Elephant
- Saturday, Feb. 11, 1-3 p.m.
- Recently opened, The Stampin' Elephant is destined to be the bee in Hanceville's bonnet with its custom made gift baskets, craft supply selection and informative classes. In this intro workshop, aspiring calligraphers will learn to use pointed pens with dip ink and become familiar with the tools while practicing the casual calligraphy alphabet. All supplies will be provided with the \$30 registration fee. The Stampin' Elephant is located at 108 Commercial St. in Hanceville. Register at www.justwrite-calligraphy.com/service-page/intro-to-casual-calligraphy-11.

Empty Bowls of Cullman County

- Cullman First United Methodist Church, Hearin Hall
- Monday, Feb. 20, 4-6 p.m.
- Enjoy a delicious dinner of Three Guys chili and grilled cheese, music by local performers and a silent auction. This local favorite benefits Cullman Caring for Kids. Only

one thing will be different this year. For 17 years, potters made bowls for attendees to take home after their meals. The potters are no longer able to produce the number of bowls needed for everyone. Drive-through and carry-out options will be available. Tickets are \$10 each and available at Cullman Caring for Kids or First United Methodist Church. Monetary donations or donations to the silent auction can be made at Cullman Caring for Kids, 402 Arnold St. NE #W1, Cullman, AL 35055. Monetary donations can also be made online at www.cullmancaringforkids.com. First United Methodist is located at 320 Third Ave. SE.

Veteran and Beginning Farmer Series: So You Want To Keep Bees For Fun and Profit?

- North Alabama Agriplex
- Tuesday, Feb. 21, 6 p.m.
- In its second class of the year, the Veteran and Beginning Farmer Series will explore beekeeping as a hobby and as a moneymaker with local beekeepers participating in a panel discussion with exhibits to study. The free class will be held at the Agriplex at 1714 Tally Ho St. NW. Register with Tony Glover at gloveta@aces.edu or 205-568-0005.

Veteran and Beginning Farmer Series: Do You Want to Sell Your Farm, Garden or Kitchen Products to the Public?

- North Alabama Agriplex
- Tuesday, March 14, 6 p.m.
- Helpful input and advice from experienced farmers and market sellers will be provided for the attendees to make the most out of their produce. The free class will be held at the Agriplex at 1714 Tally Ho

St. NW. Register with Tony Glover at gloveta@aces.edu or 205-568-0005.

Inaugural Gospel Music Jubilee

- Northbrook Baptist Church
- Friday, March 17, 5 p.m.
- The first cancer awareness event of its kind will benefit the Cullman County Bosom Buddies Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides financial support to Cullman County residents battling all types of cancer.
- Doors open at 5 p.m. and the entertainment begins at 6 p.m. St. Bernard Jazz Band and

Unity 4 Quartet are scheduled to perform and the evening will feature the Living Faith Quartet. Advance tickets are \$15 or \$20 at the door. A limited number of VIP tickets with parking are available for \$25. Tickets can be purchased at www.CullmanBosomBuddies.com or by visiting Options at 2201 Second Ave. NW or Yates Christian Bookstore at 1650 Second Ave. SW.

Cullman Women's League Auction

- Steele Building
- Friday, March 17, 6-9 p.m.
- The fundraising auction »

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will benefit Brooks' Place, the Cullman Regional Foundation, Curt's Closet, the Wallace State Future Foundation, Good Samaritan Health Clinic, Hope Horses, Knapsacks for Kids, The Link of Cullman County, Pilot Light House, Restoring Women Outreach and the Cullman Women's League Scholarship Fund.

- Live music will be provided by local favorite The Overtones and silent and live auctions will take place. Tickets are available for \$30 and will include dinner and two drinks. They can be purchased at Three Pears, Southern Accents, White Willow and TheraPlay. They may also be purchased from any active members of the Cullman Women's League.

Hanceville Irish Festival

- Commercial Street in downtown Hanceville
- Saturday, March 18, 9 a.m.-5

p.m.

- This fun, free annual festival celebrates Hanceville's Irish heritage and music, dancing, craft vendors and food will be on-hand. www.facebook.com/hancevilleirishfest

Kaleb's 5K Run

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

begins at 8 a.m. and the 1-mile fun run will start at 9.

39th Annual Bloomin' Festival Arts and Craft Fair

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

Relay For Life of Cullman

County's Party in the Park

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

Strawberry Festival

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

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TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Water cascades over the Duck River Dam spillway.

Duck River Dam and Reservoir

A new source of drinking water for Cullman residents

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com

The Duck River Dam and Reservoir project has been a long-standing effort to secure an additional water source for Cullman's growing poultry

industry and agriculture. The project started with a \$5 million grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) authorized by Congress in 1992 and was managed by Cullman Economic Development Agency Director Dale Greer.

"Cullman's poultry industry

and agriculture were the primary drivers for an alternative water supply," said Greer. "(It was) contracted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine how to address the need—build a new reservoir or connection to existing water supply sources."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined the size of the reservoir and the height of the dam, and it is now owned by the Cullman Utilities Board. Reservoir Manager Tim Scott oversees the lake and its surroundings, including water quality »



TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

An aerial view of the construction of the Duck River Dam in Cullman County

monitoring and downstream release requirements.

According to Greer, in December 2015, 10 inches of rain brought the water level to 718 feet, and on April 8, 2016, the full pool of 725 feet was reached with water flowing over the spillway.

“Water was pumped to the Cullman Water Treatment Plant for testing on July 7, 2020, and the first day of actual Duck River water being treated was in August of 2020,” he said.

The opening of the Duck River Reservoir was crucial as Corps engineering studies indicated that Lake Catoma alone was not sufficient to handle drought conditions or future supply demands, as demonstrated in the summer of 2007 when the lake dropped more than 25 feet and had less than 60 days of water supply capacity.

Greer stated the water being filtered and treated at the Cullman Water Treatment

Plant is determined by water quality and cost of treatment, with no set formula.

“The past two years, the primary water source from August to December was Duck River due to lower treatment costs. The cost per 1,000 gallons of water is divided equally among the seven water system users and is set on the cost per 1,000 gallons,” he said.

The Duck River project was proposed in 1995 with a capacity of 32 million gallons per day (MGD), and land acquisition was complete in 2012 with the purchase of 89 parcels, covering approximately 1,400 acres. The total cost of the project was \$110 million, and a federal permit was received in August 2000. The permit was challenged by environmental groups but was reinstated by the courts in 2006 and development moved forward. The maximum amount of water that the reservoir can hold is 32 MGD, and the combined

- **Year Duck River project was proposed: 1995**
- **Year land acquisition was complete: 2012**
- **Total acres purchased to contain the new reservoir and its entire footprint and 89 parcels: approximately 1,400**
- **Total cost of excavation and construction: \$110 million**
- **Maximum number of gallons that can be held in the reservoir: 32 million a day**
- **Size of spillway: 295 feet**
- **Date water began flowing to Cullman Water Treatment Plant: July 2020**
- **Date first water from Duck River entered the drinking supply: August 2020**
- **On just one day in August 2022: Cullman Water Treatment Plant treated 23 million gallons**

capacity of Duck River and Lake Catoma is 56 MGD, projected to meet the community's water needs for 75 to 100 years.

The dam is named "Noble Dam" after the family who sold a large parcel of land for the project to move forward. The permit required the addition of recreational features, including

a 21-mile public walking and biking trail, stocked fishing, public boat ramps, a handicapped fishing pier and mandatory minimum water releases to protect downstream fish and wildlife. The construction material, including clay and rock, was mined on-site to lower costs.



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Setting the barre for generations

Cullman Ballet Theatre celebrates 50 years



Young Cullman Ballet Theatre dancers pose for a photo.

CONTRIBUTED

Amy Leonard

amy@cullmantribune.com

The tenacity and work ethic of strong women and their supportive family have been the backbone of Cullman Ballet Theatre for 50 years. At the helm has always been Elaine Willingham, a statuesque picture of grace and poise, who opened the school in 1972.

Over the past five decades, other studios and fads have come and gone from the Cullman area dance landscape, but Willingham's classic instruction and time honored

reverence for the art of ballet have provided the structure for her vision to continue to grow and thrive.

After beginning her school in her father's car showroom, the ambitious young mother of two children was presented a sketch of the floor plan that her father-in-law, Joe Willingham, had drawn. His plan included an area for a ballet school and a separate portion for a music school for her brother-in-law, Tony.

"I thought it sounded great but couldn't imagine it happening anytime soon," reflected Willingham. "But Joe

Willingham got busier than I expected and the Willingham Arts Building became the home to my Ballet Theatre School for the next 20 years."

Willingham's mother was the catalyst for building the foundation of an ongoing love of dance. Willingham said, "She always wanted to dance, and growing up during the Depression she never had the chance to take lessons. My mother made sure my sister and I had all the opportunities she missed out on. She just had no idea I would love it so much."

She continued, "When I was

10 years old the only dance school in Cullman was the Miss Anita Burbage School. I was only able to take ballet with Miss Burbage one year because her family had to move due to her husband's job relocation. She told my mother to take me to a school in Birmingham."

In only the one year of practice, Willingham's instructor saw talent and determination in her young career and urged her to continue.

"At age 11 my mother drove me to Birmingham every Saturday to the Birmingham Civic Ballet School, which was the official school »

of the Birmingham Civic Ballet Company. After nine months of classes my teacher Miss Gloria told my mother I was ready for pointe shoes," she said.

At age 13 and only three years into ballet, Willingham auditioned and was accepted to a dance company as an apprentice. The once a week trips to Birmingham now meant her mother drove three times a week to take Willingham to rehearsals.

"I learned in a hurry how tough you had to be to dance with professionals," Willingham said. "I had the best teachers any ballet student could have asked for thanks to my mother finding this exceptional school. The director of the company, Richard Englund, was tough and I know to this day that was good for me. I especially admired his wife Gage Bush, who was the perfect example of a ballerina."

"The summer I turned 12 I got my first pair of pointe shoes and I fell in love with those beautiful shoes! I still wear pointe shoes to this day and am the primary teacher for first-year pointe students."

Despite the rugged schedule and high expectations placed on Willingham by her professional peers, she stands by the lessons she was taught in those early years and continues them today.

"Too many today want to baby their children and that does not prepare them for the real professional ballet world," explained Willingham. "I believe that even if a »



Elaine Willingham, left, with one of her dancers

CONTRIBUTED

parent just wants their child to be a recreational dancer then why not start out with the best teachers that have trained under true ballerinas and danseurs? If the child shows a serious interest in a dance career, they will already be better prepared in their training regardless of the desire for a career or not.

"It takes so much more than talent, so why not start them on the correct path instead of giving everyone a trophy just for participation which does not prepare children for the tough adult world in any profession they may pursue."

"Ballet in particular is just not easy, even for the most gifted."

Only one year later, Willingham had worked her way up to a full company member at age 14 and the commutes to Birmingham were now seven days a week. While Willingham was in rehearsals, her mother used her time and talent sewing costumes for her daughter.

The tedious schedule continued for two years, during which performed in several roles in "Giselle," "Romeo and Juliet" and more. Then, the next growth opportunity presented itself.

"While performing with the company on tour at the Southeastern Ballet Festival I was one of five dancers in our company that were awarded scholarships to the School of American Ballet in New York City for their five-week summer program," Willingham said. "After the first week in



CONTRIBUTED

Elaine Willingham has been dancing for most of her life.

classes I was the only one of my friends that was offered a full scholarship to return for the academic school year where I would attend the Professional Children's School in between my ballet classes. I was asked back for three consecutive years which were my sophomore to senior years of high school."

By her senior year, Willingham shared an apartment with a member of the New York City Ballet Company where she saw exactly how intensive life in a big ballet company was. She saw that life consisted solely of classes, rehearsals and performing and learned that the wages were meager.

Willingham decided it was

time for a change.

"I really enjoyed the school and the George Balanchine technique, which is primarily what I still teach in my school, along with the Vaganova Russian Style. But I decided it was time for me to move on."

Never one to be sedentary, Willingham got to work soon after returning home.

"The big city had more than enough dancers and I felt my hometown needed me more."

"I came home and taught ballet at Athens College and

the Huntsville Ballet School for one year. In the meantime, I continued to further my dance training by attending the International Academy of Dance in Portugal for five weeks the summer of 1972, Ballet West summer program for four weeks in 1973 and guest perform with the Memphis Ballet Company," she said.

Willingham then met a young aspiring law student who shared similar values and was in awe of her class, her beauty and her ambition.

"I met my future husband Dan Willingham and after we married, I taught ballet two quarters at Auburn University until he graduated," she reminisced. "While my husband was in law school, I »



Elaine Willingham, seated, poses for a photo among her dancers.

CONTRIBUTED

taught ballet at Snead State Junior College and opened my school in Cullman in my daddy's shop (Bill Brown Motors) show room. He hung curtains and I found someone to make ballet barres and the room already had mirrors on the wall. I had classes two days a week and I had 10 students. The other days I was still traveling to Snead State Junior College to teach."

After her husband passed the bar exam, Willingham chose to concentrate on her ballet school and stop teaching outside of Cullman. She added jazz dance classes to her school's schedule, which are still going strong, along with hip hop classes. An adult class for ballet beginners was included as well.

"I then learned that as my school grew I could not do everything myself now that I was in my 40s," she explained. "I reached out to 20 parents by letter to meet and start »

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some kind of organization to help the more serious dancer students. I saw the dance competition world evolving and I wanted another avenue for my dancers that did not include dancers competing against each other like a sport.

"Dance is an art, not a sport. I also wanted to have a more wholesome conservative environment for our young dancers. I did not see the evolving dance competition world to be a good dance example for my students.

"I wanted to encourage my students to continue dancing in the summers and for me to have a ballet company for the more serious students so they would be more prepared for a professional dance career if that was what they wanted to pursue."

In 1995 Willingham met with five parents who shared her vision and together they made the Cullman Ballet Society a reality.

"I am proud to say that the Cullman Ballet Society, a non-profit organization that was established in 1995, has given thousands of dollars in summer scholarships to dance students and sponsors the Cullman Ballet Company to this day. By the year 1999 I needed more dance space and my brother-in-law did too. His music school was also growing.

"My husband already owned land across Highway 278 from my school and we decided to build there. I was so nervous and put a lot of work into getting it ready. It has been a dream come true but takes a lot of work and determination."

As her dream continued to grow, The Performance Center was added in 2020, which added a new building that houses a small performance theater and area available for the public to rent for special events.

"I have been very blessed and know God gave me this »



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Elaine Willingham instructs young dancers.

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talent for some reason," Willingham surmised.

"I have taught all the great classics to my students and have created so many of my own original pieces that I hope will continue to be danced long after I am gone. I am also very blessed to have a husband that always supported me in all I wanted to do.

"And how many grandmothers can say they have had all four of their grandchildren involved in the production of 'The Nutcracker' its second year in a row?"

Willingham is quick to give credit to the student

who has studied her ways longer than most others, her daughter, Anna Lanier. Also an instructor, Lanier has taught pre-ballet level classes for over 20 years and shares her mother's vision.

Willingham concluded, "I still have a hard time believing I'm still teaching what I love. But I mostly love being around these children and watching them learn and grow as dancers and especially how they learn to be a part of a very special community that also teaches life skills, whether they become a professional dancer or not."



Elaine Willingham coaches a young dancer at the barre.

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Dolly's Imagination Library (and Paige Clabo) take Cullman by storm



PAIGE CLABO

A group of students poses with books available from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Amy Leonard
amy@cullmantribune.com

Dolly Parton has caused a stir everywhere she's gone for many moons now. The country music icon puts her fame to good use in her hometown of Sevierville, Tennessee, and all over the world, and since 2021 in Cullman, Alabama, through her Imagination Library.

The program began in 1995 in Sevier County, Tennessee, and as it branched out to send books across the globe the Imagination Library mailed its one-millionth book in 2003. As

of 2022, two million books are mailed out through the library each month.

Caregivers sign up children from birth to age 5, and each month the children receive an age-appropriate book to inspire, educate and enjoy. The goal is for children to comprehend reading fundamentals by the time they begin kindergarten.

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce Director of Programs and Friends of the Public Libraries of Cullman County Board Member Paige Clabo has a special connection to Dolly and the Imagination Library.

For nine years Clabo worked at Dollywood and had the joy of bringing the books to life for many preschools and elementary schools. But the program means even more to Clabo than that.

"My father-in-law was illiterate," explained Clabo. "Dolly's dad was also illiterate, which is why she started the Imagination Library.

"She started the program because she wanted children, by the time they reached kindergarten, to already be able to read and have that head start. That's why it's important to my husband and I because Ken, my father-in-law, wasn't

able to read."

She continued, "Wes, my husband, grew up reading to his dad, reading menus. His dad wouldn't order in a restaurant. Wes would order for him.

"Ken made it through and was so skilled in other areas. He was a master craftsman and woodworker.

"He was able to provide for his family without reading, but I think his life would have been richer if he had been able to read. That's why this program is so important to me."

The Imagination Library was brought to Cullman in October 2021 by the Friends of the Public Libraries »

of Cullman County and the Cullman Electric Cooperative. Their sign-up goal for the year was met within days, and currently 2,281 children in Cullman County are registered to receive a monthly book the Imagination Library. Since October 2021, 32,918 books have been mailed out to children in Cullman County.

Clabo personally knows the comfort that comes from being read to as a child.

"Reading helped my brother and I when we were young. My dad had Huntington's disease when we were growing up, so our household was a little chaotic because he was suffering from that disease.

"The stability that my mother provided by reading to us every night - no matter what kind of day we had, we knew our day would end in a happy and healthy way with Mom or Dad reading to us - that time reading together created a connection with our family," she said.

One misconception about the library is that it's fully funded by Parton, which Clabo clarified.

"We're so grateful for the success of this program. We want to get these books into the hands of children.

"It's important for people to understand that Dolly Parton does not fund this program completely," she said. "She partners with people to provide the books at a discounted rate, but we rely on our community's backing as far as funding goes."

Sponsoring a child for one year is \$25, which covers 12 books, plus shipping. Sponsoring a child from birth until graduation from the program at kindergarten age is \$125 for all 60 books and shipping costs. What a neat gift idea for the booklovers



The Imagination Library was brought to Cullman in 2021 by the Friends of the Public Libraries of Cullman County and the Cullman Electric Cooperative.

PAIGE CLABO

in your life - buy your loved one a book they have been wanting and inside the book have a certificate noting you

have sponsored a child for the Imagination Library in his or her honor. Corporate sponsorships are also available.

More information is available at www.ccimaginationlibrary.com or by emailing friendsofcullmanlibraries@gmail.com.

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5 ways to get fit in 2023

Lauren Estes
lauren@cullmantribune.com

With each new year, the principle of discipline remains

the same: it is within your power to take back your health.

Sometimes you just need a little extra accountability to help push you toward building consistent, healthy habits.

Here are five ways to get on track to taking back your health this year!

1. If you're not sure how or where to start when it comes to nutrition, strength training or cardiovascular workouts, hire a personal trainer. Personal trainers can help monitor, create and guide your workouts, ensuring proper technique while applying your goals to the process.

2. Invest in a fitness tracker! There are many fitness watches, phone apps, books, etc. that can be utilized to monitor your personal progress. Whether you use a watch to capture your daily steps or calories burned during a workout, or a food journey or app to track your macros or calories, there are many ways to hold yourself accountable during your journey.

3. Find a class, gym buddy or accountability partner who will help you stay disciplined when your motivation is on empty. People always say they have a lack of motivation, but the reality is they're really missing the discipline to stay committed and accountable. Having a person in your core

group or hiring a coach can help you show up when you're worn out and stay committed to your goals when the emotion and excitement for change wears off.

4. Raise the standard for the big five S's of wellness: Steps, Sunshine, Sleep, Steak and Solution. Getting your steps in daily (cardio) is very beneficial for weight management. Daily Vitamin D helps boost your immune system and your mood. Sleep is your greatest recovery asset. "Steak," or monitoring your protein intake, is one of the best ways to manage weight loss/fat loss. Eating lean meats and tracking your food is key in developing your journey toward taking back your health. Last, drinking your daily needed intake of water and electrolytes is the solution to reaching your goals and proper hydration.

5. Finally, set a reasonable goal and tell someone. Allow that person to reach out and help you along your journey. The goal can be small or something that really challenges you mentally and physically. Setting small goals and achieving them over time en route to getting to a bigger goal is an easy way to stay motivated and disciplined because you see change happening! Just because your goals aren't reached overnight doesn't mean changes aren't occurring. Monitor your progress and watch yourself grow throughout your journey.

Now it's time to put the words into action and get started toward being your healthiest self!

"You don't have to be great

to start, but you do have to start to be great," Zig Ziglar said.

Stay accountable, work hard and be consistent.

For more inspiration, check out:

• www.hussle.com/

blog/23-tips-to-get-fit-in-2023

• www.cnet.com/health/fitness/3-fitness-expert-approved-exercises-for-weight-loss-in-2023/

• www.insanelygoodrecipes.com/foods-that-start-with-s



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Healthy recipes to start your year right

Lauren Estes

lauren@cullmantribune.com

One of the best ways to take control of your health is through your nutritional habits. Meal prepping helps create an intentional plan for your nutrition goals, which makes way for less excessive spending, eating out and unhealthy decisions. The best way to stay on task is to make a weekly food plan through grocery shopping and prepping your meals at home. Here are four healthy recipes to try.

PROTEIN BENTO BOXES

Ingredients

- Two free-range, hard-boiled eggs
- One serving high-quality cottage cheese or Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup raw almonds
- 1/2 cup organic mixed berries
- 1 tiny piece organic cheese

Instructions

Place in glass food prep containers, seal well, refrigerate and eat within three days.

(www.cleanfoodcrush.com/clean-eating-protein-packed-breakfast-bento-boxes/)

CILANTRO-LIME SHRIMP WRAPS

Ingredients

- 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- Juice of 1 lime
- 2 tbsp. freshly chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil,

divided

- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Romaine lettuce, for serving
- 1 avocado, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup sour cream, for serving

Instructions

1. In a large bowl, stir together shrimp, cumin, lime juice, cilantro, garlic and 2 tbsp. oil and season with salt and pepper. Toss until combined, then let marinate in the fridge 10 minutes.

2. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat remaining tablespoon oil. Add shrimp and marinade cook until pink, 2 minutes per side.

3. Assemble wraps: Add shrimp and avocado to lettuce, drizzle with sour cream and garnish with cilantro.

(www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a22668083/cilantro-lime-shrimp-lettuce-wraps-recipe/)

SOUTHWESTERN SWEET POTATO AND EGG HASH

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup (1/2-in.) diced peeled sweet potato
- 2 tsp. water
- 1 1/2 tsp. olive oil, divided
- 2/3 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/4 tsp. chili powder
- 1/8 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/4 cup unsalted canned black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 large egg
- 2 tbsp. Green Goddess Avocado Sauce
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh

cilantro

Instructions

1. Place potatoes and 2 tsp. water in a microwave-safe dish; cover with plastic wrap. Microwave at high until tender, about 4 minutes. Place potatoes on a paper towel-lined plate. Let stand 5 minutes.

2. Heat 1 tsp. oil in a cast-iron skillet over medium-high. Add potatoes, bell pepper, chili powder, salt and cumin; cook until potatoes are crisp, 6-8 minutes. Stir in black beans; transfer to a plate.

3. Reduce heat to medium. Add remaining 1/2 tsp. oil to pan. Crack egg into pan; cook until whites are set, 3-4 minutes. Place egg on potato mixture. Top with Green Goddess Avocado Sauce and cilantro.

(www.cookinglight.com/recipes/southwestern-sweet-potato-and-egg-hash)

SKINNY CHICKEN FAJITA SOUP

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into strips
- 1 (1.27 oz.) packet fajita seasoning
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 green bell pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 poblano pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 large onion, cut into thin strips
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can fire roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 (15 oz.) can seasoned black beans



CONTRIBUTED

Bento boxes

- 1 (14 oz.) can chicken broth
- 1 dash hot sauce
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Heat oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. Place chicken in the hot oil; cook, stirring only occasionally, until brown, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle fajita seasoning over the browned chicken and stir well to coat. Add the red and green bell pepper, poblano pepper and onion to the seasoned chicken. Stir and cook over medium heat until the vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes.

2. Pour the fire roasted tomatoes, black beans, and chicken broth into the pot with the chicken and vegetables. Bring the soup to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low, and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

3. Season the soup with hot sauce, salt and pepper to taste before serving.

(www.cucinadeyung.com/skinny-chicken-fajita-soup)



Left to right: Kelly Duke, place 3 - Kerry Watson, place 1 - Jeff Clemons, Chairman - Corey Freeman, place 4 - Garry Marchman, place 2



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The importance of local parks

Ainsley Ingram

Contributor

Local parks are an integral part of any community, as each serves as a place for residents to gather, relax and enjoy nature. They provide an opportunity for children to play, for families to bond and for the elderly to stay active. With the many benefits that parks offer, it's important that communities prioritize the maintenance and development of these green spaces.

One of the most obvious benefits of local parks is that they provide a place for residents to engage in physical activity. Research has shown that people who live near parks are more likely to be physically active than those who do not. This is especially important in today's world where sedentary lifestyles and obesity are becoming increasingly common. Parks provide a safe, accessible and affordable place for people to walk, run, bike and play sports. This can help to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

"Local parks are a valuable part of the community as they add a quality of life that's unique from anything else the community can offer. Shared public space that's well-kept and recreationally useful allows (residents) the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities they otherwise may not have access to," said Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism (CPRST) Executive Director Nathan Anderson. "They provide families with a way

to connect with nature and recreate which are proven to have numerous physical, mental, and emotional benefits."

Besides promoting physical health, local parks also provide numerous mental health benefits. Spending time in nature has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood and cognitive function and boost overall well-being. For children, playing in nature can also improve their mental health, as well as their creativity and imagination. Parks also provide a place for people to socialize and connect with their community. This can be especially beneficial for older adults who may be isolated and lonely.

Parks can also play an important role in preserving the environment as they can provide a habitat for local wildlife, protect natural resources and help to improve air and water quality. Parks serve as a place for residents to learn about and appreciate the natural world. This can be particularly important for children, as it can help to instill a sense of stewardship and respect for the environment that will last a lifetime.

Local parks are an important economic asset as they can attract tourists, boost property values and stimulate economic development. For example, a well-maintained park can attract visitors and make a community more desirable for businesses and residents. This can lead to increased property values, and in turn, more revenue for the local government.

"If parks aren't maintained year-round, they can quickly become deteriorated and incur more cost from repairs than the cost of continual maintenance. There is also a relationship between how well parks are maintained and how often they are used. It's important that we encourage the use of parks because of the many benefits they provide to the public," said Anderson.

Despite the many benefits that local parks offer, they are often underfunded and under-maintained. This is unfortunate, as investing in parks can have a positive impact on the community. In order to ensure that local parks continue to provide these benefits, it is important that communities prioritize their maintenance and development. This can be done by increasing funding for park maintenance, developing new parks and creating partnerships between the community and local government to ensure that parks are accessible and well-maintained.

"Our CPRST parks and facilities are some of the best in the state and several have won awards as a result. With that being said, we work hard to make sure we're creating better park experiences for those we serve," Anderson said. "We regularly assess concerns and make decisions with our (residents') best interests in mind. With an array of public outdoor spaces available here in Cullman, we encourage everyone to find one they enjoy and want to revisit each week."

If you're looking for a local park, check out the list below.

OUTDOOR PARKS FREE ADMISSION

Art Park

1031 Second St. SW
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-9157
www.cullmanrecreation.org/art-park3f57a683

Carroll Acres

Briarwood Lane and Timberlane Drive Southeast
Cullman, AL, 35055
www.cullmanrecreation.org

Culpepper Park

1724 Primrose Dr. NW
Cullman, AL 35055
www.cullmanrecreation.org

Ingle Park

1630 Field of Miracles Dr. SW
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-9157
www.cullmanrecreation.org

Nesmith Park

311 McNabb Dr. SW
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-9157
www.cullmanrecreation.org

Stiefelmeyer Park

Eighth Avenue and Meadowview Drive Northeast
Cullman, AL 35055
www.cullmanrecreation.org

East Side Park

Seventh Street Southeast
Cullman, AL
www.cullmanrecreation.org

Depot Park

209 First Ave. NE
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-9157
www.cullmanrecreation.org/depot-parkab792aba

Skate Depot
 601 Second Ave. NE
 Cullman, AL 35055
 256-734-9157
www.facebook.com/skatedepotcullman

www.cullmanrecreation.org/hurricane-creek-park15903d77

256-737-0220
www.palominorvresort.com

Slippery Summit
 1315 County Road 222
 Cullman, AL 35057
 256-737-0220
www.slipperysumit.com

Cullman Community Archery Park
 2604 County Road 490
 Cullman, AL 35055
www.cullmanrecreation.org

Duck River Reservoir & Trails
 2074 County Road 1651
 Cullman, AL 35058
www.duckriver.org

WildWater Park
 1707 Main Ave. SW
 Cullman, AL 35055
 256-775-7946
www.wildwatercullman.com

Noah Galilee contributed to this article.

**OUTDOOR PARKS/
 FACILITIES
 PAID ADMISSION**

Field of Miracles
 1630 Field of Miracles Dr. SW
 Cullman, AL 35055
www.cullmanrecreation.org

Terri Pines Country Club
 700 Pine Hill Dr.
 Cullman, AL 35057
 256-739-0738
www.tpcountryclub.com

Heritage Park
 1705 Lee Ave. SW
 Cullman, AL 35055
www.cullmanrecreation.org/heritage-park

Cross Creek Golf Course
 2321 County Road 490
 Cullman, AL 35055
 256-739-2386
www.crosscreekcullman.com

Hurricane Creek Park
 22550 Second Ave. NW
 Falkville, AL 35622

Palomino RV Resort
 1315 County Road 222
 Cullman, AL 35057



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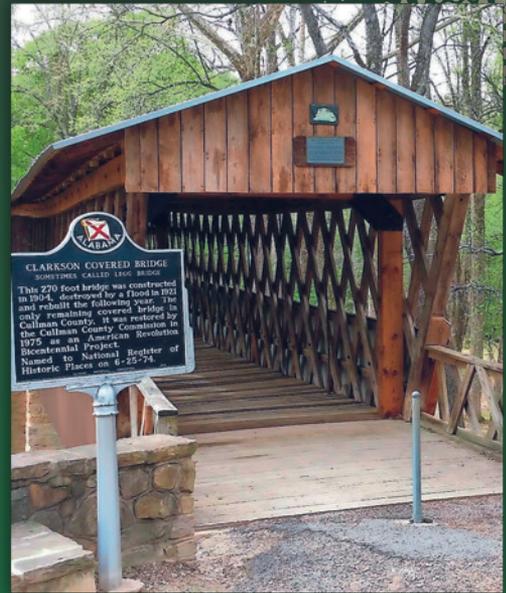


2023 COUNTY PARKS & REC CALENDAR

FEBRUARY–MAY 2023

- February 11 - Stony Lonesome Night Ride
- February 17-18 - Cullman County 4H Show - Ag Center
- February 19 - Brett Crow Livestock Show - Ag Center
- February 25 - ABA Barrel Race - Ag Center
- February 25 - Stony Lonesome Night Ride
- March 3-4 - West Point Rodeo
- March 11- Stony Lonesome Night Ride
- March 18 - Sportsman Lake Yard Sale
- March 25 - ABA Barrel Race - Ag Center
- March 25 - Smith Lake Park Yard Sale
- March 25 - Stony Lonesome Night Ride
- April 1 - Southeastern Red Angus Association - Ag Center
- April 8 - Stony Lonesome Night Ride
- April 8 - Sportsman Lake Easter Egg Hunt
- April 20-22 - Vintage Market Days - Ag Center
- April 22 - Stony Lonesome Night Ride
- April 28-29 - Bill Hudson Double Creek Rodeo - Ag Center
- May 6 - Stony Lonesome Night Ride
- May 6 - ABA Barrel Race - Ag Center
- May 13 - ASDR (Dog Show) - Ag Center
- May 13 - Stony Lonesome Mud Run 5k
- May 20 - Horse Show - Ag Center
- May 27 - Memorial Day Festival - Smith Lake Park
- May 27 - Stony Lonesome Night Ride

*DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

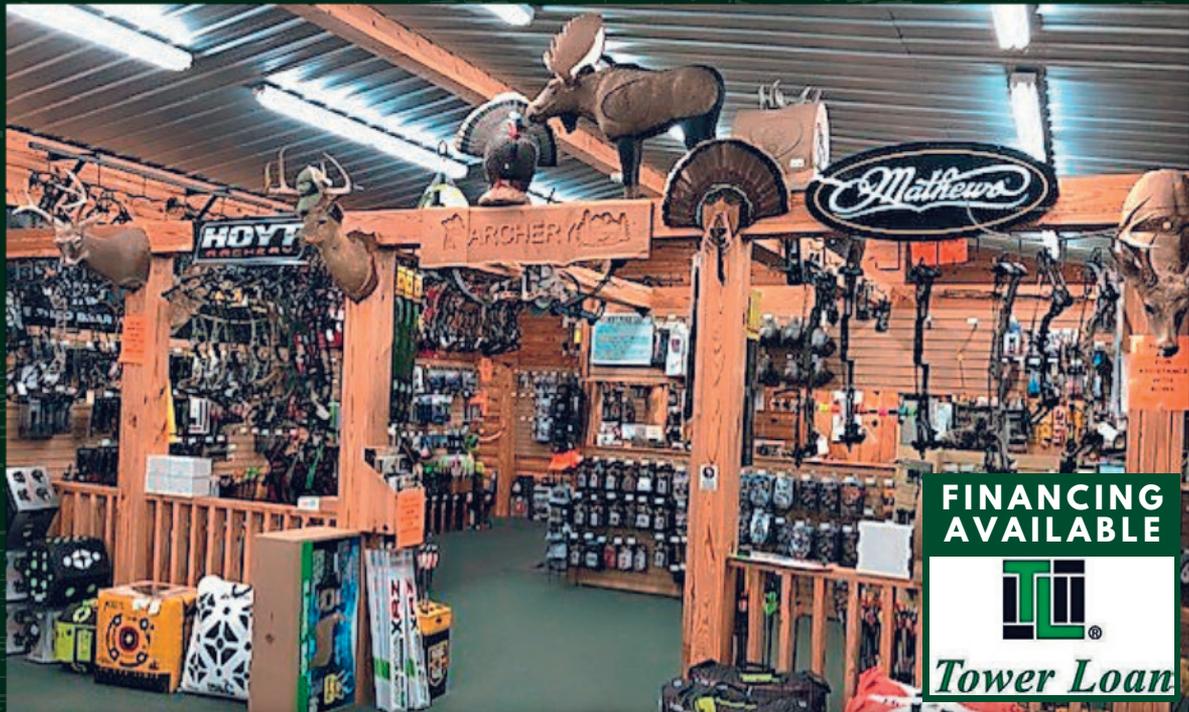


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STONY LONESOME 256-287-1133 | CULLMAN AG CENTER 256-739-4959





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PREPARING FOR TORNADO SEASON

Tips for keeping your family safe

Ainsley Ingram
Contributor

As tornado season approaches, it's important to take steps to prepare your home and keep your family safe. Tornadoes can strike quickly and without warning, so being prepared is crucial.

Here are some tips for preparing for tornado season:

- 1. Identify a safe room:** Designate a safe room or area in your home where you and your family can take shelter in the event of a tornado. This can be a basement, interior room on the lowest level or a reinforced closet or bathroom. Make sure everyone in your household knows the location of the safe room and how to get there quickly.
- 2. Secure loose items:** Make sure to secure loose items around your property, such as patio furniture, grills and trash cans. These items can become dangerous projectiles during a tornado.
- 3. Create an emergency supply kit:** Have an emergency supply kit ready, including a battery-powered radio, flashlight, first aid kit and enough non-perishable food and water for at least three days. Keep this kit in an easy-to-reach location in your safe room.

4. Have a communication plan: Make sure your family knows how to reach each other in case of an emergency and have an out-of-state contact person that all family members can contact.

5. Keep your insurance in check: Review your homeowner's insurance policy to ensure you have the right coverage in case of damage caused by a tornado. Make sure you have a copy of your policy and all important documents in your emergency supply kit.

6. Stay informed: Stay informed of weather updates by tuning into local news or the National Weather Service online. It is important to have multiple ways to receive severe weather alerts, such as a NOAA weather radio, wireless emergency alerts on a mobile device and alerts from local news and social media.

7. Know evacuation routes: Know the evacuation routes in your area and plan ahead on where you will go if a tornado is headed your way.

By taking these steps, you can help keep your family safe in the event of a tornado. Remember, safety should always be a top priority and it's important to be aware of the potential risks and to take steps to protect yourself and your loved ones.

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Tips for tornado safety at work, home, school and on the road

Ainsley Ingram
Contributor

During tornado season, it's important to know how to stay safe when a tornado strikes, whether you're at work, home, school or on the road. The National Weather Service (NWS) encourages individuals to have a plan in place and to be prepared for severe weather.

"Tornadoes can strike quickly and without warning, so it's important to have a plan in place," according to the NWS safety briefs. "Knowing what to do before, during and after a tornado can help keep you and your loved ones safe."

Below are some tips to help keep you as safe as possible no matter your location.

At work

- Know the location of the nearest shelter or safe room
- Be aware of the company's emergency plan and evacuation procedures
- Stay informed of weather updates by tuning into local news or the NWS online

At home

- Identify a safe room or area in your home, such as a basement or interior room on the lowest level
- Make sure everyone in your household knows the location of the safe room and how to get there quickly
- Have an emergency supply kit ready, including a battery-powered radio, flashlight, first aid kit and enough non-perishable food and water

for at least three days

At school

- Know the location of the nearest shelter or safe room
- Be aware of the school's emergency plan and evacuation procedures
- Stay informed of weather updates by tuning into local news or the NWS online

On the road

- Be aware of the weather conditions and pay attention to tornado watches and warnings issued by the NWS
- If possible, avoid traveling during severe weather
- If you are caught in a tornado while in a vehicle, pull over and park; keep your seatbelt on and stay in the car with the windows closed and cover your head with your hands or a blanket

The NWS also advises individuals to have multiple ways to receive severe weather alerts such as a NOAA weather radio, wireless emergency alerts on a mobile device, and alerts from local news and social media.

According to the NWS, "It is important to stay informed and be aware of the potential for severe weather. By having a plan and being prepared, you can increase your chances of staying safe during a tornado."

It is essential to be prepared for a tornado by knowing what to do, where to go and what to have on-hand. Remember that safety should always be a top priority, and it's important to be aware of the potential risks and to take steps to protect yourself and your loved ones.

The Cullman County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has provided a list of available storm shelters for inclement weather. If you are not in a substantial structure, please go to a shelter. For the safety of shelter occupants, especially small children, please do not take pets to shelters unless one specifically notes that it is pet-friendly.

LIST OF SHELTERS WITH OCCUPANCY

Town of Baileyton – three shelters (Operated by the Town of Baileyton)

- 112 Fairview Road – 96-plus
- 130 Cemetery Road – 86-plus
- 600 Fire Station Road – 86-plus

Berlin VFD (Operated by the Berlin VFD)

- 3581 U.S. Highway 278 E, Berlin (in the old VFD building behind the new building) – 40-plus

Bethsadia VFD (Operated by the Bethsadia VFD)

- 454 County Road 804 – 86-plus

Brushy Pond Senior Center (Operated by the senior center)

- 2729 County Road 143, Bremen – 48-plus

Chapel Village/Jones Chapel (Always open)

- 74 County Road 1034 (just off U.S. Highway 278) – 96-plus

Colony Senior Center (Operated by senior center)

- 12980 Alabama Highway 91 S – 48-plus

Town of Colony (Operated by Town of Colony)

- 65 Byars Road (Adjacent to town hall) – 86-plus

Crane Hill Senior Center (Operated by the Crane Hill VFD)

- 15140 County Road 222, Crane Hill (basement of Cullman County Sheriff's Office Satellite Station) – 100

Cullman Senior Center (Operated by the senior center)

- 1539 Sportsman Lake Road – 89-plus

City of Cullman – two shelters (Operated by the Cullman Police Department)

- 1511 Sportsman Lake Road (across from Cullman County Fairgrounds) – 396-plus, kenneled small animals allowed
- Beech Center, 1803 Beech Ave. SE – 150-plus

Town of Dodge City (Operated by the Town of Dodge City)

- 130 Howard Cir. (town hall basement) – Unknown capacity

Dodge City VFD No. 2 (Operated by the Dodge City VFD)

- 7150 County Road 223 – 96-plus

Fairview Housing Authority (Always open)

- 96 Countryside Acres Road – 96-plus

Town of Garden City »

(Operated by the Town of Garden City)

- 501 First Ave. SW (by Town Hall) - 396-plus

City of Good Hope - three shelters (Operated by the City of Good Hope)

- 134 Municipal Drive (city hall basement) - 75-plus
- 301 Day Gap Road - 96-plus
- 301 Municipal Drive (behind city hall) - 96-plus

Gold Ridge VFD (Operated by the Gold Ridge VFD)

- 5225 County Road 1545 - 96-plus

City of Hanceville - three shelters (Operated by the Hanceville Police Department)

- 202 Bangor Ave. (behind

- city hall) - 96-plus
- 203 Michelle St. NW (CW Day Park) - 96-plus
- 1407 Commercial St. (Steppville) 96-plus

Hanceville Senior Center (Operated by the senior center)

- 1500 Spruce St. SE (behind Senior Center) - 48-plus

Town of Holly Pond (Operated by the Town of Holly Pond)

- 60 Finley Road (Adjacent to town hall) - 86-plus

Logan VFD (Operated by the Logan VFD)

- 4203 County Road 818 Logan - 96-plus

Smith Lake Park (Operated by Cullman County Parks and

Recreation)

- 416 County Road 385 (Behind Office) - 96-plus

Stony Lonesome OHV Park (Operated by Cullman County Parks and Recreation)

- 10075 Alabama Highway 69 S - two units - 144

Town of South Vinemont (Operated by the VPVFD)

- 60 Ridgeway St. (behind VPVFD No. 2) - 192

Vinemont-Providence VFD No. 1 (Operated by the VPVFD)

- 576 County Road 1355 - 192-plus

Walter VFD (Operated by the Walter VFD)

- 32655 Alabama Highway 91,

Cullman (Walter community, next to Dollar General) - 70

Town of West Point - two shelters (Operated by the Town of West Point)

- 3990 County Road 1141 (next to town hall) - 96-plus
- 11160 Alabama Highway 157 (behind WPVFD No. 1) - 96-plus

The rules for the Cullman County EMA shelters are:

- No pets. Only service animals for the disabled are allowed in the shelter.
- No smoking. Smoking is not allowed inside the shelter.
- No alcohol. Consumption of alcohol is not allowed in or around the shelter.
- No drugs. Use of »



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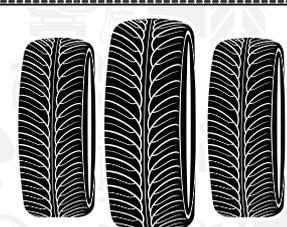
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“recreational drugs” is not allowed in or around the shelter.
▪ No firearms or weapons of any kind are allowed in shelters.

These rules are strictly enforced for each of the shelters on the list. Other rules, specific to each shelter, may be in place and shall be followed.

Shelters will be opened during a tornado watch and/or a tornado warning. The shelters will be closed as soon as the danger has passed and the watch has been canceled by the National Weather Service or allowed to expire.

It is highly recommended

that those seeking shelter in the city of Cullman use the community shelter on Sportsman Lake Road across from the Cullman County Fairgrounds or the basement at the Beech Center. One pod at the shelter on Sportsman Lake Road has been designated for owners with small pets who are in carriers.

Become familiar with the shelters located nearest your home. Monitor weather conditions and remain alert for sudden changes.

Noah Galilee contributed to this article.



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Coming Soon – New Highway 157 Location!

2nd annual Christian Hart Memorial Cornhole Tournament

The second annual Christian Hart Memorial Cornhole Tournament, a fundraiser for Vinemont High School's Christian Hart Memorial Scholarship Fund, took place Jan. 28. The scholarship was founded in the memory of then 12-year-old Christian Hart, a Vinemont student, who died May 25, 2019, in a boating incident on Smith Lake. Said the Cullman County Cornhole Club's Robert Haddix, "Raising money for great causes is where it all started for us and it is still the most important part to us."

PHOTOS COURTESY SHERRY BROWN

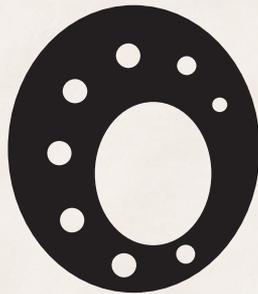


WUNDERGARTEN

The legend of the miracle garden, part 1

An original fairytale by Ben Johnson South

***Let's begin as you and
I are told all timeless
folktales begin...***



ONCE UPON A TIME, about a century and a half ago, there existed a real but fantastical village far up in the pine-forested hills of north Alabama. Any traveler

passing through would think they must have stumbled down a rabbit hole to a wondrous land or walked through some magical doorway to the Germany of the Brothers Grimm.

All school lessons in this frontier area of Alabama, in present-day Cullman County, were taught in German, church sermons were only in German, bustling shopkeepers carried on business as if they were in Germany, music was German, and even the foods they ate like pickles, pretzels and baked gingerbread were from their German family recipes. They were proud to live in freedom-loving America, but this unique place was as German as Beethoven, Bavaria and bratwurst.

In this cloud-ringed, forest and farming

land lived a boy named Fritz.

He wore simple garb- tattered blue overalls patched at the knee, sturdy plow boots and a wide-brimmed hat that covered his thatch of wheat-colored hair. Although he was young, Fritz was bent over with an infirmity like a very old man.

Beneath his wide-brimmed hat, Fritz was always smiling. Spread ear-to-ear across his sun-freckled face, his cheerful smile was as bright as the Southern sun itself. He smiled because he was awakened to the simple joys of country living after escaping the dismal emptiness of a city.

He was a farm boy, a gardener, and happy as a woodlark.

From sunrise to sundown Fritz plowed up and down, then down and up, tilling the hilly land. Clippity-clop, clippity-clop with a glossy, muscular mule named Karl. Oh yes, like many animals in this enchanted place and time of wizards, goblins and sorcery, Karl could talk, though he was a mule of few words.

Fritz would plow and shout, "Gee! Whoa!" and click his tongue, "Click, click, click." The sun stood high over them. "Gee! Whoaaa! Karl, it sure is hot out here today, isn't it?" And faithful Karl would snort in agreement, "Uhhh, huhhh!" They worked the farm for the landowner, a motherly widow lady known as Frau Ruehl (pronounced "real").

Fritz planted cabbage, cauliflower, asparagus, lettuces, beets and turnips in »

Frau Ruehl's kuchengaerten, her kitchen garden. He pruned and harvested the sweet cherry, German pear and Russet apple trees in the bountiful orchards. Many hours in springtime, he nurtured the long, low rows of tender German strawberry plants.

Frau Ruehl loved plants, from the lowliest weed to the loftiest tree. She valued all life under the tent of heaven, and she cherished the memory of her husband and other loved ones above it.

Because they are "tonic elixirs for the soul," as she said, Frau Ruehl bordered her vegetable plots with ribbons of flowers. Some of the blossoms, like the orange nasturtiums, she put in salads, but some were planted just because they prettified and softened things.

Frau Ruehl pickled, stitched, cooked and quilted. Some days, she churned cheese using the milk Fritz brought her in wooden buckets from the grazing sheep in the pastureland.

She was famed far and wide for her sweet, plump, German strawberries that thrived and throve in the hilltop soil. America was blessed with wild, native strawberries, but Frau Ruehl had her sister, Grizelda, ship her German strawberry seeds that would adapt to this new land and be even tastier.

Fritz took care of the livestock. He milked Brunhilde, the Ruehls' operatic mooing cow, slopped the pigs, shepherded the bleating sheep in the meadow and cared for Karl the mule. Fritz chopped the firewood for cooking and for the winter hearth. And he alone clipped the bramble-bush thicket that grew higher and higher as it formed a wall between Frau Ruehl's "home house" and the meadowland below the bluff.

When you are needy and desperate, all you can hope and pray for are help from others and miracles from Heaven. Having a good, hard-working youth like Fritz to work alongside her was an answer to Frau Ruehl's prayers.

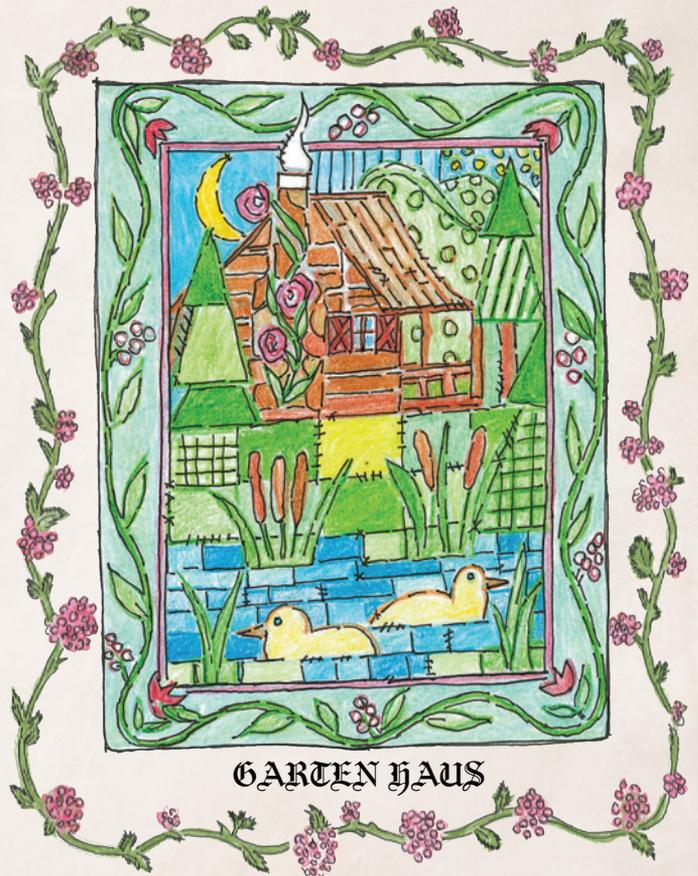
Each morning, once she'd heard the snip, snip, snip of Fritz clipping, or the shuh-shuh-shuh of his digging, Frau Ruehl would carry a tray of bacon, eggs, biscuits, pumpernickel bread, fruit jams and pecan honey out to the yard and call Fritz to join her for breakfast.

Fritz was orphaned. His mother had died when Fritz was very young. His father then married a woman who hated children. Fritz's stepmother had a sour scowl as if she'd been drinking vinegar. Fritz's situation was already sad, but sadder still, his father died as a freedom-loving soldier in their native Germany fighting a wicked tyrant king who had been waging war.

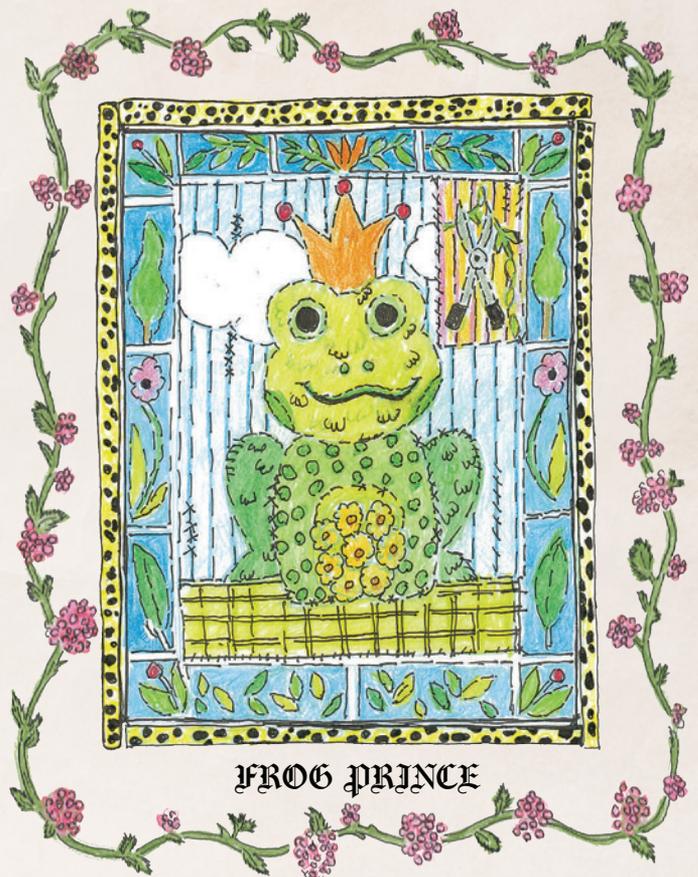
Fritz was only 12 years old, just a couple of years before this story, when his sour stepmother had him shipped far away from his childhood home in Hamburg, across the ocean to America. This horrid witch thought Fritz would die on the stormy sea or possibly from hunger and she would never be bothered with him again.

He was then young and alone in a foreign land.

When Fritz first came to this country, he worked in a coal mine in the cold north until his back was crushed in a mining accident. This was a harsh and lasting blow; however, Fritz thought of himself as a luck child considering other boys and men had died in that dark place. That's just the way of the world, he figured. "Hard work can beat hard luck," said a smiling Fritz. »



GARTEN HAUS



FROG PRINCE

For a while, Fritz was homeless and hungry, living a wretched life, starving, barely scraping by on the dirty, smoke-filled streets of a big city. There he met Colonel Cullman, a German American who worked for the railroad.

"Can-do"-spirited Colonel Cullman was creating a community for German people in Alabama. The Colonel told a newspaper reporter of the time that north Alabama reminded him of Germany's legendary Rhine Valley and "the German farmers will make this 'The Garden Spot of America.'"

The Colonel personally led two, large shiploads of freedom-seeking Germans refugees across the sea to America, mostly from his hometown of Frankweiler.

Colonel Cullman had been concerned the newly widowed Frau Ruehl needed help to keep her farm thriving and he awakened Fritz to the idea of helping. That is how German-born Fritz came to be in Alabama and live on her farm.

The Ruehl family was not wealthy; there were no jewels and goblets, but their cabin on a wooded ridge of this untamed forest was snug and not at all dark and gloomy. It had higher ceilings and a row of windows near the roofline that beckoned the sunshine in. If you went back to the time of our story, you would look out from this house at a field of fragrant wildflowers just as you would today.

Frau Ruehl had whitewashed the inside stone walls and stained her native pine kitchen cabinets a brilliant emerald green. She painted the baseboards the blue-green color of robins' eggs. Frau Ruehl swept the spotless wooden floors with a broom made of birch

twigs. The date of her house, 1870, was drawn directly into the plaster when it was built.

Frau Ruehl's beautiful quilts with traditional, German flower borders and her skillful needlework softened the handmade, hardwood furnishings. Out of respect, Herr Ruehl's deer-skin-covered chair remained just as he had last left it and his boots still rested by the door as if his ghost might awaken from the grave and resume farming. It was a relaxing home for hard-working pioneers.

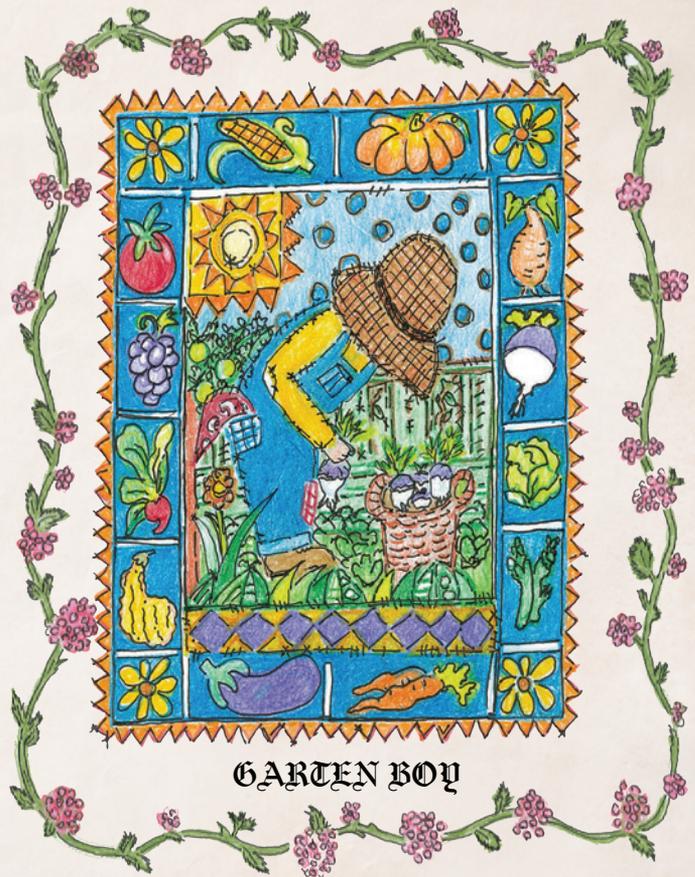
This place to Fritz was like a Garden of Eden, the original "wundergarten" paradise. There was only one thing that bothered him and Frau Ruehl, and they often talked about it over breakfast.

Frau Ruehl had a lovely, but very sick daughter who was so weak her doctor insisted she must sleep or rest all day. She was not even allowed to speak, for fear it would be too much of a strain. The girl's christened name was Zeela Elizabeth, though she was called ZeeBeth.

"How I wish I could help ZeeBeth grow lively and strong," Fritz sighed to Frau Ruehl, "for there is so much life for young people like her and me to enjoy here."

As Frau Ruehl gathered their empty dishes and tossed the breadcrumbs to the waiting mockingbirds, she spoke to Fritz, "I would so love to hear her play tunes on the pianoforte once again. You could sit beside her on the bench and turn the sheets of music.

"She is a sleeping beauty no portrait painter could improve upon, but it is within her loving heart that ZeeBeth is truly beautiful." A tear puddled in Frau Ruehl's eye and rolled down her cheek. The mother looked at her daughter tenderly, "No child in the world has ever



GARTEN BOY

been so good and kind, so pleasing and cheerful. As a wee toddler she was always sniffing the blossoms and chasing the butterflies.

"My friend, mein Freund, although you are kind and caring of ZeeBeth, you are a 14-year-old, farm boy and gardener, not an ancient sage nor a miracle worker."

She continued, "I have planted so many botanicks for healing, but none had the chemistry or alchemy or pixie dust to undo the curse like some 'miracle potion.' Nothing seems able to break the spell of sadness she is under. The herbal vinegars, the nerve-calming essence of primrose, the invigorating essence of the cinnamon-scented carnations, the potpourri, they have all been for naught."

Month after month since the shock of her Papa passing away, poor ZeeBeth had sunken into a

gloomy dungeon of despair and remained as limp and listless as a ragdoll. Her mother said sadly, "ZeeBeth seems to have chosen a dreamworld rather than living in the real world without her precious Papa. I so understand that wish, but with the death of her father and then ZeeBeth's sad escape into sleep, it feels like I have lost the two people I have loved most. I fear there is nothing you nor I nor anyone can do to revive sweet ZeeBeth's joyous spirit."

"But surely I can think of something," said Fritz. "I could plant her an eye-delighting grove of pink-blossoming crabapple trees or place pots of fragrant lavender and a sweet-smelling allspice shrub near her open window so the mountain air from these green hills would fill her bedroom with the fresh scents." He paused, "I've got it. I will go to the market and bring her back an animal »

pet.”

“Merciful heavens, my friend, a pet is a grand idea,” said Frau Ruehl. “Perhaps a tabby cat she could watch as it scampers in the yard and chases the chickens when they are pecking for grain. Or maybe a puppy she could hold upon a pillow on her lap.”

Suddenly, the girl’s kind mother looked crestfallen. “Nein, no. I’m sorry, Fritz. A pet is not such a good idea. ZeeBeth could become too excited with a kitten or a puppy. The doctor said she must sleep and stay quiet at heart. She must.”

“Then I will give her a big, croaking bullfrog! I will give her a Frog Prince like the one in the Brothers Grimm story.”

“Fritz, my young friend, the hot sun has baked your brain, you silly goose. I’m going to be at my spinning wheel like the Brothers Grimm’ Rumpelstiltskin today. WHIR, WHIR, WHIR, spinning straw into gold. And you should get to your gardening. The reward for our hard work will be venison schnitzel for supper,” said Frau Ruehl.

So, Fritz wished her a good day, picked up his pruning shears and headed toward the tall thicket that blocked the view toward the eastern valley.

The sound of snip, snip, snip told Frau Ruehl that Fritz was busy with his chores. Like a schoolmarm, nothing escaped her eyes and ears. She could even hear the grass grow.

Soon after he’d begun trimming the thorn bushes, Fritz heard the rattling of China cups and silverware which meant Frau Ruehl had rolled the young girl’s wheeled chair onto the wide, rough planks of the cabin’s porch.

Much of each day, ZeeBeth

slept in her bed. Soon after the morning dawn, she was placed in her invalid father’s wheeled chair. He was a woodcutter, a forester, who died a pitiful death sawing a mighty oak. Frau Ruehl said her dear husband had died at home as quietly as the snuff of a candle goes out.

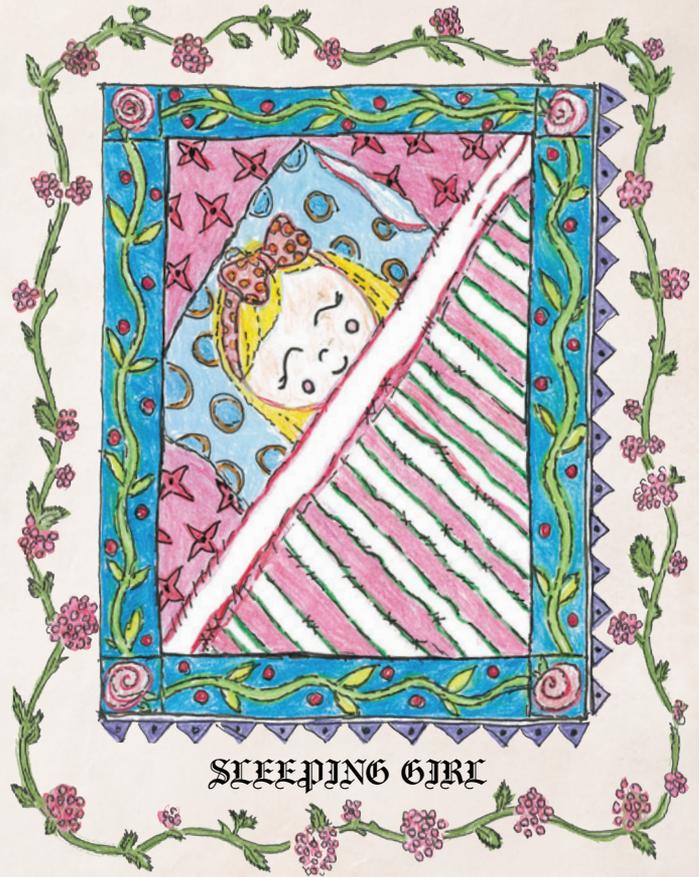
It was the shock of losing her adored Papa that caused ZeeBeth to sink into a deep sleep. The utmost care was always used whenever she was transported outside to breathe the pure air and feel the warm sunshine. Frau Ruehl was a gentle guardian of this homestead with its tender, young plants and tender, young people.

Frau Ruehl found hope in her new country, but she had courageously endured many hard things in her life. She had left her birth family in Germany; her cherished, brown-eyed husband had died and daily she grieved the wistful memories of curious, into-everything, happy, lively ZeeBeth. Frau Ruehl gave her bitter grief to God’s keeping and she bore her pain silently and patiently. Her motto was, “Rejoice when one can, suffer as one must.”

Even though ZeeBeth was not strong enough to speak, Fritz bowed to her as he did each morning, as if she were royalty. He handed her a freshly picked tussie-mussie of willow and bluebells and wished her a good morning. Fritz said, “Guten Morgen, dear princess.” The girl smiled a sleepy, wistful smile and Fritz returned to his clipping.

This day, the ear-to-ear smile on Fritz’s face beamed with joy for he had a wonderful idea. He stood on a tall ladder Frau Ruehl used to gather eggs from the dovecote.

He approached the thick,



SLEEPING GIRL

boxy thicket of privet and mountain laurel as if he were a sculptor and the dense plants were a beautiful wall of dark, green marble.

After drawing a shape in the air with his arm, he began to clip the woody plants with the shears.

He would snip and snip, then climb down from the ladder and walk toward the wide porch to see the results.

All day he clipped and climbed, climbed and clipped, then climbed back up and clipped some more.

As evening grew nigh, Fritz was still clipping and climbing when the rattling noise from the cabin porch told him Frau Ruehl would be tucking ZeeBeth in bed for the night.

Undeterred, perhaps a bit moonstruck, Fritz continued to snip away at the broad hedge. He could hear someone on a nearby farm, relaxing after a

hard day’s work, strumming a zither and singing a German lullaby in the distance.

That night, Fritz lit a lantern near the thicket so he could see to complete his work. He toiled tirelessly through the night and a smile did not leave his face.

The next morning, Fritz asked Frau Ruehl to wait until her daughter was awake and ready to venture out to the porch before she came with their breakfast.

Finally, with a rattle of China cups and silverware, Frau Ruehl brought ZeeBeth outside in her father’s wheeled chair.

A wide smile, the most beautiful smile Fritz thought he’d ever seen, spread across the girl’s pale face when she looked across the small lawn. There, clipped from a wide section of the thick shrubs, was a big evergreen frog wearing a glittery golden, straw crown — The Frog Prince of the Brothers »

Grimm fairytale. A bluebird lit upon the golden ball of yellow honeysuckle blossoms the Frog Prince offered.

When Fritz was a child in Germany, every home had two treasured books: the family copy of Herr Gutenberg’s Holy Bible, and a much-loved collection of the centuries-old

folktales gathered by the Brothers Grimm.

Frau Ruehl cheered and clapped her hands to her face.

“Fritz, our kind friend, your Frog Prince is a ladle of soul-lifting joy. Hearty laughter is grand medicine,” exclaimed Frau Ruehl. They all sipped strawberry tea and enjoyed

breakfast shaded by a magnificent magnolia tree whose branches boasted broad glossy leaves and giant, white, powdery fragrant blooms. “Indeed, you have given ZeeBeth the grandest of pets.”

As they ate, the sunbeams danced upon the golden corn swaying in the fields, which

could now be seen from the little horseshoe-shaped, bowling green lawn of Frau Ruehl’s forest home.

END OF PART ONE

Be sure to pick up the next issue of “Community Matters” to read part two!

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- PREP SOFTBALL -

'We have a fun group of girls that work hard'

Cullman's Abby Maples looking forward to upcoming season

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The Lady Bearcats are coming off a deep playoff run a season ago that ended just a game short of the state tournament and eighth grader Abby Maples is looking forward to building on that experience this spring.

"I feel the season went really well and it showed me areas of my game that needed cleaning up this off-season. It was strange at first because all the other girls were much older, but they welcomed me in and became great role models. I also gained good playing experience. I learned how to move on from mistakes and I really improved on the mental aspect of the game," Maples said. "We have a fun group of girls that work hard. Coach Lawayne Morton teaches Love, Serve, Care, which shows all of us how to act on and off the field. That is something the whole team has bought into. So, when I showed up as the youngest player on the team, all the older girls accepted me with open arms and showed me the LSC."

Maples learned a lot from last year's seniors and from coach Morton as well.

"They were all really good role models. I miss playing with all of them already. They did a lot to help improve the younger

girls, and I was given lots of good advice on how to get my softball career where I want to go," Maples said.

"Savannah Davis helped by showing me some of the steps that needs to be taken to be recruited to play at the next level. I also learned a lot from Carlie Burnham by watching her mental approach at the plate. Faith Guest was also great at the mental approach on the defensive side of the ball.

"Dayln Phillips was a great mentor as a senior catcher, especially when it came to pushing me to be the best player I could."

She added, "While Coach Morton focuses a lot on the physical aspect of the players, he focuses even more on the mental aspect. His main goal as a coach is to not only create good players, but to create good people. One thing I've learned from Coach Morton is that practice at home is not only for my own success, but for the success of the team."

Maples learned a lot from the upperclassmen last season, and she worked on a lot of her skills during the summer.

"I learned how to be a good person on and off the field. They also taught me how to overcome adversity and they showed me how to stay positive when things don't go my way. They've taught me how to be a better person and how to pass



ABBY MAPLES

Cullman's Abby Maples

my knowledge of the sport onto the younger girls," she said. "This summer, I worked a lot on my batting, and I improved my throw downs to second a lot, while still continuing to improve on all aspects of the game."

There's a lot of experience coming back on this Lady

Bearcat team, Maples has set some big goals for herself and her team.

"There are a lot of key players that are still on the team this season. It should be an exciting season and we should have a good chance of making it to the state tournament," she said. "My individual »

goals for the season would be to improve my batting average from last season, throw more people out at second base, and help the team overall. Our goals as a team are to grow closer as a team and to win the state tournament."

Maples talked about what will make this team special to watch this season and she talked about some role models that she had growing up.

"We've got some big hitters back and we've got all of our pitching back. What will make this year's team special to watch this season is we have a talented group of girls who work well together," she said.

"Growing up, one of my biggest role models has been my dad because he's always pushed me to be my best and because he can stay positive

even through some of the most negative things. One that had a huge impact on my catching career was Macey Cheatham, who graduated from Florida State in 2016. You could tell she had a love for the game, and she taught me a lot when I was a younger player. We worked a lot on framing and blocking pitches, and it kind of set the path for those two things being some of my best skills in the game."

She added, "There are a lot of girls in college softball that I look up to year after year. One up and coming freshman at Alabama who is a good role model for any young softball player is Kenleigh Cahalan based on what she accomplished in high school and what she will accomplish in college. When I was just getting

started with softball, I took some lessons from Hannah Morton after she graduated from Cullman. She taught me the basics of catching."

Maples is really happy to see how much her game has improved up to this point in her young softball career.

"It has improved a

tremendous amount. One thing that's improved a lot since then has been my throwing because I've gotten a lot stronger," she said.

"They've taught me a lot about myself and the sport. They've also taught me to preserve and to give all my effort in everything I do."

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'You have to be a family and push not only yourself, but each other'

Cold Springs' Brooklyn Ingram excited for upcoming softball season

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

BREMEN, Ala. — The 2022 softball season was another good one for the Cold Springs Lady Eagles under first-year head coach Paige Adams. Sophomore Brooklyn Ingram talked about what all she gained from that season and what it was like playing with this group of players.

"I feel like last year went great. I matured as a ball player and picked up things like leadership, teamwork, and determination from my teammates," Ingram said. "My teammates were great. They have always pushed me to be my best and are great to be around."

Brooklyn took away so much from playing with last year's seniors and she has quickly saw her game improve since she's been on varsity.

"It was a good group of girls that we lost that were a big part of the team. They always pushed me to work really hard and would always pick me up when I was down about a game," Ingram said. "I personally think I've improved a lot. Coach Paige Adams has pushed me to be my best and put my best out on the field. She made our team work and put forth our best efforts. Since been on varsity, I haven't only just seen my physical game improve, but also, my mental game. Having a strong mindset on the field will always push you to do better, even when

there are mistakes. I started playing on varsity my freshman year and it's a blessing to be a part of the team."

Brooklyn loves the coaching staff at Cold Springs and has learned so much from her so far.

"Coach Paige Adams is an amazing coach. She pushed us even when we had given up and made us realize that if you want something, you have to work for it. With her being younger, we are able to relate more with her and we have a strong bond on and off the field. But even with this, it doesn't take away the fact that she wants us to be better and do better. She has made me learn that when wanting to be on a team, you have to be a family and push not only yourself, but each other. You have to be there for one another and do everything as a team if you want to succeed," Ingram said.

She added, "Coach Bruce Parker has always been a great inspiration on and off the field. He has pushed me to be my best and put forth my best effort always. Even when we are getting down about losing a game or making a mistake, he was always there to uplift us and just tell us that everything was going to be alright. He's taught me many things by him as a teacher and a coach. He's taught me leadership skills and to take initiative, and just be positive. Coach Heath Parker has also been able to put a smile on the whole team's



BROOKLYN INGRAM

Cold Springs' Brooklyn Ingram

faces. After every at-bat, you'd walk in, and he'd just smile and give you a high five, which really made everyone's day. He's always been there helping as a coach and putting the girls in a good mood to play the sport we love so much. He has taught me that no matter what, just always be kind and be there for people. Because even the smallest acts of kindness can make your day."

Brooklyn has learned so much since she's been on varsity and worked on a lot in

the summer, with the help of her mom.

"I have learned that it's something that you have to work for. If you want to be better, you have to push yourself. I've also learned that a big part of the game is your mentality. You can't win a game when you think you're going to lose. You have to push through that mental block and know you can do better," she said. "Over the summer, I've worked on drills and hitting with my mom. She has always wanted »

me to be a part of a team and has always been a big part of my softball career."

Brooklyn has some individual and team goals set for this upcoming season. She also talked about the team's expectations are for this season and what will make them special to watch.

"I want to better myself and better my teammates. I'm overall looking to be better this season and to improve my skills. I want our team to grow and do better than we have any other season in the past." she said. "We are hoping to win area and hopefully, proceed to better and bigger things. This team is going to work hard to

make the game fun and interesting for everyone to watch. Softball is an overall fun sport to watch, so I think with all the new girls and new teams we will be playing, it will just be enjoyable for everyone to watch."

There will be a lot of new faces on this year's team and there will be some returning players as well and Brooklyn can't wait to see what all they bring to the team.

"We actually have a lot of new freshmen this year who will be joining the high school team. I'm very excited to see their talent and the dedication they will bring to the team. We will also have a lot of returning

sophomores and juniors. There are many who have played their whole lives and many who have only been playing a couple of years. I know we will have a great season this year with all

the talent and just overall hard work I see these girls put in at practice. All the girls on the team are so sweet and they really do love softball. I can't wait for this season to start."

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JV COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Holly Pond downs Fairview 38-29 to claim county title

Sammy Confer

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HANCEVILLE, Ala. — We tipped off the first of our four county championship games at the Cullman County Tournament Saturday with the JV Girls title match between Holly Pond and Fairview and after toppling top-seeded Good Hope on Thursday, the Lady Broncos downed Fairview 38-29 to capture the county title.

The first period was a defensive one as both teams struggled to hit baskets. Peyton Defoor banked in a floater for Fairview's first basket of the game, but Alyssia Mitchell knocked down a long-range shot to give Holly Pond an early 3-2 lead.

Phoebe Jones put in a short jumper to make it a 5-2 game with a little over four minutes to go in the first period. Presli Carr drilled a pair of free throws to give the Lady Broncos a 7-2 lead and Holly Pond would end up taking a five-point lead into the second.

The Lady Broncos added onto their lead to start the second. Mitchell put in her second trey of the game on Holly Pond's second possession of the quarter as the Lady Bronco lead was now 10-2.

The Lady Aggies started to chip into the Holly Pond as Defoor collected a steal and ended up scoring on the



The Holly Pond Lady Broncos defeated Fairview 38-29 Saturday to claim this year's JV Girls County Championship.

BILL PIPER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

other end to cut it to 10-4 with 4:25 to go in the first half.

Stephanie Acklin drilled a trey to make it a 10-7 game, but Carr knocked down a jumper and Mitchell put in another three to push the Holly Pond lead to 15-7 with a little over a minute to go before halftime. The Lady

Broncos would end up taking a 15-7 lead into the locker room.

Blakely Baggett split from the free throw line to make it 16-7 with a little over five minutes to go in the third, but a pair of baskets by Aynslie Holm and Jalia Eckleberry cut it to 16-11. Carr and Holm

traded baskets to keep it at a five-point game at 18-13 with 2:30 remaining in the period.

Carr put in a tough shot down low to push the Lady Bronco lead to 20-14. Holly Pond added onto their lead to end the quarter as free throws by Mitchell and Phoebe Jones gave them a 23-14 lead »



BILL PIPER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

going into the final period.

Baggett put in two more from the line to stretch the Lady Bronco lead to 25-14 early in the fourth and a Mitchell three made it 28-14.

Davi Stidham put in a shot in the paint and then, got a steal and collected a layup to cut it to 29-18 with less than four minutes to go in the contest.

Defoor drilled a long-range shot for the Lady Aggies and later hit a layup off a Lady Bronco turnover to make it a 32-23 game with less than three minutes left in the game.

A rebound and put-back by Holm cut it to 33-25, then a basket by Eckleberry made it a six-point game.

The Lady Broncos would seal the game at the

free-throw line as five free throws by Phoebe Jones helped Holly Pond win the game over Fairview 38-29 to take home the JV girls championship. Mitchell finished with 14 points for Holly Pond.

Phoebe Jones added 10 points and Carr collected nine points. For Fairview, Holm and Defoor each finished with nine points.

2023 JV GIRLS ALL-COUNTY TOURNAMENT TEAM

- Blakely Baggett, Holly Pond
- Davi Stidham, Fairview
- Aynslie Holm, Fairview
- Paizley Whitlow, Cold Springs
- Phoebe Jones, Holly Pond
- Arriana Rossie, Good Hope
- Alyssia Mitchell, Holly Pond

JV COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Pace's buzzer-beater leads Fairview 40-37 championship win over West Point

Nick Griffin

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HANCEVILLE, Ala. — Our second championship game from the Cullman County Tournament Saturday afternoon was another JV matchup and this one featured the West Point Warriors and the Aggies of Fairview. The Aggies led by 10 at halftime but the Warriors stormed back in the second half to tie the game late in the final frame. However, just before the final buzzer sounded, Fairview's Gavin Pace buried his fourth three-pointer of the night to give the Aggies a 40-37 win and this year's JV Boys' county championship.

Maddox Chapman and Jac Dunn traded baskets back and forth to make it a 4-4 game early in the opening period and Chapman laid another one in later in the first to give West point a 6-5 lead. A free throw from Carson Jones tied things up at 6 with less than two minutes to play in the quarter and a three-pointer from Zayden Cruce put the Aggies in front 9-6 going into the second.

A pair of Trace Richardson free throws and a basket from Gavin Pace extended Fairview's lead to 13-6 midway through the second quarter. Pace sank two more free throws later in the period to make it a 15-6 game and buckets from Jones and Richardson made it 19-6



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Good Hope swept Holly Pond 2-0 on Oct. 4 to win this year's Cullman County Volleyball Tournament.

with less than two minutes remaining in the first half. A three-pointer by West Point's Cade Welborn stopped a 13-0 Aggie run and Jaxon Shelton scored inside to trim the lead to 19-11 but Pace scored another basket for Fairview with 30 seconds on the clock to give the Aggies a 21-11 lead

at the break.

The Warriors began to close the gap in the third quarter. Chapman laid one in to bring the lead down to single digits and Welborn scored on back to back possessions to make it 24-18 with four minutes to play in the period. Baskets by Chapman

and Shelton made it a 2-point game midway through the third but Pace stopped the run with a three on the other end to put Fairview up 27-22. Pace and Cruce drilled a pair of three-pointers later in the quarter to stretch the lead to 33-25 but another score from Chapman and a »



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

free throw from Shelton cut the lead to 33-28 going into the fourth quarter. Chapman drove to the basket and scored to make it a 33-30 game at the start of the fourth but Pace got the points back with a bucket on the other end to keep the Aggies ahead by 5. Welborn buried another three from the left wing to trim the lead to 35-33 later in the period and

Brier Taylor laid one in tie the game at 35 with two minutes remaining. Richardson sank a pair of free throws to give Fairview a 37-35 lead, but Taylor answered with another basket for Fairview to keep the score tied at 37 with 52 seconds on the clock. The Aggies took over possession and let the clock run down as much as they could before

taking a shot but as the final seconds ticked away, Pace let go of a three-pointer from the right corner and knocked it down just before the buzzer to give Fairview a dramatic, 40-37 win over West Point. Pace led the Aggies with 21 points in the win, followed by Cruce and Richardson with six. Chapman led the Warriors with 16 points in the loss and

Welborn added 11.

2023 JV Boys All-County Tournament Team

- Zayden Cruce, Fairview
- Brier Taylor, West Point
- Callahan Lindsey, Good Hope
- Colton Gillis, Vinemont
- TB Pendley, West Point
- Gavin Pace, Fairview
- Kaden Graham, Vinemont

COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Lady Raiders capture back-to-back county crowns with 65-29 win over Cold Springs

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — Good Hope and Cold Springs, both the top-ranked teams in their respective classifications, clashed in Saturday night's first varsity championship game and the Lady Raiders left no doubt in a convincing, 65-29 win over the Lady Eagles. With the win, Good Hope captured its second consecutive Cullman County Tournament Championship.

Rudi Derrick put in a layup and Bailey Tetro knocked down a floater to give Good Hope an early 4-0 lead, but Cold Springs trimmed it to 4-3 on a trey by Ella Bruer. The Lady Raiders would counter with a three each from Bailey Tetro and Ivey Maddox to make it 10-3 with less than five minutes to go in the opening period. Kenady Graves put in one of her own from long-range to cut it to 10-6, but Maddox and Heather Tetro each knocked down a three to stretch the Lady Raider lead to 16-6. Maddox and Derrick each hit a basket to make it 20-6, but Bruer hit another trey and Ciara Calvert put in a shot down low to trim it to 20-11 late in the period. Maddox drilled a deep three before the buzzer to give Good Hope a 24-11 lead going into »



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Good Hope Lady Raiders defeated Cold Springs 65-29 Saturday night to claim their second consecutive county championship.



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

the second period.

Emma Thompson put in a layup on Good Hope's opening possession and would knock down a trey on the next one to make it 29-11. Graves and Bruer each knocked down a trey to cut it to 32-17 almost midway through the second. Bailey Tetro and Graves traded baskets to keep it a 15-point game at 34-19. Charly Johnson added a late basket for the Lady Raiders as they would take a 36-19 lead into the locker room.

Good Hope continued to add to their lead to start the third as Bailey Tetro scored five straight points and Maddox hit her fourth trey of the contest to make it 44-19 almost midway through the third period. Derrick drilled a three from the left wing and

would later add a basket down low to push the Lady Raider lead to 50-19. Bailey Tetro and Maci Brown traded baskets to end the third and Good Hope held a commanding a 52-21 lead after three quarters.

Maddox and Bailey Keef each put in a shot in the paint to stretch the Lady Raider lead to 56-21. Keef added a pair of baskets to make it 60-21. Graves scored eight straight points to cut it to 60-29, but Keef and Jolee McHan each hit the final two baskets of the game for Good Hope as the Lady Raiders collected their second straight championship with a 65-29 win over Cold Springs.

Bailey Tetro led the way for Good Hope with 18 points. Maddox wasn't far behind with 17 points. Derrick added 10 points and Keef collected

eight points. For Cold Springs, Graves finished with 16 points and Bruer added nine points.

**2023 BILL SHELTON
AWARD WINNER**

- Rudi Derrick, Good Hope

**2023 CHARLOTTE
CUMMINGS MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP**

- Erin Bailey, Cold Springs

**2023 VARSITY GIRLS
ALL-COUNTY
TOURNAMENT TEAM**

- Ella Dickerson, Cold Springs
- Ava Thomas, Fairview
- Jayla Gorham, Fairview
- Liberty Shadix, West Point
- Ivey Maddox, Good Hope
- Charly Johnson, Good Hope
- Maci Brown, Cold Springs
- Bailey Tetro, Good Hope

- Kenady Graves, Cold Springs

**2023 VARSITY GIRLS
ALL-COUNTY TEAM**

- Savana McAnnally, Hanceville
- Maddi Ham, Holly Pond
- Ivey Maddox, Good Hope
- Rudi Derrick, Good Hope
- Bailey Tetro, Good Hope
- Heather Tetro, Good Hope
- Charly Johnson, Good Hope
- Maci Brown, Cold Springs
- Ella Dickerson, Cold Springs
- Ella Bruer, Cold Springs
- Jayla Gorham, Fairview
- Darby Nichols, Fairview
- Emma Garcia, Fairview
- Liberty Shadix, West Point
- Laklin Shadix, West Point
- Whitney Quick, Vinemont
- Reagan Robinson, Vinemont

COUNTY TOURNAMENT

Hanceville takes 64-63 OT thriller over Good Hope to win county title

Nick Griffin

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HANCEVILLE, Ala. — We capped off Championship Saturday at the Cullman County Tournament with the varsity boys' finals and it was another good one between Good Hope and Hanceville. The regular season matchup between the Raiders and Bulldogs went down to the wire and their meeting in the county championship game was no different. It took more than four quarters to settle things this time around but after 36 tightly-contested minutes, the Hanceville Bulldogs finished just ahead of the Raiders 64-63 to claim their first county title since 2016. Harris knocked down a three in the final seconds of the fourth quarter to send the game to overtime tied at 57.

Brayden Harris and Braxton Broad each drained three-pointers to give the Bulldogs a 6-0 start early in the first quarter. Colton Lindsey hit a pair of free throws to cut into the lead but Zach Campbell took a steal the other way for an easy basket to make it 8-2. Dakota Overton laid one in off a turnover to trim the lead to 8-4 and following another score by Harris, K'mal Bell drilled a three from the left corner to make it a 10-7 game. A basket from Lindsey and a three-pointer by Eli Clements tied the game at 12 late in the opening period

but Noah Jones scored inside to put Hanceville back in front 14-12. Weston Hancock and Konnor Helms traded baskets to keep the score at 16-14 with 30 seconds remaining in the first but Clements sank a pair of free throws in the final seconds of the quarter to tie the game at 16 going into the second.

Overton buried a three to start the second quarter and give the Raiders their first lead of the night at 19-16 and after another steal and score by Campbell, Lindsey laid one in to keep Good Hope in front 21-18. However, Broad netted a pair of free throws and scored of an offensive rebound to reclaim a 22-21 lead for the Bulldogs and Harris drilled another three to make it a 25-21 game. Buckets from Hancock and Tyler Cone tied things back up at 25 with two minutes to play in the first half and Hancock laid one in with one minute on the clock to give the Raiders a 27-25 advantage at the halftime break.

Calvert and Bell traded three-pointers at the start of the third to make it a 30-28 game and after a Carson Garrett basket tied the score at 30, baskets from Cone and Lindsey gave Good Hope a 34-30 lead. Harris laid one in and Calvert drained another three to move the Bulldogs back in front 35-34 midway through the period and the lead changed hands with each



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Hanceville Bulldogs edged Good Hope 64-63 in overtime Saturday night to win their first county championship since 2016.

basket throughout most of the third quarter. Campbell pulled down an offensive rebound and put it back in to score and give Hanceville a 41-38 lead and on the next Bulldogs possession, he banked in a deep three to put them ahead 44-40 with 15 seconds remaining in the

quarter. However, Lindsey was able to score down low in the final seconds of the period to cut the lead to 44-42 going into the final frame.

Cone got a pair of running floaters to fall at the start of the fourth, giving the Raiders a 46-44 lead. Campbell knocked »

down another three to put Hanceville in front 47-46 but Good Hope answered with a bucket by Lindsey and a three from Bell to move ahead 51-47 with five minutes to play. Another three-pointer by Harris trimmed the lead to 55-50 later in the period and Campbell scored another basket off a turnover to make it a 3-point game with three minutes remaining. Lindsey and Calvert exchanged buckets to make it a 57-54 game with two minutes on the clock but both teams struggled with ball security in the final 90 seconds, setting up an inbound pass for Hanceville with about 20 seconds to play in regulation. The Bulldogs brought the ball up the floor with the final seconds ticking away and Harris drilled his biggest three-pointer of the night to tie the score at 57 and send the game to overtime.

A basket from Bell and a pair of Lindsey free throws gave Good Hope a 61-57 lead just a couple minutes into the overtime period but Hanceville was able to seize the momentum after that. Broad laid one in to make it a 2-point game and Garrett buried a three to give the Bulldogs a 62-61 lead with one minute on the clock. On the ensuing inbound pass, Broad stole the ball and laid it up and in to make it a 64-61 game and the Raiders called timeout to draw up their final play. Good Hope's three-point attempt was off the mark and Cone scored on a putback as time expired but it wasn't enough to erase the deficit and Hanceville held on to win a 64-63 thriller over the defending champs.

Harris and Campbell each



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

finished with 16 points for Hanceville and Broad posted 11. Lindsey led the way for Good Hope with 18 points in the loss, followed by Bell with 13 and Cone with 12.

ELI THOMAS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

- Will Calvert, Hanceville

JOE SHULTS AWARD

- Colton Lindsey, Good Hope

2023 VARSITY BOYS ALL-COUNTY TOURNAMENT TEAM

- Cylas Yarbrough, Fairview
- Kobe Payne, Fairview
- Brayden Harris, Hanceville
- Blake Rickard, Holly Pond
- Will Calvert, Hanceville
- Tyler Cone, Good Hope
- Colton Lindsey, Good Hope
- Christian Couch, Holly Pond
- Zach Campbell, Hanceville
- Braxton Broad, Hanceville
- K'mal Bell, Good Hope

2023 VARSITY BOYS ALL-COUNTY TEAM

- Connor Gibbs, Vinemont
- John Mark Smith, Cold

Springs

- Nic Fallin, Cold Springs
- Jay Lamar, West Point
- Kolten Perry, West Point
- Zach Campbell, Hanceville
- Brayden Harris, Hanceville
- Will Calvert, Hanceville
- Kobe Payne, Fairview
- Cylas Yarbrough, Fairview
- Kollin Brown, Holly Pond
- Gunnar McBee, Holly Pond
- Blake Rickard, Holly Pond
- Colton Lindsey, Good Hope
- K'mal Bell, Good Hope
- Weston Hancock, Good Hope
- Tyler Cone, Good Hope

HEARTH HEALTH

Sensible and healthy eating

It seems that everywhere you turn there is a different diet touted as being the solution to obesity and healthier living. Some people recommend low-carb diets; others suggest low-fat diets. Then there are countless fad diets of dubious value.

How do you sort through all the recommendations? The U.S. News & World Report in 2021 ranked 39 diets in several categories. Tied for first in the categories of heart-healthy benefits and best diets for healthy eating was the DASH diet developed by researchers from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), which is part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. The diet also came in second for “best diet overall.”

It isn't a new diet. Developed more than 20 years ago, it's undergone rigorous study and research. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension.

Repeated testing of the diet has found that it helps to reduce blood pressure and LDL cholesterol, which are two risk factors for heart disease. Adults on the DASH diet are able to lower their blood pressure within weeks. If the dieters also reduce their sodium intake, they have even greater reductions in



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blood pressure.

What you do and do not eat

In the DASH diet, the goal is to build nutrient-dense meals made up of whole grains, low-fat dairy products, vegetables, fruits, fish, poultry, beans, nuts and healthy oils. It limits the intake of fatty meats, full-fat dairy, sugar-sweetened beverages, sweets and sodium.

The diet is based on 2,000 calories a day. Daily portions include:

- Grains, 6-8 servings
- Meats, poultry, and fish, 6 or less
- Vegetables, 4-5 servings
- Fruit, 4-5 servings
- Low-fat or fat free dairy products, 2-3 servings
- Fats and oils, 2-3 servings

- Sodium, 2,300 mg

It recommends limiting servings of nuts, seeds, dry beans and peas to four to five servings a week and sweets to five or less a week.

Serving sizes

The diet is designed to include food that is commonly found in grocery stores so that it is easy to follow. How much a person should eat depends on their age, gender and activity level. The more active you are, the more calories you need to consume. The older you are, the fewer calories you need. Generally speaking, men need more calories than women.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute have charts on their website that show how many servings each person

should have based on how many calories they per day.

Staying on the diet

Everyone has days where they slip up or “cheat.” The NIH offers several hints for how to stay on track with the DASH diet:

- Examine what caused you to get off track.
- Take a long-term view, don't worry about a minor slip-up.
- Don't try to change too much at a time.
- Take baby steps. Break anything complex into simple, easy-to-follow steps.
- Write it down. Use a worksheet to track what you eat and drink.
- Celebrate success — but not with food.

HEART HEALTH

Pets contribute to healthy lifestyles

Dogs earn their moniker of “best friend” in a lot of ways, including helping their owners have healthier hearts.

The American Heart Association says that owning a pet, especially dogs, contribute to better heart health. In a scientific report published in 2013, scientists explored the effects that pet ownership, primarily dogs or cats, had on cardiovascular disease. The beneficial effects included “increased physical activity, favorable lipid profiles, lower systemic blood pressure, improved autonomic tone, diminished sympathetic responses to stress and improved survival after an acute coronary syndrome.



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Greater activity

Many people who have pets are more active because they have to walk the animal and move more to take care of it.

One study revealed that people who walk dogs get up to 30 minutes more exercise a day than non-walkers.

That’s exercise that contributes directly to a healthy heart.

The AHA recommends engaging in healthy activities with your pet including cooling off in sprinklers, swimming with your dog in a lake, walking and running together, playing at a dog park, spending 10 to 15 minutes a day playing catch or fetch and walking home with kids and dogs after school.

Cuddle time

Did you know that even cuddling your dog or cat can make your heart healthier? A Japanese study found that pet owners had a 300% increase in the release of oxytocin just by staring in their pets’ eyes. And the dogs experienced a 130% rise.

Why is this good? Oxytocin affects the free radical and inflammation levels of the heart, two culprits that cause heart attacks. When there is too much inflammation, it leads to a build up of arterial plaque that causes heart attacks.

So when you cuddle with your pet, you release the hormone that helps fight heart

disease.

Stress response

Other studies have shown that people respond better to stress when they live with a companion animal.

In one study, people who had pets had a significantly lower resting baseline heart rate and blood pressure.

When stress was applied, they had significantly smaller increases in heart rate and blood pressure and recovered to normal after the stress more quickly.

The fastest recovery and lowest reaction took place in people when their pet was present.

Social support

In addition to the physical benefits, pets provide emotional and social support that contribute to healthier hearts. The American Heart Association found that pet ownership was a powerful predictor of maintaining behavior change. In other words, pets help encourage good behavior and make people more motivated to engage in healthy habits. They can reduce the anxiety and depression which create barriers to healthy behaviors. While there are many factors that go into adopting a pet and one shouldn’t do it just to have a healthy heart, pets can make your life better and longer.

EASTER FAMILY FUN

Good Friday

Good Friday is traditionally the day when Christians around the world commemorate Jesus' crucifixion.

In the earliest celebrations, Good Friday was a day of sorrow, penance and fasting. Until the 4th century, the last supper, Jesus' death and his resurrection were observed in one event the evening before Easter. But since then, they've been broken into three parts.

In different religions

Unlike Easter and other Christian holidays, Good Friday has not led to a more secular set of customs and practices, perhaps because of the intense religious connotation.

In the Roman Catholic church, the liturgy of Good Friday consists of the reading of the passion narrative, the adoration of the cross and then communion. Similar services also take place in Anglican and Greek Orthodox churches. In Protestant churches, services are somber, with the cross draped and the altar bare.

Holiday

Many Christian countries mark Good Friday as a holiday. In the U.S., 12 states observe it as a state holiday: Connecticut, Texas, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, North Carolina and North Dakota. American stock markets are closed and while many retail stores remain open, some will close early. Public

schools and universities also are often close, though it may be part of a spring holiday or spring break.

Black fast

Some people may choose to fast, taking nothing but water, bread, herbs and salt. It's the most rigorous form of fasting, sometimes limited to just one meal per day and that with no meat, eggs, butter, cheese or milk. In fact, the meal may be as paltry as bread, salt, herbs and water.

Stations of the Cross

In some religious communities, adherents may participate in Stations of the Cross or Way of the Cross, a ritual involving either praying to pictures of Jesus' crucifixion or even a reenactment.

The stations are:

- Jesus is condemned to death.
- Jesus is made to bear the cross.
- Jesus falls the first time.
- Jesus meets his mother, Mary.
- Simon is made to bear the cross.
- Veronica wipes Jesus' face.
- Jesus falls a second time.
- The women of Jerusalem weep for Jesus.
- Jesus falls a third time.
- Jesus is stripped of his clothes.
- Jesus is nailed to the cross.
- Jesus dies on the cross.
- Jesus is taken down from the cross.
- Jesus is placed in the tomb.



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EASTER FAMILY FUN

Plant an Easter garden

As we enter spring, flowers popping up and fresh green leaves unfurling have many families itching to get outside. A great way to commemorate the season is to plant a spring garden. Here's how to get started.

What does your garden grow?

Gather the family together and plan what you want to grow. This is a great activity for the whole family. Find your USDA growing zone to help you pick plants that will thrive in your area. You can also contact your area agricultural extension service for a list of plants that will do well in spring.

Other than that, you'll need to think of what you want to grow. Are there cooks in the family? Think about fruits, veggies and herbs. Flowers are also a great choice. Think about if you want fragrance in the yard, cut flowers or if you want perennials that will come back year after year.

Pick your spot

Most vegetables and flowers need to have at least six hours of sunlight, so find a spot in your yard that gets plenty of sunshine. If you have more shade than rays in your yard, don't worry, there are plenty of other plants that love shade, too.

Talk to the experts at your local garden center for some great ideas for shade gardens. You'll also want to avoid slopes so that your plants are watered

evenly and pick a spot that's visible so you and your family can enjoy it. Make sure it's near enough to water so that it's easy for you to water your new garden.

Preparing your garden

If there's sod, slice that up and remove it. Work on the soil to improve it with compost, or ready-made organic soil and conditioners. Dig these into your existing soil and water it just enough that the soil is moist before planting.

Read the requirements for plant spacing and depth before you start planting and make sure to plant after all danger of frost has passed. Once your plants are in the ground, water them but not too much. Once the roots are established, you can ease up on the watering.

You can also cover the top of your garden with a layer of mulch for moisture retention and to keep weeds out. Put at least two inches of mulch



ADOBE STOCK

over the surface of the soil. Make sure it's an organic mulch such as bark, cocoa

bean shells or compost that will also help nourish the soil as it decomposes.

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EASTER FAMILY FUN

Make your own egg dyes



ADOBE STOCK

While the sizzle of a dye tablet and the pungent smell of vinegar is an Easter tradition at dinner tables around the U.S., you can also make your own homemade Easter dyes with things found in your kitchen.

Start with a base of a quart of water and 2 tablespoons of white vinegar per color. Bring it to a boil, then add the color ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain and it's ready to use.

- For red eggs: Use 4 cups chopped beets.
- For orange eggs: Use 4 cups of yellow onion skins. For a bright orange, let the eggs sit overnight. You can also use paprika.
- For a light orange egg: Add 4 tablespoons of paprika to the water and vinegar and mix until combined. Let the mixture cool before adding the egg.
- Yellow: Add 3 tablespoons of turmeric.
- Light blue: Add 3 cups chopped red or purple cabbage. Let the eggs sit overnight for a brighter blue.
- Dark blue: Add 4 cups blueberries.
- Deep red: Add the skins of six red onions and add an extra tablespoon of vinegar. Let the mixture cool before straining.
- Purple: Soak your eggs in red wine.
- Yellow orange: Use three large carrots, shredded.
- Green: Simmer 2 cups of spinach or a bunch of parsley.
- Brown: Soak the eggs in two cups of strong brewed coffee.
- Lavender: Soak the eggs in hibiscus tea.
- Pink eggs: Use raspberries, fresh or frozen.

Tips and tricks

- If you want to mix colors or dip the eggs again for a darker, more rich hue, let them dry completely first on a towel. Do not rub them.
- Gently rub the eggs with oil to prevent the color from changing over time.
- To make speckled eggs, add more vinegar to create a bubbly effect in the dye.
- For ombre eggs, start by dyeing a batch of eggs and take one out every few hours.
- Dye your eggs one color, then add oil to the second color you wish you use. Dip the egg in and let it soak. The oil will create a marbled effect.

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CULLMAN

— ALABAMA, USA —

Economic Development Agency



Pictured from left, City of Cullman Economic Development Dale Greer, Hanceville Mayor Kenneth Nail, Commission Chairman Jeff Clemons, Tyson's Jason Spann, Wallace State President Vicki Karolewics and Alabama Commerce Department's Ted Clem at the announcement of a \$200 million Tyson facility expansion.

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