

The Mirror Effect

Looking forward while glancing to the past

Noah Galilee
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With 2021 winding down and holidays piling up it can become difficult to stop for a seconds just to enjoy the moment.

This is something I've had issues with since day one in 1981.

Slowly, through encouragement from a few close individuals I've been able to stop for a few moments each day just to reflect on the past while concentrating on the future.

Future reflection, as it's been come to known around the house, has allowed a lot of anger, resentment and other negative traits to slowly leave life only to be filled with new, lovelier experiences.

The year has been filled with many difficulties but luckily there have been many around to offer solutions or to just listen to the never-ending complaining until I finally come to a conclusion as they laugh. Thank you all!

With any profession you'll have the wonderful ebb and flow in the workforce but The Tribune has always been blessed with individuals who generally care for the community which they serve.

We have reloaded this

year by bringing back Olivia Law to serve as editor and adding Ashlyn Grey, Lauren Estes and Sara Gladney to our reporting crew, and so far they've all yet to slow down.

While I look in the metaphorical mirror I'm grateful for those editors and reporters who've served at The Tribune and allowed us to grow to this point where we are finally releasing the first in a series of magazines.

Without all of them, from the first crew at CullmanSense in 2011 to our present day group, none of what we wanted to do would have never been accomplished.

So while I reflect on this year, the troubles and triumphs, honestly we've never been at a better place.

The crew continues to search out new stories and ways of telling the stories.

I believe that 2022 will be a great year for us all and we look forward to serving you all in the coming months and years!

Oh yeah, don't forget that newspaper subscriptions make for great Christmas gifts!

On behalf of us all at The Cullman Tribune we hope you've a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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Local law enforcement and fire departments encourage safety this Christmas season

Lauren Estes

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CULLMAN, Ala. — The holiday season brings on many visitors, events and celebrations with family and friends. Christmas lights often line the community's houses and indoor decorations like Christmas trees stay lit at all hours of the night.

Fire and home safety are major concerns as potential hazards are more prominent during the holiday months.

The Cullman Fire and Rescue, Cullman County Sheriff's Office and Cullman Police Department encourage community members to take extra precautions in protecting their homes against fire hazards and thefts.

CPD Public Relations officer Adam Clark said adopting the 9 p.m. rule is key.

"Lock your doors and practice the 9 o'clock routine," Clark said. "Set an alarm and every night at 9 o'clock, make sure your doors are locked on your house and vehicle.

"You can also apply this to lights inside and outside your home for protection against fire hazards."

The CCSO urges the community to be aware and proactive during the holiday months because thefts and petty crimes pose a larger problem.

"Unfortunately, the Cullman County Sheriff's Office often sees an increase in reported

thefts and burglaries during the Christmas season," Sheriff Matt Gentry said.

"People need to be very aware of their surroundings and do the little things that can help them stay safe. Keep your doors locked, at home and in your vehicle; don't leave valuables in plain sight, remember where you park when you go shopping, most importantly, if you have any concerns, don't hesitate to call the Sheriff's Office."

Cullman Fire Rescue Fire Marshal Chris Chaffin said there are a lot of tips to follow to protect your home from fire and other home issues.

"Here are a few tips that will help with your Christmas trees: Make sure that fresh trees have green needles that do not fall off when touched. Before you put it in the stand, make sure there are 2 inches cut off the bottom of it. A lot of local sellers will do it for you," Chaffin said. Chaffin said the fresh trees need to be watered daily so they stay hydrated.

"Also, keep your trees 3 feet away from any power sources," Chaffin said. "Radiators, HVAC systems, candles, high voltage lights don't need to be within reach of your tree.

"Three feet of separation is a good rule of thumb. Also, make sure your trees aren't blocking the exit of the house."

Chaffin said when using lights, to ensure they're labeled that shows they were

tested by a third party, such as Underwriter's Laboratory, and meet safety requirements.

"Make sure to use indoor lights inside the house and outdoor lights outside the house.

"When purchasing lights, read the label for the location in which the lights are to be used. Many are marked as indoor/outdoor use and have been tested as such," Chaffin said. "Please don't use real candles as decorations and make sure to turn off all lights before going to bed."

Chaffin said that most Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical fires and to be aware of power sources that are close to your decorations.

"It's not common for Christmas trees to catch on fire— but they will light up a house in a heartbeat," Chaffin said.

"With prewired trees, the plastic covering over the wires can break down causing the wires to short out. Make sure there are no broken or exposed wires before plugging into an outlet. Per the removal of your fresh trees, if you place them near the road in front of your houses, city sanitation will come to get them.

"Please do not burn them or put them in your fireplaces. Also, bringing your outdoor lights in when the season is over is important to not cause additional wear to them."

Because the holiday season

brings on a lot of cooking, the fire department encourages doing so when there is plenty of time to be present.

"Cooking in the kitchen while you can be around it for its entirety is important. Don't leave anything to cook without you being around," Chaffin said.

"Read the manufacturer's recommendations for using turkey fryers as well.

"Also, holiday events involve a lot of entertaining.

"Be sure to check smoke alarms, test the batteries and have a fire escape plan in motion."

Lastly, with the holiday months also comes the South's colder weather. Chaffin encourages having furnaces inspected and indoor heaters monitored.

"If you have a gas furnace and your natural gas provider is Cullman-Jefferson Gas, they will come and perform a safety inspection for you," Chaffin said, "With fireplaces, make sure to keep anything flammable away from it and keep a metal screen or cover in front of it. If you have a portable space heater, ensure that it has an automatic shut-off and that it's directly plugged into an outlet. Please turn it off before you go to bed and don't keep it while sleeping. Three feet of distance from any heating device and flammable or combustible materials is recommended. All of these safety measures will ensure a safer Christmas season."



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LEADING THE PACK

How CEDA stays atop the latest trends to attract industries to the area

Sara Gladney

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CULLMAN COUNTY, Ala.

— The Cullman industry has experienced growth even during the COVID-19 shutdown of 2020. The Cullman Economic Development Agency assisted industries during the pandemic by organizing job fairs to make companies aware of services available to them. CEDA combined resources with other companies to help circumvent the economic effects of the shutdown.

Due to the team effort, Cullman's industry managed to grow despite hurdles of social distancing and thousands quarantined. CEDA's biggest hurdle this year has been labor shortages.

The long-term approach to this problem is attracting people to live and work in Cullman.

Supporting the needs of existing businesses while attempting to attract new employees is a community effort.

In 2021, Cullman has seen some major company expansions which have created new jobs. Dale Greer discusses the difficulties that came with the accomplishments this year.

With 2020 a challenging year with COVID protocols and various shutdowns, how is it Cullman managed to grow its industries during the 2020-2021 years?



RWC's new 300,000 square foot distribution center

CONTRIBUTED

Most of the state had lower numbers on capital investment and job creation compared to pre-COVID years, but still pretty remarkable growth considering many businesses were totally shutdown at times.

COVID interrupted the supply chain for most manufacturers, causing thousands of workers to be out sick or quarantined, created uncertainties about the future and resulted in higher production costs.

Limited inperson contact and meetings made it more difficult to connect personally and professionally.

Social distancing curtailed meetings, events, conferences,

travel, etc. Masks and Zoom meetings changed the way we communicated.

CEDA assisted the industries by planning job fairs (with our local partners) and organizing meetings with our local career tech education leaders to make companies aware of the services available to them to grow their pipeline.

The Alabama Department of Commerce Workforce Division, North Alabama Works Region 1 Workforce Council, and dozens of local, regional and state agencies offered expertise.

We saw a more coordinated team effort to combat this pandemic and help companies address problems.

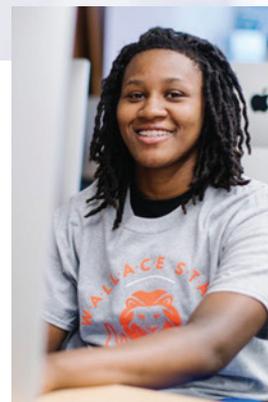
CEDA, and others, provided extensive and almost daily information on how to protect employees from COVID and how companies could access state and federal programs offering financial assistance. Combining resources made a positive difference.

Cullman's diverse industrial base was a plus for us, but the strong growth in the retail and restaurant sectors in recent years helped insure there were ample services open and conducting business.

Finally, I think the ability of Cullman companies and their workers to adapt to the ever-changing landscape accounts for much of the success. »



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What would you say was the biggest hurdle for CEDA during 2021 and how did you overcome it?

First, the biggest hurdle has been labor shortages. Most industries had difficulty recruiting and retaining a quality workforce.

Many restaurants, retail and commercial sectors curtailed hours of operation and/or had limited services.

There are help wanted signs most everywhere you look. Cullman County's unemployment rate was/is routinely the second lowest in Alabama and has been below 3% most of the year.

Alabama had the 11th largest shortage of workers of any state in the country.

We have not overcome the worker problem as a community and I see workforce - finding, training and retaining - continuing to be a focus for years.

Cullman educators, government and companies have teamed up to hold Cullman job fairs and other events to attract workers.

Working with city and county schools to make students aware of the opportunities in the community and skills needed at those jobs is making a difference in the short term.

The more long-term approach has all of us promoting attraction of people to live and work here.

A study by the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, showing housing shortages as a limiting factor in Cullman's ability to attract workers, has helped generate more than 1,000 new homes that are under construction or planned.

Specific social media platforms and other marketing plans are being designed around talent attraction.



High Caliber Mechanical, LLC holds a ribbon cutting ceremony.

CONTRIBUTED

The 2020 Census reflects a 23% population growth for the City of Cullman and a 9% population growth countywide which indicates we are on the right track.

We must continue telling the story that good paying, quality jobs exist here and that the quality of life in Cullman County offers remarkable live, work and play lifestyle opportunities.

Supporting the labor needs of existing business and industry will be a major community effort moving forward.

How many total expansions did our industries see in 2021? Please list which ones and what the expansion was.

Through nine months of 2021, data shows \$135,727,200 in capital investment related to building construction and equipment purchased by industry and 181 new jobs. We will continue to gather data on several other projects for a final tabulation at the end of the year.

How many total employees do the industries in our city/county employ?

There are at least 98 Cullman County industries fitting the industrial classification of manufacturing, distribution or research and development. Those companies provide direct jobs to approximately 9,000 people. That does not include indirect jobs created by suppliers, vendors, truck drivers, etc.

How many total tax dollars do these industries generate yearly to help fund the communities?

Tax revenue from industry is generated in many different forms. The total value is not limited to what the companies themselves pay.

Below are the top 10 industrial property taxpayers for 2021 as invoiced by the Cullman Revenue Commissioner. Property tax is only a small portion of the revenue collected

from and generated by industry.

The true magnitude of the tax revenues created by our industries would be extremely difficult to measure.

Industries not only create products that are sold, but also purchase supplies and other products locally creating sales/use tax and revenues for our local businesses and government.

- REHAU - \$887,979.03
- Walmart - \$544,236.00
- Reliance Worldwide Corporation - \$433,543.53
- Alabama Cullman Yutaka Technologies, LLC - \$421,813.67
- Rusken Packaging, Inc. - \$222,503.97
- Louisiana Pacific - \$204,873.24
- Tyson Farms, Inc. »



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Thank you, again!

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- \$198,163.94

- Webb Wheel - \$188,845.06
- Royal Technologies - \$182,555.84
- Concour Mold - \$115,883.05
- Top 10 industries 2021 tax revenue - \$3,400,397.33

An annual wage and benefit survey of industry conducted by CEDA validates a minimum of \$10 million is collected in local tax revenue and more than \$100 million is generated at local businesses.

Companies themselves spend money on utilities, insurance, vehicles and fuel, landscaping, pest control, vending services, food, office supplies, furniture, electronic equipment, etc.

Managers and employees of the industries are generally heavily involved in civic clubs, charities, churches and community activities as members, volunteers or financial supporters.

The number of industry jobs in a community also plays a significant role in the ability to attract retail, restaurants and commercial businesses.

What has been the most rewarding accomplishment during 2021?

Major expansions by REHAU, \$50 million and 125 jobs, and RWC's 300,000 square foot distribution center construction with 50 new jobs were obviously very rewarding. RWC located on a greenfield site and shows the value of purchasing and developing industrial property.

There is also great satisfaction in assisting projects like the one in Vinemont and relocating a growing incubated »



Alabama Farm Credit recently moved in to the old Wells Fargo building.

CONTRIBUTED



Huntsville Hospital Urgent Care holds a ribbon cutting ceremony.

CONTRIBUTED

industry from Wallace State Community College to a building in Hanceville.

The Hanceville project was a partnership between the City of Hanceville, Cullman County, the City of Cullman, the industrial boards of the three entities and Wallace Community College.

Teamwork like that sets the stage for even more positive development in the future.

Every new and expanding project contributes to the community and creates a place where people want to invest, work and live.

Economic development is making connections between people, companies, institutions and communities with a goal of improving the quality of life.

It is great to see the efforts of so many individuals, partners and supporters be rewarded.



The Shaddix Company holds a ribbon cutting ceremony.

CONTRIBUTED

What can industries and workers alike expect for 2022?

Workers will have their pick of available jobs in the community. There are a lot of opportunities out there. Everyone is hiring. Educational programs and training are available for individuals.

There is financial assistance offered in many instances for individuals to learn or upgrade skills either through the colleges, training service providers or companies themselves.

Industries will have to continue to find creative ways to attract and retain employees to Cullman and Alabama.

As an agency and a community, it is important to remember that success not only depends on new things coming in, but also on enriching what is already here.

We have to continually redefine success. In a tighter job market, that will continue for the foreseeable future, we



Alabama Governor Kay Ivey joins local officials as Rehau celebrates its recent expansion.

CONTRIBUTED

need to target smaller projects.

Those projects create fewer jobs, but the jobs are more specialized with higher skill requirements and better compensation.

Cullman County's future is

extremely bright.

Industrial growth and expansion will continue, but will probably be outpaced by retail, commercial and residential growth.

Cullman and North Alabama

are experiencing a robust economy and the forecast is for even more community development.

Our challenge will be managing that growth and continuing to work together.



ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Increasing beef prices hurt cattle farmers and local meat processors

Sara Gladney

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CULLMAN, Ala. — The effects of steadily increasing beef prices have been felt by cattle farmers all over the U.S. The people who raise cattle are not seeing an increase in profits even though beef prices keep rising. There are only a few meat packaging plants that control the majority (about 80%) of the cattle processing industry. The Big Four (Tyson, JBS, Cargill, and National Beef) is the part of the supply chain that is seeing the profits; however, these plants have also been affected by the labor shortage due to the

pandemic, another reason for the increased prices.

USDA inspection is an added cost to both the farmer and processor.

All livestock must go through USDA inspection before it is sold to consumers. There are a few processors in the state of Alabama that are USDA inspected.

Obtaining a slot at one of these facilities for inspection may take several months.

For every dollar spent on beef by the consumer, only 14.3 cents go to the farmer. As a result, many farmers are looking into self-processing their meat.

To begin self-processing,

storage could become a detrimental issue.

Beyond the difficulty of finding a large freezer during the pandemic, buying large quantities of meat is a big financial investment. Purchasing large amounts of meat at a time is a better deal monetarily, but most people do not have the storage space.

Haynes Farms, a local farm in Cullman discussed the challenges farmers face when trying to self-process.

During the height of the pandemic, the Haynes farm saw a spike in interest for locally grown beef, but they were limited on processing options.

Whitney Haynes of Haynes

Farms said, “We did discuss the option of our own processing facility, it simply was not feasible or conducive to our current farming operation.”

In addition to a majority of cattle sales conducted via online auction, the Haynes farm has been working with the LouAllens, a small family-owned processing facility, to provide locally grown and processed beef.

Whitney says, “For each appointment, we are able to speak directly to our processor with any questions, concerns or options we have on each particular animal.”

Brickyard Meat Processing is a local butcher shop that »



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slays custom animals from local farmers.

The prices at Brickyard may sometimes be higher than in supermarkets, but the meat is a higher grade because it is grain-fed. The meat is cut and packaged daily as compared with the weeks it may be packaged sitting at a supermarket.

Other locally owned businesses have taken a cut in profits as well as the farmers who raise the cattle.

The increase in beef prices has only hurt their business, according to owner Tamara Robinson. Small family-owned businesses like Tamara's only get a tractor load of meat at a time, so it is more difficult to negotiate prices, and thus, difficult to compare prices to that of corporate stores like Walmart or Publix.

Tamara says she has taken a cut in profits with the increased beef prices so that people can still afford to buy meat from her business. She says, "If anything, I was losing money on ground beef during the pandemic."



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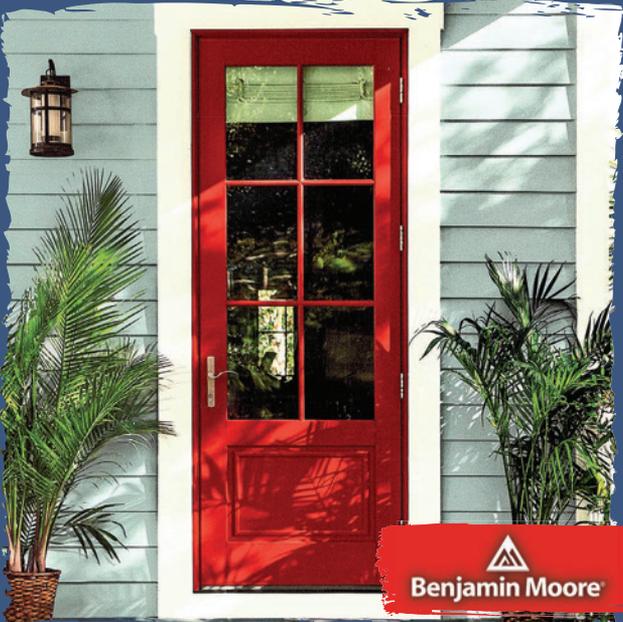
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NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Top row L-R: Hobson Hite, Mitch Morris, Russell Nicoll, Eddie Lawrence, Lance Boyd and Keith Burns representing Phillip Callahan. Bottom row L-R: Jimmy Schaffer, Brandon Pugh, Brett Crider, Kimberly Gray Whitman, Shelia Berry Buckelew and Stan Jennings.

Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2020 inducted

Nick Griffin

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CULLMAN, Ala. — After last year's induction ceremony was postponed, The Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame finally got the opportunity to recognize its newest members at Stone Bridge Farms Saturday night. The Class of 2020 was officially inducted Saturday night at the 21st annual banquet and induction ceremony and includes Lance Boyd, Shelia Berry Buckelew, Phillip A. Callahan, Brett Crider, Hobson Hite, Stan Jennings, Eddie Lawrence, Mitch Morris, Russell Nicoll, Brandon Pugh, Jimmy Schaffer and Kimberly

Gray Whitman.

After an invocation from Hall of Fame member and Board of Directors member Claborn Campbell and a meal, Hall of Fame Chairman Jackie Satterfield began introducing each member of this year's class, beginning with Lance Boyd.

LANCE BOYD

- Graduated from Hanceville High School in 1988
- Played baseball, basketball and football
- Played punter, safety and quarterback on football team
- Went to state semi-finals with football team
- All-County in basketball and

baseball

- Selected to the Cullman-Blount County All-Star Team
- Awarded baseball scholarship to Wallace State
- Coached football at Hanceville and Fairview High School
- Coached basketball at Fairview High School
- Coach with Hall of Fame coaches Dafford Smith, Ed Oaks, Keith Burns and Mark Moore
- Taught at Hanceville and Fairview High School, Cullman Christian School and Wallace State Community College

SHELIA BERRY BUCKELEW

- Graduated from Holly Pond High School in 1978
- Participated in basketball and track
- All-County in basketball in 1977 and 1978
- All-Area in basketball in 1977 and 1978
- Area Tournament MVP and All-Tournament Team
- Member of County Championship Teams in 1977 and 1978
- Member of Rifle Corps and Color Guard Captain
- Coached middle school basketball for three years
- Coached volleyball for two years
- Played on first girls basketball team at Wallace State »

PHILLIP A. CALLAHAN

- Graduated from Hanceville High School in 1975
- Member of the baseball, basketball, football and track teams
- Voted MVP of football team
- All-State in football and played in All Star Game
- Led track team in points
- Senior Class President, Member of National Honor Society and voted Mr. Hanceville High School
- Made baseball team at Auburn University as a walk-on
- Graduated Auburn University in 1985 in Veterinary Medicine

BRETT CRIDER

- Graduated from Cold Springs High School in 1991
- Member of football, basketball, baseball and track teams
- All-County and All-Area in football in 1989 and 1990
- All-State in football in 1990
- Set County record in rushing (1,987 yards), touchdowns (30) and finished third in the state in rushing in 1990
- Academic All-State Team in 1990
- 4-year starter on baseball team as shortstop and center fielder
- 2-year starter on basketball team
- All-Area in basketball for 1990 and 1991
- Played in Cullman East-West All-Star Basketball Game
- Cullman County Power Lifting Champion in 1989 and 1990
- Coached boys and girls middle school teams at Cold Springs

HOBSON HITE

- Graduated from Gilbert High School in South Carolina in 1979
- Team Captain in baseball and football
- First Team All-Conference

- in football
- Played football for Livingston University in 1982
- Head Football Coach at Fairview Junior High from 1988-1997
- Head Basketball Coach at Fairview Junior High from 1988-1990 and 1993-1996
- Head Track and Field Coach at Fairview High School in 1998-2007
- Head Cross Country Coach at Fairview High School for 18 years
- Won county championship in junior high boys and girls basketball
- Won county championships in high school boys and girls track

STAN JENNINGS

- Graduated from Vinemont High School in 1991
- Member of baseball, football and basketball teams
- All-County football in 1990
- All-Area in football as junior and senior
- All-State in football as a punter
- Passed for over 1900 yards and 17 touchdowns as a senior
- Led team to second round of state playoffs
- Joe Schultz Basketball Award winner as a senior
- Played in Lions Club North-South All-Star Baseball Game in 1991
- Valedictorian of Vinemont High School Class of 1991
- Cullman Chamber of Commerce Student of the Year
- Played for Hall of Fame coaches Mark Smothers, Mike Grantham and Mike Cupp

EDDIE LAWRENCE

- Graduated from Cullman High School in 1974
- Member of football, basketball and baseball teams
- One of two seniors to Letter in three varsity sports

- Coached by Hall of Fame members Bill Griffin, Dafford Smith, Oliver Woodard, Gerald Johnson and Ray Talley
- Won three state championships and seven runner-up trophies as boys and girls cross-country coach
- Coached baseball at Cullman High School from 1983-1988 (record of 83-60)
- Assistant baseball coach at Cullman High School from 1999-2005 (record of 198-98)
- State baseball champion in 2002 and runner-up in 2003 and 2004
- 30 years of experience as an official in football, baseball, softball and basketball
- Member of Sacred Heart Softball Team that won 88 consecutive league games and six league championships
- Special Olympics Coordinator for 20 years

MITCH MORRIS

- Graduated from Holly Pond High School in 1984
- Played baseball and basketball in high school
- All-County and All-Area in baseball as a senior
- All-County three times and All-Area twice in basketball
- Played in state basketball All-Star Game
- Head Basketball Coach at Holly Pond High School from 2004-2020 (300-plus victories)
- 10 consecutive area championships and three county championships
- Most wins in a season (30) and fewest losses in a season (2)
- Nine consecutive seasons with 20 or more wins
- Coached most games in school history
- Two appearances at the State Final Four

RUSSELL NICOLL

- Graduated from West Point High School in 1996
- Participated in football, basketball and track
- All-County in football in 1994 and 1995
- Birmingham News First Team All-State Football in 1995
- Alabama Sportswriters Association All-State Honorable Mention
- Birmingham News Super All-State Football in 1995
- Earned scholarship to Vanderbilt University for football
- Lettered four years at Vanderbilt
- Received the 2000 Kyle Cullahorn Award at Vanderbilt

BRANDON PUGH

- Graduated from Good Hope High School in 1990
- Member of baseball and basketball teams
- All-County in basketball in junior and senior years
- All-Area in basketball three times
- All-State in basketball senior year
- Joe Schultz Award winner
- Bryant-Jordan Scholar representative
- Lettered in baseball four years
- All-County in baseball three years
- Played in first two rounds of state baseball All-Star Game
- Class President and Valedictorian
- Appointment to West Point Military Academy
- Lettered in Division 1A baseball at West Point Military Academy

JIMMY SCHAFFER

- Graduated from Cullman High School in 1977
- Participated in football and track

- Played on both the offensive and defensive lines
- Voted the Most Outstanding Offensive Lineman
- Selected to the Tennessee Valley All-Conference Team
- Played from Hall of Fame Coach Dell Brock

KIMBERLY GRAY WHITMAN

- Graduated from Groveland High School in Florida in 1988
- Lettered in track for four years
- Awarded the Greenback Pride Award as Most Dedicated

- Won the Scholastic Award for highest grade-point average
- Won the 2005 Mississippi Marathon
- Won the 2006 Clearmont Florida Marathon
- Qualified for 10 consecutive Boston Marathons

- Best Boston Marathon finish top 3%
- Coached track and cross-country at Cullman Middle School
- Currently employed in Cullman County School System



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ELIZABETH HUNT

Longtime Cullman Parks and Recreation Director John Hunt pictured with his family. Front L-R: Kayla Hunt (Strickland), Elizabeth Hunt, John Hunt, Lauren Hunt (Peek). Back L-R: Hannah Hunt (Shelton), Ryan Hunt, Wilson Strickland, Cade Peek.

Hunt family establishes John E. Hunt Memorial Scholarship, annual golf tournament

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — It’s been over a year since longtime Cullman Parks and Recreation Director John Hunt passed away but his impact on the community can still be seen and felt every day. Now, John’s

family, along with the Cullman Auburn Alumni Center, have set up a scholarship in his name to continue supporting local students and help them pursue their goals. The John E. Hunt Memorial Scholarship will be given each year to a Cullman County student going to Auburn University.

Cort Chandler, a Cullman High School graduate and a Finance & Marketing Double Major at Auburn University, was this year’s scholarship recipient. John’s wife Elizabeth was happy to see the scholarship awarded to a student John watched play in Cullman’s Park & Rec. leagues and is

appreciative of all the support her family has received from the community. She also gave an update on the Inaugural John E. Hunt Golf Tournament coming up later in August.

“We were honored to award John’s scholarship to Cort. John and I have known his family for years and watched Cort »

grow up and playing in City Parks and Recreation baseball league,” Hunt said. “The Hunt family is thankful, honored and have been blessed through family, friends and community support by donations to his scholarship fund at Auburn University for a Cullman County resident to continue their education.

“So many friends and community leaders and contacts have shared their memories of John with me, what he meant to them personally as a friend, mentor and community leader and to the City of Cullman. John would feel humbled and grateful of the sentiments that people have shared and spoke of him and his contributions to the city, the community and lives he touched. Listening to people share their story with me and our family makes my heart happy.

“The golf tournament is going well as far as the number of golf teams that have registered. Golfers can register the day of the tournament as well. We will offer first and second place winners. A chance to win a car from Mitch Smith and door prizes donated by local business and friends. Opportunities are still available to be a hole sponsor as well.”

Hunt served as Cullman’s Parks and Recreation Director for over 22 years before retiring from the department in 2014, helping to lay the groundwork for many of the parks and facilities we still enjoy today. John also served as the Golf Director at Terri Pines Country Club before accepting a position at Sand Mountain Park in Albertville. During John’s memorial service at Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center last June, Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs spoke about the impact



ELIZABETH HUNT

John has had on this community and the legacy he has left behind.

“Heritage Park was the beginning of turning Cullman Parks and Recreation from a rec league, into a sports tourism department known throughout the southeastern United States. It wasn’t an easy project because no one understood it and pretty much no one believed what it would become,” Jacobs said. “But, after the success of Heritage Park, other projects followed. It’s easier to get people to believe in you after you’ve had a success. So, John came up with Chester (Freeman) and we built Field of Miracles. The facility that you’re in today took a few years, but with John and Chester’s persuasion, it became a reality and with his leadership, Cullman became an important parks and recreation department, for all citizens. He strived to build something that everyone can enjoy, from a child of all abilities to senior adults. All of the departments he tried to make top notch.

This is his professional legacy, and Cullman is a much better place.”

Biography for Auburn University’s John E. Hunt Memorial Endowed Scholarship

“John E. Hunt believed education could change a life and brighten a future. He graduated from Auburn University in 1986. He knew the university as a place of learning, family, tradition, dedication, hard work and life-long friendship. The education, values, relationships, and experiences he took with him from Auburn shaped a well-lived life of service as a mentor and community leader.

“In the workplace, John used his training in health and recreation to build a thriving and award-winning parks and recreation program in the City of Cullman, Alabama. He knew the power of sport to build strong individuals and unite communities, and he kept that as his focus as he employed staff, managed budgets, and developed programs for the

city over the course of 25 years. Those same guiding principles never wavered in his other recreational roles in the communities of Albertville, Dothan and Montgomery. John’s vision and efforts extended into the community as a board member for the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association, board member of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, a volunteer leader with Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and as a leader in his church. For many years he participated in and then led community-wide events including an annual Thanksgiving meal, serving those in need.

“John’s scholarship recognizes his family’s Auburn legacy, which includes his wife Elizabeth, a 1989 graduate, daughter Kayla (2013), son Ryan (2017), daughter Lauren (2020), and daughter-in-law Hannah (2016). In establishing this scholarship in John’s memory, Elizabeth said, ‘In our family and in our community, John left a legacy of honoring the value and potential in »

each person and empowering that person through education and service. It's that legacy we continue with this scholarship.'

"'And because Auburn men and women believe in these things, I believe in Auburn and love it.' -George Petrie (1943) 'War Eagle!'"

In addition to establishing the scholarship, John's family has also organized an annual John E. Hunt Golf Tournament. Cross Creek Golf Course was packed for the inaugural John E. Hunt Golf Tournament in August with 34 teams made up of 136 players out on the course competing. The proceeds from the tournament go toward each year's John E. Hunt Memorial Scholarship fund. The first scholarship was awarded to Cort Chandler earlier this summer and after a successful first tournament, next year's scholarship is well on its way

to being funded. John's wife, Elizabeth, was happy to report the massive turnout and knows John would've been excited to see so many within the community come and show their support for a cause he believed in.

"We are grateful, we are humbled and blessed. We didn't expect this kind of a turnout for the first year and it's just incredible that so many people came out and gave us their time and helped us raise money for the Auburn University scholarship in John's honor," Hunt said. "He would've been so honored to see so many people come out. He would've been so excited, and he would've shaken everyone's hand."

John's daughter, Lauren, was also at Cross Creek Saturday and was excited to see so many participate in an event honoring her father but is even more excited about

what Saturday's success means for future projects within the community.

"We're very thankful for this turnout. We did not expect this for the first year and it's just an honor to have been able to set up this scholarship in his name. That's just a little something we can do to honor him. He put three kids through Auburn, so we thought that was the best way to honor him right now.

"He always believed in higher education and always believed that everyone should be able to have the opportunity to do something," Lauren said. "We're very thankful that we get to do this and get to help a student and their family follow their dreams of going to school and I know in the coming years we'll have some other ways we'll be able to honor (John) and give back to the community. He was all about community and always had a

passion for kids and watching them grow and succeed."

Like Lauren, Elizabeth is also excited to see what more they'll be able to do to both honor John's memory and give back to the community in the future.

"I think next year our goal will be to help more with park & rec events. John really enjoyed doing the Thanksgiving community dinner and I know a lot of churches do that as well," Hunt said. "Grover Reeves started that, and John joined in with him so next year we'll be looking at other ways we'll be able to honor John and help within the community."

John spent decades working to add or improve on the parks and facilities within his community and now, with a scholarship in his name, he'll be able to continue helping local students accomplish their goals at the university he loved.

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FROM GOLD ARCHES TO GOLD MEDALS:

Hartselle's Quanesha Burks' amazing journey to the Olympics

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

HARTSELLE, Ala. — The Olympics is an amazing event full of some of the world's most elite athletes who will do whatever it takes to bring home a gold medal. This year, one of those athletes is Hartselle's Quanesha Burks, who will be competing in the long jump for Team USA and her journey to get to this point, has been nothing short of amazing and inspirational.

The USA Healthcare in Falkville is helping raise money so Burks' family can travel to Orlando to watch the Olympics along with the other families of Team USA. Burks will compete July 31st in Tokyo.

Burks was born in Ozark, Alabama and she and her siblings were raised by her grandparents in Hartselle. It was a real struggle early on as she watched her family live paycheck to paycheck.

She got a job at McDonald's when she was 17 years old. Her day would start at 4:30 a.m. when she took her grandmother to work at the local nursing home, which was a half-hour away from her their house.

Upon returning, she helped get her sisters ready for school before dropping them off and then attending her own classes.

When school ended, she would go to practice, which would wrap up before she needed to be at McDonald's at 4 p.m. and she worked until 10 p.m., the latest high school students were permitted.

On the weekends, she worked the »



Hartselle's Quanesha Burks will be competing in the Long Jump for Team USA at this year's Olympics in Tokyo.

UA ATHLETICS

early-morning shifts. She was making \$200 every two weeks and it was all part of her goal to go to college. All of her money would go toward helping her grandmother pay off her car insurance.

But it wasn't track that first caught her interest. While she was at Hartselle, Burks quickly took notice of her classmates using sports as a way to get college scholarships.

A family friend bought her shoes to play basketball and she had dreams of playing for Pat Summit at Tennessee.

When track season rolled around, another friend encouraged her to try out and bought her spikes to compete in the sprints and jumps.

After placing third at the 2012 USATF National Junior Olympics, she decided to stick with track for her college aspirations.

Alabama coach Miguel Pate sat down with Burks, Hartselle Track & Field Coach Kenny Lopez and her guidance counselor and let her know how much her life was going to change when she was offered an athletic scholarship.

Burks finished her high school career with 11 state titles, including the 100-meters, long jump and triple jump sweep as a senior.

At Alabama, she became the first in her family to attend college and went on to have a successful career by setting school records, earning All-America honors and winning the 2015 NCAA outdoor and 2016 NCAA indoor long jump titles.

She's also the only female national championship long jump winner to come from the University of Alabama.

But the next few years as a professional were not easy for Burks. In 2018, she finished

fourth at the World Athletic Indoors Championships and missed the podium by 0.04 meters.

A year later, she lost her grandfather, who was "the only dad I had in my life", a week before the USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

After that, she boarded a plane to Des Moines and competed two days later but failed to record a successful jump and missed the 2019 World Championships.

She rebounded by winning the U.S. indoor title in February of 2020 but the World Athletics Indoor Championship in Nanjing, China, were canceled due to the pandemic.

Burks continued to train until she suffered a bone bruise in her femur earlier this year, sidelining her for 11 weeks without any running or jumping.

While she watched her competition notch the Olympic standard and earn points in the World Athletics' ranking system, Burks took to TikTok to verbally manifest that she was going to make the Olympic team.

Despite the odds being against her, and even with her coach and the doctors saying that she probably wouldn't be ready in time for trials, Burks was determined to accomplish the goals she had set.

She knew that she could do it. Three weeks before at a meet in Chula Vista, California, Burks jumped with a season-best 6.85 meters despite the severe bone bruise in her takeoff leg.

Burks entered the trials with a personal best of 6.93 meters and entered the competition with the Olympic standard, but only secured it in her final competition before the trials. Going into her jump, she was ranked 11th in 2021.

Burks qualified for the final

on her first jump and entered the final with the second-best jump in the field.

Her first four rounds were solid but in the fifth round she finished with a personal best of 6.96 meters, propelling her from sixth to third.

Burks ended up holding that spot and made her first Olympic team. Burks feels like to this day, she still gets overlooked, but because of her determination, her mindset and her confidence, her dreams are coming true.

How did she celebrate making her first Olympic team? With an order of medium fries with no salt and a side of sweet and sour sauce at McDonald's.

Burks' family is so incredibly proud of her, and they couldn't help but get emotional when

talking about her incredible journey to get to the Olympics.

"I'm really proud of her," her stepfather, James Evans, said. "She's come a long way; she used to work at McDonald's. She graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in teaching. She kept pushing herself, working out every day.

"That's a big step when you fulfill your goals and you want to do something in life. That's what she did; she kept pushing herself and I'm very proud of her.

"To see a person like that from Alabama to participate in something like the Olympics, that's a very big step."

"I'm really proud of her. She's come a long way," her sister, Ja'Mira Davis, said. »



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"I'm actually proud that I get to go and get to see her from the Olympics doing what she's doing right now. I'm actually really proud of her."

Another one of her sisters, Jayla Dobbins, had this to say when asked what it will be like when she hears her sister's name and she see it across

the screen, "I'm going to be so proud of her.

"I'm going to be so amazed that she has gone so far over the last year. It's going to be amazing."

"I knew Quanesha was going to go very far in life," her mom, Leasha Dobbins, said.

"And me being a mom, I'm

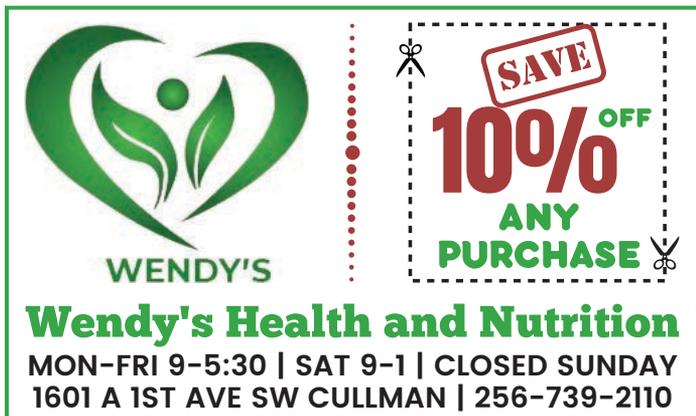
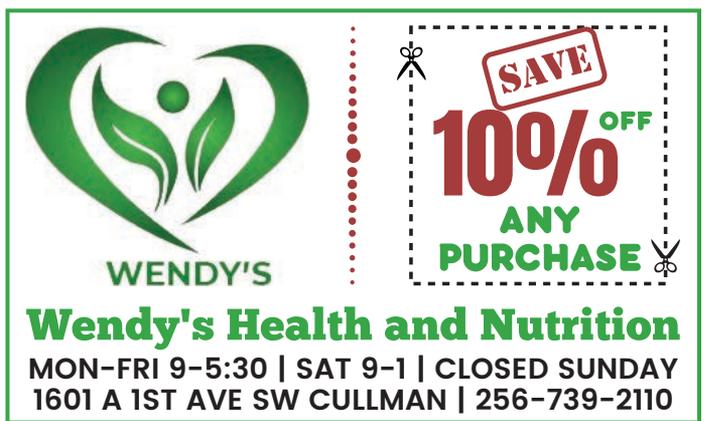
behind her with every step of the way, along with the rest of my family.

"I love my baby. I'm excited for her and it's going to be amazing."

"I'm so proud of Quanesha," her grandmother, Kathy Davis, said. "I'm just so excited for her."

Her reaction to when she sees her on the screen: "There's my baby. I'm so happy. God is good."

It's been an incredible journey so far for Quanesha Burks, and her family, along with millions of other fans, are rooting for her to bring home some gold medals.



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THE END OF THE BEST CHAPTER

Cullman County Public Library Children's Librarian Jamelle Dimbo holds last storytime before retirement

Ashlyn Grey
ashlyn@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Tuesday morning, Jamelle Dimbo sat for her last storytime with children at the Cullman County Public Library. Wednesday was her final day there before she retires after years of service as the Children's Librarian.

Jamelle shared with The Tribune, "I have been here for two or three years, but I was an elementary librarian at Hanceville for about eight years, and I worked for Birmingham City for about 20 years.

"When I retired from the City of Birmingham, I wanted to do something to give back because our community was one such that was always supported.

"Whether it be prayers, finances, food, our community just came together and supported our children."

"I have always worked with children. I did middle school for one year, but I only lasted the one year," she laughed.

Cullman County Public Library Director Sharon Townsend spoke on her time with Jamelle, »



Jamelle Dimbo assists children at the craft table during her final storytime with CCPLS. RENEE WELSH

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saying, "Janelle joined us in 2018, just to help us for a few months. We kept talking her into staying a little longer until finally she agreed to a permanent part time position. She created new programs and activities to educate and entertain children.

"She incorporated more community involvement. North Alabama Agriplex has shared many programs, as well as Merchants Bank, Cullman Electric Co-op, Peinhardt Farms, several local artists, therapy dogs and even a therapy horse (yes, we had a miniature horse IN the library) named Star."

Townsend continued, "As Janelle added more community involvement to her storytime programs, it added more partnership opportunities for the library system as a whole.

"I will miss Janelle, and am thankful God put her in my path. He surely shines through her and will continue to do so."

Fellow librarian, Josephine Harrington, offered kind words as well, saying, "She's been great for the library in her time here!

"She started up our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, and she's been very involved in our Summer Learning Programs and storytime and all sorts of children's activities.

"The kids and their parents love her. She just has this sort of approachable, fun atmosphere about her.

"I'm sure everyone will be sad to see her go! They (and we) are really going to miss her!"

The Friends of the Public Libraries of Cullman County have also worked closely with Janelle, with member Renee Welsh sharing her story of her first meeting with the Children Librarian, "One of the first things my husband and I would do when our careers brought us to a new area - a new home - we would find the nearest library and get our library card. »

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"On that day, a few years ago, we met Jamelle - her genuine love for youth and mastery of the reference interview was evident.

"She focused on our family's interests - what makes us smile - our past journeys."

"As my journey with the Friends of the Cullman County Public Libraries continued, it was apparent that Jamelle wasn't just the children's librarian - she is an advocate for all patrons of Cullman County; whether it be ensuring all pre-K children have access to a program (home school, private and public) or creating a flexible and accommodating environment for parents and guardians to celebrate Harry Potter's birthday parade.

"Even stuffing hundreds of Lunar New Year bags during the pandemic so families could learn about the Year of the Ox —Jamelle's superpower of caring for the CCPLS patrons shines across the circulation desk and into the hearts of all who visit the Cullman Library."

Bookmobile driver and librarian Willette Harbison also shared, "The moment I met Miss Jamelle several years ago at the library, I immediately liked her.

"She has this big smile and infectious laugh that will make any day brighter. Jamelle has a fellow librarian and loves children.

"She has recently volunteered to go out into the community with me on the bookmobile to help and enjoy them.

"She has convictions and is a dedicated person to her church, her profession and to the education of all children. She will be sorely missed."

Local parent Suzanne Lee often brings her children to the library for activities or storytime and reflected back on Ms. Jamelle's continuous presence and contributions.

"Jamelle loves the library, and she loves her library families. She greets everyone with such warmth and kindness. My children and I always enjoy seeing her when we visit," said Lee. »

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Tuesday morning, Jamelle Dimbo sat with her students for storytime as the children's librarian at Cullman County Public Library, just as she has countless times before.

Children giggled and clambered about as she greeted each one by name.

Some rushed to offer hugs and hellos, as the rest settled in to hear the book.

The morning was like any other and the story was "One Frog Sang" written by Shirley Parenteau and illustrated by Cynthia Jabar, as children counted throughout the story with Ms. Jamelle, assisting with frog noises and questions of their own along the way.

As it concluded, Jamelle shared a final thought on her lifelong passion and career, "You know, it is funny. When I look back on when they have those things where they ask you as a child, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?'"

She smiled, "Well, I have always wanted to be a librarian. Always."

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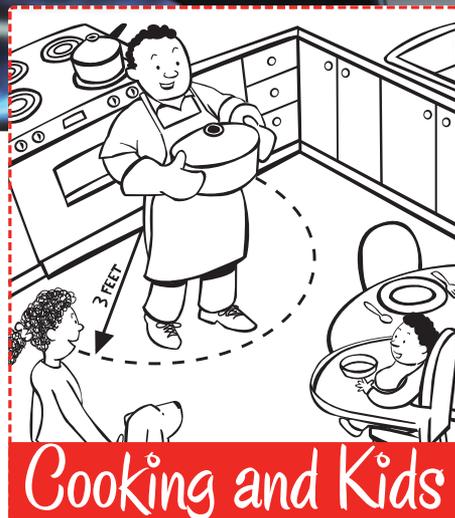
- Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

If you have a small (grease) cooking fire and decide to fight the fire...

- On the stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire...

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number from outside the home.



Cooking and Kids

Have a "kid-free zone" of at least 3 feet (1 metre) around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

FACTS

- ❗ The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- ❗ Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



Thanksgiving Safety

The kitchen is the heart of the home, especially at Thanksgiving. Kids love to be involved in holiday preparations. Safety in the kitchen is important, especially on Thanksgiving Day when there is a lot of activity and people at home.

- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stovetop so you can keep an eye on the food.
- Stay in the home when cooking your turkey and check on it frequently.
- Keep children away from the stove. The stove will be hot and kids should stay 3 feet away.
- Make sure kids stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over kids, toys, pocketbooks or bags.
- Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.
- Keep matches and utility lighters out of the reach of children — up high in a locked cabinet.
- Never leave children alone in room with a lit candle.
- Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them by pushing the test button.

Did you know?



Thanksgiving is the leading day of the year for home fires involving cooking equipment.

Have activities that keep **kids out of the kitchen** during this busy time. Games, puzzles or books can keep them busy. Kids can get involved in Thanksgiving preparations with recipes that can be done **outside** the kitchen.



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Holiday Event Calendar

31st Annual Cullman Area Christmas Open House

Nov. 12-14: The 31st Annual Cullman Area Christmas Open House will be Nov. 12-14 at the Warehouse District. This is your one-stop-shop to do all of your Christmas shopping. Visit <https://www.cullmanopenhouse.com/> for more information.

2021 Jones Chapel Merry Market Craft and Vendor Show

Nov. 13: The 2021 Merry Market Craft show will take place Saturday Nov. 13 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Jones Chapel Community Center (96 County Road 940, Cullman, AL). Along with original booths, there will be food trucks, inflatables and games. Local businesses and churches are invited to attend and set up a booth. The vendor fee is \$25. For more information, call 256-615-5611.

Cullman Elks Holiday Craft Fair and Vendor Expo

Nov. 13: Come out and support a great cause. All money goes to Elk Christmas charities. Hosted at the Cullman Elks Lodge (1525 Brantley Ave. NW, Cullman, Alabama) on Saturday, Nov. 13 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tickets for door prize drawings are \$1 per ticket.

Sportsman Lake Park Winter Wonderland

Nov. 19 - Dec. 30: This annual Cullman event is returning this year, featuring thousands of lights, Christmas train, horse and carriage rides, snow machine, photo booth, hot chocolate and more. A new addition is the Winter Wonderland Christmas Shop. Times are 5-9:30 p.m. For a more detailed schedule or for more information, call 256-734-3052.

Christmas in the Park

Nov. 26: The City of Arab is hosting Christmas in the Park nightly 5-9:30 p.m. from Nov. 26 - Dec. 31 at Arab City Park (844 Shoal Creek Trail Arab, AL). Over 2 million display

lights to walk through! Lighting ceremony will be Nov. 26 at 6 p.m. Admission is free! Santa will be in the park Nov. 26 - Dec. 18, Fridays and Saturdays only, from 6-9 p.m. in Arab Historic Village, which will also feature food trucks, live music and more! Admission is \$6, with ages 2 and under free. For more information, call 256-586-6793 or visit <https://www.arabcity.org/>

Christmas at the Grotto

Nov 26 - Dec. 31: Christmas at the Grotto will return this season at the Ave Maria Grotto. The Grotto will open for special evening hours to allow visitors to tour the Grotto grounds which will be decorated with thousands of lights. This year, there will also be barbecue, music and even horse-drawn carriage rides Dec. 17 and 18. Admission prices for adults - \$6, students - \$3, with children under 3 are free. For more information, visit <http://www.avemariagrotto.com>.

Christmas at the Falls

Nov. 25 - Dec. 23 and Dec. 26 - Jan. 1: Nocalula Falls Park will be open for their annual Christmas event this season, where visitors can enjoy viewing the park fully decorated with Christmas lights, either on foot via the paved trails or by train ride. Concessions will be open. Nightly hours of operation are 4-9 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online only.

Prices are:

- Monday - Thursday: \$8 per ticket + online fee
- Friday - Sunday: \$10 per ticket + online fee
- Tickets are non-refundable but can be transferred to another night. For more information, call 256-549-4663 or visit <http://www.nocalulafallspark.com/>.

Christmas in Cullman Parade and Tree Lighting

Dec. 3: The annual Christmas in Cullman Parade and Tree Lighting ceremony will take

place Friday, Dec. 3 at Depot Park. The parade will start at 6 p.m. and will travel down First Avenue, with the tree lighting to follow. For more information, visit <https://www.christmasincullman.com/>, or to register for the parade, visit <https://forms.gle/k3V1iTTmJ3t191Nm6>.

32nd Annual Cullman County Christmas Parade

Dec. 4: The 32nd Annual Cullman County Christmas Parade will take place on Saturday, Dec. 4 beginning at noon in downtown Hanceville, rain or shine. Entries are now being accepted. The theme is First Responders: God's gift to their community. For more information, contact Tonya Godbee at 256-531-8992 or Amy Moctezuma at 256-339-9900 or by email at

hancevillecivitan@gmail.com.

Breakfast With Santa

Dec. 4: The Berlin Fire Dept. will be hosting a pancake breakfast with Santa on Saturday, Dec. 4 from 7 p.m. - noon at the Berlin Community Center (3309 U.S. Highway 278, Cullman, Alabama). Plates are by donation and will enter you into a drawing to win a 7-foot Teddy bear.

Christkindlmarkt

Dec. 10-11: Join in on a newer Cullman holiday event, the Christkindlmarkt, on Friday, Dec. 10 - Saturday Dec. 11 in Downtown Cullman. This event will sport many different vendors set up German style in small wooden tents. This will be the perfect way to finish out your Christmas shopping!



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Upcoming local holiday events to celebrate the 2021 Christmas season

Ashlyn Grey

ashlyn@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN COUNTY, Ala. —

In the final month of the year, twinkling lights line the streets as the wind grows sharper and the evenings longer. Family and friends come together once again to celebrate holiday traditions and festivities. Here are some local events to help celebrate the upcoming holiday season.

Christmas in Cullman will make its annual grand return Friday, Dec. 3 by transforming the town into its very own Hallmark Christmas movie.

From the parade dazzled with lights to constructing handmade crafts in Santa's Workshop while sipping hot chocolate, this event will no doubt inspire the holiday spirit within all, young and old.

The lighting of the tree ceremony in Depot Park will also take place this year, accented with a chorus of holiday music and memories being made, as it caps off the Christmas parade.

The annual Christmas in Cullman Celebration is linked, like many other festivities within Cullman, to its rich German heritage.

The event pays homage by celebrating certain holidays in a more culturally German way with the Cullman Christkindlmarkt, the 'Weihnachtspyramide' (authentic German Christmas pyramid), German food and so much more.

Recreational Development

Director with Cullman City Parks and Recreation Christy Turner offered details on the highly anticipated event, stating, "Dec. 3, (Dec. 4, in case of rain) our parade and tree lighting will take place in downtown Cullman.

"The parade route will begin at Busy Bee and end at Depot Park! Santa will, of course, be there to take pictures with all the kids and listen to how good they have been this year!

"The parade is always a fun event and is the perfect way to bring everyone together for the Christmas tree lighting."

Cullman local Haley Young shared about her favorite time of the year in Cullman.

"Christmas in Cullman is hands down the best time of the year.

"The lights go up on Main Avenue and all across Cullman. Once the whole town is decorated, it truly starts to feel like Christmas and definitely gets me in the holiday mood," said Young.

The North Alabama Agriplex loves hosting fun activities for the community and while their November plans are aimed toward the Little Farmers preschool age group, December's calendar is geared toward adults and older children, ages 12 and up.

The Grapevine Reads program will be held at the Agriplex in Cullman, located at 1714 Tally Ho Street SW, on Saturday Dec. 4.

This is a "take-n-make" activity centered around the construction of a frame, and

then the weaving of grapevines, native to the region, throughout to create beautiful handmade holiday wreaths.

"This activity is probably better suited for adults and older children, as well," Agriplex Director Rachel Dawsey explained.

"While very fun, this is a bit of a lengthy process that does require a lot of attention."

Dawsey continued, "There will be holiday music and fun, wintery, holiday details to decorate with. I am even using my family's recipe to bring hot fruit punch!"

The Christkindlmarkt is the traditional German Christmas market brought to life.

During the market, shoppers have options of delicious hot chocolates and steaming mugs of authentic Glühwein while on the hunt for that precious perfect gift, or just to peruse the bustling atmosphere of the Festhalle.

The Civic Ballet company will also be in attendance to perform for marketgoers, alongside local bands and

theater groups.

"On Dec. 10 - 11, the Christkindlmarkt will bring a little bit of old-world, European heritage charm into our version of a traditional Christmas market," said Turner for Cullman City Parks and Recreation.

"Many of our local retailers, vendors, and businesses will be on-site at (the) Festhalle to help you satisfy your gift giving needs.

"Food vendors will offer authentic German and Christmas foods for the entire family, and a trip to the market will not be complete without a hot mug of Glühwein or Kinderpunsch!"

She continued, "The market will be open Dec. 10, from 5-10 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 11 from noon to 10 p.m.

"We can't wait for you to join us as we celebrate the holiday season!"

This season, take in some Christmas joy and keep the memories coming. Happy Holidays, Cullman! Frohe Feiertage!



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Holiday 2021 events for Cullman seniors

Christy Perry

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CULLMAN, Ala. — After a limited offering of senior-focused holiday events last year during pandemic, a couple of events will return this holiday season in Cullman County. The Senior Christmas Party will return in 2021 after not being held for the past two years. Also returning is Senior Night at the 19th Annual Winter Wonderland Christmas Lights at Sportsman Lake Park.

Senior Night at the Winter Wonderland Christmas Lights

Senior Night at the Winter Wonderland Christmas Lights was introduced last year to give area seniors a fun activity during the COVID-19 shutdown. It was such a huge success that it's being brought back for 2021. Cullman County Park and Rec will once again waive the entrance fee for seniors 60 and over on Thursday, Dec. 9.

Cullman Park and Rec Director Doug Davenport and his staff are hard at work putting the thousands of lights and displays up at Sportsman Park.

He said, "We wanted to help give them something last year after a tough year with Covid and decided we would go ahead and do it again."

The Senior Night at Winter Wonderland will be from 5:30-8:30 p.m. with the entry fees waived.

Other activities available within the park—photos with Santa, carriage rides, concessions, train rides, etc.—will still require payment. Seniors can ride through the lights

unlimited times.

The Cullman County Commission on Aging is also busy preparing additional goodies and perhaps a few special guests for this year's Senior Night.

For more information on Senior Night at Winter Wonderland Christmas Lights, contact the Commission on Aging.

Senior Christmas Party

The Cullman County Senior Christmas Party is back for 2021 and will be held Friday, Dec. 17 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Stonebridge Farms' Brown

Stone Centre.

The Cullman County Commission on Aging has not had a countywide Christmas Party since 2018.

In 2019, the problem was finding a location large enough to host the event after the sale of the Cullman Civic Center, where the party was usually held.

The party, as well as over a year of activities, was canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic. Commission on Aging Director Stephanie Lawson made it a priority to bring the much-anticipated event back to the seniors of Cullman County.

Seniors will be treated to a traditional holiday meal and live music from the band "Behind the Times."

Everyone will receive a decorative cookie tin and there will be LOTS of door prizes.

Reservations must be made in advance to attend this year's Senior Christmas Party.

Reservations must be made through the Cullman County Commission on Aging by Nov. 22. To reserve your spot, call 256-734-1241 and speak with Jamie, Ava, Becky or Stephanie.

Stonebridge Farms is located at 281 County Road 717, Cullman, Alabama 35055.

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'Christmas at the Grotto' returns with expanded schedule

W.C. Mann

craig@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — St. Bernard Abbey's Ave Maria Grotto, Cullman's most popular attraction and one of Alabama's must-see tourist destinations, will open evenings following Thanksgiving for the third installment of "Christmas in the Grotto." The multi-weekend festival will see the Grotto park covered in Christmas lights, offering visitors a unique opportunity for a different view of the miniature spiritual world of Brother Joseph Zoettl, a Benedictine monk at St. Bernard Abbey.

"Last year's Christmas at the Grotto was an overwhelming success with over 5,000 attendees," said Roger Steele, director of the Grotto. "Considering the enthusiasm for this event from local folks as well as people throughout the north Alabama community, we have decided to expand the event this year by adding additional nights and also bringing in Johnny's BBQ, live music and also horse-drawn wagon rides on Dec. 17 and 18."

The Grotto will be open 15 nights this year, starting on Nov. 26 following Thanksgiving.

The seasonal celebration will feature a big event on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 17 and 18 with live music from the St. Bernard monks singing Gregorian chants, traditional Christmas tunes performed in Appalachian style and more. The Johnny's BBQ food truck will be on-site both nights, and the Grotto's picnic grounds will

be lit up for use. The Abbey will also offer horse-drawn wagon rides (up to eight passengers per trip) around campus with a storyteller.

"Our staff here at the Grotto is committed to bringing our visitors an experience of the true meaning of Christmas," said Steele. "We want to make Christmas at the Grotto one of the premier Christmas events in the north Alabama region and even the state."

AT A GLANCE

Christmas at the Grotto

Ave Maria Grotto at St. Bernard Abbey, 1600 St. Bernard Dr. in Cullman

- Friday and Saturday, Nov. 26, 27 - 5-9 p.m.
- Thursday-Saturday, Dec. 2, 3, 4 - 5-9 p.m.
- Thursday-Saturday, Dec. 9, 10, 11 - 5-9 p.m.
- Thursday-Saturday, Dec. 16, 17, 18 - 5-9 p.m.
- Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 22, 23 - 5-9 p.m.
- Thursday and Friday, Dec. 30, 31 - 5-9 p.m.

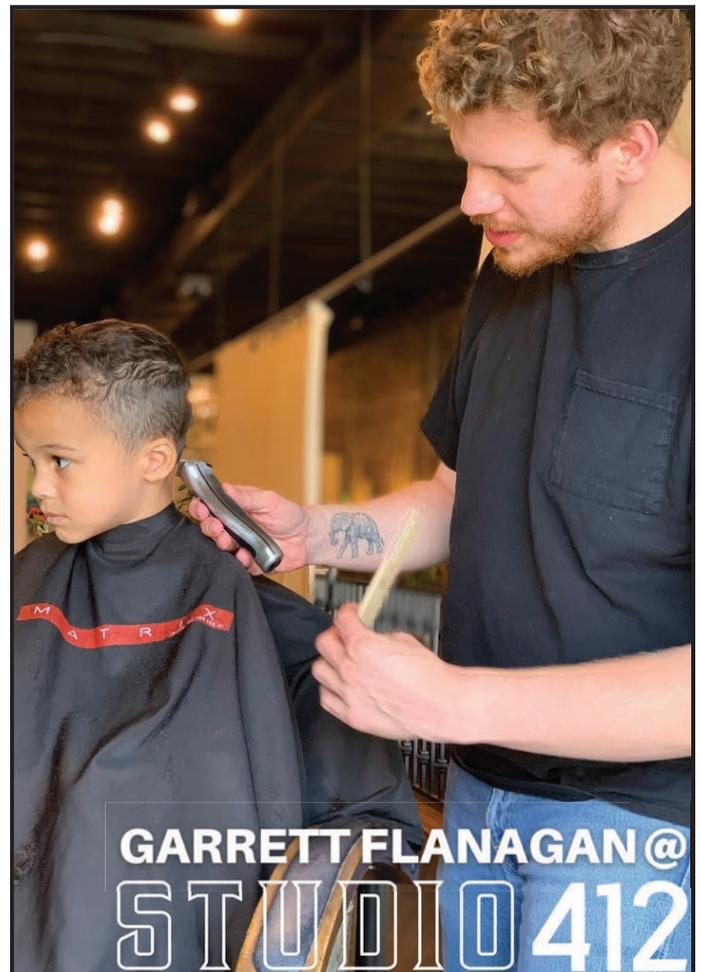
Admission

- Adults - \$6
- Students - \$3
- Children under 3 - free
- Wagon rides on Dec. 17, 18 - \$5

For more information, visit <http://www.avemariagrotto.com>.



AVEMARIAGROTTO.COM



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Cullmanites share their favorite recipes for the holidays

Christy Perry
christy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — For many, the meals shared with their

friends and families are the highlight of the holidays. Everyone wants to bring something everyone will enjoy. Taking home an empty dish can be very

satisfying while taking home a full dish, well, that can certainly put a damper on your holiday spirit. If you are someone who struggles to bring that highly

sought-after dish or you want to bring something new to this year's holiday spread, here are a few tried and true recipes from some folks you may know.



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF MATT GENTRY'S "SLAW"

INGREDIENTS

- 4-5 cups of cabbage
- 1 onion sliced
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 3 tablespoons white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 season packet from ramen noodle (chicken)
- Toast sliced almonds

INSTRUCTIONS

- Slice the cabbage and onions and place them in a non-scent bag.
- Then, mix all the other ingredients in a jar/bowl. Once the almonds are toasted, mix all the ingredients in the bag.
- Close and shake the bag mixing the ingredients.
- Pour into dish and serve.



JOSH SPEAKMAN'S (CANDIDATE FOR CULLMAN COUNTY COMMISSION) "MEMAMA'S BANANA PUDDING"

INGREDIENTS

- 4 eggs, separated
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3-4 tablespoons flour
- 3 cups milk
- Vanilla wafers
- 3-4 ripe bananas

INSTRUCTIONS

Beat egg yolks. Mix yolks, sugar and flour in double boiler until flour is thoroughly dissolved. Stir in milk. Cook in top of double boiler, stirring often, until mixture thickens to pudding consistency. Line casserole dish with vanilla wafers. Top with sliced bananas and pudding. Repeat layers until all pudding is used. Beat egg whites with a little sugar until stiff peaks form. Spread meringue over pudding. Brown in 350°F oven.



MAYOR WOODY JACOBS' "FRESH COCONUT CAKE"

CAKE

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup Crisco Oil
- 1 cup water
- 1 box vanilla instant pudding

Sift dry ingredients together; add oil, eggs and water and mix. Bake at 350 °F in 2 9-inch pans for 25-30 minutes.

FILLING

- Combine:**
- 12 ounces frozen coconut
 - 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
 - 8 ounces sour cream

TOPPING

Combine Cool Whip (large bowl) and 1 1/2 cups of coconut. Spread on top and sides of cake.



CULLMAN COUNTY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SHANE BARNETTE'S "FAVORITE CHICKEN 'N DUMPLINGS"

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pack chicken tenderloins
- One 16-ounce can chicken broth
- 4 cans cream of chicken soup
- 1 can Pillsbury Grands! Flaky Layers Biscuits

INSTRUCTIONS

Boil chicken tenderloins and shred them up. Mix chicken broth and the cream of chicken soup as you heat the mixture. Add the shredded chicken to the mixture. Bring the mixture to a boil, then add torn-apart pieces of the biscuits. Stir well and season to taste. (We like to add cayenne pepper to ours. Then as you serve the dumplings have shredded cheese and hot sauce available also.) »



Chad Burks, Lynne Morton, Robin Parson and Paul Bussman
Greg Barksdale, Nancy McClellan and John Riley

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The advertisement for T&T MOTORS features a dark blue background with a fine grid pattern. On the left, a yellow silhouette of a car's front wheel and fender is shown. In the center, the text "T&T MOTORS" is displayed in a large, white, serif font, with two white car silhouettes flanking the "T&T" portion. Below the name, the phone number "256-739-2915" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Underneath the phone number, the text "WE OFFER IN HOUSE FINANCING! NO CREDIT CHECKS AND LOW MONTHLY PAYMENT" is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. At the bottom, a dark blue horizontal bar contains the address "1801 B. CHEROKEE AVE. SW, CULLMAN" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

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**NATIONAL MULLET CHAMPIONSHIP
RUNNER-UP EZRA CRAMER'S
"PEPPERONI PIZZA ROLLS"**

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds store-bought pizza dough
- 1/2 cup marinara sauce some for the rolls, some for dipping
- 1/2 cup light sour cream also some for the rolls, some for dipping
- 2 tablespoons Hidden Valley Original Ranch Dressing and Seasoning Mix or 1 packet of Hidden Valley Ranch
- 8 ounces turkey pepperoni slices - save out 30 slices to use on the bottoms of the rolls chop the rest into small pieces (or you can use regular pepperoni for 4 points each)
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 6 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 425° F.
- Mix together light sour cream and ranch dressing mix. Store in refrigerator until ready to use.
- Divide dough into 2 equal balls (about 1 pound each). Roll each one out into a rectangle about 12 x 15 inches.
- On each rectangle, spread about 2 tablespoons ranch dressing - all the way to the edges. Top and spread with 2 tablespoons marinara sauce. (You might be tempted to use more sauce, but don't, it makes a mess when cutting the slices). Sprinkle with pepperoni and mozzarella cheese.
- Roll up each rectangle so that it forms a long roll (like rolling cinnamon roll dough). Pinch the edge of dough together to form a seam.
- Carefully cut each roll into 15 slices. Place each slice on a pepperoni piece (the roll will be bigger than the pepperoni, that's OK). Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
- Bake on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper for 12-15 minutes or until done.

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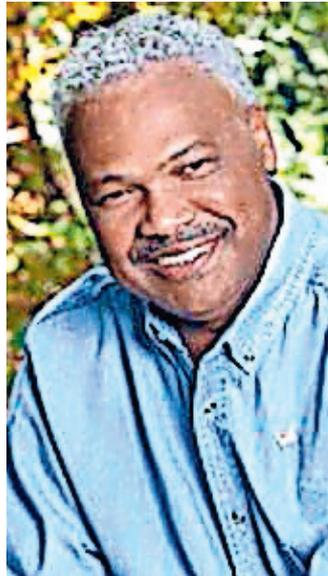
**ASHLEY WILSON'S
"DIRTY CORN DIP"**

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans white shoepeg corn
- 3/4 cup salsa
- 1 can Rotel Diced Tomatoes & Green Chilies
- 1 bag, or 2 cups, shredded cheese
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 16 ounces whipped cream cheese
- 1 or 2 cans black-eyed peas
- 1 can, or to taste, black olives
- 1 medium, or to taste, onion

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix all ingredients, chill and serve with tortilla chips



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10 servings

- 3 pounds of bananas
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- One 1-pound tub of sour cream
- Two 3.4-ounce boxes of Jell-O banana creme

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COUNCILPERSON PATTY DEAN'S "MICROWAVE PEANUT BRITTLE"

(8-9 minutes in 1,000-watt microwave)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup light syrup
- 1 cup peanuts (I use seasalt)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 large microwave bowl (sprayed)
- Jellyroll pan lined with foil and sprayed with nonstick spray - A warm pan makes it much easier to spread peanut brittle.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Add the first three ingredients, stir and place into the microwave for 3 minutes.
- Take out and stir (be very careful)
- Place back into microwave for 3 minutes
- Take out and stir
- Place back into microwave for 2-3 minutes - Keep a close watch, microwaves make a great difference depending on wattage
- You want this to be a gold color. Put vanilla and stir. Butter and baking soda, stir.
- Pour onto warmed foil and spread to thickness of brittle you desire.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE COREY HARBISON'S "OLD FASHIONED APPLE DUMPLINGS"

DOUGH

- 3 cups of sifted all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons shortening
- 1 cup milk

• Sift dry ingredients together, then cut in shortening with a pastry blender. Add milk and stir with a fork until soft dough. Knead three or four times to mix well.

• Roll out on a floured board to 1/4 inch thickness, about an 18-inch square. Spread dough lightly with soft butter or margarine.

MIX TOGETHER:

- 4 cups apples, diced fine
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Spread over dough, and roll up like a jellyroll. Do not bring the apple mixture all the way to the edge of dough. Slice roll 1 1/2 inches thick and place in a buttered pan (13X9) with cut side down.

SYRUP

- 2 cups light brown sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 stick butter
- 2 cups boiling water

Boil syrup until slightly thickened, then pour boiling syrup over dumplings in pan. Bake in preheated oven at 400°F for 30-35 minutes. Makes 12 dumplings. »

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**GOOD HOPE MAYOR
JERRY BARTLETT'S
"APPLE GOODIE"**

COMBINE

- 2 cups cooked apples
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup sugar

Place in casserole dish

TOPPING

- 3/4 cup oatmeal
- 3/4 cup self-rising flour
- 3/4 cup brown sugar

- 1/2 cup melted butter
- Cook until golden brown at 375°F

**GOOD HOPE MAYOR
JERRY BARTLETT'S
"SWEET POTATO
CASSEROLE"**

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups sweet potatoes
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine all ingredients in casserole dish and top with:

- 1/3 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup coconut
- 1/2 cup flour

Bake at 350°F for 35 minutes

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Christmas Tree Safety



As you deck the halls this holiday season, be fire smart. A small fire that spreads to a Christmas tree can grow large very quickly.



PICKING THE TREE

- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.



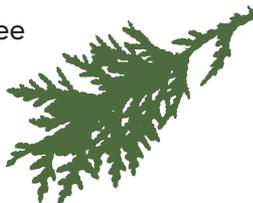
PLACING THE TREE

- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2" from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.
- Add water to the tree stand. Be sure to add water daily.



LIGHTING THE TREE

- Use lights that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree.
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.



After Christmas

Get rid of the tree after Christmas or when it is dry. Dried-out trees are a fire danger and should not be left in the home or garage, or placed outside against the home.

Check with your local community to find a recycling program.

Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

FACTS

- ! **Almost one third** of home Christmas tree fires are caused by electrical problems.
- ! Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious.
- ! A heat source too close to the tree causes more than **one in every five** of the fires.



Your Source for **SAFETY** Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

Winter Holiday Safety

Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.

HOLIDAY DECORATING

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.



Before Heading Out or to Bed

Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.

FACTS

- ! More than **one-third** of home decoration fires are started by candles.
- ! More than **two of every five** decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.



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PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**
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on fire, electrical and related hazards

'He's blessed us real good'

Skip and Dean Gregory celebrate 70 years of marriage

Christy Perry

christy@cullmantribune.com

On Feb. 16 1951, a young couple from Cullman County traveled to Mississippi to say, "I do!" Today, Skip and Dean Gregory are celebrating 70 years of marriage. On Valentine's Day, to the couple's delight, family and friends began the anniversary celebration with a car parade at Center Grove Baptist Church.

Dean Gregory (née Kelley) said she and Skip were neighbors growing up. "He was in high school at Cullman when I was at East Point, and the bus used to let him off right there and let him catch the next bus, but of course I knew him before then."

Skip was friends with Dean's brothers, and they all went to the drive-in one night. That's when the sparks flew.

"He was in a big ol' truck, and we had to park on the back row because cars couldn't see over his big truck," said Dean. "That's what he told me."

After dating about a year, when Dean was 16 and Skip was 19, they decided to get married.

Dean recalled, "His sister got married five days before we did, and the next thing I know, he had asked me to marry him. That's how it started."

There was only one problem. Dean wasn't old enough to get married. They headed to Iuka, Mississippi.

"We got married, but before we did, we were told



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Skip and Dean Gregory marked their 70th anniversary Feb. 16, 2021.

to tell them we were 18 and 21 because the preacher had the license at his house," said Dean. "I don't know who told us this, but we were told to write 18 on the bottom of my shoe and 21 on the bottom of his shoe so when the preacher asked how old we were, we told the preacher we were over 18 and 21. So that's what we did."

Once back in Cullman, they had to find a place to live.

Said Dean, "We didn't have a place to live and we had not prepared for any of this. I borrowed the suit I wore at our wedding from my sister. We were poor people, and my

parents, with 13 children raised, they did a great job with us. We did good and we farmed. One thing I did tell him (Skip) before we married, and it didn't stick, I told him, 'Are you going to farm?' He said, 'No.' I said, 'If you are, I'm not going to marry you,' and I meant it."

Dean started working, but since she didn't know how to drive, she walked 2 miles to work. She was doing that when she found out the couple was expecting their first child, Connie. Two years later, their second daughter, Becky, was born. The Gregorys began running a grocery store/gas

station and did so for 17 years. They lived with their two young daughters at their business. In 1966, they bought the house they still live in today.

Through running the store, Skip found a job with Chevron. He delivered gas for 34 years and still proudly wears his signature Chevron shirt and overalls. With Skip now on the road, Dean ran the store and was kept company by a pet squirrel named Spencer.

Skip recalled, "We had a pet squirrel in the store, and he played around and ran around the store."

Dean added, "Every »

time I would go to pump gas- the squirrel was on the counter a lot of the time- but when I'd go, he would just jump on my shoulder to go with me to pump gas.

"I thought this poor old guy saw the squirrel when I was pumping gas, but when we came back in, the squirrel jumped down on the counter. The guy had his hands out getting his money together and I thought the squirrel was going to jump on him. He would have died."

Eventually, the Gregorys closed the store and Dean went to work at The Ice Cream Tree, which was near Cullman High School. After it closed, she worked at the House of Shoes. After 28 years at the House of Shoes, the business closed.

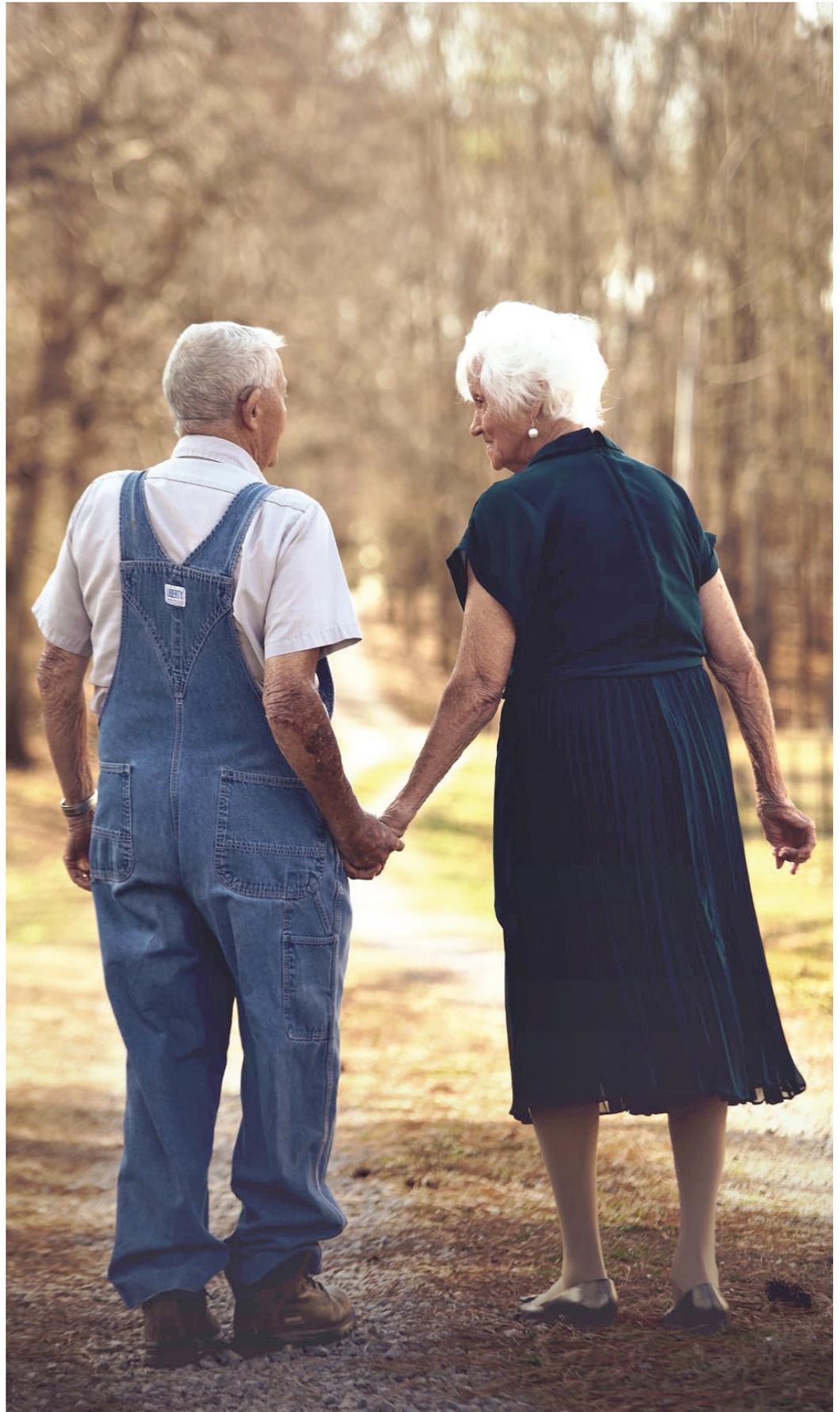
Skip teased Dean, "I told her that everywhere she worked, they closed up and left!"

Dean worked until she was 78 because she loves to stay busy and loves to run stores. She said, "I love people and I think to go into business, you need to learn to love people or not go in.

"They say the customers are always right, and they aren't right every time, but I've never had a cross word with a customer. I have worked with the public for 50 years and I never had a sassy word or hurt anybody's feelings."

In her spare time, Dean played softball and was a talented fast pitch pitcher. She played for several years while Skip ran the store, but eventually he became a team manager. Dean also bowled for 25 years. Skip enjoyed golfing, fishing and hunting.

They shared stories of rabbit hunting together as a young couple. He teased, "We took a chance you know that? »



We sat up there on the dang fender of the car and her driving up the road!"

Both Skip and Dean are retired now, but Skip, who will be 90 this year, still maintains a 1-acre farm with his daughter Connie.

They stay busy planting squash two times a year and growing corn, okra, tomatoes, green beans and other vegetables.

The Tribune asked the couple, "What is the secret to a happy marriage?"

"Just stay in there and fight like the devil," answered Skip.

Dean added, "We never had a fight. If he fought me, I wouldn't live with him either."

Skip agreed, saying, "If I had to fight her, I wouldn't live with her."

Dean smiled, "Now, we've had a lot of cross words but no fights."

Skip and Dean laugh constantly and pick at each other quite a bit, but it's all in good fun.

When asked what he loves about Dean, Skip said, "She's GOOD! Even though she makes me mind a lot. She's mean and she's good."

Skip and Dean attend Center Grove Baptist Church and have since before they were married.

"I was 12 when I was baptized," remembered Dean. "We were baptized together and didn't even know one another."

They were baptized in a fish pond along with 26 other people, according to Skip.

The Gregorys love doting on their family and sharing their accomplishments.

They are extremely proud of their two daughters and their husbands, as well as their 12 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandson. Many



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came to the church Sunday to participate in the car parade.

Skip and Dean said they are still not sure how they will celebrate their platinum anniversary.

Skip laughed, "I'll ask her where she wants to go eat and

she'll say, 'It doesn't make any difference to me. Any place you want to go eat, I'll eat. She won't pick out nothing.'"

Dean interrupted, "Tell her why! He's the picky one!" Skip smiled, "Don't worry, we'll go somewhere."

Beamed Skip, "We've enjoyed our 70 years together and just thank the Good Lord that we made it. Had it not been for him, we wouldn't have made it. He's blessed us real good."

Smiled Dean, "Yeah, I don't have any complaints."

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Fireworks Safety

FIREWORKS are often used to mark special events and holidays. The only safe way to view fireworks is to attend a professional show. With many professional firework shows being canceled this year, it is important to know that **fireworks are not safe in the hands of consumers**. Fireworks cause thousands of injuries each year.

A few ideas to get into the patriotic spirit, without fireworks:

1. Use glow sticks, they glow in the dark and are a safe alternative to a sparkler. Fun for all ages.
2. Loud and proud. Noise makers are sure to make a statement. They can be found at local party supply stores or make your own.
3. Outdoor movie night. Set up a screen and projector. Don't forget the bugspray!
4. Red, white and blue silly string...fun for all ages.
5. Make a patriotic craft with the family.
6. Throw a birthday party for the USA, and don't forget the cake.



FACTS

- ! More than 19,500 reported fires are started by fireworks annually.
- ! Burns account for 44% of the 9,100 injuries treated in emergency rooms seen in the month around July 4.
- ! Half of the fireworks injuries seen at emergency rooms were extremities: hand, finger, or leg. One-third were to the eye or other parts of the head.
- ! Children ages 10–14 had the highest rate of fireworks injury, with more than one-third (36%) of the victims of fireworks injuries under age 15.
- ! Sparklers account for roughly one-quarter of emergency room fireworks injuries.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) 2018 Fireworks Annual Report



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Preventing Suicide

Suicide is a leading cause of death.

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die. A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with any intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions.

Many factors can increase the risk for suicide or protect against it. Suicide is connected to other forms of injury and violence. For example, people who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence have a higher suicide risk. Being connected to family and community support and having easy access to health care can decrease suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Suicide is a large and growing public health problem.

Suicide rates increased 33% between 1999 and 2019, with a small decline in 2019. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. It was responsible for more than 47,500 deaths in 2019, which is about one death every 11 minutes. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher. In 2019, 12 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.5 million planned a suicide attempt, and 1.4 million attempted suicide.

Suicide affects all ages. It is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-34, the fourth leading cause among people ages 35-44, and the fifth leading cause among people ages 45-54.

Some groups have higher suicide rates than others. Suicide rates vary by race/ethnicity, age, and other factors. The highest rates are among American Indian/Alaska Native and non-Hispanic White populations. Other Americans with higher than average rates of suicide are veterans, people who live in rural areas, and workers in certain industries and occupations like mining and construction. Young people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual have a higher rate of suicidal ideation and behavior compared to their peers who identify as straight.



More than
47,500
people died by
suicide in 2019



1 death every
11 minutes

**Many adults think about
suicide or attempt suicide**

12 million

Seriously thought about suicide

3.5 million

Made a plan for suicide

1.4 million

Attempted suicide

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please contact the
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Use the [online Lifeline Crisis Chat](#)

Both are free and confidential. You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor in your area. For more information, visit the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). You can also connect 24/7 to a crisis counselor by texting the [Crisis Text Line](#). Text HOME to 741741.



Suicide has far-reaching impacts.

Suicide and suicide attempts cause serious emotional, physical, and economic impacts. People who attempt suicide and survive may experience serious injuries that can have long-term effects on their health. They may also experience depression and other mental health concerns. The good news is that more than 90% of people who attempt suicide and survive never go on to die by suicide.

Suicide and suicide attempts affect the health and well-being of friends, loved ones, co-workers, and the community. When people die by suicide, their surviving family and friends may experience shock, anger, guilt, symptoms of depression or anxiety, and may even experience thoughts of suicide themselves.

The financial toll of suicide on society is also costly. Suicides and suicide attempts cost the nation over \$70 billion per year in lifetime medical and work-loss costs alone.

Suicide can be prevented.

Suicide is preventable and everyone has a role to play to save lives and create healthy and strong individuals, families, and communities. Suicide prevention requires a comprehensive public health approach. CDC developed [Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs, and Practices](#) (also available in Spanish), which provides information on the best available evidence for suicide prevention. States and communities can use the technical package to help make decisions about suicide prevention activities. Strategies range from those designed to support people at increased risk to a focus on the whole population, regardless of risk.

Strategies to Prevent Suicide



Strengthen economic supports

- Strengthen household financial security
- Housing stabilization policies



Teach coping and problem-solving skills

- Social-emotional learning programs
- Parenting skill and family relationship programs



Strengthen access to and delivery of suicide care

- Coverage of mental health conditions in health insurance policies
- Reduce provider shortages in underserved areas
- Safer suicide care through system change



Identify and support people at risk

- Gatekeeper training
- Crisis intervention
- Treatment for people at risk of suicide
- Treatment to prevent re-attempts



Create protective environments

- Reduce access to lethal means among persons at risk for suicide
- Organizational policies and culture
- Community-based policies to reduce excessive alcohol use



Lessen harms and prevent future risk

- Postvention
- Safe reporting and messaging about suicide



Promote connectedness

- Peer norm programs
- Community engagement activities



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