

The Cullman Tribune  PRESENTS

COMMUNITY MATTERS

AUGUST - OCTOBER 2023

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Burning bridges? No, just changing the landscape

Noah Galilee
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Throughout life most have heard the colloquial saying “careful not to burn bridges,” and it’s a saying that drives me up a wall.

Why? Simple. Have you ever watched a bridge being built? If not, let’s take a quick glance. To build a physical bridge it is typically built by one group to accomplish a given goal. Whether that is to shorten a commute, connect neighboring countries or just build a bridge to nowhere - as we’ve seen with many politicians across the nation in recent decades.

The key word in the above paragraph is one. One group, one person, one idea. While many may collaborate only one idea, from one person then implemented by one group is how the process goes. Though there may be many involved in the final process it’s the concept of an individual that kickstarted the entire thing.

So what does that have to do with the colloquial saying? Honestly, everything.

We are taught as children that it takes multiple individuals to create the metaphorical life bridge between friends, acquaintances, associates, business and family. But is this really true?

Just as in a romantic relationship it takes two people to jointly enter into that union. Also like a relationship it only takes one side to blow it all up via mistrust, lying, stealing, cheating, attempts at physical dominance and other nefarious mindsets.

So again, one-sided, as one person had the concept of love while the other had a desire for

experience. While the two may go together in some circumstances the conflicting ideological stances will inevitably lead to the metaphorical bridge being burned once their ideas clash. After a short while the clashes will intensify leading to a deterioration and eventual collapse of said bridge.

I don’t believe in these metaphorical bridges as it vigorously locks the person into a compromised agreement with the one who generated the slanted concept benefiting the most. Let me explain.

While countries build bridges to reach others most of the time it’s not done out of helping a neighbor but simply a means to an end. If the optics make it appear to be a mutual agreement then most will go with the flow. However, when the people realize they are paying high toll fees that are not being used to repair the bridge but rather to fatten the pockets of the one who generated the concept then they find a way around that bridge no matter the inconvenience.

So how many toll bridges are you paying high costs for with absolutely no return other than cracked pavement, potholes and eventually a giant gap?

Just as the wood, steel and concrete used to construct the physical bridge those too will age, deteriorate and eventually crumble on its own as do these metaphorical bridges. The takeaway? Learn to navigate the landscape around the bridges and you’ll be able to make it where others insisted you could not, so keep pushing. In this life you have one chance so be careful where you cross or which bridge you take as it may just lead to a 100-foot drop.

Keep it classy!

Community Matters

from The Cullman Tribune
Vol. 3 No. 3

219 Second Ave. SE | Cullman, AL 35055
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Transportation, parks, aviation center of Cullman's thriving community



NATHAN ANDERSON

Rendering of the new multisport indoor complex that will be located near the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center

Tiffany McKoy

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The city of Cullman continues to expand and grow rapidly, and local leaders Woody Jacobs, Nathan Anderson and Ben Harrison have big visions for the future.

Mayor Woody Jacobs

Mayor Woody Jacobs has been focused on streetscape projects, which aim to improve the city's sidewalks and enhance accessibility for

all residents. These projects are particularly focused on accommodating individuals with disabilities, ensuring equal access to public spaces. A project was recently completed near Skate Depot along Second Avenue Northeast, greatly enhancing the pedestrian experience.

Jacobs said he recognizes the importance of maintaining and improving Cullman's roads and thoroughfares. Birmingham Street has received particular attention, with a recent paving

project transforming a section from U.S. Highway 31 west to Lee Avenue. He said this vital upgrade has not only enhanced the aesthetics of the area, but also contributed to a smoother and more efficient road.

Undoubtedly, one of the most exciting developments in Cullman is the construction of the new multisport indoor complex that will fill the void left after the City sold the Cullman Civic Center property in 2019. It will be located near the Cullman Wellness and

Aquatic Center and offer a versatile space for a wide range of events, including indoor sports, trade shows and community gatherings. Construction is set to begin by mid-September, following the completion of the bidding process.

Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism Executive Director Nathan Anderson

Nathan Anderson has been instrumental in spearheading numerous projects in Cullman and is not slowing down. »

He has several projects in the works and is excited to get them completed.

One of those projects is the revitalization of Depot Park. The project aims to enhance accessibility, upgrade amenities and improve the visitor experience. Explained Anderson, "We want Depot Park to be a place where families and friends can gather, relax and create lasting memories. The revitalization includes wider sidewalks for better navigation during events, improved infrastructure and the addition of new attractions."

Anderson elaborated on what Jacobs had to say regarding the new multi-sport indoor complex. He said the economic impact of the complex is expected to be significant, with projections indicating a boost of approximately \$30 million within the first year of its opening. Anderson said he believes the complex will benefit not only local businesses, but also the overall prosperity of the city.

"By attracting visitors and hosting events, we are creating opportunities for local businesses to thrive. It's about fostering an environment where our community can flourish both socially and economically," he said.

The complex will offer state-of-the-art amenities. Anderson explained, "The center will feature flexible meeting rooms, adaptable courts and top-notch facilities to accommodate a wide range of events, from sports tournaments to cultural festivals. It will be a place where our community can come together and where our athletes can showcase their talents without having to travel long distances."

Anderson also addressed the future projects. "One project that deserves recognition



TIFFANY MCKOY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Landing at Cullman Regional Airport

is the trail revitalization at Heritage Park. We recognize the importance of providing safe and well-maintained trails for our community members to enjoy. Our plans include resurfacing the trails and addressing flooding issues, ensuring a pleasant experience for all trail users. This multiyear project will not only enhance the functionality of the park, but also contribute to the overall well-being of our residents."

Cullman Regional Airport Director Ben Harrison

According to Ben Harrison, one of the notable projects completed this year was a seal coat pavement preservation initiative for the airports T-hangars. "We're trying to

preserve the asphalt as long as we can," he explained, saying the project showcases the airport's commitment to preserving its infrastructure for long-term use.

In addition to the preservation project, the airport is currently engaged in the construction of a massive 100-foot by 100-foot hangar.

Harrison shared, "That is currently under construction. It'll be able for occupancy at the end of the calendar year. That's our goal."

Looking ahead, Harrison revealed that the airport is preparing for its pre-application phase to outline the roadmap for the next few years. Additionally, the airport is working on updating its Airport

Layout Plan (ALP), which will provide a comprehensive vision for the airport's development and expansion over the next seven to 10 years. Harrison emphasized the importance of the ALP, stating, "It just gives us a roadmap. It'll tell us what size hangars, how they can be placed, what we can accommodate, things of that nature."

When discussing long-term goals, Harrison expressed enthusiasm for the airport's land development plans.

The airport aims to capitalize on the region's growth and attract smaller companies by offering suitable infrastructure and amenities. Harrison emphasized the complexity of the project, noting, "All that has to be met with just a »

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multiple layer of approvals that have to go on for a runway extension."

Regarding the airport's expansion plans, he said, "With all the growth going on in north Alabama, it's an unprecedented time. We're so close, especially to the Huntsville area. It really

gives us a good opportunity to capitalize on some of the smaller companies that can be just on the outskirts a little bit." The airport is positioning itself to serve as a vital transportation hub, supporting the economic growth in the region.

Harrison also highlighted

the importance of community engagement and the airport's unique amenities, including The Landing, a restaurant within the terminal. "We get a lot of people that fly on the weekends," he said. "The more we can help promote that and keep that going, the better off

it's going to be."

Harrison thanked the Cullman City Council, Cullman County Commission, Alabama Department of Transportation Aeronautics Bureau, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Cullman Regional Airport Board for their ongoing support.



Thank you, Cullman, for the best 80 years of our lives.



In 1943, when the Paul R. Knight Insurance Company opened its doors in downtown Cullman, there was no way of knowing what the future would bring. Paul Knight was a 30-something father of three, registered for the World War II draft, with no idea that his new venture would not only succeed but would ultimately pass down through three generations of his family. Then his son-in-law Elliot Free joined the business in 1970, the agency was re-named Knight-Free, and the rest is history.

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CULLMAN

Economic Development Agency

NEW AND EXPANDING INDUSTRY INFORMATION WITH RANKINGS IN ALABAMA

NEW	EXPANDING	TOTAL
Projects: 4 (#2)	Projects: 19 (#1)	Projects: 23 (#1)
Jobs: 62 (#13)	Jobs: 608 (#3)	Jobs: 670 (#6)
Investment: \$35,297,297 (#11)	Investment: \$253,496,490 (#7)	Investment: \$286,793,787 (#8)

CULLMAN IS RANKED #3 MICROPOLITAN IN AMERICA AND #1 IN ALABAMA FOR PROJECTS

BY SITE SELECTION MAGAZINE
Cullman industry has produced over 5,000 jobs over the past decade and we are still going. There are always plenty of opportunities in Cullman!



Workforce development bridges the training needs of individuals and employers, to enhance the workforce with qualified workers, and to build and sustain the economic development of the region. Partnerships with business, industry, K-12 school systems, and the Alabama Career Centers are integral to success and provide pathways from education to employment, as well as funding to support these pathways. CEDA and Wallace State enjoy a strong partnership working on a variety of projects and initiatives to support the new, current and emerging workforce. Their team of professionals are exceptional to work with and so much of the success of Cullman, Wallace State and our community can be directly attributed to their work."

Suzanne Harbin
Vice President for Advancement and Innovation
Wallace State Community College

Workforce development is important because it leads to prosperous employees, businesses and local communities. By upskilling our workforce, industries are subject to growth opportunities- not to mention support growth for the economy as a whole."

Dale Greer
Director, Cullman Economic Development Agency

Checking in with the Cullman County Commission

Tiffany McKoy

tsmckoy@cullmantribune.com

Cullman County Commission Chairman Jeff Clemons

Chairman Jeff Clemons acknowledged the challenges associated with the county's rapid growth. As Cullman County continues to attract new residents and businesses, infrastructure development is becoming more critical. He explained the County's focus on road improvements, and said strategic planning and collaboration with legislators ensures the commission can meet the demands of a growing population. He said upcoming projects aim to ensure safe and efficient travel for residents and visitors alike.

"We try every day to make a difference in our communities," Clemons stated. "It's a challenge. It's a tough job sometimes, but it's rewarding when you do something good for people. That's the best feeling."

Commissioner Kerry Watson, District 1

Commissioner Kerry Watson's district encompasses Fairview along with parts of Vinemont, Cullman and Holly Pond.

Watson emphasized his passion for helping people. He said he finds joy in making a difference, no matter how small, and strives to assist as many constituents as possible. However, he acknowledged that securing funding for road projects remains a significant

challenge. He said limited grants and intense competition make it difficult to address the pressing need for road repairs in the district.

Among ongoing projects, Watson highlighted his efforts to secure a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of \$600,000 for a crucial road repair project. The initiative aims to address the conditions of a 6-mile road heavily utilized by farms and trucks. Additionally, he mentioned an application for federal funding to reconstruct a bridge on County Road 1763. The bridge suffered damage from multiple floods, necessitating a complete overhaul. While the outcome of these funding applications is uncertain, Watson said he remains hopeful and determined to secure the necessary resources.

Watson highlighted the importance of completing last year's paving projects and expressed the desire to add more roads to the list, subject to available funding.

Commissioner Garry Marchman, District 2

Commissioner Garry Marchman's district covers West Point, parts of Cullman, Vinemont and Battleground.

Road infrastructure is a primary concern, and Marchman emphasized the difficulty in balancing the demands for road repairs with the available budget. He highlighted the essential nature of

roads in the community and the long-term investments required to maintain them.

Marchman is working on several ongoing projects. He said improving roads remains a top priority, and he strives to make incremental improvements throughout all the communities within his district. Marchman also expressed his desire to enhance parks and senior programs, recognizing the need for upgrades and expansions. He said he believes that investing in these areas will benefit the community and attract more people to the county.

Marchman discussed the challenges faced by the water department, mentioning the potential transition to automated meter reading. While the change could lead to greater efficiency, he clarified that it won't result in job losses. Instead, the department plans to contract the reading of meters, allowing personnel to focus on other critical tasks.

He talked about the new Solid Waste Disposal Authority (SWDA) that will manage the new partnership between the City of Cullman and Cullman County in managing the Cullman County landfill. The SWDA board will be made up of two members from Cullman County, two from the city and one appointed by the board. Marchman said his is advocate for fair representation, emphasizing that decisions should align with the best interests of

the entire community, including those living outside the city.

Commissioner Kelly Duke, District 3

Commissioner Kelly Duke's district encompasses the entire county south of U.S. Highway 278 and east of U.S. Highway 31. That includes Berlin, Holly Pond and parts of Hanceville.

Duke said a significant challenge the County faces is efficiently addressing road-related issues, which often top the list of resident complaints. Despite limited resources, Duke said, he strives to maintain and improve his section of more than 1,600 miles of roads within Cullman County. He emphasized the need for strategic allocation and community understanding.

Duke shared updates on several ongoing projects. He said Berlin secured a \$75,000 grant from the North Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) to construct a storm shelter - an endeavor that has been years in the making.

In Holly Pond, road striping initiatives have recently been completed. He said the upcoming bridge replacement project on Lick Creek Road showcases the district's commitment to infrastructure improvements.

Duke acknowledged the dedication of individuals working in various positions to bring revenue and opportunities to the community. »

He emphasized the significance of communication and collaboration among departments to further enhance community development efforts.

Commissioner Corey Freeman, District 4

Commissioner Corey Freeman's district covers the area from the Winston County line to the Blount County line and from the Walker County line to the southwest, including Colony, Arkadelphia, and Bremen.

According to Freeman roads have long been a persistent concern in Cullman County, with residents expressing their frustrations at every turn.

Recognizing the urgency of the matter, Freeman said there is ongoing collaboration with officials to develop a comprehensive plan for road repairs. Their focus lies on rejuvenating neglected roads, replacing deteriorated cross-drains and ensuring safety and convenience for the residents in his district.

"Addressing the concerns of our citizens is my top priority," Freeman said.

"The condition of our roads is a common complaint, and we are committed to finding solutions and improving the quality of life for our residents."

While road projects are the main concern, Freeman said he is also actively engaged in discussions with the director of the water department to address water pressure issues in the Crane Hill area.

He said the objective is to secure funding for the installation of a new pump, which will increase water pressure. Despite the project's potential costs, Freeman said he remains optimistic, exploring grant opportunities and potential budget allocations for the upcoming fiscal year.



Ongoing construction for the new bridge on Lick Creek Road

TIFFANY MCKOY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

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Dale Greer named 2023 Burgermeister

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Cullman Economic Development Agency Director Dale Greer said he was surprised and delighted to learn that he had been named the 2023 Cullman Oktoberfest Burgermeister. The announcement was made by Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism Board of Directors Chairman Rusty Turner and park board and foundation board member Rusty Turner and Recreational Development Director Christy Turner.

"Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism is thrilled to have Dale as the Burgermeister for our community's 150-year celebration," said Rusty Turner. "His dedication as a servant of our town and his embodiment of all things Cullman make him the perfect choice for this honor. With Dale's leadership, I am confident this Oktoberfest will be a huge success."

A Birmingham native, Greer relocated to Cullman years ago due to his love of fishing at Smith Lake. He has a long history of contributing to the city, having worked at The Cullman Times, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce and Cullman Electric Cooperative. Currently in his 30th year in economic development, Greer said he sees the honor of being named Burgermeister as an extension of his advocacy work.

"I have been pitching the benefits of companies locating or expanding in Cullman for years. Our German heritage has always been a positive

part of those presentations," said Greer. "I am honored to represent our community as Burgermeister."

This year, for the first time, Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism will take responsibility for Oktoberfest from the Oktoberfest committee. Greer is excited about the potential enhancements the department can bring to Oktoberfest with its financial resources and manpower.

Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism Executive Director Nathan Anderson revealed details about the Burgermeister selection process, saying the Oktoberfest committee accepts nominations from the public over several weeks before voting on the top candidates. Anderson expressed confidence in this year's selection.

"Dale stands out as one of Cullman's most exceptional ambassadors. His contributions to our community throughout his career have been invaluable," Anderson said.

"We couldn't be prouder to have him represent us, especially as we celebrate our community's 150th anniversary."

The Burgermeister's responsibilities extend far beyond the opening ceremony. Greer will visit schools and businesses, promoting Oktoberfest and the city's German heritage. The Burgermeister's duties typically begin six to eight weeks out from Oktoberfest, allowing he or she to become fully immersed in the role and engage with the community.

Remembering his disappointment at being too young

to participate in the 100th anniversary of Cullman, Greer said he is thrilled to play a key role in the city's 150th anniversary celebrations. With Oktoberfest serving as a vibrant showcase for the community, Greer hopes his tenure as Burgermeister will enhance the experience for all

attendees.

"I hope I will enjoy Oktoberfest and that my involvement will make it better for others," he smiled.

Cullman Oktoberfest will take place Sept. 28-30. Find out more at www.facebook.com/cullmanoktoberfest.


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2023 Cullman Oktoberfest Burgermeister Dale Greer

Revamped Oktoberfest 2023 promises unforgettable experience, will celebrate Cullman's 150th anniversary

Noah Galilee

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Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism (CPRST) Executive Director Nathan Anderson is eagerly gearing up for Cullman Oktoberfest. Anderson is promising an unforgettable experience this year, the celebration infused with new traditions and surprises, while also retaining beloved events from past festivals.

"This is going to be the best Cullman Oktoberfest yet," Anderson stated. "Our guests can look forward to diverse German musicians, entertaining acrobats and the authentic German experience of our official Hofbräu Biergarten."

One major addition to this year's Oktoberfest is the parade, which will be led by the newly-acquired beer wagon drawn by a team of Clydesdales. Anderson said he is hopeful that these additions will leave a lasting impact on the future of Oktoberfest, especially as this year's festival coincides with the city's 150th-anniversary celebrations.

After the introduction of special seating at the recent Strawberry Festival, Oktoberfest 2023 will follow suit with a similar setup.

Anderson explained, "For a small cover charge, guests can indulge in a premium German setting with table-side service in the Hofbräu Biergarten, complete with a giant pretzel. In addition, all beer purchases



Miss Oktoberfest contestants are seen arriving at Cullman Oktoberfest 2022.

TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

in the Biergarten will receive a \$1 discount."

Despite the introduction of paid seating, Anderson assured there will still be plenty of free entertainment and seating areas available throughout the festival.

To those who have never attended Oktoberfest, Anderson extended an enthusiastic invitation. "Join us in celebrating our cherished German heritage – a place of learning, joy and friendship. Discover unique entertainment,

savor delightful German cuisine and create unforgettable memories with great friends."

The Wiener Dog Races, costume contest, eating competitions and stein hoisting are just a few of the popular events making a return at the 2023 Oktoberfest. The festival will run from Sept. 28-30, culminating in a special surprise at the ceremonial final song in the Biergarten on Saturday.

In terms of working with local vendors and food trucks, Anderson confirmed that

Oktoberfest will continue to support them. He said, "The key requirement is that they offer an Oktoberfest-themed menu."

Oktoberfest 2023 is shaping up to be a monumental event, rich in tradition and full of surprises, promising an unforgettable celebration of the city's 150th anniversary.

Find out more, including events and times, at www.facebook.com/cullmanoktoberfest.

CULLMAN OKTOBER FEST

SEPTEMBER 28-30, 2023

Many new additions to make this Oktoberfest the most authentic German experience ever! Bavarian jugglers, street entertainers, music and MORE!
German costume contests daily for kids and adults,
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OKTOBERFEST PARADE

The Beer Wagon pulled by the Clydesdales
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Upcoming concerts, performances and festivals

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Fall is the beginning of the resting season for Mother Nature, but don't tell that to Cullman! This season is packed with fundraisers, concerts, performances and festivals. Check out this guide for some upcoming events in the area.

AUGUST

- **2nd Fridays:** Aug. 11, 5-10 p.m. in downtown Cullman: Get a taste of the Warehouse District after dark! With food trucks, live music, kids' area and several arts and crafts vendors, there's something for everyone.
- **Trivia Through the Decades fundraiser:** Aug. 18, 5:30 p.m. at 107 Third Ave. NW: The Cullman County Commission on Aging's inaugural fundraiser is sure to scratch your trivia itch. With catered dinner and \$300 winnings on the line, you'll need to brush up on your vintage pop culture, music, sports and entertainment knowledge to win the bragging rights!

SEPTEMBER

- **Sweet Tater Festival,** Sept. 3-4, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at Smith Lake Park: This is the perfect experience to expand your tater-tastin' palate. Arts and crafts vendors, live music, car show and a variety of sweet tater treats round out the two-day experience.
- **Bernard Blues & BBQ Festival:** Sept. 9-10, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at Saint Bernard Preparatory

School: Brings together arts and craft vendors, live music and some absolutely bangin' barbecue. The two-day event is finished off with drawings for door and cash prizes totaling \$12,000, so make sure to get your tickets!

- **Oktoberfest:** Sept. 28-30, downtown Cullman: Oktoberfest is a three-day celebration of all things German with a quaint Southern spin. Complete with authentic German food and Biergarten, stein hoisting, 5K, pageant and even wiener dog races, there's something for every age.
- **Monster Truck Wars:** Sept. 30, 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center: You'd be hard-pressed to find something more entertaining and classically rowdy than monster trucks. Featuring well-known trucks Outlaw, Equalizer, Shark Attack and Sheriff, it'll be pedal-to-the-metal action.

OCTOBER

- **Cullman County Fair,** Oct. 5-14, at the Cullman County Fairgrounds: The county fair is a classic rural sight to see, with exhibitions, livestock showings, pageants, classic carnie food and rides for even the most seasoned thrill seeker. People from all around have been coming to this fair since 1954, come see why for yourself!
- **Smith Lake Bass Fest,** Oct. 7, at Smith Lake Park: Fishing aficionados from all across the Southeast will gather at Smith Lake Park for a chance to win bragging rights. Oh, and that



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Cullman's Christmas pyramid

\$15,000 guaranteed first-prize winnings won't be too shabby, either. Do you have what it takes to be the big fish in the pond?

- **Peinhardt Living History Farm Day,** Oct. 14, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and Oct. 15, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Peinhardt Living History Farm: Come experience the history and learn how some

of the first settlers of Cullman made this land home. With a petting zoo, antique tractor show, mule and wagon rides and demonstrations of all kinds, it's a must-visit for any history buff.

- **7th Annual Caring for Cullman Concert,** Oct. 18, at 6 p.m. at Northbrook Baptist Church: The award-winning Triumphant Quartet will

be belting to the pines of Northbrook Baptist Church at Good Samaritan Health Clinic's annual concert fundraiser. For those fans of clean Christian vocals that stand alone, you're sure to be pleased.

- Steak and Sunset Dinner: Oct. 28, at 4:30 p.m. at Sullivan Creek Ranch: Come enjoy a five-star inspired meal featuring three cuts of Sullivan Creek Ranch's homegrown Akaushi steaks paired with select local produce. Accompanied with an outdoor art gallery and self-guided tour of the ranch, this is one date night you're sure to remember.

- Christmas Pyramid lighting: Nov. 24, near the Festhalle: Cullman's Christmas pyramid, or Weihnachtspyramide, was created by Erzgebirgiisehe Holzkunst Gahlenz in Germany and honors our German heritage. A fixture in the Cullman Christmas scene since 2019, the annual lighting is typically well attended and kicks off the festive season.


- Christkindmarkt opening: Nov. 24, at the Festhalle: In conjunction with the Christmas Pyramid lighting, the Christkindmarkt, or Christmas market, will open. Local artisans and crafters assemble with Christmas tunes and treats to start the shopping season off with a bang.

NOVEMBER



Guests quickly boarded the rides after the gates opened to the Cullman County Fair on Thursday, Oct. 6, 2022.


CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO



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Cullman County fall family bucket list

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Looking for some fun, fall, family activities that won't break the bank? Try these!

Visit a local pumpkin patch for a prize gourd to decorate your entryway, and have each family member select a pumpkin to carve; for those with sensory aversions, painting pumpkins is a perfectly acceptable substitute!

Make homemade apple cider; if your granny won't come off her family recipe, follow the one here:

Ingredients

- 8 medium apples, seeded and quartered
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tsp. ground cloves
- 1 orange, peeled and segmented
- Water to cover

Instructions

1. Put all ingredients in a crockpot, cover with water, cook on high for 3 hours.
2. Mash the now softened fruit, strain and serve warm.
3. Refrigerate any leftovers and consume within 5 days.

Take photos at Haynes Farms in Simcoe among the sunflower blooms; it is free to visit, and this makes a great family photo if yours needs updating.

Party Southern-style by hosting a bonfire with

traditional treats like s'mores, made special with various toppings and different flavors of marshmallows.

- Watch a family friendly fall movie like "Hocus Pocus" or throw it back to a classic with Disney's "Halloweentown."
- Decorate your coffee bar with mini pumpkins bought from the Festhalle Farmers Market, a fall-scented candle and seasonal mugs. Bonus points for mum sprigs in a

bud vase!

- Bake a pie and make it even sweeter with locally grown sweet potatoes from Kress Farms purchased at Festhalle Farmers Market. Don't forget the whipped cream topping!
- Enjoy the crispy autumn air by taking a family walk through our local Wildflower Garden at Sportsman Lake Park to appreciate the changing colors of the leaves at the arboretum.



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CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF - MATT GENTRY

DO NOT TEXT AND DRIVE

ROCK THE SOUTH

Rock the South took place July 20-22 in Cullman, welcoming near record crowds.



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MIKE WITCHER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MIKE WITCHER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MIKE WITCHER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MIKE WITCHER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MARtha NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



RYAN COLE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



RYAN COLE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



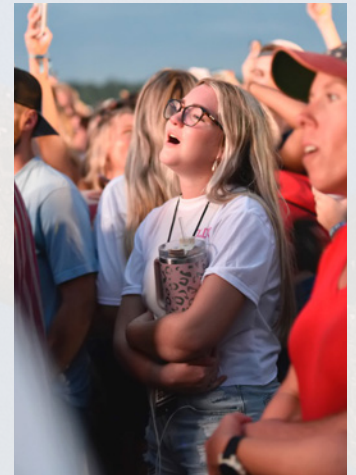
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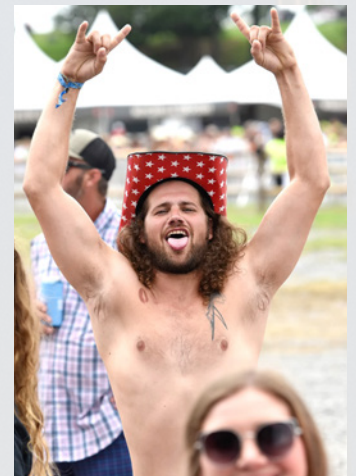
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KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



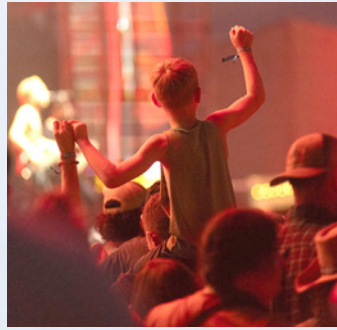
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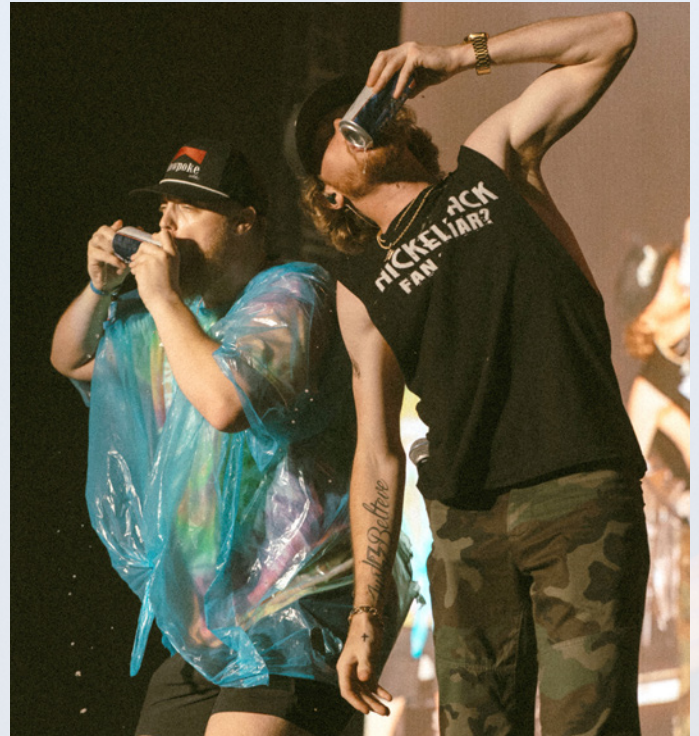
RYAN COLE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



RYAN COLE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



RYAN COLE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



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KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



KATIE HARRIS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Blazing a trail of creativity

Sisters fuse passions to create diverse artistry

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Sisters make up the artist collective of Fireheart Graphics, which specializes in art that is distinctly different than what you would see in a doctor's office or in a local craft store. Through digital, textile and metal mediums, Fireheart draws in the mystical and hippie community in Cullman with trippy digital designs, colorful tie-dye garments and bespoke wire-wrapped jewelry.

Fireheart has grown quite the following through its presence on the festival scene, and its fanbase is as diverse and eclectic as the creations themselves.

Yet, for such a far-out collective concept, the sisters are surprisingly down to earth, with even the name Fireheart steeped in family tradition and homage.

Said Emily Duncan, who specializes in digital design, "The name is kind of something that was a dream in the family since we were younger.

"Our mom wanted to do 'Fireheart Farms,' and when Ember (Emily's late daughter) passed, I remember just thinking how well it fit."

Karli Duncan, chief tie-dyer on staff, mentioned that the collective came about out of mutual interests between the sisters, and nearly every piece is collaborative in nature.

"All of us have dabbled in multiple mediums over the years, but me and Emily both shared an interest in graphic design and tie-dye.

"A lot of times she'll create the digital art, I'll create the tie-dye and then we just



Sisters Karli Duncan (left) and Emily Duncan (right) chat about their artistic process and what inspires them.

combine it!" she explained.

Fireheart's offerings are unique and ever evolving, with one-off pieces as well as mass-ordered merch of the sisters' own digital designs; the sisters say this keeps them from feeling "boxed-in" and doesn't put a limit on their creativity.

"Being able to add different things when our interests change, because we're both ADHD," laughed Karli Duncan.

"Whatever we feel like inspires us creatively at that moment, we want to be able to add that.

"We want it to be open for wherever our creative process wants to take us."

Emily Duncan said that while they do maintain online sales, the sisters truly thrive in the festival environment by

inspiring their customers with a spirit of creativity while getting to soak in the vibe of the event.

However, fostering connections with other small businesses while at events is paramount to them, having formed several relationships with similar art styles; that's no small feat, when you consider how competitive the handmade market can be.

"We do online stuff as well, but one thing I love about the booths is we always meet other small businesses," said Emily Duncan.

Her sister confirmed, "Going to an event is an experience... it's really cool to have that community aspect and be able to meet other artists and be able to support each other, even if it's just sharing tips and tricks."

The sisters shared that the inspiration for their trippy designs and groovy pieces comes from places you would expect like nature and spirituality, but sometimes, more specifically, the art of others.

Music is huge in the Duncan family. Karli Duncan said sometimes inspiration sparks in the presence of a song or chord. "Taking inspiration from other artists, like having a vision in your head of something when you hear a song."

Fireheart is expanding, with art in local brick-and-mortar store Canna Bliss and more on the horizon.

To stay up to date on future festivals it will be attending or to place a custom order, visit www.facebook.com/fireheartgraphics.



A collection of art created by Karli Duncan, Emily Duncan and Sarah Beasley

CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

- COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT -

Frances Jones of Vogue Beauty Salon

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Frances Jones has been beautifying the residents of Cullman since the age of 14, and her story is nothing short of beautiful itself. Countless heads have graced her vintage hair dryers in a shop with bright green linoleum, framed needlepoints by clients who have passed and an overall feel of community.

"It was just a commercial business area, not like it is now," laughed Jones, referencing the original warehouse district where her sister owned a shop. At 14 years old, and being paid a \$3 daily wage, Jones assisted her older sister by shampooing clients and along the way found a love of making people feel confident.

Later, she was one of the first students in Wallace State Community College's Cosmetology program. "I first started not to go, because I had married my senior year and we were expecting our first child," Jones explained. She said

encouragement from her professor kept her going. She delivered her first child, took a five-week maternity leave, and came back ready to finish strong. She went back to work with her sister upon graduating.

In July 1973, Jones and her sister set up shop where Vogue is now on Second Avenue Southeast.

"It's been 50 years that we've been in this shop. A lot of hairdressers have come and gone... at times we've had four or five hairdressers working, you'd have all the dryers full and then people waiting to get in one!" she laughed.

"It was a busy hub at one time," explained Jones.

"Most of my clients now are older. I do a few children's and men's haircuts, but most of mine is what you call a 'wet set.'" For those readers who do not know, wet sets are the quintessential Southern lady 'do, where you shampoo, set »



PHOTOS: CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



Left: Storefront of Vogue Beauty Salon; top right: Frances Jones, owner of Vogue Beauty Salon, poses with a box of curlers; bottom right: Vintage hair dryers line the wall of Vogue Beauty Salon.



in rollers and then dry.

It would be hard to guess the exact number of women she has worked with over the decades.

When asked about her

lengthy career and impact in Cullman, Jones said many of her clients have been with her from the very beginning, exclaiming, "There's some customers I've been doing 45

or 50 years!"

Jones wanted to share a final message: "It's been an exciting career for me, I've loved it. I've always tried to be a kind and giving person.

I've felt like if you're that kind of person, people will treat you that way, too."

Vogue Beauty Salon is located at 217 Second Ave. SE in Cullman.



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FOOD TRUCK FRENZY

The Cullman area is home to a diverse array of mobile food options. Here are a few favorites.

Stone's All Fired Up

Tiffany McKoy

tsmckoy@cullmantribune.com

Chris Stone established his food truck in June 2022, bringing his passion for cooking to the streets of Cullman. Having earned his culinary degree in Palm Beach, Florida, he embarked on a journey across the United States, working as an executive chef and general manager in various cities. Eventually, he found himself in Cullman, serving as the executive chef at Cullman Regional for seven years. He said the demands of the corporate world, exacerbated by the challenges of the pandemic, took a toll on his spirit.

"I was literally doing seven jobs every day, working 4 a.m.-6 p.m., and I actually had a stretch of 27 days straight," he said.

His frustrations with the corporate environment, coupled with the desire to pursue his culinary dreams, led him to venture into the world of »



TIFFANY MCKOY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE; CHRIS STONE

This page: Owner Chris Stone poses for a photo in front of his food truck. Opposite page: The Nashville Hot Chicken Sandwich from Stone's All Fired Up

food trucks. The name "Stone's All Fired Up" emerged from his determination to leave his previous job with a fiery resolve to follow his passion.

Stone said he appreciates the freedom that comes with owning a food truck. He relishes the ability to set his own schedule and craft a unique menu that showcases his culinary expertise. Having worked for corporations that dictated every detail, he revels in the opportunity to express his creativity and offer a fusion of Southern flavors to food truck enthusiasts.

He revealed the secret behind the truck's speedy service at events like Oktoberfest. "My cook, Jason Moore, and I make a great team. It's usually just the two of us running the food truck, although we have a

couple of extra hands if needed. During Oktoberfest, we kept the schnitzels frying on the flat top, perfectly buttered up and

are a hit. The combination of succulent shrimp, savory and tangy sauces and smoked Gouda cheese grits creates

steals the show. "I've never seen anything like the response I get on that burger." He said customers have driven back within minutes of leaving to order another one, and some have even returned just to contribute to the tip jar in appreciation.

"It's a labor of love," said Stone. He said the journey hasn't always been easy, especially in a city where taste preferences are evolving. However, he remains determined to push culinary boundaries and introduce new flavors to the people of



ready to serve. As we finished cooking, we sold them right off the window, ensuring super-fast service," he said.

When asked about his favorite menu items, he quickly mentioned two stand-out dishes. "My Shrimp and Grits

a symphony of flavors," he said. The dish has received widespread recognition, even making appearances on various television networks and in magazines.

However, it is the Bacon Beer-Jam Burger that truly

Cullman.

MENU MUST-TRY

- Shrimp and Grits
- Bacon Beer-Jam Burger

<https://tinyurl.com/StonesAFU>



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KIM THOMAS
OWNER

JJ's West Coast Tacos

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Army veterans and husband-and-wife duo Juan and Ariana Silva brought one of Cullman's newest food trucks into the fray, JJ's West Coast Tacos. According to Ariana Silva, the dream was 11 years in the making.

"This was something we talked about when we first got married," she said.

Her husband chimed in, "Yeah, this was a dream we had the first few years."

While Juan Silva was waiting to hear back about a military contractor position, Ariana Silva suggested that they finally make the leap.

The next weekend, the food truck was purchased and thus began the process of registering with the health department and decking out the truck.

Months later, the taco truck was finally live, dishing out authentic tacos, massive burritos and basics like cheese quesadillas.

The Silvas said one of the most impactful parts of owning a food truck is experiencing the community and kinship they've been able to develop with their customers, and even their competition.

"Everyone has been really welcoming to our food truck, even other trucks in the area like Street Kitchen and Stone's All Fired Up," smiled Ariana Silva.

Said her husband, "The coolest thing about this business is, as the creator of it, always being able to create new things.



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Main: Owners Juan Silva (left) and Ariana Silva (right) smile from the window of the newly-opened JJ's West Coast Tacos. Bottom right: Cali Tacos with Shrimp, a stellar combination of cheese, guacamole, house-made pickled red onions and pico de gallo served with salsa verde and salsa roja

"Like our specials, people love them." Ariana Silva agreed, "it's his God-given talent!"

MENU
MUST-TRY

- Cali Taco
- Cali Burrito

<https://tinyurl.com/JJswct>



Chat & Chew

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

With nearly three years of food truck experience under their belts, Chat & Chew Owners Leann Boatright and Cherrie Verhoff have learned a thing or two about carefully arranging a spread or combining classic Southern flavor combos in a portable way. With unique flavor profiles like creamy pimento cheese and smoky bacon jam, tried-and-true favorites like cheesy grits and crispy bacon, and even kids' meals, they have something for everyone.

It all began with classic charcuterie spreads for church gatherings, birthday parties and occasionally weddings. Right before the COVID-19 pandemic, they had made the leap into full-time catering. Two weeks later, the world shut down.

"No one could have any kind of event," mentioned Boatright. Verhoff posed a unique idea of individual charcuterie she called



CONTRIBUTED

Main: Chat & Chew owners Leann Boatright (left) and Cherrie Verhoff (right) pose for a photo in their recently opened brick-and-mortar storefront located in Cullman's Warehouse District. **Bottom left:** One of Chat & Chew's most well-known offerings, a charcuterie spread artfully arranged and usually including fresh local produce



"grazing" boxes, which piqued Boatright's interest; between the uncertainty of COVID-19 and a desperate need for positivity in our community, suddenly, the niche was born.

With 25 orders in the first week of offering grazing boxes and over 100 orders in the second week, the endeavor was a major success. After experiencing massive growth, particularly for event catering after the world reopened, the truck came into play.

"We said, we'll just pray about it, and see what we can do," said Verhoff, knowing neither of them had the

finances to outright purchase the one they had in mind or get a loan.

After a lucky break, Verhoff's husband purchased the food truck and gave it to the "heifers," as they call themselves, and they've been on the road ever since.

Recently, they opened a brick-and-mortar location in Cullman's Warehouse District.

MENU MUST-TRY

- Heifer on Fire
- Song of the South

www.facebook.com/itsallaboutthegraze

Mom & M's

Tiffany McKay

tsmkoy@cullmantribune.com

Mom & M's is co-owned by Megan Harris and her mother, Linda Thomas. Established in January 2020, it quickly gained popularity for its unique fusion of flavors and creative approach to street food.

Harris explained the origin of the name. "We have always loved cooking. My mom and I are partners in this." She said the inspiration for the food truck came from their shared love for cooking. Through cooking lessons and home experiments, the duo honed their skills and developed a deep appreciation for culinary delights.

When asked why they chose a food truck over a traditional restaurant, Harris said, "There weren't many food trucks in Cullman at the time, and there's less overhead with food trucks. We can set our own hours, which is important for me as I have small children. It offers a lot more freedom compared to a brick-and-mortar restaurant where people expect you to be open certain hours."

Mom & M's success has been fueled by its customer base. "Our customers really are fantastic. They seek us out, they follow us wherever we're at, they come and visit," said Harris. "Everybody has been so kind, and they're getting started. The people I talked to in the restaurant community and the guidance that they gave us, people have been so incredibly kind and helpful."

Harris and Thomas have



TIFFANY MCKOY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE; MEGAN HARRIS

Main: Megan Harris and Linda Thomas pose for a photo in front of their food truck. Bottom: Churros are a popular item on the Mom & M's food truck.

embraced the learning curve that comes with owning a food truck. Drawing on their grocery store and catering backgrounds, the mother-daughter duo experiments with new recipes and flavors, constantly pushing culinary boundaries.

"I love the Pimento Chicken Tacos, and I like to make them hot," Harris said. "We have a Baltimore Hot Chicken Sandwich that we do also. But I like to use the Baltimore Hot Sauce that we make and put it on the chicken in the Pimento Chicken Tacos." She said the Nacho Mama's Fries are a fan favorite. "They are for sure everybody's favorite. We ate a lot of fries to be able to find the perfect fry to do that with," she laughed. The result is crispy waffle fries which are covered with an array of toppings.

Looking ahead, Harris and Thomas are eager to expand

their catering services, targeting weddings, luncheons and office events.

- Pimento Chicken Tacos
- Nacho Mama's Fries

www.facebook.com/momandmfoodtruck

MENU MUST-TRY



Fall-flowering plants make life easier for bees

Katie Nichols

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

AUBURN UNIVERSITY, Ala.

— “The hum of the bees is the voice of the garden,” is a quote that rings true throughout much of the year in Alabama backyards. However, the buzz gets quieter as summer continues into the fall. Because the relationship between bees and plants is unique and mutually beneficial, there are several ways that home gardeners can make the bees’ lives easier.

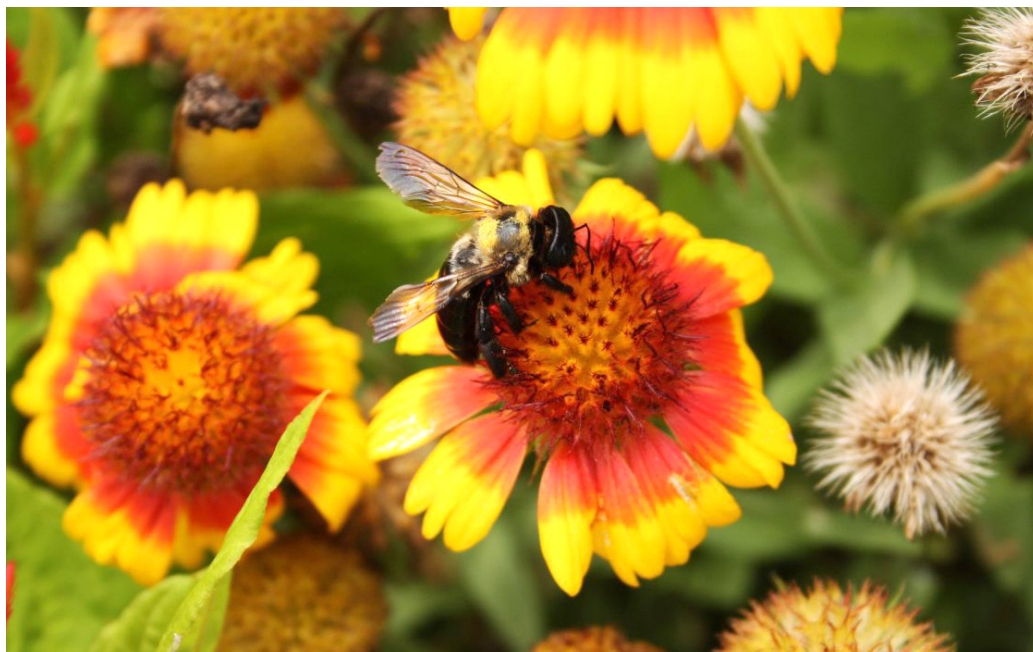
Much like the support avid hummingbird watchers provide to hummers throughout the hot summer, bees can benefit from some targeted tender loving care in your yard or home garden.

Kerry Smith, an Alabama Cooperative Extension System administrator of horticulture outreach programs, said there is an abundance of flowering plants during the spring and early summer, but gardeners overlook planning the fall flower garden. Because it’s difficult to establish new plants in the summer heat, it’s important to plant fall bloomers in later winter and early spring.

“Paying special attention to have fall blooms around your home and garden will make a difference, as pollinators work to store up food for the cold winter,” Smith said.

Supporting honeybees and native bees

Honeybees and native bees visit flowers to collect pollen and nectar for food. Pollen is essential to bees because it is their only natural source of protein. Without it, colonies would be unable to produce



ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

new bees and would eventually die.

Allyson Shabel, an Alabama Extension urban home grounds regional agent, said to produce honey successfully, beekeepers must have their colonies at peak strength when the major nectar-producing plants in their area begin to bloom.

“It is important for beekeepers to have a working knowledge of the nectar and pollen-producing plants in the vicinity of their apiaries,” Shabel said. “It is also important for the bees’ neighbors to understand their seasonal needs.”

A plant’s production and secretion of nectar are affected by many factors, such as soil fertility, moisture and acidity as well as garden location.

For maximum honey production, consider allowing wildflowers to reseed nearby for supplemental bee pasture.

In addition to helping honeybees, it is also important to support native bee species. Jack

Rowe, an Alabama Extension forestry, wildlife and natural resources regional agent, said neighboring honeybees are useful for home gardens. However, home-garden plantings are more likely to attract native bees such as bumblebees, leafcutting bees and mason bees.

“These insects will visit the home landscape more than honeybees, who tend to depend on large resources such as orchards and farm fields,” Rowe said.

“It is important to support our declining native-bee populations, as they do most of the pollination in home landscapes.”

Fall nectar and pollen plants of Alabama


Smith and a host of colleagues with Alabama Extension have developed a list of plants that grow year-round and are beneficial for bees. Plants that grow and flower in the fall include

the following:

- Sedum
- Sweet autumn clematis
- Many salvias
- Hyssop
- Horsemint and other bee balm species
- Boneset
- Buckwheat
- Cotton
- Moss rose (Purslane)
- Numerous species in the Aster family
- Ironweed
- Goldenrod
- Sunflowers

More information

Learn more about beneficial plants for honeybees in the Alabama Extension publication, *Nectar and Pollen Producing Plants of Alabama a Guide for Beekeepers*. Also, other information is available in the *Protecting Pollinators in Urban Areas* publication series. Both resources are available at www.aces.edu.

A photograph of a stone archway leading to a cobblestone street in Italy. The archway is made of rough-hewn stone and frames a view of a blue sky and a building with a dark window. The cobblestone street is paved with light-colored stones and leads into the distance. The text is overlaid on the image in a white-bordered box.

'A DREAM COME TRUE!

**LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER
ON HER TRIP TO ITALY**

BY: SHERRY BROWN

CULLMAN TRIBUNE PHOTOGRAPHER



Ridge facing the wall of Gran Sasso

SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

It was a dream come true when I got the chance to visit Italy for once in a lifetime photography workshop in the majestic Abruzzo mountains in Italy. For several days, I stayed in a fortress called Rocca Cala Scio, where I enjoyed delicious pasta, savored divine wine and enjoyed camaraderie with newfound friends.

I felt truly alive and was in awe as I sat in the midst of the vivid and bright wildflowers, feeling the sun's warmth and rays and the wind's comforting caress.

My camera captured the breathtaking beauty of the stunning landscapes, from the snow-capped peaks to the lush green valleys.

We explored the winding roads in a car or by hiking through the meadows listening to classic rock songs singing along (sometimes at the »



Rocca Calascio

SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Emperor's Field

top of our lungs) with joy! We also experienced some sudden rainstorms, which added to the thrill of being in such a vast and wild place. It was an adventure like no other.

The Abruzzo region is renowned for its Apennine mountains, which offer rugged and diverse terrain.

It also has many charming hilltop towns that preserve the medieval and Renaissance heritage.

The scenery was filled with contrasts, from the fields of wildflowers to the hills of sheep to the roadside grills that served mouth-watering food.

The people were warm and welcoming, greeting us with smiles in their eyes and kisses on both cheeks. They were such a pleasure to talk to and learn from.

At the end of each day, I felt content and fulfilled as I sat in the grasses of the fields among the flowers with the wind in my hair doing what I love most. My adventurous spirit was free to soar and explore.

It was the most exhilarating and thrilling journey that I will never forget.

I hope that you enjoy my images as much as I enjoyed taking them and feel that you were right there with me.



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Right: Local countryside; opposite page: Santa Maria della Pietra





WUNDERGARTEN!

The Legend of the Miracle Garden, part 3

An original fairytale by Ben Johnson South

*Continued from the May-June-July
edition of Community Matters...*

That next day, the sun shone through the window and woke him. A rooster crowed, "Cock-a-doodle-doo! Awake, it's getting late. Cock-a-doodle-doo! Awake, it's getting late. Cock-a-doodle-doo!" All were widely awakened.

Knowing he would be gone longer than usual, Fritz took the wooden bucket from the well and watered every plant thoroughly. Then, he approached the mysterious tree, and once again the sound of snip, snip, snipping accompanied Fritz' work as the determined tree was clipped to look like a floppy-eared bunny for the fourth and final clipping. This time, if the tree did not cooperate, Fritz had decided to uproot it and give the tree to the newcomers in the village who started a nursery of American plants and heirloom German favorites. "I will

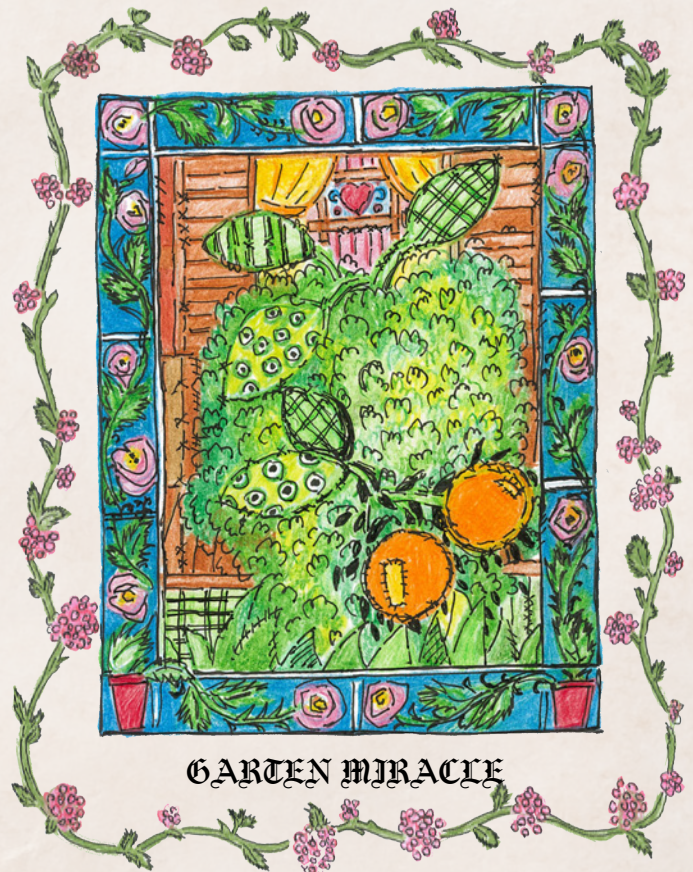
clip this stubborn shrub one last time and then never ever, never again!" said Fritz.

Once again, a frazzled Fritz closed the picket-fence garden gate, said "Guten nacht" to the plants and went to the barn shed satisfied the bunny-shaped tree would bring a smile to the young ZeeBeth the next day. Fritz was certain his goose down pillow wished for his weary head to rest upon it.

The next morning, he woke promptly at daybreak and, out of habit, Fritz picked up his hand tools and gloves and headed toward Frau Ruehl's garden home. Then, he realized he was to have a change of pace and visit some faraway farms as Colonel Cullman requested. He was to enjoy some rest.

Fritz put away his tools, turned and started strolling a neatly raked path, then he went zigzagging and slip-sliding down a slope where wagon wheels had rutted the poor earth. He headed out into the wide world toward the westernmost part of the county, choosing a path he had never trodden.

The forest itself seemed to beckon him, "Come ye, welcome, willkommen, good things shall befall ye." Some »



locals believed that part of the forest was haunted, that ogres would eat you there and that thieving elves lurked in caves and tunnels. But, wise Frau Ruehl said, "Oh pooh, that's pure poppycock, rubbish. These woods have blessed many, they are enchanted."

Fritz slung a satchel of clip-pings from his final forming of the floppy-eared rabbit bush over his shoulder. Later, he would sprinkle them to mark his journey through the woods. As he entered the forest, sunbeams danced this way and that between the trees.

With no demands on his time, Fritz began to daydream about where life had led him. He wandered deeper and deeper into the darkest part of the forest where it was still as

a church and solemnly hushed. When he whistled through a blade of grass, the sound echoed eerily.

Stopping by a clear brook he glimpsed a turtle family sheltered under the roots of three live oak trees. Little fish were frisking about making nibble, nibble, nibble rings on the peaceful pool. Then, he noticed his own reflection in the water. His teenage face was youthful, but his body was bent and drawn. This misfortune, he knew, was caused by the coal-mining accident before Colonel Cullman welcomed him to come to Alabama.

It occurred to Fritz that although Frau Ruehl was a good, kind, mothering employer and a hard-working

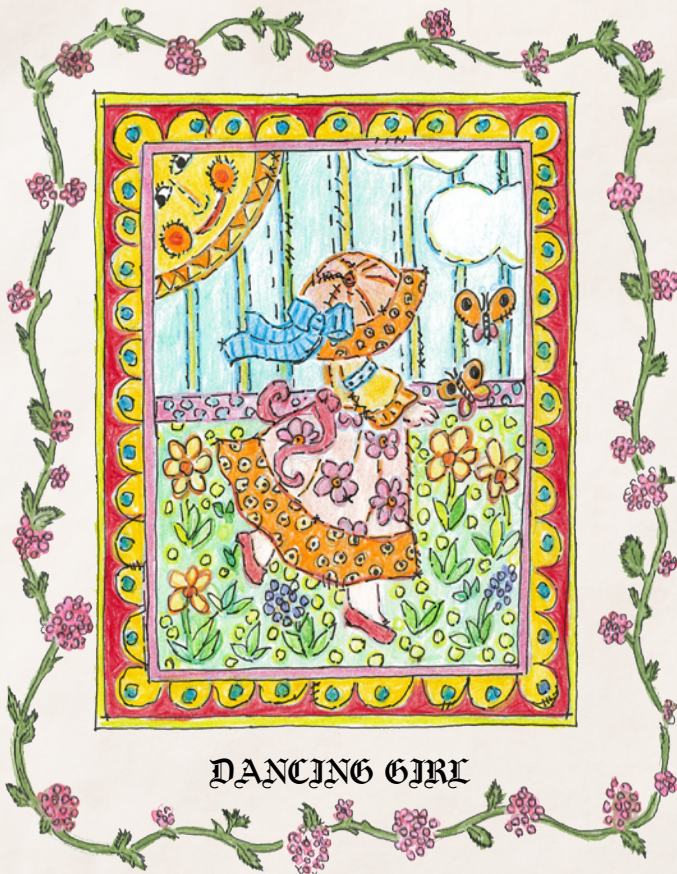
plants person herself, he missed the Germany of his all-too-brief childhood and might return there if he could find some way. The tall trees on his path reminded Fritz of the masts of the tall ships that carried him from his motherland.

"I am being foolish thinking such thoughts," said Fritz. "I have a good life in this beautiful part of the world. I should be rapturously content and grateful for doors that have been opened for me, not pining for the doors in my past that were slammed shut." He was, for certain, in an idyllic spot on the globe. As if to illuminate that truth, he passed a waterfall where sun coming through the dappled leaves created a rainbow in

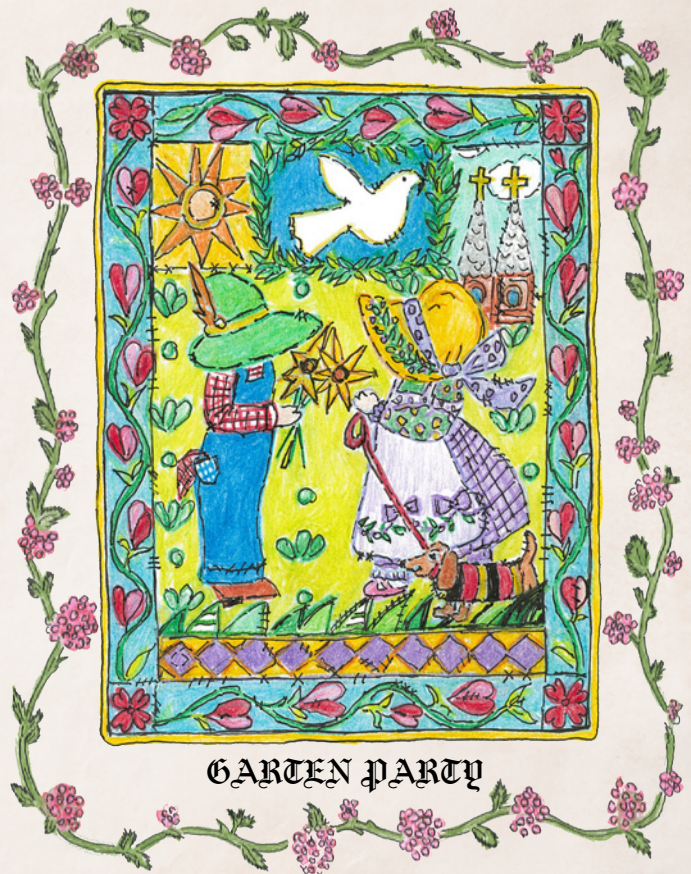
the spray. It was like hiking through a lush poem.

The turning point on his quest was a deep ravine that mapped the county line. On his way, Fritz had called on five different farm families and collected the "magical" flour from the miller. As he forged on through a whirlwind of yellow cosmos and daisies, Fritz saw six baby swans waddling, wiggling, wagging, wading and then paddling a stream as their proud papa protectively glided, coaching his young swim team.

With the wind whistling through his hair, Fritz reversed course and began his long march homeward. Arched elms formed a chapel gateway back into the forest and he smelled the »



DANCING GIRL



GARDEN PARTY

honey-perfumed blossoms of tea olive. He didn't see the birds, but he heard a sound that was like angels clapping their wings for joy.

Fritz found a velvety bed of moss and meant to rest briefly but must have drifted to sleep. When he roused, a dark cloud covered the moon. An owl screeched and a raven crowed. Powerful thunder struck and the tree branches trembled. A ladybird with lovely golden feathers chirped, "Go home, mein Freund, go home. You'll find a miracle has come." Again, she chirped, "Go home, mein Freund, go home. You'll find a miracle has come."

Fritz shuddered, "I wish myself at home." And, WHISH! The blowing wind at his bent back helped his happy return.

The sun was rising over the mountains. Some of the clippings he had strewn along his way had sprouted overnight and had gold leaves. Perhaps it was the dew, but some of the leaves glistened like diamonds and looked like hundreds and hundreds of cathedral candles guiding him home.

After being away, during which time he thought again and again about his life's journey, Fritz returned to his simple place. He had made a cozy, one-room home in Frau Ruehl's garden shed. Seeds laid out on the potting bench near his cot and herbs hung to dry. Unlike some of the neighboring farms, his modest place had a raised plank floor instead of dirt, and he added a chimney made of red clay

bricks he dug from the bluff.

He even had a small window that looked out at the patch Frau Ruehl encouraged him to plant just for himself. She sewed Fritz a muslin curtain with hand-stitched, green vines on the edge. She had woven the linen on her spindle. It was the softest, prettiest thing he held dear since his own mother had died. The shed was a place for his private dreams, not fantasy dreams of princely wealth, but dreams of safe happiness and warm, family love.

The distant church bells from St. John's, Sacred Heart and the German Baptist churches woke him. Fritz had been so caught up in his own concerns he'd forgotten today was what this German

community called "Tag der Wunder" (pronounced "tog der vunder") a "Day of the Miracles."

Today, he would be welcomed by Frau Ruehl to enjoy a grand breakfast of muskmelons, German sausages, fried peach fritters shaped like crescent moons and brimming pots of chamomile tea scented with mint and ginger. There would be no working on this holiest of feast days.

Look for the final part of "WUNDERGARTEN: The Legend of the Miracle Garden" in the November-December-January edition of Community Matters.

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HELPING HANDS

Mission teams from Kentucky increase accessibility at Victoria's Hope

W.C. Mann

craig@cullmantribune.com

Local charity-supporting thrift store Victoria's Hope got a helping hand, a lot of them in fact, from unexpected sources this summer. Construction mission teams from Newton Creek Baptist Church and Spring Bayou Baptist Church of Kevil, Kentucky, came to Cullman to repair the store's deck and stairs, and add a wheelchair-accessible ramp to the building. Team members even took time to paint fences.

Victoria's Hope Founder April Bowen German explained, "I reached out to the Lions Club, who had given me an opportunity to speak with them at one of their weekly meetings, and told them we needed a wheelchair ramp for our clients and customers, and a new deck because I was afraid someone was going to get hurt on the one we had. They knew of someone, Mr. Don Scott, who has a group that does projects like that, but they had a lot of projects coming up, so it could be months. So I was shocked when Mr. Scott called me up the next week and told me I would have a ramp by the end of the month."

Paul Radosevich, director of the West Cullman Baptist Association, had the two church crews coming to work on another project already, but the job they were supposed to do fell through, so Radosevich reached out to Scott to ask if he knew of anyone else needing a ramp.

"And next thing I know, we have like 30 people at



APRIL BOWEN GERMAN

Volunteers repaired the deck and stairs, added a wheelchair ramp and painted fences at Victoria's Hope this summer.

our shop ready to work," said German. "It was amazing to see complete strangers out there doing all that they can to make your dream a reality. (My husband) Craig (German) and I were not expecting that many people! The men did a great job rebuilding our entire deck and adding a wheelchair ramp that a small motorcycle could probably drive up on.

"Then there was the women. They came in, told me they were there to do whatever it is I've always wanted to do, but never had time to do, so I said, 'Let's paint a fence!' I gave them the idea of what I wanted, and they made my dream come alive by not only painting my fence, but adding lots of personal touches to it as well."

Victoria's Hope Thrift and Treasures sells to the public, donating profits to local charitable causes and organizations. Qualified families in need, including those with documented financial hardship

and those who have suffered sudden losses through fire or natural disaster, can shop for free.

German named the shop for her mother, a single parent who had a dream of helping others in her situation.

In a previous interview, German told The Tribune, "I always remember my mom doing without so that we could have. She mentioned to me later in the years how she wished there was a place where single mothers could get help without feeling embarrassed or afraid. She never got an opportunity to do that."

Victoria Hammond Hankey died of pancreatic cancer in May 2018. German launched Victoria's Hope a month later.

Of the recent construction project, German added, "Last week was so much more than getting a makeover for the store. Craig and my hearts needed it just as much. These people will never know how much Craig and I, and this

community, appreciate everything that they did. They were amazed at the feedback from the community as the project was going on, and I told them that this community feels like Victoria's Hope is a part of them as well, and I think some of the members of the community were as excited as we were that this was finally being done!

"With that being said, this community should feel that way; they are the reason we are still around five years later. We aren't supported by any companies or organizations; we are supported by this community, and I think that's where the special bond is. We encourage everyone to come out and see what these amazing people have done, and maybe shop and buy a thing or two. That's what keeps us operating and able to give back, and we are forever grateful for that."

For more on Victoria's Hope's visit www.facebook.com/victoriashope1952.



"I am honored to serve you as your Alabama state senator in District 4 (Cullman, Marion and Winston). I will continue to listen and be your voice in the Statehouse of Alabama. Thank you for your support while I continue to work with you to make our community the best it can be."

Sincerely,
Sen. Garlan Gudger, District 4



Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame inducts Class of 2023



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Bottom L-R: Ivan Richard, David Schaffer, Dee Merriweather Castille, Tracy Rutledge Means, Regina Jones (representing her husband Randy Jones), Daymon Gardner (representing his son Jeremy Gardner. Top L-R: Mark Putman, Stanley Parker, Paul Bailey, Kelley Freeman, Charlie Krenkel, Jeff Lovell.

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Local sports legends gathered with family and friends at Stone Bridge Farms Saturday night to celebrate one of Cullman County’s most important sporting traditions. 12 new members were inducted into the Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame and the Class of 2023 is packed with men and women who inspired sports fans all over the state as well

as Cullman County.

Before each of this year’s inductees were introduced, this year’s scholarship recipients were recognized.

Carley Davis, Cold Springs - Victoria Rouse Memorial Scholarship

Olivia Britton, Cullman - Jimmy Dale Burgess Scholarship

Aliyah Ryan, Holly Pond

- Charlotte Cummings Foundation for Girls Athletics Scholarship

Bailey Keef, Good Hope - Gussie Shabel Memorial Scholarship

Zach Campbell, Hanceville - Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame Scholarship

Noah Zane Roberts, Fairview - Peoples Bank Scholarship

Cole Bissot, St. Bernard Prep - Coach Charlie Richard Memorial Scholarship

Berkely Gable, Vinemont - Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame Scholarship

Aiden Dujoud, West Point - James Shabel Memorial Scholarship

After each of this year’s student athletes received their scholarships, Cullman »

County Sports Hall of Fame Chairman Jackie Satterfield introduced each of this year's Hall of Fame inductees.

PAUL BAILEY

Graduated from Hewitt-Trussville High School in 1979 - baseball player and cheerleader

Cheerleader at Jefferson State Junior College

Graduated Auburn University in 1989 with a Bachelors Degree in Exercise Science

Masters Degree in Athletic Administration UAB 1997

Athletic trainer Auburn University 1985-89 for coaches Joe Champi, Pat Dye and Sonny Smith

Started Sports Medicine program at Cullman Regional Medical Center

Started Sports Medicine Program as well as serving as WSCC's athletic trainer

WSCC Athletic Director since 2011

WSCC Athletics has won national championships in Tennis (4), Track (1) and Softball (1) as well as multiple conference championships in all sports

Worked with several future professionals such as Craig Kimbrel, Derrick Holland and Jake Elwood

Member of the Auburn Football Letterman Club

Lifetime Auburn Alumni member

Part of two SEC Championships at Auburn

KELLEY FREEMAN

Graduated from Cold Springs High School on 1996 - played basketball and baseball

Played on two junior high county championship teams and two high school county championship teams (basketball)

Received award for scoring 1,000 points

All county, All area three times, All region two times

Played in state tournament final four

Made all-state tournament team

Scored over 1,800 points in high school career

Signed basketball scholarship to Shelton State Community College

Made varsity baseball team in eighth grade and played five years

Played on one county championship team

All Area three years, All Region two years

Played on two Dizzy Dean state champions and one World Series champion

JEREMY GARDNER

Graduated from Fairview High School in 1992

Played football, baseball, basketball and ran track

Three years football running back, cornerback and punter - most valuable player; most valuable back

Rushed for over 1,000 yards Junior and senior season, scored five touchdowns in one game

Team captain; All County

Basketball one year team captain; All Area; County Tournament Champions - led team in assists, recognized by AHSAA for most assists in a game

Three years baseball catcher and pitcher, team captain, most valuable player, led team in stolen bases

Played in East-West All Star Game

Track one year tied for All Sports Trophy

Played two years college football at Cumberland College

Played for five Hall of Fame coaches, Dafford Smith, Wade Knight, Mark Moore, Hobsin

Hite and Marty Hardman

Son of 2014 CSHOF inductee Connie Gardner

RANDY JONES

Graduated West Point High School 1986

Lettered in baseball, basketball and football

Cullman County junior high champions 1981-82

4A, Area 13 playoffs first West Point team to make playoffs

Cullman County B Team champions 1983-84, 1984-85

4A, Area 13 basketball champions 1984-85, Cullman County champions 1985-86

4A, Area 13 basketball champions 1985-86

Sub state basketball runner up 1985-86

County baseball champions 1986

Head basketball coach at Jones Chapel Jr. High for six years

Won six boys jr. high county championships and three girls junior high/middle school county championships

Coached basketball 25 years at West Point High School, 10 years as varsity head coach

Won one county championship, three runner ups, »

an Area championship and three area runner ups

Four-time sub regional qualifier

Assistant football coach for 11 years, softball coach for five years

CHARLIE KRENKEL

Graduated Banks High School in 1967

Lettered in golf

Attended St. Bernard College on golf scholarship

Part of national championship team at St. Bernard

Second team All-American 1968; First Team All-American 1971

First ever All-American from St. Bernard

Birmingham Golf Association Champion 1971 & 1972

Winner of 20 invitational golf tournaments

Won Alabama state amateur tournament

Won Dixie Amateur Tournament at County Club of Miami

Winner of multiple mini-tour professional events

Played on PGA Tour 1981-83

Played on senior chapter tour winning multiple events

Played in Senior PGA Championship

Holds several course records

Golf pro and teacher in Cullman County for over 20 years

JEFF LOVELL

Graduated from Holly Pond High School in 1989

Played baseball, football and basketball

All county basketball junior and senior year

Led Broncos to two state tournament appearances awarded basketball scholarship to WSCC

Set single season assist record (158) Sophomore season; team captain

Made basketball team at University of Alabama as a walk-on

Senior season, awarded partial scholarship by head coach Wimp Sanderson

Voted "Mr. Hustle" by teammates and coaches back to back years

Played for coaches Wimp Sanderson and David Hobbs

Played with future NBA stars Robert Horry, Latrell Sprewell, James Robinson, Jason Caffey and Roy Rogers

Served as graduate assistant

at Livingston University

Assistant women's basketball coach at university of Alabama 1995-97

Boys and girls basketball coach Lowndes Academy

Coached girls teams to three state championships and five runner up titles

2014 Alabama independent school coach of the year

DEE MERRIWEATHER CASTILLE

Graduated Hanceville High School 2001

Four-year letter winner in basketball; two time state 3A player of the year

Led Hanceville to 2001 3A state championship

Three time All-County, All-Region, All-Area and All-State player

Led Hanceville to three straight county championships

Played in Mississippi-Alabama All Star Game

Averaged 22 points and 16 rebounds per game senior season

Signed basketball scholarship to play at university of Alabama; three year starter

Played in 27 of 28 games as a freshman

As a junior led Alabama and was fourth in the SEC in blocked shots

As a junior and senior led Alabama in field goal efficiency

During her career she played in 110 of 111 games

Three-time academic All-SEC

Second all-time at Alabama in blocked shots (138)

Career rebound leader at Alabama (8.4 per game)

Fifth all-time SEC leader in rebounds

STANLEY PARKER

Graduated from Vinemont High School in 1980

Three year letterman in football; all county, all area, all state

Played on first team in Vinemont history to win an area championship and qualify for state playoffs, elected team captain

Alabama's first winner of the Alabama Chapter of the National Football Foundation Scholarship

Signed football scholarship to Memphis State University, transferred to University of North Alabama

Played four years at UNA starting at offensive tackle, three year letterman »

in basketball
All county junior and senior year; all tournament team junior and senior year; all area senior year

President of student council; National honor society; boys state representative; class valedictorian

Pinnacle award winner

Coached pee wee football two years

Coached girls softball three years

MARK PUTMAN

Graduated Hanceville High School in 1986

Three year letterman in football, three year starter

All county 1984 and 1985

All area and all state 1985

Most valuable offensive back 1984 and 1985

Hanceville First Baptist player of the week 1985

Two time McDonalds player of the week 1985

1985 permanent team captain

Rushed for 155 yards and three TDs in playoff win vs Sheffield

Played in class that had 28-8 three-year record

Considered one of the

toughest running backs and linebackers in Hanceville Football history

Played for Hall of Fame coaches Ray Talley, Rodney Terry and Keith Burns

IVAN RICHARD

Graduated Cullman High School in 1972

Three year letterman in football and basketball and four year letterman in baseball

Most valuable back two years

All Tennessee Valley Conference junior and senior year

Basketball and baseball captain senior year

All state baseball team, selected for Alabama East-West All Star game at Rickwood Field

Football scholarship to play at UNA for coach Mickey Andrews; four year letterman, three year stater

Selected to the Ohio Valley Conference team as a junior and senior

Gulf south conference player of the week in win vs Jacksonville state

Has been coaching high school sports for 45 years, football and baseball

Has coached in five different states

Had 27 teams in the state finals and has been named coach of the year numerous times

TRACY RUTLEDGE MEANS

Graduated Good Hope in 1988

Participated in softball, volleyball, basketball, track and cheerleading

Member of Good Hope's first softball team

Three year letter winner in softball, volleyball and basketball

Five year letter winner in track

All county, all area volleyball, competed in state tournament three straight years

All area basketball, led team in rebounds

Head volleyball coach at Good Hope one season and 24 years at Fairview

County champions 1997, 1999, 2016, 2017, 2018

Super regional 1997, 2002, 2013, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

Area champions 1996, 1997, 2002, 2018, 2019, 2020

State elite eight 1998, 2018, 2019, 2020

Softball coach eight years, elite eight 1999

DAVID SCHAFFER

Graduated Cullman High School 1973

Three sport letterman in baseball, basketball and football

1972 super all state football Birmingham News/Post Herald

1972 all state football Birmingham News/Post Herald

1972 AHSAA all star game selection

1972 most valuable player

1971 & 1972 most valuable lineman

1971 & 1972 all Tennessee valley conference

1973 Faculty good sportsmanship award

1971 & 1972 WKUL Player of the year

1971 & 1972 WKUL multiple player of the week awards

Led 1972 Cullman team to play in the state playoff championship game appearance

1972 signed football scholarship to Jacksonville state University

1973 president of the "C" Club

1972 most rebounds on basketball team

1995 head coach eighth grade Gwinnett County, GA football champions

North claims Boys' and Girls' wins in All-Star Week Cross Country Competition, Cold Springs' Edgeworth places 1st

AHSAA
Contributor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Cold Springs High School rising senior Ethan Edgeworth sped to the individual championship of the sixth AHSAA All-Star Week North-South All-Star Cross Country competition Tuesday morning with a sensational time (15:15.13) in the grueling July heat to lift the North to a 77-113 victory at Gateway Park.

Edgeworth, who won the 1A/2A state cross country title last season and set a record in the 3,200 outdoor competition, had plenty of help from the North team. Five North placed five runners in the top six finishers to take a 4-2 lead in the all-time series. Charles Perry of UMS-Wright of Mobile was second with a 15:39.20 time. North runners Dakota Frank of Munford was third with a 15:41.11 time, and Jayden Allred, a teammate of Edgeworth at Cold Springs, was fourth at 15:45.55.

The North girls posted a 70-84 victory over the South to increase its lead in the series to 4-2 as well. Samantha Menikheim of Sparkman High School took first place with a time of 10:11.91. She edged out North teammate Autumn Betts of Brewer High School, who crossed the finish line at 19:23.72. Top South finisher

Eva McGowan of Auburn came in third with a 19:25.74 time.

North boys' coach was Southside's Kim Nails, and North girls' coach was Stanley Johnson.

South coaches were Chris Rogers of Hale County (girls) and Leahrose Mami of Hale County (boys).

Complete results are below.

NORTH-SOUTH GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY RACE

1. Menikheim, Samantha - North All-Stars - 19:11.91
2. Betts, Autumn - North All-Stars - 19:23.72
3. McGowan, Eva - South All-Stars - 19:25.74
4. Trimble, Mary Anna' - North All-Stars - 19:43.28
5. Johnstone, Catherine - North All-Stars - 19:56.71
6. Wende, Kaitlyn - North All-Stars - 20:11.04
7. Finch, Kate - South All-Stars - 20:17.23
8. Miles, Emily - South All-Stars - 20:24.86
9. Kent, Callie - North All-Stars - 20:27.59 »



DAVID HOLTSFORD/AHSAA

North runner Ethan Edgeworth of Cold Springs congratulated by North Coach Kim Nails of Southside.

10. Hinote, Alexiana, South All-Stars - 20:36.31	18. Patterson, Madelyn - South All-Stars - 23:07.61	6. Robinson, Cole - North All-Stars - 16:12.95	14. Erath, Ben - South All-Stars - 17:31.73
11. Prins, Railey - South All-Stars - 20:48.50	19. Downing, Ella - South All-Stars - 23:42.10	7. McGhee, Winston - South All-Stars - 16:31.98	15. Skala, Henry - South All-Stars - 17:33.38
12. West, Sophie - South All-Stars - 21:04.43	NORTH-SOUTH BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY RACE		16. Norred, Brodie - South All-Stars - 18:42.62
13. Malone, Mary Katherine - North All-Stars - 21:10.97	1. Edgeworth, Ethan - North All-Stars - 15:15.13	9. Branscome, Harper - North All-Stars - 17:10.99	17. Mixson, Wyatt - South All-Stars - 19:22.17
14. Bothern, Emma - North All-Stars - 21:11.70	2. Perry, Charles - South All-Stars - 15:39.20	10. Ary, Braden - North All-Stars - 17:17.99	18. Michael, Bowden - South All-Stars - 19:42.25
15. Baxter, Lindsey - South All-Stars - 21:16.92	3. Frank, Dakota - North All-Stars - 15:41.11	11. Dolbear, Garrett - South All-Stars - 17:23.50	19. Johnson, Nadeem - North All-Stars - 20:48.71
16. Parris, Reagan - North All-Stars - 21:18.91	4. Allred, Jayden - North All-Stars - 15:45.55	12. Dryer, Dylan - North All-Stars - 17:26.18	
17. Hopkins, Anna - North All-Stars - 23:04.90	5. Langley, Arthur - North All-Stars - 16:07.07	13. Blake, Matthew - South All-Stars - 17:29.98	

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'I know it's easier said than done, but just do it'

West Point's Silas Baty honing his drone skills for upcoming seasons

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

WEST POINT, Ala. — West Point junior Silas Baty has been piloting a drone and doing video work for the Warriors football and basketball teams for two years now and it all started when he was in ninth grade. He talked about how all of that got started, what all goes into doing video, and about piloting the drone.

"One of my mutual friends at the time asked me to do it for football since his brother played football. He was already doing it and he asked me to do it," Baty said.

"At first, me and my friend were up in the press box, just recording it and there was a 30-foot pole in the end zone that two other people did.

"Last year, they got the drone in, and I did that during our practices, just in the end zone. We never did the drone during the game last year. Last year, the drone was a non-tethered one, but this year's one is.

"The tether is bringing power to the drone, so you don't have to wait and swap out the batteries and stuff. You can keep it in the air. The DJI drone is the most famous one and that's what we have. During practice, we would bring it up and when the batteries got low, »



West Point's Silas Baty

WEST POINT HIGH SCHOOL

we brought it down, swap the batteries and bring it back up. With the tethered drone, you don't have to. You can just keep it up in the air. It has really made a difference."

There have been a lot of positive comments about what he's doing for both teams and Baty is still getting used to it all.

"It's been weird so far. I don't think I've ever gotten this much publicity," Baty said.

"Last Friday, I went to a drone class and that has really boosted my confidence, because before, I was scared, like, anything can go wrong. This one's more stable. It's still scary, but that really boosted my confidence.

"This has boosted my

confidence with the drone. That class, I feel more at ease."

Baty gave some advice to those people that want to do what he's doing right now but are a little bit nervous to do it. It took him a while to get used to the drone his ninth-grade year, but that experience has really helped him out after that.

"I know it's easier said than done, but just do it. Just push yourself and do it. You'll get better with experience. The course that I took that Friday, he had us pulling up the drone, without the tether, going to a cone, then coming back, and drifting the drone around the cone to keep it on the cone.

"At the very end, he had

us do a course with the same drone, so we would weave between cones and go through cones across the football field," he said.

"The experience has been great. I wanted to get into drones, but I was still scared, like, just operating one. That experience really helped, because I would just go on the field and follow the ball."

He's been getting a lot of help from football head coach Don Farley and his son, Bryant, plus the basketball head coach, Mason Voce.

He also talked about how much he has learned and how much this experience will help him going forward.

"Coach Farley has been helping me with whatever

I needed and coach Bryant Farley, his son; he's the one that's done the drone stuff, so he helped me set up the drone or set up the cameras before I did the drone and he also helps with the cameras.

"He's been great helping me with it, with the regular camera and the drone. What I've learned from coach Bryant Farley is how to maneuver the drone better and responsibility," he said.

"He's always supporting me. Like football, he gets me lunch when they go somewhere. We went somewhere that was really far and he gave me a meal and took me along on the bus. I've learned a lot. I feel 10 times better than when I started on both of them."

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'Do all of the little things'

Good Hope's Emma Thompson talks junior season

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

GOOD HOPE, Ala. — Last season was another special one for the Good Hope Lady Raiders in basketball as they put up another 30-win season. They added another county title and an area championship to their trophy case and ended up making their third straight trip to the Sweet 16. One of this year's seniors, Emma Thompson, played for the first time up on varsity that season and had a blast playing alongside some amazing teammates.

"It was really cool, especially because of the talent the team brought. It was amazing to be able to experience such an amazing season with a great group of girls," Thompson said.

"I learned that our team could do just about anything when we work together. We played some very tough games last year and I feel like we came out and battled and fought to the end, whether we were playing some of the best teams in the state or not.

"We didn't make it to where we wanted to be, which was the state championship with a ring on our finger, but I think that defeat just pushed everyone on the team even harder to make it happen this year."

She added, "It was incredible to be alongside some of the best players in the state and it's so fun just to be in the mix with them. Something



PHOTOS: MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Good Hope's Emma Thompson

that I really admired about our team last year is that even though we have such great players, we played unselfish basketball.

"When we play together as a team and get everyone involved, it's insane seeing what we can do."

Thompson played under

some great coaches last season and soaked up as much as she could from them.

"They always pushed us, and they were so bought into our team.

"Coach Nina Moss was a new addition to our team last year and she brought so many new things to the table, but

out of all those things, she brought so much positivity to the team.

"The coaches spent countless hours watching film and getting game plans, and it was so inspiring to see how dedicated they were.

"They are also amazing in the way that they let us »

have fun. They love the game and love to cut up just as much as we do, so I love that they can be serious when the time is right, but also have fun."

She added, "I learned how to be a good leader. They were also always big on supporting teammates and being involved, whether you were in the game or not."

"Therefore, I learned how to be a better teammate and be more positive. I also learned how to keep pushing even when things aren't going the way you want them to."

"For example, they didn't get mad if you weren't scoring points, as long as you were making up for it on the defensive end or making things happen for other teammates offensively, or even if it was just continuing to cheer my teammates on."

Thompson got to play alongside two great seniors in Rudi Derrick and Bailey Keef and took away so much from playing with them.

"Rudi was an incredible teammate. She was one to look up to on the court: getting rebounds, loose balls, and hustling."

"She is an incredible person off the court too, though. She led our team in prayer every single practice and game and she was always uplifting us when we were down."

"Bailey was one of the best team leaders I've ever had. She was literally encouraging us in practice and in games. She would be the first one to

speak up in practice and tell them, 'It's okay', and 'We got it', if we don't reach one of our goals."

"She got pictures of us after almost every game, and I thought that was really cool because of the memories those pictures hold."

"She was such a big light for our team. I would say the main thing



that they taught me was how to be a leader."

"They both just demonstrated such incredible leadership skills and I quickly found myself to be following in their footsteps often by encouraging and uplifting the team."

Thompson has continued to work on her game in the offseason as she gets ready for next season.

She talked about her goals for this upcoming season and what will make this team special to watch.

"I've mainly worked on my shooting and ball-handling. I played travel ball as well, which helped a lot, because it put in a different position on my team and allowed me to play different competition," she

many valuable players, some of which are the top guards in the state.

"When everyone starts clicking on the court and playing together, it makes us so fun to watch."

Good Hope recently added upcoming junior Ava McSwain to their team and Thompson is so psyched to get to play alongside her. She also shared some of the best advice she's been given.

"It's been great. She is so sweet and such a great teammate. She is definitely a huge addition to the team and has done so many wonderful things for us this summer. We've played some tough competition already and having her has been a huge help. She is a phenomenal player and an amazing person. I look forward to seeing what she brings to the team this year," she said.

"Some of the best advice I have ever received is to keep pushing, even when things aren't going your way. I have used this in many different areas in life, basketball being one of them."

"If I am not scoring points like I want to be, I should not just get down on myself and give up. Instead, I should try harder to find open teammates, work even more on the defensive end, and do all of the little things that make up for not scoring."

said.

"My individual goals are to just be the best teammate I can be and help our team wherever I'm needed."

"I want to knock down shots, get loose balls, get rebounds, hustle, all those things. Our team goal is to win a state championship."

She added, "Our ability to play-make will make this team special to watch. We have so

'We value a sense of family and fellowship'

Cold Springs' Kaylee Windsor recaps band season

Sammy Confer

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BREMEN, Ala. — Cold Springs' drum major Kaylee Windsor will be going into her sixth and final year in the Cold Springs Royal Blue Band and she has had an amazing experience during that time.

"Ever since I joined the Cold Springs Royal Blue Band in the seventh grade, I joined a family. While our band is just as competitive as any other, we value a sense of family and fellowship more than awards. This mindset strengthens our relationships with each other and allows us to work together to achieve our goals. Overall, my experience as being a part of this band has been more than growth in my musical abilities. It has taught me many social and leadership skills that I can carry throughout my entire life," Windsor said. "Since joining this band, I have grown tremendously in my musical abilities. In fact, I began playing as Lead Alto Saxophone for the Wallace State Jazz band in the 11th grade. I am also 70% complete with my Associates Degree in Music Education. I credit all of this musical success at

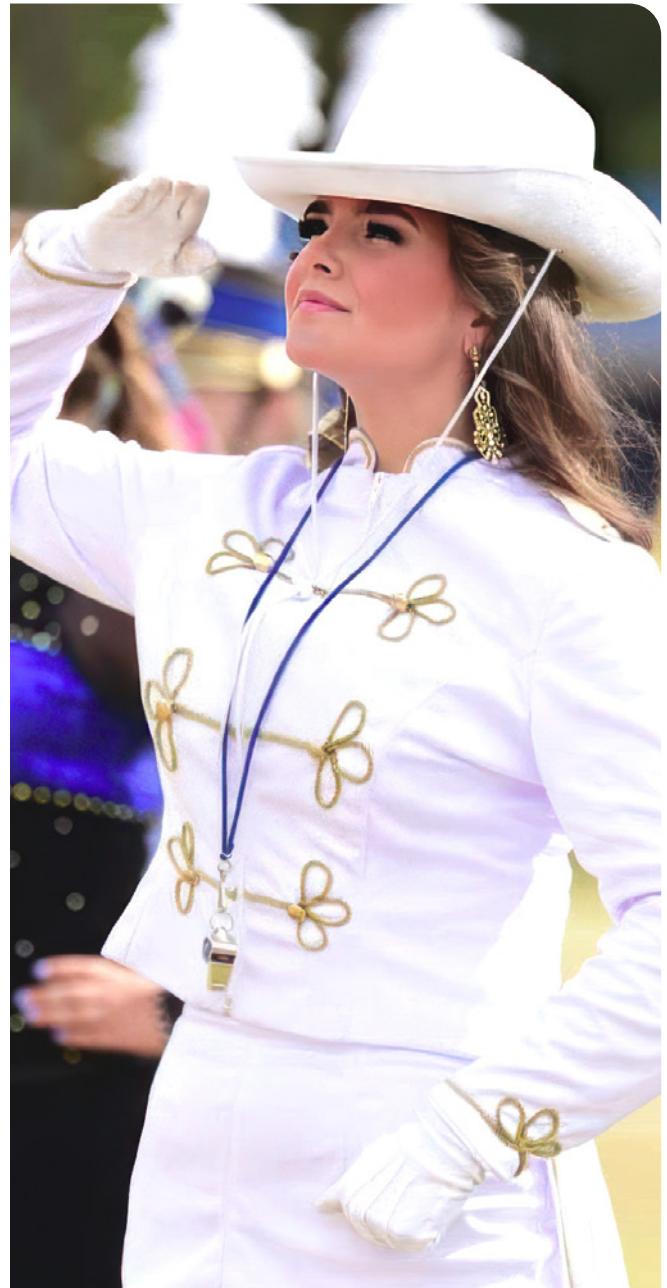
such a young age to the skills I learned in band. I learned perseverance, leadership, and that I could accomplish anything I set my mind to."

Kaylee will be heading into year two as drum major and has learned so much during that time.

"Being drum major can be stressful and overwhelming at times, especially while balancing college classes, three ensembles, and other activities. However, under the stadium lights, it's all worth it. The rush you get when your band follows your direction, and puts on a wonderful performance, makes you so proud. As drum major, your band follows you, not just with your conducting, but also with your attitude. So, you have to be optimistic, even when times are difficult," Windsor said. "I have learned that sometimes failure is the only way to grow. I have also learned how to be a leader, bringing people together to achieve a common goal."

William Johnson retired as the band director at the end of the year and Kaylee soaked up as much as she could from him.

"I believe Mr. »



PHOTOS: KAYLEE WINDSOR

Cold Springs' Kaylee Windsor

Johnson taught us how to make our band feel like a family. He was constantly there for us, allowed us to be ourselves, and genuinely cared about our well-being. He always believed in me, even when I was in the seventh grade and told him I would be drum major one day. He always treated us like his children. We were a family, and that was our main priority. He knew I was very interested in leadership, so he taught me many different skills to enhance my abilities as a leader. With those leadership skills, I was able to work my way up in different positions in the band, until I finally reached my ultimate goal of being drum major. I have also been able to use those skills as Cold Springs' Fair Queen Representative."

Cold Springs' new band director will be Zach O'Bryant and Kaylee talked a little bit about him and what he will bring to the band. She will deeply miss the seniors in last year's band and learned a very important lesson from them.

"He was the assistant band director at Benjamin Russell High School. He studied at UNA and he specializes in percussion. He will definitely be helpful in strengthening our percussion section this season," she said. "Since I was the drum major, the seniors and I worked hand-in-hand to ensure everything was running smoothly. Last year's seniors were some of my closest friends in the band, and it felt like we grew up

together. It was hard seeing them leave, but it taught me to appreciate every moment while it lasts."

Kaylee will be one of three seniors in this year's band and it took them all a while to get used to the new change, but it will help everyone get that much closer together and they will make sure that they stay a family. Kaylee learned a little bit from the other two seniors in the band.

"It's been vital having them by my side through this transition of a new director. We all took the news very hard hey at first and needed each other to get through it. We now understand that we will have to work together to ensure that our band stays as a family. Now, we have to be the ones that carry on our band's values and traditions," she said. "They have taught me that working together helps us get through our hardest times."

Kaylee worked on some things in the offseason, and she talked about the goals for this upcoming band season.

"So far this summer, I have been working with the band boosters, spreading information to all of the section leaders, and speaking with upcoming rookies in preparation for this next season," she said. "My personal goal this year is to receive a 'Best In Class Drum Major' award. I also hope the band as a whole can win some of the same awards we earned last year, such as 'Best in Class' and 'Best Overall Band in Silver Division.'"



Kaylee thinks this year's band will have a very special season and she talked about what she has learned the most since being in the band.

"The Royal Blue Band takes pride in putting our all into every performance. What will make this band so special to watch is the emotion felt through our music. The crowd will be able to feel how hard we have worked, and hear the fantastic results," she said. "What I have learned the most is how to persevere through the hard times and grow from our setbacks."

Kaylee looked up to

another drum major when she was younger and shared some of the best advice that she's ever gotten.

"When I was younger, I always looked up to our drum major: Natalie Davis. She inspired me as a musician and as a person. Ultimately, I decided I wanted to be drum major one day because of her wonderful leadership abilities that reflected on the whole band," she said. "The best advice I was ever given throughout my years was, 'Never let your age determine your success.'"

'Positive motivation and encouragement alone can make a team so much better'

West Point's Liberty Shadix ready for senior seasons

Sammy Confer

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WEST POINT, Ala. — Lady Warriors volleyball and basketball standout Liberty Shadix learned a lot during her junior season and had a blast playing alongside some great teammates so now she's ready to carry what she's learned into her senior year.

"We definitely have a lot to improve on, but I feel like we all got better last season. We've adjusted to having a new coach and things being run differently. We just have to keep improving and having fun while doing it. I've learned you have to enjoy what you do to be good at it, have fun, and trust the process," Shadix said. "Everyone was very close friends and we all encouraged each other if one was down. It was like a second family to me."

Shadix learned a few things from last year's senior, Brooklynn Wells, and from head coach Kate Kent as well. She has seen her game improve so much from her first season on varsity to now but will still continue to put

in the work in the offseason as she gets ready for next season.

"I learned that you have to make the best out of every situation. Even if we were losing or winning, we had to pick each other up and have fun," Shadix said. "Coach Kent has very high expectations for each individual and she teaches us to strive to be better. She wants us to exceed in all aspects of the game and pushes us to do our very best. I feel like I've grown as a player, physically and mentally. I've worked hard, along with my teammates, and hopefully, it will be noticed on the court. I try to encourage my teammates, because I know how important it is to have that encouragement as well. Everyone plays better when you feel good about yourself. I've learned that positive motivation and encouragement alone can make a team so much better. I'm working on my hitting and my serve-receive passes."

Shadix has some goals set for herself and for the team this upcoming season and thinks this year's »



PHOTOS: MARTHA NEEDHAM/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

West Point's Liberty Shadix

team will have a very special season. During her time on varsity so far, Shadix has learned so much from this year's seniors.

"My individual goals are to get 1,000 kills, All-County, and All-Area. My team goals are to win county, area, and make it to state," Shadix said. "Our team has different strengths that works together. I feel like we have strong leadership also. We all have a common goal, and we respect each other. We have a lot of young talent that is a great strength on our team. I learned that there's always someone looking up to you, you always need to have a good attitude, and always lift each other up."

West Point's basketball team had another successful season, which saw them take home yet another area title, and they made another trip to Sub-Regionals as well. Shadix took away a lot from that season and is so blessed to play with a young, talented team.

"We had a rough start last year, but throughout the season, we worked hard and improved so much. Us juniors last year had to step up and be leaders to the underclassmen because there were no seniors. I learned that you can be a leader, no matter your age, and that hard work will pay off. I think last year's disadvantage of having no seniors will be this year's benefit," she said. "I love getting to play with these girls and seeing all of them improve so much."

Shadix has learned so much from head coach John Welborn and she's already seen a lot of growth from this year's team.

"I love playing for him. He always pushes me to do my best. I wouldn't be the player I am today without him. I've learned how to push through adversity and when my shots aren't falling, I can make up for it on defense. I've also learned how to use my height and length as an advantage for offense and defense," she said. "We've improved so much this year already. I think we have a lot more confidence in ourselves this year than we did last year."

Shadix will continue to work on her game in the offseason in preparation for this upcoming season. She talked about the goals for this season and what will make this team special to watch. "My individual goals are to get my 1,000th point, All-County, and All-Area. My team goals are to win area and make it to state," she said. "We have the same team as



last year, so we have great chemistry and having two sets of sisters on the team helps us have even stronger chemistry. We also have great speed, great shooters, and some height on the team that all work so well together."

Shadix looked up to her older sister, Lexi, growing up, and she talked about the best advice that coach Welborn

gave her.

"I loved her hard work and dedication. Watching her made me realize that you're going to have to put in the work and extra hours to become the player you want to be," she said. "He always tells us that sometimes, you're going to have an off night on offense, but you should never have an off night on defense."



CLOSET COSTUMES

Halloween fun on a budget

Cayla Grace Murphy
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It seems our lives are busier than ever, with costume opportunities aplenty in fall: themed costume parties, dress-up days at school and work, church trunk-or-treats and of course traditional Halloween trick-or-treating. Creative costumes can be expensive, especially if you're attending multiple events or

have multiple children. Hit up our local thrift stores, bust out the needle and thread, dust off your DIY skills and check out some of these creative closet costume ideas!

Flower power

The 60s and 70s were an explosion of color, sound, and all-around flower power. Pay homage to one of the grooviest eras in our history by embodying the counterculture

movement of the "hippies." Think, crochet cardigans and fringed vests, flowy tops, flared or bell-bottom jeans and TONS of tie-dye.

Key accessories include flower crowns, round-framed glasses, and chunky belts.

Ahoy, matey!

One of the easiest closet costumes to pull together is the swashbuckling, fear-striking and often comedic pirate.

Pair a horizontal striped shirt with cropped denim or culottes, add in a scarf tied to the side of your waist and a bold color bandana around your head and you're sure to find your costume a sea-worthy success!

Up the ante with gold hoop earrings and a toy dagger tucked into your belt loop.

Say it out loud: VAMPIRE!
A classic take on »



Halloween: vampires. This costume comes together easily, especially for those who live life on the darker side.

Think luxe velvets and satin in crimson or plum tones, Edwardian-style jackets and vests and peasant-style white tops with fun details like lace or grommet lacings. Add two symmetrical dots to your jugular with an eyeliner pencil, and you're undeniably undead.

Hay there, scarecrow

A fall field staple makes for an easy, family-friendly costume that's sure to entertain: a scarecrow. Pair a plaid flannel button-down (bonus points for autumnal colors like orange, burgundy or mustard!) with a pair of overalls.

Complete the look with a straw hat, make it a little extra with some fun burlap ribbon or patchwork details and you'll be the talk of the hayride.

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How to trim food costs

Soaring inflation has hit particularly hard on the grocery store aisles

Those living on a fixed income may find that trips to the local market have suddenly become a major expense. But there are ways to cut down on how much it costs to maintain a healthy, active lifestyle into your golden years.

Look for discounts

Canned, frozen and in particular processed foods tend to be lower priced at the grocery store, but they are not usually the healthiest options. That's why it's smart to scour weekly mailers, local newspapers and grocery store coupons for special deals.

Many stores also offer special hours or days devoted to senior shoppers with their own built-in discounts.

Check your favorite store's website to find out more, or call or go by to ask. Mark down the time and days so you'll remember to get there early. This will ensure you get the freshest produce, while also avoiding a packed parking lot and long lines. After all, you won't be the only senior looking to save on groceries.

Doing it yourself

There are savings to be found by doing things yourself. If you're willing and physically able, consider starting a small garden with some of your favorite fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices. If you live in a condo or retirement home with no dedicated outdoor space, you



ADOBE STOCK

may be able to take advantage of smaller containers to grow specific things. When shopping, remember that larger cuts of meat and whole chickens often cost less than fresh-cut deli slices or packages handled by the butcher.

Similarly, heads of lettuce, entire carrots or onions and a sack of potatoes are cheaper by the serving than salad mix,

pre-cut veggies and store-bought French fries. Cooking this way will take more time and effort, but you'll encounter significant savings at the checkout.

Plan ahead

Food waste is a huge problem in our country, and not just because it's so wasteful. Throwing away spoiled items

from the grocery store is a huge financial loss, too. Avoid that by planning ahead. If you shop with a specific week of meals in mind, you're more likely to purchase only what you need. Stay away from snack foods, sweets and processed items. Fruits, vegetables, healthy proteins and grains are usually cheaper per serving — and they're far better for you.

Make driving safer

Getting behind the wheel is one of our most dangerous activities

Traffic accidents can have a devastating impact both physically and mentally, while also potentially creating lasting financial difficulties. Unfortunately, this multi-level pain and suffering can go on for years in the worst-case scenario. That's why it's so important to practice safe driving, drive defensively and secure comprehensive insurance.

Inside the numbers

More than one million people die in vehicle accidents annually around the globe, with an average of over 3,200 deaths each day, according to experts.

As many as 50 million more are injured or disabled in these road crashes.

Younger drivers are most in danger. In fact, half of all traffic fatalities are within the 14-to-44-year-old age group. Intoxicated or impaired drivers remain a huge risk. If you're impaired, call a ride-sharing service or cab.

Always wear your seatbelt when you are in a moving vehicle. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that proper usage of this everyday safety measure saves nearly 15,000 lives a year. Yet millions of Americans still ride while unbuckled, the NHTSA confirmed.

Defensive driving

Defensive driving can play a



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role in lowering these staggering statistics.

Recommended practices include creating more distance between your vehicle and others, in particular when around aggressive or distracted drivers. Stay visible to those around you, eliminate personal distractions, scan as far down the road as possible, and try to stay out of blind spots. Sometimes, safe driving just comes down to our ability to remain calm and keep a positive attitude.

Protecting yourself

Often the very best insurance is local insurance. Agents from your area will understand its unique challenges, and will help you create a coverage plan that's best suited to address local laws and the conditions you'll face.

Discuss your family's needs, and the price point that you're hoping for.

Local agents will also typically provide a more personal touch, something that becomes critically important if the worst

happens.

If you're a new driver or have recently moved, contact the state insurance department to find out more about locally licensed companies.

Don't be afraid to shop around. Get at least three quotes before choosing a carrier. Insurance policies should also be regularly reviewed to make sure that elements like the deductible and maximum coverage amounts are still in line with your needs.

*Mark your calendars so you
don't miss a thing!*

2023 CULLMAN OKTOBER FEST

SEPTEMBER 28-30



**BIERGARTEN OPENS
SEPTEMBER 28 AT 4:00 PM**

**OPENING PARADE
SEPTEMBER 28 AT 6:00 PM**

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Storytime at Art Park-FREE
August 25, 4:00 PM

Splash In Movie-WildWater
September 1, 7:00 PM

Storytime at Art Park-FREE
September 22, 4:00 PM

Oktoberfest-Depot Park
September 28-30, 2023

Storytime at Art Park-FREE
October 20, 4:00 PM

Pups & Pints "Howloween"
Goat Island
October 28, 2023

Pyramid Lighting-Depot Park
November 24, 2023

Christkindlmarkt-Depot Park
November 24-26, 2023
November 30-December 3, 2023
December 7-10, 2023
December 14-17, 2023
December 21-24, 2023

Christmas Parade & Tree Lighting
December 1, 2023