

The Cullman Tribune  PRESENTS

COMMUNITY MATTERS



NOVEMBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024



PRESENTING SPONSOR



CULLMAN
PARKS · RECREATION · SPORTS TOURISM

ADVERTISER INDEX



Brothers Concrete Supply - 37

Carlton's Italian - 11

City of Cullman - 19

Citizens Bank & Trust - 21

Cullman Ballet Theatre School - 5

Cullman County Parks and Rec - 31

Cullman County Probate Office - 39

Cullman County Sheriff's Office - 7

Cullman Economic Development Agency - 45

Cullman Funeral Home - 40

Cullman Furniture Market - 35

Cullman Jefferson Gas - 19

Cullman Marble & Granite - 59

Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism - Presenting Sponsor, 41, 60

Garlan Gudger - 17

Hanceville Funeral Home - 16

Iva Belle Skin Therapy - 13

Knight-Free Insurance Agency - 43

McGriff Tire Pros - 49

Merchants Bank - 47

Solomon's Barbershop - 13

T & T Motors - 9

Taylor's Fine Timepieces - 57

The Kilgo Law Firm - 16

Visit Cullman - 53

VIVA Medicare - 25

Walker Brothers LTD - 11

Wallace State Community College - 23

Wendy's Health & Nutrition - 39



A salute to the pillars of Community Matters magazine:

Readers, advertisers and truth-pursuing reporters

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com

In the midst of a fast-paced digital era where information can be accessed at the tap of a screen, maintaining the veracity of that information becomes paramount. At Community Matters, a quarterly magazine, an offshoot of The Cullman Tribune, our name isn't just a catchy title — it's our philosophy. Community truly does matter, and every story we present, every fact we verify, is a testament to our unwavering dedication to the community we serve.

The synergy between the newsroom and its audience is as old as journalism itself. However, with evolving platforms and methods of delivery, this relationship has become more nuanced. To all our loyal patrons, who've either subscribed, downloaded our app, regularly visited our website or consistently downloaded our thrice-weekly PDF editions — your trust and commitment to our brand are invaluable. You're not just passive consumers; you're active participants in a collaborative effort to uphold truth and integrity in reporting.

Advertisers, too, play a significant role in this endeavor. Beyond their obvious financial support, they represent the pulse of our community's economy and its aspirations. They're crucial allies in our mission to deliver untarnished, accurate news to our readers.

But the essence of our credibility? That lies in the hands of our hard-working reporters. Their task is more than just writing — it's verifying, cross-checking and ensuring that when a story goes out, it's as close to the truth as possible. We understand the weight of our responsibility. In a world where misinformation spreads like wildfire on platforms like Facebook, the diligence of our reporters ensures that we aren't constantly amending or deleting our posts. Their commitment ensures

that our audience receives a holistic, unfragmented picture, avoiding unnecessary panic or confusion.

This streamlined approach, where we aim to provide all facts in one cohesive story, may seem ambitious. Yet, it's this very ambition that sets us apart. We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who collaborate with us in this endeavor, helping us present well-rounded narratives that serve our community's best interests.

Behind the scenes of every great publication is a team of unsung heroes. These individuals might not always be in the limelight, but their contributions are immense. At Community Matters, we're fortunate to have such dedicated professionals who believe in forming lasting relationships and building trust. In an age where divisive political agendas can easily sway media narratives, our team's commitment to staying unbiased and focused on the facts is commendable. We don't peddle sensationalism; we prioritize truth, always.

Our readers, too, play an active role in our journalistic journey. By reading our stories, sharing our photo albums and even contributing their personal narratives, they breathe life into our pages. Without this engagement, our magazine would be barren of its soul. It's the community's stories, its pulse, its triumphs and its challenges that we aim to chronicle, and we're immensely grateful for the trust our readers place in us to do so. We recognize the magnitude of this responsibility and promise never to take it for granted.

In essence, Community Matters is more than just a publication — it's a partnership between us, our readers, our advertisers and our reporters. It's a bond forged in trust, a commitment to veracity and a shared vision for a community informed by facts, not fiction. As we continue this journey, our gratitude to every stakeholder remains profound. Because at the end of the day, community doesn't just matter - it's everything.

Community Matters

from The Cullman Tribune
Vol. 3 No. 4

219 Second Ave. SE | Cullman, AL 35055
256-739-1351 | CullmanTribune.com

PUBLISHER
Noah Galilee

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Sherry Brown
Ryan Cole

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
Dustin Isom

Katie Harris
Martha Needham
Michael Witcher

CONTRIBUTORS

Sammy Confer
Nick Griffin
Cayla Grace Murphy
Cheyenne Sharp

SALES

Janet Chandler
Robin Winton

The Cullman Tribune SUBSCRIBE TODAY



Visit [Tribune.Store](https://tribune.store) or
Call 256-739-1351

What's on tap for the city of Cullman?

Cheyenne Sharp

cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.”- Benjamin Franklin

Our Founding Fathers understood the task of creating a flourishing environment that provides entertainment, solace and community for its residents. Growth begets change; change begets progress.

This year was a huge one for Cullman. Notable changes include accomplishments by Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism, including Skate Depot and a renovation of Depot Park, as well as Cullman's Strawberry Festival growing into the Alabama Strawberry Festival.

Cullman Regional completed a four-story, 30-bed expansion as part of a \$30 million project. The project added 13 new beds for critical care, 12 new medical/surgical beds and five additional multiuse beds, making Cullman Regional a 175-bed hospital. Growing populations mean growing health care needs; the hospital also welcomed 20 new physicians to its health care team to assist the growing needs of the community. This was done alongside the highly anticipated four-lane expansion of Alabama Highway 157.

Cullman City Schools saw increased enrollment in 2023 and completed a two-year undertaking of expanding the current Cullman City Primary School to house all second graders from the district. CCPS now houses Headstart, Pre-K and K-2. West Elementary School and East Elementary



DAVE WARREN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

A breathtaking view of Cullman's ever growing landscape, making room for innovation and progress for future generations

School each house students in third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Cullman Middle School broke ground on a new middle school expansion that will equip CMS to house all sixth through eighth graders from the district; completion of the CMS project is expected to extend into 2024.

Wallace State Community College completed a 30,000-square-foot Center for Welding Technology and Innovation; it is the largest Welding training center in the Southeast. WSCC stated, “The Welding center has seven robotic welding stations; nine virtual welding simulators; 81 welding booths; 20 grinding booths; a fabrication area with two welders, a plasma CNC table and pipe welding equipment; and three state-of-the-art classrooms with built-in cameras, microphones and speakers to allow hosting online classes.”

Cullman's population is always increasing, according to census.gov. In 2021 Cullman's population was 18,635; that number is estimated to be around 19,505 in 2023. How can Cullman's infrastructure grow

as rapidly as the city? Cullman Economic Development Agency Director Dale Greer and Governmental Affairs & Community Development Jamie Troutman had a few answers for Cullman residents.

“Cullman and Cullman County are experiencing tremendous growth. It is occurring in the residential, industrial, commercial, medical and professional sectors. I see no immediate slowdown,” Greer declared. “Drive through the community and you will see new housing developments, apartments under construction, new retail, remodeling of retail and other signs of a prosperous community. There are no boarded up storefronts; all the signs support a vibrant, growing community.”

Troutman explained some of the recent and upcoming repairs and improvements in the city of Cullman, saying, “The City will continue pursuing grants to update water and sewer lines. The streetscape projects downtown have not only added curb appeal, but the underground utilities have received badly needed

updating, and we will continue pursuing potential funding for the widening of the St. Bernard Bridge on the US. Highway 278/Alabama Highway 69.”

Troutman continued, “Depot Park will be completed, which will provide an expanded area for festivals, as Cullman has become known as the City of Festivals. These festivals give locals something fun to do and bring in thousands from neighboring areas. These people spend money in our community which in turn strengthens our economy, services and quality of life.”

As many residents may feel the brunt of Cullman's growing pains, Greer and Troutman hope that eventually, the city will come together as a whole and embrace the changes and tweaks to their much-loved town. After all, the wheel keeps turning, and Cullman must keep up with demand. Higher populations lead to higher revenue for the City, revenue needed to enhance Cullman's appeal and support its residents.

Said Greer, “Most people support growth—maybe not in their particular »

neighborhood, but they still want their favorite shopping or dining spot here. Or they want more jobs that offer better compensation and advancement opportunities. It is important for community leaders to focus on meeting needs and enhancing quality.”

Adding that Cullman’s leadership has spearheaded the fight to keep Cullman comfortable and enjoyable, he said, “Progressive leadership has supported infrastructure improvements that ensure we have adequate water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications and solid waste disposal services. Duck River added a water supply capable of sustaining the current agriculture, residential, industrial and retail demand while also allowing for continued growth. The City/County joint purchase of the landfill assures we control our waste disposal for 75 to 100 years. Inadequate infrastructure restricts growth.”

Troutman said she hopes residents see how growing revenue positively impacts the community, saying, “Everything depends on tax revenue. Taxes generated by the businesses and industries in Cullman provide funding for roads, water, sewer, schools, police, fire and education. If a community does not continue to grow or ‘keep up,’ it will die.

“Young families are moving to Cullman and more high schoolers are saying they want to move back to their hometown after college than ever before. That is because we have things to do, good schools and an above-average quality of life.”

Growth isn’t always convenient, but it is always necessary. New businesses create new jobs; new jobs create more money going into the economy;

more money going into the economy means more businesses want to flourish in that area.

Said Greer, “For years job creation was one of the most important needs in our community. Today that focus has shifted more toward quality of life enhancements that help attract individuals and families. Cullman routinely has the second or third-lowest

unemployment rate in Alabama. Attracting workers is important to our future. Elements in that plan must include more shopping and dining opportunities, quality health care, good schools (secondary and post-secondary), entertainment and exceptional park and recreation facilities and programs.”

For the City of Cullman, 2024 continued growth and

expansion are expected, with several new retail and restaurant opportunities. New apartment complexes are popping up to assist with the demand for housing, allowing new families and individuals to be exposed to the small-town charm of Cullman. Those people will find employment, shop at locally owned stores, pay local taxes and become a part of the community.

Cullman Ballet Theatre School
presents
THE NUTCRACKER

Tickets on sale
November 1

Hartselle High School
Auditorium

DEC 2 6:00 PM DEC 3 2:30 PM

256-734-7775 cullmanballettheatre.com

Sheriff Gentry shares vital holiday safety tips

Noah Galilee

noah@cullmantribune.com

As the festive season is in full swing, Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry emphasized the importance of caution during this joyous time. "Unfortunately, the holiday season often does see an increase in thefts and burglaries," he said.

Regarding home safety, Gentry was adamant about the basics, saying, "Keep your doors and windows locked at all times." For those planning to travel, he suggested enlisting the help of neighbors or family members to periodically check on the residence and collect any mail.

The sheriff also touched on digital age dangers, cautioning against sharing travel plans on social platforms. "Real-time social media posts allow criminals to track movements," he said.

In addition, Gentry advised homeowners to employ automatic timers for lights and turn on radios or TVs to simulate occupancy. He highlighted the importance of discretion during the festive season.

"Large displays of holiday gifts should not be visible through the windows and doors of your home," he added.

On the topic of discarded packaging, Gentry was clear, "Don't let your trash lead to a burglary. If there's a box for a 75-inch TV sitting on the curb,

potential thieves can deduce there's a 75-inch TV inside."

When it comes to unexpected visitors, Gentry advised a cautious approach, especially with those claiming to be delivering packages or gifts. "Never open the door if you are uncertain," he firmly stated, encouraging residents to reach out to law enforcement if they feel uneasy or are skeptical of door-to-door solicitors.

For those braving the shopping crowds, Gentry shared a slew of advice. Keeping vehicle doors and windows locked, even when inside, is paramount.

If shopping after sunset, he recommended parking in well-lit areas and being mindful of neighboring vehicles,

particularly those with dark-tinted windows.

"Always be aware of your surroundings," Gentry stressed. In situations that raise suspicions, he advocated seeking assistance, saying, "Ask for a security or store personnel escort."

Gentry imparted a significant final reminder saying, "If someone attempts to steal from you, remember, your life is way more valuable than any items may be. In the event of a theft or an attempted one, call 911 immediately. Our deputies and investigators are ready to assist."

Residents are urged to take these guidelines to heart, ensuring a safe and peaceful holiday season for all.

Tips for home holiday safety from CPD Chief Nassetta

Noah Galilee

noah@cullmantribune.com

With multiple holidays and events slated for the rest of the year, Cullman Police Chief David Nassetta shared insights into seasonal crime patterns and offered advice to residents on how to best protect their belongings and homes.

"As far as thefts, we usually see a little more in the shoplifting category during the holiday season," said Nassetta. "Burglaries might slightly

increase, but robberies remain rare, regardless of the season."

He emphasized that most burglaries, be it from a vehicle, building or residence, are crimes of opportunity.

"For that very important reason—DON'T LEAVE ANYTHING OF VALUE IN SIGHT!" Nassetta passionately advised. "I get it that people are proud to say they live in a town where they have never felt the need to lock their cars or homes at night. That wasn't a good idea 50 years ago, and it's still not a good idea now. If something is important to

you—lock it up!"

Addressing the concern of packages being left on porches or otherwise out in the open, Nassetta recommended various proactive measures.

"I realize that we can't always be at our home to accept a delivery," he said, "but consider getting a P.O. Box for deliveries, or get a neighbor to accept deliveries or get them in as quickly as possible."

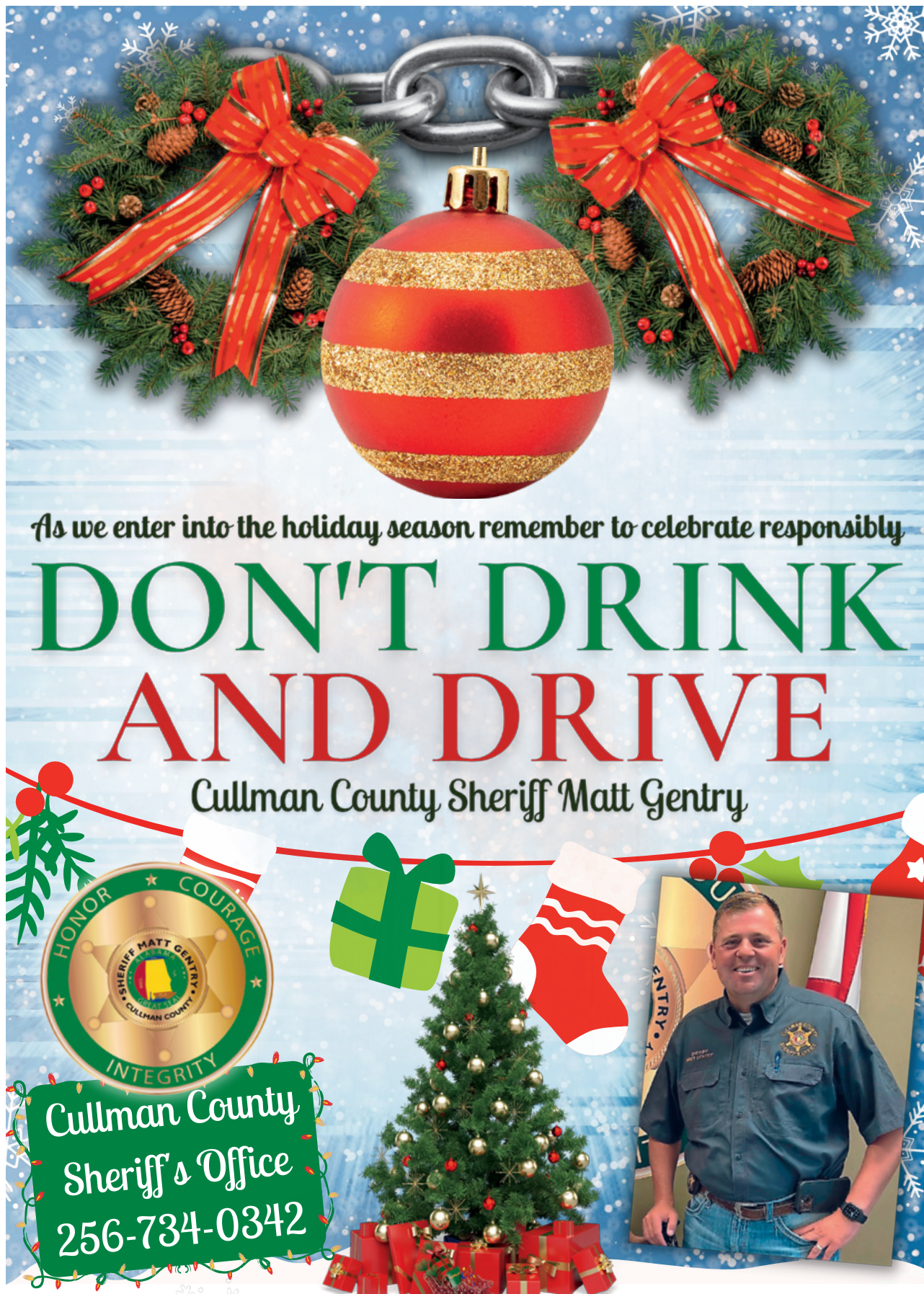
Nassetta also cautioned against publicly advertising travel plans. "In terms of traveling during the holidays, it's best not to do anything

to advertise that you are not going to be home or are leaving for a period of time," he said.

For those worried about signs of their absence post-holiday, the chief recommended, "As far as leaving boxes out after the holidays, try to do it the night before it gets picked up.

"Thieves usually aren't going to target places that look occupied, so do what you can to make it look like people are home."

Residents are encouraged to heed this advice to ensure a safe and joyous holiday season.



As we enter into the holiday season remember to celebrate responsibly

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

Cullman County Sheriff Matt Gentry



*Cullman County
Sheriff's Office
256-734-0342*



Winter fun on a budget

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

In the hustle and bustle of cookie swaps, gift-giving, holiday office parties and never-ending family gatherings this season, it can seem daunting to keep the kids entertained when they're not constantly on the go - especially if you're on a budget. Here are some ideas to keep the kids busy without all the economic strain.

Christmas movie night

While heading to Blockbuster on Friday evening and picking out a movie may have transitioned to binge watching shows on Netflix, the simple joy of a family movie night will never be erased. Check

out what holiday selections are on your favorite streaming platform and gather up the fam for a night in to watch seasonal titles like "Home Alone" or "The Grinch." Include typical movie refreshments like popcorn and boxed candy to round out the experience!

Hot cocoa bar

On an especially chilly winter day, nothing beats a good mug of warm cocoa. Let the kids choose their own mug while you prepare the cocoa and give them a fun experience of being barista for a day by letting them top their cocoa to their hearts' content; whipped cream, sprinkles, flavored syrups and, of course, marshmallows are sure to please.

An added bonus to this activity? You'll be able to reuse any unused toppings in future Christmas baking, so it's a win-win!

Make Christmas cards

For those with crafty kids, consider letting them make or decorate pre-cut cards for the holiday season for you to fill out as a family for friends or family members. Nursing homes and homebound seniors in our community would surely appreciate a Christmas card, too! Grab some construction paper and inexpensive art supplies from local dollar stores and let the kids work their magic.

While holiday motifs like snowmen or poinsettias seem like a no-brainer, encourage

the kids to think outside the Christmas box and branch out from typical colors like red and green to make something truly one-of-a-kind.

Christmas light ride

There are few things as magical to children as Christmas lights. The soft, ambient glow of warm lights on a chilly night can be calming and relaxing while dynamic Christmas light shows can be exciting and entertaining! Pack the car with some warm blankets, turn on some holiday tunes and take an hour or so before your bedtime routine to ride through Sportsman Lake Park's Winter Wonderland, a drive-through-style light show boasting thousands of lights, both still and dynamic.

Christmas at the Grotto returns with expanded celebrations

Noah Galilee

noah@cullmantribune.com

The much-awaited fifth annual Christmas at the Grotto is set to light up the Ave Maria Grotto starting Nov. 24. As the festive season approaches, visitors are invited to experience the splendor of Brother Joseph Zoettl's miniature creations, illuminated amid a backdrop of twinkling lights and festive music.

This year, event organizers have enhanced the yuletide festivities. Apart from the traditional light display, attendees can look forward to Christmas train rides for children available every night. Additionally, several dates have been added to the event calendar to accommodate the growing number of visitors.

On the weekend of Dec. 15-16, the celebration will be amped up with musical performances, food trucks, kids' rides

and horse-drawn wagon rides around the historic St. Bernard Abbey campus.

To the delight of many, Santa Claus himself will make an appearance.

The Ave Maria Grotto, nestled within the St. Bernard Abbey's grounds in Cullman, is not just a place for holiday festivities, but holds significant historical and cultural value. Often described as "Jerusalem in Miniature," the Grotto is a 4-acre park showcasing Brother Joseph's dedicated labor of love since 1934.

Visitors can walk amidst 125 meticulously crafted miniatures, representing world-renowned landmarks like St. Peter's Basilica and Montserrat, while reflecting on the profound impact of humble acts of love.

Brother Joseph Zoettl, a Benedictine monk originally from Landschutt, Bavaria-Germany, began this endeavor in the gardens near the monastery.

His intricate designs, crafted from stone, concrete and donated materials like broken plates and seashells, soon garnered attention.

By 1934, to cater to the influx of visitors, the exhibits were relocated to their current location.

Though Brother Joseph passed away in 1961, his legacy is firmly rooted in Alabama. He remains a testament to the state's rich history and its embrace of diverse cultures and traditions.

Visitors can pay their respects at his final resting place in the Abbey Cemetery, a short walk from the Grotto.

Tickets for the event are reasonably priced with discounts available for seniors, military personnel and first responders. Children younger than 4 are admitted free.

Refreshments will be available every night. Make your plans to visit now!

Dates

- Nov. 24-25, 30 - 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 1-2 - 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 8-10 - 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 14 - 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 15-16 - 5-9 p.m. (food trucks, kids' rides, wagon rides, Santa Claus)
- Dec. 21-23 - 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 26-27 - 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)

Admission

- Adults - \$10
- Seniors - \$8
- Military/veterans/first responders - \$7
- Teens (13-17) - \$8
- Children (5-12) - \$7
- Children younger than 4 - free
- Wagon rides on Dec 15,16 - \$5
- Kids' rides every night of event - \$3

Cullman Christmas events

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

WEIHNACHTSPYRAMIDE/ CHRISTMAS PYRAMID LIGHTING

A sure fire sign the holidays are open us – the Weihnachtspyramide (Christmas pyramid) lighting. Attendees can gather in the newly refinished Depot Park on Friday, Nov. 24, at 6 p.m. to watch the magic come to life and kick off all the holiday festivities. The Weihnachtspyramide will be on the grounds of the Cullman County Museum.

CHRISTKINDLMARKT

Drawing inspiration from Germany's historic Christmas markets, the Christkindlmarkt boasts goods of all kinds handmade by artisans near and far. The market will open on Friday, Nov. 24, at 6 p.m. and will run Thursday through Sunday until Christmas.

Hours for the market

- Thursdays: 4-9 p.m.
- Fridays and Saturdays: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
- Sundays: 1-8 p.m.

CHRISTMAS AT THE GROTTO

The spirit of Christmas has returned to the Ave Maria Grotto. Visit and enjoy Brother Joseph's creations, completely decked in lights. The attraction will be open every Friday and Saturday, some Sundays, and Dec. 26-27 beginning Friday, Nov. 24. Friday, Dec. 15, and Saturday, Dec. 16, will be even more magical as food trucks, kids' rides, wagon rides and even Santa Claus! It's an experience you won't want to miss!

Dates

- Nov. 24-25, 30 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)

- Dec. 1-2 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 8-10 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 14 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 15-16 – 5-9 p.m. (food trucks, kids' rides, wagon rides, Santa Claus)
- Dec. 21-23 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 26-27 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)

Admission

- Adults - \$10
- Seniors - \$8
- Military/veterans/first responders - \$7
- Teens (13-17) - \$8
- Children (5-12) - \$7
- Children younger than 4 - free
- Wagon rides on Dec 15,16 - \$5
- Kids' rides every night of event - \$3

CHRISTMAS IN CULLMAN PARADE & TREE LIGHTING

Gather round the Warehouse

District Friday, Dec. 1, as Cullman residents don their holliest jolliest best, boasting decked-out cars and trucks, each hoping to be better than the last and hoping to bring home bragging rights of first-place float. The parade begins at 5 p.m. and will travel north on First Avenue through the Warehouse District to Depot Park, where "The South's Largest Christmas Tree Lighting" will begin just after the parade, with Taylor Hicks and James Spann. Enjoy the Christkindlmarkt, ice skating rink, Christmas carousel and Kinderplatz Santa's Village!

WINTER WONDERLAND AT SPORTSMAN LAKE PARK

Tired of chasing after the kids? Throw 'em in the minivan and gaze at the hundreds of thousands of Christmas lights lining the lawns of Sportsman Lake Park. Check out a variety of still and moving light displays, then hit the concessions stand

for a warm cup of hot cocoa or a photo op with Santa Claus! The attraction is open 5-9 p.m. Nov. 17-19 and Nov. 24-Dec. 29 (closed Mondays and Tuesdays until Dec. 13). It will transition to a drive-through only experience Dec. 26-29.

Opening ceremonies will be Friday, Nov. 17 at 5 p.m.

"We are waiting on the last shipment of light displays which includes 11 new scenes," Cullman County Parks and Recreation Director Doug Davenport said. "We will put that on the hill towards the right near the flower garden and begin making that our new light scene area."

Admission is \$10 cash per vehicle. Attractions include the Christmas train (\$5 per person), horse and carriage rides (select nights at \$5 per person), snow machine, photo booth, hot chocolate and additional Christmas entertainment.



**T&T
MOTORS**

256-739-2915

**WE OFFER IN HOUSE FINANCING!
NO CREDIT CHECKS AND LOW
MONTHLY PAYMENT**

1801 B. CHEROKEE AVE. SW, CULLMAN

Trail of lights

Cheyenne Sharp

cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

Christmas goes with lights like peanut butter goes with jelly. Take a leisurely stroll through a canopy of twinkling icicle lights, or drive through the North Pole to meet Santa and his elves at a drive-through display. Cullman and the surrounding area are home to a ton of light displays and attractions for everyone to enjoy! Light displays start at dusk, unless otherwise noted.

CHRISTMAS AT THE GROTTO

1600 St. Bernard Drive SE,
Cullman

Christmas lights return to the Ave Maria Grotto; experience the beauty of Br. Joseph's work at night surrounded by the glow of lights. This year will feature even more to see and do, like live music, food trucks, kids' rides and horse-drawn wagon rides around St. Bernard's campus.

When

- Nov. 24-25, 30 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 1-2 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 8-10 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 14 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 15-16 – 5-9 p.m. (food trucks, kids' rides, wagon rides, Santa Claus)
- Dec. 21-23 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
- Dec. 26-27 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)

Admission

- Adults - \$10
- Seniors - \$8
- Military/veterans/first responders - \$7
- Teens (13-17) - \$8
- Children (5-12) - \$7
- Children younger than 4 - free
- Wagon rides on Dec 15,16 - \$5
- Kids' rides every night of event - \$3

WINTER WONDERLAND AT SPORTSMAN LAKE PARK

1544 Sportsman Lake Road
NW, Cullman

Drive or walk through one of Cullman's beautiful local parks and be enchanted by multiple light displays, snow machines and even Santa himself!

When

5-9 p.m.

- Nov. 17-19
- Nov. 24-26
- Nov. 29-Dec 3
- Dec. 6-10
- Dec. 13-23
- Dec. 26-29 (Drive-through only)

Admission (cash only)

\$10 per car
\$15 per bus

CHRISTMAS IN CULLMAN In and around the Cullman Warehouse District and Depot Park

- Christmas Pyramid Lighting- Nov. 24 at 6 p.m.
- Christmas Parade- Dec 1. at 5 p.m. through the Warehouse District
- Tree Lighting - Dec. 1

immediately following the parade, at Depot Park

CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK, ARAB CITY PARK City Park Drive Northeast, Arab

The City of Arab's 29th annual Christmas in the Park features thousands and thousands of lights depicting classic Christmas scenes and stories in a family-friendly setting.

When

- Nov. 24-Dec. 31, nightly beginning at 6 p.m.

GLOW WILD AT THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO 2630 Cahaba Road, Birmingham

Light up your holidays and experience larger than life animal lanterns, sure to excite guests of all ages.

When

- Friday-Sunday, 5-9 p.m., with the last admission at 8.
- Nov. 17, 2023- Jan. 15, 2024 (Closed Christmas Eve)

Admission

- Adults (13 and older)- \$21.95
- Children (2-12)- \$13.95
- Children younger than 2- free

CHRISTMAS AT THE FALLS 1450 Noccalula Road, Gadsden

Millions of lights wind through the pathways throughout the park, as well as holiday displays and decorations and Santa with his elves.

When

- Dusk-10 p.m. Nov. 23-Dec. 31

Cost

- Park admission is required for visitors 4 and older and tickets must be purchased in advance online; children 3 years and younger do not need a ticket.
- Purchase tickets at www.noccalulafallspark.com/events/christmas-at-the-falls.
- Monday-Thursday- \$10
- Friday-Sunday- \$15

WONDERLAND UNDER WARRIOR AT RICKWOOD CAVERNS STATE PARK 370 Rickwood Park Road, Warrior

Explore an underground Wonderland with a magical light display and meet Santa to read him a Christmas List all while staying a comfortable 68 degrees.

When

- Nov. 18-22 from 2-8 p.m.
- Nov. 24- 26 from 2-8 p.m. with Santa from 4-8 p.m.
- Nov. 29- Dec 3 from 2-8 p.m. with Santa from 4-8 p.m.
- Dec. 6- 10 from 2-8 p.m. with Santa from 4-8 p.m.
- Dec. 13- 23 from 2-8 p.m. with Santa from 4-8 p.m.
- Dec. 26-30 from 2-8 p.m.
- Jan. 1 is set to be the final day, from 2-8 p.m.

Cost

\$12 (children aged 4 and younger get in free)

GALAXY OF LIGHTS 4747 Bob Wallace Ave. SW, Huntsville »

Millions of lights illuminate the night in a spectacular light extravaganza; Galaxy of Lights offers two different entrance choices: a walking light tour and a drive-through option.

- Dec. 4-15
- Dec. 26- 31

Cost

- \$30 per vehicle

Walking nights (Tours begin at 5 p.m.)

- Nov. 17- 26
- Nov. 26
- Nov. 29- 30
- Dec. 1- 3
- Dec. 16- 24
- Dog walking nights will be held Nov. 20- 21 and again Dec. 18- 19

Cost

- Adults- \$16
- Children 5 and older- \$9
- Children 4 and younger- free
- Driving nights

ROCKET CITY DRIVE-THROUGH LIGHT SHOW AT TOYOTA FIELD

500 Trash Panda Way, Madison

Drive through a mile and a half of breathtaking lights, themed this year as "Santa's favorite tales."

When

- Nov. 17- Dec. 31, beginning at 5 p.m.
- Cost
- \$30 per car (group discounts

may be available)

WINTER WONDERLAND AT TOYOTA FIELD

Following the drive-through light show, enter a winter wonderland in the center of Toyota Field. Enjoy firepits, s'mores, hot cocoa and a huge snow globe, perfect for a holiday photo opportunity.

When

- Nov. 17-19
- Nov. 22-26
- Nov. 30- Dec. 3
- Dec. 7-10
- Dec. 14-31

Cost

Entrance into the wonderland

is free, when you complete the drive-through light show; items are available for purchase inside the wonderland.

HUNTSVILLE TINSEL TRAIL

200 Church St. SW, Huntsville

Visit and see the creativity and holiday spirit of locals with hundreds of locally decorated live Christmas trees on display. This festive tradition takes off with a tree lighting ceremony Nov. 24 at 6 p.m.

When

- Nov. 24- Dec 31

Cost

- The Tinsel Trail is a free event.



WALKER BROTHERS LTD.

BAILEYTON 256-796-2211

OPEN MON. - FRI. 7 AM - 5 PM, SAT. 7 AM - NOON

LUMBER, WINDOWS, DOORS, PLUMBING, ELECTRICAL, ALL TYPES FLOORING AND MORE!

79 SCHOOLHOUSE RD | BAILEYTON, AL



Carlton's ITALIAN

Restaurant & Catering

HOURS

Mon - Sat
10 A.M. - 9 P.M.

Dine In or Carry Out

208 3rd Ave SE | 256-739-9050

CULLMAN'S CHRISTKINDLMARKT

A German winter wonderland in the heart of Alabama!

Noah Galilee

noah@cullmantribune.com

As winter cloaks Cullman, an old-world charm takes over the streets, bringing with it the magical aura of the Cullman Christkindlmarkt. It's not just a market, but a timeless journey that traces its origins to the heart of Germany.

"The Cullman Christkindlmarkt, a traditional German Christmas market, adds a touch of old-world charm to our community, tracing its roots back to the Middle Ages," said Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism Executive Director Nathan Anderson. At its core is the "Christkind," a traditional Christmas gift-bringer of Germany, painting a picture of a cultural festivity where locals gather under twinkling lights, surrounded by festive decorations, delightful cuisine and unique gifts.

The introduction of Christkindlmarkt is no random occurrence. Beyond the festive stalls and cheery music, the market serves as a multifaceted symbol.

It celebrates Cullman's 150th anniversary, promotes the city's proud German heritage and provides a robust platform for local businesses.

"The full-scale launch of Christkindlmarkt had multiple key objectives: celebrating Cullman's 150th anniversary, promoting our German heritage and encouraging local shopping to support our businesses," Anderson elaborated. With

beautifully adorned huts displaying handcrafted treasures and the tantalizing aroma of bratwurst, flammkuchen, chimney cakes, mulled wine and hot chocolate wafting in the air, Anderson said the market guarantees an unforgettable experience.

But Christkindlmarkt isn't the only highlight. As night descends upon Cullman, the city is awash in the festive glow of Christmas lights. Rooftops glisten, streets shine and the community spirit is palpable.

"Celebrating Christmas in Cullman at night is a special experience," Anderson said, pointing out the beautifully decorated downtown and the remarkable tree lighting production.

"This event is important for our community, offering an opportunity to come together, enjoy the festive atmosphere and create cherished memories with family and friends."

Every year, the market introduces some fresh surprises, ensuring residents have something new to look forward to. This year, Christkindlmarkt has found a new, captivating home inside the freshly renovated Depot Park.

Anderson revealed, "We're featuring an even taller German Christmas Pyramid, a warming tent, an expanded kids' craft area and a wider variety of photo opportunities with Christmas characters. And let's not forget the ice skating rink, carousel and the extensive assortment of authentic German food!"

At the heart of it all, the market champions a spirit



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

of community and tradition. "The Christkindlmarkt is fundamentally about fostering a deep sense of community and tradition," Anderson stressed, sharing pride about how nearly three-quarters of the Cullman Christkindlmarkt booths are occupied by locals. The market isn't just a venue but a testament to the unity and collective strength of Cullman's community.

With the unwavering support of local merchants, artisans, generous sponsors, visionary city leaders and numerous non-profit organizations, Cullman's

Christkindlmarkt stands as a beacon of what's possible when a community comes together. It's more than just a market; it's a tradition, a celebration and a reflection of Cullman's heart and soul, something Anderson and his team take immense pride in bringing to life each year.

The Cullman Christkindlmarkt is open Thursdays-Sundays, Nov. 24-Dec. 24. Thursdays from 4-9 p.m. Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-9 p.m. and Sundays 1-8 p.m. www.christmasincullman.com

Surprising origins of America's Christmas tradition

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

The celebration of Christmas as we know it today has a surprisingly storied history, with the first recorded instance of the church celebrating Christmas or "Cristes Maesse" coming from Rome in 336 AD. It did not become a major festival as we know it today until around the ninth century. Christmas in America is especially fascinating; while early Puritan settlers did not celebrate Christmas, it later became a national holiday established by Ulysses S. Grant in 1870.

As America grew larger and became a melting pot for many cultures and ethnicities, many immigrants brought not only their belongings, but also their practices and traditions of celebrating holidays. Decorated trees, Santa Claus, gift-giving and even stockings all stem from different cultures, periods and religions across the globe, with both religious and secular celebrants enjoying the magic of Christmas.

Decorated trees: Germany

While many pagan or polytheistic cultures have decorated with evergreens during the winter as a symbol of returning life, we have the German Lutherans to thank for decorated trees as we know them today. By combining the concept of "paradise tree," an evergreen decorated with eucharistic wafers and candles in celebration of the feast of Adam and Eve, and the classic German "weihnachtspyramide" or wooden Christmas pyramid decorated with figurines and star motifs, the Christmas tree was born and popularized by German Lutherans. The concept was brought to America in the 17th century

by German immigrants and by the 19th century had become a staple in observing Christmas.

Santa Claus: Turkey, Holland

There are several cultures and even a surprising business to thank for the concept of Santa Claus, the jolly gift and coal bringer we've all come to know and associate with Christmas. Saint Nicholas, bishop of Myra (present-day Turkey) in the fourth century, was known for his generosity and giving, particularly to children. He was later canonized as the patron saint of children, yet, after the Reformation, he was forgotten by nearly every protestant country except Holland, where his legend lived on through the name "sinterklaas." In the 17th century as the Dutch began to immigrate to New Amsterdam (present-day New York), traditions mingled, with the English pronunciation of sinterklaas "Santa Claus" stuck. His rosy-cheeked and round appearance was first publicized in 1863 by Harper's Weekly cartoonist Thomas Nast, but his signature red suit was solidified to the American consumer by a series of advertisements illustrated by Haddon Sundblum for The Coca-Cola Company.

Gift giving: Rome


While many attribute the tradition of gift-giving during Christmas as an homage to the wise men who brought Jesus gifts, another widely held theory is that it stems from gift-giving traditions of Saturnalia celebrated in pagan Rome. Saturnalia, a Roman festival and holiday honoring the god Saturn and the winter solstice, was still widely celebrated after Constantine's Edict of Milan, which established tolerance for Christianity within the Roman Empire. Saturnalia's celebratory activities included gambling, role reversal,

chanting and – you guessed it – gift-giving. Gifts were typically candles, toys or figurines with some patrons electing to give a bonus or "sigillarium" to their employees. As Christianity thus became more widespread in Rome, traditions blended between the cultures, and gift-giving stayed in the first documented Christian celebration of Christmas in Rome in 336 AD.

Christmas stockings: Turkey

Christmas stockings, often a personalized sock-shaped sack hung on a mantle to be filled with treats have a folkloric origin stemming from one of many legends associated with Saint Nicholas. As the

legend goes, a poor man with three daughters was very concerned about being able to pay marriage dowries in 4th century Myra (present-day Turkey). Saint Nicholas allegedly heard about their plight, shimmied into the home at night and left gold coins in the girls' stockings which were drying by the fire. This legend is also referenced in the poem "A Visit From St. Nicholas"; though initially published anonymously in 1823, the work is widely attributed to Clement Clark Moore. Stocking stuffers have certainly changed over the years from oranges, nuts, peppermint sticks and coins, but the tradition remains the same.




SOLOMON'S™


BARBERSHOP

256.339-4662

SolomonsBarber.com

FIND US ON 

1645 Derenda Ave SW • Suite 106
Cullman, Alabama 35055



Iva Belle
Skin Therapy
Life Beautiful

Iva Belle Skin Therapy
IVABELLESKINTHERAPY.COM

**ADVANCED
SKINCARE**

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY
205.717.9147

LIFE BEAUTIFUL™

Beat cabin fever with fun-filled winter activities

Cheyenne Sharp

cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

Crisp air and cold temperatures are a trademark of winter. Colder days likely mean more time inside; for children, being cooped inside can be frustrating, exponentially so if there are multiple children in the home. Days can be filled with serenade of “I’m bored!” and “Can I go outside?” and then, after two minutes, “It’s too cold outside.” Step out of your comfort zone and explore activities and games!

INDOORS

Play board games

Playing board games or card games is easily a favorite wintertime activity. Uno, Sorry and Chutes and Ladders can all provide hours, or possibly minutes, of fun for the whole family. Learn a new card game or pick up a new puzzle, turn on a movie and get playing! Making games educational can add another layer of learning. Dominoes teach math skills, Monopoly can teach real-estate theories and sometimes a board game can teach someone how to simply lose with grace.

Camp in the living room

Is it too cold to camp in the backyard? Never fear, a living room, a tent or pillow fort and flashlights make for perfect indoor camping. Make s’mores in the oven, bundle in plush sleeping bags and tell spooky

stories in the comfort of your home.



Decorate for the holidays

Oh, Christmas Tree, Oh, Christmas Tree! Decorating for the holidays is a tedious chore if you let it. Making a game of decorating the house with tinsel, lights and bows can be an easy, fun afternoon, occupying children for hours. Fashion popcorn garland to wrap around the tree, coffee filter snowflakes for décor or cinnamon stick bundles to hang over doorways.

Transform your house into a scavenger hunt or obstacle course

There are tons of self-guided scavenger hunt plans available online to download, or you could make your own scavenger hunt map. Hide gifts and treats around the home, and dream up riddles to help guide players to the clues. Similarly, masking tape and normal household objects can quickly turn a house into a live-action episode of Wipe-Out, creating obstacles and roadblocks on the way to finding a prize.

Teach children how to cook their favorite meal

More than a holiday activity,

this is a life skill. Have children make lists of their favorite meals. Accompany them to the grocery store and help pick and purchase ingredients. Learning to prepare a meal from start to finish, is a valuable life skill that every person needs; the quality time spent together is just a bonus.



Bake cookies

Baking cookies can be messy, sure. Baking cookies can also bring joy and a love of baking that develops over time. Measuring ingredients, rolling dough and cutting shapes is a fantastic avenue to teach fractions and shapes; decorating with icing and sprinkles can teach colors and textures.

Have an at-home spa day

Face masks, nail polish, lotion and body scrubs are likely in most women’s bathroom vanities. Use what you have to create an at-home spa. Make a pot of tea, throw on a robe and a facemask (cucumber eye slices optional) and flip the television to a chick flick

or holiday-themed movie. Manicure your fingers and pedicure your toes, lather on body oil and lotions, drink some lemon water and you could imagine it’s taking place in a high-end salon, without the price tag.

Make snow globes

This is a quick, easy craft suitable for most ages including adults. Using a clear jar with a lid, fill the jar with water, glitter and any other shimmery things that may make a snow globe special; glue figurines or small toys to the inside of the lid. Line the inner rim of the lid with hot glue and screw the lid onto the jar. Allow the glue to dry, flip it over and enjoy a homemade, personalized snow globe.



Make your own playdough

Playdough can be made in less than five minutes and costs less than \$1 to make. It’s a natural DIY activity for frugal moms. Create crazy colors with food dye, and cut shapes with »

cookie cutters. You can even bake this play dough in the oven to make sculptures that will last quite a while. This activity can provide hours of busy play, making for a happy mom.

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup salt
- 4 tbsp. cream of tartar
- 2 cups lukewarm water
- 2 tbsp. vegetable or coconut oil
- Food coloring (optional)
- Quart zip bags for storage

Stir dry ingredients in a pot and add the water and oil. Cook over medium heat, constantly stirring until all ingredients are combined and the dough forms a ball. Place the dough into the quart bags or onto wax paper to cool. If coloring is being added, add food dye and knead until smooth (tip- add the dye to the dough and knead the dye into the dough while it is inside a quart bag, otherwise the dye can stain hands and clothes). When the dough is cool to the touch, it is ready to be shaped, sliced and stretched.



Create a movie theater and host a movie night

Pull the curtains closed, inflate that air mattress, pile up the pillows and have a family movie theater night. Choose a movie

from a streaming service or rent a DVD from Redbox and serve movie theater snacks like popcorn, nachos and boxed candy; all can be purchased at any grocery store and are relatively inexpensive.

Indoor snowball fight

Balling up a plastic shopping bag and folding it in a sock makes the perfect lightweight indoor snowball. Move furniture and create obstacles with tables, curtains, chairs and sheets. Dodging the opponent's snowballs, and taking cover more impressively than James Bond, an indoor snowball fight will surely hold attention for a few hours, at least.



Learn to finger knit

Finger knitting with chunky yarn is a fast and user-friendly craft for those who love cozy gifts. Finger knitting generally requires a thicker, more plush yarn that is weaved using your fingers instead of a crochet hook or knitting needles. Because the yarn is much thicker, a project is completed faster. Throw blankets, pillow forms and scarves can all be made in a small amount of time.

Try your hand at Solo Cup bowling

Love bowling but can't make it to a local alley? Set up an

impromptu bowling alley in a hallway with disposable cups and fruit. This activity can be done easily; the only supplies needed are disposable cups and a round fruit for the ball. An orange or an apple would be great to lob down the length of a hallway. As the game progresses, the stakes rise. Knocking down a 7-10 split with a grapefruit is one accomplishment that deserves fanfare.



Read a book

Reading is so beneficial for everyone. Reading can expand vocabulary, educate about significant events or even create a separate reality for the reader, an escape from mundane life. Choose a favorite chapter book to read to children, pick up that Reality TV star's memoir or read about economic collapse in other regions. No matter what is read, reading is a great way to pass time and have fun in the process.

Organize and "spring" clean

The least favorite, most obvious answer when asked how to keep busy in winter, is "clean your house." Nobody enjoys tidying up and organizing their belongings, but it is a task that must be done. While tedious and trying, cleaning and organizing can become a game in itself if creativity takes over. Make cleaning toys a game: who can fill this bucket the quickest? When all the books are put away, crank up the dance music and have a dance party in a freshly tidied home, giving room for all the above activities.

AND FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO BRAVE THE OUTDOORS...



Go on a hike

Alabama is home to so many beautiful areas for hikes and nature walks. State parks often have children's attractions. Some offer train rides and petting zoos, some even have museums and historical items on display. An outdoor excursion during the winter season may sound daunting and unenjoyable, but with proper planning and clothing, it could be a smashing success.

Build a colorful igloo

Experience how indigenous hunters slept and waited for their prey in an igloo with a twist. Using plastic containers, water and dye, an igloo can be made by freezing multiple "bricks" of colorful water, creating rainbow ice blocks. Shape and stack them together in a traditional spherical shape; with snow or water between them to cement them together. This activity is time-consuming, as you do need a large number of bricks.

Channel your inner Anna and Elsa and create a snowy friend

Do you wanna build a snowman? Snowmen and snow angels are trademarks of snowy winter days, ones that captivate all ages. »

Make a snowman family and dress them for a performance; create a snowscape with angels on the ground. Spray bottles with colored water can add festivity and character to Frosty, as well.

Make frozen suncatchers

Explore nature and create frozen suncatchers. Search for and collect twigs, berries and leaves from your area, place them in a pie pan with water, and freeze them. That's it! After the catcher is frozen, remove it from the pan, and using a lighter or a hot object, melt a small hole for a ribbon.

Hang the suncatcher from a nearby tree limb, and watch as the sun shimmers and reflects the colors of the nature items in the heart of the catcher.

Explore local Christmas markets and holiday light displays

Winter is home to all sorts of holiday light displays, ready to explore! Meet Santa Claus at a local Christmas market while perusing and purchasing gifts for friends and family. These local events usually provide activities and games geared toward children, making this a huge holiday hit.



Established in 1990

HANCEVILLE FUNERAL HOME

100 MICHELLE STREET NORTHWEST
HANCEVILLE, ALABAMA 35077
256-352-3130



THE
KILGO LAW FIRM

WE WILL FIGHT TO PROTECT YOU

**Divorce • Child Custody • DHR
Child Support • Adoption
Criminal Defense • DUI • Estates**

**Locally Owned
Same-Day &
Walk-In Appointments
Emergency Consultations**

256-841-0488
jerrykilgolaw.com

421 3rd Ave SE
Suite 250
Cullman, AL



MAY YOUR HOLIDAY
be blessed with the love and
warmth of family and friends!



Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

From: SENATOR GARLAN GUDGER, DISTRICT 4

PAID FOR BY GUDGER FOR SENATE 308 2ND AVE SE CULLMAN, AL 35055

A frugal mom's guide to holiday shopping

Cheyenne Sharp

cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

Holidays and gifts go together like peanut butter and jelly. Unfortunately, if you aren't carefully planning and scraping pennies, the holiday season can also go along with financial stress. Christmas and holiday shopping can be intimidating to even those with the largest of bank accounts and negatively impact the average paycheck-to-paycheck family. By following these tips, this holiday shopping season will be a breeze and stress free, freeing up valuable time to truly soak in the magic of the season.

1. Prioritize recipients and their gifts in order of importance

When deciding who to purchase gifts for, look for the important pillars in life; spouses, children and immediate family members should be at the top of the list, with distant family members at the bottom.

Has it been 12 years since you have seen Aunt Sally? She probably doesn't need, nor expect, a Christmas gift. Of course Christmas is a time of giving, but one shouldn't feel the need to buy gifts out of obligation.

A list creates a visual and mental note of gifts to buy and will help you avoid buying things that aren't necessary.

2. Make a budget... and STICK TO IT

As soon as it is decided who will get Christmas gifts, make a budget for either each person or gifts as a whole and do

not stray from the budgeted number. Exceeding what is allocated adds up quickly; going over budget by even \$20 per person can easily make hundreds of dollars disappear, depending on family size.

Dollar amounts are not the only thing to be aware of when shopping. Think about the quantity of gifts for each person on the list.

If \$100 is allocated for each recipient, in gifts and presents that could be one to two higher value gifts or 10 to 15 smaller gifts.

3. Shop sales and use coupons

Most retailers and stores, both online and brick-and-mortar, typically run sales in the months and weeks leading to the holiday season. Oftentimes, the sales and discounts increase as time inches closer to Christmas.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are huge sale dates, and hot ticket items will be at steep discounts. Amazon also offers "Prime Day," an online event for Amazon Prime members, where items are discounted and priced significantly lower. Kohls, Old Navy, Carters and Belk frequently release coupons that many times can be used in conjunction with their everyday prices and sales.

Get more bang for your buck by shopping Amazon's Warehouse, a hidden gem on the online retail giant's website. Items sold from Amazon's Warehouse are usually refurbished or returned goods that have been checked and rated by staff to ensure quality.

4. Make sure you are getting

the lowest price available to shoppers online

There are so many online platforms dedicated to scouring the internet for the best prices and deals. With a few extra clicks, you can be certain you have found the best deal.

-Honey is an app and Chrome extension that will show any available coupon codes applicable to a purchase.

-Flipp compiles a list and user-friendly interface of local sales flyers, as well as clickable links directly to the product shown.

-Rakuten gives discounts based on total purchase price and retailer, has cash-back incentives for referrals, discounted gift cards and coupons.

-ShopSavvy compares prices from various retailers all over the web, confirming the price listed is the lowest price available.

5. Get creative and give handmade gifts

A homemade gift is a great way to save some cash at Christmas. A hand-knitted scarf or brownies and pies made with love could be the perfect gift for someone on your list.

Look at the interests of the individual and assess their personality; What is their favorite color? Are there any hobbies they enjoy? By tailoring a gift specifically for a special person, a creative handmade gift is a heartfelt, intimate gesture and adds a personal touch to the holidays.

6. Give the gift of service

What do YOU do for business? Housekeeping, landscaping, babysitting or whatever your hustle may be, a seemingly mundane and boring gift of services can alleviate outside stressors of everyday life. Giving services could also make a surprisingly refreshing gift, avoiding the Christmas clutter and filling a daily need.

7. Use layaway and payment programs

Layaway has been around for decades and although it has lost a portion of its fan base, budget conscious shoppers can pick items from their gift lists and for a portion of the total purchase price (and sometimes a small fee), gifts are paid off in installments.

A plethora of payment programs are available for online or in-store shopping. Klarna, Afterpay, Sezzle, Zip and Affirm are all reputable programs designed to break larger totals into easier to manage smaller payments, to be paid every two to four weeks.

There is a small fee involved in each of these options; however, the benefit of shopping early (avoiding last-minute impulse buys) and sticking to the budget is worth every penny.

8. Regift, reuse and recycle

Regifting items has been a cultural taboo in our society and is more times than not seen as tacky. But why? Waste not, want not; it's an easy way to stay under budget.

A lone gift card wasting away in a wallet is the optimal gift for a teen, or a pair of slippers that just didn't »

feel right make the perfect gift for grandpa; a Bath and Bodyworks candle that has been sitting in the closet is ideal for sisters, aunts or mothers.

Regifting is a zero dollar present marked off of your list, freeing up funds for other needs that arise in the holiday bustle.

9. Give experiences, not material things

Experiences are a phenomenal gift idea if the idea of meaningful, affordable gifts tickle your fancy.

In 2022, the average American family spent \$150-\$200 per person on Christmas gifts. Instead of 10-15 toys that could break or be misplaced, one child could enjoy a yearly membership at a local museum, zoo or aquarium, providing hours of fun 365 days a year. For families with multiple members, a weekend trip or vacation depending on the allotted budget could be given in lieu of gifts.

Time with family is priceless; the memories themselves will last a lifetime, or at least longer than a lip gloss or a toy train.

10. Remember the reason for the season

The holiday season is a magical time filled with family and fellowship. That is precisely what it is meant to be.

It's much easier said than done! Try not to stress and worry about picking the perfect present; spending time with family is the greatest gift.

Bake those cookies to give to neighbors, teach your children to sing Christmas carols, go to grandma's house and learn to make her dinner rolls.

Live in the moment and cherish your blessings; the memories made will be gift enough and last forever.

CITY OF CULLMAN

MAYOR
WOODY JACOBS

CITY COUNCIL

President Jenny Folsom	Place 1 Brad Smith
President pro tempore John W. Cook	Place 2 David Moss
	Place 4 Clint Hollingsworth

204 2nd Ave. NE, Cullman | 256-775-7109
www.CullmanAL.gov | cityhall@CullmanAL.gov

CULLMAN JEFFERSON GAS

Natural Gas™
Comfortable. Responsible.

CULLMAN JEFFERSON GAS

CUSTOMER SERVICE: 256-734-1911
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. – Monday -Thursday

**Cullman-Jefferson Counties
Gas District**
P.O. Box 399 Cullman, AL 35056-0399

- LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

Pierce & Petal

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Ever a familiar face when stopping into Southern Accents and Architectural Antiques, Heather Gudger is a woman with an eye for detail. When the opportunity to expand into the florist shop next door presented itself, she couldn't just say no.

"In order to buy the building and everything, the business (the former Fairview Florist) had to come with it. We took over about two years ago, and we still have a lot of the same employees," she beamed, gesturing to her team.

When asked what prompted the name change, Gudger mentioned that it was a multipart move: Pierce was chosen to pay homage to her parents, who are co-owners. To bring give the longtime florist shop a trendier name, they chose the second part: Petal. Laughed Gudger, "Well, people kept thinking we were in Fairview!"

Gudger said Pierce & Petal has brought a fresh look to the historic floral shop, focusing on one-off arrangements in punchy and modern styles that are far from cookie-cutter, while still honoring those long-standing clients and their floral styles.

Gudger noted that it wasn't just the style of the arrangements that changed, it was the source, too.

"We don't like to use just any type of flowers; we focus on locally grown flowers. Then, we can supplement with higher-end florals," she explained. "That was my goal rather than going to a wholesaler for everything."

Yet, even with a »



Left to right: Madi Claire Johnson, Heather Gudger and Cassie Riley smile among styled wreaths and a festive Christmas tree in Pierce & Petal's studio.

CONTRIBUTED

modern look, Gudger said, Pierce & Petal is committed to delivering the floral experience that the clientele of the previous Fairview Florist came to love and count on.

“We’ve got a really great clientele. Besides our everyday families or customers, we also keep a lot of business accounts,” she said.

As Pierce & Petal gears up for Christmas, Gudger spilled the beans on what’s trending this year for holiday decor as cottage elements become more and more popular: natural elements like pinecones, touches of silk and velvet ribbon in deep blue and green tones and golden jingle bells.

For those interested in bespoke home decorating services from Pierce & Petal for the upcoming season, Gudger said she prefers clients book early to really get the full benefit of a beautifully curated home for the holidays.

“I always tell people for

home decorating, the sooner the better.

“We can do it closer to Christmas, of course, but we want people to have time to enjoy it,” she said.

However, for fresh pieces like vase arrangements or centerpieces, it’s best to wait until closer to Christmas dinner, to ensure pieces will be vibrant.

“When it comes to fresh flowers, like table decorations for family dinners, it’s best to wait closer to the actual event,” Gudger nodded.

Gudger advised not to feel pressure to stick to what’s trending.

Be you and embrace your design style, boldly, whether that’s with vibrant poinsettias and holly with festive plaid ribbon or a sleeker approach with classic calla lilies and twinkling lights, she said.

“People like what they like, you know?” she smiled. Visit Pierce & Petal online at www.pierceandpetalflorist.com.



CONTRIBUTED

Decor and greenery available for purchase in the Pierce & Petal studio

**YOUR DEPOSITS
CAN SIT THERE OR
DO SOMETHING.
WE PREFER
THE LATTER.**



Citizens Bank & Trust makes your money work as hard as you do. From reward checking to getting a great CD rate, your Citizens deposits add up to one satisfying bank experience. Plus, as a true community bank we use deposits to fund local lending, so your deposits also benefit the whole community. Citizens Bank & Trust – where local means local in a big way.



Please visit our new Highway 157 office or our downtown location.



**CITIZENS
BANK & TRUST**

Small Bank. Big Difference.™

Downtown | **Highway 157**
223 2nd Ave SE | 1800 Park Ave
256-841-6600 • citizensbanktrust.com



Albertville | Arab | Cullman | Elkmont | Guntersville | Hazel Green | New Hope | Rogersville
Loan Production Offices: Decatur | Scottsboro

A life filled with service is a life filled with love

Cheyenne Sharp

cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

“Hurt people, hurt people” is a motto that Lisa Holmes has lived by her entire life. Holmes knew from a young age that she was called by a Higher Power to minister to others and ease life’s heavy burdens in any way that she could. Beginning when she was a child, Holmes remembers being relentlessly bullied at school, the place that should have been her respite from a turbulent home life. Those experiences and memories gave her the inspiration she needed to get involved in the lives of the youth around her, demonstrate a mother’s love and give the support that she deserved, but never received.

Said Holmes, “My passion is that no child has to go through that alone. Through recovery, everyone comes to know no matter what their life was that God has never given up on them. That they are loved more than they will ever know.”

The National Traumatic Child Stress Network reports that when children are victims of bullying during adolescence, it can lead to mental health problems, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and substance abuse. Knowing these possible outcomes, Holmes and her husband of 42 years, Mark, decided to stretch their legs and begin a ministry for incarcerated youth.

Lisa Holmes said, “Children are my passion. A wonderful elderly pastor once said, ‘My

prayer is to reach these kids with love, kindness and (for them) to have a relationship with Jesus (and) their lives forever changed so that we will no longer need prisons.” That seed planted by an old, wise pastor, led The Holmeses to begin their journey of attempting to repair broken youth. Slowly, they got involved in a few smaller facilities such as Chalkville Girls Center, J. Walter Wood Residential Treatment Facility and VACCA campuses in Birmingham and Autauga. All housed children and juveniles ranging in age from 12 to 17 – juveniles convicted of violent and non-violent crimes they had been involved in or even committed personally.

As the ministry grew and new facilities invited the Holmeses in, a significant portion of time was spent on the traveling. They also had two young boys to raise at home. Concerned about the negative impact their ministry could potentially have on their children, Lisa Holmes recalled a weight lifted, saying, “I asked our oldest son one time how he and his brother felt about us doing this ministry and being away from home. He said, ‘Mom, we have you all the time. They don’t.’” Those words were the confirmation and push that the Holmeses needed to keep their ministry going. The years trudged on, as did Lisa Holmes’ desire to grow and reach farther to spread the seeds of hope to more incarcerated individuals.



LISA HOLMES

Lisa Holmes has been a pillar of support for her community for decades, ministering to youth and adults throughout Alabama’s Department of Corrections.

“I was blessed to be part of a team that got to go in for a three-day weekend at Julia Tutwiler women’s prison,” she remembered. “There I saw the worst of humanity and the best of God.”

Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women is Alabama’s oldest

and only correctional facility for women. In 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court found that Tutwiler Prison had overcrowding issues and conditions so ghastly, that they violated the U.S. Constitution; in 2014 the U.S. Department of Justice released findings of a report, »

which read, “We find that the State of Alabama violates the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution by failing to protect women prisoners at Tutwiler from harm due to sexual abuse and harassment from correctional staff. Tutwiler has a history of unabated staff-on-prisoner sexual abuse and harassment. The women at Tutwiler universally fear for their safety. They live in a sexualized environment with repeated and open sexual behavior.”

After continuing their work with juveniles, Lisa Holmes said she knew there was a gap between juveniles and adults in the prison system – a time to reach them after their release from a juvenile facility, but before their crimes got them cold, hard, prison time. Her target was her local county jail. “I was privileged to take

the recovery program to the Cullman (County Detention) Center to both men and women for several years before COVID shutdown.”

Throughout her ministries and time spent with offenders and individuals in juvenile and adult detention centers across the state, her relationship with God and her husband, Mark, were both her driving force and an obstacle at times. She said of her relationship with God, “The one thing I share constantly is I cannot do any of this first without it being directed from God and keeping God at the center.”

On her marriage, she said, “We love to share with couples in recovery that this December we will be married 42 years. That it is not always easy. There have been times when it would have been easy to give up, but we chose to fight for

our marriage not against each other. There is a plaque that hangs on our family picture wall that says, ‘We decided on forever.’”

For the past seven years, Mark and Lisa Holmes have continued to minister to the community with their program, C.O.R., or Celebrate Our Recovery, at their home church, Holly Pond United Methodist Church. Lisa Hollmes describes C.O.R. as a “life plan” and “so much more than a 12-step program.”

Meeting every Tuesday evening at 6 p.m., she and other church members prepare a warm meal and provide child-care to ensure local community members can receive support that may be needed while navigating life’s turbulent waters.

The Holmeses ministered to youth and adults for decades, learning along the way about life

and love. Lisa Holmes shared, “I have learned two things from my years and different ministries I have been blessed to be part of. First, there is no such thing as a perfect family. All families deal with issues of some sort; just as there was only one perfect person and that was Jesus. None of the rest of us are perfect, we all have a hurt, habit or hang-up we need to deal with. The second thing I have learned is everyone, whether they say it out loud or not, from the hardest person to the gentlest person, everyone wants to feel loved.”

Lisa Holmes may never fully realize the impact her life has made on others. She said there was more of an impact on her as she was carrying out her ministry. “With God at the center of my life, my husband and family by my side....my cup runneth over. Psalms 23:5”

**THE FUTURE IS WIDE OPEN...
WALLACE IS YOUR 'WAY IN'**

Welcome to Wallace State Community College

100+ programs in four high-demand pathways.
Proven pathways to high-paying careers.
Hassle-free transfer to Alabama universities and more.

One Door. *Tons* to Explore.
Ready to Roar?

wallacestate.edu/onedoor



- VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT -

Waid Harbison

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

When Waid Harbison took the position as executive director of the United Way of Cullman County, he had one goal: to give back and continue to encourage people to invest in the community that invested in him.

He's no stranger to hard work, boasting a stacked volunteer resume that spans over 12 years.

In just the last year Harbison has organized projects like canned food drives and given out free school supplies to local schools, assembled task forces addressing falling literacy rates and health inequities, and is responsible for the second-highest year of fundraising in the United Way of Cullman County's 45-year history.

Harbison said his passion for having a servant's heart is closely tied to his faith and his closeness to the community.

"My faith is really important; I like to think of how I can be the hands and feet for them... I'm happiest when I'm serving, volunteering and giving back,"

Harbison said that while he's served on a variety of boards and committees, nothing matches the feeling he gets when he gets to serve with the church.

"I really do like volunteering with church, especially youth. I've been a youth volunteer, taught Sunday school, served as an interim youth director,"

he smiled. "I really just like being able to help youth one on one."

While the fruit of a volunteer's labor is rarely seen at the time, especially with youth groups, Harbison said that one of the most impactful one-on-one experiences he's had has been volunteering with teens and standing in the gap for those experiencing suicidal thoughts.

By listening, offering reassurance and letting them know they weren't alone, he's been able to witness some of incredible milestones later in their lives.

"Now, it's been so long, I see some of them are getting married and having a family. I love being able to see that," said Harbison, quickly following with a laugh, "But it does make me feel old!"

Harbison's upbeat attitude and willingness to jump in may be surprising to some. However, his desire to be a light for the community was even more solidified after an unfortunate diagnosis.

"I found out I had Huntington's disease about two years ago. It's very rare, not a lot of funding for finding a cure, and you can't slow down the progression...I probably still have three or four good years left," he said, explaining that he is the third generation in his family to inherit the disorder, and the progression typically moves quicker after each successive generation.

Harbison mentioned that while many may hear a diagnosis like that and give up, it



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY

Waid Harbison sits in his office at United Way of Cullman County's headquarters, located in the historic train depot in Cullman.

has made him all the more motivated to make the best of what time he has left.

"It kind of just put everything into perspective," he said. "Like every minute that I have, it feels more important. I feel like God has given me a lot of purpose and a lot of fulfillment with everything I've been able to do since."

Harbison announced in September 2023 that he would be stepping down from the role of executive director of the United Way of Cullman County, saying that while after Nov. 9, 2023, he won't be on the payroll, he still intends to

serve his community through United Way's partner agencies.

"It's been a blessing. Although I'm going to have to step back from this official role, I'm going to do things as long as I can," he said, encouraging others in the community to do the same.


"I think all of us are called to do something.

"Every one of us has a specific gift or skillset, but whatever your skillset is, you can find something to give back with that.

"It doesn't matter how old or young you are. If you can move, you can give back!"



We make Medicare easy!

A photograph of a smiling woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a maroon long-sleeved shirt. She is holding a silver tablet and looking at it. The background is a bright, indoor setting with a patterned green and gold blanket on a couch.

Get answers to
all of your
Medicare questions.

Call 1-833-202-5538 | TTY: 711

8am - 8pm, Mon - Fri (Oct 1 - Dec 31: 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week)

Or visit www.VivaHealth.com/Medicare

VIVA MEDICARE is an HMO plan with a Medicare contract and a contract with the Alabama Medicaid Agency. Enrollment in VIVA MEDICARE depends on contract renewal. VIVA HEALTH complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-888-830-8482 (TTY: 711). 注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-888-830-8482 (TTY: 711).

H0154_mcdoc3841A_M_08/06/2023

FOOD TRUCK FRENZY

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

Carnival Cravings

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Boasting a menu full of county fair favorites like funnel cakes, corn dogs and fried Oreos, Carnival Cravings food truck truly lives up to its name, but got a surprising start.

Owner Stacy Heatherly shared that the truck originally started as a mobile donut shop with creative combinations like vanilla cream and Fruity Pebbles, and even maple icing and bacon bits. The transition to carnival-style food came after many customers began requesting more sweet treats - and an increasingly frustrating battle to keep the donut dough just right in often hot and balmy temps.

"It was very hard... everything was good in the winter, then when it started getting hot, they didn't do well. We could never figure out how to get them right again!" she laughed.

Avid food truck fans might notice that Carnival Cravings is often set up near another

popular local truck, The Street Kitchen; "It's because I'm her mother!" Heatherly laughed, sharing that after working with her daughter Hannah Chambers in The Street Kitchen, she decided to go for it herself.

Heatherly said despite some challenges in the initial startup, business has been smooth sailing since sticking to fair and carnival cuisine. Heatherly posed that its success is not just because of the great product at a great price, but because many of the treats on the menu are typically only available during fair and carnival season. "People can only usually get some of this stuff maybe once or twice a year," she explained.

MENU MUST TRIES

- Funnel Cake
- Fried Oreos



A fresh funnel cake heavily dusted with powdered sugar

CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Alabama Mud Coffee

Cayla Grace Murphy
 caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Alabama Mud Coffee Owner Bo Johnson said the idea of a mobile coffee cart came after the wild success of its bagged coffee. Boasting signature flavors like Choccolocco Fudge and Swamp Mud, Alabama Mud Coffee quickly became a hit in artisanal markets around the South.

“We started out with the bagged coffee and we got into about 35 retailers across the Southeast,” said Johnson, explaining that while he works closely with festivals and local schools and businesses, he’s a little preferential to his home base.

“We really love doing it in Holly Pond, in our hometown,” he smiled.

Johnson said the coffee is roasted weekly to maintain freshness, and their Swamp Mud blend, a dark earthy roast, is what they carry on the go. This darker roast lends to a richer flavored cold brew or iced latte that doesn’t taste too sweet. But, for those who do have a sweet tooth, Johnson recently added a much-requested item to the menu - frappes!

Johnson said that hands down his favorite flavor combination so far is one he affectionately calls “Butter Mud.”

“It’s a mixture of caramel, hazelnut and brown butter sauce,” Johnson smiled. “We’re the only ones who have



PHOTOS: CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Top: Bo Johnson smiles in the window of the Alabama Mud Coffee trailer. Bottom: A freshly prepared iced vanilla latte crafted by Bo Johnson of Alabama Mud Coffee at a food truck rally

anything like that!”

MENU MUST TRIES

- Butter Mud Frappe
- Salted Caramel Cold Brew



Fro'z Shaved Ice

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

A shaved ice industry veteran, Angela Sullins has been at it since the age of 14 at a shop in Guntersville. After becoming disenchanted from making the drive seven days a week and being offered the chance to buy a trailer and bring the biz closer to home, it was a no-brainer.

She and her husband Jeffrey Sullins bought the trailer in March 2021, and haven't looked back since, becoming festival mainstays for those wanting a cool and refreshing treat in muggy Alabama weather.

"This is our third year (in business)," Angela Sullins laughed, "and we try to get into everything!"

As business picked up, the opportunity came to get a second trailer, which was perfect timing since the Sullinses had to turn down several events due to being booked up. Fro'z Shaved Ice now boasts two signature trucks, in fluorescent green and orange hues that can be spotted in even the



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Top: Angela Sullins smiles while handing a rainbow-flavored shaved ice at Fro'z's storefront. Bottom: Jeffrey Sullins, left, and Angela Sullins, right, smile in Angela's signature green Fro'z trailer.



most packed crowd.

"The green one is hers, the orange one is mine!" laughed Jeffrey Sullins.

Recently, a full-fledged storefront was added to the mix, which the Sullinses say has nearly doubled their flavor and concoction

offerings in order to reach those who want something besides the typical rainbow or strawberry banana.

"In the store, counting our concoctions, we have 87 flavors, but in the trailers, we have about half that," explained Jeffrey Sullins, who said Fro'z also carries sugar-free options in both the trailers and storefront.

MENU MUST TRIES

- Strawberry Shortcake
- Rainbow

The Street Kitchen

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Hannah Chambers is no stranger to working in a fast-paced kitchen. After working as a short-order cook at her aunt's cafe for a few years, she and her husband Jackson decided to take the leap and open their truck in 2021.

"Me and Jackson have been together since we were 14 and have always talked about owning our own business because we liked working together," Chambers said, explaining that entrepreneurship is a family tradition for the both of them.

"Both of our parents run their own businesses, and we liked that growing up," she smiled.

Chambers shared that a surprising walkout during a lunch rush at the cafe gave her the confidence boost she needed to take the food truck world by the horns.

"If it wasn't for my Aunt Michelle having faith that I could cover the kitchen at her cafe when someone quit during a lunch rush one day, I don't know that I would have ever decided to cook for a living!" she laughed.

The Street Kitchen is known locally for loaded fries piled high with toppings like melty cheese, Cajun-seasoned chicken and specialty sauces and juicy burgers and sandwiches.

Chambers said the Barnyard Burger, a meaty bacon



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE; HANNAH CHAMBERS

Top: Jackson Chambers hands an order out the window of The Street Kitchen at a food truck rally. **Bottom:** The Street Kitchen's signature sandwich, the Barnyard Burger topped with melty cheese, crispy bacon and a gooey fried egg.

cheeseburger topped with a fried egg is a longtime crowd favorite.

"Some people hesitate to order it because of the fried egg, but end up loving it!" she exclaimed.

MENU MUST TRIES

- Barnyard Burger
- Rajun Cajun Fries



- AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT -

Caris Snider

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

Speaker and author Caris Snider's ability to paint pictures out of words woven together and deliver comfort to those who are struggling is truly unique. By injecting personal anecdotes and scripture into her works, Snider's down-to-earth stylistic approach draws readers in to examine situations in a broader scope. Though it might seem like her flowy form and empowering prose come naturally to her, readers might be surprised.

"I went into a really hard time with depression and anxiety, and in that time, I was one of those who didn't believe those things were real," said Snider, explaining that the advice given to her at the time from her faith-based community, and even occasionally doled out by herself to others, was just not working.

"Pray about it, read your Bible more, stop whining, suck it up, you know? And I was doing ALL of those things, and it was real. There was more to it," said Snider. After a period of worsening mental health, in an experience she called "the bottom of the bottom" Snider experienced a miscarriage in September 2011.

"I just thought the world would be better off without me; I wasn't needed here. And in that moment it was like God whispered to me, 'Look up.' I looked up and there were helpers," she said, "I began to realize I wasn't alone, that anxiety and depression are

very real, and that we need to talk about this stuff and stop hiding it."

So, she talked about it, in churches, schools and conferences around the Southeast. Yet, the idea of writing didn't cross her mind until retreat and conference hosts started requested notes and materials to accompany her talks.

"Writing was never in my top 10," she laughed, describing herself as a "recovering perfectionist" and mentioning an intense fear of editing. To give the people what they wanted, Snider created a five-day devotional - designed herself on Canva - and it was a major hit.

After encouragement from a colleague, she wrote a 10-day devotional, with the first print run of 50 copies launched on Snider's website in November 2018. Snider wasn't sure what to expect, and much to her surprise, the launch sold out in 48 hours. This initial sellout was the push Snider needed to keep writing, and keep breaking barriers surrounding conversations about mental health - particularly in the religious realm.

"The faith community, you know, we've gotten better, but our heads were truly in the sand. I knew I wanted to be a voice to say, 'Hey, faith and mental health can go together,'" she said, sharing that while the momentum continued to build, she continued to hone her craft of writing through workshops and writers conferences.

The art of stringing words together to convey a message that can be universally absorbed



BEE OSTERMAN

Speaker and author Caris Snider poses with one of her newest books, "There's an Elephant on My Chest."

did not come easy, said Snider. "I was throwing spaghetti at the wall!" she exclaimed, noting how she struggled majorly with writer's block and deadlines. Despite rigorous editing sessions, all-nighters before deadlines fueled by Celsius energy drinks and a pervasive feeling of imposter syndrome, Snider continues to lend words to the feelings many battle with daily.

Snider is confident that while her works have a prominent Christian undertone,

nonreligious community members can benefit from the principles in them, too. "Within the books, of course there's scripture, but in the text there's going to be stories that you can relate to and practical steps that you can practice," she nodded, saying the message of hope that these works sends is universal.

"We all need hope," she declared. "Even if they're not a person of faith, they can read it and know they're not alone... We're worth it to get help."

21ST ANNUAL

Winter Wonderland

**CHRISTMAS LIGHT DISPLAY AT
SPORTSMAN LAKE PARK**



NOV. 17-19, 24-26, 29-30 | DEC. 1-3, 6-10, 13-23



**DRIVE-THRU ONLY
DEC. 26-29**



**TRAIN RIDE - SNOW
MACHINE - PHOTO BOOTH
\$10 CASH PER VEHICLE**



**1544 SPORTSMAN LAKE ROAD NW • CULLMAN, AL 35055
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 256-734-3052**

WUNDERGARTEN

The Legend of the Miracle Garden, part 4

An original fairytale by Ben Johnson South

*Continued from the August edition of
Community Matters...*



s Fritz walked toward Frau Ruehl's "home house," he hoped the tree he had carefully clipped into a floppy-eared rabbit had indeed remained a hare and had not frustratingly changed itself back

into a mere tree.

Once near the cabin, Fritz opened the side gate by the smokehouse and stepped onto the gravel path that led to the cabin porch. He walked in his slow, stooped fashion to the corner of the house where he might see the vexing tree.

"FLIPPING FIDDLESTICKS!" fumed an utterly bewildered, spirit-crushed Fritz once he'd seen the tree. "I had hoped you would be the young girl's favorite. But you are useless planted here!" His heart pounded and pounded, shrank with loathing, and wouldn't calm down. Fritz cried out at the tree.

"And now, you are so monstrously hulking, you block the view of the magnificent garden I've created!

"Why couldn't you be like the others?" he pleaded. He imagined some evil wizard with a wand, whispering magic trickery like "Ribbety-rabbity, ala ka-roo."

By this point, Fritz was frustrated beyond measure and almost in tears. He shook

his fist and threatened, "If you were a real rabbit, you impossible good-for-nothing, I would skin you and give the meat to Frau Ruehl for her to make Hasenpfeffer stew!"

Then, he noticed the beautiful, rounded fruit this tree had produced. The fruit looked something like persimmons only somewhat larger and more radiantly golden, sparkling and glittering.

So far, the tree had only produced two fruits which were dangling from a silver branch with silver leaves.

Fritz plucked one of the fruits and shined it against the leg of his patched overalls. Then, he took a bite.

The fruit was sweet. "Perhaps this is some kind of apricot," thought Fritz. "Tomorrow, when I am working, I will dig up this tree and give it to the new plant nursery in town. Then, in its place I will plant another mountain laurel and clip it to look like a floppy-eared bunny. Mountain laurel will cooperate."

Then, Fritz realized something was different. Suddenly, he was no longer looking toward the ground. He felt the overalls on his back stretch as his strong body became upright.

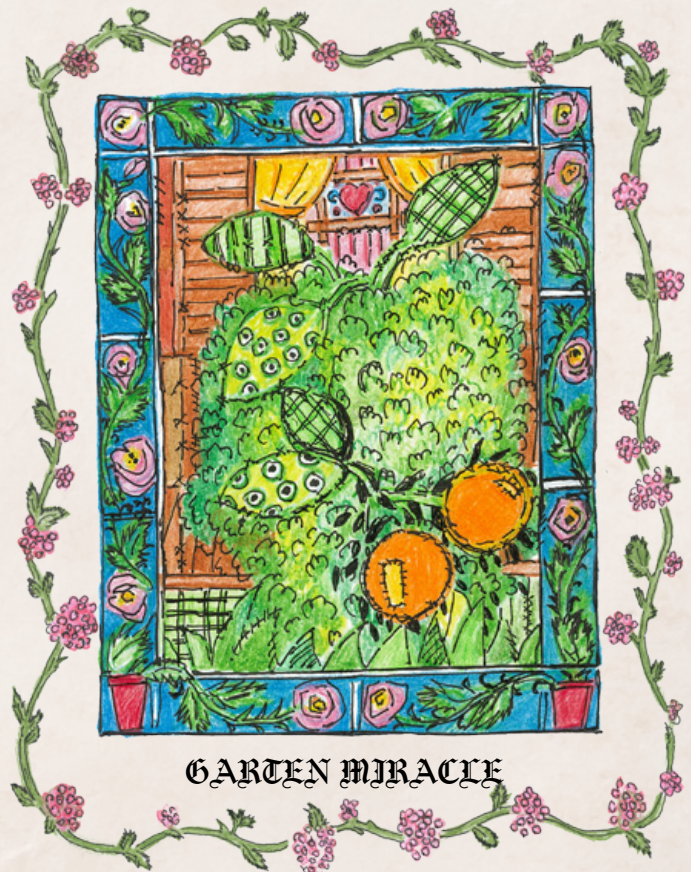
That instant, the sun was wonderfully warm and bright, and the air smelled like glorious trumpets of jasmine. Fritz was no longer stooped like an old man.

"Frau Ruehl! Come quick, out to the porch!" cried Fritz.

Frau Ruehl heard the hubbub and rushed outside to check on all the ruckus. When she saw Fritz, she couldn't believe her »



The Original All-Ages Folktale by Ben Johnson Southy



GARTEN MIRACLE

eyes. Before her, Fritz stood tall, a hale and hearty, young man. The woman and the garden boy hugged each other and jumped up and down excitedly as if they were kindergarten children.

"This tree," he stammered, "this tree which was determined to go forth as its branches grew," Fritz started.

"I need to get down on my knees and beg forgiveness. Forgive me! Forgive me! I should have been more patient, more tolerant, more understanding. I feel as if some good giant has taken me by the shirt collar and gently shaken me awake. It is the fruit from this Tree of Life that healed me."

Hearing this, Frau Ruehl ran inside the cabin to quickly bring her daughter out on the porch.

Fritz picked the remaining fruit and handed it to the girl's mother. In turn, Frau Ruehl gently handed the golden fruit to ZeeBeth.

"Eat. Eat my sweet child, my sleeping beauty," Frau Ruehl

pleaded. And, with her mother's help, ZeeBeth slowly moved the fruit to her lips.

Suddenly, the bright Southern sunburst seemed even more brilliant. Songbirds all over the garden began a joyous chorus as the young girl confidently reared back her head and for the first time in months, she could truly see all the beauty in her world. It was a dream that became completely, wonderfully, fabulously true.

"Heavens above! Heavens above! Oh, Fritz, you are indeed a wundergartner!" Frau Ruehl thought her heart would burst as she cried tears of joy when she saw her child become strong enough to get up from the wheeled chair.

"We just needed to trust in a miracle. This tree is the most extraordinary tree in our beautiful garden; indeed, in all the countryside."

After a glorious breakfast in the shade of the special tree, Frau Ruehl beamed as

she watched ZeeBeth thrilled to dance with the butterflies amidst all the Brothers Grimm storybook characters in the wundergarten Fritz had originally created for her, and now was a joy for all.

That afternoon, Colonel Cullman and Frau Ruehl welcomed people throughout the county to come to "Der Wundergarten" to enjoy that spring's first strawberries, German strawberry cake and for some grown-ups, a wee drop of strawberry wine.

Nature had been generous to farmers in the upper part of Alabama.

Orchards bloomed, cash crops promised a tidy sum, the meadows were quilted with sweet, German grasses and the people were grateful.

Some of the revelers came by wagon as far as twenty miles away. A few of the ladies wore colorful bonnets and a couple of them flaunted parasols.

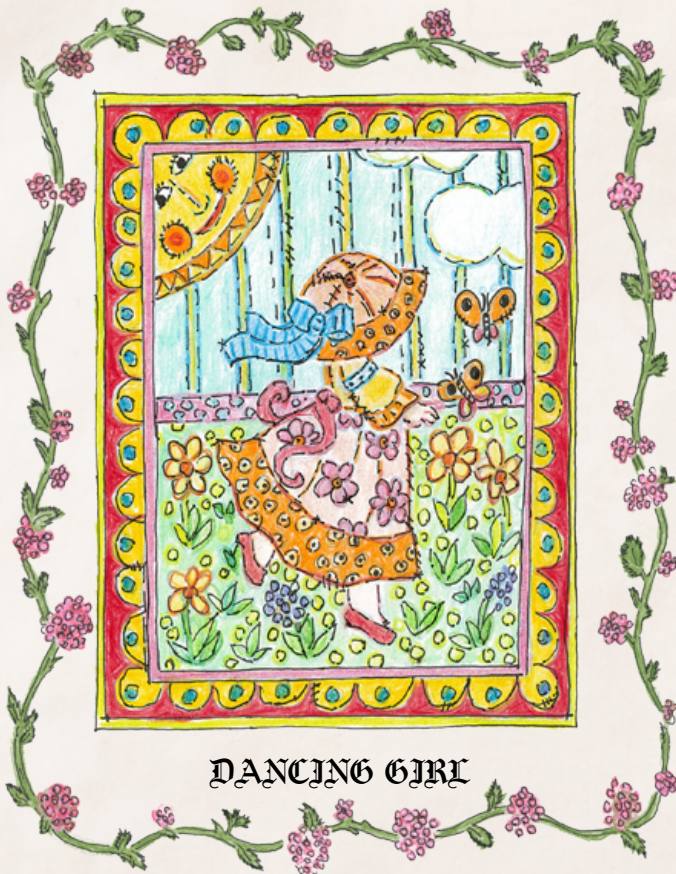
Frau Ruehl with beauteous,

bubbly ZeeBeth, welcomed all with "Guten Tag! Good day!" to the Veigls, the Hasenbeins, the Heitmuellers, the Betz, the Richters, to another Ruehl family from the east side of the county, and the Peinhardts, the Stiefelmeyers, the Buettners, the Wachters, the Apels, the Dreher, the Ehrenspergers, the Kesslers; and new settlers in the county who had come from Virginia, Tennessee and Georgia.

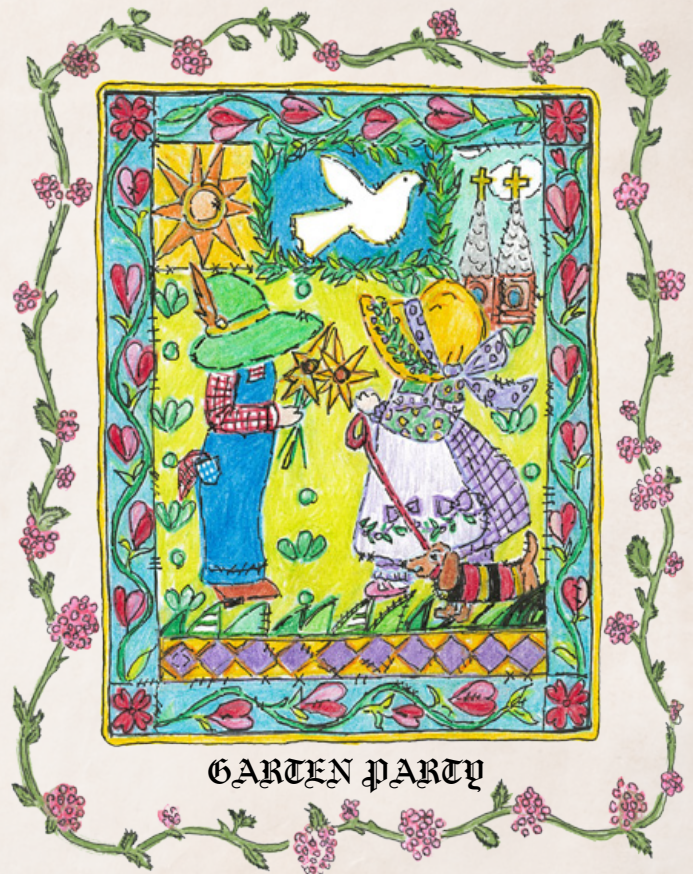
There was a little, willow basket for each to fill with sweet strawberries.

Together, the Colonel and his dear friend, their farmer hostess, Frau Ruehl, ignited the "Boom! Boom! Boom!!" of the celebratory cannons. Lilacs, types which could flourish this far south, perfumed the breeze. Crimson Cardinals, Blue Jays and Yellowhammers added notes of music and color to the scene as they chirped and trilled.

Colonel Cullman declared »



DANCING GIRL



GARDEN PARTY

this was a day for play not solemn speechifying and raised a toast to the founding farmers and gardeners and to the splendid “wundergarten” that surrounded them.

His vision had become imperfect with age, so the Colonel now wore bifocals at times. However, he saw a grand future for the community, clearly. He smiled as he told those gathered, “Our place here in America feels like this magical “wundergarten,” like one could magically change their life here”

Hearing this final remark, the jubilant crowd went joyously wild—“Hooray! Hooray! Hip, hip, hooray!” Then, the volunteers of the community band played a spirited version of Herr Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy.”

So that the picnicking musicians, including those from the Bremen town community and the Hauk Family Band could eat as they played

merry tunes, Frau Ruehl had baked long, soft rolls to hold their Frankfurter sausage, red cabbage sauerkraut, pickled dill gherkins and mustard relish. For dessert, Fritz and ZeeBeth made gingersnap cookies and stamped each with a thumbprint they filled with German strawberry jam.

There were large bowls of herb punch. Everyone clinked glasses, danced and sang familiar folk tunes; some from the olde country, some from the new.

Drums and flugelhorns played and there was a miraculous fiddler. Music went ringing through the woods and continues even to this day. There was a yodeling contest. “Yodel-Ay-Ee-Oooo! Yodel-Ay-Ee-Oooo!” Children of all ages tried for prizes as they tossed little pouches of beans at a target in a game called “sitzsack.” Even the willows happily swayed their green veils in the mountain air. I wish

you and I had been there.

Frau Ruehl, herself like a young woman, donned a hand-dyed kerchief, red stockings and a quilted, dirndl skirt she had embroidered with flowers like those in the borders of her kitchen garden. She intended to dance through her shoes with jaunty jigs to the oompah band.

Across the garden chatting with ZeeBeth, Fritz stood tall, looking out across the bluff toward the east. His joyful heart wagged like a lamb’s tail. The two played fetch with the new farm dog, which they named Rolf. That was the barking sound he made as he merrily chased squirrels and hares. “Rolf! Rolf! Rolf, rolf, rolf!”

The meadows of colorful wildflowers below looked like Aladdin’s magic carpet, shimmering in royal splendor as the sun was brightly shining. Chimes of the bells from the village churches spread joy up to Frau Ruehl’s mountaintop

home and through all of God’s green earth.

Fritz, like the flowers which colorfully dotted the meadow, had bloomed where he had been planted. After wandering through the dark forest, he was no longer longing to be anywhere else. An ear-to-ear smile stretched across his sun-freckled face because he loved his new life, which he was now fully awake to appreciate.

This tale of long ago reminds us—we should all grow as if we were miracles planted in a “wundergarten”—because we are.

As Fritz and ZeeBeth looked toward the future and the promise of this place, he was surrounded with joy in his new homeland. They lived happily until the end of their long lives.

AND, the brown-eyed dove fluttered from his pine tree perch toward the heavens like the angel he was.

DAS ENDE

CULLMAN'S LARGEST FURNITURE SHOWROOM

CF

CULLMAN FURNITURE MARKET

ROWEFURNITURE.COM | ROBINBRUCE.COM



1807 2ND AVE SW | CULLMAN, AL 256-841-6755 CULLMANFURNITUREMARKET.COM

Bassett

BERNHARDT

HOOKER
FURNITURE

LA Z BOY
ComfortStudio

- LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

Cullman Marble & Granite

Cheyenne Sharp

cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

“Memorials of Quality since 1910” is the motto emblazoned in stone on the front of Josh Eddleman’s business, one of Cullman’s oldest – rivaled only by Buettner Brothers – Cullman Marble & Granite.

Eddleman knows being such a longtime company has its perks, saying, “We have been in the same building, basically, since 1910, as far back as we can date it. This used to be the old 9-0 Cafe which some previous owners bought, and parlayed into the whole shop now. The shop originally was actually a little room of the building where it all started. So we never moved, just got bigger, just took over more space in the building.”

Headstones, mausoleums and grave markers aren’t usually dinnertime conversation, but instead a service the community needs.

Eddleman said, “We provide more of a service to the community, for sure.” It’s a service that everyone will need sooner or later, but one people don’t usually think about until it’s needed. Costs associated with purchasing a marker for a loved one can be high, but Eddleman said, “I tell people and I say, ‘You know, my wife may remodel our kitchen 10 times in our lifetime, but if I pass she’s only going to buy one stone for me.’”

Granite is the second hardest stone found in nature, and is also the stone used for markers and headstones, as its hardness and sustainability allow some respite from weathering, ensuring a lasting memorial.



CHEYENNE SHARP/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Josh Eddleman purchased Cullman Marble & Granite in 2017, and continues the legacy of “Memorial of quality since 1910.”

Creating these stones is no easy process; engraving tools have to be made of diamond, or a lab created equivalent, and the sheer weight of the stones alone exceeds a ton in some cases.

Said Eddleman, “Gray granite is 183 pounds per cubic foot, black is 210 pounds per cubic foot. So most of your colors are heavy. It’s heavy, it’s hot in the summer, it’s cold in the winter. You know? It’s just a process. It’s a process most people don’t know about.”

Once the raw stones are received by Eddleman, a computer program creates a stencil that is glued on and sandblasted to ensure proper depth of lettering. Eddleman said, “The deeper the lettering is cut, the longer the words will

last.” When the initial sandblasting is done, the stone heads to Mark Ballew, longtime employee of Cullman Marble & Granite since the early 1980s.

Eddleman continued, “After everything’s done cutting, it goes to the next stage which is Ballew’s booth and he does the shade carve, where basically he free hands all the designs, so that’s an amazing process and he’s a very, very talented man.”

Ballew has saved the shop on more than one occasion, according to Eddleman. Backlogs and shortages have touched Eddleman’s business in the past; Ballew was there to jump in when production halted.

Eddleman recalled, “Mark’s been here for years and the

process that he was raised or learned on was actually rubbing a design on it and cutting it out freehand, so it was all hands-on. So we went back to the old-school way: rub acetone on it, tape it so it holds everything together and freehand the cutting. The knowledge that Mark had and knowledge from the company being here that long, if we’d have been a fresh start-up company, we’d have been like everybody else, we couldn’t do anything.”

Going back to the “old ways” did add time to each job, but Eddleman said he would rather lose time on completing a project to his own high standards, than lose quality. “It’s a process and it’s just lengthy and that’s the thing – there’s no way to speed it up »

because if you speed it up you lose quality, and that's one thing we have always worked for - quality, quality, quality - from the workmanship, to the setting, to the finished product, and that's what really we stand on. So you can't you speed it up, we take our time or you lose quality and then your product is no good anymore."

Cullman Marble & Granite runs a small team, with less than a handful of employees to share in the burdens of these heavy pieces. Safety stays at the forefront of Eddleman's mind when bringing in new team members.

"I had to hire and let go a few people because they had no concern for their own safety or the safety of other people. Dealing with stuff that heavy you don't get a second chance; if it falls on you, you don't get a second chance.

"You really have to get a good crew, take care of them and they'll take care of you, you know. But we have a good crew. There's four of us here and they're a good bunch of guys. I trust them on everything. They all do their one certain job really good; they all come together and do the ultimate goal."

Cullman continues to grow and with increases in births and population, come increases in deaths and funerals; Eddleman's demand for markers and headstones has skyrocketed.

Wait times between ordering a stone and the time Eddleman and his team could place it were steadily at six to eight weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic, he said. Now that time has shifted to six to eight months. Quarries shut down, exports from other countries were prohibited or, if allowed, subject to a high tariff. "We had a long straight time of just zero production, but yet people were still coming in and purchasing," he said.

Eddleman said he and his



CHEYENNE SHARP/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Details of stones and markers are hand carved to ensure quality of the added designs.

team are slowly catching up on the backlog, each week chipping away at the waiting stones, and Eddleman is thinking to the future of his

shop, as well.

"This place means a lot to my family. Hopefully it stays in my family, but you never know. My daughters have their

own lives, their own path and that'll be their journey," he said, laughing, "They're going to have to marry a good man or something."

**LOCALLY OWNED
READY MIX PROVIDER**

PROUDLY SERVING:
CULLMAN COUNTY
SMITH LAKE &
SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

**BROTHERS
CONCRETE SUPPLY**

256.798.2500 | WWW.BROTHERSCONCRETESUPPLY.COM

Healthy holiday recipes

Lauren Estes

lauren@cullmantribune.com

This holiday season, change up your normal Thanksgiving, Christmas and other holiday dishes with healthy, fresh or simply different alternatives that are sure to impress and save some calories.

You can eat better this holiday season by adding some new side dishes, main courses and even a healthy dessert. Here are a few recipes we found that incorporate healthier ingredients, but still have big flavor!

GREEN BEANS WITH ORANGE AND ALMOND GREMOLATA

YIELDS: 8 servings
CAL/SERV: 125

Ingredients

- 2 lb. green beans
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- 1/2 c. roasted almonds, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp. orange zest
- 1/2 c. flat leaf parsley, chopped

Directions

1. Bring large pot of water to a boil. Fill large bowl with ice water. Add 1 tbsp. salt to boiling water, then, in batches, cook green beans until just tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer green beans to the ice water to cool; drain and set aside.

2. In a small skillet, heat oil, garlic and rosemary on medium heat until garlic sizzles around the edges and begins to turn golden, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and toss

with almonds and orange zest, then parsley.

3. Serve over warm or room temperature green beans.

www.womansday.com/food-recipes/food-drinks/a24115941/green-beans-with-orange-and-almond-gremolata-recipe

HOLIDAY BEEF STEW

YIELDS: 8 servings
PREP TIME: 15 mins
TOTAL TIME: 1 hr 40 mins
CAL/SERV: 296

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. (or more) vegetable oil
- 2 lb. beef chuck stew meat, cut into 1" cubes
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled, cut into rounds
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 c. tomato paste
- 6 c. low-sodium beef broth
- 1 c. red wine
- 1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. dried or fresh thyme leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 lb. baby potatoes, halved
- 1 c. frozen peas
- 1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley

Directions

1. In a large Dutch oven or heavy pot over medium heat, heat oil. Add beef and cook, turning occasionally, until seared on all sides, about 10 minutes. Transfer beef to a plate.

2. Coat bottom of pot with oil, if needed, and heat over medium-high heat. Cook onion,



Holiday beef stew

carrots and celery, stirring, until softened, about 7 minutes; season with salt and pepper. Add garlic and tomato paste and cook, stirring, until garlic is fragrant and tomato paste has darkened, about 2 minutes. Return beef to pot. Add broth, wine, Worcestershire, thyme and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and bring to a simmer; season with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, until beef is tender, 30 to 45 minutes.

3. Add potatoes and simmer, covered, until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes.

4. Remove bay leaves. Stir in peas and cook, stirring, until warmed through, about 2 minutes; season with salt and pepper.

5. Divide stew among bowls. Top with parsley.

www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a23515497/easy-beef-stew-recipe

CINNAMON APPLE OAT BRAN PANCAKES

PREP TIME: 8 minutes
COOK TIME: 20 minutes
NUTRITION: 184 calories

per pancake, 27 carbs/8.8 fats/6.8 grams of protein- 6 servings per recipe

Ingredients

- 1 crisp apple (sweet apples are best)
- 1 c. oat bran
- 1/3 c. old fashioned oats
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 c. unsweetened almond milk plus more to reach desired consistency
- 2 tbsp. honey
- 2 tbsp. coconut oil, melted

Directions

1. Peel and de-core the apple. (Any sweet, crisp apple will do for this recipe, like a gala, fuji or honey crisp.)

2. Once the skin and core are removed, chop the apple into fine, even pieces.

3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the chopped apple, oat bran, old fashioned oats, baking powder, ground cinnamon, eggs, unsweetened almond milk, honey and coconut oil. Stir well. (The mixture should be thick, but soupy and pourable. If necessary, you can add a touch more almond milk to loosen.

4. Now, heat a griddle or skillet over medium-high heat. »

5. Once the pan is hot, pour 1/4 cup of the batter onto the hot pan. (No need to grease the pan since the batter contains the coconut oil which will prevent it from sticking.)

6. Cook the pancake for 3-4 minutes, then flip and cook an additional 3-4 minutes, or until golden-brown.

7. Repeat with remaining batter.

8. To serve, you can drizzle with some pure maple syrup or honey.

www.asweetpeachef.com/oat-bran-pancakes

WINTER FRUIT SALAD

PREP TIME: 30 minutes
NUTRITION: Per serving-301 calories/ 2 grams of fat/ 76 grams of carbs/ 11.5 grams of fiber

Ingredients

- 1/2 c. sugar
- 11-inch piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- one vanilla bean, split lengthwise and seeds scraped out
- 1 lemon
- 5 large navel or blood oranges
- 2 mangoes, peeled and diced
- 2 firm bananas, peeled and diced
- 5 kiwis, peeled and diced
- 12 kumquats, very thinly sliced crosswise, seeds removed
- 1 cup pomegranate seeds (from 1 pomegranate)

Directions

1. Combine the sugar, 2 cups water, the ginger and vanilla seeds and pod in a saucepan.

2. Use a vegetable peeler to remove wide strips of zest from the lemon and 1 orange, add to the saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat.

3. Reduce the heat and simmer

for five minutes. Refrigerate until cold.

www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/holidays/holiday-central-how-tos/holidays-made-healthy-smart-indulgences

HERB-ROASTED TURKEY BREAST

YIELDS: 6 servings
PREP TIME: 25 min
TOTAL TIME: 2 hr 40 mins

Ingredients

- 1 whole bone-in turkey breast, 6 1/2 to 7 lbs.
- 1 tbsp. minced garlic (3 cloves)
- 2 tsp. dry mustard
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh sage leaves
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. good olive oil
- 2 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice

- 1 c. dry white wine


Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 325 F. Place the turkey breast, skin side up, on a rack in a roasting pan.

2. In a small bowl, combine the garlic, mustard, herbs, salt, pepper, olive oil and lemon juice to make a paste. Loosen the skin from the meat gently with your fingers and smear half of the paste directly on the meat. Spread the remaining paste evenly on the skin. Pour the wine into the bottom of the roasting pan.


3. Roast the turkey for 1 3/4 to 2 hours, until the skin is golden brown and an instant-read thermometer registers 165 F when inserted into the thickest and meatiest areas of the breast. (I test in several places.) If the skin is over-browning, cover the breast loosely with aluminum foil. When the turkey is done, cover with foil and allow it to rest at room temperature for 15 minutes. Slice and serve with the pan juices spooned over the turkey.

www.foodnetwork.com/thanksgiving/photos/healthy-thanksgiving-recipes



WENDY SMITH

Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Closed Sundays



1601-A 1st Avenue SW
Cullman, Alabama 35055

256-739-2110

JUDGE OF PROBATE

TAMMY BROWN

& EMPLOYEES WISH YOU A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON



PHONE: 256-775-4652 WWW.CULLMANCOURTS.ORG

5 ways to FITNESS at home this holiday season

Lauren Estes
lauren@cullmantribune.com

If you're looking for some extra accountability and don't want to see added pounds this holiday season, use these tips to help stay active and healthy from Thanksgiving to New Year's!

1. Steps

One of the best ways to manage your weight year-round is to get your steps in daily. Setting a step goal for yourself and monitoring it via a fitness app on your phone or watch is one of the easiest ways to keep up with how much you are walking every day. Studies show that walking 10,000 steps can improve cardiovascular health and reduce risks of both dementia and cancer. While walking 10,000 steps is ideal, fewer steps still confer many benefits, with even 3,800 steps

daily reducing cognitive decline by 25%. (www.kumc.edu/about/news/news-archive/jama-study-ten-thousand-steps.html)

2. Sunshine

Our bodies produce Vitamin D when exposed to sunlight—so 15 minutes a day can help your body maintain calcium and can prevent brittle, thin or misshapen bones. It can also help with your mood. (www.selecthealth.org/blog/2020/07/7-health-benefits-of-sunlight)

3. Proper hydration and nutrition

Properly hydrating and fueling your body can keep you focused and prepared for all things you might face during the busiest time of the year. Meal planning, prepping and drinking plenty of water can help on travel/on-the-go days where

otherwise "bad" food decisions might happen. Fail to prepare or prepare to fail when it comes to your nutrition. (www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/features/holidays-healthy-eating.html)

4. Sleep and recovery

Sleep is VITAL for your cognitive, physical and emotional abilities to function properly in your day-to-day routines. Healthy sleep is one of the best things you can do for your overall well-being. Having appropriate sleep, rest and recovery times (all different things) are super helpful in regulating your blood sugar levels, lowering your risk of diseases and reducing inflammation. (www.optum.com/health-articles/article/healthy-living/what-does-it-mean-have-healthy-sleep)

5. Exercise/weightlifting

Working out at home can be

as simple as finding a few challenging exercises that you can complete and are approved by your doctor. Most health experts recommend exercising 30 minutes, five times weekly. (www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/index.htm)

Here is a sample home workout for a beginner: (Please have all workouts approved by your doctor before beginning a new exercise regimen.)

At home Tabata workout:

- 20-30 seconds with 10 seconds of rest in between
- Step ups + jumping jacks + plank hold + free squats. Repeat 3-4 rounds.

If you can manage to get your steps in, get appropriate sleep, be adequately fueled and hydrated, exercise and grab some sunshine daily - you have the magic pill of health and wellness.

**CULLMAN'S NEWEST ON-SITE STATE OF THE ART CREMATORY NOW OPEN
DIRECT CREMATION \$1,595 | NO HIDDEN COSTS**

Cullman Funeral Home and Crematory

– "Sincere Compassionate Care" –



**100% Locally Owned & Operated
by the Steve Rodgers Family**

(256) 734-3144

461 U.S. Highway 278 East
Cullman, Alabama 35055

www.cullmanfuneralhome.com



Pyramid-Lighting
November 24

NEW!
CAROUSEL
RIDE

Cullman Christkindlmarkt
November 24 - December 23

Christmas Parade
December 1

Tree-Lighting
December 1

NEW!
ICE
SKATING
RINK

A JOURNEY TO CHRISTMAS WONDER

Where German Traditions meet Southern Charm

CHRISTMASINCULLMAN.COM

- MIDDLE SCHOOL FOOTBALL -

Raiders capture back to back county championships with 28-8 win over West Point

Nick Griffin

nick@cullmantribune.com

GOOD HOPE, Ala. — After defeating Fairview and Vinemont in last week's semi-finals respectively, the Good Hope Raiders and West Point Warriors clashed in the county title game for the second straight season at James W. Shabel Stadium Tuesday night. The Raiders held a slim, 6-0 lead at halftime but fell behind West Point early in the third quarter. However, Good Hope outscored the Warriors 22-0 the rest of the way and the Raiders captured their second consecutive county championship with a 28-8 win.

Good Hope struck first on its opening possession when quarterback Web Buchanan connected with Tucker Screws over the middle and Screws took it into the end zone for a 20-yard touchdown, giving the Raiders a 6-0 lead with just over four minutes remaining in the first quarter. On the first play of the ensuing West Point possession, a Warriors fumble was recovered by Screws, giving the ball back to Good Hope but the Raiders turned it over on downs just a few plays later.

Another West Point fumble was recovered by Good Hope's Chase Boles early in



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Good Hope Raiders defeated West Point 28-8 Tuesday night to win back to back county championships.

the second quarter, but the Raiders were unable to take advantage of the short field and turned the ball over on downs once again. Neither team was able to find the end zone in the final five minutes of the second and Good Hope went into the halftime break with a 6-0 lead.

The Warriors came out firing to start the second half and were able to take the lead after quarterback Carter McAfee hit Breylee Woodard in stride deep down the middle of the field for a 47-yard touchdown. Koltan Franks punched in the two-point conversion and with

just one minute gone in the third quarter, West Point led 8-6. Good Hope answered quickly on its next possession, keeping the chains moving on the ground with an up-tempo attack. Once the Raiders moved down inside the Warriors 20-yard line, Buchanan pulled up and hit Cooper Johnson running down the seam for a 16-yard touchdown and put Good Hope back in front 12-8 with 3:39 to play in the third.

West Point's next possession ended with a turnover on downs and the Raiders took advantage of the short field, extending their lead to 18-8

with a 17-yard touchdown run by Screws. Screws ran in the two-point conversion moments later and gave Good Hope a 20-8 lead with less than a minute remaining in the third quarter.

The Warriors were unable to convert on fourth down at the start of the fourth quarter and just a couple of plays later, Screws stretched the lead to 26-8 with his second touchdown run of the night. Eli Drake carried it into the end zone for the two-point conversion to put the Raiders in front 28-8 and all but seal the win for Good Hope. The Raiders finished the »

game in victory formation and celebrated their second consecutive county title after defeating West Point 28-8.

Buchanan completed seven of his 10 pass attempts for 84 yards and a pair of

touchdowns and added 50 more yards on the ground.

Screws posted 33 yards and two touchdowns on two carries and caught four passes for 64 yards and another score. Johnson caught three

passes for 38 yards and a touchdown. Ryker Hancock finished with 46 yards on nine carries and Johnson added 32 yards on six carries.

McAfee completed three of his five passes for 58 yards

and a touchdown. Woodard caught a 47-yard touchdown and Westen Tolbert hauled in another catch for 11 yards. Rush Lamar led the way on the ground with 75 yards on 19 carries.



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.

But it's a history that wouldn't have happened without you, Cullman. We never forget that. For 80 years, you've trusted us to insure your homes, your cars, your businesses, your lives. You've become our friends, our neighbors, and our reason to turn up at the office every day. You're also the reason that, after all these years, Elliot's son Wescoat Free is still running the independent insurance agency that bears his family name. And, for that, we can't thank you enough.



Your agents. Your neighbors. Your friends. For three generations.

- MIDDLE SCHOOL FOOTBALL -

CMS 7th grade downs Hartselle 12-0 to win Tennessee Valley Championship, cap perfect season

Nick Griffin

nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — After wrapping up an undefeated regular season against Arab last week, the Cullman Bearcats returned home Tuesday night to host this year's Tennessee Valley League seventh grade championship game and the 'Cats took down Hartselle 12-0 to claim the league title and complete the season 7-0. James Short recorded touchdown runs of 85 and 55 yards along with several big tackles on the defensive side of the ball to earn Championship Game MVP honors.

Bearcats Head Coach Gerald Turner has spent nearly two decades on the sideline at Cullman Middle School and has coached a lot of great teams and players but admits this year's team has been special to coach.

"It was just a lot of hard work and unity every day. No one ever complained, everyone just did their job and did what they were supposed to do. We do a lot of different stuff here at the middle school. We throw the ball all around the field and use a lot of different formations, but these guys stepped right up and caught right on," Turner said. "That's something special about these kids here. A lot of times when something doesn't work, we just draw it up in the dirt and they're smart enough to figure

it out and that's what makes them special."

In addition to the efforts of his players, Turner wanted to acknowledge his coaching staff and the work they put in to help their players and teams reach their goals on and off the field.

"These teams are special. I've been here 18 years, 16 as a head coach and we went on a 34-game winning streak but it's just never enough for these guys, we just keep coaching, and the kids keep playing. Most of my assistant coaches played for me I've been here so long, and I couldn't ask for better help," Turner said. "These guys take care of our kids, they love them, they teach them football but not only that, they teach them a lot about life. We use football to teach about life, that's really our job, the football will take care of itself."

After a high snap sailed over quarterback Shannon Wynn's head on the game's first play, the Bearcats made up for it on the very next snap when James Short took a handoff from Wynn 85 yards down the sideline for a touchdown to put Cullman in front 6-0 just one minute into the first quarter.

After both teams exchanged a pair of punts, the Tigers were able to put a drive together late in the second quarter and move into Bearcat territory but an interception by Walker Gentry stopped the drive short and gave the



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Cullman Bearcats defeated Hartselle 12-0 Tuesday night to win this year's Tennessee Valley League seventh grade championship game and finish the season unbeaten.

ball back to Cullman's offense near midfield. The 'Cats went into the halftime break leading 6-0 but Hartselle came out to start the third with another good drive.

The Tigers converted on fourth down to move the ball inside Cullman's 20-yard line but Short burst through the middle of the line on a blitz to make a big tackle for loss and set up fourth and long at the end of the third quarter. On fourth down, Gentry broke up another Hartselle pass to force a turnover on downs and give the ball back to the Bearcats at the start of the fourth.

Just a few plays later, Short took off down the Cullman

sideline for his second touchdown of the night, this time from 55 yards out, and made it a 12-0 game with just over three minutes to play. The Tigers threatened to score one more time in the final minute of the game, but Levi Voss picked off a Hartselle pass and returned it all the way down to the 6-yard line to preserve the shutout and secure a 12-0, championship win for the Bearcats.

Cullman Middle School's eighth grade team will be looking to finish its own perfect season Thursday night when they host Muscle Shoals for the eighth grade Tennessee Valley Championship Game at 6 p.m.

EST.  1873

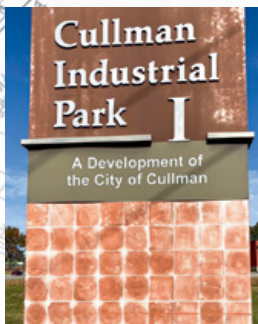
CULLMAN

Economic Development Agency

OVER 1 BILLION
IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT 2013-2022

#1 NEW & EXPANDING INDUSTRIES
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

#3 MICROPOLITAN IN AMERICA
SITE SELECTION MAGAZINE



“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.

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

- MIDDLE SCHOOL FOOTBALL -

CMS 8th grade tops Muscle Shoals 20-8 to win Tennessee Valley Championship, finish season unbeaten

Nick Griffin

nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — After capturing the seventh-grade title Tuesday, Cullman Middle School was back on Mark Britton Field at Oliver Woodard Stadium to play Muscle Shoals for the Tennessee Valley League's eighth grade championship Thursday night. The Bearcats trailed Muscle Shoals at halftime but outscored the Trojans 14-0 in the second half to win the game 20-8, claim this year's league title and finish the season undefeated. Brooks Loftin earned Championship Game MVP honors after making several big plays on defense and catching a pair of passes for 77 yards.

'Cats Head Coach Gerald Turner knew his team wasn't playing loose in the first half and knew they could pull ahead if they settled down for the second.

"At halftime I just told them they weren't playing the way they were taught. I think in the first half they were just so hyped up and ready to go and we missed some assignments and had a weird fumble down on the goal line and things weren't going our way," Turner said. "But I told them at halftime we're probably two touchdowns better than they are, and we aren't playing like that. Going into the second half we just needed to take a deep breath



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cullman Middle School's eighth grade team defeated Muscle Shoals 20-8 Thursday night to win this year's Tennessee Valley League Championship.

and relax, and we were ready to go."

Cullman took an early lead right out of the gate when Joshua Au took a handoff 65 yards for a touchdown on the game's first play to put the Bearcats in front 6-0. Muscle Shoals responded on the ensuing possession, capping off a scoring drive with a 28-yard touchdown pass and a successful two-point conversion to move in front 8-6. Cullman was stopped short on fourth down on its next drive, but the Trojans were forced to punt a few plays later after a big tackle for loss by Brooks Loftin.

On the next 'Cats possession, quarterback Michael Shadeck hit Loftin on a screen pass and he ran it all the

way down inside the 5-yard line but a fumble near the goal line was recovered by Muscle Shoals in the end zone, resulting in a touchback and a first down for the Trojans. Neither team was able to get any more points on the board in the remainder of the second quarter and Cullman went into the halftime break trailing 8-6.

The Bearcats looked sharp to start the second half, forcing Muscle Shoals to punt on its first possession and then putting together a methodical scoring drive that consumed most of the clock left in the third. After driving down inside the 5-yard line, Cullman pulled ahead 12-6 after Jace White punched in his first touchdown of the night from two yards out. The Bearcats got a big play

on defense to end the third quarter when Loftin caught the Trojans deep in the backfield for another big loss and forced Muscle Shoals to punt once again.

Cullman was moving the chains on the ground, keeping the ball away from the Trojans and running the clock when White broke free for a 31-yard touchdown and made it an 18-8 game. Shadeck found Colt Colvard over the middle for the two-point conversion and the Bearcats pulled ahead 20-8 with five minutes left to play. The next possession ended on a Trojans fourth down when Loftin got into the backfield for a sack and all but secured the 20-8 win for the 'Cats.

Turner is proud of the way his team responded in »

the second half and is even prouder of the work they and his coaching staff have put in over the last year to prepare for this moment.

“This is the hardest working group. We started working these guys out this same week last year and it was every day. Every day we were over here on this hill running and they never complained because the one game they lost last year was to this same bunch and they knocked us out of the

playoffs. They didn’t want that to happen again, and they worked every day to get where they needed to be,” Turner said. “This coaching staff is unbelievable, and I just can’t say enough about them. Some of them have played for me, some of them are community coaches and they’re taking away from time with their family to be part of football because they all played here. Every one of these guys was successful here on the teams

they were on, and the big thing is the kids love them. They love them and they play way above their heads for these guys because they can get it out of them.”

Turner continued, “The administration here is great and they’ve been so good to us whether it’s letting us out early or whatever we need to do to go the games and stuff. It’s unbelievable what our parents do to help us ever since I’ve been here. That’s

why football has been successful here at the middle school and these guys are going to make great players and responsible men when they have their own families.”

White led the way for Cullman on the ground with 79 yards and two touchdowns on 11 carries. Au posted 75 yards and a score on three carries, Shadeck carried it seven times for 31 yards and Loftin caught a pair of passes for 77 yards.



Lenders
You Know
and
Trust

 **Merchants Bank**
of Alabama

a division of SouthPoint Bank

www.merchantsbankal.bank 256-734-8110



- PREP CROSS COUNTRY -

Cold Springs Eagles, Lady Eagles capture 20th, 18th consecutive county championships

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

FAIRVIEW, Ala. — This year’s Cullman County Cross Country Championships were hosted at Fairview’s Randall Shedd Community Park Thursday and both the Cold Springs Eagles and Lady Eagles put on dominant performances to add to their growing list of county titles. The Eagles topped Holly Pond 35-56 to claim their 20th consecutive county championship and the Lady Eagles flew past the Lady Broncos 18-51 to earn their 18th straight county crown.

Individually, Cold Springs’ Ethan Edgeworth (15:36.61) and Reagan Parris (20:01.69) each placed first in the varsity boys’ and girls’ races respectively. Holly Pond’s Travis Barnett (16:14.73), Cold Springs’ Jayden Allred (16:31.77), Fairview’s Alex England (16:49.55) and West Point’s Rene Moreno-Tovar (17:01.97) rounded out the top five on the boys’ side and Cold Springs’ Macie Huffstutler (21:32.93), Holly Pond’s Mila Edmondson (21:57.18) and Cold Springs runners Paizley Whitlow (21:59.56) and Daisy Mavers (22:50.60) filled out the top five in the girls’ division.

Cold Springs Boys (1st Place)
• 1st Ethan Edgeworth: »



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Cold Springs Lady Eagles won this year’s Cullman County Cross Country Championship.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Cold Springs Eagles won this year’s Cullman County Cross Country Championship.

15:36.61

- 3rd Jayden Allred: 16:31.77
- 7th Sage Nelson: 17:24.55
- 10th Drew Dykes: 18:12.41
- 14th Logan Perdue: 18:45.10
- 20th Blake Belcher: 19:42.65
- 21st Blaize Anderson: 19:48.37
- 29th Zander Ashworth: 22:03.00
- 46th Samuel Hunt: 26:31.83

Holly Pond Boys (2nd Place)

- 2nd Travis Barnett: 16:14.73
- 8th Matthew Putman: 17:39.33
- 9th Joshua Putman: 17:56.56
- 18th Kohl Horton: 19:28.07
- 19th Emery Barnett: 19:41.98
- 24th Caden Moody: 20:14.72
- 37th Bradley Woods: 24:20.70
- 42nd Carter Brewis: 25:24.32
- 49th Jonah Shockley: 30:51.12

West Point Boys (3rd Place)

- 5th Rene Moreno-Tovar: 17:01.97
- 11th Hayden Jones: 18:32.06
- 15th Thomas Ferster: 18:50.63
- 23rd Brier Taylor: 20:06.32
- 25th Jesus Tovar: 20:17.35
- 26th Jakob Salter: 20:17.75
- 30th Zeth McCain: 22:29.97

Fairview Boys (4th Place)

- 4th Alex England: 16:49.55
- 12th Parker Guterrez: 18:38.11
- 17th Carlos Medina: 19:26.99
- 27th Jackson Haynes: 20:53.43
- 32nd Devon Mcgee: 23:28.97
- 34th Meighton McParlin:

23:31.30

- 39th Tucker Kimbrough: 24:36.04
- 40th Oscar Pardo: 24:47.50
- 47th Bryan Garcia: 27:12.79

Vinemont Boys (5th Place)

- 6th Brady Johnson: 17:14.18
- 16th Hayden Robinson: 19:04.40
- 22nd Andrew Landreth: 19:58.35
- 28th Yojan Patino: 21:07.68
- 31st Brayden Harbison: 22:34.12
- 35th Dekota Crider: 23:32.38
- 41st Samuel Pierce: 24:59.12
- 44th Davy Johnson: 25:48.56

Good Hope Boys (6th Place)

- 13th Drake Nichols: 18:39.23
- 33rd Kaden Mattox: 23:31.19
- 36th Roger Miller: 23:34.89
- 43rd Noah Page: 25:45.61
- 45th Lee Dickerson: 25:55.19

Hanceville Boys

- 38th Trenton Barlett: 24:29.51
- 48th Jacob Kane: 29:10.07

Cold Springs Girls (1st Place)

- 1st Reagan Parris: 20:01.69
- 2nd Macie Huffstutler: 21:32.93
- 4th Paizley Whitlow: 21:59.56
- 5th Daisy Mavericks: 22:50.60
- 6th Kynzlie Myrex: 23:01.44
- 8th Leslie Jones: 23:46.40
- 10th Claire Huffstutler: 24:37.95
- 13th Makara Mavericks: 24:58.02
- 14th Hayla Watson: 25:10.05
- 15th Allison White: 25:24.11
- 17th Charli Harbison:

25:33.43

- 18th Claire Hancock: 25:47.46
- 22nd Alana Smith: 28:57.38
- 25th Conellie Philbeck: 31:37.06

Holly Pond Girls (2nd Place)

- 3rd Mila Edmondson: 21:57.18
- 7th Caroline Lamoureux: 23:15.37
- 12th Kynleigh Wood: 24:52.54
- 19th Violet Adams: 26:15.26
- 21st Jayden Persall: 28:19.37
- 28th Clara Spitzer: 32:55.05
- 29th Kalie Bartlett: 33:08.44
- 32nd Dallas Welton:

39:11.17

West Point Girls (3rd Place)

- 9th Lilly Patterson: 24:14.35
- 11th Elizabeth Lee: 24:50.56
- 16th Dorothy Salter: 25:24.96
- 23rd Maggie Warren: 30:12.78
- 26th Alyssa Carr: 31:43.14

Hanceville Girls

- 24th Gabby Hunter: 31:01.44
- 27th Whitney James: 32:07.56
- 30th Piper Butts: 35:13.74

Good Hope Girls

- 31st Mary Self: 35:50.84

Vinemont Girls

- 20th Whitney Quick: 26:31.72

MCGRIFF
TIRE & SERVICE

75
YEARS

1948-2023

BERT MCGRIFF, FOUNDER OF MCGRIFF TIRE & SERVICE

209 2ND AVE. NW, CULLMAN, AL 35055
256-734-5212 | WWW.MCGRIFFTIRE.COM

- COUNTY VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT -

Good Hope edges Fairview 3-2 to claim 3rd straight county crown

Nick Griffin

nick@cullmantribune.com

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — It took five, hard-fought sets to pull it off, but the Good Hope Lady Raiders were able to capture their third straight Cullman County Tournament Championship Thursday night. Good Hope went back and forth with Fairview for four tight sets before putting things away for good in the fifth set 15-11. After the championship match, this year's All-County and All-Tournament teams were announced, and Lady Raiders senior Ivey Maddox was named Tournament MVP. This year's Samantha Perdue award was also presented to Cold Springs' Malaya Taylor.

Earlier in the evening, the JV Tournament Championship was decided as well. West Point took the first set over Fairview 25-21, but the Lady Aggies bounced back to take the second set 25-18. With a county title on the line in the third set, the Lady Warriors topped the Lady Aggies 15-8 and captured this year's JV County Championship.

Good Hope 3 - Fairview 2 (20-25, 25-18, 23-25, 26-24, 15-11)

Good Hope led the opening set 5-3 early but the Lady Aggies pulled ahead to take a 15-10 lead later in the set and



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Good Hope Lady Raiders defeated Fairview 3-2 Thursday night to win their third straight county championship.

never gave it back. Despite trailing 23-12 at one point, the Lady Raiders climbed back to make it 24-20 but couldn't quite complete the comeback and Fairview won the set 25-20 to take a 1-0 lead.

Good Hope bounced back in the next set, leading 11-7 early and building a 19-11 lead late. The Lady Aggies managed to trim the lead to 23-18 but didn't get any closer than that and the Lady Raiders tied things up with a 25-18 win in the second set.

The third set was knotted

at 10 early on but a 12-4 run allowed Fairview to move in front 22-14. However, Good Hope responded with a 7-0 run of its own to make it 22-21 and the Lady Aggies were able to narrowly escape another Raiders rally with a 25-23 win.

Good Hope jumped out to a 5-1 start in the fourth set and led 12-8 at one point but it was tight the rest of the way. Fairview cut the lead down to 19-18 later in the set and after falling behind 23-20, the Lady Aggies battled back to tie things up at 24. Down 2-1 and with their backs against

the wall, the Lady Raiders scored the next two points to win the fourth set 26-24 and force a fifth and final set for the county title.

Once again Good Hope took a big lead early but just like in the first four sets, a win wouldn't come easily. Fairview came from behind to trim the Raider lead to 11-7 midway through the set and was able to bring the lead all the way down to two at one point but the Lady Raiders scored the final two points to secure a 15-11 win and their third consecutive »

county championship.

ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

- Ivey Maddox, Good Hope (MVP)
- Charly Johnson, Good Hope
- Emma Bailey, Good Hope
- Campbell Koch, Good Hope
- Abby McDonald, Fairview
- Kabri Redding, Fairview
- Ava Calvarese, Fairview
- Laci Segrest, Fairview
- Hallie Wheeler, West Point
- Laklin Shadix, West Point
- Liberty Shadix, West Point
- Kamryn Tankersley, Holly Pond
- Macie Black, Holly Pond
- Emma Earl, Holly Pond
- Zoe Pitts, Hanceville
- Carly Stephens, Vinemont
- Mary Warden, Cold Springs

ALL-COUNTY TEAM

- Ivey Maddox, Good Hope
- Emma Bailey, Good Hope
- Charly Johnson, Good Hope
- Campbell Koch, Good Hope
- Abby McDonald, Fairview
- Laci Segrest, Fairview
- Kabri Redding, Fairview
- Liberty Shadix, West Point
- Laklin Shadix, West Point
- Patton Fell, West Point
- Emma Earl, Holly Pond
- Kamryn Tankersley, Holly Pond
- Kate Sterling, Hanceville
- Mary Warden, Cold Springs
- Carly Stephens, Vinemont

West Point 2 - Fairview 1 (25-21, 18-25, 15-8)

A kill by Hanna McKenney, followed by an ace from Violet Riddle, gave West Point an early 4-2 lead. The Lady Warriors held a slim 7-5 lead, but five straight points



The West Point Lady Warriors defeated Fairview 2-1 to win this year's JV County Volleyball Tournament Championship.

NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

by Fairview, including a kill and a point by Peyton Salazar, gave them a 10-7 lead.

The Lady Aggies later pushed their lead to 13-9, but West Point cut it to 13-12. Fairview got a point and a kill from Kailyn Redding as that gave them a 17-13 lead. A pair of aces from Salazar helped give the Lady Warriors an 18-17 lead.

West Point increased their lead to 21-18 and got a pair of huge points from Mary Beth Penn that helped them take the first set 25-21.

Fairview got off to a red-hot start in the second set as they jumped out to a quick 4-1 lead.

A trio of aces from Salazar helped the Lady Aggies push their lead to 8-2, but an ace from Kelsye Will helped West Point cut it to 9-6.

Fairview increased their lead to 14-7, and later on, to 17-10, on an ace from Anna

Strane.

A late run by the Lady Warriors made it an 18-16 contest, but the Lady Aggies outscored West Point 7-2 the rest of the way and ended up winning the second set 25-18.

The third set was back-and-forth early on. Fairview held a slim 3-1 lead, but a pair of points by Penn and Will tied things up at three.

Later on, an ace from McKenney gave West Point a 6-5 lead.

Redding collected a point for the Lady Aggies to keep it a one-point game at 7-6, but West Point went on their biggest run of the game, scoring the next seven points, with three of those points coming via ace from Will, as they quickly widened their lead to 14-6.

Fairview trimmed it to 14-8, but the biggest point of the game came from the Lady

Warriors' Jacee Bartlett.

Her point to end the game helped West Point get past Fairview 15-8 and claim this year's JV county championship.

JV ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

- Kelsye Will, West Point
- Violet Riddle, West Point
- Bella Thornton, West Point
- Peyton Salazar, Fairview
- Kailyn Redding, Fairview
- Ralie Gaines, Fairview
- Caselyn Whatley, Good Hope
- Maggie O'Neil, Good Hope
- Lexi Marshall, Good Hope
- Cameron Baty, Cold Springs
- Bella McAfee, Hanceville
- Mabri Smith, Vinemont
- Mila Edmondson, Holly Pond

Sammy Confer contributed to this article.

- PREP CHEER -

'Spread God's word as much as you can': Good Hope's Lexi Doss enjoying senior season



Good Hope's Lexi Doss

LEXI DOSS

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

GOOD HOPE, Ala. — Good Hope senior Lexi Doss will be heading into her fourth and final year as a varsity cheerleader and has enjoyed every second of this experience so far. She has learned some very important things during this journey and from some incredible cheerleaders.

"I am so blessed to have been able to experience it. It has been so much fun, and nothing short of incredible. I thank God daily for the friendships and relationships I've made as a cheerleader these past 13 years. The most important thing I've learned is that without God, none of the things I am able to do would be possible. I have also learned that a good team is very hard to find, and when you do find it, it changes everything. I am so blessed with the group of girls I get to cheer with," Doss said. "It has been such a blessing. Each of us know we can count on one another for anything, and that's what makes this team so special. The individuals on our team have taught me how to love, guide, and encourage others in my everyday life. They have also taught me patience, kindness, respect, and joy. I am beyond grateful for them."

Lexi is cheering for some amazing coaches and has

soaked up as much as she can from them. Her improvement in her performance throughout the years have drastically improved and she has improved the most on some important things.

"It has been so rewarding getting to be coached by them, while also growing in my relationship with them. They treat us as their own children, and for that, I will be forever grateful. The biggest lesson they've taught me is that no matter what you may be going through, God will always be right there with you. Another important lesson they have taught me is to enjoy every moment, because you never know how fast your life can change," Doss said. "I have been a cheerleader for 13 years. From the time I was four, my entire life has revolved around cheerleading. It is such a full-circle moment to be able to look back at how far I've come since the beginning. I have physically and skillfully improved each year, as well as also improving as a person. Cheer has always been such a huge part of my life, and it's so bittersweet that the end is coming so soon."

She added, "I have definitely improved on my stunting and tumbling skills over the years, but I have mainly improved my strength. I love spending my free time working out and getting »

stronger; it's my therapy."

Lexi will continue to work on some things as she gets ready for this upcoming cheer season, and she talked about the goals for this season.

"Since this is my last season, I am working my hardest to improve on every aspect I can. I want to finish strong, and leave behind a legacy of hard work, determination, and most importantly, faithfulness," she said.

"My main goals are to cherish every moment and to not take a single second for granted. I know it sounds cheesy, but it truly matters so much to me.

"I want to be able to look back on these years when I'm older and be happy that I cherished these times while I was in them.

"Several of my other main goals are to improve my

tumbling, win state, have a strong run at Nationals, and to be a Godly example by sharing the Gospel and ministering to my teammates.

"One of my biggest personal mottos is, 'You may be the only Jesus someone meets, so spread God's word as much as you can'".

She added, "Some of our team goals are also to win state, have a strong run at Nationals, but more importantly, to grow closer as a team, and be there for one another every chance we get.

Lexi thinks this cheer season will be a very special one for the Lady Raiders and she talked about her role models growing up.

"What will make this team special to watch this year is our strong ability to work together as a team to accomplish a common goal. We also

have many new stunting skills, unlike anything we've ever done before, along with a large variety of skillful tumbling," she said.

"One of my biggest role models is Evan Hutchins, from Sheldon State.

"We have known each other for years, so I have been able to see, first-hand, all of the effort he has put in to become successful.

"The road to collegiate cheerleading is far from easy, but not once have I ever seen him give up on his dream, or even something as small as putting in a half-effort at a single practice.

"His skill level, along with his relationship with the Lord, is truly admirable and inspires me daily. Along with him, I have had many amazing cheerleaders to come before me, that I still look up to, even

to this day."

Lexi talked about the best advice that someone ever gave her and what she's looking forward to the most this upcoming season.

"The best advice I have ever been given is, 'Love God, and love all people'. God calls us to love all people, regardless of who they are or the way they treat you. Another great piece of advice I have been given is my mom telling me, 'Respect is given where respect is earned,'" she said.

"I am looking forward to spending my senior year with my girls. I have such a special bond with the younger girls, and it's such a blessing to be able to pour into them daily. I am also looking forward to cherishing every moment, and hopefully finishing up my high school career with a ring."



November 24 – December 24

CullmanChristkindlmarkt.com

Cullman, AL – "Where German Tradition meets Southern Charm"



Visit **Cullman**

VisitCullman.com • 833-333-0130

- PREP BASKETBALL -

'True joy is found in the Lord': Phoebe Jones recaps junior season at Holly Pond, talks move to Cullman Christian

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — In this interview, I talked to Phoebe Jones about her junior season with the Holly Pond Lady Broncos as well as her recent move to Cullman Christian.

"We had a really good season. The team had a strong connection, and we grew a lot as the season went on. I had to learn that it's okay to step out of your comfort zone, because I played some positions I was not used to playing," Jones said. "They were great teammates. I had so much fun with the practices, games, and tournaments, getting closer and growing as a team. One girl I loved playing with was our only senior, Aliyah Ryan. She was a great leader and an even better friend. She always knew how to lift others up and her strengths to our team. Getting to play volleyball with her these past few years were amazing. We grew close and bonded over things outside of volleyball. I learned the girls' strengths and weaknesses, how to lift others up, and encourage them."

She loved playing for coach Adrienne Adams and learned so much from her. She saw so much improvement from her game throughout her time at Holly Pond and will continue to work on her game as she



BILL PIPER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cullman Christian's Phoebe Jones

gets ready for this upcoming season at Cullman Christian.

"Coach Adams was a good coach to our team. She taught me patience and also, the importance of putting God first in all situations. That is something I will always take with me," Jones said.

"I think I improved a lot as the years went on, as well as our team. I learned how to play different positions on the

court and also learned how to have a positive attitude through any situation. I will continue to work on the little things. Work on volleyball, even when we're not practicing. Something important to me that I also want to improve on is how my teammates will see me. I want to grow my relationship with Christ, so that my teammates see Christ through me. That in

any situation, whether we win or lose, or we are having a bad day, in the end, that's not what matters. It's trusting in Christ and striving to be more like Him every day."

She talked about her individual goals, and she also wished her former Bronco teammates the very best of luck this upcoming season.

"I want to work harder and get better. I want »

to work on not only volleyball skills, but also on building muscle and my speed. I hope that Holly Pond has a great season and makes it far. This team has talent and a strong love for the game. I wish the best for these girls and the team."

It was a very successful season for the JV and varsity teams for the Lady Broncos as the JV won the county championship and the varsity made it to the Sweet 16. Phoebe talked about that experience and what she learned. She played with an amazing group of girls and learned so much from her coaches.

"Basketball was a lot of fun. Last season on JV went really well for us. We won county and I was on the All-Tournament team. After JV season ended, I got moved up to varsity, where we were the area runners-up and made it to the Sweet 16. Through all this, I learned to always encourage and do your best. With a team like ours, we were all close and encouraging each other, especially when we were down. That's when we did our best," she said.

"Playing with these girls, I feel like, made me become a better leader. Being one of the oldest girls on the team, I had to learn to take control during games and help encourage my team. These girls also always encouraged me. When I got down, they always supported me and helped me become a better person."

She added, "Coach Daugherty was a great coach. We had a good connection, and she is definitely one I look up to on and off the court. She taught me more than to love basketball, but to love God first. Along with her, I

was also coached by coach Hartline and coach McKelvy. These three always pushed me. They knew the things I could do and when I wasn't pushing myself, they pushed me. They all love their job, and they taught me that you are always capable of being able to do more."

Phoebe got to play with three great seniors last year and saw a tremendous amount of improvement in her game.

"Maddi Ham is a great basketball player and she taught me that I need to put work in, even when no one is looking. There is always room for improvement. She always encouraged us and pushed us as a team. Along with her being great on the court, off the court, she was an amazing friend. She always made you laugh and is someone you can always go to. Along with her is Samantha Giles. Sam always hustled.

"She always tried her best and she taught me to do the same. In practice, she always pushed us in drills to do better. We became close and I'm glad for our friendship that we made. Bai Widner was also a great player. She always encouraged us and was always one to talk up and lead our team."

She added, "I saw a bunch of improvement in myself. I only started playing in seventh grade and my skill level, along with the way I knew the game, were years behind some of the girls I was competing against. I knew I had a lot of work to do, but I knew I could do it. To improve, I worked with my brother, Caleb. He was always willing to work with me and Abbey and always pushed us hard. Another thing

that helped me improve was playing travel basketball. I started playing for the Rim Rockers a few years ago, and my coaches, Luke Yarbrough, Caleb White, and Jarrod Oliver, helped me not only improve my ball-handling skills, but also how to play the game. They weren't afraid to yell at me when I was doing bad, but then coach me on what I can do to get better."

Phoebe will continue to work on her game as she prepares for this upcoming season, and she talked about her individual goals. She wished her former Holly Pond teammates the very best of luck this upcoming season.

"I will continue to work on getting stronger and my speed, handling the ball under pressure, and being a consistent shooter," she said. "Individually, I want to work every day on ball-handling and shooting drills and try to improve the best I can to help my team for next season. I hope that Holly Pond has the best season. I hope they all work together as a team, communicate, and have leadership."

She has several role models that she looks up to.

"My role models would be my brothers, Jacob and Caleb Jones. They both played sports in high school and Jacob also played in college. They were both really good in high school and I know I can always go to them for help. They taught me to never give up and push through. Caleb is always willing to train with me and always tells me that in order to get better, I have to work outside of practices. They both always find ways to help me and tell me what I could fix from the game I

just played. Without them, I would not be the person that I am today. Another person that is always with me is my twin sister, Abbey. We have a connection that no one else has. We work well together. Coach Daugherty will also be a role model of mine. She was a great player in high school and a great coach to me. She was always willing to listen and help me. Aside from basketball, she is also a Godly woman that taught me more about Christ and is always someone I can go to."

She talked about the best advice that someone ever gave her, what all she will bring with her to Cullman Christian, her thoughts on the school, what all she will take away from being a Bronco, and what she learned about being at Holly Pond that will help her at Cullman Christian.

"The best advice I was ever given was that sports are going to come to an end. All that matters is your relationship with Christ. True joy is found in the Lord," she said. "Cullman Christian is a great school. I can't wait for the school year to start and see what my senior year has to bring. I hope to be a role model and leader to those younger than me. Mr. Yearwood is great and is doing great things with the school. The school focuses not only on academic growth, but also on spiritual growth."

She added, "I hope to always remember the friendships I have and all the memories I have made being at Holly Pond since kindergarten. I learned how to treat others and it takes hard work to succeed. I will take these things with me to Cullman Christian."

'Shine for Him on the field': West Point's Sierra Cranford enjoying band season

Sammy Confer

sammy@cullmantribune.com

WEST POINT, Ala. — West Point junior Sierra Cranford is heading into her third year as a majorette in the Warrior band and has had a blast doing it. She feels so blessed to be around some great people and has tried to learn as much as she can from all of them.

"Being in the band has been great. It's been so much fun. It has taught me to push myself to work hard to achieve my goals, not just in twirling, but in everyday life. I have learned from band members, past and present, what makes a good teammate and a good leader," Cranford said.

"I have enjoyed it so much. It's been really amazing to follow in the footsteps of some fantastic people, such as two of our majorette line's former teammates, Anna Armstrong and Jordan Shelton, not to mention other great band members of the auxiliary and the band. I have made life-long friendships with the members of the band, especially the auxiliary, because we work so close together and have become so tight-knit."

Sierra has learned so much from this experience and from last year's seniors.

"I have learned the importance of trying your best and how much you can accomplish when working together. Sometimes when you feel

like you have failed, there is people around to lift you up and encourage you. You should make sure to go out of your way to encourage and lift others up as well. Teamwork is the key to success," Cranford said.

"The seniors last year were very talented. They were great, because they played in a big part in building the band back up.

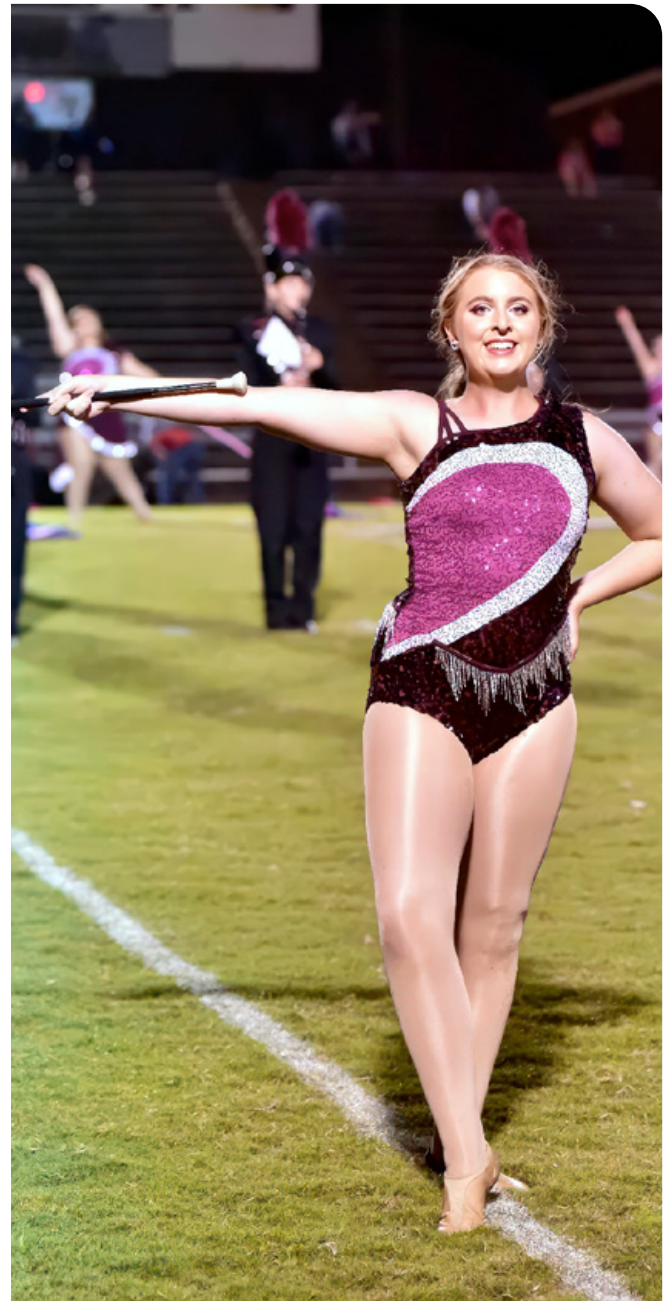
"They went through several changes, so I'm proud that they stuck it out and had great attitudes about being in the band. You could definitely tell that they genuinely wanted to be there and was excited about it."

She added, "I learned that you can have fun, but also, when it's time to be serious about what you're doing, you are serious. They taught us how to achieve our goals and have good connections with others, while still having fun in the process.

"They also taught me to come out of my shell. I have always been really shy and they helped me with that. Without them, I probably wouldn't have been honored with my leadership position."

She has also learned some things from this year's seniors as well.

"This year's seniors have been amazing. They began band in middle school and are great about helping others. Many of the seniors I know started the year that I »



SIERRA CRANFORD

West Point's Sierra Cranford

started.

"They were great about learning quickly and also became good leaders. I have definitely learned what it takes to be a kind person. Many of them have stopped in the hallway just to say hello. On the field, I've learned to work hard and treat others with respect."

Sierra has soaked up as much as she can from band director, Thad Walker.

"During my first year on the majorette line, Mr. Walker came in with a vision of the potential of what the West Point Band could achieve. He has made great strides in making that vision come to life. In the short time he has been here, he has doubled the size of our band.

"He will also listen to any questions or concerns any band member might have. He makes me feel like a part of the band. He is good about not just being a teacher, but also knowing his students and co-workers," she said.

"I have learned the importance of setting your goals and going for them. When he first came, he had a vision and has already succeeded in making that vision come to life."

She will be going into her first year as the captain and was shocked, but blessed, when she first got the news. She's gotten a lot of help from her fellow bandmates and has learned a few things since getting named captain.

"I was so shocked when I found out. I was very honored to be named captain. It honestly feels a little strange, because this is my first leadership position ever. I am used to working under people, but my teammates have been so supportive in helping me find my voice," she said.

"I learned how hard you have to work to get this far. I have also learned how to be

decisive and strong-willed."

Sierra talked about how much she has improved over the past couple of years and will continue to work on some things before band season gets started.

"My first year, I found myself behind in my twirling skills, but my teammates made an effort to help me learn the routines fast and new tricks.

"Over the last couple of years, I can watch videos and see how much improvement I really have had. People around me have told me that what makes me stand out is my ability to try any trick that is asked of me," she said.

"I will always continue to work on my leadership skills and my twirling technique. I will also work on being kind to my teammates in any situation. Lastly, I will work on teaching my teammates to love God and shine for Him on the field."

She talked about the goals for this upcoming season, and she thinks this band season will be a very special one for West Point.

"We have four new girls on the majorette line. In my past year, we've had a small line, so one team goal I have is to make sure we are always in sync. This can get tricky with six girls on a team. My other team goals are to score all one's at our band competitions and to most importantly, have fun," Cranford said.

"My individual goals are to grow as a person and as a leader, as well as improving my twirling skills and learn new things that can potentially help me be able to try out for a college line in the future."

She added, "We have a great show picked out by our band director. It will show how far the West Point band has come. Also, the auxiliary

routines will really complement the music. The most special thing that everyone will see is the excitement and happiness in the band's faces as they performed a fantastic show."

Sierra talked about her role models and the best advice that someone ever gave her.

"I look up to anyone that shows wonderful leadership and great passion in the band, especially students who are hardworking and kind on and off the field. Luckily, as far as the West Point band, that is many of the members," she said.

"Shortly after I was named captain, I messaged one of my former captains and asked her for any tips she might have had for me. She gave me the

best advice by saying, 'Don't be afraid to reach out if you need some advice or assistance'. I thought about that and realized how much asking for assistance has helped me in baton and outside of it. In twirling, asking for assistance is what has helped me improve my skills. Also, praying and asking God for assistance has helped me in everything I have done."

Sierra talked about what she will be looking forward to the most this upcoming season.

"In the upcoming season, I am looking forward to spending time with my teammates, seeing improvement in our band, and most importantly, performing on the field."



TAYLORS *Fine*
TIMEPIECES
Watches · Clocks · Estate Treasures
BUY • SELL • REPAIR
256-747-5620












MICHAEL TAYLOR CW21
124 7th Street SW ~ Cullman, Alabama 35055
Horologier@aol.com

- RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT -

Col. Don Fallin

Cayla Grace Murphy

caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

While he may seem fairly casual and even unassuming at VFW Post 2214 during Tuesday lunches, Fairview native Col. Don Fallin has quite the career under his belt that has impacted not only the community, but also the world at large. His story is the kind you only hear about in historical fiction novels or war documentaries - or in this case, an article in a local magazine.

Fallin began his 30-year military career a few months after graduating from Fairview in 1982, a move that he thought would only last a few years at most. He explained, "I grew up in a low-income family in Fairview and lacked the resources to attend an undergraduate program after graduation, so I enlisted in the Army as a private to get the Army College Fund."

When recalling the day he caught a Greyhound bus to boot camp, he shared, "I wasn't too concerned about leaving home...I glanced over and saw my dad and mom, just solemnly sitting there by themselves. It wasn't until decades later that I would understand their emotions, when my son and daughter left home, that I had an appreciation of how they looked and felt."

Fallin said the two-year commitment seemed easy »



Retired U.S. Army Colonel Don Fallin photographed in Afghanistan at the Special Mission Wing in 2015.

CONTRIBUTED

enough as he was expecting a follow-on assignment to Redstone Arsenal after basic. However, during basic, he realized he had actually signed an “open contract,” meaning, he was at the Army’s beck and call to go where it needed him. Stuttgart, Germany was the first place he was needed; a far cry from close-to-home Huntsville.

“Although I was disappointed about not returning close to home, I was excited about the opportunity to travel overseas. As time would tell, it was the best thing that ever happened to me,” said Fallin, explaining, “My chain of command encouraged me to pursue becoming an officer by way of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.”

This encouragement would lead Fallin to first become an aviation colonel following his graduation from West Point, then later holding leadership and command positions in every rank from lieutenant to colonel, serving in Infantry, Airborne, Aviation and Special Operations Commands with duty in 18 countries across four continents.

During his storied career, Fallin served in eight combat tours, which include Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Resolute Support and Advanced Force Operations in the Horn of Africa and Eastern Europe; these combat tours total up to four years and six months of combat time. Of special note, his Special Operations Task Force was responsible for the rescue of hostage, Captain Richard Phillips, of

the Maersk Alabama off the coast of Somalia.

Fallin shared that despite these accolades, the things he remembers most from his deployments are not the medals and badges, but the people who were serving right alongside him.

“The men and women with whom I served...,” he recounted. “The teamwork and camaraderie in some of the most austere conditions. Each doing whatever was needed to make the mission.”

Yet, Fallin was frank in admitting that throughout his career, some of those missions didn’t always work out. “Deployments are an encapsulation of ultimate highs and lows; the adrenaline rush of a successful operation, and the gut-wrenching feeling of a lost friend,” he said.

These days, Fallin is a little more laid back, despite still rocking a haircut that is in regs and boasting those classic West Point manners. While his career may have come to a close, he is now serving his community and encouraging other folks – especially veterans recently coming home – to do the same. The key, said Fallin, is finding purpose.

“Find purpose. Purpose is different for people... for me, it is what makes you get up in the morning. Give back to your community and its citizens for having had the opportunity to serve with the greatest asset our country has, which are the men and women who answered the call,” he said plainly.

Fallin believes part of his purpose is in honoring those

lost men and women through a partnership with the Johnny Mac Soldiers Fund, a nonprofit that raises scholarship funds for the children of fallen service members by leading annual endurance events. Fallin completed the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail, climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, climbed Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina and completed the 70-mile Inca Trail in the Peruvian Andes – raising over \$175,000 for scholarships. (Read more about his adventures at www.cullmantribune.com/tag/donald-fallin)

When he’s not climbing mountains across the globe, he’s teaming up with local veteran-focused agencies. He is an active member of VFW Post 2214, serves on the Cullman County Republican Party Executive Committee, the Cullman Veterans Park Board and has spearheaded the Cullman Veterans Hall of Fame and also serves on its committee. Serving others seems to be a character trait that not only sustained him through his military career, but also bled over into sustaining the community as a whole.

“Serving is a catalyst,” said Fallin, “The more people you help, the more people you find

that want to help.”

Writer’s note:

Fallin was asked during this interview if he would like to recognize anyone from his time in service. Those individuals are listed below.

Major Russ Zahas

Led a flight of three Mi-17 helicopters to evacuate a Special Forces team in Kudzuz, Afghanistan. The team was successfully rescued despite heavy enemy machine gun fire and a damaged aircraft.

Captain Lisa Becker

Exceeded standards and became the first female Mi-17 pilot in the country and led countless missions against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

Lieutenant/U.S. Navy SEAL Jonas Kelsall

Jumped into the Indian Ocean with his team of six men to coordinate with the USS Bainbridge in order to execute the Captain Phillips hostage rescue off the coast of Somalia. Kelsall was later one of 30 American servicemembers killed in action during a mission in the Wardak province of Afghanistan.

A JOURNEY TO CHRISTMAS WONDER



November 24 – December 23

CullmanChristkindlmarkt.com

Cullman, AL – “Where German Tradition meets Southern Charm”