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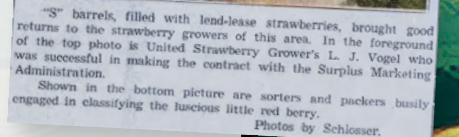
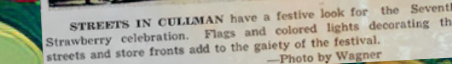
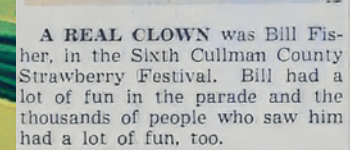
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Clarkson Covered Bridge

CULLMAN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION



Smith Lake Park

CULLMAN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

# A look at Cullman County Parks and Recreation

**Lauren Estes**

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Cullman County Parks and Recreation oversees five parks and facilities - Clarkson Covered Bridge, Smith Lake Park, Sportsman Lake Park, Stony Lonesome OHV Park and the Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center. It's also responsible for dozens of fun-filled, family friendly events year-round.

Director Kenneth Cornelius said Cullman County has been blessed beyond measure with the number and types of parks at every resident's disposal.

"We here at Cullman County Parks don't take that for granted; we work every day to ensure that everything is done at a high standard to make every trip to one of our parks as enjoyable as possible," he said. "Our Cullman County parks are at the center of our community. They give all families a place

and time to come together and enjoy the outdoors and each other. We have such a wide variety of different types of parks from Stony Lonesome riding OHV all day to Sportsman Lake enjoying lunch and letting the kiddos play on the playground and riding the train to Smith Lake Park swimming at the pool and the entire family camping and having quality time together in the outdoors. And you can't forget Clarkson Covered Bridge; it's like stepping back in time and seeing a beautiful creek and beautiful scenery. Cullman County parks (are) the best place to get the family together outside and spend time with each other."

## Clarkson Covered Bridge

1240 County Road 1043,  
Cullman, AL 35057

"One of Cullman's most well-known attractions and historically rich sites, Clarkson Covered Bridge, originally built

in 1904, and was once used regularly by farmers and travelers to cross Crooked Creek. The weather-worn bridge is now closed to traffic, and the centerpiece of a park built in period fashion to showcase the bridge and its historical significance.

The bridge was torn in two in 1921 by a huge storm. One piece was left intact, the other swept downstream and soon salvaged. One year later, the project to repair the bridge with the salvaged material was completed.

On June 25, 1974, Clarkson Covered Bridge was named to the National Register of Historic Places. Shortly thereafter, in 1975, the Cullman County Commission restored the site with the help of concerned citizens as part of the American Bicentennial Project, embellishing the grounds with hiking trails, a picnic area and two period structures built to accent the historical nature of the

bridge: a Dogtrot log cabin and a working grist mill. Located just off U.S. Highway 278 in Bethel, Clarkson Bridge is the site of numerous weddings, car shows and various other activities."

## Smith Lake Park

403 County Road 386,  
Cullman, AL 35057

"Located in Cullman County, Alabama, on the shores of the 21,200-acre Lewis Smith Lake with 500 miles of shoreline, Smith Lake Park is open for year-round camping. The park has nine cabins, 219 full-service sites, five water and electric sites, and 61 tent sites.

Eight pavilions, playgrounds, a pool, fishing pier, a huge stage for special events and new boat launch make (sic) rustic Smith Lake Park a destination for fun and relaxation, plus a number of special events and festivals at the park throughout the year." »





CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

**Sportsman Lake Park**

CULLMAN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

**Stony Lonesome OHV Park**

CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

**Cullman Co. Agricultural Trade Center****Sportsman Lake Park**

1544 Sportsman Lake Road  
NW, Cullman, AL 35055

"Sportsman Lake Park is a scenic destination that has a little something for everyone, regardless of age. Located around a large, shallow body of water teeming with fish and wildlife in downtown Cullman, it is the perfect place for family gatherings at picnic tables and pavilions. A fan favorite is the small-scale train wrapping around the lake. Kids of all ages will enjoy it and the 18-hole putt-putt golf course. Riding paddle boats, feeding the fish, riding a bike, hiking or working out on fitness equipment at various locations are all part of what you can find at the park. If it's warm out, the kids can beat the heat at the new splash pad."

**Stony Lonesome OHV Park**

10075 Alabama Highway  
69, Bremen, AL 35033

"Stony Lonesome is the first public OHV park of its kind in the state. Open year-round, the 1456-plus acre park features trails for ATVs, rock crawlers, dirt bikes, mountain bikers, equestrians, hikers, pedestrians, and much more. We host multiple night rides, 24-hour rides, and mud runs."

**Cullman County  
Agricultural Trade Center**

17465 U.S. Highway 31,  
Cullman, AL 35058

"The Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center in Cullman, Alabama, is the focal point of many music events, sports competitions, farm exhibitions and family activities for north-central Alabama."

"A sampling of events includes rodeos; barrel races; dog shows; bluegrass, rock, country and gospel music events; racking, walking and quarter horse shows; 4-h events; motocross; outdoor exhibits; Boer goat shows and r/c rally; the facility is also available to rent for company picnics and other events."

"We have applied for many grants," Cornelius said. "The most recent is a grant for Stony Lonesome to update with some new cabins to stay in and upgrade to our safety rescue vehicles and a drone to locate someone trapped or hurt at the park."

"We have also applied for a grant to repave the parking area at Clarkson Covered Bridge. RC&D (the Alabama Mountains, Rivers & Valleys Resource Conservation & Development Council) has

awarded a grant to purchase a new arena drag for the Cullman County Ag Center. Alabama community grants have awarded us a brochure grant for tourism for all Cullman County parks."

Find out more about Cullman County Parks and Recreation, including upcoming events, at [www.cullmancountyparks.com](http://www.cullmancountyparks.com). You can find each facility on Facebook.

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# – SPEND A DAY IN CULLMAN –

## Enjoy a park, shopping, dinner, a cocktail and cozy stay

**Anabelle Howze**

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

**W**hat better way to start your day than walking around our beautiful parks? Sportsman Lake Park is a scenic destination in Cullman that offers something for people of all ages. You can jog, walk or bike around the 1.4-mile trail around the park, hike the wild-flower trails or take your little ones to the splash pad and playground. There are fitness machines around the trail to elevate your workout and even a dog park where your furry friends have plenty of space to run and play. When you need a break, the park offers a snack stand, putt-putt golf and a duck food vending machine to feed the critters.

When you need a boost of energy, Karma's Coffee House has your caffeine fix how you like it. Located in the Warehouse District, Karma's offers a cozy environment to kick back with a good book, finish a work project or hang out with friends. Enjoy signature drinks like the Kurt Cobain or one of the many tea selections. Aside from drinks, it offers a menu full of choices for lunch, from sandwiches to flatbreads and chicken salads, and a bakery counter with mouth-watering treats!

Cullman has many unique shops, many in the

Warehouse District, to match anyone's style and preferences. If you're looking for the perfect destination to find fun, age-appropriate clothes and accessories for your children, Wren + Revel is the place to be. Lavish Boutique offers fashionable clothes for ladies of all ages, and there are many other boutiques to browse. Aside from clothing, the Warehouse District offers shops that sell handmade woodwork, candles, decor, candy, gourmet popcorn and baked goods.

Deciding on a place to eat for dinner in Cullman can be challenging. With so many unique local restaurants, it can be hard to choose just one! An exciting new, must-try restaurant located in the Warehouse District is TACOMARG, which has a vibrant environment and appetizing menu. Carlton's Italian and 412 Public House are great if you're looking for a romantic dinner with your partner. These restaurants provide delicately prepared food and classy environments for an ideal date or family dinner.

If you're looking for drinks to wind down the evening, Jubilee Coffee and Wine Bar and Sipsey Winery are the places to go. Jubilee offers high-end coffee and cocktail creations, full breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus, and a fully stocked bar. Sipsey Winery offers wine variations, apple



ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

**TACOMARG:** [www.tacomarg.com](http://www.tacomarg.com)

and pear slushies, charcuterie and even pizza. Both businesses are in the Cullman Savings Bank/Flying Fifty Hotel building.

Looking for a luxurious place to stay? The Flying Fifty Hotel is a boutique hotel offering seven suites, highlighting iconic Cullman and north Alabama spots. The hotel prioritizes locally sourced amenities whenever possible, such as Red Land Cotton Towels, HomTex sheets and Beutymade mattresses made in Cullman.

Guests can also enjoy Blue Spring water and artwork crafted by local artists. Each spacious suite offers a comfortable stay and plenty of relaxing space. Each guest who stays with The Flying Fifty receives complimentary



ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

**Carlton's Italian:**  
[www.facebook.com/Carltonsitalian](https://www.facebook.com/Carltonsitalian)

access to the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center. Rates average around \$250 per night, varying based on local events. Reservations can be made online at [theflyingfifty.com](http://theflyingfifty.com) or by calling 256-793-0115.



# SPEND A DAY IN CULLMAN

## Spend a strawberry-themed day in Cullman

**Katie Spicer**

katie@cullmantoday.com

Prepare to enjoy the sweetness of a new season by indulging in some strawberry-themed activities this spring and summer!

### **U-pick strawberries at Five Oak Farm and Kitchen of Holly Pond**

Family owned Five Oak Farm and Kitchen of Holly Pond offers fresh, locally grown vegetables and strawberries. Throughout peak strawberry season, the farm offers U-pick activities where visitors can pick their own strawberries. All available U-Pick times and dates can be found at Facebook/Five Oak Farm and Kitchen of Holly Pond. Five Oak Farm and Kitchen is located at 1540 County Road 1736, Holly Pond, AL 35083.

### **Read up on strawberry plants at the Cullman County Public Library**

The Cullman County Public Library System has strawberry-themed favorites for family members of all ages. Unwind with a sweet, Southern romance such as "The Strawberry Hearts Diner" by Carolyn Brown. Use the library's online resources to get the expert gardener involved by checking out titles such as "Grow Strawberries at Home" by Steve Ryan. Likewise, satisfy a culinary craving with titles like "How to Grow Strawberry Jam" by Alix Wood or "Cooking with Strawberries, 30 Days of Cool Recipes" by Rodney Cannon. The youngest strawberry enthusiast can even



FACEBOOK/FIVE OAK FARM AND KITCHEN OF HOLLY POND

**Five Oak Farm and Kitchen is located at 1540 County Road 1736, Holly Pond, AL 35083.**

enjoy Strawberry Shortcake, who stars in various print and DVD collections available at the CCPLS. The main branch of the Cullman County Public Library is located at 200 Clark St. NE in Cullman. Find the CCPLS online at [www.ccpls.com](http://www.ccpls.com).

### **Sample strawberry-themed sweets from local eateries**

Start the morning with a sweet sip of strawberry smoothie from Tropical Smoothie Cafe! Enjoy classic smoothies or satisfy your hunger with a strawberry based acai or yogurt bowl. Try out the Cullman location at 1311 Second Ave. SW.

Stop by Puckett's for your next strawberry-themed meal. Enjoy the Strawberry Spinach Salad. A combination of baby spinach leaves, heritage spring mix, strawberries, candied pecans, blue cheese crumbles, shaved red onion and balsamic vinaigrette makes for the perfect



INSTAGRAM/FLAVORS BAKERY

**Flavors Bakery is located at 101 First Ave. NE, Ste. 100, in Cullman.**

refreshing lunch item! Puckett's is located at 6076 Alabama Highway 157.

Finish off the day with a delectable strawberry dessert.

Stop by Flavors Bakery for a slice of Strawberry Swirl Cheesecake or a Strawberry Gem. Flavors Bakery is located at 101 First Ave. NE, Ste. 100.



# Spring and summer recipe guide

**Lauren Estes**

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**T**he smell of spring is in the air, and so is lingering aroma of your grill heating up! This spring and summer, change up your at-home prepared meals with some healthy, fresh alternatives.

Here are a few lighter options that you can cook, bake or grill at home!



DELISH.COM

## Campfire Hot Dog Skewers

[www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a28198532/hot-dog-veggie-skewers-recipe](http://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a28198532/hot-dog-veggie-skewers-recipe)

### Ingredients

#### Sauce

- 1/4 cup barbecue sauce
- 1 1/2 tbsp. ketchup
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. rice wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. chili powder

#### Skewers

- 18-pack hot dogs, quartered
- 3 cups pineapple, cut into 1-in. pieces
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into

1-in. pieces

- 1 green bell pepper, cut into 1-in. pieces
- Small red onion, cut into 1-in. pieces

### Directions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk to combine all sauce ingredients. Preheat grill or grill pan on medium heat.

2. Build skewers by alternating hot dogs, pineapple, peppers and red onion. Brush all over with sauce and place on preheated grill.

3. Grill on medium heat, flipping every couple minutes and basting with remaining sauce, until skewers are charred, about 8 to 10 minutes total.



DELISH.COM

## Grilled Honey-Chipotle Salmon In Foil Packets With Summer Squash

[www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a40511179/grilled-honey-chipotle-salmon-foil-packets-with-summer-squash](http://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a40511179/grilled-honey-chipotle-salmon-foil-packets-with-summer-squash)

### Ingredients

- 4 tbsp. butter, melted
- 2 tbsp. honey
- 1 tbsp. chipotle chili powder or regular chili powder
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Kosher salt
- 4 (6-oz.) skin-on salmon filets
- 1 medium zucchini, chopped
- 1 summer squash, chopped
- 1 small red onion, chopped

- 1/4 cup packed basil leaves, torn
- Lime wedges, for serving

### Directions

1. Heat grill to medium-high. In a small bowl, whisk butter, honey, chipotle chili powder, garlic and 1/2 tsp. salt; set aside.

2. Season both sides of salmon with 3/4 tsp. salt. In a medium bowl, toss zucchini, summer squash and red onion with 1/4 tsp. salt.

3. Lay four 12-in. by 16-in. pieces of foil on a flat surface. Divide vegetable mixture between foil packets, filling up half of the center of each piece of foil. Arrange salmon next to vegetables. Drizzle salmon and vegetables with the chipotle sauce (stir to combine before using if separated), dividing evenly. Fold and seal edges of foil to create a packet.

4. Grill, covered, until salmon is cooked through and squash is tender, rotating packets half way through, 11 to 14 minutes. Sprinkle with basil and serve with lime wedges.



DELISH.COM

## Cheeseburger Cabbage Wraps

[www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a27115412/cheeseburger-cab-](http://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a27115412/cheeseburger-cab-)

bage-wraps-recipe

### Ingredients

#### For cabbage wraps

- 4 large green cabbage leaves (from 1 head)
- 1 lb. ground beef
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 slices cheddar cheese
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced into rounds
- 1 medium tomato, sliced
- Pickle chips, for serving

#### For sauce

- 2 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

### Directions

1. In a large pot of boiling water, use tongs to dip cabbage leaves in water for 30 seconds to blanch. Place on a paper towel-lined plate to dry.

2. Make sauce: In a medium bowl, combine mayonnaise, mustard, vinegar and garlic powder. Season with salt and pepper and whisk until smooth.

3. Make burgers: Form ground beef into 4 patties; season both sides with salt and pepper. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add patties and cook until burgers are seared on the bottom, 4 to 6 minutes. Flip burgers and cook until cooked through to your liking (4 to 6 minutes for medium), adding cheese during the last minute of cooking.

4. Assemble burgers: Place burger patty on the edge of a cabbage leaf where the thickest part of the stem is. Top with onion, tomato »



and pickles. Fold opposite end of cabbage leaf up over burger, then fold one side of cabbage leaf over burger and roll until burger is completely wrapped. Serve with sauce.



DELISH.COM

### Caprese Turkey Burgers

[www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a46556322/caprese-turkey-burgers-recipe](http://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a46556322/caprese-turkey-burgers-recipe)

### Ingredients

- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 3 tbsp. store-bought or homemade pesto
- 1 lb. ground turkey (preferably 93% or 94% lean)
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh basil, plus 12 large leaves
- 1/2 oz. Parmesan, finely grated (about 1/4 cup)
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper, plus more
- 2 tbsp. neutral oil, divided
- 4 (1/2-in. thick) slices fresh mozzarella (about 2 oz. each), divided
- 4 hamburger buns, toasted
- 4 large tomato slices
- 4 tsp. balsamic glaze

### Directions

1. In a small bowl, stir mayonnaise and pesto until combined. Set aside.

2. In a large bowl, using clean hands or a flexible spatula, mix turkey, egg, chopped basil, Parmesan, garlic powder, 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper just until combined. Divide mixture into 4 portions and shape into round patties about 1/2-in. thick.

3. In a large metal or cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1 tbsp. oil. Arrange 2 patties in skillet, spacing evenly apart, and cook until a browned crust forms on the bottom, about 3 minutes. Flip burgers, cover pan and continue to cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center

registers 155F, about 2 minutes more.

4. Uncover pan and place 1 slice mozzarella on top of each burger. Cover and continue to cook until cheese is melty and burgers are cooked through (instant-read thermometer should register 165F), about 1 minute more. Transfer burgers to a plate. Repeat with remaining 1 tbsp. oil, patties and mozzarella.

5. Spread pesto mayo across bottom buns. Top with a burger and tomato slice; generously season tomatoes with salt and pepper. Drizzle with balsamic glaze and top with basil leaves. Close burgers with top buns.



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# 6 ways to spring into your fitness goals for summer

**Lauren Estes**

lauren@cullmantribune.com

**L**onger and warmer days are ahead as spring arrives in the South. There's no better time to start or maintain an active lifestyle.

Please consult with your physician before beginning any new fitness regimen. Please consider all health risks when using any new health exercise, movement or activity.

Here are six ways to help you spring into your fitness journey by taking advantage of the warmer weather and sunshine: gardening, cycling, racketing sports, walking/running, swimming and hiking.

## 1. Gardening

According to many sources this is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. Most can expect to burn around 300 calories per hour during typical gardening activities.

Gardening helps improve your cardiovascular health and also has an array of other health and wellness benefits.

Along with assisting your physical health, there are many mental health benefits, including improving your mood and reducing stress and anxiety. Spring is the perfect time to get outdoors and get your garden ready for summer.

## 2. Cycling

Studies find that it reduces heart disease, improves cardiovascular fitness by strengthening the heart and lungs, improves lower body strength and flexibility, and helps tone the legs, core and upper body. It can also improve joint mobility and reduce the risk of arthritis. It can be a fun outdoor exercise and social period with friends while reducing stress and anxiety

and releasing endorphins.

Cycling/biking provides a low-impact and fun way to get your cardio in, outside or inside.

## 3. Racket sports

Pickleball is one of the fastest growing games that is played by all ages. Developed in 1965 by three dads in Bainbridge, Washington, the sport was originally designed as a backyard game that the entire family could play. Plus, you cannot beat the fact that pickleball offers a number of health benefits, too.

Playing this fun sport improves your flexibility, lowers your blood pressure and can also improve your cardiovascular health and your hand-eye coordination.

Sports like tennis, paddle ball and pickleball combine physical activity, mental stimulation and social interaction, which all have positive impacts on brain health and overall well-being.

Research has shown that regularly participating in racket sports can provide a wide range of benefits for the brain, potentially leading to a longer and healthier life.

## 4. Walking

One study found that regular aerobic exercises, such as walking, can reduce belly fat and potentially help people manage obesity.

Walking is known to help lower blood pressure, reducing your risk of chronic diseases, boosting your immune system and strengthening your joints and bones.

Walking also can boost your mood and help sharpen your brain.

## 5. Swimming

Swimming is a great low-impact exercise that has a wide variety of applications no matter your



*Pickleball is fun and provides a number of health benefits.*

goal.

Whether you swim competitively, to stay in shape or to help recover from injury, a workout in the pool can leave you with phenomenal gains in many different key health areas.

Like any form of physical exercise, swimming releases feel-good hormones called endorphins. Being surrounded by water, you won't feel yourself sweating because the water will actively cool you down.

Swimming is low impact, decreases stress and can help with joint pain, heart health and weight loss.

## 6. Hiking

Hiking is one of the best ways to get fun, stress-free exercise. No matter what type of trail you find yourself on, hiking is a great whole-body workout — from head to toe and everything in between.

A few benefits of hiking include building stronger muscles and bones, improving your sense of balance, improving your heart health and decreasing the risk of certain respiratory problems.

Whether you find yourself scrambling up a steep incline or walking on a winding dirt trail or path, hiking is an opportunity to get an outdoor workout in!

Give one of these outdoor, stress-relieving forms of exercises a try!

## Get more info at:

- [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/cycling-health-benefits](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/cycling-health-benefits)
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# CULLMAN ALABAMA



## - BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

# The Olive House

## 'May you find a refuge here'

**Anabelle Howze**

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

**L**ongtime friends Leann Boatright and Cherrie Verhoff have created a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, where people can come and enjoy good food and tea.

After years of catering and event planning for church friends and family, the friends began a full-time catering business. Just as their business took off in March 2020, the world shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With all large events and gatherings prohibited, they pivoted to delivering their "grazing boxes" to people's doorsteps.

"We did it as an encouragement because everybody is stuck inside, and so we put cute little themes and decor and flowers on them so it would give them a boost," said Boatright.

Then, a couple of years after the world reopened, they acquired a food truck and began to take Chat and Chew on the road.

They catered festivals and events throughout Cullman and found a temporary home within Frios Gourmet Pops. While their business grew, they began looking to the future and the expansion of their business.

They had fallen in love with the house at 502 Third St. in the middle of Cullman, conveniently located just two minutes from both of their houses.

When the house went on the market, they purchased it, and The Olive House was



ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

**The Olive House is located at 502 Third St. SE in Cullman.**

born.

Transforming the house into a whimsical refuge from the fast-paced reality of everyday life, they poured their hearts into its creation. Their vision statement is proudly gleaming on the walls in shining script: "Here at The Olive House, we would love to welcome you to a space that infuses your senses with the sweet fragrance of light, hope, peace, good food, laughter, and fellowship. May you find a refuge here for the fast pace of everyday life." Inspired by a time when people would go to their friends' houses every week for supper or fellowship, they strive »



ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

**The atmosphere is cozy and inviting.**



to create that same sense of community in a world that doesn't have the time to do those things anymore.

Every room in The Olive House is intricately decorated with vibrant colors, eccentric art and fun decor.

Featuring enchanting rooms like The Peacock Parlor, The Garden Room, Spill the Tea, Tea Room and more, the house is like something straight out of a fairytale.

Each room is a lively shade of green, with the exception of The Magnolia Room, which is the only white room in the house, with striking white decor.

Not many places in Cullman offer a full tea service. Tea is served because it ties into relaxation and slowing down. In addition to tea, they offer dining options for lunch, and their salad bar is a popular hit among regulars.

For a full-course English tea service, you must purchase a pre-sale ticket.

The full-service includes a

savory course served with tea sandwiches, a bread course of tea biscuits with Devonshire cream and jam and a sweets course.

The Olive House usually offers two hot teas and one iced tea to provide various options and allow people to expand their tastes.

The Olive House is open for lunch on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., offering everything from salads to appetizers, sandwiches, scones and, of course, tea.

Also offered are the popular baby cakes, which are created by local bakery Twin Treats.

They hope to grow their business by acquiring a large event venue to continue hosting and providing a space to build community.

"We do hope that The Olive House will become a destination for Cullman... where people want to bring somebody for their birthday or for a special occasion," smiled Verhoff.

[www.allaboutthegraze.com](http://www.allaboutthegraze.com)

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- FAITH -

# Meet Pastor Jason Ellerbee

**Anabelle Howze**

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**P**astor Jason Ellerbee grew up surrounded by church life and was strongly inspired by his grandfather, a bivocational pastor whose faith and commitment left a lasting impression.

Although he pursued a different major in college, he spent his time under the discipleship of Campus Outreach and eventually began to feel a call to the ministry.

Ellerbee spent several years working with a Christian camp in North Carolina and later went on to serve with a Campus Outreach group in south Georgia. While serving with these organizations, his love for the church grew.

He began to work at Briarwood Christian Church in Birmingham and eventually earned his Master of Divinity through the Birmingham Theological Seminary.

After serving at Briarwood, Pastor Ellerbee was called to Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Cullman, where he has served for the past three years.

Christ Covenant's vision and mission are rooted in God's great commandment and commission: to seek Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves, Ellerbee said.

"That is our great passion. The Westminster Confession of Faith says that what is achieved in a man is to glorify and enjoy God, and that's what we desire to do, to glorify him and enjoy him through loving him and through making him

known."

Grounded in the teachings of the Westminster Confession of Faith, he said, the church continues to love Christ and make Him known by living out His commandments and spreading the truth of His word.

Christ Covenant is the only Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) church in the community.

It follows Reformed and Covenant theology and emphasizes being faithful to scripture, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.

Since Ellerbee arrived at Christ Covenant, the church has grown in membership, and the variety of gifts and personalities the members bring has increased, he said - the church has enriched its community and values with the congregation's contributions.

The steady growth of its membership has allowed the church to stay true to its mission while drawing strength from the congregation's unique gifts and passions.

Ellerbee applauded the Christ Covenant congregation for its warmth, grace and commitment to each other.

He said the members genuinely love, serve and care for each other and the Cullman community.

Many active members participate in local organizations and events, using their God-given gifts to be a positive and loving influence beyond the church doors.

"They're committed to one another, and they're committed to their community as well.



JASON ELLERBEE

**Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church Pastor Jason Ellerbee and his wife, Elizabeth Ellerbee**

"Many of them are engaged in various community activities that aren't necessarily sponsored by us as a church, but they're being salt and light in our community."

He described his church as a grace-centered and welcoming body where new members and visitors are embraced with love and hospitality.

Christ Covenant actively

engages with many local and regional ministries and outreach programs.

The church partners with local organizations like The Link of Cullman County, First Source for Women, Cullman Christian School, and the Committee on Church Cooperation.

It also supports Campus Outreach, a college program that has expanded »



across the region.

By supporting these ministries, Ellerbee said, Christ Covenant proudly serves and shares God's love outside the church's walls.

For Ellerbee, the most rewarding part of being a pastor is ministering to people through difficult times and discipling them toward spiritual maturity.

"Through the discipleship of God's word, seeing people grow in their understanding of who Christ is and their understanding of His call on their life, and grow to maturity and fruitfulness is a great blessing."

He draws his strength from the scripture John 10:10: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly."

The verse is a reminder to stand strong against the enemy's schemes while staying grounded in the

assurance of Christ, he said.

It provides Ellerbee with hope and direction, especially during challenging moments in his ministry.

Ellerbee loves his church and its congregation dearly. He is grateful for the opportunity to serve as the pastor and for the opportunity to serve the community.

He appreciates the friendships he has built with other local pastors and values the collaborative spirit among the churches of Cullman.

"I've been able to build friendships with other local pastors, talk about ministry with them and learn from and grow with them," said Ellerbee, who emphasized that the church is a part of the larger body of Christ working alongside others to love, serve and minister to the community: "It's a blessing to be part of the whole body of Christ here, serving together, caring together, loving together."

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## - BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

# Mavens & Makers moving downtown

**Katie Spicer**

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**A**shlea Chance, owner of local artisan shop Mavens & Makers, is embarking on a journey to move her business to a new location this spring.

Formerly located at 609 U.S. Highway 278 East, the shop specializes in farm-fresh foods, handcrafted kitchen utensils, gifts and more. Providing locally made items inspires the "makers" part of the business's name; the "mavens" part of the name is derived from the Hebrew word "mevin," which means "expert or connoisseur."

Mavens & Makers was

founded in April 2021. Chance moved to the Cullman area with her family several years prior and started a small hobby farm. What began as a pastime on the weekends expanded into more than they had ever dreamed. The farm grew rapidly and the family needed an outlet to sell their meat; the business was born.

Said Chance, "We are here to serve. We want to offer classes and products that are hard to source and different from what you can already find in Cullman."

Along with its one-of-a-kind products, Mavens & Makers currently offers cooking classes as well as educational sessions on topics such as mushroom



CONTRIBUTED

**Back row: John Tyler Chance, Ashlea Chance, Tanner Chance; Front row: August Chance, Barrett Chance**

growing, canning foods, herbology and sourdough basics. Information about special events and class registration can be found on its Instagram

and Facebook pages.

Mavens & Makers' new location is 302 Second Ave. SE in Cullman. [www.facebook.com/MavensAndMakers](http://www.facebook.com/MavensAndMakers)

## - BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

# The Sun Room Aesthetics & Wellness

**Lauren Estes**

lauren@cullmantribune.com

**M**ee Emilee (Emi) Harbison, owner and operator of The Sun Room Aesthetics & Wellness.

Harbison is a 22-year-old Licensed Esthetician who just recently took the leap into becoming a business owner.

"I started as a solo esthetician just renting a room in February of 2023, then bought the spa and opened The Sun Room in October of 2024," Harbison said. "After going solo in 2023, I knew that one day I wanted to own my very own spa. Don't get me wrong, running a small business can be stressful - but it is so fulfilling and rewarding. I love being able to provide my clients with what I envision as 'the perfect

facial' and a cozy relaxing environment, while still correcting their skin concerns holistically.

"I didn't think I would be able to own and run my own place at 22 years old, but God's plan is greater than my own. These past couple of years have taught me that we can't grow if we stay in our comfort zone, so in this new and exciting transition to becoming a spa owner, my goal is to take it one day at a time. I want to never stop learning, continue growing and bettering my services and client relationships in order to provide the very best environment for my clientele and tenants."

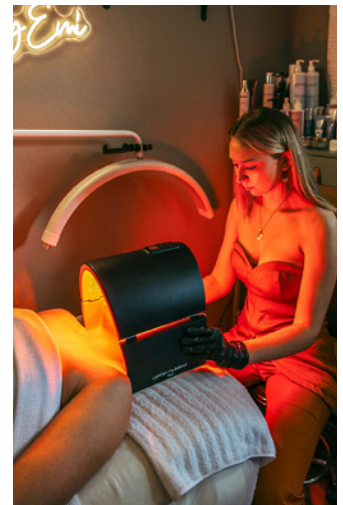
One of Harbison's favorite things about being an esthetician is providing an environment that promotes stress relief.

"I love to be able to give

others a peaceful space to relax because in this hustle culture I don't feel we do that enough," Harbison said. "Then most definitely seeing my clients' self-confidence grow when we get their skin clear and reach their skin goals. I will never forget my first Acne Boot Camp client graduating with clear skin and telling me that she shows everyone who compliments her skin the transformation pictures! I was so proud and honored to be her esthetician."

Harbison and The Sun Room's services include skin consultations, Acne Boot Camp, LED light therapy, Hydrafacial, numerous facial options, lash lift and tint, brow waxing, lip waxing and more.

The Sun Room Aesthetics & Wellness is located at 304 Hickory Ave. SW in Cullman. For appointments, availability



EMI HARBISON

**LED light therapy is just one of many services offered by The Sun Room Aesthetics & Wellness.**

or questions about services, visit [www.estheticsbyemi.com](http://www.estheticsbyemi.com).

"We can't wait to see you at The Sun Room!" she said.



# HEATH ALLBRIGHT

 STATE HOUSE DISTRICT 11 

**Heath Allbright was born and raised in District 11.** He and his wife, BreAnn, are both graduates of Holly Pond High School where she has been a teacher for the past 20 years. Heath also started a small business here in the district, Brighton Forestry Services, a timber harvesting and reforestation company.

Heath is running for House District 11 because he believes in the strength and potential of our community. He is a small government conservative who **will cut taxes, support small businesses, and fight for family values.**

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– FAITH –

# Korey Cowart's mission to disciple to college students

**Anabelle Howze**

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

**K**orey Cowart's journey to faith began during his teenage years when he was influenced by his youth pastor, who led him to Christ. Inspired by his youth pastor, Cowart desired to dedicate his life to providing that same impact and guidance for college students. Now, as the leader of college ministries at Crosshaven Church and in charge of the Baptist Campus Ministries at Wallace State Community College, Cowart is helping students navigate life with a biblical worldview.

"I wanted to work with students because of the questions they begin to face about who God is, what really matters in life and how they will view the world," Cowart said. "I want to show students that all of those things can be done from a biblical perspective, and when viewed rightly, provide the answers they are looking for."

College students face a world of hard questions, decisions and unknowns. Recognizing the fear and challenges that come with making life-changing decisions like choosing a major, finding a spouse and deciding where to live, he emphasized that the only decision that matters when a person comes to the end of their life is whether or not they have trusted Christ as their Lord.

Cowart believes that today's discipleship focuses too much on affirming the self-worth of

students instead of the Bible. "I think the plan for discipling students today is to tell them how awesome they are and try to use the Bible less," he explained. "But students don't need to hear how awesome they are. They need to be taught how to read the Bible, how to pray, how to share their faith and more — all according to the Bible." His countercultural approach to student discipleship is based on his belief that students can handle much more than they are given credit for. "We underestimate how much students can handle when it comes to Christianity. They study difficult subjects in school, yet we're worried that diving into doctrine and theology will be too much for them." The phrase he uses to encourage students is, "The more you know God, the more you'll love Him, and the more you love Him, the more you'll obey Him."

Two of the biggest problems that college students are affected by are comparison with each other and isolation. Cowart acknowledged social media's impact on people, especially younger generations, and how that encourages them to pursue constant approval.

"Social media has provided access to everyone's life, and now students see each other's posts and instantly think they need to match or even top what someone else is doing," Cowart said. "Of course, there's never an end to that game, and it becomes exhausting and leads to depression. Students need to know that they don't have



KOREY COWART

**Korey Cowart and his wife, Abigail**

to compare themselves with others — God doesn't ask us to compare."

Isolation is another concern. "Many students choose to isolate themselves and miss out on community," he added. "When things get tough,

everyone needs people around them to help. For believers, this looks like being involved in a church and finding a community that holds them accountable, prays for them and offers encouragement." He believes that building »



trust with the students starts with listening to them. "The easiest way is to make sure every student feels heard and listened to," he said. "When students feel safe enough to talk to you, knowing that you will listen and that you really care, it goes a long way. Sometimes that means a late-night phone call or a long conversation right before we start BCM, but it's always worth it."

While Cowart serves as the college minister at Crosshaven Church, he also invests his time in the BCM ministries at Wallace State. "BCM is not a church, but a ministry. Our primary goal is to plug students into local Baptist churches," Cowart explained.

Acknowledging that college is often when students stop

attending church, the purpose of BCM is to prevent that and guide students toward lasting discipleship. BCM hosts a weekly Bible study on Sunday nights at Crosshaven Church, where students can hang out with each other, enjoy a free dinner and build meaningful friendships. "We dive into God's Word in a discussion format so students can interact and offer insights into what we're studying," Cowart explained.

BCM also hosts events like bowling nights, Christmas parties and mission opportunities. One of the year's biggest events is the Church Fair in August, where students can connect with different churches and their leaders.

Cowart and his wife, Abigail, are also passionate readers,

which they use to connect with students. "We're huge book people, and we think giving away books is an easy way to help people grow, so we do that pretty often," he said.

Cowart's ultimate goal is to ensure that students graduate from college with more than just knowledge, but a growing relationship with God. "If we truly disciple and train students according to the Word while we have them before they graduate, that's how we keep them," he said. "After graduation, distractions will arise, but if we teach them what their heart posture should be and how to handle those distractions biblically, we can have confidence in their faith."

A significant part of the preparations involves helping students find a church as they

move away and encouraging parents to be involved in their children's spiritual health throughout their time in college, discussing if they're attending a church, the friends they've made and whether they're continuing to grow in their faith and through what resources.

As Cowart continues to minister through Crosshaven and BCM, he remains dedicated to discipline and equipping students with what they need to develop a lifelong relationship with Christ.

"Eventually, students will leave home and their home church for good," Cowart said. "College is a great time to go ahead and test the waters. My hope is that they will find a church, get involved and continue growing in their faith wherever they go."





## - BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

# Father/son masonry duo bringing beauty to north Alabama

**Lauren Estes**

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**G**rowing up watching his dad be passionate about his work in the local masonry business, Alejandro Carbajal was happy to begin working with him seven years ago and follow in his footsteps.

Carbajal and his dad, Gilberto, recently founded Carbajal Masonry, LLC, serving north Alabama and surrounding areas with their love and passion for the work.

"We do not have an office currently, but we are open to working all throughout Alabama and other neighboring states," Carbajal said.

"My father has been doing masonry work for about 22 years and I started working with him at about 15 years old. We recently started our own LLC last year."

They specialize in masonry work such as block, brick and stone.

"This includes mailboxes, mobile home trims, chimneys, built-in grills, etc.," Carbajal said.

"However, we do house foundations, pavers, concrete and pressure washing as well. Pretty much anything surrounding this work."

Carbajal said one of his favorite things is being able to work on something he enjoys.

"For me, masonry is like an art," he said.

"Depending on customers, you can have intricate designs

or patterns within the brick or stone laid. It's rewarding to see how each project comes together. I enjoy working with clients to make sure their vision comes to life."

Truth be told, Carbajal said, he hasn't had truly difficult jobs, but rather, large projects.

"I will say one of the hardest and most important steps in masonry is making sure measurements are correct," he said.

"This ensures that the work is uniform. When doing more intricate work, I like to verify each step with the client before continuing. In addition, I also take time to show the clients the work that was completed each work day."

The duo's current goal is to market and grow their brand in the area — and reach a larger audience.

"At the moment, I'm just trying to get our name out in order to gain more jobs," Carbajal said.

"We're a fairly new company, so I'm excited to branch out into other areas."

Carbajal Masonry can be reached at 256-606-6099 or carbajalmasonryllc@gmail.com. Or find the business online at Facebook/Carbajal Masonry LLC.

"We give out free estimates," Carbajal said. "Feel free to reach out to us anytime. We will gladly take on new homes, loved homes or simple repairs needed to make your home better. We truly enjoy doing our job and we guarantee our best work every time."



**Alejandro Carbajal with his father, Gilberto Carbajal**



**Carbajal Masonry constructed this beautiful stone fireplace.**



## - BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

# Pizza Done Right: Beloved Fairview staple

**Lauren Estes**

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**P**izza Done Right, lovingly known as PDR to the town of Fairview and frequent visitors, brings yummy to the next level.

Known for its mouth-watering breadsticks, fresh hoagie sandwiches and, of course, pizza, PDR is nestled in the heart of Fairview and owned and operated by Holly Pond resident Lisa Thomas.

"We actually quietly took over PDR as it was and worked long hours to do much-needed work on the property while trying to maintain the regular restaurant schedule," Thomas said. "We haven't had an official re-grand opening, but it would not be a bad idea to have one."

Of course pizza is a fan-favorite, but people come far and wide for PDR's breadsticks.

"Our menu consists of the famous breast sticks — which are an everyday request. Diners love these little things," Thomas said. "We are continuing to use the original recipe of making the homemade dough daily. The pizza choices, we have a 'create your own' or try one of many specialty pizzas. We also have gluten-free options available."

Thomas said all their hoagie bread is baked and shipped fresh.

"The Italian hoagie is the most requested, along with ham and cheese and our meatball and pizza hoagie," she



said.

"Also, our spaghetti or baked spaghetti with our garlic bread and add an Italian chef salad are fan-favorites. We also have a delicious fruit pizza."

Thomas said Weekly Specials include Tuesday's dine-in, all-u-can eat spaghetti and garlic bread; Wednesday's (the favorite of the week) buy one large or medium get the second half off; and Thursday's Hoagie Special night.

"We have had a few catering opportunities with private socials, kids' birthdays and two weddings," Thomas said. "I asked, 'Are you sure?' The brides were adamant that they wanted our pizza and salad. It was a pleasure doing all the staff's Valentine's lunches. I truly appreciate how the

community has welcomed me here. Nothing but positivity and encouragement since day one."

Thomas said Fairview Athletics has been great to allow PDR to continue the concessions for all home games.

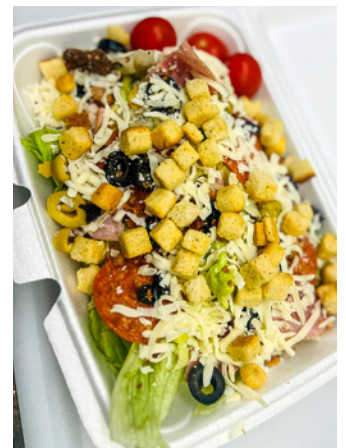
"It was quiet after school for quite some time and finally a couple kids came in and I always offer some kind of special to encourage them to return and just hang out after school," Thomas said. "(It's) a safe place to wait after school while waiting on parents. One of my favorites has been Ms.

***Pizza Done Right is a community staple, offering breadsticks, hoagies, spaghetti, salads and, of course, pizza. »***

Ashley, who still substitutes almost each day at the school. She comes several days a week and requests her favorite hoagie. She has become a true friend and also brings us her homemade apple pies. I am thankful for all the support from all the neighboring communities and families that drive in to visit. I could not ask for more; I am truly grateful."

Pizza Done Right is located at 714 Welcome Road in Cullman directly across from Fairview High School.

Find PDR online at [www.facebook.com/PDRFAIRVIEW](https://www.facebook.com/PDRFAIRVIEW).



PHOTOS: LISA THOMAS

## - BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

# Country Kutz

**Anabelle Howze**

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**C**ountry Kutz is a salon nestled in the Trimble community in Cullman County. Offering a comfortable and homey environment, Owner Christy Harris has created a space where the sweet scent of hairspray mingles with community and conversation.

Creating a place where everyone feels welcome at her charming salon has been Harris' dream since before she picked up a pair of shears. "I believe what inspired me was passion and motivation to express creativity and offer a place where everyone is welcome," she shared. "I had the idea of what I wanted to do long before I received my training."

With her passion and deep faith in Christ, Harris started on a journey to build something special. Before training as a stylist, she gained insight into how to own and operate a business and how important it is to be positive and respectful of everyone who enters her doors.

Country Kutz provides a friendly atmosphere for both clients and stylists. Customers are treated like family, and stylists pamper their clients and support their fellow coworkers. "The ladies and I all work together to help each other when needed," Harris said. "It's a team effort, which makes this place feel so special." Country Kutz offers various services, from trendy cuts and colors to waxing and lash extensions. It also specializes in memorable occasion stylings for weddings, proms and pageants, which the



CHRISTY HARRIS

**Country Kutz Salon is located at 6050 County Road 222.**

salon ladies especially love to do. "There's nothing quite like seeing someone's face light up after we've created the perfect look for their big day," she said, recalling the joy of clients who have hugged her or even cried happy tears after seeing their transformations.

The cosmetology industry is constantly moving and changing, so Harris works to make sure that the salon is on top of the latest techniques, styles and trends. She follows industry publications, listens to the advice of other professionals and uses her creativity to experiment with new trends. "There are so many different options to take with new trends and techniques," she said. "I love learning and trying out new things to give my clients the best results."

Building her dream salon hasn't been without its challenges. "The biggest challenge for me was not knowing if the salon would grow where it was.



CHRISTY HARRIS

**Country Kutz is a place where everyone feels welcome.**

The unknown sometimes is the hardest to get through," she admitted. Despite all fear and concern, she said, she trusted Christ and allowed Him to guide her path. "God gave me the wisdom to make my decisions and provided a way. Trusting Him gave me strength and peace in my decisions. All of my challenges seemed small with God leading the way."

During the past four years, Country Kutz has transformed like the clients who leave the

salon with a fresh glow. The most rewarding aspect of owning her business for Harris has been the relationships she's built over the years. "Getting to know my clients and being able to communicate and talk with them... they are like family to me," she said. "To see my clients and their happy faces when they get their hair done makes it all worthwhile."

Country Kutz Salon is located at 6050 County Road 222.





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## – SENIOR SPOTLIGHT –

# On the run with Nancy Scott

**Anabelle Howze**

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

Anyone who's been through Cullman Middle or High School in the last 20 years probably knows Nancy Scott, but they probably don't know her life before her career as an educator.

Scott began her career 1962 at Lloyd Noland Hospital in Birmingham, where she trained unit clerks and hospital personnel in clerical roles. In 1970, she decided to step away from full-time work when she became pregnant with her third child.

After moving to eastern Birmingham in the early 1970s, Scott's love for fitness led her to attend an exercise class at a local school.

When her instructor went on medical leave, she began teaching the classes, incorporating music into workouts to make them more engaging and fun.

"Back then, fitness classes didn't have music — you just did the exercises military style. But I thought, why not make it fun? So I started adding music, and it completely changed the energy of the class."

She began to teach fitness classes at multiple schools, including Hewitt-Trussville High School, Putnam Middle School and the Northeast YMCA. After attending a workshop in Atlanta, she became a certified dance aerobics instructor and taught courses for a decade till the end of her career, impacting countless people throughout the Birmingham area.

"I wasn't just leading a workout — I was helping people keep healthy and feel good

about themselves."

In the mid-1970s, Scott began jogging to expand her training and developed a passion for it. She joined the Birmingham Track Club, one of only two women then, and began participating in area races across the Southeast, including 5Ks, 10Ks, half marathons and full marathons. In 1980, she participated in her 11th marathon, the Vulcan Marathon in Birmingham, winning the women's division with a time that qualified her for the Boston Marathon.

"Winning the women's division for the Vulcan Marathon was a big moment — it proved to me that I could push myself further. Back then, there weren't many women running marathons, and certainly not many in Birmingham. But I wasn't going to let that stop me."

In 1981, Scott became the first woman from Alabama to complete the Boston Marathon, which marked a historic moment for the state of Alabama.

"When I ran the Boston Marathon, I didn't just do it for myself — I did it for all the women who came after me."

She had become an inspiration, and her success caught the attention of Nike, which sponsored her with shoes and athletic apparel for a year, assisting her in continuing her running career.

"Nike sent me shoes and gear for a year. I guess they thought I was serious about running!"

Scott returned to education in the mid-1980s. She soon transitioned into administration, when a supervisor in the Birmingham Public »



VANESSA KRETZSCHMAR MCCLUSKEY

**Nancy Scott and her beloved dogs, Benson and Buttercup**



NANCY SCOTT

**Nancy Scott runs in the Vulcan Marathon in Birmingham on Nov. 23, 1980, qualifying for the Boston Marathon.**



Schools Community Education Department appointed her as the program director for community education. While serving as director, she led the Crestwood Community Education Center, which was once an abandoned elementary school and turned into a center for adult learning. She brought in programs such as electrical apprenticeships, sewing and general education, giving the community access to personal and professional development resources.

In 2001, she retired from Birmingham Public Schools, and a few years later, in 2004,

she moved to Cullman with her granddaughter, whom she was raising. There, she fell in love with the community and became an active member of several community organizations, including the Civitan Club and local dance classes at what is now the Donald E. Green Active Adult Center. Scott also twice participated in the Miss Senior Cullman County Pageant and became a regular at the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center.

Despite her retirement, her love of education led her back to the classroom as a substitute teacher for Cullman

City Schools. She found joy in teaching and spending time with the students.

When she first began her teaching career, she taught at every city school but soon realized she particularly had a heart for middle and high school students. Her ability to connect with students and her compassionate heart made her a beloved role model for many students.

Scott's impact on her students has been incredible, with many recognizing and honoring her throughout the community. Substitute teaching has brought joy to

her life in many ways. She sees it as a calling, praying each day to be led to the students who need her the most. "The students have touched my life in thousands of ways and made it richer and fuller."

Scott's life has been full of incredible experiences and accomplishments, whether in education, fitness or community involvement. Her service to the students and faculty of Cullman City Schools is a testament to her deep love of the community.

"I've made lifetime friends — students, parents, teachers. They're all family to me."

## SUMMER DANCE 2025

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**DANCE THIS SUMMER  
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## – SENIOR SPOTLIGHT –

# Living life to the fullest

*Educator, dog trainer, mother*

**Lauren Estes**

lauren@cullmantribune.com

**T**rimble resident, longtime educator and dog trainer Paula Kretzschmar, 73, was born and raised in Cullman County. She spent most of her life in Garden City, formerly serving on the town council.

After graduating from St. Bernard College, Kretzschmar took off to Europe to travel. Vanessa Kretzschmar McCluskey shared about her mother's ventures.

"On her trip, she managed to call home and my grandmother told her to get her butt home, she had a job," McCluskey said. "In the fall of 1973, she started teaching at Cleveland School in Blount County and didn't leave until 40 years later. When she retired the other teachers asked her what she wanted as a going away gift. She simply said nothing – she just wanted to 'fly away.' Taking that cue, the faculty worked together to get a hot air balloon to 'fly' her away after her retirement party. They gifted her a pair of ruby slippers and she and my grandmother took off from our practice field with the whole community on hand. They even served popcorn and drinks."

After McCluskey moved to Auburn for college, she said, her mom was a single-parent empty nester.

"She needed companionship and adopted a Bichon Frisé from the Lee County Humane Society," she explained. "He remained her companion for several years. After his death, she purchased another Bichon Frisé puppy, Jack, who she started to train in simple obedience. As time passed, Jack loved the spotlight more and more. Mom decided to

compete with him in AKC-sanctioned events such as Agility and Obedience. She was still teaching (elementary guidance counselor at Cleveland Elementary) and decided to use Jack and his good nature to nurture her students. Jack became a fixture at the school, serving as a reading buddy for the elementary school kids. He even tried out for the 'David Letterman Show.' After that, she soon adopted another Bichon, Stella, and began working with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs in 2007."

McCluskey continued, "ATD provides testing, certification, registration, support and insurance for members who volunteer with dogs to visit hospitals, special needs centers, schools, nursing homes and other facilities. This became her passion and would end up being a lifesaver after an autoimmune illness forced her to retire from Cleveland and ultimately retire from her professorship at Wallace State."

After her full retirement, Kretzschmar decided to build her own dog training facility at her home in Trimble.

"She has all the equipment for a full agility course, and two rings inside the building one for Obedience and one for Rally," her daughter said. "She also decided in 2016 to focus more wholly on the therapy dog aspect. She became a certified tester for the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, and has certified police officers, school teachers and business owners and their pets to become a certified therapy team. To pass the test, the team (dog and handler) are required to fulfill a number of requirements and have evaluations in public places such as Lowe's, Tractor Supply or another »



VANESSA KRETZSCHMAR MCCLUSKEY

**Paula Kretzschmar with her dog Finn at a Halloween event**

location that allows training service animals."

Before Kretzschmar retired, she was the elementary guidance counselor for Cleveland Elementary School and taught Western Civilization and American History at Wallace State Community College.

"Her days were spent at school and then she taught night classes," McCluskey said. "In between, she worked in her therapy work and dog shows."

In 2007 she became a certified therapy dog team with her two Bichons, Jack and Stella.

"Today, she continues their legacy with her Standard Poodle, Finn and her Bichon Frisé, Louis," McCluskey said. "She serves at the Cullman County Courthouse as an emotional support for drug court, the Cullman County Public Library, Hanceville Public Library and sometimes the

Holly Pond Library. They do small groups at schools and she is currently working with the second graders at Cleveland Elementary using Finn and Louis as reading buddies. They also visit CRMC, the Hanceville Nursing Home, DHR and the sheriff's fun day at Sportsman Lake. She has also served at the Birmingham International Airport with Traveler Loving Canines to help calm anxious travelers."

McCluskey shared that although her mother remains very active — she has struggled with some health problems, but it hasn't stopped her.

"Mom is on a walker full time," she said. "She has Rheumatoid Arthritis and Lupus, which have crippled her legs. She still keeps going. It is inspiring to watch her push on and do as much as she does... and that is a lot!"



## – SENIOR SPOTLIGHT –

# Roger Pierce: A passion for preaching and teaching

**Katie Spicer**

katie@cullmantoday.com

**R**oger Pierce, known to most as Coach Pierce, has been an influential beacon in the community for years, serving as a teacher, preacher, coach, mentor and more.

Pierce, 72, began his teaching career with Cullman County Schools in 1975. After working at Cold Springs and Jones Chapel, Pierce returned to his alma mater, Good Hope High, where he taught various mathematics and social science courses. His influence on education did not stop there. He also taught at St. Bernard and Cullman Christian School later in his career.

Reflecting on the countless lives he has touched, Pierce shared, "My heart reached out to the students who didn't do as well academically or got in trouble at school." He discussed the importance of always trying new things to engage students because each one is different and each one needs to know he or she is cared about.

Regarding his work with various schools in the area, Pierce stated, "Cullman County is a community where people still serve God, they love children and we have great leadership with our superintendents."

As a coach, Pierce helped establish teams in their formative years, won championships and set records. He served as a head basketball and tennis coach as well as assistant

football and track and field coach. In 2013, Pierce was inducted into the Cullman County Sports Hall of Fame. After leading the Cullman Christian Lady Lions basketball team to the Alabama Christian Athletic Association (ACAA) State Championship, Pierce was named ACAA Coach of the Year.

When it comes to coaching, Pierce said, "A coach can be someone who helps a child have better discipline, set goals and have a work ethic to achieve those goals... it's not all about winning."

As he continued his teaching career, Pierce also found a passion for ministry. He has served the church in multiple roles such as youth pastor and head pastor at Good Hope Assembly of God.

During his tenure as a pastor, he was able to preach the gospel, host numerous successful judgment house dramas and show the love of Christ to his students.

"One of my greatest joys in life was inviting my students to attend our services," he said. Seeing his young people develop a relationship with the Lord was, and continues to be, the ultimate goal for Coach Pierce.

Although he is technically retired, Pierce said, "Let us work until the good Lord takes us home."

Pierce practices what he preaches as he continues to serve as a substitute teacher and works as a part of the Kairos clergy. He emphasized



ADDIE IRWIN: A LIFE WELL CAPTURED

**Roger and Betty Pierce with their granddaughter Rudi Barnette**

the importance of his continued involvement in the school community saying, "I see a need for helping teachers and I still love kids."

As a clergyman, Pierce works with a group of men to provide a series of talks and has private conferences with men who are incarcerated at the St. Clair Correctional Facility. He said that while they are not advocating for their release from prison, they hope to help these men find the freedom from sin in their soul that only the Lord can provide. "It is a dark place," he said, "but

I believe God's light shines in the darkness."

Outside of working, Pierce's favorite hobbies in retirement are spending time with family, attending church and watching his grandchildren participate in the activities they love. The main thing he wants people to know is "I'm a work of grace - glory to God!"

A final piece of advice Pierce had to offer: "Don't give up if you are a young teacher. There will be obstacles that you have to overcome, but you are more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus."



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

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Sincerely,  
Sen. Garlan Gudger, District 4





# SMITH LAKE PARK

Located in Cullman County, Alabama, on the shores of the **21,200 acre** Lewis Smith Lake with **500 miles of shoreline**, the Smith Lake Park is open for **year round camping**. The park has 11 cabins; 219 full service sites; 5 water and electric sites; and 61 tent sites. Eight pavilions, playgrounds, a pool, fishing pier, a huge stage for special events, and new **pickleball courts** makes rustic Smith Lake Park a destination for **fun and relaxation**, plus a number of special events and festivals at the park throughout the year. We are located within 7 miles of I-65!

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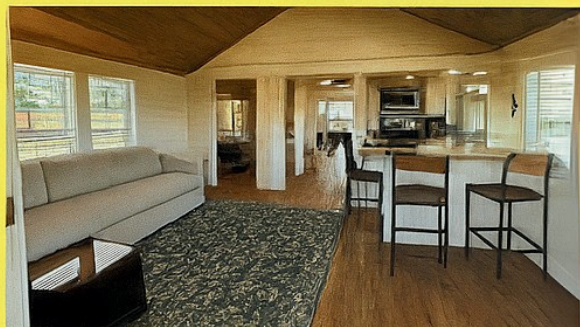
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(Varies based on availability, contact the office to book and verify amenities on each particular pavilion.)

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SECOND ANNUAL

# Alabama State



Strawberry Festival  
2025



# Alabama Strawberry Festival set to celebrate 86 years of tradition and community spirit

Noah Galilee

noah@cullmantribune.com

**T**he Alabama Strawberry Festival is back for its 86th year, promising an even bigger and better celebration of community, agriculture and the arts. Hosted by Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism (CPRST), the two-day event will take place April 25-26, 2025, at Depot Park, with free admission for all ages.

The festival, rebranded last year from the Cullman Strawberry Festival to the Alabama Strawberry Festival, drew nearly 50,000 attendees in 2024. Organizers are anticipating another record-breaking turnout.

"This year marks the 86th anniversary of the inaugural Cullman Strawberry Festival, now celebrated as the Alabama Strawberry Festival for its second year," said Nathan Anderson, CPRST executive director. "Visitors can anticipate an expanded lineup of live music, the largest variety of food vendors to date and an impressive selection of arts and crafts vendors."

Festival hours are Friday, April 25, from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. and Saturday, April 26, from 9 a.m.-10 p.m.

The Coca-Cola Stage will feature performances by Russell Dickerson, Lauren Alaina, Chase Matthew, Kidd G and more. While general admission is free, Anderson recommends purchasing tickets online for the best seating options.

In addition to music, the festival offers a blend of old and new traditions. Events include the Strawberry Queen Pageant, strawberry baking competitions, a lively carnival and a



SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

***The Alabama Strawberry Festival will take place April 25-26, 2025, at Depot Park, with free admission for all ages.***

large-scale arts and crafts show.

"The Alabama Strawberry Festival continues to honor its rich history, beginning with the celebration of local farmers," Anderson said. "This blend of the old and new ensures that we maintain our cherished history while keeping the festival vibrant and relevant for today's audiences."

To accommodate the growing crowds, the City of Cullman has added more than 150 new parking spaces since last year's event, including additional accessible parking for guests with disabilities at the north end of the festival grounds near the police station. Two accessible parking areas will now be available near the north and south entrances, with signage and a festival map to guide attendees. A rideshare drop-off point will be located at Second Avenue and Arnold Street, near the festival entrance.

Although there will be no shuttle service this year, organizers aim to make the festival grounds accessible and convenient for everyone, Anderson said.

Carnival ride prices will range from \$3-\$5. A QR code

with a current festival map will also be available for attendees.

Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs praised the event's impact on community spirit.

"The city council and I always look forward to this festival as it provides a wonderful opportunity to see our community unite, celebrating our farmers and local businesses while creating lasting memories," Jacobs said. "The community's enthusiasm and participation truly make this event special."

Anderson credited the event's success to the support of sponsors, City leadership, vendors and volunteers.

"Our goal is for this year's Alabama Strawberry Festival to be memorable not only for its celebration of Cullman's rich agricultural heritage, but also for fostering a sense of community and togetherness," he said. "We strive for every guest to leave the event with lasting memories filled with joy and a profound sense of community pride."

Get more detailed information at [www.alabamastrawberryfest.com](http://www.alabamastrawberryfest.com). Depot Park is located at 309 First Ave. NE in Cullman.

## Alabama Strawberry Festival improvements

Anabelle Howze

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

**T**he Alabama Strawberry Festival event continues to grow. After receiving feedback from last year's attendees, Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism and the City of Cullman have focused on making this year's experience even more enjoyable.

The dining and hang-out areas will have some of the most significant improvements. "Last year, we knew that space was limited for dining and hang-out spots, so we have made many improvements to that space," CPRST Executive Director Nathan Anderson shared.

Many attendees also shared concerns about limited parking in previous years. With the mayor's and city council's support, an additional parking lot will be added on the north end of the venue, aiming to make the festival more accessible.

Phase Two of Depot Park's expansion will also be used for this year's festival. This will allow vendors and activities to spread out and create more room for attractions. The lineup of activities includes more bands and music performances. The kids' ride area has been expanded for families to offer more fun. Using a new carnival ride company, the festival will offer a fresh selection of rides, including options designed for older audiences.

"We appreciate everybody involved—our sponsors, our team, our vendors, and the farmers. They have the best strawberries in our region, and we always appreciate the community coming out to support the event," Anderson said.

The Alabama Strawberry Festival will take place April 25-26, at Depot Park. Visit [www.alabamastrawberryfest.com](http://www.alabamastrawberryfest.com) for more.



## WEEKEND GUIDE: MAKING THE MOST OF THE



### FRIDAY

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Kick off your festival experience at the Farmer's Market, where local growers showcase the season's finest Alabama strawberries—stock up on fresh produce and enjoy the sweet flavors of spring. Seniors can make a stop at Senior Day, hosted by Cullman's Active Adult Center.

When hunger strikes, JJ's West Coast Tacos has you covered with authentic street tacos and loaded nachos, the perfect fuel for a day of festival fun. Spend the afternoon exploring artisan vendors, where you can watch live glassblowing at Jason Mack Glass—or even create your own piece! Then, browse Southern Native for original artwork and stylish screen-printed clothing before heading to the Fresh Picks stage around 3:30 for a lineup of talented local acts.

As the day winds down, grab a hearty meal at The Butcher's Chuckwagon—their strawberry smoked wings are a festival favorite! Finally, end the night on a high note with country stars Russell Dickerson and Lauren Alaina, taking the Coca-Cola Main Stage for an unforgettable evening of live music.

### SATURDAY

---

Start your second day at the Alabama Strawberry Festival with a refreshing strawberry frappe from Holderbeans Coffee, then explore Miller Farm Candle Co., where handcrafted soy candles fill the air with seasonal scents. Mid-morning, browse Wren + Revel's trendy boutique finds and Mayberry Creek's rustic country charm for unique gifts before heading to the Fresh Picks stage, where the Community Band kicks off a full day of live music. When lunchtime rolls around, savor a Huli Huli chicken bowl from Hele Bowls and don't forget to save room for their strawberry haupia coconut pudding.

Spend the afternoon sampling artisanal flavors at Dixie Gourmet and Chop Jerky, picking up tasty treats to take home, then swing by the Fresh Picks stage to catch the 2025 Miss Alabama Strawberry Pageant winners, the All Things Strawberry Contests, and the Strawberry Baking Contest.

Need a sweet pick-me-up? Scooty's Apples' strawberry caramel apples and Southern Sweet Shack's classic strawberry shortcake are the perfect festival treats. As the evening sets in, enjoy Southern comfort food at Puckett's Restaurant, from BBQ sandwiches to their signature Strawberry Fields salad—just be sure to leave room for cobbler! Then, close out the weekend in style with headliners Chase Matthew and Kidd G, lighting up the Coca-Cola Main Stage with an unforgettable night of country music.

No matter when you visit, the Alabama Strawberry Festival serves up delicious food, handcrafted goods, and toe-tapping entertainment—so come hungry, bring your shopping bags, and get ready for a berry good time!



# ALABAMA Strawberry FESTIVAL

Visit  Cullman

## KICK OFF YOUR SUMMER

**FRIDAY, APRIL 25**

[ALABAMASTRAWBERRYFEST.COM](http://ALABAMASTRAWBERRYFEST.COM)

*Fresh Picks*  
**STAGE**

**11AM-3PM SENIOR DAY**

**3:30PM CALEB LEE HUTCHINSON**

**5:15PM DESLONDES**

**6:35PM SHAYLEN**

*Coca-Cola*  
**MAIN STAGE**

**4:30PM GRIFFIN WILLIAM SHERRY**

**5:50PM AUSTIN WILLIAMS**

**7:20PM LAUREN ALAINA**

**9:00PM RUSSELL DICKERSON**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26**

\*SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

*Fresh Picks*  
**STAGE**

**9:00AM CMS BAND**

**10:00AM COMMUNITY BAND**

**11AM-1PM CHS JAZZ BAND**

**12PM-1PM CONTESTS**

**1:50PM SIPSEY FALLS**

**2:30PM 45 SURPRISE**

**3:15PM CADE PIERCE**

**4:45PM KAYLEE JORDAN BAND**

**6:25PM MT JONES**

*Coca-Cola*  
**MAIN STAGE**

**4:00PM GRAHAM BARHAM**

**5:30PM SAM DONALD**

**7:15PM KIDD G**

**9:00PM CHASE MATTHEW**



# German strawberry sweets

**Katie Spicer**

katie@cullmantoday.com

**W**elcome in sweet summertime with some old-fashioned strawberry-themed treats straight from the heart of Germany!

## Classic German Strawberry Cake (Erdbeerkuchen)

([www.daysofjay.com/2025/03/09/german-strawberry-cake/](http://www.daysofjay.com/2025/03/09/german-strawberry-cake/))



DAYSOFJAY.COM

Erdbeerkuchen is a combination of soft sponge cake, sweet custard, fresh strawberries and a tasty jelly topping.

### Ingredients

#### Sponge

- 3 large eggs
- 125 g white sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 75 ml vegetable oil, e.g., sunflower
- 100 g plain or all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder

#### Custard

- 20 g corn flour/corn starch
- 40 g white sugar
- 1 egg
- 250 ml full cream milk
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract

#### Topping

- 500 g strawberries

#### Glaze

- 3 sheets gelatine
- 3 tbsp. white sugar

### Directions

1. Line a 20x30 cm (8x12 in.) deep-sided baking tray with baking paper and grease with a little butter. Heat the oven to 350°F.

2. In a large mixing bowl, use an electric beater to beat the eggs, sugar and vanilla extract together for five minutes until pale and almost tripled in volume. After five minutes, drizzle in the oil while still beating, then sift over the flour and baking powder and fold through, keeping as much air in the mixture as possible.

3. Pour the mixture into the prepared tray, smooth over the top, then bake in the preheated oven for 25 minutes until golden brown and springy to the touch. Set aside to cool in the tin.

4. When the cake is cool, make the custard by whisking together the corn flour and sugar until well combined. Add the egg and half of the milk and whisk until smooth. Heat the remaining milk and vanilla extract in a saucepan until nearly boiling. Pour over the cornstarch mixture whisking constantly, then pour the mixture back into the saucepan and cook, stirring until thick. Pour immediately over the sponge base, using a spatula to spread it all the way to the sides.

5. Wash and dry the strawberries, then cut off the green tops, and halve lengthways. Arrange tightly on top of the custard in a pattern that you like, pressing the strawberries firmly into the custard to fix them in place.

6. Soak three sheets of gelatine in cold water for five minutes to soften. In a very small saucepan heat 225 ml of water with 3 tbsp. of sugar, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat, squeeze the liquid out of the gelatine sheet, then stir it into the hot sugar syrup until dissolved. Place the saucepan in a sink of cold water for 10-15 minutes until the mixture begins to thicken. Proceed to adding the glaze.

7. Spoon the glaze evenly over

the entire cake from the middle, taking care that each of the strawberries is completely covered. Allow to cool for 10 minutes, then chill in the fridge for at least half an hour or until the glaze has set. Gelatine and potato starch will require longer in the fridge to set up.

8. Slice and serve with plenty of whipped cream.

**Fun fact:** The traditional glaze for Erdbeerkuchen is known as Tortenguß and is a fixture in every German kitchen as it sets quickly and makes a beautiful cake topping!

## German Strawberry Roll (Erdbeerrolle)

([www.allrecipes.com/recipe/263618/german-strawberry-roll/](http://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/263618/german-strawberry-roll/))



FOODNPHOTO.DE

Erdbeerrolle is a simple sweet treat created with sponge cake, whipped cream and, of course, strawberries!

### Ingredients

#### Cake

- 4 eggs, divided
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla sugar
- 3 tbsp. confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. white sugar

#### Filling

- 3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 tsp. vanilla sugar
- 2 cups finely chopped strawberries

#### Garnish

- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 5 fresh strawberries, halved

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F (200 C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Combine egg yolks, 1/2 cup sugar, and 2 teaspoons vanilla sugar in a large bowl; beat with an electric mixer until foamy.

3. Beat egg whites in a glass, metal, or ceramic bowl until foamy. Gradually add confectioners' sugar, continuing to beat until stiff peaks form. Slide over the egg yolk mixture.

4. Sift flour and baking powder over the stiff egg whites. Carefully fold everything into the egg yolk mixture until batter is well combined, but do not over mix. Spread batter onto the prepared baking sheet.

5. Bake in the preheated oven until sponge cake is set and lightly browned, 12 to 16 minutes.

6. Lay a clean dish towel on a flat work surface and sprinkle dish towel with 2 tsp. sugar. Invert sponge cake onto the dish towel and remove parchment paper. Roll up cake with the dish towel and allow to cool completely, about one hour.

7. Beat 3/4 cup cream in a chilled glass or metal bowl with an electric mixer until frothy. Add vanilla sugar gradually, continuing to beat until stiff peaks form. Fold in strawberries with a spatula.

8. Carefully unroll sponge cake. Spread strawberry cream on top, leaving a little room on the edges. Carefully roll up and place seam down onto a cake platter. Allow to chill in the refrigerator for one hour.

9. Beat 1/2 cup cream in a chilled glass or metal bowl with an electric mixer until frothy. Add vanilla sugar gradually, continuing to beat until stiff peaks form. Spread all over the strawberry roll and garnish with strawberry halves.



# The legacy of the Strawberry Queen

**Anabelle Howze**

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**T**he Miss Alabama Strawberry Festival Pageant is a beloved tradition in Cullman.. It has celebrated local ladies for generations while honoring the area's connection to strawberry farming.

Elenore McGlawn of Hanceville was crowned the first queen in 1939, beginning the tradition. Throughout the 1940s, the tradition continued, and several other queens were crowned, including Margaret Engel (1940), Mamie Deerr (1941), Peggie Sue Gorham (1946) and Charlotte Marle Rosson (1949). The process of selecting the Royal Court in the 1940s differed from today. To ensure the community had a say in the representation, principals and teachers from Cullman County and City Schools nominated girls to be princesses, with the final decision being made by the senior classes.

In 1949, Norine Buckelew from West Point High School was chosen as the school's Strawberry Princess. She and her fellow princesses participated in numerous events during her reign, including a visit to the Governor's Mansion under Big Jim Folsom's administration. The festivities that year were further amplified when the 1949 festival was broadcast nationwide on the "RFD America" radio show,

bringing significant attention to Cullman's agricultural heritage.

The pageant has continued to evolve and grow over the years. Last year, Cullman High School senior Siddalee Drake was crowned Miss Alabama Strawberry Festival. This year, the pageant is scheduled for April 12 (shortly after this magazine's deadline) and will be held in the Cullman High School auditorium. It will include girls across multiple age divisions, from infancy through 12th grade. The pageant allows girls from across the region to participate and is open to girls of all age divisions to ensure that anyone who wants to participate has the option to do so. The divisions included are Infant Shortcake (0-11 months), Baby Shortcake (12-13 months), Toddler Shortcake (2-3 Years), Tiny Miss Shortcake (4 Years-Kindergarten), Little Miss Shortcake (1st-2nd Grade), Young Miss Shortcake (3rd-4th Grade), Miss Pre-Teen (5th-6th Grade), Miss Junior Strawberry (7th-9th Grade) and Miss Strawberry Queen (10th-12th Grade).

Each age division crowns a queen and two alternates if more than four contestants participate. If only four contestants participate in a division, one alternate is selected along with a queen. The queen receives a crown and an embroidered sash,



FACEBOOK/ALABAMA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

**Left to right are 2025 Miss Strawberry Queen Lainey Gerstman and 2024 Miss Strawberry Queen Siddalee Drake.**

medallions are given to alternates, and there are awards for categories like photogenic qualities, prettiest eyes, hair, smile and dress.

Being the reigning Strawberry Queen entails certain civic responsibilities to the city and the honor of holding the title. The queen is expected to participate in various events during the year, such as the Alabama Strawberry Festival, the Cullman County Fair Parade and Oktoberfest. While

holding the title, queens are expected to uphold a ladylike attitude and conduct themselves with dignity and grace to serve as role models for the community.

The Alabama Strawberry Festival Pageant started as a celebration of Cullman's agricultural legacy and a reflection of the community's values. Today, it allows girls to show off their confidence and poise while representing their community and honoring a long-standing tradition.



# Exploring New Hampshire and Vermont

By: Sherry Brown

Recently, this wandering photographer ventured into New Hampshire and Vermont to capture the beauty of snow-covered farms and their picturesque landscapes. Coming from the South, I was mesmerized by the snow and vibrant splashes of color evoking the feeling of exploring quaint, Hallmark-style towns. Come play in the snow with me!



## The town of Ashland, New Hampshire



## Flume Covered Bridge



## St. Matthew's Chapel in Sugar Hill, Vermont



## East Corinth, Vermont



The town of East Corinth, Vermont is a small community where the film "Beetlejuice" was filmed. The people are very proud of this and loved showing me landmarks that are easily recognized in the movie.



## New Hope Church in Vermont



## Stowe, Vermont - a view of the town



## Jackson Village, New Hampshire



Jackson Village, New Hampshire - a local park full of skiers, from children to seniors

## Slaughterhouse Covered Bridge



Slaughterhouse Covered Bridge stretches across Dog River and was originally constructed in 1872. I was standing on frozen ice to capture this image and to the right are some animal prints where something else had walked here, too!

## Crawford Notch Depot



Crawford Notch Depot in New Hampshire was originally constructed in 1891.



## Maple Grove Farm



Maple Grove Farm, established 1902

## Jenne Farm

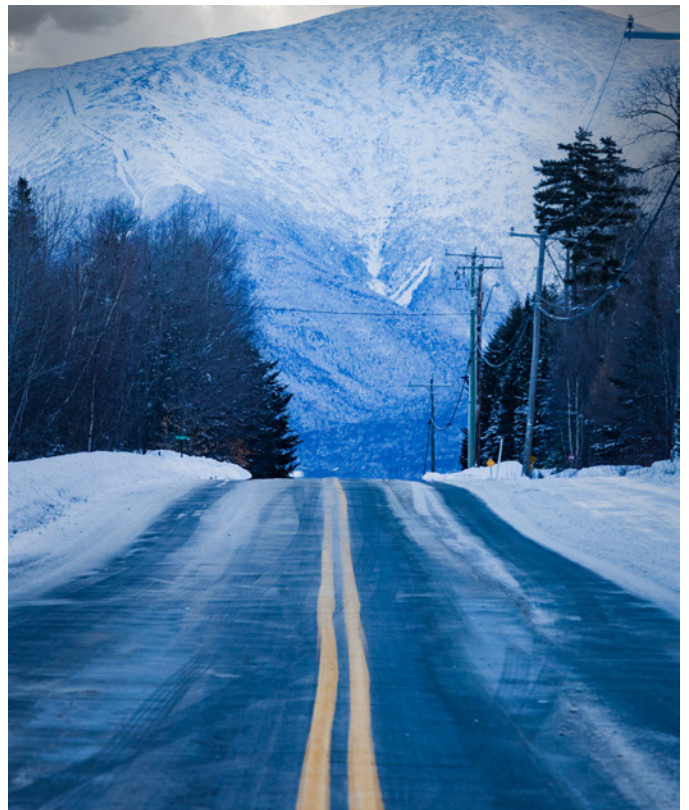


Jenne Farm in Vermont is one of the most photographed farms in the United States.

## Sleepy Hollow Farm in Woodstock, Vermont



## Mount Washington



Mount Washington has the highest peak in the northeast United States, at 6,288 feet in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Follow the road down to the Mount Washington Cog Railway.



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## – STUDENT SPOTLIGHT –

# Cullman High's Nevaeh Green

**Anabelle Howze**

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**N**evaeh Green is a senior at Cullman High School and the featured twirler in the Cullman Bearcat Marching Band. She began her twirling career at 9 and fell in love with the sport. Now, she is the choreographer and instructor for Cullman High School's upcoming majorettes. In addition to her leadership role, she has a deep love and connection with her church, Crosshaven. She has the opportunity to serve in the church's nursery every month and has been leading the Vacation Bible School dance team since 2021. With all her experience, she now feels a call to pursue a career in education to one day serve the community that has enjoyed her performances so much.

Reflecting on her years at CHS, Friday night football games are some of her favorite memories. "Walking on the field every Friday night is a feeling like no other," she shared. "The roar of the crowds, the glow of the lights, the sound of the Bearcat Marching Band and the feeling of a baton twirling through my hand — will always hold a special place in my heart." Along with football games, homecoming weeks and the Senior Sunrise are some of her fondest times in high school, filled with excitement and friends. "HOCO week is filled with goofy costumes, laughter, games and fun. But looking back at pictures, I can't help but see a student body that truly cherishes each moment," she said. "Senior Sunrise, where we gathered on the football

field at the end of homecoming week, was a reflection of everything I've experienced and the friends I've made at CHS."

In addition to her time with the marching band, Green is a dedicated Future Teachers of America (FTA) club member. After being inspired by a day volunteering with the Cullman Primary School Extended Day Program, she began taking foundational education courses. She served as club treasurer her junior year before becoming the club's president during her senior year.

"I've had the opportunity to intern at East Elementary for the past two years, which opened my eyes even more to how much I love serving children and making a positive impact on their lives," she said.

She also had the privilege of being a member and the president of marketing/events for Bearcat Buddies, a club that pairs traditional students with special needs students, allowing them to interact and befriend students in a special needs environment.

Green has accomplished several things during her time at CHS, and her list is impressive. She was crowned Homecoming Queen and Prom Queen, and chosen as Miss Cullman High. She humbly credits her accomplishments to the love and support of all her peers. She was named the 2025 Distinguished Young Woman of Cullman County, competed in the Distinguished Young Women of Alabama program in Montgomery, earning a spot as a Top 5 talent finalist. She has performed in local state, and national competitions during her twirling career. In the summer of 2023, she »



NEVAEH GREEN

**Cullman High's Nevaeh Green**



won two national titles at the National Junior Olympics, and in 2024, placed in the Top 10 in two events at the National Baton Twirling Championships at Notre Dame.

Despite her accolades she remains humble, saying she draws strength and motivation from her relationship with Christ. "While I will forever be grateful for all these titles, none compare to my relationship with Christ. I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for His grace, mercy, love and, most of all, His goodness. He has shown me my worth in Him, He has shown me the calling He has for me and He has been my firm foundation when I thought I was going to fall. I am only where I am because of Him."

Her high school journey was not without its challenges. During her sophomore year, her twirling coach Shirley BeShears passed away from cancer. "This was a very hard time in my life because I didn't

just lose a coach; I lost one of my best friends. She taught me everything I know about batons and helped me realize that I want to open my own baton and dance studio someday. The way she loved, cared for and pushed her students is what I want to do for future twirlers as well." Without a full-time coach, she had to hold herself accountable and find her own motivation. She pushed herself to choreograph her own routines, refine her skills and stay persistent and driven. Above all, she needed to remain strong in her faith to get through hard times.

After graduation, Green plans to attend Mississippi State University or the University of Mississippi and become a collegiate featured twirler while majoring in elementary education. After receiving her bachelor's degree, she plans to return home to Cullman and work at one of the local elementary schools while pursuing her master's degree

in elementary education. She would also like to open her own baton and dance studio, where she can teach and impact the lives of the children. "I hope to have the opportunity to work with girls of all ages, with different backgrounds and stories. My goal is to reach and positively impact as many students as possible. I want to be a light, a helping hand and a loving mentor to any future student I may have."

As her time at Cullman

High School comes to a close, Green has some advice for underclassmen and incoming freshmen. "Never give up," she said. "No matter what life throws at you, keep going. Find what you're passionate about, and don't take these years for granted. They go by so much faster than you think. Live in the moment, see the positive in every situation and be thankful for the memories — because one day, you'll be looking back with gratitude."

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# 'Everyone deserves to be treated equally and have all the same opportunities'

*Vinemont's Makenna Howard excited for Fair Queen Pageant*

**Sammy Confer**

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**J**unior Makenna Howard will represent Vinemont in the Fair Queen pageant this October. She has been competing in pageants ever since she was little, and the things that she learned from her previous competitions have helped her so much this time around. She talked about what the process was like going into the pageant in February.

"Re-watching my old pageant videos helped me correct my walk this year. Definitely fixing my posture in certain dresses and walking slower than I did in previous pageants helped me score better this year," Howard said.

"For the past two months or so, I've been working extremely hard for my title. I've spent a lot of time thinking and researching about my platform, going to my talent lessons an hour away, and having pre-interview sessions at 9:30 at night. It's not as easy as people think. I'm extremely grateful I was given the opportunity."

Makenna was nervous going into the pageant, but she had a lot of help from some great friends. She talked about her talent and the new friendships that she made during the pageant.

"It was extremely supportive. I had a lot of stress

going into that night, and the girls backstage with me, along with the other contestants, never once failed to cheer me on, and lift my spirit up," Howard said.

"My talent was clogging. It's similar to tap dance, but you're using your toes more than both toes and heels. I definitely made new friendships during the pageant."

Makenna reflected on her reaction and everyone else's reaction when they first announced that she would be the Fair Queen representative.

"I felt a lot of love. The Vinemont community is very strong and supportive. I truly believe that everyone was happy for me," she said.

"My most memorable moment from the pageant was when I was running out of the locker room to make it back on stage in time to be crowned. Everyone saw my shadow behind the curtain sprinting to the floor. It gave a lot of comedic relief," Howard laughed.

"I learned to be myself. I have learned that, when putting myself out on a stage, people are going to have different opinions of me, even if they don't know me as a person."

"You can't make everyone happy, and you can't risk your own happiness being someone you aren't just to make others happy. I've learned that »



CONTRIBUTED

**Vinemont's Makenna Howard**



I'm a confident and kind role model who can be unapologetically me."

She talked about why her platform, Ability in all Disability, is so important to her.

"I want to spread awareness of how all businesses, establishments, and even social media platforms need to be compliant with the Americans Disabilities Act.

"The ADA is a law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. I want to share how there's still multiple places that don't have accommodations for disabled people like they should. Even public-school systems are failing and not having the resources for disabled kids. Everyone deserves to be treated equally and have all the same opportunities."

Makenna can't wait to represent Vinemont in the upcoming Fair Queen pageant in October. She wants to use

her platform to be a role model for the younger girls watching her perform.

"Vinemont hasn't had a representative win the Cullman County Fair Queen Pageant in a long time, and I'm going to work my hardest to be the next.

"I want to be the best example of what's it like to be a student at Vinemont High and be the best representation of my school. I'm beyond proud to be trusted with this title," she said.

"It was a very good feeling, from the random waves I would get, to getting so many compliments. One of the girls I give private lessons to came and got to watch and take a picture with me. It was very fulfilling, knowing little girls look up to me."

Howard added, "I give all the glory to God. I would not be where I am right now if Christ didn't give me the

opportunities. I want to be not just a good role model, but also, a Godly role model. I want to share how God has helped me get to where I am today and give me the power of my voice to speak up for the ones who can't for themselves."

Makenna talked about a role model she looks up to and shared her favorite Bible verse.

"My Godly role model is my mom. She never fails to assure me how beautifully and wonderfully made I am in God's image. I have been taught how to not only love myself, but others as God's creations. I have always been taught to pray and lay my weaknesses and the heaviness of my heart at Christ's feet, and I will blossom. The more I do through God, the more love I feel. I'm blessed to have had a Godly environment growing up," she said.

"Philippians 4:13 is my favorite. It not only gives me strength in the pageant world,

but also the cheer world. During competition season, I wear that verse on the side of my cheer shoe."

Howard shared some advice with girls who want to compete in pageants themselves.

"Do it. It's truly not as bad of an experience as you would think. It's such a great experience to become more confident in yourself as a person. I've made good friendships, and I've met so many kind people through the pageant world. Be yourself and do it to have fun. It's so worth it," she said.

"I want them to remember how I hold myself up. So many teens struggle with confidence and being themselves. I want to be able to show people that being yourself is the best thing to do. Be confident and sure of everything you do. I also hope people see the true passion I have. I hope I'm seen as a passionate advocate for all equal rights to everyone."



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# 'It touched a lot of people's hearts'

*Jillian Zapka to represent Good Hope in Fair Queen Pageant*

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Jillian Zapka will be representing Good Hope High School in the upcoming Fair Queen pageant this fall and she's already looking forward to getting back on stage. This was her first pageant since second grade, and she had so much fun being around her friends while preparing.

"It was so much fun being with all the girls. It was amazing. We truly were there for each other throughout the entire pageant. We all got to watch each other the day before and give each other advice. It was a great environment," Zapka said.

"I've worked with my baton coach, Bess Wills, on my talent, and Julie Graham has been helping me for about five weeks with interviews, my pageant walk, and my fitness walk."

Jillian was given some great advice before everything got underway, and she talked about her service initiative and how much it means to her.

"Some advice that people gave me was to just be myself, and as long as I show the judges the best of my abilities, it was considered successful, no matter what the outcome was," Zapka said.

"My service initiative is T.W.I.R.L. for a Cure, which focuses on spreading breast cancer awareness.

"It means so much to me, because people need to know how important early detection of any cancer really is. If you can catch it early, that can be the difference between overcoming the disease or having it spread throughout your body."

Her performance during the pageant touched a lot of people's hearts, and she talked about her reaction and everyone else's reaction to her winning.

A lot of younger girls were watching her performance at the pageant, and being a role model for them is important to her.

"I think it touched a lot of people's hearts, since cancer is so prominent in society today," she said.

"I was honored that I was chosen out of such a great group of girls. I'm still in shock. They were all so happy for me and supportive.

"It is important for them to find a role model who is a positive and Godly person that they can follow."

Jillian gave some advice to those girls that want to compete in pageants themselves, saying that God played a huge role in her performance. She shared her favorite Bible verse as well.

"Go for it, and as long as you know you did your best, it doesn't matter what the outcome ends up becoming," she said. "He played a big »



CONTRIBUTED

**Jillian Zapka (left) and Anna Grace Pemberton (right)**



role in my performance. Before we started the pageant, we all prayed over each other, and we did the same thing before we went out for awards.

"My favorite verse is Proverbs 16:9, and that verse means so much to me, because

without the Lord establishing each of my steps, I wouldn't have made it to where I am today."

Jillian reflected on her most memorable moment from the pageant and what she learned something about herself during

the competition.

"My most memorable moment was right before awards when we were all praying for each other and just supporting each other," she said.

"The biggest thing I learned

was to be more confident with what I do.

"I want people to remember my service initiative and how important it is for us to come together to make people more aware of the importance of early detection."



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## - BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT -

# 'Health is wealth and movement is medicine'

## The journey of Lauren Estes Fitness

**Gauge Day**

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**"Health is wealth and movement is medicine!"**

For Lauren Estes Bailey, owner of Lauren Estes Fitness, this isn't just a catchy phrase, it's the heartbeat of everything she does. It's the encouragement she speaks over her clients daily, the mindset she lives by and the mission that drives her work.

Estes Bailey, now a local International Fitness and Bodybuilding (IFBB) Federation Pro and well-known fitness business owner, never thought her fitness journey would lead her to where she is today. When she first stepped into the world of health and wellness, it was purely out of passion. She loved the way training made her feel — the discipline, the challenge and the constant push to be better. With time, her journey grew from more than just her own and develop into a passion for creating an environment where others could discover their potential, set goals and reach new heights.

"I thrive in an encouraging, empowering atmosphere," Estes Bailey said. "I wanted to cultivate that for others. I love watching people reach

the goals they set for themselves and I love to be a part of it and help raise the bar. I tell my clients all the time, 'I am not calling you out, I am calling you up. I'm holding you accountable to be your best self.'" That mindset became the foundation of Lauren Estes Fitness — a business built on life balance, long-term sustainability and mastering the basics to achieve lasting success.

Before launching her business, her fitness journey began in 2015 when she entered her first bikini division bodybuilding competition. To Estes Bailey, it was never about becoming a professional athlete — at least, not at first. She simply loved the lifestyle and the challenge. But bodybuilding, especially competitive prep, isn't for the faint of heart. "For anyone who has prepped for a show — it's different. There's no instant gratification," she explained. "It's months of compound consistency when you have no energy, when you're sick, when you want to do anything else. Athletes who choose to compete are made different because, at the end of the day, we choose it. We choose the lack of quick turnaround. We want the longevity. It makes the journey worth it."

As her love for the sport grew, so did her commitment. With 14 bikini division competitions on the books, she transitioned to the fitness division in 2019, competing



LAUREN ESTES BAILEY

**Lauren Estes Bailey, local IFBB Pro and owner of Lauren Estes Fitness**

in more than 27 shows over the years, including eight national pro-qualifying competitions between 2020 and 2023. In June 2023, her hard work paid

off, earning her the coveted IFBB Pro Card, an elite honor only given to a handful of competitors each year through rigorous competition. Estes Bailey »



had reached a pinnacle of prestigious bodybuilding, an accolade not shared by many in the world, and even fewer in northern Alabama.

But to Estes Bailey, it was always more than just a title — it was the meaning behind it that she chased. “It meant I didn’t quit; I finished. I saw something through that was bigger than me that was at one time what I deemed unreachable,” she said. “I believe adding those letters after my name showed that if I could accomplish something that remarkable, then others could do it in their own way, too.”

While bodybuilding had become a significant part of her life and shaped the way she viewed fitness for others, coaching and training had always been a part of her true calling.

Estes Bailey’s background in broadcast journalism and writing gave her another career path, but fitness steadily grew into a focal passion instead of a secondary job. For years, she worked in local gyms while balancing her role as a journalist, but something about the traditional 9-to-5 lifestyle never felt right. Eventually, she took a leap of faith — turning her side hustle into a full-time career by opening her own business, Lauren Estes Fitness.

“I had no clue how to run a business and I am still learning every day,” she admitted. “I just wanted to coach and train. Thankfully, I had a tribe around me that poured into me at different points and helped me figure out the necessities.” By 2020, her business began to flourish, giving her the push to officially register Lauren Estes Fitness as an LLC, pursuing personal training and group classes as her full-time job.

“Although I’ve been training for nearly a decade, I’ll be at my location eight years in March. It’s been a wild ride of ups and downs. I struggled, but I learned. But it was all a process

necessary for my journey,” she shared. “Jesus allowed the tests I faced to become my testimony and I’m very grateful for that.”

While time proved that Estes Bailey’s dedication to her clients and their potential has been an effective business model, Estes Bailey’s approach to training is what sets her apart. While some trainers push extreme regimens or lack a personal touch, she preaches balance and sustainability. “I feel like several things I personally offer, no one else does locally. Some things are the classic ‘old school’ routines that work,” she explained. “I truly try to be the preacher of balance and moderation.”

“I want your fitness journey to be a lifestyle that you can keep up for life,” she said. “Crash diets, unrealistic workouts and weight loss fads? You won’t find those in my gym. I am a believer in the mastery of the basics, while adding fun and flair in the process.” Her philosophy harkens back to the very beginning: “Health is wealth and movement is medicine!”

So how does she do it? Running a business, competing as an IFBB Pro athlete and personally coaching clients requires an incredible amount of discipline and Estes Bailey is the first to admit that balance for herself is something she’s still working on.

“I am still working on figuring that one out. Some days, I’m great at it. Other days? Not so much,” she laughed. Her routine starts before the sun rises — waking up around 4 a.m. and in the gym by 4:45, coaching clients for five to six hours, handling business operations, back at home writing for The Cullman Tribune and then heading back for another three to four hours of training. While it seems to be a lot to juggle, Estes Bailey has made it clear that she wouldn’t have it any other way.

While her journey has had



LAUREN ESTES BAILEY

**A packed-out night crew after a Booty by Lauren class focused heavily on glutes and core movements**

its fair share of setbacks, she believes every challenge has shaped her into the coach and business owner she is today. “I’ve learned that every period of brokenness had a purpose. I have won, lost, started over and learned so much. But every hardship allowed me to build something better. My gym has become so much more than a place to live and sweat. It’s a sanctuary of therapy, support, encouragement, energy, prayer, love and understanding.”

With every early morning, long day of work and competition prep and each setback that challenged her path, Estes Bailey has been led to what she calls the most rewarding part of her job: watching her clients achieve things they once thought were out of reach. “To see them do things, complete things that at one time were a tiny dream, means everything to me. I get to see them win, and no two wins ever look the same,” she said. “For one person, it’s finishing a race. For another, it’s moving weight they never imagined lifting. I’ll never have two clients with the exact same goal, but every win matters.”

For those just starting their fitness journey, her advice is simple, “Stay consistent and show up,” she shared. “Even on the days you don’t want to. No one can do any of it for you. You literally can make anything

happen if you continue to be consistent. If you only have 40%, give 40%. That’s growth, consistency and balance.

“If I could go back and tell myself anything, it would be this: stop having imposter syndrome. It’s okay to learn. It’s okay to be a beginner. It’s okay to not be great at something when you start,” she added. “It’s okay to bet on yourself, but be prepared to work. Always be prepared to work.”

Looking ahead, Estes Bailey is excited for the future of Lauren Estes Fitness. She hosts an annual Vision Night, where clients set personal and fitness goals for the year. Every December she hosts an event called the “Grinch Games,” an extended hybrid workout that comes with themed medals for participants, with hopes of kicking one off for the earlier part of the year. She’s also preparing to introduce a brand-new class to the gym, one that will be the first of its kind locally. “I can’t release the info yet, but we are bringing a class to the gym soon that I won’t be teaching and it will be the only one of its kind locally. Stay tuned!” she said.

For more information about Lauren Estes Fitness, upcoming programs or personal training, contact Estes Bailey at leestes21@gmail.com or follow her on Facebook or Instagram at Lauren Estes Fit.



– FAITH –

# 'God's trials are opportunities to inspire others by overcoming adversity'

*Good Hope's Mattie Wix shares story of her faith*

**Sammy Confer**

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**G**od has definitely changed Good Hope senior Mattie Wix's life and in this interview, she discussed her relationship with her faith, starting with some of her favorite Bible verses.

"God holds a significance in my life that is difficult to put into words. He serves as my guiding light and my source of reassurance when faced with uncertainty. I firmly believe that without Him, I wouldn't be where I am today, nor would I have become the person I am," Wix said.

"My favorite Bible verses are Isaiah 53:5 and Isaiah 41:10. They bring me encouragement and remind me of God's greatness, as they assure me of His constant presence with me, providing peace and strength in times of anxiety."

Mattie wants to help people of all ages find God and being a strong »



KATIE BARRETT

**Good Hope's Mattie Wix**



role model for them is important to her.

"In today's world, where Christianity often faces criticism and division, finding God is crucial for people of all ages, as He is the ultimate source of creation, love, and wisdom.

"My life has been tremendously impacted by God, whose presence brings comfort, guidance, and purpose, and offering peace and hope during challenging times," she said.

"Everyone needs God's unconditional love and grace, which can transform our hearts and inspire us to live with compassion and integrity.

"By seeking God and developing a relationship with Him, we can find strength, direction, and a deeper understanding of our place in the world, which is why I am passionate about helping people navigate their faith and understand the profound impact God can have on their lives."

She added, "It is so important to me to be a Godly role model for kids, because they tend to look up to others for guidance, inspiration, and having that positive faith-based example can really help shape their values and behavior. Living out my faith in everyday actions shows them how to handle life's challenges.

"Plus, it helps build a foundation of love and trust, which can guide them throughout their lives. It's all about leading by example and being 'that shoulder to lean on' or positive influence they have to count on."

Mattie talked about her

favorite mission and some of her role models.

"My favorite mission was helping an elderly man a few summers ago with various tasks around the house, including roofing, siding, painting, and yard cleanup alongside my youth group. That allowed us to spread God's word through acts of kindness and share with him how Jesus has impacted our lives," she said.

"My parents are my ultimate role models, consistently showing me what it means to live with love, integrity, and faith. Through their actions and words, they've taught me valuable lessons in kindness, honesty, and compassion.

"Additionally, I draw inspiration from social media role models like Bryce Crawford, Sadie Robertson, and Cliff Knechtle, who demonstrate the importance of proudly embracing my Christian faith and living it out daily, even when it's not considered 'cool' or 'trendy'."

Mattie went through a challenging life-changing experience at a young age, but God has helped her every step of the way, and that experience has helped her faith grow even stronger.

"When I was five years old, I was diagnosed with strep throat and was given an antibiotic shot. Unfortunately, the shot was injected into my sciatic nerve, which caused full paralysis of my left leg.

"I regained feeling six months later with intense therapy and lots of tests. Since then, however, walking has never been the same

for me. Despite the challenges, I have overcome my battles with God by my side, finding strength and resilience through my faith. This difficult experience brought me closer to God, as I relied on His guidance and comfort during my darkest moments.

"Through prayer and trust in His plan, I found the courage to face each day with hope and determination. My faith has been my anchor, helping me to see beyond my physical limitations and embrace the blessings in my life.

"Even though I walk differently, I'm still able to live a fulfilling life, pursue my dreams, and inspire others with my journey," Wix said.

"My relationship with God has grown stronger, giving me the inner strength to overcome any obstacle that comes my way. I even competed in the Miss Good Hope Fair Pageant, where I had the opportunity to share my story and spread God's word about how He helped me overcome this battle."

Mattie gave some advice to anyone who wants a relationship with God but might be struggling with that goal.

"If you're looking to build a relationship with God but are struggling, start small with a few minutes of prayer or reading a verse.

"Be honest with God about your feelings and doubts and find a church or Bible Study to connect with. Explore different books in the Bible and stay open to how God might be working in your life, even in small ways. Be patient with yourself and God, as building a relationship takes time. Remember,

it's a journey, and everyone's path is unique. Keep seeking, and you'll find your way."

Mattie has learned so much during her journey so far and competing pageants has changed not only her life, but gives her a chance to change other girls' lives as well.

"I've come to trust God's plan for me, understanding that patience is key as I navigate a journey unique to me with its own challenges and outcomes.

"God is always watching over me, providing peace and guidance through difficult times, leading me towards a brighter future. With every step, I draw closer to Him," she said.

"Participating in the pageant helped me discover my true purpose and understand that God's trials are opportunities to inspire others by overcoming adversity.

"That gives me the confidence to showcase my uniqueness and encourage other girls to do the same, serving as a role model and reminding them that their individuality reflects God's creation.

"I hope girls can wake up each day, thank God for making them, and spread positivity to others. Singing at the Good Hope Elementary pageant last month and receiving love from the little girls afterward made me realize the impact one person can have on others.

"My goal is to always be my true self, so those little girls aren't afraid to do the same."



## - COUNTY TOURNAMENT -

# Good Hope claims back-to-back county titles with 11-1 win over West Point



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

**The Good Hope Raiders defeated West Point 11-1 on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 to win their second straight county championship.**

**By: Nick Griffin,  
Sammy Confer**

**A**fter rainy weather pushed the start of this year's Cullman County Softball Tournament to Tuesday, April 1, the Good Hope Raiders defended their title in dominant fashion, routing Cold Springs 17-2 in the semi-finals and handling West Point in the championship game 11-1. Molly Benefield got the start for Good Hope in the title game, allowing just two hits and striking out eight batters to help seal the win for the Raiders.

Lizzy Steed led off the bottom of the first with a single and scored on a fielder's

choice later in the inning to give Good Hope a 1-0 lead. After a scoreless second inning, West Point's Avere Foldes scored on an error to tie the game at 1 in the top of the third, but the Raiders responded in the bottom half of the inning.

Maggie O'Neil was hit by a pitch to lead off the inning and Lizzy Steed knocked the next pitch into deep left field to score O'Neil and give Good Hope a 2-1 lead. One pitch later, Kylee Smith drove an RBI single back up the middle to score Steed and make it a 3-1 game. After Campbell Koch kept the inning going with another hit, Haley Lay lined an RBI single into left field to plate Smith and put

the Raiders in front 4-1 going into the fourth.

Brooklyn Lambert scored on an error in the bottom of the fourth to extend the lead to 5-1 and Good Hope put things away for good in the bottom of the fifth. Three straight walks loaded the bases for Natalie Miller and she sent a bases-clearing double into center field to make it an 8-1 game. Burgess knocked the next pitch into left field to score Miller and stretch the lead to 9-1 and after two more walks loaded the bases again, Steed wrapped things up with a 2-run single, securing an 11-1 win for Good Hope and back to back county championships.

Steed finished 3-for-4 at

the plate with three RBIs and Miller (one hit) recorded three RBIs as well. Smith, Koch, Lay and Burgess each posted a hit and an RBI in the win. Foldes and Zailee Love recorded West Point's only two hits in the loss.

## CULLMAN COUNTY ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

- Addyson Burgess, Good Hope
- Haley Lay, Good Hope
- Natalie Miller, Good Hope
- Lizzy Steed, Good Hope
- Molly Benefield, Good Hope
- Kortni Baker, West Point
- Katie Beth Yovino, West Point
- Cabri Blackwood, West Point

»



- Macie Brown, West Point
- Kylie Kovar, Fairview
- Emily Benson, Fairview
- Ayda Payne, Fairview
- Joci Williams, Cold Springs
- Sadie Smith, Cold Springs
- Brooklyn Ingram, Cold Springs
- Bryleigh Basinger, Vinemont
- Tori Vines, Vinemont
- Abby Kuykendall, Vinemont
- Maggie Nail, Holly Pond
- Alaina Folds, Holly Pond
- Isabella Spinks, Hanceville
- Josi Jones, Hanceville

### 2025 All-County Team

- Molly Benefield, Good Hope
- Lizzy Steed, Good Hope
- Addyson Burgess, Good Hope
- Campbell Koch, Good Hope
- Katie Beth Yovino, West Point
- Kortni Baker, West Point
- Macie Brown, West Point
- Brayley Phillips, West Point
- Ralie Gaines, Fairview
- Jocelyn Barnett, Fairview
- Addison Phillips, Fairview
- Adriana Young, Cold Springs
- Sadie Smith, Cold Springs
- Cloe Shelton, Cold Springs
- Alex Twitty, Hanceville
- Kynzlee Farr, Hanceville
- Bryleigh Basinger, Vinemont
- Alaina Sandlin, Vinemont
- Clara Spitzer, Holly Pond
- Maggie Nail, Holly Pond

### Good Hope 17 - Cold Springs 2 (semifinals)

The game was scoreless going into the second inning, but Good Hope quickly got something going in the bottom of the second. Molly Benefield led off the inning with a walk, and Natalie Miller reached on an error. They both moved up to third and second, respectively, on a ground ball, and Brooklyn Lambert's RBI single

put them on the scoreboard first. Miller scored on a suicide squeeze play by Lizzy Steed to make it 2-0, then three straight RBI singles by Kylee Smith, Campbell Koch, and Haley Lay extended the Lady Raider lead to 5-0.

Good Hope broke the game wide open in the bottom of the third inning. Benefield hit a double to lead off the third, and Natalie Miller drove her in on an RBI single up the middle to make it 6-0. A hit by pitch and a walk loaded the bases with one out, and Steed hit the first pitch she saw into right field for a two-run double to put them ahead, 8-0. Maggie O'Neil came around to score on an error to give the Lady Raiders a 9-0 lead. Koch hit an RBI single, and Lay drove in a run on a sacrifice fly to make it 11-0.

Brooklyn Ingram led off the top of the fourth inning for Cold Springs with a triple and came around to score on an error four pitches later to cut it to 11-1. Back-to-back singles loaded the bases, and Brooke Rowan hit an RBI single to center field to make it 11-2. Good Hope ended things in their half. Gracie Garmon hit a two-run double, Kenzlee Smith added an RBI single, and Calleigh Granger collected an RBI double to give them a 15-2 lead. Granger came around to score on an error to make it 16-2, and Carlee Trammell's RBI double put the finishing touches on a 17-2 win for the Lady Raiders.

Steed and Kylee Smith each posted a pair of hits and three RBIs for Good Hope. Koch added three hits and a pair of RBIs, and Garmon collected a hit and two RBIs. Six other Raider players finished with an RBI in the game. Addyson Burgess gave up just six hits and one earned run and struck out three in her four innings of work.

Rowan finished with a hit and an RBI for Cold Springs, while Aleah Addison, Kaydance Williams, Ingram, Sadie Smith, and Adriana Young all collected a hit of their own in the loss.

### West Point 10 - Fairview 5 (Semifinals)

West Point struck first in its opening at-bats. Katie Beth Yovino reached on an error to lead off the bottom of the first. She moved up to third on a fly ball, and a sacrifice fly by Brayley Phillips gave them the 1-0 lead. The score remained the same until the bottom of the third. Lauren Windham reached on a fielder's choice with one out, and back-to-back errors allowed Windham and Phillips to score to make it 3-0. Cabri Blackwood followed that up with an RBI double to extend the Lady Warrior lead to 4-0, and Kylie Burks added an RBI single to put them ahead, 5-0.

Back-to-back doubles by Ayda Payne and Addison Phillips cut the Fairview deficit to 5-1 in the top of the fourth. West Point put a pair of runners on second and third in their half, and Windham's sacrifice fly made it 6-1. Three pitches later, Phillips knocked an RBI single to center field to give them a 7-1 lead. The Lady Aggies cut into the deficit in the top of the sixth inning.

A single by Payne and a double by Phillips put runners on second and third with one out, and Jocelyn Barnett lined a two-run double to right field to make it a 7-3 game. A single by Ralie Gaines put runners on the corners, and Ada Fales made it 7-4 on an RBI single. Later that inning, Emily Benson hit an RBI single to center field to trim it to a two-run game.

West Point added to their lead in their half. Kealie Harbison led off the inning

with a single, and Yovino reached on an error to put runners on second and third with nobody out. Windham lined the first pitch she saw into right field for an RBI single to make it 8-5. Yovino later scored on a passed ball to extend the Lady Warrior lead to 9-5, and an error allowed Windham to cross the plate to make it 10-5. Fairview couldn't mount a comeback in the seventh, and West Point would go on to defeat the Lady Aggies, 10-5, to move on to the championship game against Good Hope.

Windham and Phillips each collected a hit and two RBIs for the Lady Warriors, while Blackwood and Burks each added a hit and an RBI. Barnett finished with a hit and two RBIs for Fairview, while Phillips (two hits), Fales (two hits), and Benson (one hit) all drove in a run as well.

### Cold Springs 7 - Vinemont 6 (Game One)

After a scoreless first inning, Vinemont was able to take an early lead in the top of the second. Singles by Alaina Sandlin and Tori Vines put a pair of runners on base and Brooklyn Yarbrough drove the next pitch into left field to plate Sandlin and take a 1-0 lead. Later in the inning, Jady Knott ripped an RBI single into left field to score Audriena Key and make it a 2-0 game going into the third.

Vinemont added to its lead in the top of the third when Sandlin lined an RBI single into left field, stretching the lead to 3-0. However, Cold Springs responded in the bottom half of the third. Sadie Smith led things off with a triple, Aleah Addison drew a walk and Kaydance Williams laid down a bunt single to load the bases. Two pitches later, Brooklyn Ingram drove a 2-run single into left field to »



plate a pair of runs and cut the lead to 3-2. Cold Springs was able to load the bases again later in the inning and an error allowed two more runs to score and put Cold Springs in front 4-3 going into the fourth.

Vinemont answered in the top of the fourth, tying the game at 4 on an RBI single from Arleigh Thomason. Later in the inning, Bryleigh Basinger barreled up a 2-run double to plate two more runs and give Vinemont a 6-4 lead. After a scoreless fifth inning, Cold Springs tied things up in the bottom of the sixth. Williams drew a walk with the bases loaded to bring Maddie Davis home to score, cutting the lead to 6-5 and Ingram was hit by a pitch during the next at bat to score Smith and tie things up at 6 headed into the seventh.

In the bottom of the seventh, a pair of walks and an error loaded the bases for Cold Springs and Addison drew a walk to score Cloe Shelton, seal a 7-6 win and advance to the semifinals.

Ingram (one hit) racked up three RBIs in the win and Smith added a pair of hits as well. For Vinemont, Knott, Yarbrough, Vines, Sandlin and Abby Kuykendall each recorded two hits in the loss.

#### **Fairview 16 - Holly Pond 1 (Game Two)**

The Aggies got off to a fast start in this one. An RBI double from Ava Pruett put Fairview in front 1-0 in the bottom of the first and another RBI double from Addison Phillips made it a 2-0 game going into the second.

The Aggies added to their lead in the bottom of the second. Josie Earl hit a lead off single into left field and Emily Benson followed with a double to put a pair of runners in scoring position.

Three pitches later, Kylie Kovar knocked a 2-run double into center field to make it a 4-0 game. After Pruett drew a walk, Ayda Payne lined a 2-run single into right field to stretch the lead to 6-0. Ada Fales drove another 2-run single into left field later in the inning to give Fairview an 8-0 lead going into the third.

An RBI single from Payne made it a 9-0 game in the bottom of the third but the Broncos were able to get on the board in the top of the fourth.

Alaina Folds was hit by a pitch and Olivia Smith knocked a double into left field to give Holly Pond a pair of runners. Folds came home to score on a passed ball a few pitches later to trim the lead to 9-1 but the Broncos were unable to chip away any more in the fourth. The Aggies wrapped things up in the bottom half of the fourth, plating seven runs on seven hits to secure a 16-1 win and a spot in the semifinals.

Jocelyn Barnett earned the win after pitching two hitless innings and striking out four. Mali Gregory tossed the other two innings, allowing just one hit and striking out one batter.

At the plate, Payne finished 3-for-4 with five RBIs to lead the way for Fairview. Fales added three hits and three RBIs in the win and Benson, Kovar, Pruett and Ralie Gaines each posted a pair of hits as well.

#### **West Point 12 - Hanceville 2 (Game Three)**

The Bulldogs led off the top of the first with back to back singles from Kynzlee Farr and Alex Twitty. After Farr came home to score on a wild pitch and make it 1-0, Twitty scored on a fielder's choice a few pitches later to give Hanceville a 2-0 lead. West Point responded in the bottom

half of the first. An RBI double off the bat of Brayley Phillips cut the lead to 2-1 and Phillips came around to score on an error later in the inning to tie things up at 2.

The Warriors were able to pull ahead in the bottom of the second inning. Averee Folds led things off with a double and Kortni Baker brought her into score with an RBI single, putting West Point ahead 3-2. An RBI double from Katie Yovino put another run on the board to make it 4-2 and Zailee Love scored on a passed ball later in the inning to extend the lead to 5-2 going into the third.

After a scoreless third inning, West Point added to its lead in the bottom of the fourth. A pair of errors allowed Baker and Love to reach base

and Baker scored on a fielder's choice a few pitches later to make it a 6-2 game. An error during the next at bat allowed Love and Windham to score as well, stretching the lead to 8-2 headed into the fifth. After a scoreless fifth inning, the Warriors pulled away for good in the sixth. An error allowed Love and Yovino to score and make it a 10-2 game and later in the inning, Kylie Burks wrapped things up with a 2-run double into center field, securing a 12-2 win for West Point and a spot in the semifinals.

Burks (one hit) and Yovino (one hit) each posted a pair of RBIs in the win. Baker (one hit) and Phillips (one hit) each added an RBI as well. Farr led the way for Hanceville with two hits in the loss.



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## - COUNTY TOURNAMENT -

# Fairview claims county championship with 3-2 win over West Point



PHOTOS: NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

**The Fairview Aggies defeated West Point 3-2 on Saturday, March 22, 2025 to win this year's county baseball tournament championship.**

**Nick Griffin, Sammy Confer**  
The Cullman Tribune

After advancing with semifinal wins earlier in the day, Fairview and West Point clashed in the County Tournament Championship Game at Good Hope High School on Saturday, March 22. The Aggies took an early lead in the third inning and held off a late push from the Warriors to end West Point's six-year reign as county champs and claim their first county title since 2017.

Aggies Head Coach Nick Dumas was proud of his team

for hanging on to seal the win at the end and is excited to bring some hardware back home to Fairview.

"I'm extremely proud. I felt like we had a chance two years ago and lost a 1-run game to them and then last year I felt like we had a chance to win it and then had some weather come in and that kind of threw a wrench into things. West Point has set the standard for the last six years and we knew we would have to go through them to bring it back to Fairview," Dumas said. "I'm proud of the way our guys battled today. We faced some adversity there

late and we were able to get out of it and hang on. I couldn't be more proud of our seniors. They haven't had one so to be able to go out with a county championship means a lot to them and it means a lot to me."

Both teams combined for just two base runners in the first two innings, but the Aggies put some runs on the board in the bottom of the third. Collin Nelson singled up the middle and Lincoln Wright drew a walk to give Fairview a pair of runners. After they both advanced on a wild pitch later in the inning, Camden Cullen punched a

2-run single into center field to plate two runs and give the Aggies a 2-0 lead going into the fourth.

After a scoreless fourth inning, Fairview added to its lead in the bottom of the fifth. Nic Gregory and Connor Scott each drew walks to reach base and later in the inning, Gregory came around to stretch the lead to 3-0. West Point applied some pressure in the top of the sixth. Back to back singles from Skylar Echols and Boston Freeman put runners on the corners and three pitches later, an error allowed Echols to »



score and cut the lead to 3-1. Another Aggie error allowed Freeman to cross the plate later in the inning and made it a 3-2 game going into the bottom of the sixth.

Down to their final three outs in the top half of the seventh, the Warriors were unable to put any more runs on the board and Fairview secured its first county championship in eight years.

Jaxon Robertson went the distance on the mound, giving up zero earned runs, allowing just hits and striking out six to earn Tournament MVP honors. Cullen finished with a pair of hits and RBIs in the win and Nelson and Scott added hits as well.

Freeman, Echols, Cooper Howard and Cade Welborn each posted hits in the loss.

#### **ALL-COUNTY TOURNAMENT TEAM**

- Jaxon Robertson, Fairview (MVP)
- Colton Jennings, Fairview
- Konnor Duncan, Fairview
- Cooper Howard, West Point
- Boston Freeman, West Point
- Parker Johnson, Good Hope
- Case Naramore, Good Hope
- Jake Hale, Vinemont
- Josh Rhodes, Vinemont
- Mason Gable, Cold Springs
- Sawyer Olinger, Holly Pond
- Hunter Weeks, Hanceville

#### **Fairview 3 - Vinemont 2 (Semifinals)**

It was a pitcher's duel in the opening game between Vinemont and Fairview, and the game would be decided in the seventh inning.

Vinemont loaded the bases with one out in its opening at-bats, but Colton Jennings got a strikeout and a fly out to get out of the inning unscathed. The

Eagles looked to get the first run of the game in the top of the second. Tucker Mauter hit a one-out single, then with two outs, Jake Hale hit a double to center field. A great throw from Lincoln Wright to Jackson Earnest nailed Mauter at the plate, as the game would remain scoreless going into the third inning.

Vinemont loaded the bases once again in the top of the third, and a suicide squeeze play by Hayden Robinson gave them a 1-0 lead. From the bottom of the third to the top of the sixth, a combined four batters reached base for both teams. Fairview got a two-out rally started in the bottom of the sixth. Conner Scott got things started with a walk, and Camden Cullen reached on an error to put runners on the corners. Earnest hit an RBI single to tie the game up at one.

Hale reached on an error to lead off the seventh for the Eagles. A ground ball moved him over to second, and three pitches later, Kayden Henderson hit an RBI single to left field to give them a 2-1 lead.

Fairview looked to respond in their final at-bats. Konnor Dunkin hit a single to right field, and an error on the same play allowed him to move up 90 more feet to second base. Nicolas Gregory reached on another error to put runners on the corners with one out. Gregory advanced to second on a wild pitch, and Collin Nelson quickly ended things three pitches later as his walk-off two-run single up the middle gave the Aggies the 3-2 win over Vinemont.

Nelson (walk-off two-run single) and Earnest (RBI) each finished with a hit for Fairview, and Dunkin added a pair of hits. Jennings and



Gregory combined to give up just four hits and no earned runs, walked one, and struck out five. For Vinemont, Henderson (one hit) and Robinson each drove in a run in the loss, while Hale and Owen McKinney each collected a hit in the game. The duo of Josh Rhodes and Banks Borwick gave up just four hits and no earned runs, walked three, and struck out four.

#### **West Point 8 - Good Hope 3 (Semifinals)**

Good Hope struck first in its opening at-bats. Mason Drake hit a one-out single and later scored on an error to give the Raiders the early lead. West Point got on the scoreboard in the bottom of the second. They loaded the bases to lead off the inning, and Skylar Echols drew a walk to tie the game up at one. Back-to-back sacrifice flies by Boston Freeman and Titan Thornton gave the Warriors a 3-1 lead.

Good Hope put runners on first and second with two outs in the top of the third, and a two-run single by Micah Rickel tied things up at three. The score would remain the same until the bottom of the fourth inning. West Point loaded the bases once again,

and Charlie Ashley got hit by the pitch to force home a run. Jay Lamar followed that up with an RBI single up the middle, and Cade Welborn added a sacrifice fly to put the Warriors ahead 6-3. West Point added to their lead in their next at-bats.

The Warriors put runners on second and third to lead off the bottom of the fifth inning. Freeman hit an RBI single up the middle, and on the next pitch, an error allowed Echols to score to extend their lead to 8-3.

Freeman finished off Good Hope in the top of the seventh inning, and West Point punched their ticket to the county championship game with an 8-3 win over the Raiders.

Freeman finished with a hit and two RBIs for the Warriors. Echols (two hits), Lamar (one hit), Welborn (one hit), Thornton, and Ashley all drove in a run in the win. Freeman went the distance for West Point, as he gave up six hits and two earned runs, walked two, and struck out five. For Good Hope, Rickel finished with a hit and two RBIs. Parker Johnson and Mason Drake each added a pair of hits, while Carter Rutherford collected a hit of his own in the loss.



## - PREP BASEBALL -

# 'Winning is a byproduct of doing all the little things right'

## Patterson earns 500th win at Cullman

**Nick Griffin**

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Since taking the reins of the program in 2009, Cullman Baseball Head Coach Brent Patterson has put together quite the resume. He's led the Bearcats to a pair of state championships in 2015 and 2019 along with state runner up finishes in 2011, 2014, 2016 and 2017. He's helped develop dozens of former Bearcats into college and professional players and in December he was formally inducted into the Alabama Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Now he has another major milestone to add to his list of accomplishments.

Cullman's 1-0 area win at Jasper on Tuesday, April 1 was the 500th career victory for Patterson and he admits that when he was first named head coach 16 years ago, he didn't have win totals on his mind. The Bearcats were coming off back-to-back state titles and Patterson's biggest concern was maintaining that level of success.

"When I first became the head coach I was just trying to survive and just didn't want to be the guy that dropped the baton," Patterson said. "I wanted to continue everything that Coach (Bryan) Bowen had done and advance the program. I just didn't want to be the guy that dropped the

ball. So, I never once thought about a number of wins or how long I was going to do it or anything like that. I just wanted to survive."

Patterson has certainly held onto the baton since Bowen passed it to him, but the people he credits most for the program's consistency over the years are the numerous assistant coaches he's had helping him.

"One is the consistency of the coaching staff. Coach (Jonathan) Romine has been here since 2002. Coach (Shannon) Fondren was here for so long and then we've had Coach (Aaron) Avery, Coach (Daniel) Moore and Peyton Colvard who all played here and are now coaching here. People like Coach (Bill) Griffin that are Cullman and are baseball and there are those pieces all throughout the coaching staff," Patterson said. "It's a lot of guys that are super competitive and love the game of baseball but even more so they want to do things the right way and influence kids the right way and impact lives. And of course, we have so many guys like Kalen Elam, Brandon Lee, Drew Bryson, Matt White, Jordan Guthrie, Jeremy Peek, Patrick Britton. You can just keep going. There are so many guys that played here, coached here for a while and either went on to get jobs elsewhere or that went off and weren't in education anymore.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

**Cullman High School Baseball Coach Brent Patterson earned his 500th career win at Jasper on Tuesday, April 1, 2025.**

All those guys brought stability and brought pride in what Cullman baseball is. It means a lot to them; it's not just a job. It's part of who we are, and it means a lot to us."

In addition to a long list of coaches, Patterson also believes the support from the community has played a

major role in the program's success.

"The other big thing is the community that just keep supporting us. Our school, our businesses, our parents and so many people that have invested in our program in many different ways. It might be working the »



concession stand, it might be putting up a sign or donating money or whatever, they believe in our program," Patterson said. "Because of the way they were raised, we've had a lot of really good people that have come through our program that still love it and now they've got kids coming up and playing so they want to see it keep getting better and better too. That's the way you build some tradition and a culture. I think those two things, the consistency in our coaching staff and the consistency of our community's support."

Patterson cares a great deal about helping his players get better on the field, but he cares even more about how he and their experience in the program can better prepare them for life after baseball.

"I hope that when they leave, they start seeing why we did things the way we did them and that the way we coached, and the game of baseball really can spill over into real life. So, if we do it the right way we have played a part in helping them prepare for the next chapters of their lives beyond high school baseball. And hopefully it's not just college baseball, its college, its relationships and its everything. Knowing how to be a good teammate, how to be unselfish, knowing how to work hard, how to invest in something, taking pride in what means a lot to you. Hopefully when they leave here, they know that we really cared about them, even though they might've gotten yelled at or maybe they got ran some, we did it not only because we want to win baseball games. We want to have high standards for them and want them to realize what the potential for their life is," Patterson said. "Most importantly I hope

they know I tried to model a Christ-like life and not be fake and be as real as I can possibly be. I tell them when I make mistakes because they see me every day and they know if I'm not being real with them. I want to be an example of a man in their life that lives for Jesus and is far from perfect, but quick to repent, I hope. We always say that winning is a byproduct of doing all the little things right. You may have great talent, mediocre talent or bad talent but the way you compete on the field and do those little things is what gives you a chance to win. That's kind of the way we've done it. There's no magic formula; it's just a lot of good people and guys that fight for each other."

Former Cullman High School Head Baseball Coach Bryan Bowen on Patterson,

"He's a great person who genuinely cares for his players and the baseball program. He's selfless and puts the players first," Bowen said. "He's continued this program with the foundation of discipline and dedicated himself to having a relentless work ethic from players and staff. He's an excellent teacher of the game in all phases. He's always had a great vision and had the ability to relay his vision and get complete buy in. He does it the right way. I said when I left that he was the best coach to take this program forward and I can say now that he's the best in the business."

Former Cullman pitching coach Shannon Fondren on Patterson's success,

I think its several factors, he is a teacher of the game, to watch him in practice is incredible. I loved watching him in definitive period with those infielders, he's the best I've been around hands down. Of course, we always

ran over the scheduled time because he wanted more reps. He pours into those players and it's so much more than baseball," Fondren said. "He isn't afraid to share his faith, and I loved that. You are prepared for life after spending 4-5 years in the program. My boys both played for him and think the world of him and I personally wouldn't want them to play for any other person than Coach Patterson. He surrounds himself with great people and the staff has been together so long

that everyone is on the same page. He's one of my best friends and I am blessed to have spent the last 13 years of my career with him. He made me want to be a better person and coach every day.

Former Cullman High School Football Coach Mark Britton on Patterson,

Brent Patterson is a great coach but an even better person," Britton said. "He has had great positive influence on dozens of young men in our community including my two sons. He is a tremendous role model for young men."

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# 'It's been a very warm welcome'

## Coach Tammy West ready to take the reins at Cullman

**Nick Griffin**

[nick@cullmantribune.com](mailto:nick@cullmantribune.com)

It's been a remarkable run for Coach Tammy West and the Cold Springs Lady Eagles. Since arriving as the varsity girls' basketball coach in 1992, West has led the Lady Eagles to 754 wins, seven county championships, eight Final Four appearances and four state titles and now she's excited to take on a new challenge. West was officially named the next head coach of the Cullman Lady Bearcats on March 10 and even though she hasn't had a chance to spend a lot of time on campus yet, West has enjoyed a warm welcome and is looking forward to getting started with her new team.

"I haven't had an opportunity to spend a lot of time there since I'm still teaching at Cold Springs through May, but it's been a very warm welcome from everyone that I have met, from the superintendent to the principal and the athletic director," West said.

"I've received texts from the coaches on staff there and I did have a meet and greet with the parents and the players that played last year so that was very good. Everyone seems super excited for us to get started and right now we're really looking at just trying to build a staff which we really can't start until we get into May.

"With me not being there it's been hard; I've been working on the schedule and summer planning and things like that, and we've just about got everything finished as far



TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

**Cullman Girls' Head Basketball Coach Tammy West**

as that goes.

"I've been watching film obviously and they had a successful year last year. I'm just looking forward to building on that success and hopefully improving on what they did last year."

One of the biggest differences West is already navigating is scheduling. She's putting the finishing touches on the schedule for the upcoming season and she's already becoming more familiar with the teams the 'Cats will be competing against.

"There's a huge difference in your scheduling," West

said. "I had to get with some coaching friends and get a lot of new contacts so that's been the biggest difference, just getting to know some of the other coaches in Birmingham and Huntsville where we are going to be playing a lot of those teams."

Leaving her position at Cold Springs wasn't an easy decision for West. Her family has been intertwined with the Lady Eagles basketball program for decades and West knows there will always be a strong connection between her family and the Cold Springs community.

"The fortunate thing for me

is I will always have those relationships with those people there. The last 33 years have been the best years of my life. My whole family was involved in everything that we did at Cold Springs and obviously a piece of my heart is always going to be there," West said. "The love and support that I've been given over the years there is just second to none. It's just family and we'll be forever connected. With the memories we have and the love that was shown to us, it's just been an honor to be part of the Cold Springs community."



# YOU ARE MOVING ON TO A NEW AND EXCITING CHAPTER IN YOUR LIFE

**I wish you all the  
best for the future  
that lies ahead.**

**Congratulations**

 **on your**   
**graduation.**

**Cullman County Sheriff  
Matt Gentry**



**If you need to report  
any crime anonymously  
please call 256-734-0210**



**CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF MATT GENTRY  
CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE | 256-734-0342**



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CULLMAN, AL



*From left: Council President Jenny Folsom, President Pro tem Johnny Cook, Mayor Woody Jacobs, Clint Hollingsworth, David Moss, Jr. and Brad Smith*  
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