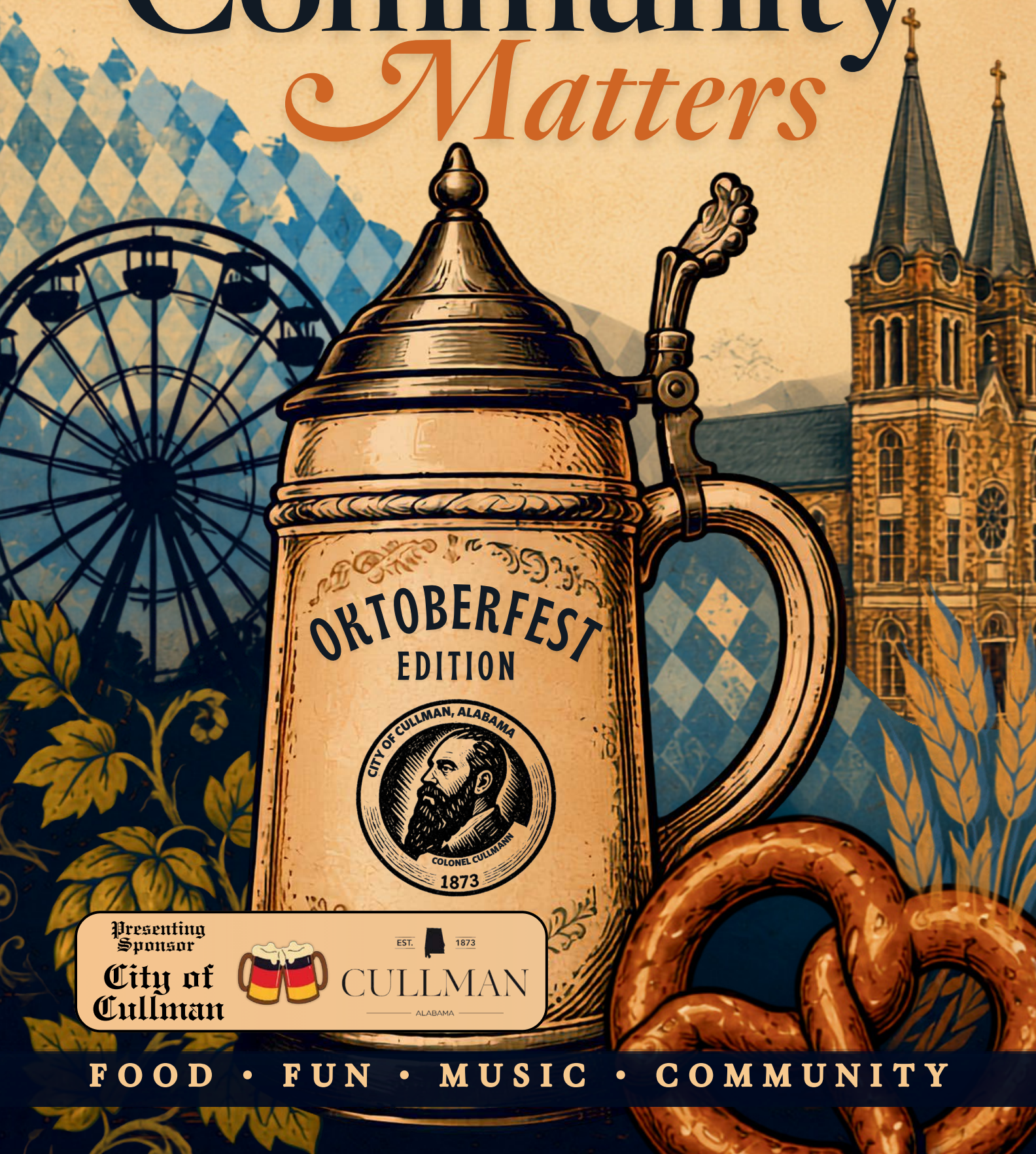


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— LOCAL HERO —

‘Snead’s Farmhouse is more than a farm’

Judy Snead speaking to visitors at the farm

JUDY SNEAD

Lauren Estes

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Local nonprofit farm Snead's Farmhouse provides tours, field trips and hands-on farm experiences for families and children. Owner Judy Snead said she wears a lot of hats, but at the heart of everything she does, helping people remains her priority.

She shared, "One of the things I'm most passionate about is making the farm accessible to everyone. We provide free visits for children with autism and offer programs twice a week for individuals with disabilities where they can learn about farm life, enjoy karaoke, dance and build confidence in a safe and welcoming environment."

Snead also travels to libraries across Alabama with her "Big Dreams, Little Chickens" program, where she shares the story of how the farm got started and encourages children to dream big, work hard and never give up on themselves.

"I'm also a content creator on Facebook and YouTube, where I share farm life videos several times a week and host live discussions on mental health, faith, overcoming struggles and the lessons I've learned along the way," Snead said. "As a nonprofit, giving back is a big part of our mission. We donate all of our eggs to Cullman Caring for Kids to help families in our community. Everything we do at Snead's Farmhouse is centered around creating a safe place where people can learn, grow, heal and feel like they belong."

Snead said her mission at Snead's Farmhouse is simple: to give back what God has blessed her with.

"The farm changed my life in ways I never imagined, and my hope is that it will change the lives of others as well," she said. "Snead's Farmhouse



JUDY SNEAD

Snead's Farmhouse Owner Judy Snead presents interactive programs at local libraries.

is more than a farm — it's a place where people can come to breathe, slow down and enjoy the moment. Whether you're a child, an adult or a senior citizen, my goal is for you to forget about the stress of daily life, expensive bills, hard times and all the worries you may be carrying. I want people to leave their burdens at the gate for a little while and simply experience joy."

Through the animals, educational programs, library visits and community outreach, she hopes to create a safe and welcoming place where people feel accepted, encouraged and inspired.

"If someone leaves the farm smiling, feeling a little lighter or believing in themselves a little more than when they arrived, then I've accomplished my mission," Snead said. "For the past three years, I've partnered with libraries across Alabama by bringing my animals and reading my children's books to families during their summer programs. It's been a wonderful way to connect children with farm life and encourage them to

dream big. This year, however, I've introduced an entirely new program called Big Dreams, Little Chickens. It's a 33-minute interactive show where I act, tell stories, sing and take the audience on the journey of how Snead's Farmhouse got started. It's a story about faith, perseverance, overcoming obstacles and following your dreams even when others tell you that you can't."

The show is designed for ages 4 and up, but she encourages younger children to stay and enjoy the music and fun.

"After the performance, I bring out live animals for a special petting experience and photo opportunities, giving families a chance to interact with the animals up close and create lasting memories," Snead said. "My goal is to make learning fun while inspiring children and adults to believe that big dreams can start in the most unexpected places."

She said working with libraries is important to her for several reasons.

"First, they help me keep Snead's Farmhouse running,"

Snead said. "As a nonprofit farm, it takes a tremendous amount of work and funding to care for the animals, provide free programs for children with autism, serve individuals with disabilities and continue giving back to our community. The library programs allow me to earn income during the summer so I can continue that mission throughout the year. It's about much more than money. Libraries give me the opportunity to connect with families, children and adults through a story that changed my life."

In her show, she shares how she was praying for God to let her family stay at the beach where we were living because she didn't want to move to Cullman.

"My husband was being transferred, and I was leaving behind my friends, my family and everything that was familiar to me; I didn't understand why God was leading us here," Snead said. "By the end of the show, the audience learns that God wasn't bringing us to Cullman for my »

husband — He was bringing us here for me. If we had never moved, Snead's Farmhouse would never have existed, and thousands of people would have never experienced the joy, hope and healing that the farm provides today. My hope is that children and adults leave the program understanding that sometimes our greatest blessings come disguised as our biggest disappointments. The move I fought so hard against became one of the greatest gifts God ever gave me. I would love for families of all ages to come join us for a fun and inspiring experience."

Snead's Farmhouse is located at 820 County Road 1225, Vinemont, AL 35179. Find it online at www.sneadsfarmhouse.com.



JUDY SNEAD

Local nonprofit farm Snead's Farmhouse provides tours, field trips and hands-on farm experiences for families and children.

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– LOCAL HEROES –

‘Our goal is for people to feel loved and appreciated’

By: Anabelle Howze | anabelle@cullmantribune.com

At The Link of Cullman County, people are seen as neighbors, not just clients or numbers. This idea guides everything the organization does, from the food pantry to housing, jobs and life support.

"We call our people neighbors, and not clients, because we want that familial feel whenever people walk into our building," said Jonathan Creekmore, supportive services manager. "We want them to feel like they're part of the family and not somebody with a problem that we're trying to fix."

This feeling of belonging includes volunteers, staff and community partners, who all help create a caring and supportive atmosphere. Creekmore said many volunteers come back each week, not just to help, but because they feel part of a community. "We have a lot of people who volunteer here because their friends are here," he said. "It's a place where they come to refill themselves with human interaction, spend time together and give back at the same time."

The Link does more than just meet urgent needs. Staff try to understand the bigger

challenges families face, instead of offering only quick fixes. For example, when someone asks for help with rent, staff also look at what might be causing the problem, not just the immediate need.

"We're not just looking at things from a surface level," Creekmore said. "If someone needs rental assistance, we want to know what's causing that need. Do they need a better job? Do they need childcare? We want to get down to the root of the issue and help them move onto a better path."

This focus on long-term support has built strong relationships and often inspires people who once received help to volunteer themselves. One woman said that after leaving a domestic violence situation and getting help from The Link, she now volunteers regularly.

With the cost of living going up, more people are turning to The Link for help. Many families in Cullman still struggle to get enough food. The food pantry now helps about 900 families each month, giving them a way to stretch their budgets and get the groceries they need. "It's not necessarily enough groceries to feed someone for an entire month but it helps get them to a point where they can supplement what they need and make it through the month," Creekmore shared.

The Link's housing programs help families stay stable and make the community stronger by working with local landlords



ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Pantry at The Link is a neighbor's choice pantry, meaning neighbors are allowed to select their own meats, snacks, produce and breads with their families' preferences in mind.

and housing providers. Even with more people needing help, Creekmore said he stays hopeful because the community continues to offer strong support. He pointed out that anyone can get involved, whether by helping in the pantry, tutoring, leading classes, working in the office or giving monthly donations. The real difference comes from the relationships built and the sense of belonging, not just the number of meals or services given.

"Our goal is for people to

feel loved and appreciated," he said.

In a world where many people feel alone or ignored, The Link shows that real support often starts with treating others like neighbors. By showing compassion, building connections and meeting people where they are, The Link's staff and volunteers have become local heroes for hundreds of families in Cullman County.

Get more info at www.linkingcullman.org. The Link is located at 708 Ninth St. SE, Cullman.

« The Link is located at 708 Ninth St. SE, Cullman.

ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



CASSIE WARD

Urban Pine is owned by Cassie Ward.

Lauren Estes

lauren@cullmantribune.com

Cullman's Urban Pine, known for its seasonal decor and realistic faux floral arrangements opened in August 2023.

Owner Cassie Ward started the business in Cullman, a relocated to the Warehouse District in March.

"My goal for my business is to be a place where people come not just to shop, but to have an experience - cozy vibes, praise music playing and a welcoming atmosphere," Ward said. "Ultimately, I want my business to be a place where people feel like they can relax, share their joys and struggles and have an almost therapeutic stroll through beautiful decor. It's my ministry, and I just pray

that Christ is magnified through everything that I say and do in my shop."

Ward shared that she strives to have products that are unique, beautiful and excellent in quality, but still affordable.

"I believe that home is such a sacred place, and I want to help people love their home," Ward said. "I have throw pillows, art, vases, scented candles, incredibly realistic faux florals, serving dishes, LED candles, trays, small furniture pieces, wreaths, etc. A couple of my favorite pieces and best sellers are my vintage-inspired art pieces and faux fur blankets."

Urban Pine is located at 106 First Ave. NE.

Find it online at www.facebook.com/urbanpinecompany.



CASSIE WARD

Urban Pine carries throw pillows, art, vases, scented candles, incredibly realistic faux florals, serving dishes, LED candles, trays, small furniture pieces, wreaths and more.

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How to Spend a Day in Cullman: **Explore downtown murals**

Cullman Depot mural

CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Anabelle Howze

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

A great way to explore Cullman for a day is to take a self-guided tour of the downtown murals. These large artworks are found throughout the area and celebrate the people, places and events that shaped the community as well as bring pops of color and life to the streets.

412 Second Ave. NE

Start your tour at the Cullman Depot mural, »



Jazz Feeds mural

CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO



First Cullman High School mural

CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

painted by Jack Tupper. This mural shows one of the first railroads that brought settlers and new opportunities to Cullman.

209 First Ave NE

A few blocks from there, you'll find the Buy Fresh, Buy Local mural at the Festhalle Farmers Market, painted by Donald Walker. This bright mural highlights Cullman's farming history and celebrates local farmers, fresh produce and

the community.

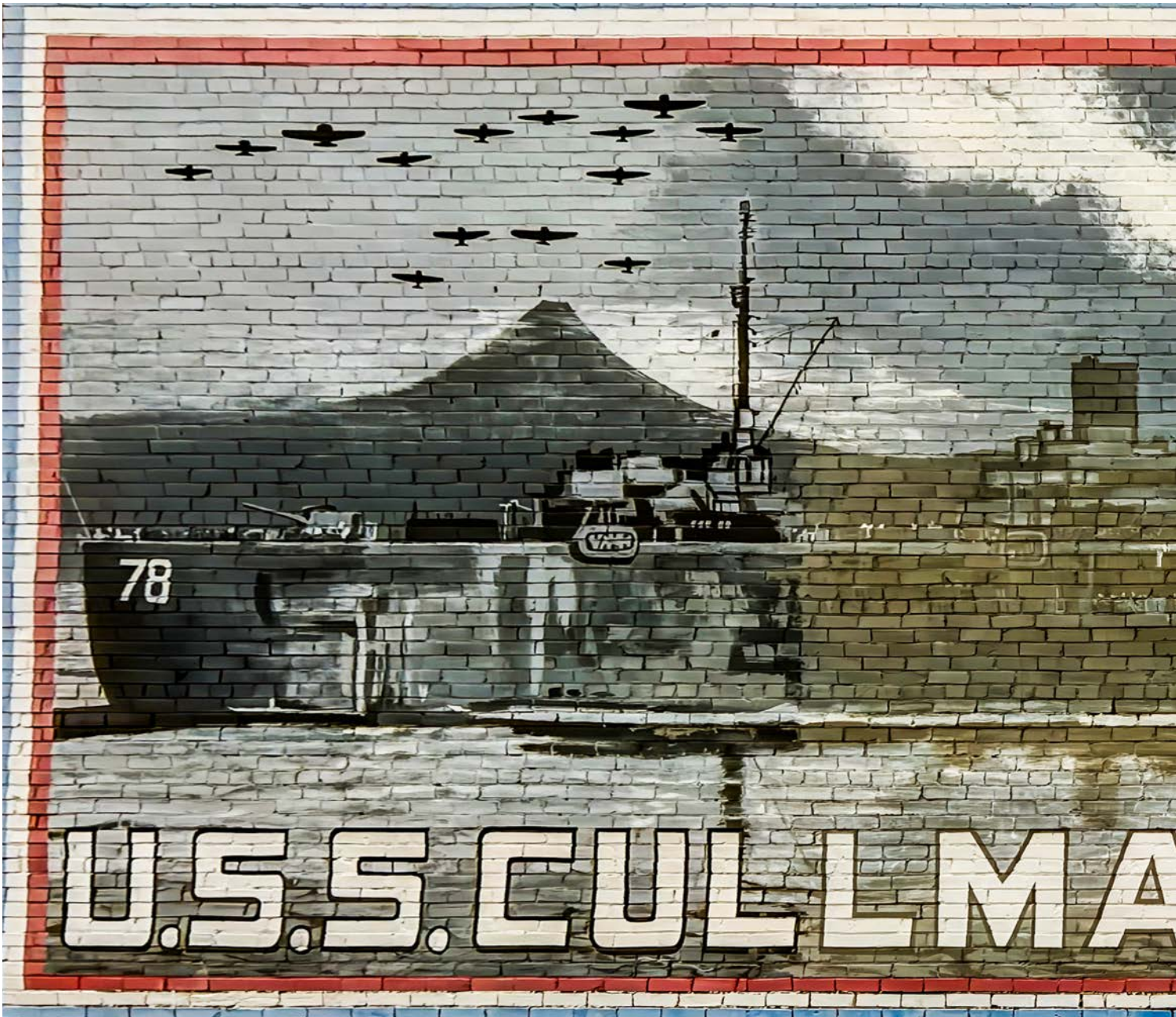
228 Third Ave. SE

Another mural to check out is the U.S.S. Cullman mural, also painted by Jack Tupper. This large mural honors the U.S.S. Cullman, a transport ship named after the city. The U.S. Naval Historical Center notes that the ship was commissioned in January 1945 and served in the Pacific during the last months of World War »



Buy Fresh, Buy Local mural

CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO



U.S.S. Cullman mural

CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

II. It carried troops and cargo to places like Pearl Harbor, the Philippines and Japan. Most importantly, the U.S.S. Cullman was in Tokyo Bay during the Japanese surrender on Sept. 2, 1945.

219 First Ave. SW

Stop by the First Cullman High School mural. Artist Bethany Kerr, with help from local students, created this mural to honor Cullman's first high school, which opened in the early 1900s. The school was built

on land given by community leaders and graduated its first class of six students in 1912.

104 First Ave. NE

Another favorite downtown is the Jazz Feeds mural, restored by Bethany Kerr.

It's on a building that used to be home to Cullman Banana Supply.

915 Second Ave. NW

When you enter Cullman from the north, you'll see the Welcome to Beautiful Cullman mural. It shows »



Col. Cullmann, who is usually pictured from the left side because of a scar he got during a disagreement with an early settler.

427 Second Ave. SW

You can end your tour at the Cullman in the 1800s

mural. This mural acts as a visual time capsule of Cullman's early days. It shows historic landmarks and businesses like Kinney Horse and Mule Barn, the first fire station, Werdt's German Restaurant, Dinckelberg's Santa Claus

Store and the county's first courthouse.

All these murals (there are even more!) turn downtown Cullman into an open-air gallery where art and history come together. If you want to keep exploring,

you can find more murals around Cullman County. There are installations at Art Park in downtown Cullman and in Hanceville.

Find out more at <https://tinyurl.com/muralscullman>.

Historically Cullman **The Flying Fifty Hotel**

By: *Anabelle Howze*

Anabelle Howze

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

Before Cullman was known for its manufacturers and industries, most of the county relied on agriculture. For many families, farming was more than a way of life and something they heavily depended on. Things began to change in the 1950s when a group of local businessmen, later called the Flying Fifty, took bold action to bring new jobs to Cullman.

Even though they were called the Flying Fifty, the group actually had about 47 or 48 members. They got their name because they were willing to fly out of town to look for new industries for Cullman, which was unusual for a small Alabama community back then.

The story began when Dr. Leroy Bledsoe learned that people from King Edward Cigar Company were passing through Cullman on their way to Mississippi to look for a place to build a new factory. After his wife told him the news, Dr. Bledsoe reached out to local businessman Roy Drinkard. In just a few hours, community leaders came up with a plan.

The next day, 47 men paid their own way to travel to Jacksonville, Florida, to meet with executives of King Edward Cigar Company. With help from Alabama Governor Jim Folsom, the group rented a ballroom at the Hotel Mayflower and invited the company's board of directors to lunch.

At the meeting, Cullman's representatives explained



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

The mural outside The Flying Hotel in Cullman pays homage to The Flying Fifty, a group of local businessmen who brought industry to Cullman.

why the cigar factory should come to their city. They convinced the company leaders to visit Cullman and take a closer look at the proposal. To make the project happen, the community needed money to buy land for the factory and to support future efforts to attract new businesses. So, local leaders put up a small building on the courthouse lawn, which people started calling the "Cigar Shack."

The fundraising campaign soon involved the whole county. Local radio stations stopped their usual shows and broadcasted from the shack while volunteers made phone calls. People from all over Cullman County gave what

they could, from children's pocket change to bigger donations from businesses and community leaders. In just a few days, they raised over \$83,000.

Their hard work paid off. King Edward Cigar Company chose Cullman for its new factory, bringing hundreds of jobs and new opportunities beyond farming. For many people, this was the start of a new chapter for the local economy.

Although the group never traveled together as a whole again, many members kept working to bring new businesses to Cullman for years. Many Flying Fifty members later joined Industrial

Development boards and Chamber of Commerce committees, continuing their efforts to boost the local economy. Their wives also played a key part by welcoming visiting business prospects into their homes and helping show off the community.

Today, many people know the name "Flying Fifty" from the hotel, but fewer know the story behind it. The group's legacy lives on in the industries, businesses and jobs that came to Cullman because of their work.

The Flying Fifty Hotel is located at 515 Fourth St. SW in Cullman. Find it online at www.theflyingfifty.com.



CULLMAN CHAMBER

Burgermeister Ball

Join us Thursday, September 24th at the Abby Byre at for the 2026 Burgermeister Ball sponsored by HomTex.

We will kick off the fall season and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Cullman. Guests will be treated to an evening of fine dining, lively entertainment, and a celebration of German culture. We will meet this year's Burgermeister, while enjoying German inspired games and music!



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- HOW TO SPEND A DAY IN CULLMAN -

For vintage lovers

Chasady Woods

chasady@cullmantribune.com

As we guide you through spending a day in Cullman, don't forget to queue up the following songs for the journey. Envision they are cassette tapes plucked from a dusty shelf and carefully plopped into a Walkman as you begin this endeavor.

Playlist

- "Call It Fate, Call It Karma" - The Strokes
- "No Surprises" - Radiohead
- "Jealous" - Eyedress
- "Feels Like We Only Go Backwards" - Tame Impala
- "Seventeen Seconds" - The Cure
- "Heaven Known I'm Miserable Now" - The Smiths
- "In Bloom" - Nirvana

Our first stop will be Side B Skate Shop at 209 Fourth St. SW. They offer a selection of skateboards and more. Socialize and take a look at the boards and browse the customizable pieces to make your own.

If you have never taken up skating this will be the best place to start a conversation!

Per usual, our next stop will require a nice beverage!

Located on 103 First Ave. NE, Suite 140 is Karma's Coffee House. I recommend the Kurt Cobain or Mona Lisa, though any selection is good.

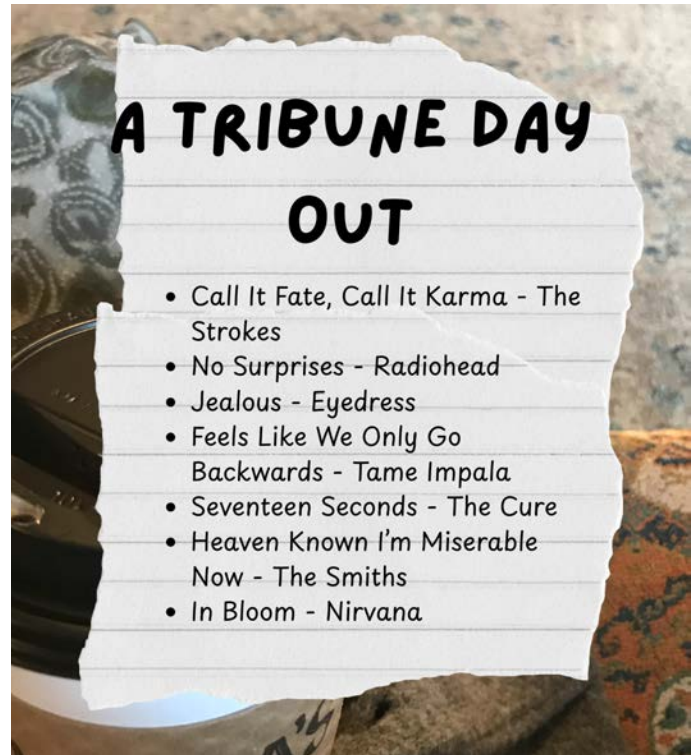
Sit around and admire the beautiful array of furniture while you finish your drink and, if you're feeling up to it, roam the Warehouse District! There is often jazz playing among the streets and just down the road is Depot Park. This area is great for conversation and plenty of memories.

If you committed to buying a board at Side B, Skate Depot Park is within the area! I'll let you determine the rest yourself.

While the coffee is still working, head over to Press Rewind Vintage Audio at 1821 Eva Road NE, Suite 205. This shop has a variety of records and vintage audio systems to browse through.

The crew is very knowledgeable and can answer any questions about what they have in stock and more. You can also ask the staff for song recommendations for the trip home while you look at records!

As you finish your day, discuss your favorite parts and don't let it end here. Take pictures and make more memories!



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

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Site Selection Magazine, 2026



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CULLMAN

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Bent N' Dent Grocery:

'You ain't coming for the green beans!'

Chasady Woods

chasady@cullmantribune.com

Angel Brant owned her first property and lived by herself at 17 years old. She worked jobs relating to construction even after suffering an injury in high school while playing basketball.

She stated she didn't graduate due to the timing of the injury, though when she recovered decided to pursue construction work.

In addition to construction work she maintained rental properties.

Brant had originally aimed to go to Mississippi State to get her architectural degree. "My mom being an airplane mechanic, my father with a steel company and my stepdad in construction company - all I have done my whole life is build," she said.

At the age of 21, Brant gave birth to twins. As a single mother she worked construction, but decided to open a thrift store since construction fluctuated depending on the weather. This would allow for work and support her children and herself.

"Ten years ago I just stopped," said Brant.

She went on to explain that over the past 10 years she has aided in organizing bluegrass festivals and revivals. "When I get burnt out on something I just shut the door and walk away."

Though two years ago when



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Bent N' Dent Grocery is located at 305 Main Ave. SW in Cullman.

she and her family came off the road and put travel to a halt, Brant had an epiphany.

"I miss ministry," she said to her husband and children as they all sat on their porch. "I've got to open a building."

They asked her, "Well, what are you going to put in the building?"

She said she didn't know, but after reading through her Bible and sipping her coffee, it came to her.

"I knew that we need to have something that's not church, but that isn't in the business

of taking from church," she explained. "You still need godly fellowship, decency, order and a shepherd. I'm nondenominational. I believe in the fullness of the gospel I believe in casting out devils and discipleship."

Bent N' Dent was initially used as a faith-based event center. "We had teen night, praise night and faith-based karaoke night. It was awesome! "I said that, ya know, the Lord is gonna provide. So I'll pay the power and water and everything. So I did," Brant laughed. "Then common sense kicked

in."

She continued, "I decided if I'm gonna put anything here that I will only open something that blesses people. Then 'Bent N' Dent Grocery' hit me. There are people who work hard and want to be stewards of the funds that the lord has blessed them with."

Bent N' Dent features tables toward the front for fellowship, with the grocery and miscellaneous items further inside. She explained that every customer hears something about Jesus throughout their time at »

the store.

"There are people that walk into the store thinking they're coming for green beans. You ain't coming for green beans!" she laughed. "You will get met with the holy ghost."

Brant clarified that anyone is welcome within her store.

"We have homeless individuals come in to use the restroom and they're always welcome," she said. "Everyone deserves a clean space to use the restroom and wash up."

She has offered sanctuary to those who have faced hardships and offered them space in her rental homes until they could get on their feet.

"There are bad days. There are rough days because you deal with the public," she said. "There are days I want to pack

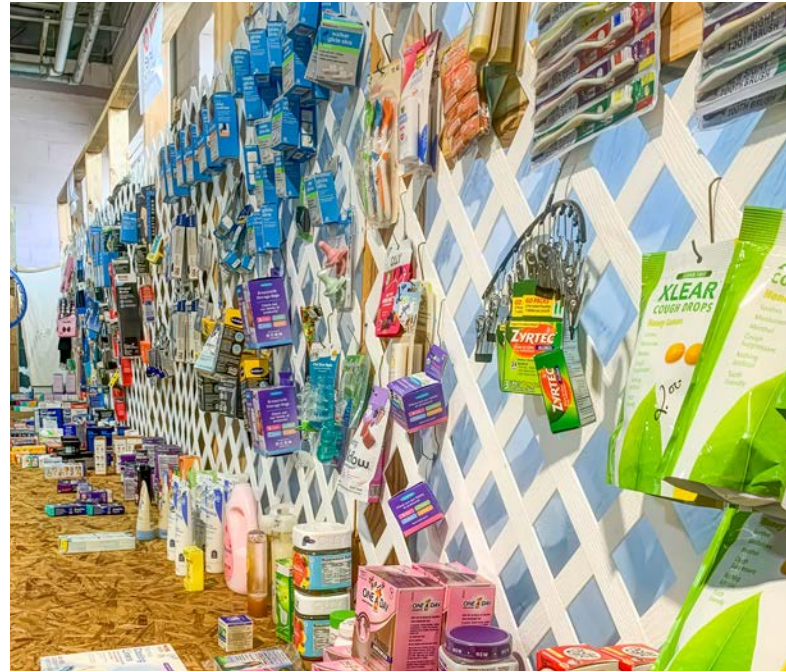
it up and walk out the door."

Though through the bad days, Brant said, she reflects and is able to speak to her regulars and be encouraged in return.

"Our family opened this store to be a blessing," she smiled.

The inventory brought to the store is consistently checked by Brant herself and those who help her to ensure the items are within date, sealed and sellable. There are pantry items, feminine products, makeup, laundry powders, soap, diapers, baby essentials, clothes and much more.

Bent N' Dent Grocery is located at 305 Main Ave. SW in Cullman. It is open Tuesday-Friday, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Customers are advised not to enter the store with large bags or purses.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Bent N' Dent Grocery carries pantry items, feminine products, makeup, laundry powders, soap, diapers, baby essentials, clothes and much more.



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– DAY IN THE LIFE –

'We can let people know they're appreciated for the life they've lived'

Anabelle Howze

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

At the Cullman County Commission on Aging, the day starts well before lunch is served at any of the county's seven full-time senior centers.

Staff members begin answering phone calls, helping with Medicare questions, guiding seniors who are getting ready for retirement and organizing programs to keep older adults connected and supported. Meanwhile, center managers welcome participants and prepare meals that will be delivered to seniors who can't leave their homes.

Director Stephanie Lawson said each day is about meeting practical needs while also building real connections. "We have our office staff helping people with Medicare questions, our trips and activities, and then our center managers are receiving participants every day and preparing meals that will go out to homebound seniors."

During the day, seniors come to the centers for activities like bingo, card games, dominoes, cornhole and shared meals. Some also stop by the Commission on Aging office for help with Medicare or to learn about upcoming events and trips.

Lawson said that, although the organization offers many programs, one of the most important is helping seniors stay independent in their own homes. Right now, the Commission on Aging's homebound meal program



STEPHANIE LAWSON

The Cullman County Commission on Aging arranges trips for area seniors.

serves about 190 seniors across Cullman County. That's a big jump from the 120 to 140 people it served when Lawson became director five years ago. "Our biggest need is helping those who are no longer able to leave their homes and need a hot meal," she said. "We want to help them stay in their homes and maintain their independence as long as possible."

Meeting that need depends heavily on volunteers. The program relies on volunteers to deliver meals every weekday. Lawson said finding enough volunteers is still one of their biggest challenges as more people need help.

She said the true impact of the Commission on Aging

can often be seen in the lives of the people it serves.

Her own mother, Linda Bryson, is one example. After Lawson's father died in 2014, Bryson stayed active and spent time with family. Still, Lawson thought, she might enjoy the social side of a senior center and encouraged her to go. At first, Bryson didn't want to try it but eventually gave in, later telling Lawson something that surprised them both. "She said, 'I didn't realize the peer interaction I was missing,'" Lawson recalled. "She had family around her all the time, but she didn't realize how important it was to be among people her own age and build those friendships." »



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Cullman County Commission on Aging Director Stephanie Lawson



STEPHANIE LAWSON

Cullman County Commission on Aging Director Stephanie Lawson with members of the Colony Senior Center

Now, Lawson said, she sees these kinds of connections forming every day.

Participants look out for each other if someone misses a visit. Friendships grow during meals and games, and in many ways, the centers feel like an extended family. "If

somebody's not at the center, they're calling and checking on them. When we lose one of our participants, especially someone who's been here a long time, it's like losing a family member."

Lawson said she hopes everyone who visits a senior

center or the Commission on Aging office feels that sense of family.

"My goal is for everybody to feel loved, valued and important," she said. "Sometimes we can't solve every problem, but we can listen. We can let people know

they're appreciated for the life they've lived."

Find out more about the Cullman County Commission on Aging, including a list of senior center locations, visit <https://co.cullman.al.us/coa/index.html> or call 256-734-1241.







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- HIDDEN GEM -

Man Cave Market

Anabelle Howze

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

Surrounded by lush plants and interesting treasures, Man Cave Market in Vinemont gives visitors more than just a regular shopping experience. The shop brings together a nursery, plant store and gift market, all in a space meant to inspire, help people relax and invite them to take their time.

Co-owner Tyler Mercer believes Man Cave Market stands out because it offers products that customers can't easily find anywhere else.

"We definitely have more rare stuff than you normally would find in a lot of other places," Mercer said.

The market focuses on indoor tropical plants, especially rare and unusual types that have become more popular lately. They also offer outdoor nursery plants, as well as locally made goods, home décor, gifts and special items from local makers.

Mercer said indoor plants are still one of the main reasons people visit the store. "I think COVID really ramped up people wanting something green inside. Indoor plants are probably one of the biggest things that draw people in here because it's hard to find a store around here that has that stuff."

Earlier this year, Mercer and business partner bought the market from its previous owners. They want to keep what makes the business special, but also hope to make it an even bigger part of the community. One of the most exciting changes coming soon is a new coffee shop. Mercer



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Surrounded by lush plants and interesting treasures, Man Cave Market in Vinemont gives visitors more than just a regular shopping experience.

hopes it will turn the market into a "third place," which means a spot outside of home and work where people can gather, relax and connect.

"Our goal moving forward is to create more of a destination for people," Mercer said. "We want somewhere people can come sit and hang out, decompress and enjoy being here."

The coffee shop is still being planned, and they hope to open it around September. The owners are already getting ready by reorganizing parts of the space for the new addition.

Since taking over, Mercer said, running the business has been both rewarding and challenging. Like other seasonal shops, the number of customers changes throughout the year. Spring was busy, especially around Mother's Day and planting season, but summer has slowed down as

it gets hotter and fewer people are gardening.

Despite these ups and downs, Man Cave Market is still focused on its long-term plans for the market. Mercer thanked the previous owners for creating a special atmosphere that still brings people in. He hopes to build on what they started while keeping the character that customers enjoy.

"When you walk in, you get that feeling of, 'Wow, this is really cool. I've never seen a place like this before.' We want to keep that legacy while improving on it."

In the end, Mercer

New Co-owner Tyler Mercer thanked the previous owners for creating a special atmosphere that still brings people in. »

hopes that first-time visitors leave with more than just a plant or a gift. He wants them to find a place they'll want to come back to, whether it's to shop, have coffee or just enjoy being around plants.

Man Cave Market is located at 17897 Second Ave. NW (U.S. Highway 31) in Vinemont.

Find it online at www.facebook.com/mancaveplant-market.





**Cullman County Parks
Stony Lonesome OHV Park
Smith Lake Park - Cullman County
Ag Center - Clarkson Covered
Bridge - Sportsman Lake Park**



– RECIPE REVIVAL –

Fresh Summer Salsa by Kim Calvert

Chasady Woods

chasady@cullmantribune.com

Yield

About 3-4 cups (serves 6-8 as a dip)

Prep Time

10-15 minutes

Total Time

15 minutes (plus 10-15 min resting)

Storage

Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 5-7 days

Ingredients

- 4 cups chopped fresh tomatoes (about 13/4-2 lbs.; Roma or firm varieties preferred; drain excess juice if very watery)
- 1/3-1/2 cup finely chopped white or red onion
- 1-2 jalapeño or serrano peppers, seeded and chopped (adjust for desired heat; leave seeds for spicier)
- 2-3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2-1 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- Juice of 1-2 limes (2-4 Tbsp., to taste)
- 1/2 tsp. salt (or to taste)
- Optional add-ins: 1/2 tsp ground cumin, pinch of sugar, black pepper

Instructions

1. Prep the vegetables: Wash all produce. Core and chop the tomatoes. Finely chop the onion, peppers (wear gloves for hot peppers), garlic and cilantro.
2. Combine: In a mixing bowl, stir together the tomatoes, onion, peppers, garlic, cilantro, lime juice, salt and any optional spices until well combined.
3. Adjust consistency and seasoning: For a chunkier salsa, mix by hand. For smoother, pulse a few times in a food processor or blender (avoid over-processing).

Taste and add more salt, lime juice or spice as needed.

4. Rest and serve: Let sit for 10-15 minutes for flavors to meld. Serve immediately with tortilla chips, tacos, grilled meats or eggs.

Tips and variations

- Roasted version (deeper flavor): Char tomatoes, peppers, onion and garlic on a hot skillet or under the broiler for 10-15 minutes before chopping and mixing.
- Milder: Use bell peppers instead of (or with) jalapeños and remove all seeds.
- Sweeter: Add diced mango, pineapple or corn.
- Thinner: Use very juicy tomatoes or add a splash of tomato juice.

Food safety note

Keep refrigerated. For long-term preserving, use a tested canning recipe with proper acidification.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

A variety of canned items at a Mavens & Makers class

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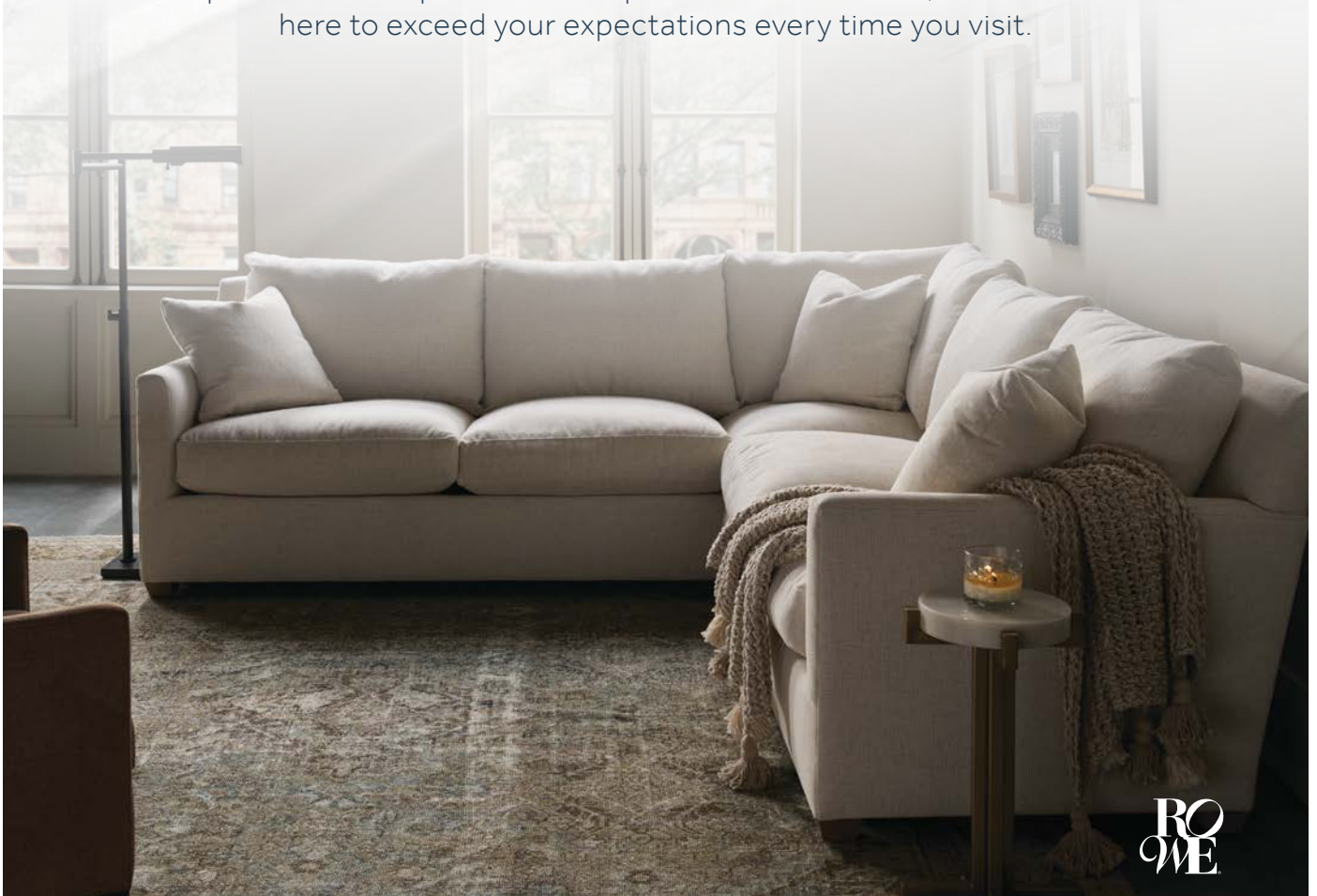
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– SHOP LOCAL –

The Pink Cactus Western Co.

Anabelle Howze

anabelle@cullmantribune.com

Owner Kayla Shelnutt started The Pink Cactus Western Co. because she loves western fashion and wanted to offer something special to her community. What began as a dream is now a busy local shop offering western-inspired clothes, accessories and gifts for all ages.

Shelnutt said she wanted to give people a place to find stylish, affordable western fashion close to home, without needing to travel far or shop only online.

"Pink Cactus Western Company started from my love for western fashion and the desire to create something that felt authentic to our community," she said. "My goal has always been to create a welcoming place where people can find pieces that fit their style and personality while supporting a local small business."

The boutique mixes classic western style with modern trends, so shoppers can find something that fits their taste. Whether you need everyday clothes or something special, the store tries to have options for almost everyone.

"We carry everything from classic western pieces to trendy everyday items that can be worn whether you're headed to a rodeo, a concert, church or just out running errands," Shelnutt said.

Besides clothing, Pink Cactus has products for women, men and kids, plus accessories, gifts and home décor. Shelnutt believes the store's family-friendly feel

and affordable prices make it stand out. Some of the shop's best-selling items include jewelry, handbags, wallets, western hats, graphic T-shirts and cowhide goods. Lately, customers are especially interested in western accessories, turquoise-style jewelry, leather details and comfortable western clothes that work for everyday wear.

"We're seeing a lot of interest in pieces that help people express their individual style without breaking the bank," Shelnutt said.

Shelnutt, like many small business owners, has faced challenges while building her company. She said it has taken faith, hard work and persistence, but the rewards have made it all worth it. "The most rewarding part has been seeing people walk in, find something they love and leave feeling confident. I've also loved meeting so many amazing customers and building relationships within our community."

Looking ahead, Shelnutt wants to keep growing the store while holding on to what makes it special. She hopes to add new brands, offer more products and host more special shopping events during the year. Customers can also look forward to more western fashion, accessories, gifts and a bigger selection for men.

"Most importantly, we want to continue being a place where people feel welcome and can find something they genuinely love," Shelnutt said.

The Pink Cactus is located at 18667 U.S. Highway 31 in Vinemont.

Find the store online at Facebook/The Pink Cactus Western Co.



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

The Pink Cactus Western Co. offers western-inspired clothes, accessories and gifts for all ages.



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Besides clothing, Pink Cactus has products for women, men and kids, plus accessories, gifts and home décor.

- HIDDEN GEM - Clockwork Cullman

Chasady Woods

chasady@cullmantribune.com

Time changes all things. In this town it is treated as a guest, not something to beat. It has welcomed it with open arms and grace. Cullman has no shortage of tourist attractions, but I would like to show you some that are still ticking, literally!

The glockenspiel clock is the focal point of the King Edward Plaza Shopping Center at 1731 Second Ave. SW. The plaza is owned by Drinkard Development and features Roy Drinkard in suit and tie calling to his dog, who barks in return.

Every hour "The Schnitzelbank Song" plays, which is a tribute to Cullman's German heritage. Along a ribbon beneath the clock "Ist das nicht eine Schnitzel Bank" is quoted.

At 204 Main St. SE, in Hanceville is Donald Hamby Memorial Park, which honors Hanceville Police Officer Donald Hamby, who lost his life during a high speed pursuit on Aug. 31, 1985.

The park, in addition to its remembrance, has a clock placed next to a park bench. Atop the clock perches an American Eagle as if to salute the officer forever.

Last, but not least, located on the corner of Arnold Street and Second Avenue Northeast is the Cullman County Museum.

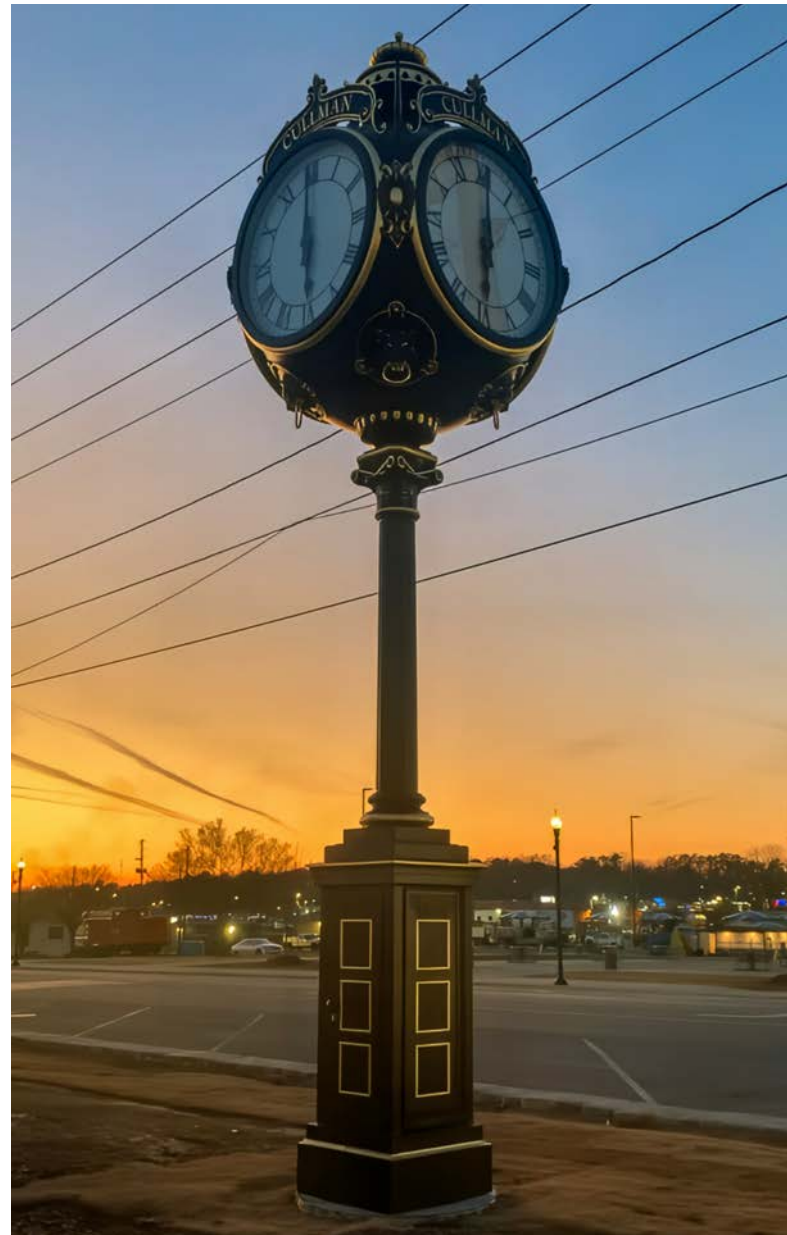
Bordering Arnold Street is a rotary clock next to a beautiful gazebo where you can sit and listen to the complex chimes as the clock strikes the hour.

Above: Hanceville's Donald Hamby Memorial Park features a clock with an American Eagle on top. Courtesy: Chasady Woods/The Cullman Tribune



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

The glockenspiel clock is the focal point of the King Edward Plaza Shopping Center in southwest Cullman. Shown behind the left panel is a figurine of Roy Drinkard.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Clock near the Cullman County Museum

Welcome to Cullman Oktoberfest

By: Noah Galilee | noah@cullmantribune.com

There is something special about fall in Cullman. The air begins to change, downtown comes alive and one of our community's most beloved traditions returns with the sights, sounds, flavors and fellowship that have made Oktoberfest a signature celebration for generations.

Each year, Oktoberfest gives Cullman a chance to welcome friends, families and visitors from across the region while celebrating the German heritage that helped shape our community. It is a festival rooted in history, but it is also a celebration of who Cullman is today: vibrant, growing, welcoming and proud of its people.

For those who call Cullman home, Oktoberfest is a reminder of the traditions that continue to connect generations. For visitors, it is an invitation to experience the hospitality, downtown energy and community spirit that make Cullman one of Alabama's most unique destinations.

"Oktoberfest is one of the best examples of what happens when a community comes together," Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs said. "It celebrates our heritage while showcasing the vibrant, welcoming city Cullman has become."

Jacobs said Cullman's German heritage remains an important part of the city's story.

"Cullman's German heritage is an important part of our story, and Oktoberfest provides an opportunity to celebrate that history while creating new traditions for future generations," Jacobs said.

That is what makes Oktoberfest so meaningful. It honors the past while continuing to grow into something new for children, families, longtime residents, first-time guests and everyone who gathers downtown to be part of the celebration.

From German food and the biergarten to live music, children's activities, vendors, downtown businesses and the festival atmosphere that fills the heart of Cullman, Oktoberfest has become one of those weekends people look forward to long before it arrives.

"Oktoberfest has become one of those weekends that people plan their calendars around because it brings together everything that makes Cullman special," Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism

Executive Director Nathan Anderson said. "From our heritage, to our hospitality, great entertainment and a downtown filled with energy. Whether it's your first visit or your fortieth, we hope you'll come experience what makes this tradition so meaningful."

Anderson said the festival's continued growth is intentional, but so is the effort to protect the traditions people love.

"Every year we look for ways to make Oktoberfest even better while protecting the traditions that people love," Anderson said. "Our goal isn't simply to host a festival, it's to create an experience that leaves families making memories and visitors wanting to come back to Cullman throughout the year."

That work has helped Oktoberfest grow into one of Alabama's premier festivals and one of the Southeast's best downtown German festival experiences.

"Oktoberfest has grown into one of Alabama's premier festivals because it offers something for everyone," Anderson said. "From authentic German traditions and incredible food to live music, children's activities and one of the Southeast's best German festival downtown atmospheres, it's a celebration we're proud to share with tens of thousands of guests from across the region."

Of course, an event of this size does not happen by accident. It takes the work of city leaders, parks and recreation staff, volunteers, sponsors, businesses, vendors, performers and countless community members who help make Oktoberfest possible each year.

"An event of this size only happens because of an incredible partnership between our city, volunteers, sponsors, businesses, staff and countless community members," Anderson said. "Oktoberfest belongs to Cullman, and we're honored to help bring it to life each year."

Inside this special section, we hope you find stories, information and features that help you enjoy the festival and appreciate the people and traditions behind it.

Whether you are here for the food, the music, the biergarten, the family activities, the shopping, the fellowship or simply to enjoy downtown Cullman at its best, we are glad you are here.

Welcome to Cullman! Welcome to Oktoberfest!

And welcome to a tradition that
continues to bring our community together!





Cullman Oktoberfest expands to 4 days after record-setting 2025 festival

– Noah Galilee | noah@cullmantribune.com –

After drawing a record-setting crowd in 2025, Cullman Oktoberfest is expanding its schedule in 2026 with the addition of Sunday, giving visitors a fourth day to experience one of the

city's signature festivals.

Daniel Wyatt, events director for Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism, said the decision was driven by the festival's continued growth, strong community response and feedback from guests.

"Record-breaking attendance in 2025, a growing regional draw, community enthusiasm and guest feedback on social media calling for an extra day all made the case for adding Sunday, giving more visitors the opportunity to

experience the festival," Wyatt said.

The 2025 festival drew 74,000 visitors, according to organizers, continuing Oktoberfest's rise as one of Cullman's largest annual events. Wyatt said expanding from three days »

Photo: Cullman Mayor and 2025 Oktoberfest Burgermeister Woody Jacobs taps the keg to open Cullman Oktoberfest 2025.

PHOTO COURTESY SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

The stage was lined for the kids' stein hoisting contest Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022, at Oktoberfest.

to four is expected to improve the overall festival experience by helping spread attendance across the weekend.

"Spreading attendance across four days rather than three should reduce peak congestion, ease parking pressure and make the experience more comfortable for families and first-time visitors," he said.

The additional day is also expected to benefit vendors, restaurants and local businesses by giving them another opportunity to serve visitors downtown.

"An additional day means an additional revenue opportunity," Wyatt said. "Sunday gives vendors, restaurants and local shops another full day to capitalize on that foot traffic."

Planning for the expanded

festival includes continued attention to traffic flow, parking, public safety, sanitation and the layout of the festival grounds. CPRST continues to work closely with local public safety officials before and during major events.

"CPRST has a strong relationship with local public safety officials, working hand in hand with them to ensure safety remains the top priority," he said. "Together, we study traffic flow and pressure points. The silver lining is that a more distributed crowd across four days may reduce the intensity of public safety demands on any single day."

Organizers continue to review the guest experience during events and make adjustments where needed.

"We are always looking for ways to make the guest experience more enjoyable," he said. "During events, we evaluate traffic flow throughout the festival and look at how we can improve the layout to better guide crowd movement."

Cullman's downtown continues to be one of the festival's greatest strengths. It has turned into the city of festivals in the past decade.

"What makes Cullman special is that even first-time guests can move through our streets with ease," he said. "The walkability of our downtown makes it an ideal setting for large festivals."

Several crowd favorites will return this year, including the Ferris wheel and double-decker carousel. Organizers are also

working to add new vendors and entertainment while preserving the festival's traditional Oktoberfest feel.

One addition this year will focus on traditional Oktoberfest attire. Wyatt said more guests have been embracing the festival spirit by dressing in lederhosen and dirndls, and this year's festival will include a vendor specializing in authentic German-style clothing.

"Over the years, we've noticed more guests embracing the spirit of the festival by dressing in lederhosen and dirndls," he said. "This year we are excited to welcome the United States leader in authentic lederhosen and dirndls to the festival, giving guests the opportunity to purchase the same »

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styles you'd find at the great Oktoberfests in Germany.

Entertainment has always been a major focus. This year, according to Wyatt, will not disappoint.

"Entertainment has always been a key part of Oktoberfest, and this year we've taken it to a whole new level," he said. "We've added some acts that will be unlike anything attendees have seen before, while staying true to the authentic feel of a traditional Oktoberfest. We don't want to give too much away just yet. Stay tuned, this year is going to be one to remember."

Senior Day will also remain an important part of Oktoberfest. Wyatt said seniors play a special role in the festival because of their connection to Cullman's history and German heritage.

"Seniors are a vital part of Oktoberfest," Wyatt said. "They are the ones who carry so much of the history of our town and our German roots, and we want to make sure they feel celebrated and welcomed every year."

Wyatt said transportation, accessibility and ease of movement through the festival grounds are key parts of Senior Day planning.

"We want to remove any barriers that might keep our senior guests from fully enjoying everything Oktoberfest has to offer," he said. "We look forward to honoring our senior community again this year. Their presence, their stories and their connection to Cullman's heritage make Oktoberfest truly special."

Accessibility remains a broader focus for the entire festival. Wyatt said organizers want the event to be welcoming for families, seniors, visitors with disabilities and guests traveling from outside Cullman.

"At Cullman Oktoberfest, we believe every guest deserves the same amazing experience regardless of age, ability or



Left to right, three former Burgermeisters — Casey Harbin, Dale Greer and Steven Sides — pose for a photo at the Cullman Oktoberfest Burgermeister Ball on Sept. 25, 2025.

SHERRY BROWN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

where they're coming from," he said. "Making the festival accessible and welcoming for all is not an afterthought; it is a core part of how we plan every detail of the event."

Vendor selection is also part of that planning process.

Wyatt said each application is reviewed to ensure it fits the look, feel and spirit of Oktoberfest.

"German-themed food and merchandise are important to the festival's identity, and we also place a strong emphasis on

unique handmade and artisan products," he said. "We are especially proud of the strong local lineup of food vendors, makers and small businesses that help make Cullman Oktoberfest special."

The festival's three »

biertgartens will remain a central part of the Oktoberfest experience. Wyatt said the goal is to give guests an authentic biergarten atmosphere in downtown Cullman.

"Biertgartens are a core part of any Oktoberfest, and we want to give our guests an authentic experience without having to get a passport," Wyatt said. "The look and feel of each of our biergartens is taken directly from what you would find in Germany."

This year's biergarten lineup will include Bitburger, a German beer brand founded in 1817. Wyatt said the addition reflects growing interest from German brands in being part of Cullman Oktoberfest.

"As word has spread about the festival, more German brands have been reaching out wanting to be part of this special event," he said. "This year we are excited to welcome Bitburger to Oktoberfest."

Guests attending the festival should expect street closures within the festival footprint. Wyatt encouraged visitors to follow posted signage and check the festival's website and social media pages for updated information on parking, road closures and other details before attending.

"Our downtown's walkability makes getting around easy, and we encourage guests to take advantage of surrounding parking areas and plan for a short walk to the entrance," Wyatt said.

Oktoberfest will remain pet-friendly, but organizers ask that pets remain on a leash and that owners remain mindful of the crowds.

Although attendance remains an important measure of the festival's reach, Wyatt said CPRST's definition of success goes beyond the number of visitors.

"Beyond attendance, our goal is for every guest to have an authentic Oktoberfest experience, to make lasting

memories with their family and to make Cullman Oktoberfest a tradition they return to year after year," Wyatt said. "Guest satisfaction is one of our top priorities."

For out-of-town visitors, Wyatt said organizers want Cullman to feel welcoming from the moment they arrive.

"For everyone who travels

from outside our city, we want them to feel like an honorary member of our community for the time they are here," Wyatt said.

He said the festival's continued growth is ultimately a reflection of the community behind it.

What truly makes Cullman Oktoberfest so special is the

people," Wyatt said. "The pride our community takes in making sure every single guest feels welcome and at home is what sets all of our festivals apart."

Cullman Oktoberfest 2026 will take place Oct. 1-4, at Depot Park. Get more details about this year's festival at www.CullmanOktoberfestival.com.

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CULLMAN OKTOBERFEST

A timeline of Cullman's German heritage festival

From immigrant roots to a modern fall tradition

ROOTS



THE FESTIVAL BEGINS



TRADITIONS GROW



HOME OF THE
HAY PEOPLE

- 1810** Munich's Oktoberfest begins in Bavaria.
- 1873** Col. Johann Gottfried Cullmann helps found Cullman.
- 1877** Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church is established.
- 1930s** Cullman County votes dry, shaping the city's early festival culture.
- 1976** The Cullman County Museum opens in a replica of Col. Cullmann's home.
- 1977** Sacred Heart marks its centennial with a one-day German Festival.
- 1982** The German Festival expands into the citywide Cullman Oktoberfest.
- 1982** The first official Oktoberfest features a root tiner tapping; instead of beer.
- 1999** Phillip and Pat Clemmons bring home the idea for giant Hay People after a trip to Germany.
- 2000** The first Hay People appear and become a local favorite.
- 2008** Phillip and Pat Clemmons are honored as Burgermeisters after their deaths; their children carry out the duties.
- 2010** Cullman approves alcohol sales under local rules.
- 2011** Beer is served at Cullman Oktoberfest for the first time.
- 2023** Oktoberfest aligns with Cullman's 150th anniversary celebration.
- 2024** Amy McAfee Wood is named Burgermeister.
- 2025** About 74,000 attendees make it the largest Oktoberfest in Alabama history.
- 2026** The City of Cullman receives the Rainer Bauer Award from the Alabama Germany Partnership.
- 2026** Cullman Oktoberfest is set for Oct. 1-4 at Depot Park.



2026 FESTIVAL
Oct. 1-4, 2026 ♦ Depot Park ♦ Cullman, Alabama

From Cullman's German Kitchens

Recipes, traditions and flavors
passed from one generation to the next



Bremer Butterkuchen

$\frac{1}{2}$ Tasse Milch
1 Würfel Hefe
 $\frac{1}{4}$ Tasse Zucker
1 Ei
1 Prise Salz
550 g Butter
500 g Mehl
Für den Belag:
125g Butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tasse Zucker
Mandeln
etwas Sahne

In Cullman, German food is more than a meal.

It connects today's families to the people who settled this community, the traditions they carried with them and the recipes preserved around kitchen tables for generations.

Some recipes were written carefully on index cards. Others were prepared from memory and taught by watching a mother, father, grandmother, grandfather or neighbor at work in the kitchen.

Measurements became more precise. Ingredients changed according to what was available. Families added their own touches. Still, the purpose remained the same: preparing something nourishing and bringing people together. German cooking is often described as hearty, but its character comes from balance.

Vinegar brightens warm potatoes and slow-cooked cabbage. Apples bring sweetness to savory dishes. Mustard adds sharpness to sausage and roasted meats. Flour, eggs, butter, potatoes and onions become comforting dishes through technique, patience and tradition.

"From Cullman's German Kitchens" celebrates familiar Oktoberfest flavors through recipes adapted for today's home kitchen.

From golden schnitzel and handmade spätzle to warm potato salad, Bavarian-style pretzels and buttery German cake, these are foods meant to be prepared patiently, served generously and shared.

Willkommen.

Pull up a chair and enjoy a taste of German tradition.

BAVARIAN-STYLE SOFT PRETZELS — BREZELN

Makes: 8 large pretzels

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Rising time: Approximately 90 minutes

Baking time: 14-18 minutes

With their dark golden crusts, soft centers and sprinkling of coarse salt, pretzels are among the foods most closely associated with Bavaria.

Fresh pretzels may be served with sweet mustard, cheese spread, butter or alongside bratwurst and sauerkraut.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups warm water, approximately 105-110 degrees
- 1 Tbsp. light brown sugar
- 2 1/4 tsp. active dry yeast
- 4 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus more as needed
- 2 tsp. fine salt
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 10 cups water
- 2/3 cup baking soda
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 Tbsp. water
- Coarse salt, for topping

Directions

1. Combine the warm water and brown sugar in a large mixing bowl.
2. Sprinkle the yeast over the water. Allow the mixture to stand for five to 10 minutes, or until foamy.
3. Add the flour, fine salt and melted butter. Stir until a rough dough forms.
4. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead for approximately eight minutes, or until smooth and elastic.
5. Add additional flour 1 tablespoon at a time only if the dough remains excessively sticky.
6. Place the dough in a lightly

greased bowl. Cover it and allow it to rise in a warm location for approximately one hour, or until doubled in size.

7. Heat the oven to 425 degrees.

8. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper. Lightly grease the parchment.

9. Turn the dough onto a clean work surface and divide it into eight equal portions.

10. Roll each portion into a rope approximately 24 inches long.

11. Form the rope into a wide U shape. Cross the ends twice, then fold the ends downward. Press them gently onto the bottom curve to form the traditional pretzel shape.

12. Bring 10 cups of water to a gentle boil in a wide pot.

13. Carefully add the baking soda. The water may foam briefly.

14. Using a large, slotted spoon, lower each pretzel into the simmering solution for 20-30 seconds.

15. Remove the pretzel, allow the excess water to drain and place it on the prepared baking sheet.

16. Whisk the egg yolk with 1 tablespoon of water.

17. Brush the mixture lightly over each pretzel. Sprinkle with coarse salt.

18. Bake for 14-18 minutes, or until the pretzels are a deep golden brown.

19. Transfer the pretzels to a wire rack. Allow them to cool for at least five minutes before serving.

German kitchen note

Traditional Bavarian pretzels are dipped in a food-grade lye solution, which gives them their distinctive dark crust. A baking soda solution offers home cooks a more approachable alternative.

Serving suggestion

Serve warm with German-style sweet mustard, cheese spread or butter.

TRADITIONAL BREADED PORK SCHNITZEL — SCHWEINESCHNITZEL

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: Approximately 15 minutes

Crisp on the outside and tender inside, schnitzel is one of the most recognizable dishes associated with German-speaking Europe.

Traditional Wiener schnitzel is prepared with veal. Pork schnitzel is widely enjoyed in Germany and provides an affordable option for the family table.

Ingredients

- 4 boneless pork loin chops, approximately 5-6 ounces each
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs
- 2 Tbsp. milk
- 1 1/2 cups fine, plain breadcrumbs
- Vegetable oil, canola oil or clarified butter, for frying
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges
- Chopped fresh parsley, if desired

Directions

1. Place one pork chop between two sheets of plastic wrap or parchment paper.
2. Using the flat side of a meat mallet, pound the pork gently until it is approximately 1/4-inch thick.
3. Repeat with the remaining pork chops.
4. Pat the pork dry. Season both sides with salt and pepper.
5. Place the flour in a shallow dish.
6. Whisk the eggs and milk together in a second shallow dish.
7. Place the breadcrumbs in a third shallow dish. »

8. Coat each pork cutlet lightly in flour. Shake away the excess.
9. Dip the cutlet into the egg mixture and allow the excess egg to drip away.
10. Coat both sides with breadcrumbs.
11. Do not press the breadcrumbs firmly into the meat. A light coating helps create a crisp crust that separates slightly from the meat during frying.
12. Pour enough oil into a large skillet to reach a depth of approximately 1/4 inch.
13. Heat the oil over medium-high heat.
14. Working in batches, place the breaded cutlets carefully into the hot oil.
15. Cook for approximately two to three minutes on each side, or until golden brown.
16. Check the pork with a food thermometer. It should reach an internal temperature of 145 degrees.
17. Allow the schnitzel to rest for at least three minutes before serving.
18. Do not overcrowd the skillet. Add additional oil between batches if needed.
19. Transfer the schnitzel to a wire rack or paper towel-lined plate.
20. Serve immediately with lemon wedges and parsley.

German kitchen note

Bread the schnitzel immediately before frying. Allowing the coating to rest for too long may cause it to become heavy or soggy.

Serving suggestion

Serve with warm German potato salad, spätzle, braised red cabbage or cucumber salad.

GERMAN MARINATED POT ROAST — SAUERBRATEN

Serves: 6-8

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Marinating time: 2-3 days

Cooking time: Approximately 3 hours

Sauerbraten translates to "sour roast."

The traditional dish develops its distinctive sweet-and-sour character by marinating beef with vinegar, vegetables and warm spices before slowly braising it until tender.

Regional recipes differ. Some use wine, buttermilk or raisins. Others thicken the gravy with gingerbread or crushed gingersnap cookies.

This version uses ingredients readily available to modern home cooks while preserving the dish's savory, tart and slightly sweet flavor.

Ingredients

For the marinade

- 1 beef chuck roast, approximately 3 1/2-4 pounds
- 2 cups dry red wine or additional beef broth
- 1 1/2 cups red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups beef broth
- 1 large yellow onion, sliced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 celery ribs, sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, lightly crushed
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 whole black peppercorns
- 6 whole cloves
- 6 juniper berries, lightly crushed, optional
- 1 tsp. mustard seeds

For the roast and gravy

- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 10-12 gingersnap cookies, finely crushed
- Additional salt, pepper, vinegar or brown sugar, as needed

Directions

1. Place the beef roast in a large glass, ceramic or

food-safe nonreactive container.

2. Combine the wine, vinegar, broth, onion, carrots, celery, garlic, bay leaves, peppercorns, cloves, juniper berries and mustard seeds in a large saucepan.

3. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil.

4. Reduce the heat and simmer for approximately five minutes.

5. Remove the marinade from the heat. Allow it to cool completely.

6. Pour the cooled marinade and vegetables over the roast.

7. Cover and refrigerate for two to three days. Turn the roast once or twice each day.

8. When ready to cook, heat the oven to 325 degrees.

9. Remove the roast from the marinade and pat it thoroughly dry.

10. Strain the marinade. Reserve both the liquid and vegetables.

11. Season the roast with salt and pepper.

12. Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat.

13. Brown the roast for approximately three to four minutes on each side.

14. Transfer the roast temporarily to a plate.

15. Add the reserved vegetables to the Dutch oven. Cook for approximately five minutes.

16. Stir in the tomato paste and brown sugar. Cook for one minute.

17. Return the roast to the Dutch oven.

18. Add enough reserved marinade to reach approximately halfway up the sides of the meat.

19. Bring the liquid to a gentle simmer.

20. Cover the Dutch oven and transfer it to the oven.

21. Cook for approximately 2 1/2-3 hours. Turn the roast halfway through cooking.

22. Check the meat for tenderness. It is ready when

it can be easily pierced with a fork.

23. Transfer the roast to a cutting board and cover it loosely.

24. Strain approximately 3 cups of the cooking liquid into a saucepan. Discard the cooked vegetables and whole spices.

25. Bring the liquid to a gentle simmer.

26. Whisk in the crushed gingersnap cookies a small amount at a time until the gravy reaches the desired thickness.

27. Taste the gravy.

28. Add a small amount of brown sugar if it is too tart. Add vinegar if it needs additional brightness. Season with salt and pepper as needed.

29. Slice the roast across the grain.

30. Serve with the warm gravy.

German kitchen note

Sauerbraten should taste balanced rather than sharply sour. Vinegar provides brightness, while brown sugar and gingersnaps soften the acidity and add depth.

Food safety note

Keep the roast refrigerated throughout the marinating process. Because the marinade has been in contact with raw meat, it must be fully cooked before it is used in the finished gravy.

BRATWURST WITH APPLES, ONIONS AND SAUERKRAUT — BRATWURST MIT ÄPFELN, ZWIEBELN UND SAUERKRAUT

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: Approximately 35 minutes

Bratwurst and sauerkraut are familiar favorites during »

Cullman's Oktoberfest season.

Apples and onions soften the sharpness of the sauerkraut and create a savory dish with gentle sweetness.

Ingredients

- 6 uncooked bratwurst links
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil or butter
- 1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 2 medium firm apples, cored and thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 24-ounce jar sauerkraut, drained
- 1 cup apple cider or unsweetened apple juice
- 1 Tbsp. German-style or Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. caraway seeds, optional
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- Salt, if needed
- Chopped fresh parsley, optional

Directions

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat.
2. Add the bratwurst and brown for approximately two to three minutes on each side.
3. The sausages do not need to be completely cooked at this stage.
4. Transfer the bratwurst to a plate.
5. Add the onion to the skillet. Cook for approximately five minutes, or until softened.
6. Add the apple slices. Cook for an additional three minutes.
7. Stir in the garlic. Cook for approximately 30 seconds.
8. Add the sauerkraut, apple cider, mustard, caraway seeds and black pepper.
9. Stir gently to combine.
10. Nestle the browned bratwurst into the sauerkraut mixture.
11. Bring the liquid to a gentle simmer.
12. Cover and reduce the heat

to medium-low.

13. Cook for approximately 20 minutes. Turn the bratwurst once during cooking.

14. Check the bratwurst with a food thermometer. Each link should reach an internal temperature of 160 degrees.

15. Remove the lid during the final five minutes if excess liquid remains.

16. Taste the sauerkraut. Add salt only if needed.

17. Sprinkle with parsley and serve warm.

German kitchen note

Caraway seeds have a warm, earthy flavor commonly associated with rye bread and cabbage dishes. They are traditional in many sauerkraut preparations but may be omitted.

Serving suggestion

Serve with warm pretzels, sweet mustard, German potato salad or mashed potatoes.

HOMEMADE GERMAN EGG NOODLES — SPÄTZLE

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Resting time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: Approximately 15 minutes

Spätzle are small, tender egg noodles enjoyed throughout southern Germany and neighboring regions.

Their name is often translated as "little sparrows," a reference to the appearance of older hand-cut versions.

A spätzle maker creates the familiar small noodles, but a colander with large holes or a sturdy cutting board may also be used.

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. salt

- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup whole milk, plus more if needed
- 3 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley, optional
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a gentle boil.
2. Whisk together the flour, salt and nutmeg in a large bowl.
3. Whisk the eggs and milk together in a separate bowl.
4. Pour the egg mixture into the flour mixture.
5. Using a sturdy wooden spoon, beat the dough vigorously for approximately three to five minutes.
6. The dough should become smooth, elastic and thick. It should remain loose enough to fall slowly from the spoon.
7. Allow the dough to rest for approximately 10 minutes.
8. Working in small batches, press the dough through a spätzle maker or colander with large holes directly into the gently boiling water.
9. As an alternative, spread a small portion of dough thinly along the edge of a damp cutting board. Use a knife to cut narrow strips of dough directly into the water.
10. Stir gently to prevent the noodles from sticking together.
11. Cook until the spätzle rise to the surface.
12. Continue cooking for approximately one additional minute.
13. Remove the noodles with a slotted spoon and transfer them to a bowl.
14. Repeat until all the dough has been cooked.
15. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat.
16. Add the cooked spätzle.
17. Toss gently for approximately three to five minutes, or until heated through and lightly golden in places.

18. Season with salt and pepper.

19. Add parsley, if desired, and serve warm.

German kitchen note

The dough should be wetter and more elastic than ordinary pasta dough. If it is too thick to pass through the spätzle maker, add milk 1 tablespoon at a time.

Käsespätzle variation

1. Place warm spätzle in a baking dish in alternating layers with shredded Emmental, Gruyère or Swiss cheese.
2. Top with deeply browned onions.
3. Bake at 375 degrees until the cheese has melted and the dish is hot throughout.

WARM GERMAN POTATO SALAD — WARMER KARTOFFELSALAT

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: Approximately 30 minutes

Unlike many American potato salads, this traditional German-style version contains no mayonnaise.

Warm potatoes absorb a tangy dressing made with bacon, onion, vinegar and broth. The finished salad is savory, slightly sweet and pleasantly tart.

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 pounds Yukon Gold or other waxy potatoes
- 6 slices thick-cut bacon, diced
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon or German-style mustard
- 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 3/4 tsp. salt, plus more »

for the cooking water

- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

Directions

1. Place the potatoes in a large pot.
2. Cover them with cold water by approximately 1 inch.
3. Season the water generously with salt.
4. Bring the water to a boil.
5. Reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife, approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. Do not overcook the potatoes.
7. Drain the potatoes. Allow them to cool just enough to handle.
8. Peel the potatoes, if desired.
9. Cut them into slices approximately 1/4-inch thick.
10. Place the warm potatoes in a large heat-safe bowl.
11. Cook the bacon in a large skillet over medium heat until crisp.
12. Transfer the bacon to a plate with a slotted spoon.
13. Leave approximately 2 tablespoons of bacon drippings in the skillet.
14. Add the onion. Cook for approximately three to four minutes, or until softened.
15. Carefully add the broth, vinegar, mustard, sugar, salt and pepper.
16. Bring the dressing to a gentle simmer. Stir until the sugar has dissolved.
17. Pour the hot dressing over the warm potatoes.
18. Add the cooked bacon.
19. Fold the ingredients together gently so the potato slices remain intact.
20. Allow the salad to stand for at least 15 minutes so the potatoes can absorb the dressing.
21. Taste and adjust the vinegar, salt or sugar as needed.

22. Sprinkle with parsley.

23. Serve warm or at room temperature.

German kitchen note

Waxy potatoes hold their shape better than russet potatoes. Dressing the potatoes while they are warm allows them to absorb more of the vinegar and broth.

BRAISED RED CABBAGE WITH APPLES — APFELROTKOHL

Serves: 6-8

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: Approximately 1 hour

Slow-cooked red cabbage is a traditional accompaniment to German roasts, sausages and holiday meals.

Apples, vinegar and sugar create the sweet-and-sour balance that defines the dish.

Ingredients

- 1 medium head red cabbage, approximately 2 pounds
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 2 medium tart apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup apple cider or unsweetened apple juice
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. ground cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 cup water or vegetable broth, plus more if needed

Directions

1. Remove any damaged outer leaves from the cabbage.
2. Cut the cabbage into quarters. Remove the hard

core.

3. Slice the cabbage into thin strips.
4. Melt the butter in a large Dutch oven or heavy pot over medium heat.
5. Add the onion. Cook for approximately five minutes, or until softened.
6. Add the apples. Cook for an additional three minutes.
7. Add the cabbage a handful at a time.
8. Stir until it begins to soften and there is room for the remaining cabbage.
9. Stir in the vinegar, apple cider, brown sugar, salt, pepper, cloves, bay leaf and water or broth.
10. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer.
11. Cover and reduce the heat to low.
12. Cook for approximately 45-60 minutes, stirring occasionally.
13. The cabbage should be tender but not mushy.
14. Add a small amount of water or broth if the pot becomes dry.
15. Remove the bay leaf.
16. Taste and adjust the flavor.
17. Add a small amount of vinegar for additional tartness or brown sugar for additional sweetness.
18. Serve warm.

German kitchen note

Red cabbage often develops a deeper flavor when prepared one day in advance. Cool and refrigerate it promptly, then reheat it gently before serving.

Color note

The vinegar helps preserve the cabbage's rich red-purple color during cooking.

BREMEN-STYLE BUTTER CAKE — BREMER BUTTERKUCHEN

Makes: 12-16 servings

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Rising time: Approximately 90 minutes

Baking time: 20-25 minutes

Butterkuchen, or butter cake, is a German sheet cake traditionally made with soft yeast dough and a topping of butter, sugar and almonds.

The cake is lightly sweet and intended to be shared. It is often enjoyed with coffee during Kaffee und Kuchen, the German custom of gathering in the afternoon for coffee, cake and conversation.

Ingredients

For the dough

- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 2 1/4 tsp. active dry yeast
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

For the topping

- 8 Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon, optional
- 2 Tbsp. heavy cream

Directions

1. Warm the milk to approximately 105-110 degrees.
2. Pour the milk into a large mixing bowl.
3. Stir in the yeast and 1 tablespoon of the sugar.
4. Allow the mixture to stand for approximately five to 10 minutes, or until foamy.
5. Add the remaining sugar, flour, salt, egg, softened butter and vanilla.
6. Mix until a soft dough forms.
7. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface.
8. Knead for approximately »

six to eight minutes, or until smooth and elastic.

9. The dough should remain soft. Add additional flour only if needed to prevent excessive sticking.

10. Place the dough in a lightly greased bowl.

11. Cover it and allow it to rise in a warm location for approximately one hour, or until doubled in size.

12. Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch baking pan.

13. Press the dough evenly into the prepared pan.

14. Cover and allow it to rise for an additional 20-30 minutes.

15. Heat the oven to 350 degrees.

16. Use a fingertip or the handle of a wooden spoon to make small indentations across the surface of the dough.

17. Cut the softened butter into small pieces.

18. Distribute the butter across the cake, pressing some pieces gently into the indentations.

19. Combine the sugar and cinnamon, if using.

20. Sprinkle the mixture evenly over the dough.

21. Scatter the sliced almonds across the top.

22. Drizzle the heavy cream lightly over the cake.

23. Bake for approximately 20-25 minutes, or until the edges are golden and the center is fully baked.

24. Allow the cake to cool slightly before cutting it into squares.

25. Serve warm or at room temperature.

German kitchen note

Butterkuchen is a yeast cake rather than a rich American-style layer cake. Its soft crumb and buttery topping make it especially well-suited for serving with coffee.

GERMAN-STYLE SWEET MUSTARD — SÜSSER SENF

Makes: Approximately 3/4 cup

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Resting time: At least 4 hours

Sweet mustard is commonly served with Bavarian sausages, pretzels and roasted meats.

Its flavor improves after resting, allowing the sweetness, acidity and spice to blend.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup whole-grain mustard
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 3 Tbsp. honey
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- Pinch of ground cloves, optional

Directions

1. Combine the whole-grain mustard, Dijon mustard, honey, brown sugar, vinegar, salt and cloves in a small bowl.
2. Stir until the brown sugar has dissolved and the ingredients are thoroughly combined.
3. Cover and refrigerate for at least four hours before serving.
4. For the best flavor, prepare the mustard one day in advance.
5. Store it in a covered container in the refrigerator.

A German table in Cullman

German food has long held a place in Cullman's community celebrations, church gatherings and family traditions.

The dishes prepared today may not be identical to those served generations ago.

Ingredients became easier

to obtain. Measurements became more precise. New cooks adjusted recipes according to taste, availability and the needs of their families.

That evolution is part of a recipe's history.

A handwritten card may contain a grandmother's careful instructions. A well-used cookbook may open naturally to a family favorite. Some recipes survive without ever being written because one generation takes the time to stand beside another and learn.

The recipes in this section reflect traditional German flavors while using ingredients, equipment and measurements familiar to modern American kitchens.

They are intended to be prepared, shared and adapted as they become part of new family traditions.

The tradition of Kaffee und Kuchen — Coffee, cake and conversation

In Germany, Kaffee und Kuchen means "coffee and cake."

The afternoon tradition centers on slowing down and spending time together.

Family members and friends gather over coffee, tea and a slice of cake. The occasion may be planned or informal, but its purpose is simple: conversation and companionship.

Butterkuchen, apple cake, fruit tarts and other lightly sweet desserts are natural additions to the table.

The tradition offers a fitting reminder that food is not remembered only for its ingredients.

It is remembered for the people who prepared it, the table around which it was served and the stories shared while everyone stayed for one more cup of coffee.

Recipes survive because someone makes them again
Recipes are preserved

in handwritten notes, remembered measurements and stories told while flour is scattered across a kitchen counter.

Each time an old recipe is prepared and shared, another generation becomes part of its history.

Cullman's German heritage can be seen in its architecture, celebrations, churches, family names and community traditions.

It can also be tasted in the dishes families continue to prepare and pass along.

May these recipes inspire new memories while honoring the people and traditions that brought them to our tables.

Guten Appetit!

Editor's source note

The recipes in "From Cullman's German Kitchens" were developed and modernized using historic German culinary references, previously published Community Matters and Cullman Tribune food coverage and traditional preparation methods.

Historic preparations were adjusted for contemporary American measurements, commonly available ingredients, modern kitchen equipment and current food-safety guidance.

"The Art of German Cooking and Baking" by Lina Meier, published in 1922, served as the principal historic reference. The original work is in the public domain in the United States.

The 2024 Community Matters Oktoberfest edition provided continuity for several featured dishes, including schnitzel, spätzle and Bremer butterkuchen.

Sacred Heart's traditional Oktoberfest dinner menu provided additional local context for dishes including bratwurst, German potato salad and sauerkraut.



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



CULLMAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

500 2ND AVENUE SW CULLMAN, AL 35055 | MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

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 BOARD OF REGISTRARS 256-775-4699
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"I am honored to serve you as your Alabama state senator in District 4 (Cullman, Marion and Winston). I will continue to listen and be your voice in the Statehouse of Alabama. Thank you for your support while I continue to work with you to make our community the best it can be."

Sincerely,
Sen. Garlan Gudger, District 4





**Hi! I'm
Reba**

L O C A L H E R O

R E B A

'makes them feel safe'

R

Chasady Woods

chasady@cullmantribune.com

The Cullman County Animal Shelter is a local sanctuary for stray cats and dogs. They work with the community to help animals find their forever homes.

Said Director Andrea Hudson, "We are here for the community and we are here to help. We are taking stray dogs and we do take pet surrenders when we do have the space available."

The shelter also helps those who face financial hardship by providing dog and cat food.

"It's not something we can do all the time, but they know they can reach out to us," Hudson added. "We just want to help the community as much as possible."

Reba is the Cullman County Animal Shelter's greeter. This Hound-Doberman mix and is described by the staff as the shelter's "grandma" or sometimes the "aunt."

Hudson explained, "If one animal is really shy she will sit with them. She'll try to play with them and they kind of mimic her."

Reba introduces fellow puppies to the wonders of being a dog again, or, in some cases, for the first time. Many abused animals never get the chance to run, play and live without the restraint of fear.

"She makes them feel safe," Hudson said.

Reba, despite her positivity, came to the shelter in a rough state.

"She was a stray and she was super skinny - just a skeleton," Hudson explained, "She wasn't eating and we were able to open her mouth and look. In the roof of her mouth she had a chicken bone that had been embedded and got infected."

Once the chicken bone was removed and the infection cleared up, Reba was all about food!

"There was just something about her. She was just special. All dogs are, but she had this quality

to her," smiled Hudson.

Reba has her own elevated desk bed that allows her to raise up and put her elbows on the counter.

"She's Cullman's best people greeter," Hudson laughed. "Anyone that comes in, she will greet them."

Hudson noted that while Reba provides therapy for the shelter dogs, she also has a lot to offer to the people that come through.

"She's actually good therapy for people that are coming in that are having to surrender a dog."

Reba is also a demander of pets among her other favorable attributes! The staff reports that she will paw at you until she receives the required

amount of attention.

"She is just a people person and a dog person."

The Cullman County Animal Shelter is always open to donations. Hudson advised that a call in advance is not required.

The following items can be donated:

- Dry cat or dog food
- Dog or cat treats
- Dog or cat toys
- Cat litter

Visit the Cullman County Animal Shelter at 935 Convent Road NE. It's open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Contact the shelter at 256-734-5448 or cullmananimalshelter@co.cullman.al.us.



CULLMAN COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER



– CREATIVE CULLMAN –

Katie B. Kirkwood

Architectural and Interior Design

Chasady Woods

chasady@cullmantribune.com

Katie B. Kirkwood Architectural and Interior Design is a residential design studio in downtown Cullman. The studio officially opened April 10, 2026, and has since been carefully planning designs for each project.

Kirkwood told The Tribune, "We do everything from floor plans, full house construction documents, but we also had someone yesterday come in that just needed new curtains."

Kirkwood said she can meet with homeowners and contractors to walk their sites. This opens the path for her design process and layout. Current house layouts and existing paint colors that clients prefer narrow down design revisions and updates, but Kirkwood brings more to the table than pretty colors.

She earned an architecture degree and an interior architecture degree from Auburn University, as well as a master's degree in construction.

"I've always been super creative," Kirkwood said.

She recalled wanting to be a pediatrician in first grade, but she had more enthusiasm about designing waiting rooms than treating patients.

"Kids are sick and they are sitting there miserable," she said. "That's when I noticed I focused »



The design studio features a bold green that grabs your attention as you walk in.

CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

on making the waiting room colorful as opposed to the actual practice."

For customers who walk in and are in the beginning stages of a new build, she asks the fundamental questions: Do you have a land survey or topography map? Do you have a desired contractor?

"We trek through the woods and mark trees that need to be taken down, making sure that we're inside property lines before we start laying out bedrooms and bathrooms," Kirkwood stated. "We build an entire construction document."

A standard document set includes the foundation, floor plans, roof plan and detailed elevations.

"Then we dive into the fun stuff!" she smiled.

This stage of the design process includes light fixtures, plumbing fixtures, paint, upholstery, cabinet hardware and all the details.

"On interiors I like to start with the conversation piece," she said. "Paint is never my first selection because paint can be changed."

Kirkwood emphasized that the art of design and craftsmanship is not a quick process and also not one that can be rushed.

"We understand our services are not cheap so we want to get it right the first time," she explained. "We are designing spaces that directly affect the way our clients live so we really get to know our clients."

She used nurseries as an example for determining design.

"We have to know all about the baby and what attracts their attention. However, we have to consider what space the mother feels comfortable in because they will be in the nursery probably more than the baby will be," she said.

"The most enjoyable part of schematic design is when we have people we've never met

before come into the studio and by the end of schematic design we know how they live and operate," she shared. "Sure they want a pretty dining table, but if they are never going to sit at it, we have to make sure they have an island with comfortable stools because that is where all the conversation is going to be had."

The design studio features a bold green that grabs your attention as you walk in. There is an array of samples for curtains, flooring and plenty of décor.

"I thrive in this chaotic studio," Kirkwood laughed. "There's lime green shelves, brown wallpaper and drapes of different fabrics. Though I know that, for someone else, this may induce anxiety."

Kirkwood noted that the uniqueness of the studio doesn't have to be the style that comes to your home.

"Our goal is not for our projects to look the same. We want someone to know Katie B. Kirkwood was the designer due to the details and thoughtful elements, not because it looks like our last project."

For Katie B. Kirkwood Architectural and Interior Design, what the customer wants, the customer gets.

"Once we understand our clients, the pretty or decorative process is easy, but the primary foundation is all about understanding our clients' wants, needs and interests so we can successfully design their spaces."

Katie B. Kirkwood Architectural and Interior Design is located at 221 Third Ave. SE. It is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Mondays are reserved for appointments only and the business is closed on weekends.

Call 256-339-4403 or email design@kbkirkwood.com to schedule an appointment. Follow [kbkarchandintdesign](https://www.instagram.com/kbkarchandintdesign) on Instagram to find out more.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Katie B. Kirkwood Architectural and Interior Design is a residential design studio in downtown Cullman.

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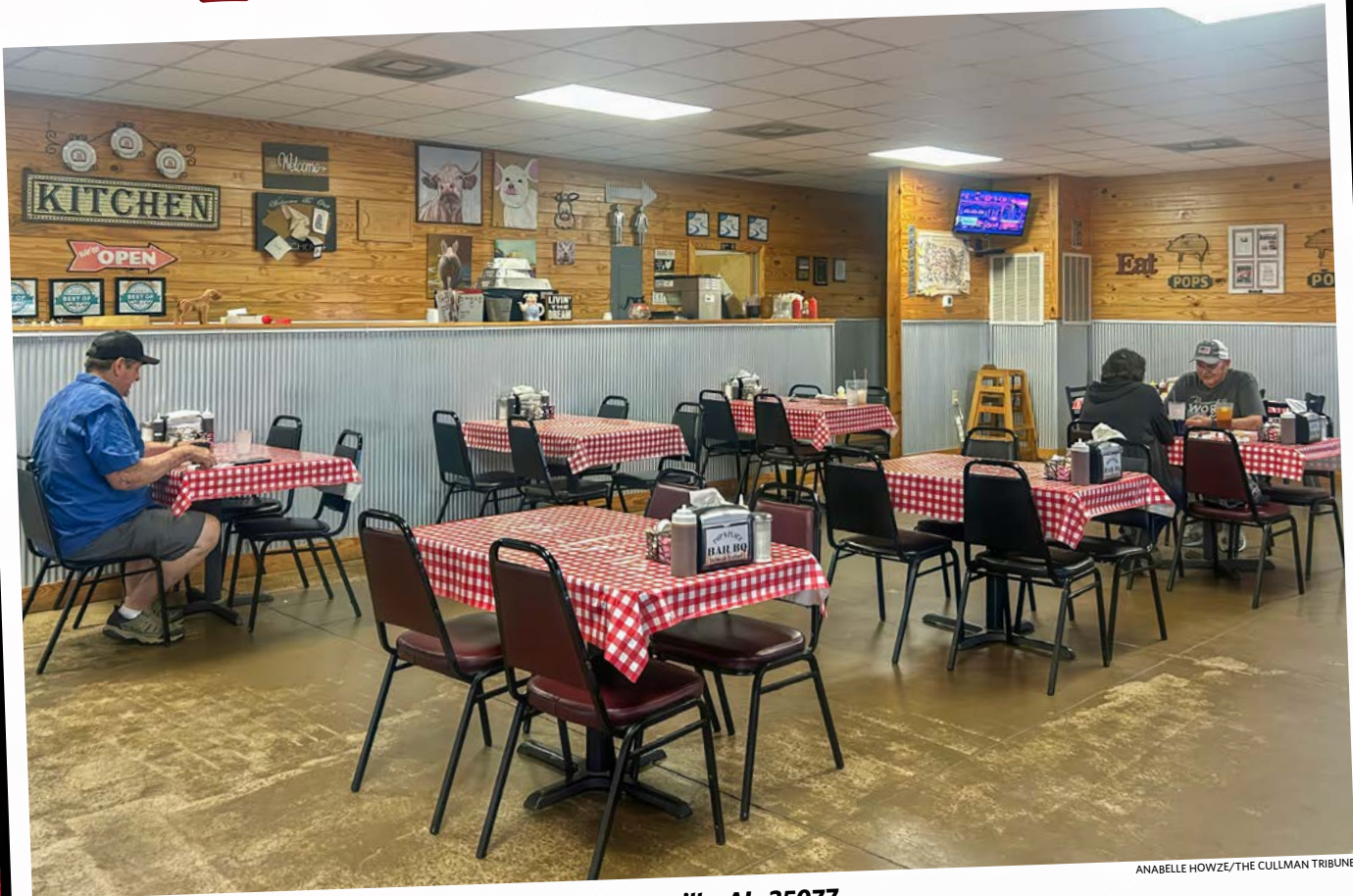
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– LOCAL EATS –

Pop's Place Bar BQ



ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Pop's Place is located at 721 Alabama Highway 69 S, Hanceville, AL, 35077.

Anabelle Howze
anabelle@cullmantribune.com

Over the last decade, Pop's Place Bar BQ in Dodge City has earned its reputation by using fresh ingredients, sharing family recipes and staying dedicated to the Cullman County community.

Pop's Place started as a concession trailer at festivals, community events and baseball games before growing into a full-service restaurant loved by residents and visitors. The business moved from a small 32-seat

spot to its current location, which seats about 100 guests and welcomes regulars and newcomers.

Pop's Place focuses on making food from scratch. Barbecue sauces, side dishes and meats are made fresh using recipes passed down through the family. Favorites like baked beans, coleslaw and green beans come from these recipes, and the meats are smoked and prepared daily.

One of the most popular menu items is Pop's Chips, hand-cut potato chips that customers have loved for years. Many guests »



ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The business moved from a small 32-seat spot to its current location, which seats about 100 guests and welcomes regulars and newcomers.

make sure to order them every time they visit.

Barbecue is still what Pop's Place does best, with pulled pork, brisket, turkey and chicken as top choices. Guests can also enjoy smoked wings, burgers, ribs, sandwiches and changing specials. New items like Friday catfish have been added, but the focus on homemade quality remains the same.

Consistency has been key to Pop's Place's success. Many staff members have worked there for years, so customers see familiar faces each visit. Experienced employees, fresh food and a friendly atmosphere have helped build strong relationships with guests over time.

Support from the community has helped Pop's Place grow. Regulars who have come since the beginning still visit and travelers often find the restaurant through recommendations or online. Inside, a map shows where visitors from across the country have come from.

Looking ahead, the restaurant's long-term vision centers on continuing family traditions, community connections and homemade flavors that bring people together one meal at a

time. Pop's Place wants to keep its legacy going for the next generations. With help from family, loyal staff and returning customers, the goal is to keep Pop's Place a place where great

food and real hospitality meet.

Pop's Place is located at 721 Alabama Highway 69 S, Hanceville, AL, 35077. Find it online at Facebook/Pop's Place Bar BQ.


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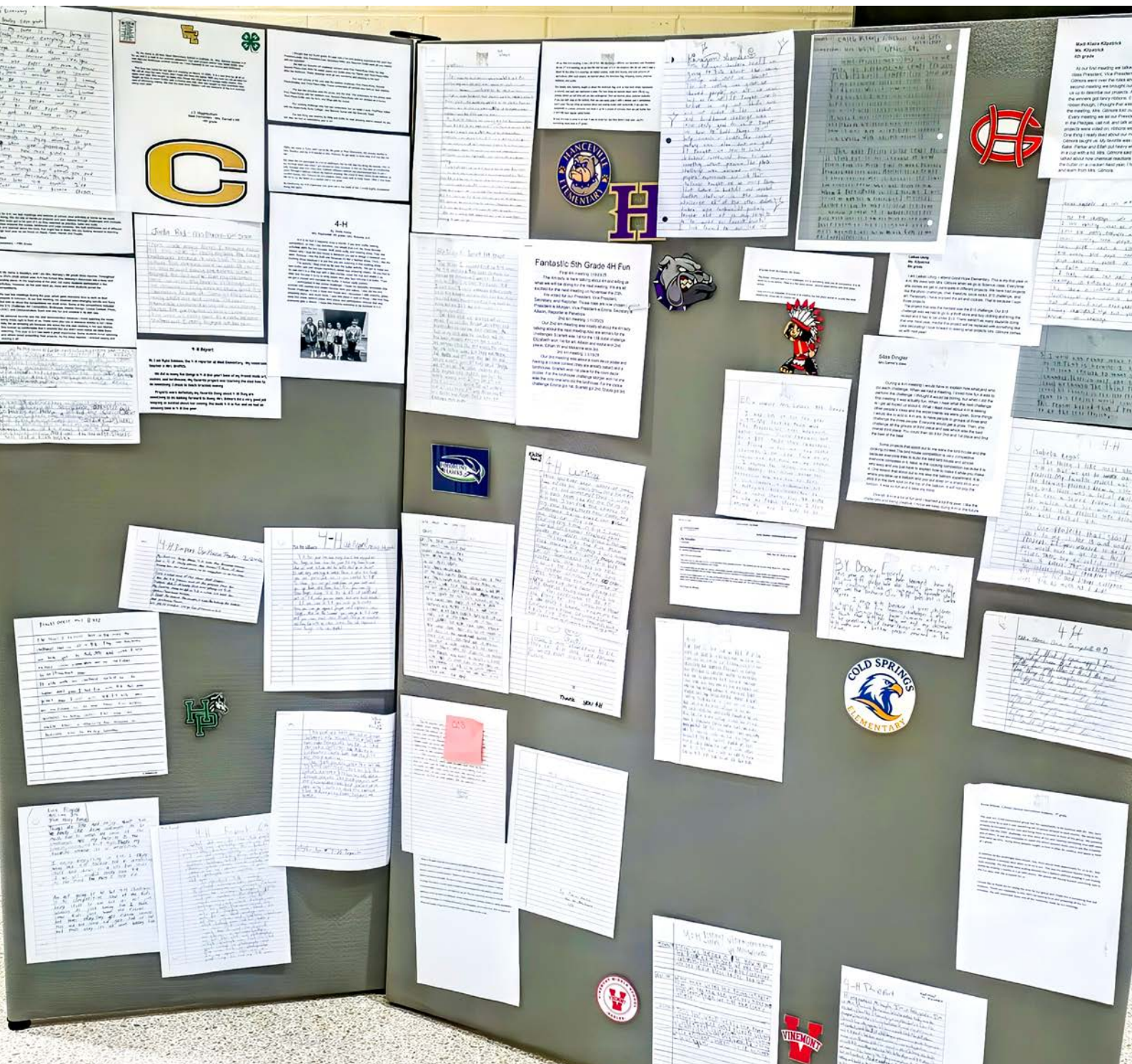
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THE BRIGHT YOUNG VOICES OF CULLMAN COUNTY 4-H

4-H student reports were showcased at this year's 4-H County Round Up.

GAUGE DAY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

For the second year, The Cullman Tribune has had the privilege of covering many of the 4-H happenings throughout Cullman County. This year, however, was especially memorable.

Each year, 4-H students take part in a variety of contests and educational opportunities that culminate with County Round Up, where they showcase everything they have learned and accomplished. This year, 4-H Youth Development Coordinator Kerri Roberts invited me to serve as a photography judge during the competition.

It was an incredible experience to meet the bright young minds behind the submitted photographs, hear them speak about their passions and creative inspiration and even challenge them to think about their future goals. That experience gave me a new appreciation for the student reports we share with you throughout the year. Behind every report is a student with unique talents, interests and a story worth telling.

Below, you'll hear directly from the students who served as their club reporters this year. I hope you'll enjoy reading about their experiences and, like I did, come away encouraged by the passion, leadership and potential of the next generation.

HAYDEN ARRINGTON

Fairview | Mrs. Moore | Fourth Grade

This year was my first year to participate in 4-H Club. To begin this year we elected club officers in each homeroom class. In our club meetings we learn about agriculture and talk about future projects. We try to meet once a month or just as often as we can because it is important to discuss and plan for each upcoming project. Meeting so often is also helpful in preparing for summer camp and the following year.

This year's projects were fun and allowed us to be creative. One of my favorite projects was

making a birdhouse and baking cookies. Making a birdhouse seemed to be everyone's favorite, there were so many that participated. I also really enjoyed the photography and the showing how to make food in five minutes project. I found it neat that there are so many foods that can be created in five minutes.

Being a part of 4-H has helped me challenge myself and think outside the box. It has also helped me accomplish achievements I have never reached before. It has helped me learn new things I can take with me for the future. I like that being involved in 4-H helps kids who do not always like regular sports to win awards and build self confidence. I think 4-H is fun and that every kid should try to be a part of it.

BOONE EPPERLY

Cold Springs | Mrs. T | Fourth Grade

This year in 4-H we have learned how to do our 4-H pledge. We also learned our monthly 4-H challenges such as cooking. My favorite challenge was the birdhouse. Our 4-H president is Carter Myrex.

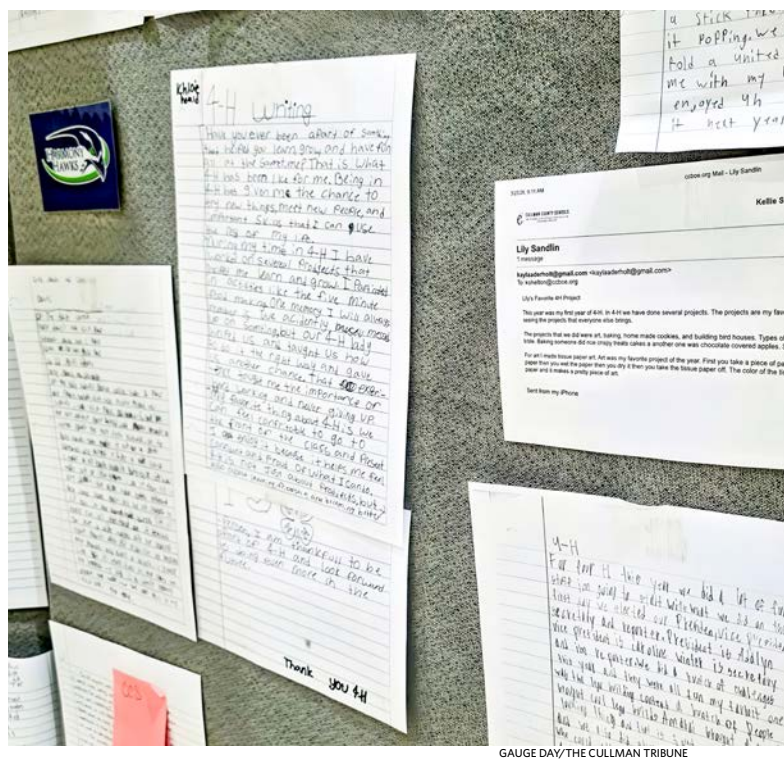
I enjoy 4-H because it gives children a chance to do fun learning challenges. I also like 4-H because they have summer activities. I think that 4-H has help me and my classmates to be creative. All of these things I'm learning in 4-H make me a better person now and in the future.

AUBRIE CLAIRE

Cullman Christian School | Sixth Grade

The 4-H program was a nice added touch to this year.

I really liked seeing what my classmates made with all their creativity. The lessons we did to top-off each meeting were so fun and interesting. I also loved participating, especially in art, which is my favorite. That's another reason I love 4-H. People have so many talents and 4-H



GAUGE DAY, THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

gives people the opportunity to show their talent. Winning felt amazing! It was so nice to see different classmates win different categories.

The winners in each category will go on to the county round up in April. I can't wait to see how they do there and if they get to move on. It can be intimidating, but it's so neat to see kids from all over the county come together and to not only show off their talent, but be proud of it. This is what makes 4-H so special.

MIA BRYANT

Holly Pond | Sixth Grade

What did we do this 4-H year?

This 4-H was probably one of my favorite years. Our teacher was Mrs. Roberts and we did many activities such as learning about rockets, doing art, photography, birdhouse building, chef, the \$15 challenge, elect officers, interior design, launch rockets, and cookies. In my opinion even if you didn't participate in a competition you still won.

In our first 4-H meeting we elected officers. Our president A.J. Peterson, our vice president Zachary Wilkans, our

secretary Kaileigh Manfeild, and our reporter me, Mia Bryant. At second meeting we did the \$15 challenge and art which Kaileigh won first for both, Mia won second for art, and Jayden won third for art. At our third meeting we did the cookies and birdhouse challenge which Kaileigh won first for both, we also shot water rockets in which the 1/3 went the highest and skewered a balloon. Lastly, we did the chef and photography, which Kaileigh won first in chef and second in photography and Mia won first in photography. In my opinion this was a great way to end my 4-H years.

MIA ANN WILBANKS

Holly Pond | Mrs. Bell | Sixth Grade

4-H this year has been really fun! I have enjoyed all the things we have done this year. But my favorite was when we went outside and the bottle flew up in the air! It was very interesting to watch. There is also fun things you can participate in if you wanted to! 4-H is where you can get confidence in yourself and go up there and have fun! Also you can try new things during 4-H. »

You do lots of crafts and art in 4-H, even you can make foods and build blocks!

If you win in 4-H you could go to county. Then, you can go against people and experience new things. Also in the Summer you can go to 4-H camp and you can meet new friends. And go on adventures and have fun with no cellular device. You can experience new things with new people!

GRIFFIN
East Elementary | Fifth Grade

I thought that our fourth grade 4-H year was a fun and exciting experience this year! Our President-Jude, Vice President-Cole, Secretary-Willa, and Reporter-Griffin were all very helpful with our activities!

We had our beautiful art challenge winners were First Place-Ruby Drew her dog, Second Place-Jude drew his ocean scene and Griffin drew his Titanic, and Third Place-Willa drew her bedroom. These drawings were all very wonderful and pleasing to the eye!

Our next activity of the year was the cookies challenge, First Place-Ruby, Second Place-Kinsley, and Third Place-Willa. These contenders all worked very hard on their cookies.

The last two activities were the photo, and the chef. The contenders for the photos were First Place-Sylvia with her newborn cow, Second Place-Ruby with her chicken on a tractor, Third Place-Griffin with his farm, and Rhys with his tractor.

Our cooking challenge only had two contenders, but we made it work. First Place Killian with his Apple-Nutty Butty Collage, and Second-Sylvia with her Avocado Toast.

Our last thing was rewards for Willa and Griffin for their amazing peanut essays! As you can see, we had an astonishing year in 4-H.

ROWAN FOSTER
Parkside | Fourth Grade

Thank you for letting us be a part of 4-H this year. I had a great time. My favorite part of 4-H was both the challenges and seeing what people had brought. My favorite challenge was the CHEF Challenge, and my second favorite challenge was the one we just did, the Free-style Challenge. I loved during the CHEF Challenge how Callie and Lillie had stayed on task and did good! And during the Free-style I loved Layla's squishes but I especially loved how Callie did a twist braid. I thought it was very unique. I can't wait for 4-H next year and I can't wait to see what we do next year.

EMMA MILLICAN
Cullman Classical Homeschool Academy | Seventh Grade

This year our CCHA homeschool group had the opportunity to be involved with 4-H. Mrs. Kerri would come to us and it was something we all looked forward to each month. We would have projects to complete on our own and bring them to present in front of the group. My personal favorite was the CHEF challenge, but they were all fun and I learned something new with every one of them. It was also enjoyable to watch the others present theirs and to see the creativity they came up with. Doing these projects taught us how to plan, be creative, and speak in front of a group.

In addition to the challenges each month, Mrs. Kerri would have experiments for us to do. She would explain a concept, then allow us to try it out. This was my personal favorite thing to do each meeting. My top picks were putting skewers into a balloon without popping it and making butter by shaking a marble in a jar with cream. We always left having learned something new in the fun ways that she prepared for us.

I would like to thank 4-H for taking the time for our group and I hope this is something that will

continue. Thank you especially to Mrs. Kerri for coming to us and preparing all the fun activities. We will remember them and all the memories made by our meetings.

LAIKEN UHRIG
Good Hope Elementary | Ms. Kilpatrick | Fourth Grade

I am Laiken Uhrig. I attend Good Hope Elementary. This is my first year in 4-H. We meet with Mrs. Gilmore when we go to Science class. Every time she comes we get to participate in different projects. We have had projects like the photo challenge, chef, freestyle, block rocks, \$15 challenge, and art. Personally I have enjoyed the art and cookies. That is because I won those projects.

The project that was the hardest was the \$15 challenge. Our \$15 challenge was we had to go to a thrift store and buy clothing and bring the receipt and it had to be under \$15. There weren't as many students doing that one. Next year, maybe this project will be replaced with something like cake decorating! I look forward to seeing what projects Mrs. Gilmore comes up with next year!

MADI KLAIRE KILPATRICK
Good Hope Elementary | Ms. Kilpatrick | Fourth Grade

At our first meeting we talked about projects and voted on our class President, Vice President, Secretary, and Reporter. Mrs. Gilmore went over the rules and explained what 4-H was. Our second meeting we brought our projects and Mrs. Gilmore called us up to describe our projects. After our projects were voted for, the winners got fancy ribbons. Everyone that participated got a ribbon though, I thought that was nice. Before our officers closed the meeting, Mrs. Gilmore told our class about the next projects.

Every meeting we let our President and Vice President lead us in the Pledges, call roll, and talk about unfinished business. Our projects were voted on, ribbons

were given, and we took pictures. One thing I really liked about our meetings were the lesson Mrs. Gilmore taught us. My favorite was the one called Shake and Bake. Parker and Ellah put heavy whipping cream and a marble in a cup with a lid. Mrs. Gilmore said it would make butter. She talked about how chemical reactions happen, and even let us try the butter on a cracker! Next year, I hope we get to participate and learn from Mrs. Gilmore.

LAWSON FULMER
West Point Intermediate | Fourth Grade

4-H is so fun. We do a lot of fun things. You do some competitions and first, second, and third place all get ribbons. Some of the competitions we did this year are the 15 dollar challenge, cookie challenge, chef, photo, and birdhouse. I am sad that we only have 5 4-H meetings. This was a great year for 4-H.

KAYSON DYE
West Point Intermediate | Mrs. Johnson | Fourth Grade

This year in 4-H we participated in several super cool projects. Everyone enjoys when Mrs. Gilmore comes to teach us. Some of my favorite memories are when we had the birdhouse and cookie competition. It was so fun to see all the creative and yummy ideas everyone had. Also, we practiced being good sports by not sulking when we lost and congratulating the winners.

4-H is a global organization that works to teach and instill good values and character into the students in our community. We follow a routine of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and repeating the 4-H pledge before every class. Each officer has a specific role. All our officers took their roles very seriously. I especially think our president enjoyed pounding his desk gavel to call the meeting to order. Even though this year is coming to an end, there are summer programs »

that students can attend and we can all look forward to meeting again in fifth-grade.

KYLIE SIMMONS

West Elementary | Mrs. Griffith

Hi, I am Kylie Simmons, the 4-H reporter at West Elementary. My homeroom teacher is Mrs. Griffith.

We did so many fun things in 4-H this year! Some of my friends made art, cookies, and birdhouses. My favorite project was teaching the class how to do something. I chose to teach bracelet making.

Projects were definitely my favorite thing about 4-H! They are something to be looking forward to doing. Mrs. Gilmore did a very good job keeping us excited about her coming. She made 4-H so fun, and we had an amazing time in 4-H this year.

MADELYN

West Elementary | Mrs. Meharg | Fourth Grade

Hi! My name is Madelyn, and I am Mrs. Meharg's 4th grade class reporter. Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, 4-H has turned Mrs. Meharg's classroom into a busy and exciting place. At the beginning of the year, not many students participated in the activities. However, as the year went on, more and more students joined the competitions.

We had five meetings during the year, which gave everyone time to work on their projects in between. At our first meeting, we received color-changing pencils and flyers that told us about the competitions we could enter. Some of the competitions included the \$15 Challenge, Art Competition, Birdhouse, Interior Design, Cookie Contest, Photo, LEGO, and Demonstration. Each one was fun and creative in its own way.

My personal favorite was the chef demonstration because I loved watching the meals being made right in front of us. There were also lots of delicious snacks to try! I think Milly did an amazing

job because she acted like she was cooking in her own kitchen. She looked so comfortable that it seemed like she didn't even notice we were there watching. This year in 4-H has been a great experience. Some students loved watching, and others loved presenting their projects. As the class reporter, I enjoyed seeing and sharing it all!

J.G. HIGGINBOTHAM

West Elementary | Mrs. Darnell | 4th Grade

Hi, my name is JD from West Elementary School in Cullman, AL. Mrs. Gilmore teaches 4-H for us, and it is held in our science classroom. Our chef project winner was Violet Smith. She was also our birdhouse contest runner up. I was honored to win our cookie and birdhouse contests.

The time has come for our last 4-H meeting on March 10, 2026. It is a sad time for all of us. We will all miss her very much, and I hope she feels the same. With any luck we will all have her again next year. She taught us many new things like what the 4-H pledge really means. She taught us how to churn butter with a marble and milk. She also taught us how scientists take care of whooping cranes. We had the best time! Maybe I will see everyone at the 4-H summer camp next year!

CARTER BLACK

West Elementary | Fifth Grade

This year for 4-H, we had meetings and lessons at school, plus activities at home so we could learn by doing. We did lots of hands-on projects and won ribbons through challenges and contests. Our families even got to be part of it as they watched us practice, bake and build.

Our class enjoyed the cookie, birdhouse and Lego contests. We built birdhouses out of different materials and learned about the birds that might live in them. We are looking forward to learning new things next year as we focus on Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

KAYLA LAM

Sacred Heart | Mrs. Holmes | Fifth Grade

Hi, my name is Kayla and I'm in the 5th grade. I've learned a lot and had a lot of fun this year in 4-H. Like when we had the choice to make a craft or buy an outfit. I had built a dollhouse and won first place! The process of making it was fun and exciting, although it could get a little stressing at some points. The outfits were also great. Our 4-H director had also gave a lesson about how to pierce a balloon without popping it. Now that's a lesson I would never forget. Ms. Gilmore was also a very nice and fun director so this was my favorite year of 4-H.

I also loved when we did a cookie baking contest and bird house contest. All the cookies tasted like heaven and the bird houses looked amazing! Overall this was a great 4-H year and I wouldn't want to change.

KHLOIE HEALD

Harmony

Have you ever been a part of something that helped you learn, grow, and have fun all at the same time? That is what 4-H has been like for me. Being in 4-H has given me the chance to try new things, meet new people, and important skills that I can use the rest of my life.

During my time in 4-H I have worked on several projects that helped me learn and grow. I participated in activities like the five-minute food making. One memory I will always remember is we accidentally messed up on something, but our 4-H lady helped us and taught us how to do it the right way and gave us another chance. That experience taught me the importance of hard working and never giving up.

My favorite thing about 4-H is we can feel comfortable to go to the front of the class and present. I enjoy it because it helps me feel confident and proud of what I can do. 4-H is not just about projects, but also about learning, friendship, and becoming better.

JAELA ROBERTSON

Cold Springs | Mrs. Brown | Fifth Grade

This school year has been awesome but the things me and my class enjoyed the most was... 4-H! 4-H is a very fun and educational program. Our president Zayli is a very good president. She has done an Amazing job. There is an opportunity for everyone to participate in something that they love to do and enjoy.

Now our Secretary Amber has also been doing an awesome job. We love 4-H and we just want to say that there is an opportunity for the shy ones and whatever they like to do for in 4-H and our vice president Brianna (Bri) always subs in when our president isn't here. She says our pledge and is always brave enough to just step up there in front of the class.

We got to make a birdhouse and on Feb 25th we did a five minutes or less and then we had a cultural picture contest. We have done a drawing contest and so much more. There is also going to be a _____ and also a freestyle contest.

Thank you for your time.

KASSIE TAYLOR

Holly Pond | Mr. Kusz | Fifth Grade

My favorite thing about 4-H was the drawing contest, but is 4-H really about the contest? I think it's about showing how our minds work in a way but in a fun way.

Here is what some of the other kids thought:

I love the 4-H teacher and all the projects that the students did. I actually love everything in 4-H.

My favorite thing we did in 4-H is when we had the cookie/birdhouse contest.

I liked the cookies challenge, it was fun baking the cookies and presenting them.

We got to make very fun projects in 4-H.

Community Matters Q&A:

Talking youth ministry with Korey Cowart

Gauge Day

gauge@cullmantribune.com

Welcome to the third edition of the Community Matters Q&A series, highlighting local youth pastors who continue to make a meaningful impact throughout the Cullman community. This edition features Crosshaven Youth Pastor Korey Cowart, giving readers a closer look at his heart for ministry, the challenges he and his students have faced and the calling that led him to invest in the next generation.

For readers who may not know you, can you share a little about who you are and a little bit about your youth ministry?

I am currently in my 15th year of youth ministry. I have had the privilege of working at four churches: Hannah Church in Gordo, Alabama, Central Heights Baptist in Florence, Alabama and Jackson Way Baptist in Huntsville, Alabama.

I currently serve at Crosshaven Church in Hanceville, Alabama, and have been there for four years now. I've had the privilege of ministering to several students over the years, and our current averages about 30-35 students.

What originally drew you to working with students, and what keeps you invested in youth ministry today?

I was fortunate to have only had one youth pastor through 7th-12th grade and it was he and his wife who led me to Christ at their kitchen table. He was instrumental in my »



Crosshaven Church Youth Pastor Korey Cowart and his wife Abigail Cowart

KOREY COWART

life and one of the biggest influences on my life and leading me to think about youth ministry.

Seeing teenagers grow in their love for Christ is one of the greatest experiences for me. Over the years I've seen many teens come to Christ and grow in their love for Him and that has been what has motivated me. Any time a student, parent, church member, etc. encourages me, it's always a great reminder that what we do matters.

What is one word that best describes how you approach youth ministry, and why?

Discipleship. It's great for students to have fun and make friends and all, but the Bible says we are responsible for those we shepherd and it's important for us to show them how to read the bible, pray, share their faith, etc. and the importance of them to then turn around and who others how to do the same. I believe the best way to disciple a student is through God's Word. A mistake that is often made is that we think students can't handle deeper truths in the Word so we must "dumb it down" for them. They study chemistry, physics, trigonometry and other things at school but yet we think they can't take theology for some reason.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing today's youth?

Social media. It's caused students to become more anxious, depressed and question so many things. While there are positive things about it, I believe it has had a tremendous negative impact on teenagers and we should find ways to try to remind students of what reality is versus what social media tells them.

How do you create an environment where students feel safe, valued and heard?

We try to allow students to

participate and lead in our group. From preaching, to leading worship and even starting a student leadership team for students to lead and guide decisions for the ministry. I'm blessed enough that on Wednesday nights students open and lead the service until I get up and preach. When students see other students leading, it's always a win.

What role does your faith in Jesus play in helping young people navigate the world today?

I believe that because of the position I serve in, my relationship with Jesus not only impacts me and my family, but also the students and church that I serve. They've probably seen plenty of people claim to be a Christian but then end up departing from that and I believe they need to have people they look to who stick it out and trust in the Lord. I know that means I must find myself disciplined and realize that when I'm not spending time with the Lord, that also trickles down and affects those who I am ministering to.

Is there a moment or experience in your ministry that reminded you why this work matters?

My first Sunday at one of my previous churches, there was a student who was getting baptized after recently giving his life to Christ. I began meeting with this student every week and talking about the Lord, allowing him to ask me questions and share struggles for three years. He eventually felt the call to ministry and this past week he was able to lead his first baptism of a student. There was an incredible moment for me that I will never forget and that the Lord allowed me to see.

If you had the opportunity to share the Gospel with a student that has never heard



Crosshaven Youth Pastor Corey Cowart bringing the Word during one of his many messages

before, how would you do it? What would you say?

With teens these days, a lot of people try to sugarcoat the Gospel and tell them how amazing they are or that they haven't done anything wrong, but I think we need to be honest with them and show them what the Word says about who they are in relation to God and His holiness. We sometimes don't want to mention sin, and while there are wrong ways to do it, I think it's important for people to know why Jesus had to die in the first place. Romans 3 tells us that people don't actually realize how deep their sin goes, so we need to warn them, while also showing them the solution.

Therefore, I would simply explain that we have all sinned against a holy and perfect God. Because of this, we will face the wrath of God and his judgment and answer for our sin. However, God sent His son Jesus Christ, to take our punishment on Himself and die the death that we deserve to die. He then rose again and is alive today.

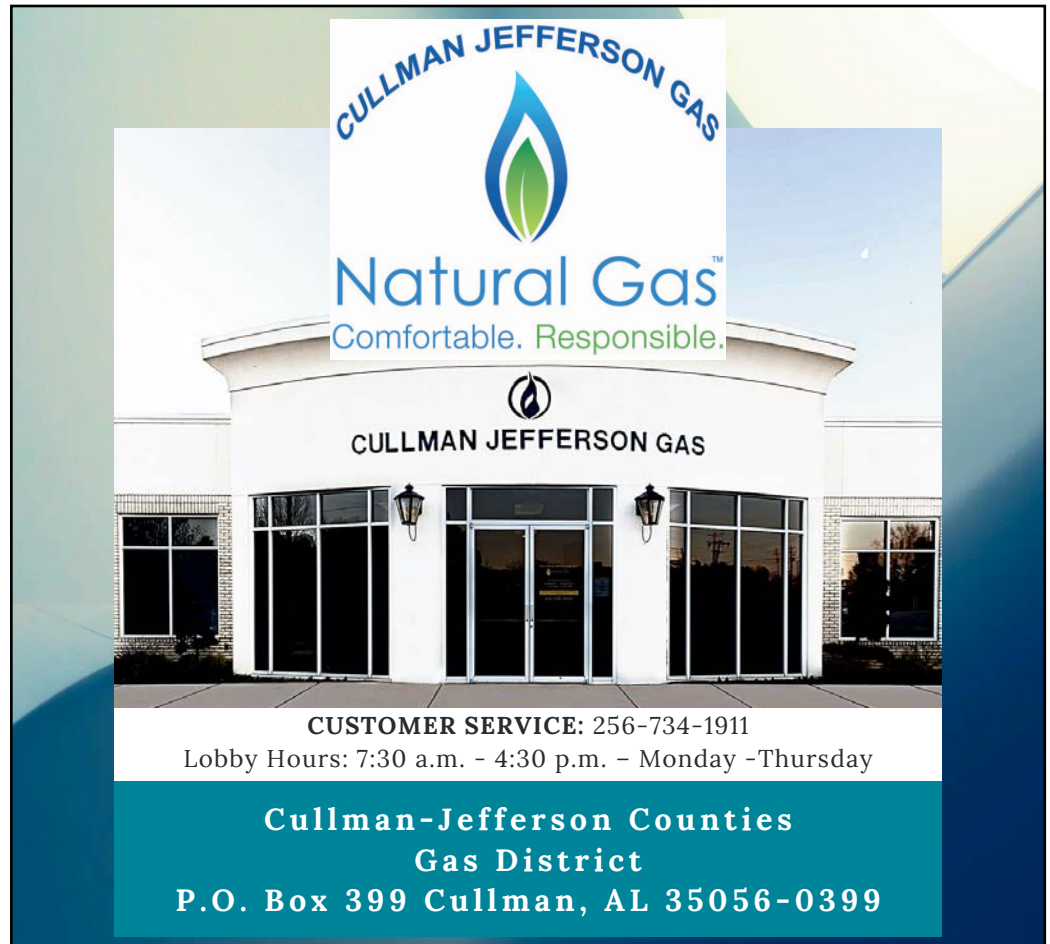
He died for us when we didn't deserve it one bit, therefore, how could we not want to live for Him?

What is one thing you wish parents or the community better understood about today's youth? »

I think what's been encouraging to see is that teenagers these days are looking more for truth rather than the spectacle. Many teenagers aren't looking to be entertained or hyped up necessarily; they want to know what the Bible says and how to live this out. I think sometimes people don't have enough faith in God's Word alone.

What do you hope students carry with them long after they leave your youth ministry?

I truly hope that students leave healthier in their walk with the Lord. I hope that they have a better understanding of who God is and that they yearn for a deeper walk with Him. One thing we repeat over and over is that we want students to know God more which will lead them to love Him more, which will lead them to obey Him more. That's our goal.



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