

Courier Journal

Serving Northwest Alabama and beyond

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Development Promotion

SHEFFIELD- Bank Independent recently announce the promotion of **Lynda Darby** to Business Development Officer for Lauderdale, Colbert, and Franklin counties.

"The creation of the Business Development Officer role demonstrates our commitment to meeting deposit demand through relationship-based business development," said Bank Independent CEO **Rick Wardlaw**. "Lynda's talent for building strong relationships made her the ideal candidate to fill this important new role."



Darby

Darby will be responsible for generating long-term, sustainable core deposit growth by serving as a brand ambassador.

Darby joined the bank in 1996 in Customer

Service before moving to Business Banking, now Treasury Solutions. The Coffee High School graduate earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and biology from the University of Nebraska.

Darby has received multiple awards for sales, deposits, and volunteerism. She is active in the community as a Chamber Ambassador and has held board positions with organizations including Junior League and Riverbend.

Singers Will Present Glory

FLORENCE- The Shoals Chamber Singers will present their Christmas concert, "Glory to the Newborn King!,"

See SHORTs... on Page 2

Automotive Inside NOW
Ray Miller Buick-GMC
Advance Auto Sales

A Creekside Win

Local STEM Team Overcomes Odds for South's BEST Title

FLORENCE -The University of North Alabama hosted this year's South's BEST Robotics competition in early December. Close to 1000 high school students comprising over 40 teams from five southern states participated in the three-day competition which was sponsored by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Through participation in BEST's STEM program (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), students learn to analyze and solve problems using the Engineering Design Process. This helps them develop technological literacy skills

See CREEKSIDE... on Page 8



Team members and grade alphabetically: Christian Alexander-7, Kayln Angel-10, Mark Angel-11, Sidda lea Berryman 12, William Rhodes Berryman-7, Avery Clark-8, Zoe Clark-8, Conley Ford-11, Oakley Ford -11, Aslan Gilchrist-12, Lily Gilchrist-7, Hayden Hannah 10, Micah Hannah 9, Mia Henson 9, Benjamin Jeffreys 11, Faith Letson 8, Natalie Letson 8, Brylee Miller 8, Piper Moore 11, Abbie Pearson 6, Chase Rosser 9, Ashley Scheele 6, Isabella Sherrill 10, Kaity Sherrill 12, Sarah Wilcoxon 12, Amelia Woody 9, Jayne Woody 7. Coaches Danny and Carol Scheele. Courtesy photo

For information about advertising in premium positions like this, please call 256-740-4701.

HARD TO BALANCE Salvation Army's Requests, Expenses

FLORENCE - Increasing living costs have resulted in a surge of requests for assistance from The Salvation Army. At the same time, the organization is experiencing escalating expenses to deliver such crucial services. The Salvation Army is seeking assistance from the community to help meet the increased need. The Salvation Army invites the community to donate at a local red kettle or online at FlorenceKettle.org.



"Holiday donations fuel our capacity to

See KETTLE... on Page 6

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- Porches



- \$\$ Stretcher
- Adopt-a-Friend
- Hocus
- Soaps
- SIGNS of the PAST



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- Alabama Outdoors
- Web Poll



Mystery Photo Rosetta Cantina WIN A MEAL FOR 2

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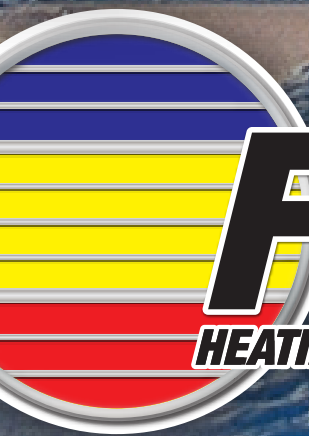
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Shorts...

Singers Will Present Glory

Continued from Page 1

on Tuesday, December 19 under the new leadership of Director/Conductor, Dr. Eric Kirkman.

Davonna Blasingame will continue as accompanist. The concert takes place at 7pm at Church of the Good Shepherd at 2001 Cloyd Blvd in Florence. Everyone is welcome and donations are gratefully accepted.

Kirkman came to NW Alabama from Panama City in 1992 on a full music scholarship to UNA and received his Bachelor's in Music Education and a Master's in Music Education from UNA. He also received his Doctorate in Education Leadership in 2009.

While at UNA he was the lead trumpeter and featured soloist in the marching, jazz, and concert bands. His selection as "University Man of the Year" in 1997 was one of many accolades and a sign of things to come. He stayed in NW Alabama and has excelled in every

professional level of music, education, and administration in which he has embarked. Follow Shoals Chamber Singers on Facebook.

Potter Joins Wheaton WW

MUSCLE SHOALS—Jim Potter & Sons, Inc., recently joined Wheaton Worldwide Moving's agency network as an interstate agent. Previously an agent for National Van Lines, the Muscle Shoals moving and storage company joins more than 350 Wheaton agents across the country.

Owner James Potter, Jr. represents the second generation of his family in the company. His parents founded the company, and he took over in 1984. The Potter family's third generation is also involved in the business with two of James Potter, Sr.'s grandchildren driving for Jim Potter & Sons, Inc.

"We have moved a baby grand piano used by Aretha Franklin to record her 1967 hit "I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Love You)" around the Shoals ten different times," said James Potter, Jr. "Back in 2017, we helped move and pack items out of General Joe Wheeler's house so it could have renovations done. We then moved the items back in a year later."

Jim Potter & Sons, Inc. can be reached by phone at 256-383-7836 or online at www.pottermoving.net.

Department of Health and Human Services.

The community agencies accept applications at the local level from residents seeking help through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Recipient agencies include counties within our coverage area. Allocations help may not be immediately available. The application periods are established locally by each community agency.

• Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama Inc.: \$1.75 million. (Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale) 256-764-5142, caanw.org

• Community Action Partnership of Huntsville/Madison and Limestone Counties Inc.: \$2.87 million. (Limestone, Madison) 256-907-1550, caa-htsval.org

• Community Action Partnership of North Alabama Inc.: \$2.46 million. (Cullman, Lawrence, Marion, Morgan, Winston) 256-355-7843, capna.org

OnePlace is Part of Grant

MONTGOMERY—More than \$2.7 million has been released in 13 grants to help reduce incidents of sexual assault and assist victims in Alabama. The grants covering all 67 Alabama counties will help ensure victims can receive medical attention, counseling, and support. Agencies receiving funds also assist law enforcement agencies in pursuing and prosecuting offenders.

One Place of the Shoals in Florence is among the recipients – \$101,052 to provide services in Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Marion and Winston counties.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grants from funds made available by the U.S. Department of Justice.

"I commend these agencies for reaching out and providing care and compassion to help victims in their critical time of need," said Governor Kay Ivey.

More SHORTS... Page 11

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Local Utility Assistance

MONTGOMERY – More than \$46 million in grants to 18 community service agencies will soon be distributed to help provide emergency heating and cooling assistance to low-income households.

"High energy bills can be an overwhelming burden for families that are already struggling to meet their basic needs," said Governor Kay Ivey, in announcing the allocation. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grants from funds made available by the U.S.



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COMMUNITY NOTES may be submitted for non-profit, civic or church-related events and published free of charge AS SPACE IS AVAILABLE in the Courier Journal. Community Notes must be submitted in writing by 3pm Friday for consideration in the following week's issue. Email to editor@courierjournal.net

7th Annual Holly Jolly Christmas Trolley on Thursday, December 21 from 5:30-7pm hosted by Singing River Literacy Council and the City of Tusculmbia.

The popular Christmas sing-a-long trolley ride will depart from the Tusculmbia Round House, located at 110 N. Indian Street in Tusculmbia. Admission is free, thanks to generous donations.

The trolley ride is open to the public. Each child who participates will receive a free Christmas book. Christmas stations inside the Round House will include face painting, snacks, games and read alouds. The trolley will run continuously from 5:30-7pm.

Muscle Shoals Sound Studio will be closed for Christmas December 23 -January 2. It will reopen Wednesday January 3, 2024.

Tour prices will remain the same for 2024 as well as hours and tour times: 10-4 Tuesday - Friday with tours at 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30. All tours are guided tours and are \$20/ person. There are discounts for military, seniors, and for pre-arranged group tours of 20 or more.

For more information, call 256-978-5151 or visit www.musclehoalsoundstudio.org

LifeSouth Bloodmobile Dates: Thursday, December 21 Florence Square, 1pm - 6pm

Friday, December 22 Tractor Supply Company - Russellville, Noon - 6pm

Saturday, December 23 Austin's Shoes - Florence, 10am - 4pm

Wednesday, December 27 Workout Anytime - Florence, 8am - 2pm

The Lauderdale County Solid Waste Department will be closed Christmas Day Monday, December 25 and New Year's Day Monday, January 1. There will be no household or commercial garbage pickups those days. Household garbage collections will be delayed ONE DAY ONLY on Christmas and New Year's weeks.

The landfill will also be closed to the public on those holiday weekend Saturdays, December 23 and 30.

Gerald Clemmons needs a kidney! Gerald is a lifelong resident of Lauderdale County. He has kidney disease and is on dialysis. He has been told that he needs a kidney transplant, and a living donor is his best chance to survive. Please consider becoming a living kidney donor for him at Vanderbilt Hospital.

You can help! To be a donor, you will need to: know your blood type, be at least 18 years of age, be in good physical health, and have a good mental disposition. This week can provide more information: <https://bit.ly/VandyLivingDonor>

If you can't donate, please share this information.

The 2023 Tusculmbia Civitan Christmas Ornament is Deshler High School, celebrating the school's centennial. It is now available for purchase at Fiddledee D! Gift Shop, 111 S. Main St., in Tusculmbia, at Helen Keller Library, 511 N. Main St. in Tusculmbia, and at financial institutions in the city. The cost is \$20 cash or check only (to Tusculmbia Civitan Club). Proceeds benefit local charities. For more information or to purchase by mail or Paypal: Tusculmbiacivitan@gmail.com. For more information, please call 256-710-1440.

The Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts is hosting the Quad Cities Photography Club Member Exhibition through December 28. The Quad Cities Photography Club was created in January 2022. Their mission is to provide an informal, friendly, and supportive environment for local photographers at all levels of experience and with interests in all types of photographic imagery. They share ideas and knowledge with one another through participation in meetings, guest lectures, and club excursions.

The Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts is open to the public Monday - Friday from 9-4 and on Sundays from 1-4. The art center is located at 217 E. Tuscaloosa St. Florence, AL and can be reached at 256-760-6379.

See NOTES... page 7

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Kettle...

Continued from Page 1

offer critical financial support to families and individuals in crisis year-round," said Captain Richard Watts, Commanding officer of The Salvation Army. "This assistance helps individuals and families stay in their homes, keep their utilities on, and feed their families, alongside our Christmas assistance initiatives."

For people experiencing poverty, the outlook is overwhelming. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey, 36.7% of survey respondents said they would likely face eviction in the next two months. The Consumer Price Index reports that food prices are up 4.3% from 2022, which adds to the 8% increases in '21 and '22. More and more Americans are barely making it to their next payday.

"Families are facing higher rent, food, and utility expenses and turning to us for help. Christmas should be a

time of joy, but for people experiencing poverty, it can be a season of depression and worry. Your donation will stay right here in this community, helping our most vulnerable," added Watts added.

Every dollar dropped into the red kettles supports a wide array of local services and programs, including food assistance, shelter

assistance, emergency financial assistance, youth programs, and more. Reaching this year's goal of \$150,000 can help meet the increased needs in the community.

You may visit SalvationArmyFlorence.org or call 256-764-4432 to donate or learn more about how you can support The Salvation Army this Christmas and beyond.

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<p>2013 Scion XB \$91/weekly</p>	<p>2012 Nissan Quest \$91/weekly</p>	<p>2016 Dodge Journey \$87/weekly</p>
<p>2015 Nissan Sentra \$119/weekly</p>	<p>2013 Nissan Sentra \$87/weekly</p>	<p>2014 Chevrolet Cruze \$105/weekly</p>

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Community Notes...

Continued from page 4

First Christian Church will host a Christmas Eve Service on Sunday night, 6-7pm. 700 North Wood Ave. in Florence. Everyone is welcome.

Disabled American Veterans - Veterans Serving Veterans. 1409 W. 11th St., Sheffield, 256-381-8229. Open Mon-Wed, 9am-1:30pm

Meets every fourth Tuesday of each month, December 26. Dinner at 6pm - Business at 7pm

Infants/Adults Clothes, and Shoes giveaway - Our winter clothes and coats are out. Thursday, January 4 from 8-10am at the Care Center, First Baptist Church, Killen

The Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts will present *This House Was Full of People: The Art of Mary Wallace Kirk* from January 7 - February 29. An opening reception will take place at 2pm on Sunday, January 7.

Mary Wallace Kirk (1889-1978) was a poet, author, and educator, as well as an artist. She was born in and resided in Tusculumbia nearly all her life. Her finely detailed renderings of the rural surroundings of her home captured fragments of time and preserved them in etchings, prints, watercolors, and sketches.

This exhibition comprises art and memorabilia on loan from private collectors throughout the community and the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library.

The Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts is located at 217 E. Tuscaloosa St. in Florence. It is open to the public Monday - Friday from 9-4 and Sunday from 1-4. There is no admission charge. Please call 256-760-6379 for more information.

Religious Abuse Support Group of the Shoals will meet the first and last Sundays of every month. Time and Location will vary. *About us:* we are a group dedicated to supporting individuals in our local community who have experienced abuse within religious institutions. Check our Facebook for additional

details. Contact us at <https://www.facebook.com/ragshoals/>

There is space HERE for YOUR EVENT, and plenty of eyes to read it. Email your information to editor@[CourierJournal.net](mailto:editor@CourierJournal.net).

Are you looking for a new church home? Weeden Heights Methodist Church is a small friendly church with Christians who love the Lord, welcome new members with open arms and no affiliation with larger denominations; an independent Church whose discipline is the Holy Bible. We answer to no organization or group. We answer to the Holy Lord and God.

Sunday Worship 11am. Wednesday Prayer Group 10am. Wednesday Bible Study 5pm. Weeden Heights Methodist Church, 128 N. Orleans, Florence.

The Florence Beautification Board presents *The Wildflower Project!* Through this project, you can contribute to the future of our community's sustainable growth. There are several tiers of involvement, Tier 1 - \$100; Tier 2 - \$200; Tier 3 - \$1,000 To donate, you may give checks to the Beautification Board City of Florence, PO Box 98, Florence, AL 35631. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Social Dance on Tuesday Nights, 6:30-8:45, at The Club (Florence Senior

Center), 450 Country Club Drive in Florence. Music from across the decades provided by The Browns. The Club is an alcohol, drug, smoke, and weapon-free facility. 256-760-6420.

Joints in Motion, chair exercise class, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at The Club (Florence Senior Center), 9:30am. No charge. BINGO Wednesdays 10:15am until our 11:30am lunch (w/ \$1 lunch donation)! If you are the age of 60 years or plus you can join

us for lunch and games. 256-760-6420.

The Club (Florence Senior Center) and Diamond Tours presents the Myrtle Beach Holiday Show Trip November 27-December 2, 2023. Call for more info or to book, Fran 256-760-6642. Trip fees are due now. There are 6 openings left. Departure on November 27 from The Club, 450 Country Club Drive in Florence.

See NOTES... page 9



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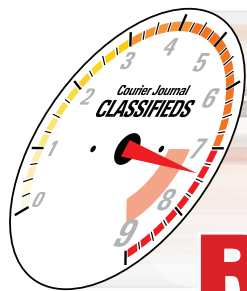
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Creekside BEST...

Continued from Page 1

that industry seeks in its workforce.

It was reported that several teams from this area competed including Brooks High, Brooks Middle, Covenant Christian, Creekside Tech, Rogers, Russellville, Starkville, and Trinitas. There were categories for robot competition, robot build, marketing presentation, and engineering notebook, and much more. This year's competition was centered around building a robot that could simulate surgery. Several awards were presented at the close of the competition in various individual and team categories. Creekside Tech team of 7th-12th grade homeschoolers had 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place wins in several categories which helped catapult them the First-Place Overall winner.

Months of planning were required for this competition and preparation and guidance from Creekside's coaches, Danny and Carol Scheele, helped them balance the

high and lows throughout the weekend.

"At TVA we understand that developing energy systems of the future requires strategic partnerships, programs that enrich the communities we serve, and investments in education and the development of a skilled workforce," said Jared Mitchem, regional vice president for the Tennessee Valley Authority. "UNA, BEST, and TVA share a common desire to engage and excite students about engineering, science, and technology as well as pursue careers in those fields."

This type of intense competition against other elite minds paves the way for future leaders in dozens of employment fields. Planning, implementing, failure, recovering, execution. The accomplishment by this team of homeschoolers, winning against some of the largest, most talented, and well-funded schools in the southeast, cannot be overstated.

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8:00am - 5:00pm

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Your Courier Journal is published for total saturation, direct-mail delivery every Wednesday to 51,892 Shoals area and surrounding homes. It is Alabama's Largest Weekly-Mailed Direct, and enjoys a larger circulation than all local subscriber based newspapers combined.

EDITORIAL POLICY: Your Courier Journal accepts a variety of news releases, photos, stories, Letters to the Editor and upcoming community, church or civic events for publication as space permits. Please submit all materials in written form to:

219 W. Tennessee St.
Florence, AL 35630
or email to:
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2012 CHEVROLET CRUZE	1G1PG5SC5C7361467	2008 HYUNDAI SONATA	5NPET46C18H392944
1989 CHEVROLET S-10	1GNCT18Z3K0197494	2006 INFINITI G35	JNKCV51E76M519830
2008 CHEVROLET HHR	3GNDA23D68S550288	2007 JEEP COMPASS	1J8FF47WX7D193022
2012 CHEVROLET CRUZE	1G1PG5SCXC7166044	2002 LINCOLN TOWNCAR	1LNHM82W42Y639246
2008 CHEVROLET TRAILBLAZER	1GNDS13S382152554	1997 MAZDA PICK-UP	4F4CR16X5VTM21061
2007 CHEVROLET TAHOE	1GNFK13027J274298	2002 MERCEDES BENZ	WDBJF70J12B421428
2007 CHEVROLET IMPALA	2G1WB58K979132951	2007 MERCURY MILAN	3MEHM07Z17R671875
2003 CHEVROLET SUBURBAN	3GNEC16Z83G252062	2017 MITSUBISHI MIRAGE	ML32A3HJXHH012581
2002 DODGE DAKOTA	1B7GL42X42S617853	2003 NISSAN FRONTIER	1N6ED29X73C401650
2011 DODGE DURANGO	1D4SD4GT1BC688471	2019 NISSAN VERSA	3N1CN7AP9KL875430
2003 FORD TAURUS	1FAFP53223A174124	1997 NISSAN MAXIMA	JN1CA21D3VT814398
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2008 FORD FOCUS	1FAHP35N18W264492	2004 NISSAN MURANO	JN8AZ08T54W226339
2009 FORD FOCUS	1FAHP35N89W250817	2013 NISSAN MURANO	JN8AZ1MU2DW204447
2002 FORD EXPLORER	1FMDU63K62UD02017	2007 GMC ACADIA	1GKER33797J170050
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2002 FORD ESCAPE	1FMYU03192KD81328	2004 PONTIAC GRANDAM	1G2NF52E84C135813
1995 FORD F-250	1FTHF25H2SLB78263	1996 PONTIAC GRANDAM	1G2NW12M8TC817430
2005 FORD F-150	1FTPW14595KC55413	2003 SATURN ION	1G8AF52F03Z207726
2003 FORD RANGER	1FTYR10U23PB45585	2008 TOYOTA AVALON	4T1BK36B08U287868
2007 FORD CROWN VIC	2FAFP71W37X130261	2008 TOYOTA SIENNA	5TDZK23C38S199542
2010 FORD FUSION	3FAHP0JA3AR368086	2007 TOYOTA YARIS	JTDBT923171098424
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DEADLINES: Issues Published Every Wednesday
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Community Notes...

Continued from page 7

Holiday Porches - The Tusculumbia
third annual "Parade of Holiday Porches" will be Dec. 8-31. The Parade of Porches is sponsored by the Colbert County Historical Landmarks Foundation. 256-710-5499.

Chloe's Fund Santa Paw Bake Sale
- The bake sale will be 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at the Florence-Lauderdale Animal Services, 3240 Roberson Road, Florence.

Ice Skating - Ice skating is at the Public Ice-Skating Rink, 2010 Avalon Ave., Muscle Shoals. Schedule: 3-8 p.m. Thursday and Friday; noon-8p.m. Saturday and Sunday through Jan. 14. Admission: \$12 and includes skate rental.

Director sought -- Zodiac Players
of the Shoals Community Theatre is accepting director applications for the 2024-25 season. If interested

in submitting a show proposal, please submit a brief proposal of the show along with application to direct and experience. Include concept of the show production. Submissions due by Jan. 1 and will be presented to the Zodiac Board for approval. Submit to: rjpettus@gmail.com, rpettus@shoalschamber.com.

Upcoming trips - The Club, Florence Parks and Recreation Department, will sponsor trips through 2024. Open to the public. Schedule for trips include Nashville Show Trip, April 15-17; Niagara Falls Trip, June 23-29; Mt. Rushmore and the Badlands, Aug. 17-25; Mackinac Island

Trip, Sept. 22-28; Pigeon Forge and Smokey Mountain Show Trip, Nov. 11-15. fdavis@florenceal.org, 256-760-6642

2 trips available - The Club will travel with a different travel company with these two 2024 trips. Must call the company directly for these adventures: Alaska Discovery Land and Cruise, May 29-June 9, and Magical Christmas Market Germany, Dec. 10-17, 2024. Call Collette at 1-800-340-5158.

The Club (Florence Senior Center) and Diamond Tours Diamonds in the Rough 2024 trip information. www.GroupTrips.com/TheClub

• Nashville Show Trip, April 15-17, #2089232, Double Occupancy Rate \$582, Single Rate \$672

• Niagara Falls Trip, June 23-29, #2101920, Double Occupancy Rate \$1187, Single Rate \$1421

• Mt. Rushmore and the Badlands, August 17-25, #2092162, Double Occupancy Rate \$1542, Single Rate \$1872

• Mackinac Island Trip, Sept 22-28, 2024, #209362, Double Occupancy Rate \$1086, Single Rate \$1335

• Pigeon Forge and Smokey Mountain Show Trip, November 11-15, 2024, #2076085, Double Occupancy Rate \$918, Single Rate \$1067

Personal Checks or Money Orders

made to Diamond Tours. Please no cash or Credit Cards. Call 256-760-6642 come by The Club to pay for your trips. 450 Country Club Drive, Florence fdavis@florenceal.org

THESE TWO TRIPS are scheduled with a different travel company. Call Collette at 800-340-5158 to sign up directly with them. You'll be traveling with us (The Club).

• Alaska Discovery Land and Cruise, May 29-June 9, 2024. 24 spaces available.

• Magical Christmas Market Germany, December 10-17, 2024. 21 spaces available.

See NOTES... page 27



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We want to thank you all for supporting and trusting us this past year.

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Idaho **Baking Potatoes** **89¢** Lb.

Shorts...

Continued from Page 2

FY23 Record Fundraising

FLORENCE – For the second consecutive year, the University of North Alabama has broken all previous fundraising records for FY23 that concluded September 30. The previous record of \$22,865,000 raised in FY22 has been exceeded by more than \$11.5 million dollars for a total raised of \$33,545,310.

“It has been an exceptional time at the University of North Alabama as we have far surpassed previous fundraising goals and set the stage for the launch of the largest comprehensive campaign in our history,” said UNA President Dr. Ken Kitts.

The Shine On, Gold Comprehensive Campaign for the University of North Alabama launched September 29 as part of the Alumni Celebration. During the event, the \$100 million campaign goal was announced, along with amounts to raise for designated priorities that include scholarship programs, student support centers, and academic and athletic facilities. In addition to these priorities, donors may continue to direct gifts to other projects and initiatives of their choosing.

For the third consecutive year, the

number of donors supporting UNA grew, and there were namings for the Sanders College of Business and Technology, the Florence Helen Nethery Duncan Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, CB&S Bank Arena, and Bank Independent Stadium. Additionally, the remarkable generosity of donors resulted in 40 new current-use funds and 37 endowments being established. The university is already at 61% of the \$100 million goal for the comprehensive campaign.

To learn more, to give, or to connect, log on to una.edu/shineongold.

NW Alabama Drought Nod

MONTGOMERY—Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, Rick Pate, recently announced that USDA Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack has designated 11 Alabama counties as primary natural disaster areas due to a recent drought.

The eleven primary Alabama counties included in the disaster designation are Butler, Cherokee, Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Madison, Marshall and Morgan. Last month, five counties received the national disaster designation for drought as well. Those counties are Baldwin,

Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile and Monroe. For a total of 16 counties in Alabama.

“We recognize that the drought conditions have hit Alabama farmers hard and hope this disaster relief from USDA will ease some of the financial burdens,” said Pate. “We encourage farmers to reach out to their local USDA offices for details about available funding.”

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor (see <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>), these counties suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of 1) D2 Drought-Severe for eight or more consecutive weeks or 2) D3 Drought-Extreme or D4 Drought-Exceptional.

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I LIVE IN A MIXED FAMILY. My son is an Apple iPhone person. His mom and dad are both Android people. As a result, our communication skills are sometimes a bit strained. Let me explain:

Apple uses its own proprietary iMessage messaging platform to exchange text, images, and video messages between fellow iPhone users. It has some cool features such as the ability to un-send a message, and confirmation that a message was delivered.

Android users primarily depend on "Short Message Service" (SMS) for text



Jim Fisher

Rich Communication Services

by "The Computer Skeptic"

messages and "Multimedia Message Service" (MMS) for photos and video. SMS and MMS are the original text messaging services that go back to the dark ages of flip phones. It hasn't changed much in that time but it works well enough between fellow Android devices.

iMessage works great between fellow iPhone users and SMS/MMS works well enough between Android users. But things get wonky when messages are sent between Android and iPhones. For example, videos sent between

iMessage and SMS/MMS are horribly pixelated. You can easily leave a group chat in iMessage. With Android, your phone will beep incessantly until everyone in the group has had their say.

So the bottom line is that Apple and Android simply don't communicate with each other as well as they could. That's where a new-ish technology called RCS comes in. RCS stands for "Rich Communication Services." It allows for universal Message reactions, end-to-end encryption that enhances privacy, a shared

set of emojis, and non-pixelated, high-definition pictures and videos.

Android manufacturers would love for Apple to drop iMessage in favor of RCS. According to Google (the makers of Android), this would allow more fluid communications between Android and Apple users. Of course, the other side is that it might provide one less reason for Apple users to use Apple. Apple is famous for promoting its products and services through exclusivity. Sometimes that makes Apple products and services superior, and sometimes it just makes them feel superior.

But in a surprise move last month, Apple announced that they would offer RCS chats on iPhones starting late next year. That means that those of us in

mixed families will finally be able to communicate with each other in fun, new ways. Those with new Android phones are probably already using RCS chat. But if you're unsure, simply search for "Google Messages" in the Play Store, install the app, and set it as your default messaging app. All your old messages will automatically be imported and, importantly, you'll soon have a much better experience texting with iPhone people and vice versa.

For questions or comments, Contact the Computer Skeptic, Jim Fisher at Jim@ExcelAL.com

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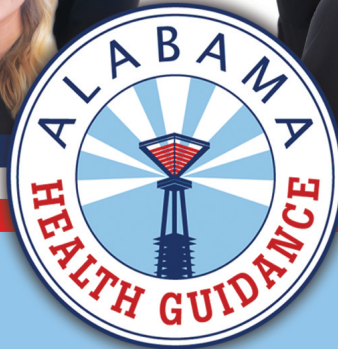
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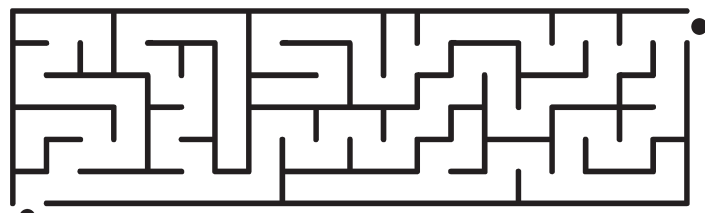
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Kids' Maze



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Even Exchange by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Canoe oar | ___ A ___ | Small pool of water | ___ U ___ |
| 2. Runner's pathway | ___ ___ K | Vanish without a ___ | ___ ___ E |
| 3. Judge's workplace | ___ ___ R ___ | Dracula's title | ___ ___ N ___ |
| 4. L.A. ballplayer | D ___ | Hotel guest | L ___ |
| 5. Make amends | ___ T ___ | By oneself | ___ L ___ |
| 6. On the ___ hand | ___ H ___ | Playful mammal | ___ T ___ |
| 7. Fast trot | ___ ___ P | 4 quarts | ___ ___ N |
| 8. Burst of light | ___ ___ H | Small canteen | ___ ___ K |
| 9. Fry lightly | ___ ___ T ___ | Gravy | ___ ___ C ___ |
| 10. Reykjavik's country | ___ C ___ | Land of shamrocks | ___ R ___ |

Puzzle Whirl

MINI SUDOKU

	1	2			
					4
			5		
	6			2	
5	2				
			6		

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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WORD LADDERS

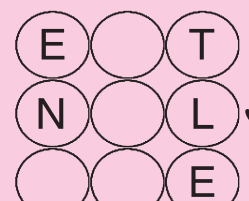
Can you go from SELLS to STARK in 6 words?
 Change one letter for each rung in the ladder.

SELLS

STARK

Answers on Page 38

WORD SPIRAL



Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.

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Commentary

Food, Visits, Love Mean Everything

Editor's Note: A few people mentioned they appreciated this column from last year and hoped to see it again. Still appropriate, just slightly revised.

It is easy and understandable for us to get absorbed in our own lives and the lives of our immediate family during the holiday season. The accelerated pace of the season can leave time for little else.

Little things like Christmas lights not working properly can be a source of frustration.

Others wish they had a strand of lights to hang or the opportunity to hang them.

We can easily lose sight of the bigger picture and forget the plight of others.

Inflation is squeezing the food and energy budgets for many of our friends and neighbors at much more than 4% (2023) and the 8% (2022) that officials would have us believe. Many of your friends and neighbors may be squeezed tighter than you

See **FOOD...** on Page 18

Comments do not necessarily represent those of the Courier Journal staff, its advertisers, or its readers.

In A Few Words



TOM MAGAZZU
Editor

Courier Journal

in the *Shoals*

THIS WEEK

December 20, 2023

Happening
THIS WEEK

Tuscumbia's Pride in Porches

Have you noticed the decorations in and around downtown?

TUSCUMBIA - A "Parade" of decorated porches is again bringing a spirit of joy and celebration to the town of Tuscumbia this Christmas season. Many residents within the historic neighborhoods surrounding downtown and bordered in each direction by the Commons are participating in the 3rd Annual Parade of Holiday Porches.

"The Parade of Porches seems to have become a tradition in Tuscumbia," said Sue Mangum, one of several organizers of the event. "We love the festive atmosphere these



efforts bring to our town."

"We are delighted to continue this fun new tradition again this year," said Lorie Johnson, president of the Colbert County Historical Landmarks Foundation, the organization which sponsors the event. "We are so thankful to all who participate and decorate their porches, making the season that much more beautiful and enchanting for each of us. We love highlighting these beautiful displays."

The Parade of Porches is running

now through New Year's Eve.

THE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PLAY, "The Inn Keeper" will be performed Saturday, December 23 at 3pm in the Coach Harvest Mitchell gymnasium (formerly Burrill Slater gym). Doors open at 2pm. 600 W. College St. Florence. The play is presented by Ms. Alta W. Morrow.

LIFESOUTH BLOODMOBILE
Thursday, December 21
Florence Square, 1- 6pm
Friday, December 22
Tractor Supply Company - Russellville, Noon - 6pm
Saturday, December 23
Austin's Shoes - Florence, 10am - 4pm
Wednesday, December 27
Workout Anytime - Florence, 8am - 2pm

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH will host a Christmas Eve Service on Sunday night, 6-7pm. 700 North Wood Ave. in Florence. Everyone is welcome.

THE LAUDERDALE COUNTY SOLID WASTE Dept will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. There will be no household or commercial garbage pickups those days. Household garbage collections will be delayed by 1 day on those weeks. The landfill will also be closed to the public on those holiday weekend Saturdays, Dec. 23 and 30.

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Your Courier Journal welcomes tastefully presented typed or neatly written letters to be published as space allows. Letters may refer to timely matters of local, state, or national interest or any topic of concern or interest. **Letters must include name, address and phone number for verification.** (Only name and town will be published.) Letters are subject to editing. Please limit letters to 400 words. All letters become the property of the Courier Journal and may not necessarily reflect opinions of the Courier Journal staff, its advertisers, or a majority of readers.

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Not One Dollar for Palestine or Israel

To the editor:

The Palestinian military killed over 1000 Israeli civilians, mostly by ground assaults on October 7. That was mass murder, and it cannot be

justified. It was pure evil.

Since October 7, the Israeli military has killed 15,000 Palestinian civilians, mostly by aerial bombardment. That was mass murder, and it cannot be justified. It was pure evil.

When it comes to the Israeli/Palestine conflict, many say that we should accept and embrace the lesser of two evils.

I say that we should do what the good book says, that we must reject and renounce all evil. Not one dollar for Palestine; not one dollar for Israel.

William Davis
Muscle Shoals

See **LETTERS...** on Page 30

A BIG seasonal Thank You" to our letter writers and readers

Greetings of the Season

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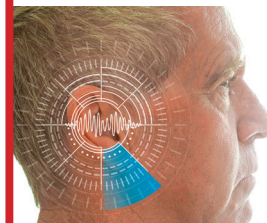
December 13 winner is **Vicky Purser of Killen**

who correctly guessed **"Grace Episcopal Church in Sheffield"**

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Child Safety at Christmas

Don Keenan is an author, a trial lawyer and a child safety advocate. Joel and I have met Don and we both admire him. Don tirelessly works for child safety. He has conducted national safety projects such as the Playground Safety Project and Toy Safety. He wrote a book called 365 Ways To Keep Kids Safe.

Emergency room doctors want people to avoid certain toys that bring children to the emergency room. Toy related injuries accounted for over 145,000 emergency room visits for children ages 12 and younger in 2022 according to data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Doctors suggest avoiding toys with magnets and button batteries. They can be choking hazards but can also cause severe internal damage. The most serious issues typically occur in the throat where they can get stuck and cause serious burns. Magnets can cause constrictions in the bowels.

Water beads, brightly colored beads that grow large. Young children may put the beads in their ears, nostrils or worse, their mouth. When swallowed, the beads can continue to absorb water and grow in the intestinal tract leading to blockages and life-threatening injuries.

ER doctors caution against scooters and hoverboards for children. Those can lead to broken bones which can usually be reset in the emergency room but may require surgery in more serious cases.

Of course, doctors advise against rocket launchers, BB guns and slingshots. Obviously, we are in the south and every kid needs to learn how to shoot a Daisy Red Ryder BB gun, but with proper supervision. (But don't shoot your eye out.)

From everyone at McCutcheon & Hamner have a Merry Christmas!

Please send the questions to: "Ask the Attorney," P. O. Box 38, Florence, Alabama 35631 or visit our website at: www.mhatty.com



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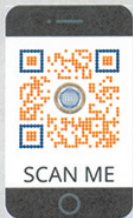
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CLEANER CARPETS

I like to spot clean my carpets before holiday entertaining. I've found an easy way to get the job done. Using the old steam iron my mom gave me, I set it on steam. I don't touch the carpet. Instead, I just spray some steam on the stain. Then I blot with a white towel and most stains disappear! For more stubborn stains (like those that have been on the carpet for a while), I spritz some white vinegar on the stain and blot it. *Nadine*

MORE KITCHEN STORAGE SPACE

The best way to double (or triple) your kitchen storage space is to use the "dead space" that's already there. In the kitchen, I've added cup hooks to the undersides of the cabinets and those handy, expandable shelves to give myself two surfaces instead of one. All of my dish and pantry storage is double-decker. Another kitchen space saver is to buy drinking glasses that stack. Drawer dividers organize utensils most efficiently. If you have a broom closet somewhere (even if it isn't in the kitchen), consider adding shelves to it to make pantry storage. I keep overflow canned goods and staples in a plastic bin in my basement. *Glenda*

BUILDING A BUSINESS CASUAL WARDROBE

A good way to build a basic "business casual" wardrobe is to stick to one neutral color of slacks or skirts and then add the visual interest with a few tops and a couple of jackets or cardigans. The same basic black pencil skirt or slacks looks totally different when worn with various blouses. Pairing them with a finishing piece (maybe a jacket or cardigan) gives you even more variety and makes you seem more put-together. Don't forget accessories. One bag and one good pair of shoes in your neutral color and a few pieces of jewelry will suffice. Spend your money on quality bottoms, which

take the most wear and tear, and save on the tops. Search out sales, clearance, consignment shops, and thrift shops. With just a couple of bottoms, five tops, and a couple of jackets, along with a few accessories, you have a good, basic wardrobe that you can always build on later. *Diva*

ELIMINATING REFRIGERATOR ODORS

My old boss saved a dorm-sized fridge from being thrown out by the mechanics next door. The fridge had been sitting unplugged with old food in it for a long time. My boss simply took a bottle of vanilla extract (not imitation) and poured it all over the interior. He plugged it in, left it for a day, and then wiped it out with more vanilla. We have used the fridge for years since. *Sarah in KY*

KICKING UP GROUND MEATS

I like using ground turkey in lieu of ground beef. I have found if you knead spices into the ground turkey the night before you plan to cook it, the flavor will be greatly improved. I frequently spice ground turkey this way for spaghetti and chili dishes. For spaghetti, I work Italian seasoning, garlic, and onion powder throughout the meat, and for chili, I use chili powder, garlic, and onion powder. I use a lot of spices, and my guests seldom know the meat is turkey! The little extra time it takes is definitely worth it. *HF*

AVOIDING FOOD WASTE

The best way to cash in on bargains and stocking up is to properly store food. The easiest rule to remember is "first in, first used." That means you are always using the oldest items first, which should keep you within expiration dates. Canned goods, dry pasta mixes, baking goods, paper products and similar items can be stored in a pantry or shelf. Meat, dairy, bread, etc. should be frozen until

used. Most meat is good even after the expiration date, as long as it is frozen and still appears "pink" or fresh.

It is easy to throw your items in the freezer or pantry when you get back from the store and then grab the nearest item for supper. But if you consistently rotate your stock so that you are using the oldest items first, you should not have to worry about expiration dates. *Shaunna*

EASY CLOTH DIAPERS?

The reason most people don't use cloth diapers is probably not the folding (which some consider therapeutic) or even the washing, but the "poop" part might turn them off. As I recall, a person can purchase "diaper liners." My mother-in-law advised me to use raggedy old sheets (try your own closet first and then look at garage sales, etc.). Wash them in bleach and rinse twice before using. Then cut pieces, one layer thick, to put inside the diapers. If the "liners" just get wet, wash and reuse them. When they get poopy, toss them like a "disposable diaper." It's really great advice! *Linda*

THRIFTY FLAVORED COFFEES

I used to work at a coffee shop before I met my husband, and I had become very used to great flavored coffees for free or almost free. But now that we are married and I stay home with our four-month-old baby, we can't afford them very often. I have figured out that my husband's favorite (Vanilla Cappuccino) is easily made using vanilla extract. I use one shot of espresso, one cup of milk (heated), two tablespoons of sugar, and 1/8 teaspoon of vanilla. For coffees, I use the opposite proportions of the coffee and creamer (1 cup of coffee and 1 oz. creamer). There are also many other extracts in the baking aisle to try. For any of the other extracts, I suggest purchasing an inexpensive

medicine dropper and starting with five drops in a glass. The amount you use will depend on your tastes and the strength of the oil. Do not assume they are all the same strength. Some have a little more aroma and flavoring ability than others do. I ended up pouring a few overdone cups down the sink. Hope you find a few new favorites this way. *Mandy D.*

REPLACING EXPENSIVE CANNED DOG FOOD

I buy reduced meat at stores and cook it in a pressure cooker along with a sweet potato. Then I mash the sweet potato, cut the meat up into smaller pieces, and keep it in a plastic container in the refrigerator for convenient feeding. The dogs love it and eat well. I know what's in their food. I add a crushed dog vitamin to the mix for each dog. Their coats are shiny, and the dogs are healthy and happy. Their vet approves. The dogs always have a bowl of commercial dry dog food available as they like crunchy food for snacks. I save a bunch of money by buying and preparing their food as canned dog food's pricing keeps escalating. It takes five minutes in the pressure cooker to feed the two dogs for an entire week, so that's not much time at all. My dogs are not getting animal by-products, added wheat, or any of the other fillers usually used in canned food. My dogs are like family. I feed them as well as my family, but very economically. *Saga*

PARTY BEVERAGES

Serve one signature alcoholic mixed drink or one type of wine punch and one type of non-alcoholic fruit punch instead of many different drink choices at your party. Add coffee, tea, and water to round out your drink selections. This will save you both money and time. *Janet H.*

WRAPPING GIFT CARDS

I'm giving gift cards for Christmas and plan on "wrapping" them in novelty socks for my teenage granddaughters. I'll just fold the socks up and wrap a ribbon around them, shaping them into a box around the gift card. This can be done with a man's handkerchief or bandanna for a boy. *Debbie*

See DOLLAR... page 31

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Besides being a distinguished geographer, "Bill" is an accomplished Tang Soo Do martial arts teacher and Grandmaster.

~ Courtesy David Curott ~ author of Historical Markers & other "Signs of the Past"

Commentary
Food...

Continued from Page 14

realize; tighter than they want to let on. Some may have lost their homes, unexpectedly buried loved ones, or experienced financial devastation from medical expenses, job loss, weather disasters, or fire. Donate to your local Food Bank, Help Center, Salvation Army, Shoals Dreamcenter (previously known as Loaves and Fishes). Each helps to provide groceries to under-resourced families in the Shoals area. That list is ever-growing. Some people are in a nursing home, may have recently lost a long-time spouse or be otherwise secluded or separated from familiar surroundings and loved ones for the first time. They may never again see a bustling shopping center or a big family event. Some may have a terminal disease, and this could be their last Christmas. A random visit during the holidays and the months after can go a long way in lifting the spirits of older people. For that matter, a box full of personal or hygiene products could be the best present some nursing home residents will receive, and the most needed. You may be one of those who can't make the full month, no matter the stipends or how wisely you grocery shop. Calling 2-1-1 is a good place to start. That free and confidential information and referral hotline operated through the United Way connects people to essential health, crisis care, and human services 24 hours a day, seven days a week online and over the phone. They can make sure you find all the optional resources that are available to you. Many of us focus more intently on Christ during this season than we do at other times. He deserves all the focus we can devote at any point. Christ primarily came to save. However, His dying on the cross, His burial, and resurrection weren't the only points of significance. He came to show us how to live life through faith, to love, give, forgive, and be merciful. He gave us examples of how we should treat others - as we would hope to be treated, and how to

always speak the truth in a loving manner. After the holidays, it is easy to forget about the plights of others with whom we may not regularly interact. However, true Christmas Spirit knows all seasons. We can always give or mail an anonymous grocery gift card to someone who we know can use it, or we can pay on someone's utility bill. Give your elderly neighbor a ride to the store on occasion if they don't drive and don't have easily accessible transportation. When that mother of three in the grocery line comes up a little short with her debit card, cover those last few items for her. Take a neighbor's trash can back up the driveway after the garbage truck runs. Tip that hardworking restaurant server a little more generously when you can. Pick up the tab for the drive-thru customer behind you in line. Remember to donate good used items to The Blue Door, St. Vincent DePaul, or another worthy local charity that enriches the lives of others. Some of you may have great suggestions or examples for us as well. We should always look for any opportunity that lifts someone else physically, mentally, or spiritually. We're all made richer for it.

Refugee or a Survivor

One other point of accuracy should be addressed. It has to do with the rising popularity of considering Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to be refugees. It is also championed on popular television and digital commercial series, entitled He Gets Us. Like so many things these days, it is a politically/socially based narrative. However, outside of the political realm, the accuracy needs to be addressed. Like so much in today's culture, the situation of Jesus' family running for a better life plays on our emotions. The portrayal is of two young parents grabbing their toddler and whatever they can carry on their backs and fleeing the country, because there was no safety for them in their homeland,

so the only option was seeking foreign soil. King Herod ordering all the male children 2 years old or younger to be killed, meant Mary and Joseph had to distance themselves from danger. They fled to Egypt. Therefore, they claim that Jesus was a refugee. Jesus was neither an immigrant, nor a refugee as the term applies today. Bethlehem and Egypt were not ruled in separate manners. Both were part of the Roman Empire as was that entire part of the world at the time. It was all under Roman law. King Herod simply ruled over the region of Judea where Bethlehem was located. I'm sure there were anxious moments as Joseph, Mary, and Jesus made the 200+ mile trek to Egypt, ending far outside the bounds of Herod's search. However, they soon returned from Egypt to Nazareth - after Herod's death - when Jesus was still very young. Refugees find safety in another country because they don't or they can't return home. That was not the case here. The refugee aspect is culturally sensitive to us today, so we can easily drop the face of a young Jesus into one of the lost stares that we see crammed tightly at our southern border. That way, Jesus' plight may generate a parallel empathy for all those in that predicament. However, His family's objective was not to flee for a better life or greater opportunity. They always hoped to return.

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DAVE Says

by DAVE RAMSEY

“STUFF” JUST DOESN'T DO IT

Most families have money problems at some point. And when I was a little kid, our family went through tough financial times just like everyone else. A job layoff can take your breath away. An illness can leave you completely broke. Little kids in the house may not know exactly what's going on, but there's stress in the air. They're told, "Times are tough, so we can't go on vacation this year," or "We have to move," or "Christmas is going to be slim."

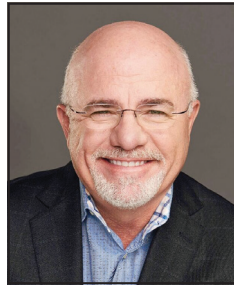
My parents were in the real estate business and were building homes. Then, the economy went sideways and left them in a mess. Outside forces brought trouble to our house. We never went without food, shelter, or anything else, but the air changed in our

home. I always thought money would solve the problem, so I vowed that one day I would become a millionaire. I doubt I even knew what that meant, but in my head, I thought it meant money would never be a problem.

Believe it or not, I'm a spender by nature. I've always enjoyed spending money. Of course, when I was young and immature, that idea of spending for fun led me into the trap of thinking if I got enough Stuff, I would be happy. I would've never admitted it out loud, but there was also the stupid idea deep down that if I got enough Stuff, I would be happy and safe, or if I got the right Stuff, people would be impressed.

With that driving force, I went about the business of earning piles of money so I could spend piles of money. But a funny thing happened. The Stuff became . . . unsatisfying. There was never completion or peace after a purchase, only the need to buy more.

Stuff just doesn't do it. By the time I was 26, I



was a millionaire making \$250,000 a year. Not long after that, due to some really dumb business decisions, I went broke and lost everything. That was 30 years ago.

I also met God during this time, who did bring me peace and completion. I finally realized I was pouring Stuff down a spiritual hole, and Stuff is not designed to fill that hole. No matter how many cars I bought, or fancy dinners I ate, or cool places I traveled to, there was always something still missing.

During the following decades, we slowly began re-building wealth . . . this time while always giving. In the process, we discovered there's much more joy in giving than in Stuff. If you haven't experienced the joy of giving, there's no better time to start than during the holiday season. Who knows? It might just be the encouragement you need to become a giver all year long.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national bestselling author, personal finance

expert and host of *The Ramsey Show*. He has appeared on *Good Morning America*, *CBS This Morning*, *Today*, *Fox News*, *CNN*, *Fox Business* and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions.

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Soap Opera Preview

EDITOR'S NOTE: "The Young and the Restless" was not available at press time.

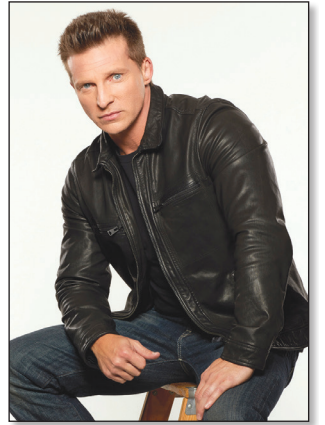
DAYS OF OUR LIVES Chad and Stephanie officially called it quits. Paulina hid her increasingly growing

fatigue from Chanel. Harris announced that they had a lead on the kidnapper, just as Sloan was about to confess. EJ wanted to take the baby back after finding out that Sloan was careless. Stephanie told Harris that she didn't remember anything about the

previous night other than waking up in his bed. Brady almost caught Theresa talking with Konstantin. Stefan told Ava that Clyde had Gabi physically hurt at the prison. Chad had an altercation with Stefan. Paulina continued to keep her health problems a secret. Maggie had trouble coping with the loss of Victor during the holiday season. Andrew accused Theresa of being Victoria's kidnapper. Chanel urged Paulina to go to the hospital. *Wait to See: Doug and Julie reminisce about past Christmases. Tate erupts over Brady and*

Theresa's bickering. Maggie shocks everyone by bringing Konstantin to the party. **GENERAL HOSPITAL** Kristina's feelings for Blaze continued to grow. Molly and TJ received bad news. Trina stood up to Esme. Dante and Anna made a discovery. Brook Lynn and Chase got into the holiday spirit. Anna and Dante found themselves in a dangerous situation. Sonny shut down Cyrus. Carly was in deep trouble. Nina asked Michael for help. Lucy shared her frustrations with Kevin. Stella and Marshall grew closer. Aiden and Elizabeth had a heart-to-

heart. Dex grew concerned about Adam's behavior. Anna and Valentin came to a realization. Laura and Kevin fretted about Charlotte. Lois and Tracy went head-to-head. Michael attempted to placate Ned. Anna turned to Kevin for help. Spinelli put Cody on notice. Dante updated Sonny on the shooter. Friends and family gathered at the hospital for the reading of "A Visit From St. Nicholas." *Wait to See: Kristina makes a case to Molly and TJ. Jordan puts Cyrus on notice. Esme extends a holiday gesture to Spencer.*



Steve Burton is "Harris" on "Days of Our Lives."

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S. Alabama at E. Michigan

FENWAY BOWL

SMU at Boston College

MILITARY BOWL

Virginia Tech at Tulane

PINSTRIP BOWL

Rutgers at Miami

DUKE'S MAYO BOWL

N. Carolina at W. Virginia

POP-TARTS BOWL

NC State at Kansas

WK 17 Saturday December 23

CHECK BOX BESIDE EACH WINNING TEAM
DEADLINE: FRIDAY, 5PM DEC. 22

MAIL-IN ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY FRIDAY (vs: games at neutral location)

TIE BREAKER
Write Exact Score Below



name _____

address _____ city _____ state _____ zip _____

day phone _____ evening phone _____

WEEK 15 WINNER: OFF WEEK - NO WINNER

Enter online at www.courierjournal.net
or Mail or deliver your entry to: **Courier Journal Gameday Scorecard**
219 W. Tennessee St., Florence, AL 35630 - Fax to: 256-760-9618
Winners will be listed online Tuesday afternoon and in the FOLLOWING week's Courier Journal.

RULES: You can only enter for yourself, not other people. Only one entry per person per week. Only one winner per week. Winners must present a photo I.D. when picking up their gift certificate(s). Check the box beside the appropriate picks for the first 11 games, then write in the exact score of the tie-breaker game and alternate game. Person with the most correct picks receives a \$50 Gift Card from 306 Barbecue in Florence. No change will be returned for any unused portion of the certificate. Gratuity is not included. In event of a tie, the tie-breaker score will be utilized. Otherwise, it will not be considered. Closest tie-breaker score wins. Total points will be next tie-breaking procedure, and a random drawing of finalists will be used to determine the winner if they are still tied after the tie-breaking procedure. ALTERNATE GAMES will only be used in cases of late postponements or forfeits, games which will then be excluded from consideration. Person with the winning card for the week, who also picks every game correctly including tie-breaker, will also win \$50 from the Courier Journal and another \$50 306 Barbecue Gift Card. Judges decision is final. Mailed entries must be post-marked by deadline day. Hand-delivered, faxed or on-line entries must be submitted by exact time of deadline stated above. NO EXCEPTIONS. Winner is posted on website each Tuesday afternoon and in the paper delayed by one week. Employees and family of Courier Journal and Game Day Scorecard sponsors are ineligible to win. NOTE: If you're faxing, first make a CLEAN COPY, then FAX THAT COPY. NEWSPRINT DOES NOT REPRODUCE CLEARLY ON A FAX. WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ILLEGIBLE COPIES.



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Smithfield

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4/\$5

10-12 Ct. Select Varieties Sister Schubert Rolls

2/\$6

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USE 1X IN A SINGLE TRANSACTION

SALE PRICE WITHOUT DIGITAL COUPON 2/57

23.5-36 Oz. Select Varieties Edwards Pies

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USE 5X IN A SINGLE TRANSACTION

SALE PRICE WITHOUT DIGITAL COUPON \$4.99

15 Lb. Bag Russet Potatoes **6.99 EA**

14.5-15 Oz. Select Varieties Libby's Vegetables **39¢**

WITH \$1.00 OFF 2 DIGITAL COUPON

USE 5X IN A SINGLE TRANSACTION

SALE PRICE WITHOUT DIGITAL COUPON 89¢

12-24 Oz. Select Varieties Bob Evans Side Dishes **2.99**

TABLE BUSTERS

4 Lb. Bag Navel Oranges **4.99**

12-16 Oz. Select Varieties Pillsbury Frosting **1.69**

15-16.25 Oz. Select Varieties Pillsbury Cake Mix **79¢**

WITH 20¢ OFF 1 DIGITAL COUPON

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SALE PRICE WITHOUT DIGITAL COUPON 99¢

Mix & Match

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5 TIPS FOR Safe Holiday Travel

(Family Features) The holiday season can be stressful enough before adding travel to the mix. Coordinating ground or air travel and planning accommodations, even if you're simply staying with loved ones, is often just the beginning and health and safety concerns can fall by the wayside.

For example, the highest incidence rate of cardiac mortality for the entire year occurs between Christmas and New Year's Day, according to the American Heart Association, and more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur each year in the United States.

If you're among the 62% of Americans who plan to travel this holiday season, according to research conducted by IPX1031, consider these tips to protect your health and safety.

Plan Ahead

Proper planning can help ensure you're prepared to handle any unexpected challenges or delays when you depart. Check the weather before heading out - including at your destination - and travel around any anticipated storms. Leave early to account for potentially heavy traffic and plot your path in advance to ensure you're aware of any road closures or construction, which can allow you to find alternate routes, if necessary, rather than trying to adjust on the fly.

Be Up-To-Date on Vaccines

Routine vaccinations can help protect you from infectious diseases that can be easily spread when around a large group of people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the seasonal flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older. Other vaccines can help protect not only your health, but your loved ones as well.

Learn CPR

Only about 40% of people who suffer from cardiac arrest receive cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, from a bystander, according to the American Heart Association. However, immediate CPR can double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival.

Just in time for the holiday season, revamped Hands-Only CPR training kiosks, which provide an overview of Hands-Only CPR followed by a practice session and a 30-second test, are available in airports, hospitals and other locations around the country. With the help of a practice mannequin, the kiosks give feedback about the depth and rate of compression, as well as proper hand placement - factors that influence the effectiveness of CPR - and teaches the two simple steps:

1. Call 911
2. Push hard and fast in the center of the chest of the individual

experiencing cardiac arrest until help arrives

Many of the Hands-Only CPR kiosks, as well as the Hands-Only CPR campaign, are supported by Elevance Health Foundation. To find a kiosk along your travel path, visit heart.org/handsonlycpr.

Prepare Your Vehicle

Car trouble is a common culprit during holiday travel. To help avoid potential issues, have your vehicle checked before embarking on an extended trip. Check tires, the battery, headlights, windshield wipers and any other parts that may be adversely impacted by winter weather. Also ensure your vehicle is equipped with essentials like a spare tire or inflation kit, jack, jumper cables, blankets, a first aid kit and a flashlight in case of an emergency.

Pack a Health Kit

If you take prescription or over-the-counter medications, it may be difficult to quickly get a refill at your destination, so be sure to pack enough to last your entire trip, plus extras in case you encounter any travel delays. It may also be helpful to pack other essentials including hand sanitizer, a first-aid kit, cold medicine, aspirin and your health insurance card in case of any unexpected injuries or illnesses while on the road.

Source: American Heart Association

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Community Notes...

Continued from page 9

Florence Parks and Recreation/The Club/Florence Senior Center, hosts a variety of activities for adults throughout the week. Chair exercise classes, line dancing, Square dancing, social dancing, BINGO, \$1 lunch, Rummy, Rummy cubes, Rook, Mexican Train & Chicken Foot Dominoes. 9am-3:30pm. 450 Country Club Drive in Florence. Group Travel

is available for the community. Call for specifics. 256-760-6420.

LifeSouth is in emergency need for blood donors. This year continues to be difficult for LifeSouth and blood centers across the country with the impact of the pandemic causing a decrease in blood donations, while the need to help patients

in local hospitals continues to increase.

Regular blood donors who have not given recently and first-time donors can make a major impact by donating. One donation can save up to three lives.

Donate at the Center, 307 Veterans Drive, Florence. Schedule an appointment, 256-765-7038. www.lifesouth.org. The hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9am-5pm; Tuesday and Thursday 9am-7pm; Saturday 9am-3pm; Sunday 1-5pm.

To find a donor center or mobile blood drive near you, visit lifesouth.org or call 888-795-2707. Blood donors must be at

least 17 or 16 with parental permission, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in good health. A photo ID is required. LifeSouth donors receive a complimentary cholesterol screening with each donation.

Public Notice and Opportunity to Comment - The Lauderdale County School System is attempting to locate any child with disabilities, ages 0-21, who may be living in the Lauderdale County School District and who are not currently in a school program.

Anyone knowing of a child, who may be in need of Special Services, is asked

to contact Mrs. Kim Meeks, Director of Special Education at 256-760-1324 between the hours of 8am and 4pm, Monday-Friday. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

The Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group meets at the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library at 2pm every 3rd Monday of each month. All caregivers are welcome. We all need encouragement.

A newly formed Colbert County Republican Women's Club meets every third Wednesday at noon at the

Helen Keller Library in Tuscumbia. Visitors welcome. For further information contact Mary Baschab Haslacker at 251-234-0077.

Free! Fun! Stretch and Tone Exercise class. Tuesday and Thursday 9-10am. Killen Senior Center, 227 J.C. Mauldin Hwy, Killen, 256-757-1792.

Food Pantry at North Wood Methodist Church, North Florence. Call for appointment, 256-764-2111

See NOTES... page 34

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Medicare Minute

"Medicare Changes for 2024"

January 1st of each year is a time that many make resolutions to make changes in their lives. But it's also a time that Medicare makes changes for the upcoming year. In 2024 there are a couple of changes in Medicare that everyone should know.


The first is the Part B premium. Those of you who started Medicare during or prior to 2023 may see a change in your Part B premium for 2024. Early indications are that your Part B premium may go down. For those who are starting Part B in 2024 the premium will be \$164.90 per month. This amount could be higher for people making more than \$94,000 per year.

The Part A deductible is also changing in 2024. The Part A deductible in 2023 was \$1,600 per benefit period. In 2024 the Part A deductible will be \$1,632 per benefit period. Remember, the Part A deductible is not an annual deductible and can hit you more than once in a calendar year. The Part B deductible will be \$240 in 2024. The Part B deductible is an annual deductible.


The third change to be aware of is the amount you and your drug plan will have to pay before you reach the coverage gap or "donut hole". In 2023 that amount was \$4,660. The amount in 2024 is \$5,030. This is a good thing for those affected because it means your plan can pay more before you reach the gap.

If you are affected by any of these changes in 2024 and do not understand them just contact us at the number below and we will be glad to go over them with you. For those of you going on Medicare in 2024 you can call our office and sign up for one of our free Medicare Education classes. They are taught each month and will explain all the above for you.

If you have any questions about this or any other aspect of Medicare feel free to call us at 256-648-5710 or visit our office at 885 Florence Blvd. Alabama Health Guidance is an independent insurance agency and does not represent Medicare or any other government agency.



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Savvy SENIOR

How an Incentive Trust Can Influence Your Heirs

Dear Savvy Senior,

What can you tell me about creating an incentive trust? I have an adult son and daughter that are both financially inept. Before I die, I want to put some type of requirements in place that they will need to follow in order to receive their portion of my estate.

Frustrated Father

Dear Frustrated,

If you want to influence your heirs even after you're gone, an incentive trust is definitely an option to consider, but be careful how you construct it because it can cause unintended, unfair consequences. Here's how it works, along with some tips to help you create one.

Incentive Trusts Basics

An incentive trust is an estate-planning tool designed to help encourage your heirs in a direction you desire when you're no longer around.

With an incentive trust, some or all of your assets are passed to your trust when you die rather than directly to your heirs. Your trustee is empowered to distribute funds from the trust only if and when your beneficiaries do whatever it is you have specified in the trust.

For example, an incentive trust might encourage a beneficiary to graduate from college, enter a particular profession, get married or even have children. They could also reward beneficiaries who do charitable work or supplement the incomes of those who choose low paying, yet meaningful careers like teaching or social work. Or they could penalize beneficiaries who don't work by cutting off or decreasing distributions or placing restrictions on heirs with addictions by requiring that payments go directly to rehab centers.

But be aware that these types of trusts can also have drawbacks. A poorly constructed incentive trust can have a high risk of unintended consequences. For example, if your trust provides a financial incentive for your children to be employed full-time, but one of them gets sick or seriously injured in a car accident and can't work, they would be punished unfairly.

You also need to know that incentive trusts aren't cheap. You can expect to pay an attorney \$2,500 to \$5,000 to draft one.

There are also legal limits on what you can do with an incentive trust. While state laws vary, incentive trusts that encourage a beneficiary to join or leave a particular religion, or leave a spouse or not marry at all, can be challenged in court and possibly struck down.

How to Create One

To create a solid incentive trust that accomplishes what you envision, you need to hire an estate-planning attorney who will include precise instructions that clearly spells out your wishes. You'll also want to include language granting your trustee the right to use his or her discretion and that the trustee's decisions should be final and binding.

This allows your trustee to make common sense rulings, which will reduce or eliminate the chances of unintended and unfair consequences. It also makes it very difficult for beneficiaries to successfully challenge the trust or trustee in court. When a trust grants final decision-making authority to its trustee, it becomes almost impossible for beneficiaries to successfully argue that this trustee is not correctly implementing the trust's terms.

The key is to select a trustee who's smart enough to interpret your intent and has sufficient backbone to stand up to beneficiaries when necessary. You also need to select a successor trustee too if your first choice can no longer serve. Fees paid to a trustee vary widely depending on the state's fee schedules, the size and complexity of the trust, and conditions laid out in the trust.

To find an experienced attorney in your area to help you create an incentive trust, see the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (naela.org) and the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (actec.org).

Send your senior questions to:

Savvy Senior,
P.O. Box 5443,
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Jim Miller is a contributor to the
NBC Today show and author of
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Letters...

Continued from Page 14

Know God Loves You

Editor:

To all who read this and find it difficult to find joy in the holiday season, know this; God loves you.

Maybe you are estranged from your family members. That can be tough. Maybe you're not doing so good financially and are feeling that stress. Maybe you can only foresee another Christmas going by without a friend in the world who cares if you even wake up tomorrow. No visits. No cheer. No hope. Perhaps your health has declined sharply, and even with a lot of family support you still feel desperate and empty inside. Maybe you're quite aged, sad from losing so many friends and loved ones through the years, and you can't help but wonder if you'll even see another Christmas. You might also be putting on a facade of well-being, embarrassed by crushing debt, and you don't want others knowing about it. Some might very well be suffering from physical or mental challenges.

The vagaries of life itself can at times overwhelm a person. Whether it's a chronic condition or a temporary setback, please know this: you are as loved as any man, woman, or child on earth. Maybe not by your fellow man, but you are loved by God above.

We should always try to carve out any niches of kindnesses we can provide, even just a kind word for another person, or even an animal. It'll come back to us one way or another. God bless all of you who, for whatever reason, find it hard to enjoy the holidays.

Wayne South
 Florence

Didn't Wait to Follow

Editor:

I have found the family tree of Abraham to be very interesting. Lots of

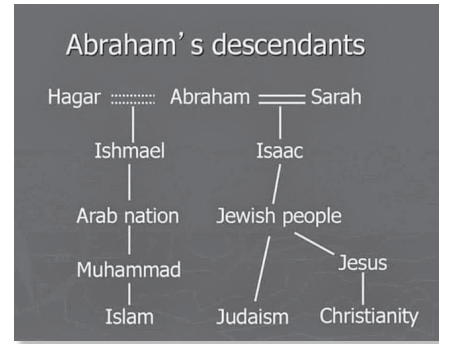
application can be drawn from this.

Today, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity can represent Gaza Strip and Lebanon, the Jewish nation, and United States. These three are now involved in conflict in the Middle East. All three have a common ancestry from Abraham.

However, a second application for me is getting ahead of God's plan as described in Genesis 21:1-21.

Even though both were beyond childbearing age in their 90's, God promised Sarah and Abraham a son who would be the father of the Jewish nation. When the child didn't come quickly, Sarah suggested that Abraham have a child with Hagar, her hand maiden. Hagar had a baby named Ishmael. Later, as God had promised, Sarah conceived and had a baby named Isaac.

Abraham ended up taking Hagar and Ishmael out into the desert to separate them from the Jewish nation. There have been conflicts now for centuries between the



descendants of Isaac and Ishmael, Judaism and Islam.

I see this as not waiting on God's promise and trying to alter God's plan. It can be very difficult to follow God's plan because of being impatient.

We see conflict in the Middle East today because of Abraham and Sarah's impatience.

When God gives you direction, follow it.

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Continued from Page 17

THE WIDE WORLD OF SAVINGS

I like to shop the "ethnic" section of my local grocery store. I find that many of the products are cheaper than the name brand versions. And, it's not just things like canned soups and veggies. Also, this includes soaps and laundry detergent. Check out the ethnic section and see what savings you can find. *Kristina*

TREE TOO BIG?

My three-year-old child and I live in a one-bedroom apartment. It's not real small, but a Christmas tree makes it seem tiny. Last year, when I went to buy a tree, I looked for one that was bare on one side. I got a good deal on it. The bare side goes against the wall and it doesn't take nearly as much space as a fuller tree. This solves two problems at once. *Charly*

DOUBLY SNUG

I live in Michigan where we have very cold winters. I had been using flannel sheets and a comforter, but that didn't allow me to adjust the thermostat as low as I would have

liked at night. I use fleece throws for wrapping up in on the sofa, and it keeps my back warm while sitting. I decided to try it for sleeping. I took a large fleece throw and used a safety pin in each corner to attach it to the fitted bed sheet. I still use the comforter, but I'm staying much warmer and sleeping much more comfortably. *Teri T.*

PREVENTING DOG CHEWING

Star is my dog. I love her, but she's a chewer and has bitten through her leash on more than one occasion. I had applied a liquid to prevent her from biting the leash, but it was expensive. I tried rubbing white vinegar on it. Star hated it! She no longer bites the leash. I've found that I need to reapply it every few days, but vinegar is cheap, so it's still a great solution. *Lia*

ORGANIC STAIN REMOVAL

If you have clothing that's stained from an organic source (like blood), you can get it out by using salt mixed with just a little water. The salt attracts the stain away from the

clothing. Salt can also replace bleach in your wash. Just use a mixture of salt, baking soda, and detergent in the wash. Your clothes will come clean, and an added benefit is that clothes will last much longer when you stop using bleach. *Kamia*

LAUNDRY DETERGENT LESSON

Back in high school chemistry class, I learned that laundry detergent doesn't actually clean clothes. It just makes it easier for water to dissolve water-soluble dirt. It's the agitation of the water that does the real work. Therefore, I've always used less detergent than is recommended and been careful to load my washer per the directions. I especially avoid overloading. That way, I get the maximum agitation and use the least amount of detergent. My clothes get cleaner and last longer. *Heidi*

WHY ROLL?

I recently repainted our home office. The first time I painted it, I used a roller to do the job. It took over a gallon of paint. This time, I decided to use a brush because I was doing it over a period of days. The second paint job took only two quarts and was less messy than the roller job. Plus, it looked nicer than ever before the second time around. I could have saved myself the \$18 that I spent on the second gallon of paint. *Donald*

SECOND LIFE FOR LEGGINGS

My daughters wear leggings every day (long, stretchy pants). Unfortunately, the fabric is unforgiving, so the girls only wear each pair a few times before holes appear. The stretchy fabric is really tough to repair. So, on a whim, I cut each pant leg into five-

inch rings from the ankle up. You can cut the bands as wide or narrow as you wish. They don't fray. The smallest rings make terrific scrunchies (hairbands for ponytails). The fabric is gentle and doesn't pull out hair. The largest rings (widest) make traditional headbands that are super comfortable. They can be used to hold back hair

when washing your face or just hanging around the house. The widest rings also make great napkins. The upper-most part of the pants makes excellent rags and wash clothes, as they are soft and absorbent. It's a shame to throw out good leggings as soon as the first few holes appear and now I don't have to throw them out! *JR*



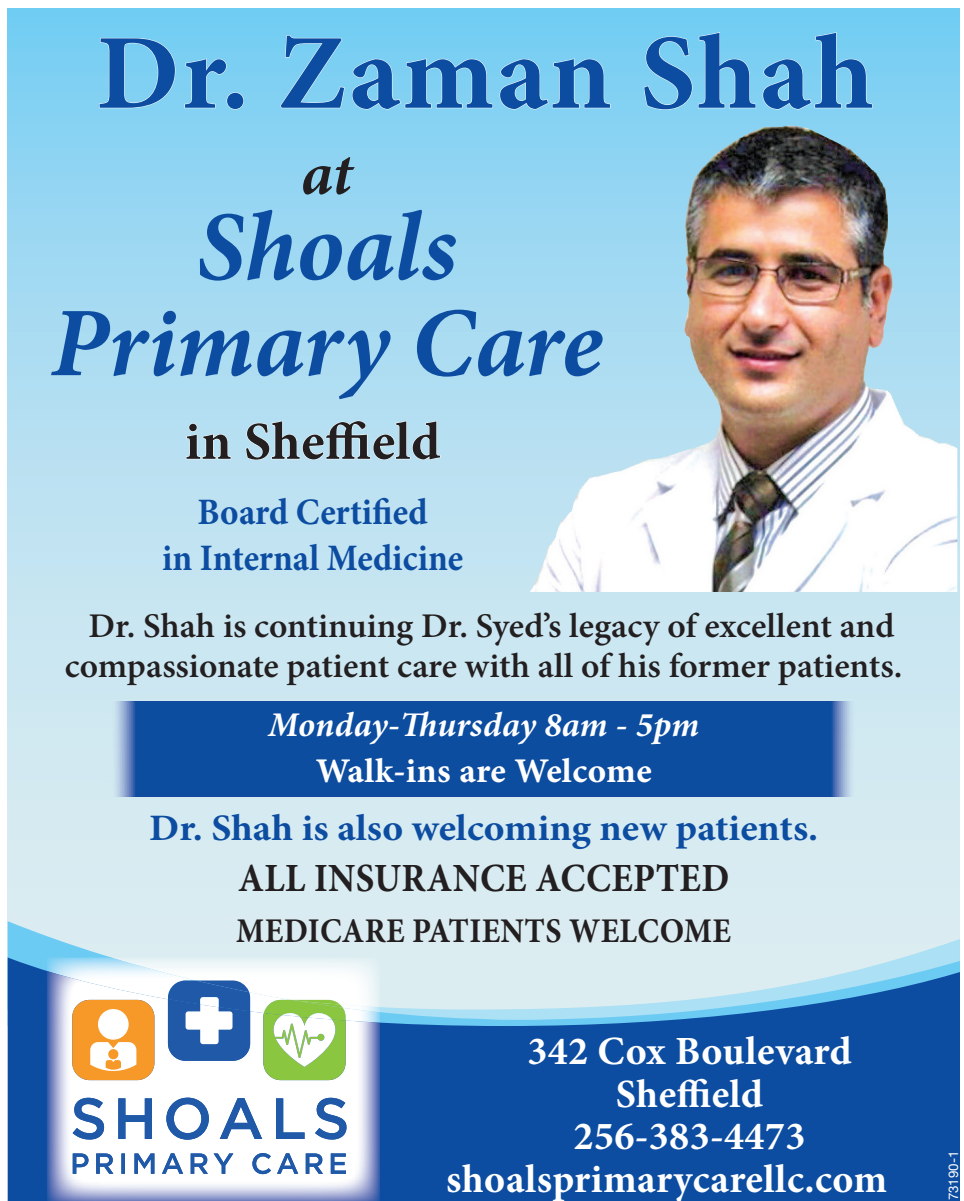
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2-4 Age Group: Hadassah Salinas, Selah Stafford, Elijah Cross, Hannah Salinas, Bella Brown.

5-7 Age Group: Jabari Murphy, Jessie Sanderson, Vanessa Jenkins, Walden McGee, Nora Jusdon, Jolie Stafford, Kenslee Cosbie.

8-10 Age Group: Tatum Ricks, Wade Nelson, Olivia Barnett, Ashlyn Underwood, Kennedy Sherman, Argie Campbell, Addie Anderson, Willow Craig, Leah Salinas.

2-4



1st Austin Comer
Age 4 - Florence



2nd Poppy King
Age 3 - Tuscumbia



3rd Alexx Henderson
Age 2 - Courtland

5-7



1st Shane Wheeler
Age 7 - Florence



2nd Jurnee Carrol
Age 6 - Sheffield



3rd Kate Cabler
Age 5 - Sheffield

8-10



1st Willow McGee
Age 10 - Killen



2nd Paisley Frost
Age 9 - Town Creek



3rd Addison Paiter
Age 8 - Florence

Guest Commentary - Mike Gonzalez

College Presidents Expose Moral Rot in Their Institutions

The presidents of Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and MIT appeared before a House committee Tuesday, December 5 to answer for their shameful inaction in the face of antisemitic rhetoric and attacks on their campuses. Their craven responses were as noncommittal as their handlers obviously wanted, which served only to indict their institutions.

Indeed, the whole nation has watched aghast over the past couple of months, as students have shown themselves to be in a state of moral confusion inculcated by the universities and their DEI departments' promotion of an "an oppressed v. oppressor" narrative, which identifies terrorists as the oppressed and the women they raped as their oppressors.

The hearing by the House Committee on Education and the Workforce was called to examine what specific steps these three universities had taken following their campuses' embrace of the Hamas terrorists who invaded Israel and killed 1,200 civilians October 7.

But all of higher education was put on the stand.

Everything from the rot of so-called diversity, equity, and inclusion—or DEI—and the new racial segregation on campus to academia's rigid, intolerant ideological partisanship and its funding by nefarious foreign entities, was laid bare for the nation to see.

For three institutions that collectively took in around \$10 billion in taxpayers' money in grants and contracts between 2018 and 2022, it was a dereliction of duty. Beneficiaries of government dole in that Olympian magnitude have a responsibility to hold themselves accountable. At the hearing Tuesday, the schools failed miserably.

Harvard President Claudine Gay, University of Pennsylvania President Liz Magill, and MIT President Sally Kornbluth basically stuck to giving

name, rank, and serial number. They repeated carefully rehearsed phrases obviously precleared by lawyers and comms teams.

Gay in particular kept restating the same phrases, not even bothering to find different variations.

One formulation she clung to (as though it were a talisman that would save her from the bad men and women that had her pinned) was: "We are deeply committed to free expression, but not when it violates our policies against bullying, and intimidation, and harassment. Then we have strong disciplinary processes in place."

Gay invoked "processes" in other contexts, too, despite diminishing returns that, by the end of the ordeal, had turned the term into an object of derision.

"I didn't ask about your processes," an obviously exasperated Rep. Nathaniel Moran, R-Texas, spat out at one point. "I am asking for action. How many students have been disciplined? How many have been held to account?"

Crickets. On questions about expelling foreign students, who have obviously been a substantial part of the anti-Jewish demonstrations, Gay's magic words were: "Our international students are an enormous source of pride for Harvard and part of our strength as an institution. But we hold those students accountable to the same set of disciplinary processes that we hold all of our students accountable to."

Harvard's president repeated this again and again, only demonstrating that someone had sat with her and worked out messaging.

"Antisemitism has no place at Harvard" was another incantation Gay hurled over and over, despite the enormous

evidence showing Jewish students being harassed at Harvard and the school's long and shameful history of Jew hatred.

But her robotic answers notwithstanding, Gay didn't have the most horrific answers of the day. That dubious distinction goes either to Magill or Kornbluth. It's a toss-up, so I'll let the reader decide.

Magill's moment came in an answer to Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y. Stefanik asked, "Does calling for the genocide of Jews violate Penn's code of conduct or rules regarding bullying and harassment?"

To which the smiling Magill eagerly affirmed,

"It is a context-dependent decision."

"That's your testimony today? Calling for the genocide of Jews is dependent upon the context?" said an incredulous Stefanik. "That's the easiest yes, Ms. Magill!"

Kornbluth's drop-mic moment came in an exchange with Rep. Burgess Owens, R-Utah, a former NFL star with a Super Bowl XV ring to prove it. He asked Kornbluth about the segregation of dorms and other places on campus.

"You have blacks-only dorms. Is it OK for whites to set up whites-only dorms where minorities are excluded?" asked Owens.

"It's not exclusionary; it's actually positive selection by students," said Kornbluth, almost cheerily.

"We're talking about segregation," shot back Owens, a courtly and dignified black man who was born in 1951 and who, therefore, must have seen his share of racism. "It's happening on your campuses!"

"There is a distinction between sending an exclusionary message and looking to other students for common experiences and support," said Kornbluth, who may be highly accredited but apparently ignores that

this is precisely how racists who supported Jim Crow would have defended segregation.

On second thought, perhaps it's best to prepare beforehand with lawyers and communications people. Magill particularly has come under intense pressure to resign, and if her tone-deaf retort doesn't convince the board that the "context" requires her departure, not much will.

(Magill, who had led Penn since July 2022, stepped down December 9 amid building criticism, but will remain a tenured law professor there, The Associated Press reported. Scott Bok, chairman of Penn's board of trustees and a Magill supporter, resigned hours later, AP reported.)

As the House hearing made clear, if higher-ed institutions indoctrinate the young into the narrative favored by the Left and keep out conservative professors, students, and ideas, most Democrats will run cover for them.

But these institutions, and those running interference, are obviously blind to the hit that this lopsided political approach is taking on their all-important brand.

If prospective employers, and the country at large, suspect that graduates from elite institutions will know no philosophy, no arts, no science—no beauty, truth, or good—but only how to "out-woke" each other, who will hire them?

This commentary was published originally by the *Washington Examiner*.

Mike Gonzalez, a senior fellow at The Heritage Foundation, is a widely experienced international correspondent, commentator, and editor who has reported from Asia, Europe, and Latin America. He served in the George W. Bush administration, first at the Securities and Exchange Commission and then at the State Department, and is the author of the book "BLM: The Making of a New Marxist Revolution."



Mike Gonzalez



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Tony's Note: I'm getting better daily. Like a couple of things, being completely a new man! I've joined up with Jai Templeton and Action Realty of Selmer to further expand our services. I'm looking forward to some Real Estate deals after Christmas. Andy by the way, Brian Dickey and Brooke Redmon have not only several homes for sale, but a great tract of 80 acres in the Rose Creek area, 60 acres of 15 year old pine. I was looking at it before the hospital trip. Timber folks and land investors need to call and look today.

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The History Of Anti-Semitism

Up front, let me say that God's word clearly states that Jewish hatred will flood the earth in the last days. **Luke 21:17** "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Careful KJV study will reveal historically from Eve in Genesis, Pharoah in Exodus, Haman in Esther, David in 1 Samuel, the prophet Daniel, and Herod the king, not counting Hitler or Putin, the DEVIL'S attempt to destroy the Messianic seed and the Nation of Israel hasn't happened. Notice: **Zechariah 2:8** "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." **Joel 3:2** "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." Lately, the U.N., the world's puppet, is pressuring the U.S. to back off their lifetime support of Israel.

With our own nation in turmoil, it's easy to get distracted from our calling as saved folk. We still need to try to win souls to our Lord in these uncertain days. God has spoken of these days and we should be "redeeming the time, because the days are evil". Ephesians 5:16. God, unknowing to the world, is using these events to fulfill His word. The blind are wildly leading the blind. Power and the dollar now rule. Lying is the norm. Can God bless this mess? **Zechariah 12:3** And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it." **Zephaniah 3:8** "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." Most ignore this warning. Will you? We can show you from the Bible what tomorrow holds. COME AND SEE.

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Community Notes...

Continued from page 27

The Batting Brigade Quilt Guild meets every 2nd Monday at 9:30am at Edgemont Methodist Church, 1330

Eauclaire Ave in Florence. Everyone interested in Quilting is welcome - from beginners to expert

Methamphetamine is a powerful and addictive stimulant drug. It is important to know the many mental and physical symptoms and signs of abuse. Meth use releases large amounts of the chemical in the brain associated with pleasure, motivation, and movement contributing to its strong addictive

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If you or a loved one are struggling with Methamphetamines, reach out for help. Narconon helps people all over the U.S. find treatment to end the web that traps those in addiction. To learn

what to look for visit: <https://www.narcononnewlifetreat.org>
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Want to list your event in Community Notes? Email your information to editor@CourierJournal.net.

Alabama Hospice of the Shoals is currently seeking volunteers to serve in Colbert, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Franklin, Marion, and Winston counties. For more information, contact Christy Perry at 256-314-1204.

60 or older? Join us for lunch Monday thru Friday at 11am for a one dollar donation. Our hours are 8:30am -12:30pm. Also if you would like to join Bingo every Tuesday and Thursday bring a small one dollar gift to play. Killen Senior Center, 227 J.C. Mauldin Hwy. Killen, 256-757-1792. See you soon!!

The Little Ryman - Gospel, Bluegrass, country, oldies and open mic. Every Friday 6-8:30 p.m. No dancing or alcohol, and free admission. 18210 Hwy. 72 W., Tusculumbia. 256-810-5866

Alabama Music Hall of Fame - Star Player exhibit will be on display at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, 617 U.S. 72, Tusculumbia. Rotating exhibits at the hall of fame highlight accomplishments of area music achievers. Details: 256-381-4417.

Did you know that 22 Americans die each day waiting for organ transplants? Most of them for kidneys? The good news is that MatchingDonors.com is helping to change that. Linking organ donors with people in need of kidney and other transplants. And now you don't need to donate a kidney to save a life. Donate your boat, car, or real estate, and get a great tax deduction while helping to save lives. Visit MatchingDonors.com or call 800-385-0422.

For Parrot Lovers in the Shoals- Join our Facebook group - For the Birds Parrot Club. We discuss Pet Sitting, Re-homing, best Bird Vets, Bird food, Sharing Advice, and more.

Pay it Forward: Donate to Educate. Shoals Scholar Dollars is an Education Foundation raising money to pay tuition at Northwest Shoals Community College and transfer scholarships to the University of North Alabama for Lauderdale and Colbert County students who meet certain criteria. Donate to Scholar Dollars at any participating financial institution the second Friday of each month.

The Help Center - 621 South Court Street, Florence. A cooperative ministry of local churches in Lauderdale County serving our neighbors in need with utility, food, clothing, prescriptions, and dental.

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See NOTES... page 38

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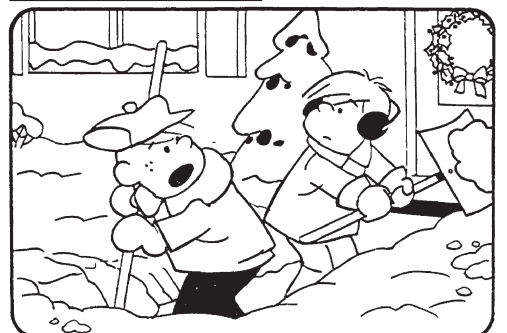
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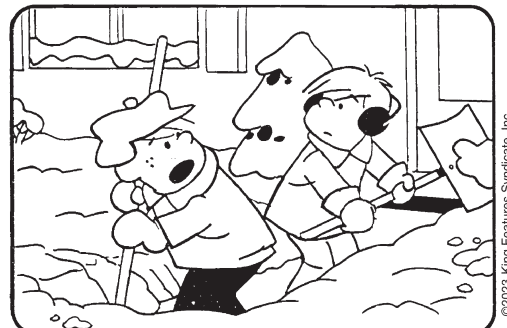
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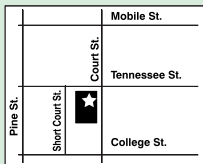
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STRANGE but TRUE

- We should all be so lucky as to have vision like that of the mantis shrimp: Not only do its eyes possess four times as many color receptors as a human's, it can see UV, visible and polarized light as well.
- The rise in global temperatures has led to flowers emitting less scent.
- Lightning hasn't brought down an airplane since 1963, thanks to engineering that allows a bolt's electric charge to run through and out of the aircraft.
- Spinraza, a drug prescribed for spinal muscular dystrophy, has a list price of \$750,000.
- By 2018, more than 100 people living in the U.S. owed at least \$1 million in federal student loans.
- A one-euro breakfast featured at an IKEA store in the Netherlands proved so popular that it had to be canceled after it attracted too many customers and even led to highway traffic jams.
- Kellogg's All-Bran cereal is actually 87% bran.
- Heading for the gym in the new year? Be sure to take some hand sanitizer! A report found that a typical gym's free weights boast 362 times as much bacteria as a toilet seat.
- During the Cold War, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to put aside their political differences if Earth was ever invaded by aliens from outer space.
- Nicaraguan Catholics who abstain from meat during Lent include iguanas and armadillos in their diet.
- In 1978, Equatorial Guinea's President Francisco Macias Nguema, widely considered one of history's most brutal, possibly even insane dictators, tempted fate by changing his country's national motto to "There is no other God than Macias Nguema."
- More than four tons of old American paper money is mulched into compost every day.
- To visit every child in the world, Santa Claus would need to travel at 3,000 times the speed of sound. But who says he couldn't? Not us! He's Santa!
- If you were drafted during the American Civil War, you could legally pay someone \$300 (roughly equivalent to \$5,000 earned by an unskilled worker in 2018) to go in your place. The practice, known as commutation, was actually intended to raise money for the war effort.

- Need a morning pick-me-up? A cup of java is most effective if consumed between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.
- Six hundred Americans die each year from falling out of bed.
- A 99-year-old man divorced his 96-year-old wife after 77 years of wedlock when he discovered she'd had an affair in the 1940s.
- Elvis Presley failed a music class in high school.
- On average, people who complain live longer! Verbally releasing their grievances boosts their health by increasing their immunity. Of course, some of us may wish to keep that nugget of information to ourselves.

• Oxford University researchers discovered that people who opt for genetic research have a genetic predisposition to do so.
• George Washington stopped the Revolutionary War by ordering a ceasefire in order to return a lost terrier that belonged to British Gen. William Howe, via one of Washington's aides under a flag of truce, after having the dog fed, cleaned and brushed in Washington's own tent.
• Leo Fender, inventor of the Telecaster and Stratocaster guitars, could not actually play the instrument himself.
• Despite its nickname, Florida isn't the sunniest state. Arizona is.

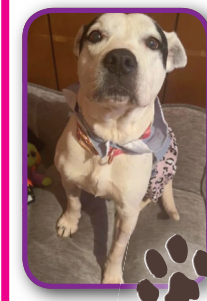
Thought for the Day: "Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable." -- John Wooden
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The animals you see here are currently in local animal shelters or rescue facilities. Adoption fees vary and include having your new friend spayed or neutered, if necessary. Help us help these and other animals by adopting a new friend today.

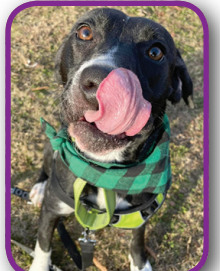


MILA is a 2-3 year old Curr mix, who is very dog friendly and wants to play all the time!! She LOVES being petted and given attention. Mila loves to be outside and loves being able to run and play! All of her babies have now moved on and she is ready for her forever loving home. She is so deserving of the chance to have a happy life with people who love her as much as we do at the shelter! **HER ADOPTION FEE IS \$85.** The fee includes current vaccines (apart from rabies), NexGard, heartgard, \$15 rabies voucher and a voucher for \$70 off of her mandatory spay! For more information please contact **Colbert County animal shelter at 256-381-4073.**



ANALISE is a 3-4 year old pit type mix, who is the absolute best girl with kids!! She is in a foster home with 2 other dogs and cats! She does ok with the dogs, she needs a very slow introduction! She doesn't like them to be in her personal space. She was found starving on the side of the road with a huge mass on her belly! She is doing great with house training! She won't go in the house unless she absolutely can't hold it and at that point, she has puppy pads in her room at her foster's house. She walks great on a leash! Doesn't hardly pull at all and LOVES to wear clothes!! She just had surgery to have the mass removed and is ready for her permanent home! **HER ADOPTION FEE IS \$85.** For more information please contact **Colbert County animal shelter at 256-381-4073.**

Meet **LINDZY**. This beautiful young pup needs a HERO to show her the LOVE she is asking for. She is longing for love. She loves attention and to melt into you and feel loved. She is scared and needs to be shown trust. Lindzy is such an amazingly sweet girl who need to learn trust and how to be a dog. She does good riding in car but has some anxiety about waking on leash and noises she will overcome with lots of love. **ADOPTIONS ARE CURRENTLY \$85** and include everything your new pet needs to be on track for a happy, healthy life: vaccines, a microchip, spay/neuter, and heartworm test. Please call or come by **Florence Lauderdale animal services 256-760-6676** to meet this sweet girl.



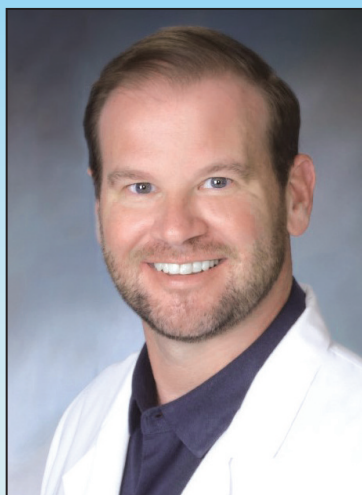
Meet **NANCIE**. This sweet amazing girl is waiting on her forever home. She does fantastic riding in a car she hopped right in and rode great on her doggies day out. Also she was awesome on leash and knows the word sit. Nancie a short little lady which makes her super cute she is a little over 5 years old and was turned in as a stray. This amazing girl has been at the shelter for close to a month and wishing for you to come meet her. **ADOPTIONS ARE CURRENTLY \$85** and include everything your new pet needs to be on track for a happy, healthy life: vaccines, a microchip, spay/neuter, and heartworm test. Please call or come by **Florence Lauderdale animal services 256-760-6676** to meet this amazing girl.

HAZEL is a 1.5-2 year old pit mix. She is the sweetest girl in the world!! She is a little shy at first but craves attention! She literally cries when you talk to her because all she wants is your love! She is not a messy girl at all and she babies her toys! She loves her blankets! She is very calm as far as we have seen! She climbs in your lap to get love! She is spayed already! Her adoption fee is \$25 and covers her NexGard, HeartGard and 5-way. **HER ADOPTION FEE IS \$85.** For more information please contact **Colbert County animal shelter at 256-381-4073.**



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ON YOUR DEBT

Voluntarily Surrendering Your Vehicle Is Not A Good Idea: Let Me Explain Why



B. Grant McNutt
Managing Attorney

Searches for "GIVE BACK MY CAR" are surging online-

Before Deciding To Voluntarily Surrender Your Car Please Call Our Office.

According to Google Trends, searches for "Give Back My Car" and "Voluntary Repossession" have doubled in the last 6 months. This after hitting a low point since the pandemic. There could be many reasons for this, inflation costs surrounding food and housing, overpricing cars when the dealer inventories were low in 2021 & 2022 or being tremendously upside down (owing much more than the car is worth). Whatever the reason, voluntary repossession should be an absolute last step option only taken after first consulting with an experienced debt resolution attorney.

What Is A Voluntary Repossession

Voluntary repossession — also called voluntary surrender — means that you return your car to the lender because you can no longer meet the terms of your loan agreement. Voluntary repossession is an immediate alternative to repossession, which is when the lender takes action to seize the vehicle once your loan is in default, per your auto loan agreement.

Consequences Of "Giving Back Your Car"

- Voluntary repossession will remain

Alabama State Bar requires the following: "No representation is made that the quality of legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers."

on your credit report for up to seven years

- Voluntary repossession can make obtaining future loans more difficult.
- Voluntary repossession doesn't necessarily erase your debt. If the lender sells the car but doesn't make enough to cover the outstanding loan balance, you will still be liable for the difference—known as a deficiency balance. And this is almost always what happens.

A voluntary repossession should be a last resort. First, call your lender and explain the situation. Chances are good that they've helped other borrowers in your situation before. If you can't arrive at a solution with your lender, call us at Bond & Botes Law Offices, and we will help.

Our debt resolution attorneys have helped many clients avoid having their vehicles repossessed or given back. In many cases, we have created a strategic plan to restructure the debt to something more affordable. Our attorneys provide absolutely free confidential consultation and advice to help you make the best financial decision possible.

Contact The Bond & Botes Law Offices

We'd love to discuss your finances with you. Debt can be overwhelming. The attorneys here at Bond & Botes provide guidance on helping clients reduce or eliminate debt. We can alleviate your stress! We want to help!



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Community Notes...

Continued from page 34

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture civil rights regulations and policies, our organization, Little People's

Nursery School, Inc. in Killen, AL, is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation

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This program is in partnership with the State of Alabama and Alabama

Department of Senior Services

Grief can be an overwhelming season to go through. There is a monthly grief support group that meets on the third Friday of each month at 10am at First Baptist Church of Rogersville, 222 College Street. Come and share and let us pray with you for strength and comfort! These groups are FREE, open to the public, and include supportive materials. Another grief support meeting also takes place at 10am every first Tuesday at Cliff Haven Church in Sheffield. These groups are sponsored by Kindred Hospice. For more information, call 256-764-0873.

You Are Not Alone! Grief can be an overwhelming season to go through. Often the time it takes to process all of those feelings is multiplied simply because those who grieve have no one to talk to. You are not alone as you go through this difficult time! Let us help!

There is a monthly grief support group that meets the first Tuesday of each month at 10am at Cliff Haven Church in Sheffield. Located at 1601 Andrews Avenue in Sheffield directly behind McDonald's near the O'Neal Bridge.

There is a second monthly grief support group that meets the third Friday of each month at 10am at First Baptist Church of Rogersville. Located at 222 College Street in Rogersville.

Come and share and let us pray with you for strength and comfort! These groups are FREE and open to the public. We will provide wonderful, supportive materials to take home to help with your healing process!

For more information call 256.764.0873.

These groups are sponsored by Kindred Hospice.

Shoals Community College and transfer scholarships to the University of North Alabama for Lauderdale and Colbert County students who meet certain criteria. Donate to Scholar Dollars at any participating financial institution the second Friday of each month.

Want to list your event in Community Notes? Email your information to editor@ CourierJournal.net.

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Puzzle Whirl Answers

Even Exchange answers

1. Paddle, Puddle
2. Track, Trace
3. Court, Count
4. Dodger, Lodger
5. Atone, Alone
6. Other, Otter
7. Gallop, Gallon
8. Flash, Flask
9. Saute, Sauce
10. Iceland, Ireland

Kids' Maze Solution



WORD LADDER Answer

SELLS, SEALS, SEARS, STARS, STARE, STARK

Word Spiral Answer

EARNESTLY

MINI SUDOKU Answer

4	1	2	3	6	5
6	5	3	2	1	4
2	4	1	5	3	6
3	6	5	4	2	1
5	2	6	1	4	3
1	3	4	6	5	2

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Mistletoe: Holiday Friend or Forest Foe?

by Cole Sikes

AUBURN, AL — At Christmastime many people may find mistletoe to be a natural ornament that signifies the holiday season. However, forestry experts with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System may not botanically consider it romantic, merry or bright. This is because mistletoe, in its most natural form, is parasitic — making it appear a little less jolly outside the home.

History and Folklore

Most people recognize mistletoe from the tradition of sharing a kiss while standing under its sprigs. The lesser-known fact about this tradition is that it started approximately 2,000 years ago.

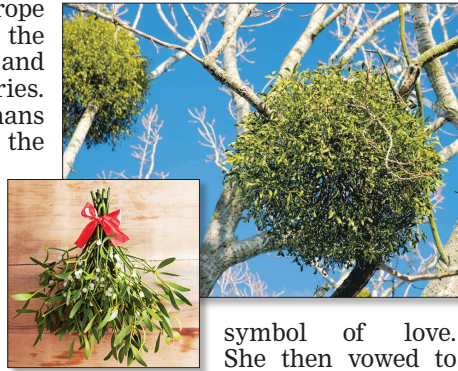
Historians believe that mistletoe's romantic origins likely began with the Celtic druids of the first century. These tribes of Europeans shared many religions and culture. They made homesteads in areas known today as Ireland, Great Britain, Spain and France.

The first evidence of this tribe is documented by the Roman Empire, ruler over most of

southern Europe during the seventh and eighth centuries. The Romans referred to the Celts as Galli, translating to barbarians. Mistletoe locally blossomed in the winter, making the Celts associate the plant with a symbol of life. This later influenced the druids to feed the plant to their people in hopes to restore fertility.

A popular belief of mistletoe folklore derives from mythology. The Norse god, Odin, had a son, Baldur, who was destined for death. Odin's wife, Frigg, the goddess of love, secured a promise of life with all the natural world's plants and animals in hopes that they would not harm Baldur. However, Frigg did not make a pact with mistletoe, leaving it as a threat. The infamous and scheming god, Loki, made an arrow using the plant, which was later used to kill Baldur, who was thought to be invincible.

The myth says later that Baldur was resurrected, which influenced Frigg to use the plant as a



symbol of love. She then vowed to kiss all those who passed under it, leading to today's tradition.

Biology

Although there are at least 30 species of mistletoe in the United States, only one is native to Alabama. Phoradendron leucarpum, commonly referred to as American mistletoe, is typically in holiday décor.

This Alabama-native species is a small evergreen shrub that grows on hardwood tree branches. Its leathery, opposite leaves and white berries give this plant its identity. The plant spreads via birds when they eat the berries and deposit the seed to a new location. A sticky outer layer helps the berry stick and eventually germinate into the host plant.

Nancy Loewenstein, an Alabama Extension forestry, wildlife and

natural resources specialist, said mistletoe, away from a holiday party, is hemiparasitic, or partially parasitic.

"Mistletoe uses water and nutrients from its host tree but produces its own sugars through photosynthesis," Loewenstein said. "A few mistletoe plants on healthy trees typically have little significant impact. But large numbers can reduce tree vigor. This is especially the case during drought conditions, when mistletoe plants use water that the host tree can little afford to lose."

If choosing to decorate with real mistletoe, be sure to keep it out of the mouths of children and pets because of its toxicity. Although moderately poisonous, when eaten in large quantities, mistletoe can cause symptoms of intestinal irritation, diarrhea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, slow pulse and lower blood pressure.

Friend or Foe

In the sense of holiday cheer, make sure that mistletoe remains solely as a decoration and tradition this year. Keep this plant away from the mouths of loved ones, and teach others about mistletoe at your next Christmas party.

If you find that your trees are overrun with mistletoe, information on

controlling this parasitic plant is available in the Alabama Extension publication, "Controlling Mistletoe in Trees" at www.aces.edu.

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