

Clean-Up is All Month

FLORENCE — Florence's annual cleanup day that was previously scheduled for Saturday, March 15 has been modified as a cleanup month due to the inclement weather threat that day.

City officials are asking groups or individuals who want to participate to do so at any point during the month.

Anyone in need of supplies can notify the Public Works Department at 256-760-6495 or email them at recycle@florenceal.org

Lauderdale Sports HoF

FLORENCE—The Annual Lauderdale County Sports Hall of Fame celebrated the induction of its 2025 class Sunday afternoon March 16 at the Renaissance Shoals Conference Center. Old friends and teammates visited and shared memories as many accomplishments were recognized. The class included:

Andrew Almon, Greg Burdine, Bryan Cruce, Tyler Grigsby, Michael Haraway, Mark Humphrey, Billy Neal Lumpkin, April Murphy Marsh, Gator Todd, and Matt Wright.

Cluck, Hop, & Shop!

MUSCLE SHOALS—Rural King in Muscle Shoals is

See SHORTS... on Page 2

Volume 141 Number 21 March 19, 2025 POSTAL PATRON

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No Phone Zone



Sheffield Adopting New 7th-12th Policy

Alyssa Sutherland
TimesDaily Staff Writer

SHEFFIELD — City schools in Sheffield will implement a new phone-free policy for 7th–12th-grade students beginning next fall.

According to district administrators, students at both the junior high and high schools will place their cellphone inside a personally assigned “Yondr” pouch as they enter the school every day.

They will keep their phone in the pouch all day, until the pouches are opened upon dismissal using a magnetic

A phone is shown inside a Yondr pouch, a locking pouch designed to secure phones and to promote distraction-free environments at Sheffield High School. A phone-free policy takes effect next school year. *Courtesy photo*

Courier Journal Perma-Note

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NAACP HOSTS Freedom Awards Breakfast

FLORENCE—The NAACP Tri-County Branch will present its Annual NAACP Freedom Awards Breakfast at 9am Saturday, March 29 at the Mt. Moriah Family Life Center, 820 West Irvine Avenue in Florence. The speaker for the event will be the Reverend Lyle Lee,

See FREEDOM... on Page 4

Big Day at Keestone

LORETTO—The Spa at Keestone Resort in Loretto will host a series of events on Saturday, March 22 running all day and into the night. An Open House with Ribbon Cutting gets it all underway at 10am with hors d'oeuvres served and assorted giveaways, including a cruise,

See BIG DAY... on Page 7



INSIDE this Issue

Automotive Inside



Ray Miller Buick-GMC
Advance Auto Sales
Watson Auto Sales

- A Conversation with Pastor Kiki
- Adopt a Friend
- Hocus Focus
- Savvy Senior



- Medicare Minute
- Ask the Attorney
- Dave Ramsey
- Cat & Kids
- Soap Making



- Deibert Fishing Days Announced
 - Hocus Focus
 - Guest Commentary
- SIGNS of the PAST



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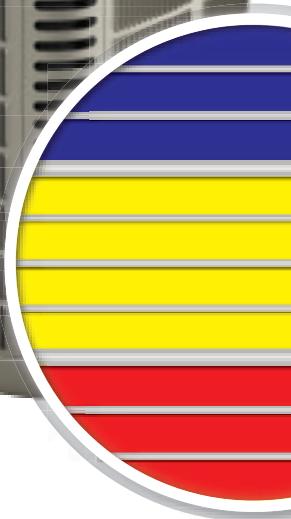
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Shorts...

Cluck, Hop, & Shop!

Continued from Page 1

hosting Cluck, Hop, & Shop! at the store on Saturday, March 22, from 10am-2pm. Eggciting fun for the whole family awaits with activities, freebies while they last, and exclusive in-store deals on poultry and rabbit supplies. Everyone can meet the adorable chicks and rabbits at the corner of Woodward and 6th in Muscle Shoals, next to Foodland.

Still Some \$5 GS Cookies

BIRMINGHAM—Girl Scouts of North Central Alabama last week announced that the 2025 cookie season will be extended for an additional two weeks, with a new end date of March 30. Many factors contributed to the decision to extend the cookie sale, including our choice to continue selling cookies for \$5 per package despite a 22% increase in the upfront

cost of cookies for the council, 5% less girls selling cookies compared to last year, and cold, rainy weather on some of this season's prime cookie booth days. Due in part to these factors, GSNCA still has more than 90,000 packages of cookies in storage, awaiting buyers.

With the help of an additional two weeks for girls to make sales, the council is optimistic that the 2025 cookie season will be a tremendous success.

How to Purchase Girl Scout Cookies:

- If you know a registered Girl Scout, find out how she's selling cookies.
- If you don't know a Girl Scout, use the Girl Scout Cookie Finder to find a booth and purchase cookies.

A State Park Ambassador

MONTGOMERY—Alabama State Parks has launched a new way for park enthusiasts to promote the 21 state parks by providing photos, video and more to be featured on social media platforms.

The Alabama State Parks Ambassador Program is designed to attract park regulars, hikers, bikers, photographers and adventure lovers of all kinds who want to showcase the state's natural beauty and inspire others to visit the parks.

The new Alabama State Parks Ambassador Program is a tangible and unique way that our top supporters can help share the parks, inspire others to enjoy the great outdoors, and showcase the wide variety of activities and experiences available in our state parks system," said Alabama State Parks Director Matthew Capps.

Selected Ambassadors will be invited to document their experiences at the parks, including hiking trails, lodge views, camping, glamping, biking and more, through photos and videos, which will be featured on Alabama State Parks social media platforms and other promotions.

Ambassadors will receive special merchandise and state parks commemorative items. Ambassadors will be asked to provide at least four photos and/or videos per month to Alabama State Parks.

The program is free, but space is limited. The online application can be accessed at <https://www.alapark.com/ambassadors>.

Last Days for Your Seeds

SHOALS—The Gerald Williams, Cooperative Garden Program is off and running for the 2025 growing season. The Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama offers free vegetable garden supplies to help qualifying local residents who wish to grow their own gardens. Sign ups are underway NOW. Participants in the program must reside in Lauderdale, Colbert, or Franklin Counties. Household monthly income limits are as follows:

- **Single person \$1,883,**
- **2 person household \$2,555,**
- **3 person household \$3,228,**
- **4 person household \$3,900,**
- **For each additional person, add \$672.**

All residents should call 256-248-1921. The cooperative garden program is a partnership of Community Action NW-AL, TVA, retirees, and many others. The deadline to register is March 21.

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Yard Sales

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Donations
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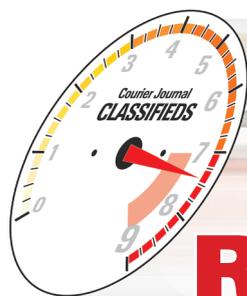
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Freedom...

Continued from Page 1

President of Huntsville Bible College. Rhoda P's Catering will prepare the breakfast.

Each year, the Tri-County Branch presents Freedom Awards in the categories of Leadership, Youth Service, Community Service, Civic Duty, Humanitarianism, Education, and Spiritual Guidance to local individuals, organizations, and businesses. Nomination forms are available at the NAACP Tri-County website, from the Branch officers, or at WZZA Radio.

Tables of eight are \$240. Individual tickets are \$30 each. A souvenir program

for the Freedom Award Banquet will feature ads at a cost of \$35 for a quarter page, \$60 for half a page, \$100 for a full page, \$150 for the inside front or back cover, and \$200 for the back cover. Patron ads are available at \$20 each. Ads can be emailed to Secretary@NAACPTriCounty.org. Payments can be mailed to NAACP at Post Office Box 2110, Muscle Shoals, Alabama 35662.

Funds raised during the Freedom Awards Banquet assist in supporting advocacy of civil rights throughout the Tri-County area. Please email toricbailey@gmail.com or call 256-383-4260 for additional information.

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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:

editor@courierjournal.net

well in advance of the planned event. The Editor reserves right to shorten, edit, reword or omit submissions as seen fit. All information submitted for publication becomes property of the Courier Journal. Information published does not necessarily reflect an opinion or endorsement by the Courier Journal, members of its management, or its staff. Advertisers are responsible for all content and claims in their advertising.



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Caring for
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A CONVERSATION WITH PASTOR KIKI The Lenten Journey: A Season of Deep Reflection, Self Love, and Renewal

Lent is an invitation, an opportunity to step away from the noise of the world and look inward with honesty, grace, and compassion. It is a season of self examination, surrender, and transformation, calling us to reflect on our relationship with God, others, and ourselves.



Rev. Kiki Woods-Terry

Too often, we approach self reflection with harshness, focusing only on where we have fallen short. But true reflection is not about shame, it is about awareness and growth. God does not call us to dwell in guilt but to recognize our worth, even in our imperfections. Lent is a time to see ourselves as God sees us, as beloved, as worthy, as a work in progress that is constantly being shaped with love.

Loving ourselves as God loves us is an act of faith. It means embracing our flaws while still striving to grow. It means acknowledging the parts of ourselves that need healing without believing we are

unworthy of grace. It means forgiving ourselves for past mistakes and understanding that transformation is a process, not a single moment.

Lent also teaches us about surrender. We often carry burdens that were never meant to be ours, self doubt, regret, the need to prove our worth. But God calls us to release these burdens and rest in divine, unconditional love.

True self reflection does not strip us down, it builds us up, reminding us that we are deeply loved, just as we are.

And in all of this, there is hope. Lent is not about deprivation, it is about making space. Space to reflect, to heal, to forgive, and to grow. It is a reminder that even in seasons of challenge or change, God's love remains constant, calling us forward with grace.

If you are searching for a space to reflect, heal, and grow, we invite you to join us at North Wood UMC. Come worship with us and experience a faith rooted in love, renewal, and the unfailing grace of God.



North Wood United Methodist Church
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Rev. Kiki Woods-Terry
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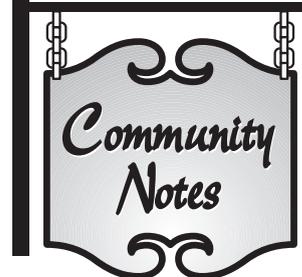
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♦ Wall Decor

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COMMUNITY NOTES may be submitted for non-profit, civic or church-related events and published free of charge **ASSPACE 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

Free Clothes - The Samaritan House, 600 Geneva Ave., Muscle Shoals, gives away free clothing each Tuesday from 9-11am - except for every 5th Tuesday. Donations are accepted.

The Colbert County Historical Landmarks Foundation will host its quarterly meeting at 2pm on Sunday, March 30, at the Helen Keller Public Library in Tuscumbia with a program by Kurt Vettors, a former U.S. Army Cavalry Captain and Civil War reenactor. He is also an author and painter with an emphasis on historical subjects. Vettors will unveil the new Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area's Civil War Trail painting, "The Engagement at Little Bear Creek."

The program was originally scheduled for February, but it was postponed in the aftermath of a tornado that struck downtown Tuscumbia the night before. The event is free and open to the public.

Vettors said all five of the completed Civil War Trail paintings will be on display at the unveiling on March 30. He will also do a presentation on the details of the 1863 battle that took place just west of Tuscumbia

The Sheffield native grew up in Birmingham, lived for many years in Indiana, and now resides in Florence.

Shoals Artists Guild Meeting
Every 3rd Friday of the month, (March 21), 10am-Noon at the Southall-Moore House, next to the Kennedy-Douglass Art Center, Downtown Florence. For more info, contact Carolyn Wear, 256-710-6854.

Clean Campus Poster Contest - Deadline: April 3.

- Two Categories: K-3rd and 4th-6th
- Theme: Help the Shoals Thrive!
- Clean Up in 2025!
- Submit to: The Shoals Chamber (20 Hightower Place Florence)
- Standard White Poster or Foam Core Board
- All mediums are accepted
- Back of Poster include: student name, school, grade, phone number and email for parent.

Sponsored By: Alabama PALS (People Against a Littered State) and Keep the Shoals Beautiful (a Keep America Beautiful Affiliate.)

Spring Revival at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church 8880 County Road 71 Lexington, 256-229-8811. Speaker Bro. Brian Bridges, Music by Kings Highway and Speaker Bro. Kerry Nelson. Join us March 27-30 at 7pm.

Readers of the Lost Ark Book Club, 10am, third Wednesday, (March 19) at Helen Keller Public Library, 511 Main St., Tuscumbia. nancy537481@yahoo.com

Swing Into Spring at Royal Recreation Center with 6 weeks of fun and energetic Ballroom Dance Swing Classes starting Thursday, March 20 at 2:30pm. No partner needed. All skill levels welcome. It's the perfect way to welcome spring, get moving, make new friends, and learn a timeless dance style!

For more information or to register, please call 256-760-6425. Grab a friend

who might enjoy dancing with you!

T. Graham Brown and Jerry Phillips: "From Memphis to Muscle Shoals" will be in concert Friday, March 21 at the Shoals Theatre in Florence. Doors open at 6pm for VIP's and 6:30pm for floor and balcony tickets. The show begins at 7pm.

VIP tickets are \$50, Floor seats are \$40, and balcony are \$35 each. The VIP Includes a Meet & Greet with the artists and an autographed poster.

Legendary country artist, T. Graham Brown and his band will share the stage with Muscle Shoals own, Jerry Phillips - with his band as well. Brown's latest record hit the top of the blues charts, and he will blend that with his monster hits for an amazing show. Phillips debuts his new album for the first time in his adopted hometown of Florence.

Tickets are available at etix.com and search "From Memphis to Muscle Shoals"

Senior Meals on Weekdays at 11:30am at The Club, 450 Country Club Road in Florence. \$1 donation.

The Gerald Williams, Cooperative Garden Program is off and running for the 2025 growing season. The Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama offers free vegetable garden supplies to help qualifying local residents who wish to grow their own gardens. Sign ups are underway NOW. Participants in the program must reside in Lauderdale, Colbert, or Franklin Counties. Household monthly income limits are as follows:

- Single person \$1,883,
 - 2 person household \$2,555,
 - 3 person household \$3,228,
 - 4 person household \$3,900,
- For each additional person, add \$672. All residents should call 256-248-1921. The cooperative garden program is a partnership of Community Action NW-AL, TVA, retirees, and many others. The deadline to register is March 21.

See **NOTES... page 22**

Ja Var Myatt-Jones MD

A Primary Care Physician
specializing in Family Medicine
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No Phone Zone...

Continued from Page 1

using cell phones during the school day except during permitted times.

Yondr provides a way to ensure the policy is followed.

Rickman noted district administrators have spent significant time researching the Yondr Program, which is utilized in schools across the nation.

Among a survey of 1,200 schools currently using Yondr pouches, 86% saw a positive impact in student safety and wellness; 84% saw a positive change in student engagement; 72% saw a positive change in student behavior; and 68% saw a positive change in academic performance, according to a city schools press release.

"This is not to limit communication with parents, or keep students from accessing their phones completely," Rickman emphasized. "Kids will be able to get to their cell phones if or when they're needed — but in the middle of geometry, cell phones aren't needed."

She explained that every teacher will have the ability to unlock pouches and can and will do so in case of an emergency, or if a phone is needed for academic purposes, like to take pictures for a project.

However, students will no longer have the freedom to freely text or use social media and the

internet from cell phones during the academic day.

School administrators will work with the guardians of students who have special needs, medically or otherwise, to make accommodations, according to Rickman.

"Our hope is that parents and the students themselves come to see this as advantageous for them," she said.

Administrators also hope the implementation of the Yondr pouches will eliminate some drama during the school day since students will be unable to engage negatively via cell phones.

Before the current school year ends, Rickman said meetings will be held to further introduce students and parents to the program and give parents a chance to have their questions answered.

While pouches have currently been purchased for junior high and high school

students, Rickman said the district will continue to assess whether they are necessary at the third- through sixth-grade levels, too.

The cost to outfit every 7th- through 12th-grade student with a Yondr pouch was \$30,000. The purchase was funded by last year's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds for learning support.

"Educators have known for a long time that not having a cell phone with you in an academic situation is less of a distraction and sets you up for greater attainment of knowledge, greater listening skills and the ability to retain information," Rickman said. "We've got to give the students this opportunity ... to make academic gains."

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Greenhill Water will have the following rate increase **beginning April 20, 2025.** The bills reflecting the new rate will be mailed to customers at the end of May.

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Any questions or concerns contact the Greenhill Water Department at **256-757-2863**

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Big Day...

Continued from Page 1

vacation, spa packages, overnight accommodations, and a dinner for two in the StoneHouse restaurant, gift certificates, and more.

Absolute Motivation takes center stage at noon as serious business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals looking to gain insights from the best minds in the industry. This life-changing experience can redefine how you approach success and relationships. Author and motivational speaker, James Dixon, is hosting this private networking event that includes a combination of world-class speakers, high-level networking, and live entertainment. Medal of Honor recipient, Earl Plumlee, is one of those speakers Dixon will be introducing. Plumlee was



Rockland Road
Courtesy

deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom (2005 and 2008) and Operation Enduring Freedom (2013). Other noted speakers and business icons include Lee Brower, Founder of Empowered Wealth; Baron James Dentley, a renowned wealth strategist, entrepreneur, and business mogul; Darren Dunn, he visionary founder of Zartico, an expert in strategic growth and innovation; and bestselling author, Angela Stanton King, to

name a few. The day will culminate with a memorable performance in the Stone Theater by musical powerhouse, Rockland Road, six musicians representing four generations of musical heritage, all vocalists who combined play 23 different instruments. Their soulful vocals combine with a rich, authentic signature sound. Doors open at 6:30 and showtime is at 7pm. Concessions will be available.

All the details can be found at thestonetheater.com. Call 931-853-3303 with any questions.

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Guest Commentary

Even Amidst Change in Washington, Alabama Must Limit its

Dependence on the Federal Government

With the start of President Donald Trump's second term in office, there has been a fundamental shift in Washington. On his first day in office, President Trump officially created the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) through an executive order. Since its creation, DOGE has set out to reign in government spending, waste, and reduce the overall size of the federal government. And to be clear, this is a much-needed initiative. The federal debt is currently more than \$36.5 billion. Spending has been on an unsustainable path for nearly two decades. If Washington does not get its fiscal house in order, all Americans will pay the price. State governments, including Alabama, should take notice: the flow of federal dollars to



Justin Bogie
Sr. Director of Fiscal Policy

See **ALABAMA'S DEPENDENCE...** on Page 18

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

Courier Journal

in the *Shoals*

March 19, 2025

THIS WEEK



Fishing Day Schedule

FLORENCE—The Fishing Days schedule at Deibert Park for 2025 is out and presented by the Florence Parks and Recreation Department. Sign In. Catch and keep, Catch and share, Catch and release. Mark your calendars. No fishing license is required. Bring your own chair, snacks, tackle, and enjoy park fishing days. Please adhere to the times

See **FISHING...** Page 20

Soap Making Workshop

Herbal & Medicinal Origins

FLORENCE— Florence Arts and Museums is excited to announce its partnership with the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area to launch the Alabama Plants Series. This workshop, hosted by Summer McCreless, will provide an opportunity for participants to learn about soap making. This event will take place on Sunday, March 23, from 1-2pm at Pope's Tavern, located at 203 Hermitage Drive in Florence. This workshop will allow participants to learn about historic and homemade soap making and the evolution of that

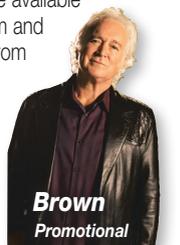
See **SOAPS...** Page 16



Happening THIS WEEK

MUSCLE SHOALS AMATEUR RADIO CLUB, meets at 7pm on the third Thursday each month (March 20) in the Colbert County EMA, annex basement, 120 W. Fifth St., Tuscumbia. Email info@msarc.org for more information

T. GRAHAM BROWN AND JERRY PHILLIPS: "From Memphis to Muscle Shoals" will be in concert Friday, March 21 at the Shoals Theatre in Florence. Doors open at 6pm for VIP's and 6:30pm for floor and balcony tickets. The show begins at 7pm. VIP tickets are \$50, Floor seats are \$40, and balcony are \$35 each. VIP includes a Meet & Greet with the artists and an autographed poster. Legendary country artist, T. Graham Brown and his band will share the stage with Muscle Shoals own, Jerry Phillips - with his band as well. Brown's latest record hit the top of the blues charts, and he will blend that with his monster hits for an amazing show. Phillips debuts his new album for the first time in his adopted hometown of Florence. Tickets are available at etix.com and search "From Memphis to Muscle Shoals"



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YOUR Letters

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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Editor-Courier Journal
219 W. Tennessee St., Florence, AL 35630
- **e-mail: editor@courierjournal.net**
- **FAX- 256-760-9618**

UNA and the Council

Editor,

At its January 21 meeting, the Florence City Council voted to give UNA another \$500,000! These funds were to be used by UNA for the new Computer Science & Math building. The vote was somewhat unusual.

Members Hendrix, District-2; Eubanks, D-4; Edwards, D-5; and Oliver, D-6, voted to give the money. Member Griffin, D-3, voted No, and President Simmons, D-1, chose to take an abstention which means: a decision not to vote on a particular matter.

With the Council voting to give UNA funds for the building, UNA now has funds to leasing apartment complexes for student housing without a change in

zoning laws.

Since President Simmons is an employee of UNA, I believe it is safe to assume this is the reason she abstained. If this is true, I do not believe her vote is a proper one.

Due to her UNA employment, Simmons should have recused herself. This refers to a member who removes him/herself from a particular matter when there is a conflict of interest.

A few years ago, the Alabama Ethics Commission (AEC) ruled that a council member, who is an employee of UNA, should not vote on issues involving UNA.

Council member Michelle Eubanks is also an employee of UNA. As noted above Eubanks voted to give the money to UNA. I have been told, by a council

See **LETTERS...** on Page 20

... I have forwarded a letter to the Attorney General stating my displeasure with his ruling.





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| 2005 DODGE NEON | 1B3ES56C15D148965 | 2010 MINI COOPER | WMWMR3C50ATZ19106 |
| 1999 DODGE RAM 1500 | 1B7HC16Y5XS313640 | 2007 NISSAN ALTIMA | 1N4AL21E07C204958 |
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Understanding Your Settlement

We had a gentleman come see to us who was significantly injured in a wreck. I would place the value of his case in the \$75,000.00 range. He signed a personal injury release believing that he was signing a property damage release. The insurance adjuster explained to him what he was signing and recorded the conversation. This man made a \$75,000.00 mistake. Some injury cases can and should be handled without an attorney, others should not.

If there is a question in your mind about understanding what you are doing, don't do it. We really do offer free consultations. It's our job to make sure that you understand the legal issues. If you have a case that we want to handle, we'll tell you that we'd like to handle your case, and you are free to say I'd like to think about it. That's the end of the conversation. But if we can help you, we will. The only way we will charge you is if we make money for you.

Here are some things to think about in settling an automobile accident case.

How much money do you get to keep? Make certain that you know and confirm that amount. If you settle for \$5,000.00 but your hospital bill is \$4,900.00 then you only keep \$100.00. Understand what your compensation for your injury is.

Some one will have to evaluate the following documents:

1. The accident report;
2. Medical bills;
3. Proof of who paid the bills, i.e., Blue Cross, Medicare, Tricare, or that they have not been paid.
4. Proof of lost wages.

With property damage claims the value of the car is what it is. It doesn't matter what you paid for the vehicle or how much you owe. One of the things that we hear often is that the replacement value is not adequate and now a person has a car payment that they didn't have before. That said, if you had to replace the engine or transmission and you have those receipts it could add value to the vehicle.

If your vehicle is a total loss, make sure you have the title to the vehicle. If you still owe for the vehicle, make sure you have the lien holder's information as well as the amount of the payoff.

I think we all see people driving as if they are alone on the road. The best tip is to drive defensively.

Buckle up, drive safely, and as always, your referrals are appreciated! 256-764-0112

Please send the questions to:

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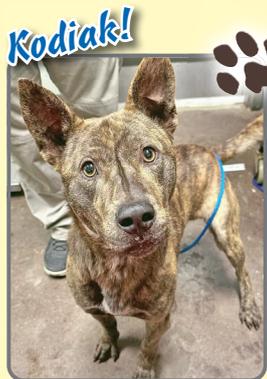
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Courier Journal ADOPT A FRIEND

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.

Meet Kodiak!

This sweet boy is great on leash and loves to go on walks. He was good in his recent foster home. He wants a family to take him home forever and love him. He's medium to high energy at first and very excited to go outside. The adoption fee is currently \$85 and includes 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 dog.



Meet Sadie!

This girl is full of energy and loves to play. She is good with other dog but maybe a lot for some dogs around her if the energy doesn't match. She is adorable and super sweet. Small spaces aren't her favorite. The adoption fee is currently \$85 and includes 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 your new best friend.



Meet Blackie!

She is a beautiful dog who might have some Belgian Malinois in her. This beautiful girl is high energy and likes to have space to move around and play. So far she has been good with other dogs. Experienced pet owner will be best for her. The adoption fee is currently \$85 and includes 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 pup.



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Location: Pine St at UNA, Florence 34.8093°N, 87.6835°W

Pinning its hopes on the construction of their new stadium, the University of North Alabama would like to regain the excitement and glamour of those 1993-1995 years when they won three consecutive national championships.

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

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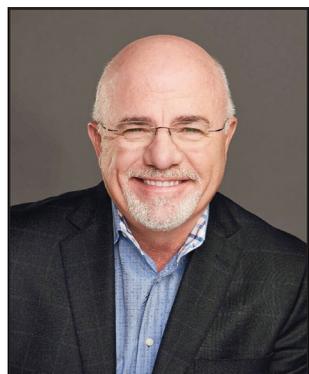
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DAVE Says

by DAVE RAMSEY

DETERMINATION AND HARD WORK

Dear Dave,
I started listening to your show, and following the Baby Steps, three months ago. I'm already seeing great results with my money. Over the weekend, I spent time looking at part-time jobs to help me pay off debt faster and keep moving forward with my finances. I found a few work-from-home ideas that were intriguing. But how can I tell the difference



between real opportunities and all the scams featured online and on television?
Bonna

Dear Bonna,
Congratulations on making the decision to gain control of your money! You sound motivated, and I believe it will translate into some really good things.

Truth be told, the vast majority of things you see online and in late-night

infomercial presentations are scams. I'm not talking about ads for legitimate job hunter sites, I'm talking about the business-in-a-box kind of thing. I know you've probably seen the advertisements that go something like, "My sister-in-law makes \$500 an hour working from home, and you can, too!" These clowns are the worst of the worst. Please, don't waste a second of your time on that kind of stuff. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

There's no shame in picking up a normal, part-time gig a couple of nights a week after work and on weekends. You'd be surprised at how much extra cash you can earn just delivering pizzas, or working at a local retail store. If that doesn't sound like something you'd enjoy for a little while, you might try thinking of something

you love doing, and find a creative way to make some extra money doing that. Your idea might even be something that would allow you to work from home. I've known lots of folks who make wonderful second incomes by turning a hobby or hidden talent into extra cash.

But the big thing is to just find a real and honest idea to help you make extra money. Remember, short-term sacrifice for long-term gain. You won't be doing this side gig forever. But whether you're looking for a little help in building your emergency fund or paying off debt,

creativity, determination and hard work go a long, long way.

Best of luck, Bonna. And God bless. You can do this!
— Dave

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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Soaps...

Continued from Page 8

process. Over time, soap has been used medicinally with specific herbal combinations to bring the user to a more centered and healthy state. Today, soaps are used for cleansing the body and enjoying the infusion of native plants through the senses. Participants will get a small bar of soap to take home.

The Alabama Plant Series is a set of six free workshops hosted at Pope's Tavern Museum and sponsored by the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area. These workshops are meant to draw the connections between Native American cultures, Alabama plants, and the products created by people that are rooted in early traditions.

Tickets for this event are available on Eventbrite, here: <https://tinyurl.com/253nm3fa>.

Pope's Tavern Museum is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10am until 4pm, and is located at 203 Hermitage Drive, Florence, AL 35630. For questions, call: -256-760-6379 or email: connect@florencealmuseums.com.

Medicare Minute

"Mail, Calls and Door Knocking 2"

Last week we began discussing ways that agents and companies market Medicare plans to people turning 65. We discussed the phone calls you may receive and the possibility of someone showing up unannounced at your door. This week we will look at online marketing and direct mail.

Direct mail - This is the most common way companies market their plans. When you are within 6 months of turning 65 a company will purchase a mailing list with your name and address on it. Most companies will start sending mail 6 months prior to the month you turn 65. This is because you are eligible to purchase a Medicare supplement any time during that 6 month period. In most cases direct mail is designed to initiate a response on your part. That response is to call a toll free number. You may be calling to get information but usually are connected to a sales person. If you do respond to direct mail, our advice is to never give the agent on the line your social security number until you are ready to buy. This should protect you against unknowingly signing up for a plan.

Online marketing - Occasionally we will have someone stop by our office that has gone online to research Medicare plans. Most online marketing companies will ask you to provide your phone number and/or email address to get pricing information. Once you enter this information you will immediately begin getting phone calls. This is because when you hit "send" that information goes out to 10 or more agents who have bought that lead. All the agents will begin reaching out to you within minutes.

Phone calls, direct mail, door knocking and online marketing are perfectly legal and compliant under Medicare guidelines for some plans but not others. If you have any questions concerning any of these you can contact our office for more information. The solution to this is to find a local agent that can help you. They will make sure you get the right plan and you'll be able to find them if you need them. If you have questions regarding any aspect of Medicare or Medicare health plans feel free call us at Alabama Health Guidance (256-648-5710), stop by our office at 885 Florence Blvd (Four Lane Shopping Center) or email me at ikey@alabamhealthguidance.com. Alabama Health Guidance is an independent insurance agency and is not affiliated with Medicare or any other government agency.



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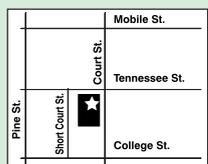
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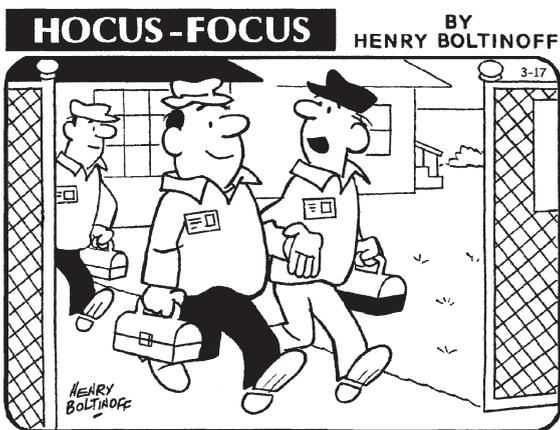
Failure to Perform Required Monitoring

Chisholm Heights Water & FPA is required to monitor your drinking water for specific contaminants on a regular basis. Results of regular monitoring are an indicator of whether or not your drinking water meets health standards. During August 2024, we did not complete all required monitoring for total coliform bacteria and therefore cannot be sure of the quality of your drinking water during that time.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not receive this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in public notices or distributing copies by hand or mail.

Chisholm Heights Water completed all testing in September 2024, and all samples were good.

Should you have questions concerning this violation or monitoring requirement, please contact Chisholm Heights Water at 256-718-0301 or e-mail at chisholmheightswater@comcast.net.



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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1 Timothy 6:10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Like our final tomorrow, settling up day is at our doorsteps. Isaiah 2:20 "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;" Isaiah 31:7 "For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin." James 5:3 "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." Revelation 9:20 "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:" When you finally get the "L" out of gold, all you have left is GOD! We all must deal with HIM!

Our past lost leaders have shown where their priorities are, and now reaping time is just around the corner. There may be prosperous times ahead, but abundance of all things usually ushers in a huge spiritual decline. Money makes characters; training, trials and hard work build character. God isn't impressed with your riches. Gold won't buy favour with God, nor Heaven! Psalms 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Have you ever had a broken spirit and contrite heart? If not, you've no salvation or hope for heaven! Get saved and you will!

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Guest Commentary - Justin Bogie, Alabama Policy Institute

Alabama's Dependence...

Continued from Page 8

shrink. On January 27, 2025, a memorandum from the Office of Management and Budget directed federal agencies to suspend all grant payments to state and local governments. While the policy was rescinded, that does not mean that similar policy shifts will not follow. As DOGE continues its work, it remains a real possibility that federal grants could be on the chopping block. This should be of particular interest to Alabama lawmakers.

Alabama is consistently ranked as one of the most federally dependent states in the nation. According to data from USASpending.gov, Alabama received over \$66 billion in federal funding last year. This includes over \$36 billion in direct payments to Alabamians, \$17.3 billion in contracts awarded

within the state, and nearly \$13 billion in grant awards to state agencies.

In 2024 alone, grant awards accounted for nearly 32% of all of Alabama's state government revenues. The Alabama Medicaid agency received more than \$6.4 billion from the federal government, with the state Department of Transportation and Department of Education each receiving more than \$1.2 billion in federal grants.

One problem with being so heavily reliant on the federal government is that state funding may shift based on the priorities of one presidential administration to another. Moreover, there is a perception that federal dollars are free money. They are not. Each dollar that the federal government sends back to state and local governments in the form of direct payments, grants, and other forms of assistance represents taxpayer dollars that hard-working Alabamians have paid to the Treasury. Federal money also always comes with strings attached. There are several recent examples of this.

In 2024, the U.S. Department of Education announced updates to the Title IX code, a civil rights-era legislation that prohibits sex-based discrimination in education. Amongst the changes was the addition of gender identity and sexual orientation as federally protected classes. In 2023, the Alabama Legislature enacted a law that prohibits college athletes from competing on sports teams that do not align with their biological sex. Shortly after the federal Title IX changes were filed, Alabama and several other states filed suit against the Biden administration, challenging the new rules. As Attorney General Marshall said, "This is an example of how the federal government can control activity at the state level through the use of purse strings." He continued, "Because the only vehicle for these changes to take place is if, in fact, you are receiving federal funding.

Absent that, it is clear the federal government has no authority to be able to dictate these policies at the state level."

Alabama's Legislature, duly elected to reflect the principles and values of the state's citizens, has already taken action to ensure that men and women compete based on their biological sex. Yet, depending on which party controls the White House, Alabama could be compelled to comply with a policy that most citizens disagree with simply to keep the federal dollars flowing.

Medicaid policy is another area in which the Biden administration has consistently tried to limit the ability of states to administer the program as they see fit, specifically around work requirements. Under the first Trump administration, at least six states had work requirement provisions approved as part of their Medicaid programs. Alabama had a Medicaid work requirement waiver pending when President Biden was elected in November 2020. After Biden's inauguration, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) rescinded all Medicaid work requirement waivers. Alabama voluntarily withdrew its waiver application shortly after Biden became president, knowing it would be rejected.

Requiring able-bodied people who are receiving Medicaid benefits to, at a minimum, attempt to find employment is a reasonable policy. Yet, because of the threat of losing federal funding, every state has remained unwilling or unable to put such requirements in place.

In 2025, for every dollar Alabama puts into its state Medicaid program, the federal government provides a match of 72.8%. Because states rely so heavily on federal funding for Medicaid programs, federal bureaucrats can exert their will over policy decisions, regardless of whether those decisions align with the beliefs of the citizens governed

by them. Regarding Medicaid specifically, there is also a real possibility that federal funding could soon be reduced. On February 25, 2025, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted a budget resolution that directs the House Energy and Commerce Committee to reduce federal spending by \$880 billion over the next decade. Most, if not all, of those cuts are likely to come from the Medicaid program, which the committee has authority over.

As federal spending has increased dramatically over the last several decades, the federal government has taken a larger role in setting policy agendas at the state and local levels. Now, because of DOGE and other efforts, change is on the horizon. Alabama lawmakers must seize this opportunity and decrease the state's dependence on Washington.

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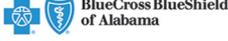
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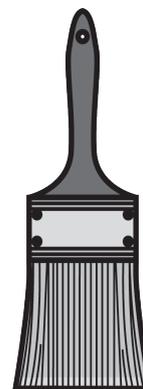
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Chisholm Heights Water & FPA was required to prepare and submit an initial service line inventory, as required by EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Revisions, to the Department by October 16, 2024. The inventory must include all service lines connected to the system regardless of ownership. Additionally, the system was required to review specific records to identify the service line material as either lead, galvanized requirements replacement, lead status unknown, or non-lead. We failed to develop and submit the required inventory and certification of records review by the required due date.

Exposure to lead in drinking water can cause serious health effects in all age groups. Infants and children can have decreases in IQ and attention span. Lead exposure can lead to new learning and behavior problems or exacerbate existing learning and behavior problems. The children of women who are exposed to lead before or during pregnancy can have increased risk of these adverse health effects. Adults can have increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, Kidney or nervous system problems.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not receive this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in public notices or distributing copies by hand or mail.

Chisholm Heights Water submitted the required service line inventory and certification on February 5, 2025.

Should you have questions concerning this violation or monitoring requirement, please contact Chisholm Heights Water at 256-718-0301 or e-mail at chisholmheightswater@comcast.net.

Letters...

UNA and the Council...

Continued from Page 8

member, that Eubanks got a special ruling from Alabama Attorney General, the Honorable Steve Marshall, that allows her to bypass the earlier ruling by the AEC! I do not agree with this ruling.

I have forwarded a letter to the Attorney General stating my displeasure with his ruling. Hopefully the ruling will be voided! The Attorney General will not get my vote in future elections. City elections are in August and candidates are needed!

Bill Smoak
Florence

He Belongs to Putin

Dear editor,

Recently, there was a resolution voted on at the United Nations finding Russia to blame for the invasion of Ukraine and guilty of various crimes against humanity.

Our representative, chosen by Donald Trump, voted along with Russia, Iran, and North Korea against the resolution. All democracies in the world voted for it. That, along with the mistreatment of the president of Ukraine in the oval office pretty much nails shut the coffin of our membership in NATO. No democracy in the world will share information with us until we have another president. It is confirmed that there are two major political parties in the United States, the Democratic and the Maga. And Maga has aligned itself with tyrants and dictators.

There seems to be no doubt now that Donald Trump belongs to Putin. The only reason any sanctions on Russia passed in Trump's first term is because a bipartisan veto-proof majority voted for them.

I know a lot of poor and middle-class folks who love Trump. Are you going to love him when Medicaid is gone?

Rodney Osbirn
Florence



Fishing...

Continued from Page 8

on the schedule. Parents, please keep a close eye on your young ones who are fishing. Sign in with your phone number and we'll send you a reminder of fishing dates.

FRIDAY, March 21, 6:30am-11:30am Spring Break

SATURDAY, March 22, 4pm-7pm Spring Break

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FRIDAY, April 25, 7am-5pm No School

TUESDAY, June 17, 6:30-11:30am Summer Day

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Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) for help with plan choices.

Community Notes...

Continued from page 5

Seven Springs Lodge at 1292 Mt Mills Rd, Tusculumbia. Seven Springs Lodge will be hosting their annual Mule Ride March 27-31. More details to follow. For additional information, contact 256-370-7218.

Colbert Transportation - Wells of Hope Ministries, Inc. was recently awarded a grant to provide transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities in Colbert County. Seniors and handicapped individuals who live in Colbert County and are in need of free transportation, please contact Mr. Wendell Plain at 256-412-5220 or Mr. Otis Johnson at 256-762-1378.

LifeSouth Bloodmobile Dates:
Wednesday, March 19 Central High School, Florence, 8am - 3:30 pm
Thursday, March 20 Muscle Shoals High School, 8am - 4pm
Friday, March 21 TNT Fireworks - Helton Drive Florence, 8am - 4pm
Saturday, March 22 PetSmart - Cox Creek Parkway, Florence, 10am - 4:00 pm
Sunday, March 23 Walmart - Hough Road - Florence 03/23/2025 10am - 4pm
Wednesday, March 26 Tharptown High School - Co. Rd 80, Russellville, 8am - 3pm
Wed., March 26 Genesis Healthcare - Glenwood Center, Florence, 11am - 5pm
Tuesday, March 25 Constellium - E 2nd St. Muscle Shoals, 7am - 4pm
Friday, March 28 Kia of the Shoals, Sheffield, 10am - 4pm
Sunday, March 30 Foodland - Elgin, AL-101 Rogersville, 11:30am - 5:30pm

The 21st Annual Empty Bowls Luncheon To Feed The Hungry
 Wednesday, April 16, 11am-1pm at the Renaissance Shoals Hotel Conference Center, 800 Cox Creek Parkway South, Florence. Hosted by the Salvation Women's Auxiliary. Tickets available from any SAWA Member or the following: Salvation Army (Huntsville Rd., Florence) Or Trinity Ceramic Supply (3107 Northington Court, Florence Industrial Park) \$20 in Advance or at the Door.
 Our shuttle buses will take you from your car to the door. For more information call: 256-764-4432 or 256-810-6175

Holy Week Service Times at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Florence Palm Sunday, April 13 at 10:30am; Maundy Thursday, April 17 at 6:30pm; Good Friday, April 18 at 6:30pm; Easter Sunday, April 20 at 10:30am. Everyone is welcome. 630 N Poplar St. in Florence • 256-764-3902.

The Club/Florence Senior Center at 450 Country Club Drive in Florence serves boomers and seniors of the Shoals area!

Monday-Friday 9am-3:30pm. Games (Rook, Mee, Dominoes, Mexican Train, Chickenfoot, LRC, and others. M-F Lunch served (\$1 donation), BINGO (Wednesday), Chair Exercise (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday), Rock Painting (Friday), Local Events, Square Dance Lessons, (Mondays), Social Dance (Tuesday), and Specially Scheduled Dance Events, Master's Games, Shuffleboard (Broadway Rec. on Tuesday).

Group Travel tours this year to The Ark, Virginia Beach, Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Vermont, Washington DC, and Lancaster. Trips are open to the general public. For more information, email fdavis@florenceal.org or call 256-760-6420.

Florence Fly Fisher & Tyers meets the 1st Tuesday (April 1) of every month from 6:30-8pm at St Bartholomew Episcopal Church, 1900 Darby Dr. in Florence. Anyone interested is welcome and encouraged to attend.

2025's Fishing Days at Deibert Park presented by Florence Parks and Recreation Department.

Sign In. Catch and keep, Catch and share, Catch and release. Mark your calendars. No fishing license is required. Bring your own chair, snacks, tackle, and enjoy park fishing days.

Please adhere to the times on the schedule. Parents, please keep a close eye on your young ones who are fishing. Sign in with your phone number and we'll send you a reminder of fishing dates.

FRIDAY, March 21, 6:30am-11:30am Spring Break
 SATURDAY, March 22, 4pm-7pm Spring Break

FRIDAY, March 28, 4pm-7pm Spring Break

FRIDAY, April 25, 7am-5pm No School

TUESDAY, June 17, 6:30-11:30am Summer Day

THURSDAY, September 18, 6:30-11:30am Fall Day

SATURDAY, October 4, 8am-5pm Fall Weekend

North Alabama Youth/Family Ministry presents the 2nd Alabama HBCU Day Saturday, March 29 Noon - 3pm at Mt. New Home Missionary Baptist Church at 7135 Old Hwy 20, in Leighton.

Free Food • Door Prizes • Music • Learn about our Alabama HBCUs • entertainment • sorority/ fraternity step shows.

Encouraging our youth to have hopes and dreams - Providing parents with information for college and trade school.

For additional information, call 256-762-1378, 256-509-4488, or 256-616-2868.

Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts welcomes Huntsville artist Monica Yother as she hosts Cultivate Your Creativity: An Art Journal Retreat from April 4-6 in the Southall House.

This retreat is designed to help you stay creatively motivated and find ways to continue to grow as a creative person. You'll learn tried and true practices... and how to modify them to work for you. This is not just theory or lectures; it's a hands-on working retreat! When you leave, you'll have a plan and resources to keep you thriving.

Monica Yother, your guide for the retreat, is an artist and graphic designer who has worked as a full time creative for 37 years. She has led team building events for businesses as well as taught a variety of art classes in her studio in Huntsville.

To register for this retreat, visit www.florencealmuseums.com/arts-programming

Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts is located at 217 E. Tuscaloosa St. in Florence. For questions, call 256-760-6379 or email connect@florencealmuseums.com

The Lauderdale County Commission will be opening the two county-maintained parks - Wheeler Campground (on Alabama 101 near Wheeler Dam) and Brush Creek Park (on Lauderdale 14 near Waterloo) on April 5.

Due to traffic concerns on Alabama 101, the practice will continue of taking reservations at the Wheeler Campground during the first weekend the park is open. Anyone wishing to camp at the park during the first weekend, must call the County Solid Waste office and make reservations.

This is ONLY for the opening weekend. The campsites will be on a "first come basis" after the April 5 weekend.

The Solid Waste office will start accepting reservations for the opening weekend (at Wheeler Campground) on April 3. Anyone interested may call the Solid Waste office (Monday-Friday from 8am-4pm) at 256-760-5878. A map of the campground, showing the campsites, can be found on the Lauderdale County Solid Waste Facebook page.

Individuals can reserve ONLY ONE campsite. NO one can reserve multiple campsites.

Opening weekend payments must be made to the Wheeler Campground attendants by 4pm on April 5. The Wheeler Campgrounds have water and electric hooks and a dumping station. The cost of \$15 per night and \$10 per night for senior citizens. There will be a \$10 per night fee for campers using the pad camping area.

Brush Creek Park, near Waterloo, features primitive camping areas and pad camping (for RVs and pull campers) with water hookups only. There is a dumping station at the park.

The Colbert County Domestic Violence Response Coalition's 3rd Annual Community Diaper Drive gets underway April 1. This diaper drive will go toward helping local families impacted by domestic violence.

Community support is vital. April 1-30 - All sizes of new diapers, wipes, and pull-ups. Join us in our mission. We have meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month @12pm at the Helen Keller Library Annex in Tusculumbia. Check our Facebook Page: Colbert County Domestic Violence Response Coalition for more information or call 256-284-2284. Also accepting Monetary Donations: 1. CCDVRC- PO Box 434 Tusculumbia, AL 35674. Paypal: Jenniferccdvrc@gmail.com Donation locations are: Rio Grande Restaurant-Sheffield; Renaissance Antiques-Florence; The Healing Place- Muscle Shoals; People's Drugs -Cherokee, AL; Foodland- Elgin, Rogersville, Tusculumbia, and Florence; and Curtis' Restaurant-Greenhill.



Cat & Kids

by Cathy Turner

Mama's Voice

I am a 65-year-old mother of three, grandmother of four, and yet, I still hear my mother in my head. "Stomp your feet off before you come in this house - been out there in all that the snow." "Bed's not made up if the covers underneath are wrinkled." I attribute so many sayings to my mom. Either she said it, or she raised me to think it. "Use your feet, not your mouth." Mama would tell me to go get my brother from outside. I would go open the screen door and holler his name. She would react with, "I could have done that! Use your feet not your mouth!" And off I would run to get him. I have thought of that thought at so many different times and ways in my life. When someone has done me wrong, I think, "Use your feet, not your mouth." Remembering that I need to use my feet to go to that person rather than using my mouth to revile them. Or if there is something that needs to be done - "Use your feet, not your mouth." Don't just talk about it - do it!

There are so many of Mama's words that still flash into my head. Mom's been gone for over 20 years. It's sweet that I can still hear her voice saying some things. One thing that she said that has come to my head quite often lately is "You can't get something clean, if you are cleaning it with something dirty." If I come to your house to help you clean, you better have a bunch of paper towels, because I go through them like crazy! Because, "You can't get something clean by cleaning it with something dirty!" Clean the mop! Get another paper towel! Refill the rinse water! Have you ever watched soapy dishes being dipped through soapy rinse water? Or the same oncedipped mop being used to clean an entire 200 square foot room? Have you ever smeared glass tops with towels that you have folded a thousand different directions, trying to use all the clean spots? Okay mama, enough!

But also, "You can't get clean using something dirty" is a basic fact that most teenage boys need to hear. Then maybe they won't wipe themselves down with their stinky shirts. Or perhaps they would change the washcloths and towels in their dorm room more often. Or maybe through this adage, we could learn that lies don't lead to truth or two wrongs don't make a right. Because, "You can't make something clean, if you're cleaning it with something dirty."

I have just come to appreciate the depth of my mom's teaching and experience. "Everybody squats when they go to the bathroom." "Tomorrow's another day." I hear her singing, in her glee club alto voice, "O, Holy Night", or saying, "Education is the key." Her words shaped me. I was blessed to be raised by such a wise woman. I am old, and yet, I wish I could actually hear her voice again. Blessed.

Email comments or suggestions to CatnKids1@gmail.com

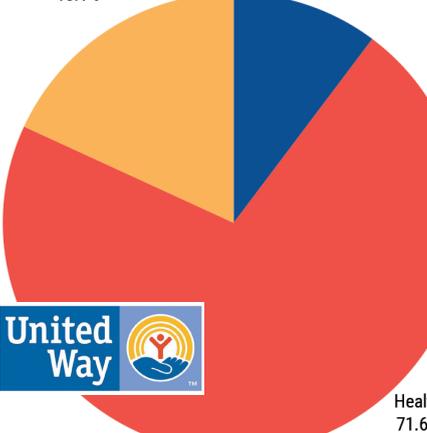
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of households in Northwest Alabama earn less than \$50,000 a year

For more information, call the United Way of Northwest Alabama, 256-764-5892.

Space courtesy of Courier Journal.



Savvy SENIOR

Are You at Risk for Kidney Disease?

Dear Savvy Senior,
What are the risk factors for kidney disease? My mother died from kidney failure a few years ago at age 75 but didn't even know she had a problem until it was too late.

Inquiring Daughter

Dear Inquiring,

Anyone who has diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems or has a family history of the disease is at increased risk for chronic kidney disease, a condition in which the kidneys can no longer effectively filter your blood.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, around 37 million U.S adults have chronic kidney disease, and millions more are at risk

of developing it, yet most people don't realize it.

That's because kidney disease develops very slowly over many years before any symptoms arise. But left untreated, the disease can eventually require people to spend hours hooked up to a dialysis machine or get a kidney transplant. Even mild kidney problems can double a person's risk of heart attack and stroke, as well as cause anemia and bone disease.

The reason kidney disease has become so widespread today is because of the rise of obesity, type-2 diabetes and high blood pressure which all strain the kidneys.

Another factor is the increasing number of people who take multiple medications, which can

overtax the organs. People over age 60 are especially vulnerable both because they tend to take more drugs, and because kidney function normally declines somewhat with age.

Get Screened

Because kidney disease is often symptomless, it's usually undiagnosed. The only way to catch it before it advances is to have a routine blood and urine test by your doctor. So, anyone that has diabetes, high blood pressure or heart disease, or is age 60 or older needs to be tested annually.

If your lab tests show a decline in kidney function for more than three months in a row, you might be diagnosed with kidney disease and referred to a nephrologist. You also need to know that while kidney damage cannot be reversed, there are a number of effective lifestyle steps and treatments that can help contain the damage, including:

Control your blood pressure: If you have high blood pressure, get it

under 130/80. If you need medication to do it, ACE inhibitors and ARBs are good choices because of their proven ability to protect the kidneys.

Control your diabetes:

If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar as close to normal as possible. Diabetes medications called SGLT-2 inhibitors have also shown to be effective in helping slow the progression of kidney disease, even in non-diabetic patients.

Adjust your diet: This usually means reducing the amount of protein and phosphorus you eat and cutting back on sodium, sugar and possibly potassium. Your doctor can help you determine an appropriate eating plan, or you may want to talk to a dietitian.

Watch your meds: Dozens of commonly used drugs

can damage the kidneys, especially when taken in high doses over long periods – most notably NSAIDs like ibuprofen and naproxen. Proton pump inhibitor (PPI) medications taken for heartburn and GERDS, and herbal supplements can also be problematic. Talk to your doctor about all the prescription, over the counter and herbal products you take to identify potential problems and find alternatives.

Exercise and lose weight: If you're overweight and inactive, start an aerobic

fitness routine (walk, swim, cycle, etc.) that gets your heart pumping. This will help lower blood pressure, control diabetes and help you lose excess weight all of which will help your kidneys.

Stay hydrated:

Dehydration can affect kidney function, so try to drink at least six to eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day.

Quit smoking: If you smoke, quit. Smoking damages the kidneys and doubles the rate of progression to end-stage renal failure.

Send your senior questions to:

Savvy Senior,
P.O. Box 5443,
Norman, OK 73070,
or visit SavvySenior.org.
Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.



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