LOOKING AHEAD TO 2015

NEW YEAR TO INTRODUCE DUCK RIVER DAM, 222 INTERCHANGE, AND MORE RETAILERS

Chelsea Sparks
chelseas@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Cullman has seen many changes in only a year’s time. 2014 has been a year for growth in both economy and infrastructure. As many have noticed, business is getting bigger and better at almost every end of town, and according to officials, 2015 should be even better. New businesses and more job growth are both on the horizon.

One of the bigger projects that has been in the works for quite some time and is projected to be finished in the spring is the Duck River Dam project. “We have a lot of things going that is affecting a lot of people,” said County Commissioner Garry Marchman. “As the Duck River project progresses, the more funds will go into it, and so water rates will increase. The price that we purchase the water for will go up, and so rates will follow. I can say that it will be as limited as we can and still operate.”

Cullman City Mayor Max Townson also weighed in on the Duck River project, and how it is more than necessary for the future of the city and county. While rates might increase a small amount, it is ensuring water for future generations. “What people need to realize is that in 2007, we were within months of being without water,” said Townson. “But with this new Duck River project, we can alternate the supply and it should take care of this county for the next 100 years. We don’t have access to the Tennessee River like a lot of other areas. This will ensure that future generations have sufficient water for farming, retail, industrial development, and home use.”

CWAC TO OFFER FREE ADMISSION DURING COMMUNITY WELLNESS DAY

Will Hogue
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CULLMAN - The Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center has had great success in the last five years: from hosting state-wide swim meets, to meeting its five-year goal in its first five months of being open.

However, in the past five years, the CWAC has never had a day like the one set to occur on January 3, 2015. There will be no charge to make use of the facility’s amenities from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. CWAC, or The Duck, as some around the community have dubbed it – because of the pronunciation of its acronym – will not only offer free admission, but also a health fair featuring local organizations and businesses.

Along with the health fair, CWAC has organized an array of speakers who will talk about nutrition, building a workout program, wellness, and other topics, according to Waid Harbison. Harbison also wrote that the whole point of the event is to further motivate and educate the community on how to become healthier and stronger. Along with the health fair and the speakers, there will also be free Zumba, spin, aerobics, and water aerobics classes.

Furthermore, there will be a Polar Bear Plunge on the day of the Community Wellness Day. The winner of the Polar Bear Plunge will receive a free one year membership to CWAC.

Also, if you sign up for your CWAC membership on January 3, there will be no registration fee. If you have any further questions or wish to know more about the CWAC’s Community Wellness Day, visit the Cullman Parks and Recreation website at cullmanrecreation.org or call 256-775-7944.

CULLMAN - A national look back at the year of 2014 is hard to do considering the slew of events in science, pop culture, and politics that have occurred. A lot has happened in one year, and the year of 2015 promises to bring just as many changes. We have seen amazing triumphs, bitter defeats, and gut wrenching losses in this year, so let’s explore some of the highlights.

In the world of pop culture and entertainment, we suffered some terrible losses of unforgettable actors. James Avery, who played the father on the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, passed away at the beginning of the year, leaving the children of the 90s in a week. Brilliant actor, Philip Seymour Hoffman also passed.
"TRAGIC SITUATION" LEADS OFFICER TO USE DEADLY FORCE AT HOLLY POND RESIDENCE

Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

HOLLY POND - Shortly after 2:46 p.m. on Saturday December 27, emergency responders along with volunteer fire per- sonnel and deputies with the Cullman Sheriff’s Office ar- rived at the residence located on Meadown Drive in Holly Pond on a medical call. “At 2:46 this evening an of- ficer responded to assist EMS on a medical call at 49 Meadow Drive in Holly Pond. When of- ficers arrived the person that had been slated for treatment ran back into the house and came back outside brandish- ing an edge weapon, running towards our officers,” said Chief Deputy Max Bartlett. Bartlett said the “Two sheriff’s deputies were on the scene and one attempted to deploy a Taser. We don’t know if it missed or had a partial deployment, but the assaillant continued to advance on our officers and one of the officers was forced to use deadly force. It’s a tragic situation.” The 51-year-old white male subject, whose name is being withheld at this time, was shot four times, according to Chief Deputy Bartlett. “At this time we believe there had been four shots fired. We are still early in the investigation but we believe there were four shots,” he said. “The body has been sent for a full autopsy so we will know more once it is concluded.” The State Bureau of Investi- gation has been notified of the incident and will be con- ducting an investigation into the shooting. “We feel that at this time, all indicators are that the of- ficer did nothing other than what he had to do to protect his life. It is an unfortunate situation but one officers all over the nation fear every day,” he said. “We are in the process right now of proces- sing the evidence at this time with the B.I.L.” Bartlett said both deputies were wearing body cameras at the time of the incident. “We believe both officers had their body cameras fully activated, so as the investi- gation continues it will be analyzed and should help us in the investigation to deter- mine exactly what took place. But right now we believe the shooting was very much jus- tified and there were a num- ber of witnesses on the scene which observed the scene,” he said. Chief Deputy Bartlett said the deputy responsible for fir- ing the deadly shots has been placed on administrative paid leave, which is normal when dealing with an officer in- volved shooting. “The officer is visibly upset for having to take this sort of action,” he said. CS will bring more details as they are made available.

PROPERTY TAXES FOR 2014 ARE DUE NOW

Sharon Schuler Kreps
shlp@alcom.com

CULLMAN - For those of you who have not paid your prop- erty tax for 2014, it’s not too late to pay your 2014 property taxes. But you must act fast; the deadline is just around the corner! “The taxes are due by De- cember 31, 2014 with no pen- alties or interest,” said Darla West, Chief Clerk for the Rev- enue Office. “The taxes will be considered delinquent on January 2, 2015.” In celebration of the Christmas holiday, the Cull- man County Court House will be closed Wednesday through Friday, December 24-26. It will also be closed on January 1 in observance of New Year’s Day. This includes the Revenue Commission office, as well as the satellite payment loca- tions. “The office at the Court- house is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and we don’t close for lunch,” West continued.

County Sanitation
Cullman County Sanitation pickup will not be delayed or hindered due to New Year’s Eve/Day.

For more information call: • Cullman County Sanitation at 256-287-1142 • Cullman City Sanitation at 256-737-7532 • Cullman County Courthouse at 256-775-4644

We do have satellite offices in Baileyton, Hanceville, and Dodge City. They close for lunch depending on the local Town Hall hours. If you or someone you know still needs to pay your taxes or if you would like more information about paying them before December 31, feel free to call the Revenue Commission at the Cullman County Revenue Office at 256-739-3350. You can also stop by and visit them in person by going to 506 2nd Avenue SW, Cullman, AL 35055. The satellite office in Bai- leyton is located at 12080 AL Highway 69 North, Baileyton, AL 35019. Their phone num- ber is 256-796-3300.

NEW YEAR’S EVE/DAY CITY AND COUNTY CLOSINGS

Noah Chandler
noah@cullmansense.com

City of Cullman
All offices will be closed New Year’s Day and will reopen at normal times on Friday, Janu- ary 2.

City Sanitation
“We’re coming in Wednesday to run the regular routes,” said Superintendent of Sanitation Larry Jones. “The resident, commercial, and recycle, and then we will be off Thursday. Thursday’s route will be picked up Friday. Our commercial will be run as scheduled.”

Cullman County Revenue Office
The Cullman County Revenue Office will be closing at 1 p.m. on New Year’s Eve, as the U.S. Postal Service is closing at that time.

The office will be closed on New Year’s Day, and will re- open on Friday, January 2 at 8 a.m.

In addition to road work, another form of transporta- tion will be improved upon in the next year and that is our lo- cal airport. According to Mayor Town- son, maintaining and im- proving the airport is vital to keeping Cullman ahead of the game. “We are working toward improving the airport in 2015,” he said. “The airport is es- sential for industrial devel- opment. We have people who fly in from Australia, Japan, Europe and other places. The county and city industrial de- velopment boards realize that as well so we will be working together on that.” Constantly growing and improving, this humble town has transformed into a thriv- ing area that others want to move to and live in. There is always work to be done, but as Mayor Townson points out, it is an exciting time to be in Cullman. “This will be a very exciting year,” said Townson. “Not only for the city council and the mayor, but I believe the citi- zens are going to be very happy with what transpires in 2015.”

Ahead (from Front)

CRMC and Cullman Internal Medicine Pair for Record Food Drive

CRMC and Cullman Internal Medicine physi- cians and staff, donated more than 2,000 pounds of food to help feed these pa- tients and their families. “We have been able to bring food families dur- ing the holidays this year thanks to their generosity,” Neal said. “Being able to take the burden of worrying about buying food for these fami- lies, who are already going through so much with their cancer treatment, really means more than you can imagine. All of them have been so grateful for this wonderful donation.” For more information visit www.crmchospital.com and www.cullmaninternalmedicine.com.

TIPS FOR SAFELY STARTING THE NEW YEAR WITH A BANG

Chelse Sparks chelse@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Many of us will be celebrating the New Year this week, and everyone is excited to welcome it in their own way. Some will sing Auld Lang Syne and pop some champagne, others will spend the late night talk show scene and turn to several incidents of unrest and protests across the country. These instances have led to many debates and division on the issue of racial profiling and police brutality.

This group has taken control of large portions of both Syria and Iraq, and brought big questions as to how the current administration should respond.

The year of 2014 has seen considerably less deaths in the Middle East than 2013. This in turn, was used as a topic of discussion in the 2014 midterm elections. Lastly on our journey is the new threat in the Middle East known as ISIS.

While it will probably be years before the group is dismantled, top leaders within the group have been killed, and forces have been pushed back, thanks to airstrikes.

The year of 2014 has seemed to be one of division. Great progress was made in some areas, while others have fallen behind.

TIPS FOR SAFELY STARTING THE NEW YEAR WITH A BANG

With a country so vast and full of hundreds of different races, religions and ideas, it seems to take some time for any big changes to happen, but change and progress come all the same.

First, make sure you are shooting on a non-combustible surface. Anything made of wood, paper or cardboard materials are not good surfaces and are easily flammable.

Secondly, make sure you are in an open space away from homes, businesses and power lines.

Thirdly, make sure you have a source of water or a fire extinguisher available in case of emergency.

It is important to use common sense and good judgment when dealing with explosives. We often take for granted how quickly an innocent good time can turn into a night at the ER. It takes only one mortar tube falling over, or one badly aimed Roman candle to turn a celebration into a disaster.

For more information on Cullman City laws please call 256-734-4454. For County laws, call: 256-734-0342.

Review (From Front)

this year leaving us with some magnificent performances in the newest Hunger Games movie.

The entire country also mourned the loss of one of the biggest comedic stars of our time, Robin Williams.

The Internet and TV were awash with tribute pictures of the late night talk show scene with Stephen Colbert. A change to the format.

The entire country also turned to several incidents of unrest and protests across the country.

There is an ordinance in the city limits of Cullman without a permit. "There is an ordinance inside the city limits of Cullman," said Assistant Police Chief Craig Green.

Chief Craig Green.

"They are much bigger and more powerful. We see a lot of parents allowing their teenagers to shoot them, and we discourage that a lot because someone could easily be hurt. I would encourage everyone who wants to see fireworks to go see them at show by professionals."

For those who will choose to shoot fireworks however, there are a few things you can do to decrease the chance of injury or accidents.

First, make sure you are shooting on a non-combustible surface. Anything made of wood, paper or cardboard materials are not good surfaces and are easily flammable.

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RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH YOUR CHILDREN USING THESE FESTIVE IDEAS

NEW YEAR’S TRADITIONS

Sharon Schuler Kreps
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CULLMAN - January 1, 2015 marks the arrival of a new year. On that day, people around the world perform specific actions or traditions religiously in hopes of bringing good fortune. Maybe you can’t feel happy, healthy, wealthy, and wise throughout the year. Some of the traditions can be simple while others can be quite complicated. There are also some rather strange traditions.

In Denmark all unused dishes and plates are saved up until December 31st. On that day, folks take the dishes and hurl them against the doors of friends and family, where they shatter on impact. Believe it or not, it is considered a very warm-hearted, a show of love and affection.

In Bolivia, coins are baked into the center of the ball. Tie a string around the bottom of the ball and let them thing else you like and then hurl them against the doors of a building. People in Bolivia, coins are baked into the center of the ball. Tie a string around the bottom of the ball and let them shatter on impact. People in Bolivia, coins are baked into the center of the ball. Tie a string around the bottom of the ball and let them shatter on impact.

In some South American countries, people wear brightly colored underwear. The color determines their fate for the new year.

For example, red underwear means they will find love. Gold underwear means wealth, and regular, white drawers signify peace. I wonder where I can find a pair of gold undies.

At the end of the year, people in a small Peruvian village flat set their fortunes to the future.

By doing this, they can then start the year off on a clean slate. I like to think of myself as a lover, not a fighter.

In Bolivia, coins are baked into cakes, cookies and pies. Whoever finds the coins will have good luck for the next year – and possibly a couple of broken teeth!

People in Finland try to predict the coming year by casting molten tin into a bucket of water. The resulting shape is then interpreted. Interpreted how? I don’t know.

In Scotland the first person to cross the threshold of a home in the new year should have plenty of gold undies. What kind of gift? I have no idea.

I would like to do the following thing. The people of Estonia eat seven different times on New Year’s Day to pick out their own hats and decorations.

Lastly, if you want to go the extra mile for the ball drop, then you and your little ones can make one together at home.

Get a Styrofoam ball, sequins, glue, and any other thing you like and then start gluing on your decorations.

Put a pipe cleaner stem into the center of the ball. Tie a long piece of ribbon to the stem and attach the ball to the ceiling. Cut the ribbon at the stroke of 12 a.m.

If you’re a local artist, you can make funny hats, paper hats, or even a band play called the Overtones, said owner Tyler Jacobs.

“People will be singing home for the holidays, and kick back and have some drinks with friends. Their knowledgeable staff and bartenders will be ready to make you New Year cocktail you want.”

“We will be featuring the band Horizon on New Year’s Eve,” said owner Tyler Schuman. “They will be playing a little bit of everything like rock, country and blues. They will play from 8 p.m. to midnight.”

No matter which restaurant you decide to celebrate with, you are sure to have a night to remember.

All three restaurants are eager to countdown to midnight and beyond with the citizens of Cullman.
LOCAL HISTORY: SENATOR JOHN SPARKMAN TOURS CULLMAN COUNTY

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN - Senator John Sparkman was born December 20, 1899 in Hartselle, AL. He was the seventh of 11 children of Joseph Whitten and Julia Mitchell Kent Sparkman. He represented Alabama for 42 years in the U.S. Congress, first in the House of Representatives from 1937 to 1946, and then in the Senate from 1946 to 1979. Over time, he became known as one of the nation’s most skilled legislators, and in 1952 won the Democratic nomination for vice president. Even though Sparkman consistently opposed civil rights legislation, he was viewed as a liberal during his years in the House and his first three Senate terms because of his strong support for unions, public housing, aid to education, hospital and health-care funding, increased public-works spending, higher minimum wages, veterans programs and small businesses.

Sparkman became chairman of the Committee on Banking and Currency, but in 1975 he gave up that position to head the more prestigious Committee on Foreign Relations. Unfortunately, age had reduced the skills and acuity of the once vital senator, and he was criticized repeatedly for his poor leadership of the committee. As a result, Sparkman announced he would not seek re-election in 1978. He retired from politics the following year. He spent his final years in Huntsville and died there on November 16, 1985. Senator John Sparkman toured Cullman County in late October 1966. A large motorcade accompanied him across the county. The picture by Mr. Grover Smith was taken at this time in Fairview. The following people appear in the picture: Do you see anyone you know?

Senator H.G. Allen, R.C. Eddins, Horace Culpepper, Russell Plunkett, Mrs. Jack Moore, Judge Tankersley, Robert Schafer, Jim Folson, Jim D. Moody, Herman Plunkett, Roy Drinkard, Mr. and Mrs. Luther Morris, G.W. Pinkard, Jim Reese, Harold H. Keeton, Troy Reese, L.T. Dunkin, G.W. Bledsoe, Glenn Reid, Hubert Dunkin, Homer Cornett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Bailey, Doctor Moore, Robert A. Sapp, Marvin Barrington, Monroe Brock, Lelston Mulfings, Robin Cummings, Hilary Warren, Mr. Tom Drake, Mrs. Fred Folson, Mrs. John Starnes and Mrs. Bud McDonal.

Jewelry (from Front)

Katie Dansby
katie@cullmansense.com

CULLMAN – Marilyn Dodge has been a resident at USA Healthcare in Cullman for about seven years and has been making jewelry there for the last three to four years. She got started one day when one of the RNs suggested that she do something with her time. The RN gave Marilyn some beads and told her to see what she could do with them.

“Something inspired me to make the jewelry,” Marilyn said. So far she has made earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and rings and is interested in making Indian jewelry. “I’m trying to get into Indian jewelry because that seems to be picking back up,” she said.

Marilyn is a breast cancer survivor of 19 years and said that this event in her life contributes to her inspiration to make jewelry.

She said she makes jewelry with the pink breast cancer ribbon and said, “I like my pink cancer ribbon. That’s my favorite.”

She also makes something under other breast cancer survivors that see her jewelry.

If someone sees something they like or has an idea for something they would like to have, Marilyn will take requests and gladly make whatever they wish.

One request she has taken came from one of the employees at the nursing home. The employee brought in a necklace and asked Marilyn to make earrings to match it.

Marilyn is proud of how it turned out and says that the earrings are an almost exact match to the necklace. She said, “If somebody brings me something, I will try to make something out of it.”

Marilyn works on making jewelry whenever she has free time and ultimately gives a lot of it away.

“A lot of times people come in and see what I’m doing and they see something they like,” she said.

If family members are visiting any of the residents and they happen to see and like Marilyn’s handmade jewelry, she does not hesitate to give it away.

Currently she has several pairs of earrings hanging next to her bed ready for wearing. She also has many necklaces hanging up and countless bracelets to give away. “I’ve got two boxes of bracelets,” she said.

Sometimes Marilyn sells her jewelry and uses the money she makes to go buy more beads and supplies.

She gets her beads from all over town and then comes up with appealing patterns based on what she buys.

“Everybody that comes in the room thinks it’s gorgeous,” she said.

“Some employees in the nursing home especially love what she is doing.

“They think it’s wonderful,” Marilyn said. She is thankful to have such a support system where she lives and appreciates the encouragement she gets from the staff and her friends at the nursing home.

POSITION AVAILABLE

Program Facilitator needed for local domestic violence intervention program.

Full time, BS degree required. Send resume to: vsoced@vsoc.cullman.org
Polar Bear Plunge Part of Free Community Wellness Day

Sharon Schuler Kreps
sharon@cullmansense.com

Cullman - On Saturday, January 3, 2015, the Cullman Wellness and Aquatics Center will offer a folks a full day of health and fun. Community Wellness Day will feature free access to CWAC for both members and non-members alike. They will be able to come participate in the fun and exercise will go through their community health fair, and tour the facility and see what a great place it is.

CWAC has never offered free access to the center before, so this will be a great opportunity for everyone in the community to come out and enjoy the center's pools, fitness center, and other facilities with no out-of-pocket expenses. Wellness Day will be geared toward helping people reach the number one New Year's resolution in the world, which is losing weight, eating healthier, or getting into shape.

DEEP SOUTH TATTOOS HOSTS EVENING OF MUSIC

Will Hague
will@blomansense.com

Cullman - Last Saturday, Deep South Tattoos presented music by Shallow Side, a regionally touring band, along with local artist Daniel Harbison and Stephanie Ann. Stephanie Ann started off the evening by singing a couple of hours earlier before the Bears got into a shootout with an athletic bunch from Muscle Shoals. Holly Pond is currently 2nd in the Alabama Sports-writers' 3A state rankings, coming into the title game with a 14-2 record while Cullman is 11-5 with a 2-2 mark in games played since December 19 when the Bears began their holiday tournament tour in the Steel City Invitational. Cullman patiently made plays when it was needed as Muscle Shoals led 74-64 when the game was nearing the 4:00 mark. A couple of 3-pointers by Schaffer in a matter of seconds, erased a six-point deficit with 1:25 to go and the game was tied at 76-76. The Bears got a defensive stop, came down the floor and with less than a minute to play, went ahead when Harris drove inside and scored.

The winner of this year’s Polar Bear Plunge will win a 12 month family membership to CWAC.

The headlining act came next. Shallow Side took the stage and, although the set was acoustic, the band still found a way to make each song a chance to win a free year's membership to the center. Wulf Harbison, Marketing and Programs Director at Cullman City Parks and Recreation, explained, “In the past, we have charged to participate in the plunge with proceeds benefitting the free programs of Parks and Rec. Like the recent phone calls from Santa and our therapeutic programs; however, this year we are doing the plunge with our community wellness day on January 3 and it will be free to compete in.”

Cullman Wellness and Aquatics Center will also offer free enrollment on any membership on January 3, a 450 savings. The Community Wellness Day will last from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you or someone you know would like to get fit in 2015, or are just interested in a free visit to the Wellness Center, make sure to stop by and see them that day.

The Wellness Center is located at 1636 Field Of Miracles Dr SW, Cullman, AL 35055. For more information, feel free to give them a call at 256-775-7946.

FANTASTIC Finish for Cullman Caps Second Day of Yule Tide Classic

Johnny Thornton
Sports Correspondent

HANCEVILLE - A 10-point deficit in the final 4:00 of the game was erased by the Cullman Bearcats Saturday in dramatic fashion at the Mitchell Smith Chevrolet Yule Tide Classic. Cullman was finally able to overtake Muscle Shoals in a grueling, yet entertaining semifinal, posting an 80-76 victory. The Bearcats finished on a 16-2 run, making critical stops when the Trojans had the ball and going to their main cogs in the offense, point guard Lawson Schaffer and shooting guard Brontez Harris.

This effort has set up a highly anticipated championship game for Monday night. The Bearcats and the Holly Pond Broncos in the third edition of this post-Christmas hoops classic will be worth watching. Holly Pond fought off Hartsville 60-46 at Tom Drake Coliseum a couple of hours earlier before the Bearcats got into a shootout with an athletic bunch from Muscle Shoals. Holly Pond is currently 2nd in the Alabama Sports-writers’ 3A state rankings, coming into the title game with a 14-2 record while Cullman is 11-5 with a 2-2 mark in games played since December 19 when the Bears began their holiday tournament tour in the Steel City Invitational.

Shallow Side. She played for just under an hour. Sitting behind her electric guitar and, although the set was acoustic, the band still found a way to make each song a chance to win a free year’s membership to the center. Wulf Harbison, Marketing and Programs Director at Cullman City Parks and Recreation, explained, “In the past, we have charged to participate in the plunge with proceeds benefitting the free programs of Parks and Rec. Like the recent phone calls from Santa and our therapeutic programs; however, this year we are doing the plunge with our community wellness day on January 3 and it will be free to compete in.”

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Taylor, a freshman center, scored 10 with Golden hitting nine while Garrison and Mullican added eight. An 18-7 spurt in the third period sent Fairview into the lead for good when the Lady Aggies trailed 17-16 at the break. Hanceville got 15 points from Taylor Holli ngsworth and nine by Nyia Evans.

Monday schedule of the Mitchell Smith Chevrolet Yule Tide Classic at Wallace State:
• Hanceville vs. Brooks (Girls) 9:30 a.m.
• Hanceville vs. Calera (Girls) 12:30 p.m.

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Taylor, a freshman center, scored 10 with Golden hitting nine while Garrison and Mullican added eight. An 18-7 spurt in the third period sent Fairview into the lead for good when the Lady Aggies trailed 17-16 at the break. Hanceville got 15 points from Taylor Holli ngsworth and nine by Nyia Evans.

Monday schedule of the Mitchell Smith Chevrolet Yule Tide Classic at Wallace State:
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LOCAL NURSING HOME RESIDENT WRITES POETRY ABOUT LIFE

Katie Dansby
kdn@cullmansense.com

CULMAN – Clara Jepson started writing poetry in 1974. She has written countless poems about relationships, loved ones, friends, family and even nature. However, before she moved to USA Healthcare four years ago, she had not written any poetry in 24 years. The ladies that take care of her and the friends she has made at USA Healthcare have helped to inspire her poetry writing. “Once I got in here, just all of a sudden I wrote, I started writing about my life here and this nursing home.”

Her most recent poem is untitled, but is written with a sense of gratitude regarding her time at USA Healthcare. She loves her home, the friends she has there, and the ladies that take care of her, and she expresses her thanks within the poem. A portion of it reads:

“We become attached to some of the girls They care for us, and some of them curl their hair Now these girls, With our lives we do trust For the rest of our days, They’ll take care of us”

After Clara showed the poem to the ladies that take care of her, several of them wanted signed copies. She has also given copies of this particular poem to some of the residents who have asked for it after reading it. Clara said, “I need too much care. This [poem] means that the girls take care of us, that we put our trust in them. It’s from my heart.” Clara went on to say, “If you want to come to a good nursing home, this is the place to come.”

Clara’s favorite thing to write about is what is going through her mind at the time. When something means a lot to her, it becomes important for her to write about when. People read the poems she has written about them, it is her way of telling them how she feels about them and that she is thankful for them. She expresses this thankfulness in her poem titled, “Friend.” In this poem she writes about her friend, Ben, that she made at USA Healthcare. Clara knew Ben for three months and said that during that time he cared for her and checked on her daily. “He was such a wonderful man,” she said. Clara gave Ben a copy of the poem and later wrote another poem called, “Memories,” when he passed away. “I appreciated him. I didn’t know how good of a friend he was until he was gone.” A part of the poem reads:

“But the memories we made, I’ll hold close to my heart. He made me happy, From the very start.”

Clara also wrote a poem after her parents died. Her Dad died in 1986 at 62 years old and her mom died in 2000 at 66 years old. Clara’s parents wrote a lot to her and she expresses her love for them in this part of her poem that reads:

“They made me so happy, And filled my life with love Now they’re in heaven, With the good Lord above.”

When something comes to Clara’s mind, she jots it down. “I can write a poem in 15 minutes. When it comes to me, I write it,” she said. Clara likes to write in her room and said that she has a lot of poems that need some work. She also wants to write about her children. “I want to write about each one of my children because I love them all, but I love them different.” Clara has three children, including a daughter and two sons. She wants to write about what they mean to her. She has already written a poem in 1992 about her son, Michael. The poem tells such a story and ultimately thanks the Lord for her son’s safety.

Although she hadn’t written any poetry in 24 years, Clara Jepson was inspired to write after moving to USA Healthcare. She writes about the memories she has of her parents, how he made her happy and how good of a friend he was. With the good Lord above.”

Clara sees her poetry as a way to move on after a significant event in her life has happened. She will continue to write poetry as she experiences important things in her life worth writing down and enjoying being able to make people happy with her gift.

Safety (from Front)

Sheriff’s Department will man the roads out in the county. The Hanceville Police Department will face added challenges this year due to the fact Hanceville now sells alcohol.

“As far as New Year’s Eve parties go, it’s fine as long as people stay inside on private property,” said Jeremy Laney, reserve officer and dispatch worker at Hanceville Police Department. “Don’t get into any fights and don’t drive away drunk.”

While Laney gave some sound advice, another Hanceville police officer had the following to add. “Basic rule of thumb, always have a designated driver and do not drink and drive, of course,” he said. “Law enforcement all across the state will have extra patrols working this year, including Hanceville, so there will be some sobriety check points around.”

He continued, “Be responsible, adults need to keep alcohol away from children and be sure their’s isn’t under age drinking going on. Also, adults need to be careful about housing what we call open house parties where they allow minors to drink. That’s actually a crime and they could be jailed for that, so they need to be aware of it.”

Even though the city of Cullman has sold alcohol for a few years now, the city police will be watching the streets closely New Year’s Eve. Hoping there will be no trouble; they are planning to keep everyone safe and secure to the best of their ability that night. “People just need to use common sense,” explained Police Chief Kenny Culpepper. “Sure that they don’t put themselves in a position where they can be injured, whether it is themselves or somebody else or get in trouble with the law. The best thing to do when going to a party to where there will be alcohol is to have a designated driver.”

Drinking and driving is very dangerous and is to be avoided at all cost. If a person decides to drive their car after having a few drinks, they will be caught and prosecuted. But what happens once a drunk driver has been pulled over?

“If a person is drunk and gets pulled over, they will be arrested for D.U.I. or Driving Under the Influence. They will stay in jail until there is no longer alcohol in their system. In other words, it would vary. For example, if someone’s blood alcohol level was .26 and somebody else’s was .08, the .08 might get out the next morning whereas the .26 may be there until that afternoon.”

In closing, Chief Culpepper had one last thing to say.

“Just make it a safe holiday. You can use common sense and not have problems and not make it unsafe for someone else.”

Just like the Hanceville and Cullman law enforcement, the Cullman County Sheriff’s department offers the same advice. There will be plenty of extra sheriffs on call New Year’s Eve and all will have your safety as their top priority. Even way far out in the remote areas of the county, their patrol cars will be strolling by and keeping watch. Please help them by being responsible and use extreme caution while out and about.

If you have any questions about the law in connection with your New Year’s Eve plans, feel free to contact your local law enforcement agency at the following phone numbers.

Cullman City Police Department: 256-734-1434
Cullman County Sheriff’s Office: 256-734-0342
Hanceville Police Department: 256-352-9811

COMMUNITY MATTERS 7
**Monday**

Cullman Kiwanis Club

The Cullman Kiwanis Club invites all local men and women who are interested in taking part in community service along with great fellowship, fun, networking, and learning to attend their weekly luncheon meeting at 12 noon each Monday at the All-Steak. Come see what Kiwanis is all about and enjoy a great luncheon meal as well.

**Domestic Violence Sufferer Support Group**

Victim Services of Cullman sponsors a Domestic Violence Sufferer Support Group meeting at the Cullman Civic Center from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. For more information please call 256-775-2600. CRISIS HOTLINE 256-734-6100.

**Overeaters Anonymous**

Gather at Grace Episcopal Church. Members of Overeaters Anonymous meet every Monday at 9:30 a.m. at Grace Episcopal Church in the Carriage House. New members are always welcome and all who are interested are invited to attend. For additional information please call 256-747-6218 or 256-352-3143. Everyone is invited to attend these gatherings.

**Cornerstone Revival Ladies Prayer Group**

A Ladies Prayer meeting is conducted each Monday night at 7 p.m. at Cornerstone Revival Center. For additional information call 256-796-2819. All interested women are invited to attend.

**Aqua Zumba Classes at CWAC**

Everyone is invited to take part in the Aqua Zumba classes that are offered each Monday at Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center beginning at 7 p.m. and run from March 18 through July 11. For more information please call 256-734-6100.

**Wednesday**

St. Monica’s Group

St. Monica’s Group for those addicted to alcohol or drugs meets every Wednesday night at 7 p.m. in the Rectory Basement of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church. ‘Root Ministry’ has the aim of radically overcoming obstacles together for anyone with any types of hurts, hang-ups, or habits in their lives. Please call 256-739-7091 for additional information. All welcome!

**Thursday**

**New Vision Support Group**

There is a New Vision Support Group which will meet at 10 a.m. and everyone interested in this subject is welcome to attend. The program is at Hilltop Community Center. Additional information is available by calling Linda Estes, 256-739-4653.

**Celebrate Recovery**

at Hanceville First Baptist Church

There will be a ‘Celebrate Recovery’ meeting tonight starting at 7 p.m. at Hanceville First Baptist Church. Childcare will be available. Additional information can be found at church office at 256-732-9150. Open to all!

**Ageless Grace Fitness Class**

Come join in the Ageless Grace Fitness Class held each Thursday evening starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Cullman Civic Center. Leader Ann Caretti will show attendees the latest fitness tips available. The event is sponsored by Cullman Park and Recreation Department. Call 256-734-9157 for more information.

**Friday**

**Nimble Thimble Quilt Guild of Cullman**

Members of the Nimble Thimble Quilt Guild will gather at the Colonial Cullman Museum starting at 9:30 a.m. All interested quilters are invited to attend.

**Aqua Zumba Classes at CWAC**

Everyone is invited to take part in the Aqua Zumba classes, which are offered each Wednesday at Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center beginning at 7 p.m. in the center’s indoor pool. Please call 256-775-7946 for additional information!

**Saturday**

Laughter Yoga at the Cullman Civic Center

Everyone is invited to take part in ‘Laughter Yoga’ classes at Cullman Civic Center starting at 10 a.m. Donations accepted but no set fee is charged. Come start your weekend out with some great ‘laughs’! Please call 256-734-9157 for additional information.

**Next Monday**

Cullman Kiwanis Club

The Cullman Kiwanis Club invites all local men and women who are interested in taking part in community service along with great fellowship, fun, networking, and learning to attend their weekly luncheon meeting at 12 noon each Monday at the All-Steak. Come see what Kiwanis is all about and enjoy a great luncheon meal as well.

**Domestic Violence Sufferer Support Group**

Victim Services of Cullman sponsors a Domestic Violence Sufferer Support Group meeting every Monday evening from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the old County Board of Education Library. For more information please call 256-734-3768. Everyone is invited to attend these gatherings.

**Aqua Zumba Classes at CWAC**

Everyone is invited to take part in the Aqua Zumba classes, which are offered each Wednesday at Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center beginning at 7 p.m. in the center’s indoor pool. Please call 256-775-7946 for additional information!
Recently I told someone that I thought 2015 would be Cullman's best year! Look at what is on the horizon: New job opportunities, positive retail and industrial growth, and plenty of new tourist attractions and events. It’s great to be a Cullmanite! But how did we get here from the downturn of 2009? I can answer that in one word, “YOU”!

Cullman has been named the “City of Character”. We have earned the fruits of our labor. Elected officials, leaders, churches and citizens alike have prayed, sweated, and devoted many hours to our economic recovery.

Now it is time to refocus our energy. If you have ever lived through a major crisis, you know that while your adrenaline was up, so were you. Once recovery set in, however, so did exhaustion. I don’t know about you, but my adrenaline is almost tapped out. I am going to use 2015 to refocus my personal and professional goals in order to make myself a more productive leader, spouse, mom and friend. Below are three habits I intend to resume and I would like to encourage you to do the same.

1. Become an early riser by going to bed early. Early risers really do have a distinct advantage when it comes to mental clarity, acuity and energy. Most of these articles are written at 4:30 am!

2. Start every day with an intention, focus, and meditation. Have you ever had a day where as soon as you woke up, there were already missed calls, text messages and emails screaming for your attention? You felt like you were struggling to stay afloat before breakfast. Oh, that sounds like every day, you say? Me too. That needs to stop. Prayer and meditation coupled with a clear vision of what you want to achieve will get your day started in the right direction.

3. Physical activity. Do it. Working out is probably the highest-leverage tool in your arsenal. It makes you feel better and keeps you both physically and emotionally healthy, year round. To have the mental energy to take on the full calendar of to-do's that people want from you, you have to get physical!

Our daily decisions and habits have a huge impact on both our levels of happiness and our success. Successful people are simply those with success-ful habits. “Working people have a lot of bad habits, but the worst of these is work” ~ Clarence Darrow

Happy New Year!
The final round of community improvement award winners of 2014 were recently announced, with the awardees listed. The Community Improvement Committee hopes to inspire others to take action to preserve, protect and promote community improvement in Cullman. Nominations are currently being sought the March 16 deadline. Anyone may nominate a commercial property/organization in the Cullman area. These awards will be given on a quarterly basis. Businesses/Organizations are eligible for one award per category each year and must be a Chamber member in order to be nominated. 

continued on pg 14...

Business/Organization with Best Landscaping – Small
Marx Optical

Business/Organization with Best Landscaping – Large
Cullman Regional Medical Center

Business/Organization with New Construction
Good Hope Pharmacy

Business/Organization with Best Curb Appeal
Traditions Bank

Right: Business/Organization with Best Restoration
Nearen Construction

Business/Organization “Building a Sense of Community”
Vinemont Sports Complex
MEMBERSHIP

Cullman Emergency Medical Services
601 2nd Ave SW Cullman, AL 35055

Hanceville Drug Company
101 Commercial St SE Cullman, AL 35077 | 256-352-5829

James R. Smith Trucking
240 Co. Rd. 222 Cullman, AL 35055 | 256-734-0511

Compton's Veterinary Hospital
1011 2nd Ave SW Cullman, AL 35055 | (256) 734-9488

Cutie Patooties
306 1st Ave. SE Cullman, AL 35055 | 256-590-7661

Creative Design & Screenprinting
343 Co. Rd. 591 Hanceville, AL 35077 | 256-734-7242

**New Chamber Members listed on page 13**

The Cullman Area is growing. In 2014 we had a total of 55 ribbon cuttings!

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Even three wishes won’t get you what you want.

That is, if what you desire is an office that runs efficiently and technology that gives you the power to work wonders. Because when it comes to a smooth running operation, magic just doesn’t cut it.

For technology that powers your business, call your local RJ Young representative, Israel Gomez, at 678.825.7851 or visit us online at RJYoung.com.

RJYoung
Your productivity is our mission.
Cullman's legislative delegation will give an overview of what's currently happening in Montgomery. So be prepared to find out all you ever wanted to know that is happening at our state capitol! Bring business cards and get ready to network. Our first community luncheon of 2015 will be happening on Friday, January 23 at the All Steak Restaurant Banquet Room, located at 323 3rd Ave., S.E. Cullman, AL 35055, from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Thanks to our January Sponsor Carter & Company Real Estate. Prices are $15 for chamber members and $20 for future members. For more information or to make a reservation, please call 256-734-0454 or email info@cullmanchamber.org.

COMMUNITY LUNCHEON

January's Community Luncheon Sponsor:

Senator
Paul Bussman

Representative
Ed Henry

Representative
Randall Shedd

January's Sponsor:

9910 US Highway 31
Hanceville, AL 35077
(256) 734-2032

1940 2nd Avenue NW
(256) 734-4472
www.billsmithbuickgmc.com

DECEMBER'S SMALL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

L to R: Bobbie Shedd, Mary Flanagan, Linda Cabri, Jo Kreps, Rickey Kreps, Manager (sitting), Carla Fussell, Cullman Florist, Maria Richter Schultz, Retail Committee Chair; Bill Strandlund, Charles Garrett.

Congratulations to our December Small Business of the Month winner, Office Equipment Company. This month’s Small Business of the Month was sponsored by Cullman Florist. The Small Business of the Month award is given monthly to a local small business that meets nomination requirements. Eligible candidates have under 100 employees, are members of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce and make contributions to our community, offer outstanding customer service and serve as inspiring success stories. Nomination forms can be downloaded at www.cullmanchamber.org.

Who will be awarded Small Business of the Year? Go to page 15 to see the nominations!
Leadership Cullman County is a nine-month series of seminars and programs designed to bring together a class of 20 community leaders to examine community issues such as education, healthcare, crime, government, economic development and quality of life. This ambitious group of leaders have successfully completed a group retreat, sessions on education, criminal justice and local government with January's outing to feature healthcare learning. Leadership Co-Chairs include Brian Lacy, Cullman Electric Cooperative; and TJ Franey, Cullman County Schools. Cullman Chamber President Leah Bolin leads the group and serves as program advisor. This spirited class looks forward to 2015 and all that the year will bring with it, including several opportunities for leadership ethics, service learning, and community improvement. January’s Session sponsor is Cullman Electric Cooperative along with the Breakfast sponsor Ed Holcombe Pharmacy.

Business changes for 2015?
Is your business changing locations for 2015, changes in staff, new hours of operation? Make sure you update your information with the Chamber! You can do this by logging into your Member Center. Please contact Magan F. Bartlett for your username! You can login to your Member Center by going to www.cullmanchamber.org, selecting the Chamber Tab, and choose Member Login. You will be able to access “how to videos”, Business Reports and update your information. By updating your business’ information you are helping others find you!

Youth Leadership Cullman County is entering the 6th month of their nine-month series of seminars and programs. The programs are designed to educate the students on community issues such as education, healthcare, crime, government, economic development and quality of life. They have enjoyed sessions on experiencing leadership, community day, volunteerism day, law & criminal justice day, and look forward to learning about quality of life in their January session. They will be having breakfast sponsored by Serra Visser Nissan, and the students will travel to local healthcare facilities throughout the day. Lunch will be provided by Jackson & Williams Attorneys. The students will learn about how important it is to a community to embody a positive environment that fosters physical & mental health, education and social belonging. Jackie Moore, Director of Finance & Administration, is the program advisor. Presenting Sponsor:

A Brand New Start in 2015
See What WSCC Continuing Education Has to Offer

Home & Family
Photography
Cake Decorating
Home Decorating Sewing
Genealogy
Computer

Health & Wellness
Yoga
Ballroom Dancing
Wellness Center for Seniors
Wellness Center for the Community

Academic Prep
ACT Prep Workshop

Training for Business & Industry
CDL Business
Welding Accounting
ServerSafe Computer

Short-Term Health Programs
Certified Nursing Assistant
Phlebotomy Technician
CCS Exam Prep Course
Medical Assisting Review

Online Courses
Health, Media & Design,
Business, IT Software Design

For course descriptions: www.wallacestate.edu/ce
To register call 256.352.7826
Classes start this month

Wallace State HANCEVILLE
CONTINUING EDUCATION

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
Thank you for you support & investment in the Cullman Area!

Spradlin Farm 256-734-6419
Hankey Law Firm 256-736-8744
MoMoSHE 103 256-841-1688
Colonial Life 256-347-7478
Dave Warren Photography 205-616-8009
Agcor Steel, LLC 256-734-4792
ASI Constructors, Inc. 719-647-2821
Buenavista Mexican Cantina 256-737-5050

The 2014-2015 YLCC class visited the Cullman County Detention Center during December’s session.

EYES OF PROGRESS
January 5, 2015

LEADERSHIP CULLMAN COUNTY

Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, speaks to the Leadership class.

Ben Harrison, speaks on behalf of Cullman Regional Airport.

Presented By:
The Smithsonian Institution’s traveling exhibition “The Way We Worked” will make its next stop in Cullman County, settling in at The Evelyn Burrow Museum on the campus of Wallace State Community College in Hanceville from February 10 to March 20. Admission to this exhibit free.

Expressly chosen by the Alabama Humanities Foundation to host “The Way We Worked” as part of the Museum on Main Street project, the Cullman area is one of only six communities in the state selected for the honor. The project — a national, state and local partnership — brings exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations as a way to explore the professions and the people that sustain the American society.

“The Way We Worked,” adapted from an original exhibition developed by the National Archives and Records Administration, explores how work has become a central element in American culture. It traces the many changes that have affected the workforce and work environments over the past 150 years, including the growth of manufacturing and increasing use of technology. The exhibition draws from the Archives’ rich collections, including historical photographs, archival accounts of workers, film, audio and interactives, to tell the compelling story of how work impacts our individual lives and the historical and cultural fabric of our communities. Since 1997, the foundation has partnered with the Smithsonian to bring the Museum on Main Street program to small cities and rural communities across Alabama. “Allowing all of our state’s residents to have access to the cultural resources of our nation’s premiere museum is a priority of the Alabama Humanities Foundation,” said Executive Director Armand DeKeyser.

“The Way We Worked” is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils, located in each state and U.S. territory, support community-based humanities programs that highlight such topics as local history, literature and cultural traditions.

Volunteers needed!

If you would like to volunteer to be a docent, please contact Elaine Fuller with the Cullman County Museum at 256-739-1258. Docents will work with former educators and current docents to lead schoolchildren and museum visitors on guided tours.
Morning Blend is a chamber event held each third Wednesday of the month in the Commons Room of the CoC. You set the topic, Starbucks provides the coffee. This is a great opportunity to network with others in the community.

Thanks to Cullman Electric Cooperative for being our monthly sponsor! This event was one of the Chamber's top events for 2014. Make sure you join us for 2015! You never know who you could meet!

January’s Monthly Sponsor: Cullman Electric Cooperative 

**SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**

For the past 15 months, the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce’s Retail Committee has presented the award of Small Business of the Month to a deserving business in the Cullman area that met pre-selected criteria. For the first time ever, the Small Business of the Year will be awarded at the 72nd Annual Meeting & Gala to be held on Thursday, February 19, 2015. If you would like to nominate a business for Small Business of the Month, please contact Derek Lane at dlane@cullmanchamber.org or submit a nomination form online at cullmanchamber.org. We look forward to awarding one of our hardworking local companies, as well as showcasing that our community is honored to have such prominent small businesses, which serve as one of the major economic engines of growth in the Cullman area.

**SBotM Winner**

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<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>October’s Winner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bella Faire Day Spa &amp; Salon</td>
<td>Jan-14 Mitch Smith Chevrolet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aprill Flours Catering</td>
<td>Feb-14 Brandin’ Iron Steakhouse</td>
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<td>ADS Security</td>
<td>Mar-14 Johnny’s Bar-B-Q</td>
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<td>Prestigious Pets</td>
<td>Apr-14 Alabama Farm Credit</td>
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<td>Cullman Chamber</td>
<td>May-14 EvaBank</td>
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<td>Cullman Chamber</td>
<td>Jun-14 Quick Tire</td>
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<td>Cullman Chamber</td>
<td>Jul-14 DQ Grill &amp; Chill - Cullman</td>
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<td>Cullman Chamber</td>
<td>Aug-14 Walker Brothers Ltd.</td>
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<td>Cullman Eye Specialists</td>
<td>Sep-14 R.E. Garrison Trucking, Inc.</td>
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<td>EvaBank</td>
<td>Oct-14 Southern Accents</td>
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<tr>
<td>What a Girl Wants</td>
<td>Nov-14 Valley Heating &amp; Cooling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cullman Florist</td>
<td>Dec-14 Office Equipment Co.</td>
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Tickets are limited for the Annual Meeting & Gala, please call the Chamber to reserve yours today at 256-734-0454. To learn more about the Annual Meeting & Gala, please refer to page 9. We hope to see you there!

**MEMBERSHIP 101**

These quarterly held meetings teach new and existing members how best to maximize their membership investment in the Chamber by joining us for this free and exciting seminar, where we will teach you the ins and outs of the Chamber and show you company the full experience of what being a member is all about! The next session of this program will be on Thursday, January 22, 2015 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sponsored by Charter Business, this event will be beneficial for you whether you are a new member – or a long-time member with new employees. We encourage you to make plans to attend so you can be sure you’re taking full advantage of your membership investment. A complimentary lunch will be available for all attendees. Reservations are requested, so please contact Magan F. Bartlett at mbartlett@cullmanchamber.org or by phone at 256-734-0454.

Membership 101 is presented by:

**Fricke, Sweatman & Miller, P.C.**

Certified Public Accountants

412 Second Ave. NE
P.O. Box 1083
Cullman, AL 35056

Phone: 256-739-0955
Fax: 256-739-3753

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Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC)

The Governmental Affairs Committee of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to reviewing, developing, and supporting issues that promote a positive, pro-active economic environment with social progress and enhanced quality of life.

**Role of GAC**

- Establishing productive relationships between business interests and public officials.
- Providing forums to inform Chamber members, public officials and candidates for public office on issues impacting the business community.
- Developing and supporting legislation and other governmental action which promotes a strong business climate and job growth opportunities.
- Endeavoring to hold public officials accountable for their actions and the resulting impacts on the business community.

If you would like to apply for the GAC please contact Debbie Matthews at dmatthews@cullmanchamber.org or fill out the application at www.cullmanchamber.org under forms.
If your life’s purpose is to walk with God, then there is a strong possibility that you have asked yourself, “What am I supposed to do?” or “Does God want me to do?” Blackerby shared several questions that you should ask yourself when thinking about what you should do as a profession with the life you have been given.

Question number 1: What gives you joy? Number 2: What are you good at? Number 3: Does anybody need you to do it? When you answer these questions based on a career, but also live your life as a Christian, you can be rest assured that whatever you are doing as a profession will be acceptable as long as you are serving the Lord in everything you do.

Let’s start with number 1. What gives you joy? Most people can answer that question without needing anyone else’s help. It is a great question to start on and explore. “Only know what you give you joy.” Blackerby said.

Next, ask yourself question number 3. Does anybody need you to do it?

Once you have figured out what you enjoy doing and then realize that you are in fact good at it, you have to ask yourself if it is something that someone needs you to do.

A humorous example that Blackerby used would be if you lived in New York and you are a great sheep herder and you love being able to do it, but no one needs you to do it in New York.

If you want to turn your gift into a profession, then you must think realistically about its viability based on where you live.

Now, we can get back to the initial question. What is it and where responsibility as a Christian in the world? Our role as Christians should be to spread the gospel to the world. There are a lot of ways you can do it.

It takes all kinds of people and personalities to do it or else the world would be boring, uninteresting and robotic. God created the world, us and our uniqueness. He has put something specific in all of us that makes all of us do things differently.

We have to remember that the gospel is a process, just like our lives. Your life does not have to be figured out all at once.

Blackerby said, “It can be a continual discovery about yourself. Sometimes you will find things out about yourself that you never knew. You discover things about yourself as you live and learn.”

He added that we should not think of things as notchtes in our belts or as crossing things off and moving on.

Instead we should think of things as a part of a journey. “Everything can be a graduation into something else,” he said.

The Divine Red Door Discussion Group is a weekly discussion group, led by clergy from various churches in town. It is designed to learn more about God from each other.

The group began meeting on Thursday, November 6, 2014 and meets every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The Alabama Tobacco Quitline – 1-800-QUIT-NOW – is available every day from 6 a.m. to midnight. Calls placed after these hours or on holidays will be ref ed to the next business day. For those who prefer electronic help, the same Quitline services are available at QuitNowAlabama.com.

Almost one in five adults in Alabama use tobacco. According to the 2013 Adult Tobacco Survey, more than 54 percent of Alabamians who smoke said they tried to quit at least once during the past year. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows that there are now more people who have quit smoking than there are current smokers.

“The benefits of quitting smoking are almost immediate,” said Bret Stanford, communication coordinator for the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program at ADPH. “Your heart rate and blood pressure drop within an hour and your circulation improves in a matter of weeks. Longterm, smokers who quit enjoy several major health benefits such as reduced risk of suffering fatal lung cancer and coronary heart disease. Also, by quitting smoking you could potentially save hundreds, if not thousands of dollars a year.”

Since 2005, the Quitline has helped thousands of Alabamians quit smoking. Callers are required to participate in coaching sessions to receive the free nicotine replacement therapy patches. “Many studies have shown that you are twice as likely to quit if you receive coaching along with patches,” Stanford said.

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States. Each year, 7,500 Alabamians die from smoking-related causes. According to the CDC, for every person that dies, 20 people are suffering from at least one serious tobacco-related illness. Since the first Surgeon General’s report on smoking and health was published in 1964, more than 20 million Americans have died because of smoking. The new report issued this year says active smoking is now causally associated with age-related macular degeneration, diabetes, colorectal cancer, liver cancer, adrenal health outcomes in cancer patients and survivors, erectile dysfunction, ectopic pregnancy, rheumatoid arthritis, and impaired immune function. In addition, exposure to secondhand smoke has now been causally associated with an increased risk for stroke.

For more on quitting, contact the Quitline at 1-800-784-8669.
Both of these dogs have an adoption fee of $90 that will include their general exam at the Vet, vaccines, wormer, rabies shot, microchip, spay/neuter, and free 45 days of pet health insurance. Pet Depot will give you a bag of food (you pay taxes) as their way of supporting adoption. If you know the owner of either dog or if you are interested in adopting one of the dogs, please call 256-734-5448 or come by the Animal Shelter.

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**AN ARTIST AMONG US**

_**Katie Dansby**_  
_katie@cullmansense.com_

**CULLMAN** - Shirley Roy at USA Healthcare is quite the artist. She passes the time by drawing and coloring pictures of the workers on the second floor where she lives as well as other drawings including landscapes, animals and cartoon characters.

"I started about 10 years ago drawing for the public. I’ve always drawn something and thrown it away because I thought it wasn’t any good. When I went in the nursing home people saw my drawings and they really liked them."

Sometimes Shirley looks at pictures that have already been drawn and then draws them herself. Other times, she looks at the nurses and CNAs that work on her floor and draws them from memory. She has drawn every employee on the second floor at USA Healthcare.

"If somebody wants their picture drawn, I just look at them, and as long as I have the color of their hair and the color of their eyes I can draw them." When she is finished, the drawings get hung up in the hallways on the second floor. Typically when someone asks her to draw a picture, they give Shirley what she will need to complete it.

"Most people that want my art have just gone and got me some art material. Then I give them the picture when I’m done." She has also put a few drawings upstairs on the third floor.

Shirley likes drawing because it helps pass the time. When she is looking for something new to draw, she picks something pretty and then just goes for it.

Among her current collections of drawings are Tinkerbell, Batman, and some festive pictures like Rudolph and Christmas stockings. She said that if she were to draw a famous person she would choose Elvis Presley.

Shirley likes taking requests as well, but her favorite things to draw are butterflies, flowers, trees, ponds, lakes, and people. "It takes about 20 minutes for me to sit down and draw a whole picture and color it." Shirley is present in other activities at the nursing home and enjoys participating with other residents in games in the afternoons.

"I like to go to activities. I can draw in the activity room at the tables." She said there is usually something planned to do in the afternoons in the activity room and there she can visit with everyone and draw if she pleases. Shirley loves to talk about her art and is thankful to have a hobby to keep her busy.

Shirley Roy began drawing for the public about 10 years ago.

It takes Shirley about 20 minutes to draw and color her illustrations.

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**PETS OF THE WEEK**

_Dandy_  
Hello my name is Dandy and I am about 9 months old. I am a Catahoula Leopard Dog and I currently weigh 47 lbs. I am full of life and I love to play. Come visit me today, and I will win you over with my sweet and loving nature!

Lexi  
Hello my name is Lexi and I am about 1.5 year old. I am believed to be a Jack Russell Terrier mix and I currently weigh 28 lbs. I am full of life and I love to play. Come visit me today, and I will win you over with my sweet spirit!

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**Medical Arts Apothecary**  
**Living Well Natural Store**  
124 7th Street, S.W.  
256-734-4933  
"Serving Cullman Families for over 50 Years!"

_SUSAN SKINNER ADKISON, R.P.H._
New Year’s Resolutions and Why You Shouldn’t Make Them

Chelsea Sparks
chesla@cullmansense.com

New Year is always an exciting time for everyone. It is a time of new beginnings, start- ing over and perhaps kicking some old habits from the previ- ous year. All over the world, people will be talking about their New Year’s resolutions and what they look forward to accomplishing. The idea of a resolution is in itself a good concept, but could you be doing more harm than good?

Perhaps you want to quit smoking or lose weight. These are two of the most common resolutions people made around this time of year, and both are great things to accomplish. However, there are a few problems with making these resolu- tions.

First, the problem is that when you make a resolution at New Year’s, chances are you have told everyone about your resolution. You have made promises out loud to yourself or family. “Starting January 1, I will not touch another cigarette,” you might say. This sets you up for failure from the start because you are dealing in ab- solute promises.

Goals like quitting smoking require a lot of work to keep up, and will not be easy with- out support. Challenges you will be up against will lead you to becoming ashamed or embarrassed, leading to you giving up completely.

Another reason most resolu- tions are doomed to fail is that we expect that once we are going to do some- thing, things will just magi- cally happen for it. Life is messy and the stars will not align to make it hap- pen. In fact, everything in the world will probably happen to keep you from your goal will it seem.

This will frustrate and dis- courage you from keeping it up, and being proud of what you did actually accomplish. Instead of being proud that you made it to the gym twice that week, you will be focused on the fact that you didn’t make it three days like you said you would.

Lastly, a lot of resolutions are made in one p.m. and you are sitting at a party with friends. You say a resolution in the moment and give up completely.

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Lee H. Hamilton
Contributor

Recent economic news has been broadly reassuring. Re- tail sales are strong, Novem- ber saw the best job gains in three years, the federal deficit is shrinking, the stock market is robust, and the Fed is shrink- ing interest rates — and the gap between economic growth. That’s many benefits. Although there is growing for everyone, not just of economic growth. That’s means they can now focus sure on policy makers to focus on its skills to meet changing needs, which have a far more sal- utary effect on our economy than singling out politically connected enterprises for tax and other benefits.

As Princeton economist Alan Blinder, political strate- gist Al From and others have pointed out, the key is to con- centrate on creating the envi- ronment in the country for sustained, non-inflationary eco- nomic growth.

To begin with, we have a chance to get our fiscal house in order and pursue long-term deficit reduction. This is a cru- cial early step for government to take in creating a sound environment for economic growth.

This means modernizing entitlement spending and shaping a tax-reform package that focuses on investments in economic growth, and cannot make small- mines economic growth.

Nor should it stand idle. We need to invest in economic growth for low-income Americans through early childhood education and training, and upgrading its skills to meet changing needs, will have a far more sal- utary effect on our economy than singling out politically connected enterprises for tax and other benefits.

There are other steps gov- ernment policy-makers can take to improve broad eco- nomic growth.

We need to expand trade through open markets and simplify the regulatory struc- ture so that it protects Ameri- cans without burdening com- panies beyond reason.

And we must address our nation’s deferred infrastruc- ture needs, which hinder the smooth functioning of every business that relies on trans- porting its goods.

Reforms to the tax code applies to re- forming government itself. A government that does not work well — that wastes mon- ey, fails its regulatory respon- sibilities, and cannot make timely decisions — under- mines economic growth.

You can see this, for in- stance, in our current inability to pass comprehensive immi- gration reform. We cannot in- crease economic growth with- out the people our labor force needs, from mathematicians and engineers to migrant farm workers.

Finally, policymakers need to remember that eco- nomic growth means provid- ing a ladder out of poverty for the truly needy. Providing opportunity for low-income Americans through the Earned Income Tax Credit and programs to upgrade their skills is vital.

Free, competitive markets are the best way to deliver goods and services to Ameri- cans. Government must not get in the way of that system.

Nor should it stand idle. The right response by gov- ernment to our economic challenges is not to focus on the immediate economic problems of the day, but to invest in economic growth for all.

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Represen- tatives for 34 years.
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