

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

Savior

THE ALABAMA
Gazette



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A Season for Giving! \$1,000

The Alabama Gazette will again present \$100 cash to ten deserving people in the Tri-County area.

Send in your nomination letter stating why you think your friend or family deserves \$100 cash for Christmas.

Please include address and phone numbers of your nominee.

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All nominations must be received by
December 16th.
Winners will be notified by
December 19th.



Governor and Rotarian Kay Ivey, Rotary District Governors Sue Mitchell (6860) and Bill Trant (6880) representing the entire state and ATFA Executive Director William Green

Farmers, businessmen and Rotarians joined Gov. Kay Ivey on Alabama's Capitol grounds on November 17th with a hope to cultivate stronger connections between urban and rural communities through the simple act of planting a tree.

The tree planting project kicked off Farm-City Week, which ended on Thanksgiving. This project aims to strengthen the public's perceptions of the important connection between farmers and those who work in cities. It also fulfills a challenge from Rotary International's President Ian Riseley for every Rotarian to plant a tree before Earth Day 2018. Ivey has been a Rotarian since the early '90s, and her farm was recently certified as an Alabama TREASURE Forest.

Earlier this month, the Alabama Farm-City Committee distributed informational resources to every Rotary Club

in the state to help the groups meet the challenge of planting one tree per member. The chapters also received a copy of the book *I Can Name 50 Trees Today!* from the Cat in the Hat's Learning Library, donated by the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association.

While the tree planting project is meant to make a lasting difference in local communities, Alabama is already blessed with forested lands. The state ranks third in the contiguous U.S. for timberland acreage, and the forestry industry provides over 122,000 jobs. Since 1990, over 3,150 trees have been planted for each baby born in Alabama.

The Shumard oak tree was grown at and donated by Hunter Trees LLC in Talladega County.

For more information, visit AlabamaFarmCity.org or Rotary.org.

CONNECTING
FARMERS
AND
THOSE WHO
WORK IN
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"You Are Being Played"

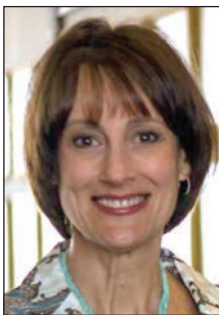
An Open Letter
To Alabama's Christian Community:
Nov 22, 2017

Dear Alabama Christians,

In my 50 years of following national political races I don't know if I've ever seen one as strange as the current U.S. Senate race in your state.

First, we had the national Republican Party in the September Senate run-off working against the state's more popular candidate Judge Roy Moore in favor of their establishment candidate, and former D.C. lobbyist, Luther Strange. The D.C. Republicans flooded Strange with money only to see him lose by a significant 9-point margin.

See Page 5A



The Chambliss Comment:

A Political Witch Hunt Influencing an Election

Entering the month of December, all I really want is to focus on the celebration of God's gift of the birth of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Not politics. And certainly not an incredibly nasty U.S. Senate race that is bringing unwanted attention to our beloved state.

Yet, here we are and we have a decision to make - one that will have a tremendous impact on our state and nation, and speculation of all manner is rampant about the message that will be sent with the election of either candidate.

Like many of you, I am disturbed by the allegations that have been made against Republican nominee Judge Roy Moore. The abuse of power in any form is contemptible in my mind, and those who exert it over others should and must be held accountable for their actions if they are indeed guilty.

See page 6A



Thomas Ertl

Guest Editorial

A columnist for
NewsWithViews.

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Inside the Statehouse with Steve Flowers

Steve Flowers is Alabama's leading political columnist. His weekly column on Alabama politics appears in over 60 Alabama newspapers. He served 16 years in the state legislature.

www.steveflowers.us

up for election to his fifth six-year term. It was expected to be a coronation. He was reserved, aristocratic, and almost felt as if he was above campaigning. Hill was also soft on the race issue. He was a progressive who refused race-bait.

Out of nowhere a handsome, articulate, young Gadsden businessman, Jim Martin, appeared on the scene. Martin was 42, a decorated World War II officer who fought with Patton's 3rd Army in Europe. He entered as a private and became an integral part of Patton's team, rising to the rank of Major. After the war he went to work for Amoco Oil and married a Miss Alabama - Pat McDaniel from Clanton. They then settled in Gadsden and he bought an oil distributorship and became successful in business. He was a business Republican and became active in the State Chamber of Commerce. When the State Chamber Board went to Washington to visit the Congressional delegation, they were treated rudely by our Democratic delegates who were still voting their progressive New Deal, pro union philosophy.

Martin left Washington and decided that Alabama at least needed a two party system and that he would be the sacrificial lamb to take on the venerable Lister Hill as the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate. Martin got the nomination in a convention and the David vs. Goliath race was on. By late summer the Big City newspapers could feel that Martin had some momentum. He was being perceived as the conservative and Hill as the liberal.

Every Alabama courthouse was Democratic, all sheriffs, Probate Judges, and statewide elected



officials. It was hard to imagine that the tradition of voting Democratic would change, but the winds of segregation were strong. When the votes were counted in November of 1962, Martin had pulled off the biggest upset in the nation. NBC's team of Huntley and Brinkley reported the phenomenon on the nightly news. Republican President, Eisenhower, called Martin to congratulate him. However, things were happening in rural North Alabama. Martin had won by 6,000 votes but three days later, mysterious boxes appeared with just enough votes to give Hill the belated victory. The entire country and most Alabamians knew that Jim Martin had been counted out.

Jim Martin would have been the first Republican Senator from the South in a century. Some people speculate that he would have been the vice-presidential candidate with Nixon in 1968. Regardless, he was the John the Baptist of the Southern Republican sweep of 1964, and father of the modern Republican Party in Alabama.

That 1962 Senate race was a precursor of what was to come two years later. Jim Martin was one-of-five Republicans swept into Congress in the 1964 Gold-water landslide. He probably would have won the U.S. Senate seat of John Sparkman. However, he chose to run for governor against Lurleen Wallace.

In 1987 Martin became Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. As commissioner, Martin helped create the Forever Wild land preservation program. Jim Martin has a special place in Alabama political history.



Ronald A. Holtsford

Can you make a "case" for celebrating Christmas on December 25th?

The Bible does not tell us the date of Jesus's birth nor does it tell us to celebrate His birth. A celebration of Jesus's resurrection following His death on the cross is a more appropriate celebration for Christians than His birth. That is because Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the proof of the deity of the Son and the real hope for those that believe on Him that their soul will reside with God forever.



Society however would much rather celebrate a birth rather than a death. I remember when my son was born. Looking at this innocent, beautiful child and thinking about how all possibilities were open for him. My mother and father-in law waited outside as he was born and was able to see him minutes after that miracle had come to fruition. Looking at the way my father-in-law held him, I believed he was quietly thanking God and praying for what his life would be. My brother, wife's grandmother and several friends came to visit while my son and wife were still in the hospital. The day after we brought my son home, my parents, my sister and my wife's aunt and uncle came to visit. It was a celebration of a new life and the hope that goes along with it.

While the deaths in the family have been a celebration knowing that our family members are now free from the afflictions of the body and reside without pain in Heaven, we still grieve at their death and the loss of the earthly relationship.

To your question, can I make a case for celebrating Christmas on December 25th? Maybe, number one since we don't know the exact day and number two if you think about God's gift to mankind that God the Son would reside in an earthly body and walk among us, then the date is not really relevant. There are several theories and possibilities.

It seems that pagans of various cultures such as the Egyptians and barbarians of northern and western Europe celebrated births and had various celebrations in or around December 25th. While there is suggestion of Christmas celebration as early as the third century, it seems that Constantine first made Christmas official. While some celebrated Christmas on December 25th, others (I understand the Armenians still do) celebrate Christmas on January 6th. January 6th is supposed to also coincide with the Feast of the Epiphany, being that day in which the magi came to see Christ and is said to have been His introduction to gentiles. There is also the theory that Jesus was conceived and crucified on the

same day of the same month, placing His birth on (or about)

December 25th. Some writers seem to be hesitant about considering sheep in the fields in December in that it would be too cold. In looking at expected temperatures for Bethlehem this year it does not seem that it should get any cooler than about 45 degrees F.

To me, if you really want the best clues to the birth of Jesus. I think you have to consider the birth of His cousin, John the Baptist. Zechariah was a priest and of the division of Abijah. Within that division the priests were chosen by lot to burn incense in the temple. With knowledge of when other divisions served it is believed that Zechariah served during the last week of Passover. Zechariah encountered an angel while in the temple. He was told that his prayers had been heard and that he would have a son. Zechariah was frightened and replied that he and his wife were very old. The angel told Zechariah more about who his son would be and that because of his unbelief he would be unable to speak until the baby to be named John was born. Further reading in the Bible shows an encounter between John's mother, Elizabeth and Mary the mother of Jesus in the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy. Zechariah was told that John would be filled with the Spirit even in the womb and it was evident when John jumped in Elisabeth's womb when she encountered Mary who had recently become pregnant with Jesus. Extrapolating out nine months from that time puts Jesus' birth at the end of September, which also coincides with the Jewish Festival of Booths or Tabernacles. There are other times that Zechariah could have served in the temple but many writers seem to favor service of the division of Abijah during Passover.

Regardless, I hope that in your celebration of the Christmas season that it will focus on Christ and remember that **"for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, . . ."** I hope that each of you have a blessed Christmas or to my friends of the Jewish faith a Happy Hanukkah.

This article is informative only and not meant to be all inclusive. Additionally this article does not serve as legal advice to the reader and does not constitute an attorney-client relationship. The reader should seek counsel from their attorney should any questions exist.

"No representation is made that the quality of legal services performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers."

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House and Senate
Take Important Steps to Support our Military

Just in time for the holiday season, Congress is saying “thank you” to all service personnel by authorizing the largest military pay raise in more than eight years. It’s part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which has now passed the House and Senate and is expected to be signed into law by President Trump.

As you may know, the NDAA is an annual bill authorizing various programs and activities throughout the military, ranging from weapons systems and training to military base construction and the payment of troops. After years of harmful budget cuts, this NDAA aims to rebuild our military by authorizing nearly \$700 billion for the Department of Defense, increasing the size of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Army Guard and Reserve, Naval and Air Reserve, and Air Guard. The bill authorizes an additional \$4.4 billion to strengthen Missile Defense and an additional \$1.9 billion for military facility maintenance over the President’s budget. It also makes permanent the special survivor indemnity allowance (SSIA) payments to more than 60,000 surviving military spouses. The NDAA includes strong funding for Alabama-based

military missions, including Army Aviation at Fort Rucker and military education and cyber warfare at Maxwell Air Force Base.

One of Congress’ most fundamental duties enumerated in the Constitution is to “provide for the common defense” of the nation. As your Representative in Congress, I take my responsibility to look out for our troops very seriously. It’s no secret that the world has seen increased threats in recent years, from the rise of ISIS in the Middle East and Africa to North Korean hostility. It is imperative that we provide the military with the tools they need to deter these threats, and I am confident this NDAA does just that.

It is my great honor to serve a district that is home to two of our nation’s finest military installations in Maxwell Air Force Base and Fort Rucker, thousands of active duty and reserve personnel, and nearly 16,000 military retirees. I have always been a strong and vocal proponent of properly funding the military, and I will continue to fight to ensure that the men and women who protect us have all the tools and resources they need to be safe and successful when we send them into harm’s way.

Martha Roby represents Alabama’s 2nd Congressional District. She lives in Montgomery, AL with her husband, Riley and her two children.



I’m thankful for the gift of family – for my husband Riley and our two wonderful children, Margaret and George; for our parents and all of our dear family and friends.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve my state and country in the United States Congress. It is an honor to be in a position to make a difference on behalf of those I represent and to fight to make this country great for all Americans. Thank you for allowing me to represent you.

I am thankful for this great country and all the freedoms we enjoy as Americans. I’m abundantly grateful for the men and women of our Armed Forces who have put their lives on the line to defend these freedoms – especially those who are deployed and away from their families at this very moment.

Have a Wonderful Holiday Season!



ROBSERVATIONS...

U-n-g-r-a-t-e-f-u-l

by Robert Tate

By now, all of us have heard about the three UCLA freshmen basketball players who were caught shoplifting in China a couple of weeks ago. Yeah, that is a pretty bad thing. Stealing is bad enough but to do it on foreign soil is taking theft to a new level. Haven’t these guys seen the 1978 movie, “Midnight Express” where the guy was trying to sneak heroin out of Turkey but got caught at the airport? Or maybe they have seen a couple of episodes of the series titled, “Locked Up Abroad?” Or maybe they never heard of Michael Fay who was caned in Singapore back in 1994 for “theft and vandalism.”



L-R: Cody Riley, LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill

The three freshmen, **LiAngelo Ball**, **Jalen Hill** and **Cody Riley** were looking at potentially spending 10 years in prison for stealing sunglasses. I’m not going to say 10 years is a little harsh but it is not my monkey and not my circus. The Chinese have the right to do what they want to do inside their country with respect to laws and those who break them. Just look at Otto Warmbier who died earlier this year after being released from a North Korean prison. These guys don’t mess around and certainly do not care about any future superstar status.

Well, as bad as the crimes were, luckily for the threesome, President Trump was in China at the time in talks with Chines President Xi Jinping. So how embarrassing a situation do you think this was for President Trump? You are in face-to-face

negotiations with your Chinese counterpart and three knuckleheaded, American basketball players get caught stealing. Not only that, he likely knew those actions stood to reinforce many Chinese citizens’ opinions of Americans. To his credit, President Trump, not wanting these guys to languish in a Chinese prison, went to bat for them and was able to secure their release. Bravo, bravo. Let’s all stand up and clap. But wait, there is one person not applauding.

Enter the always loud and imminently annoying **Lavar Ball**. The outspoken father of the newly released LiAngelo Ball and Los Angeles Lakers rookie Lonzo Ball. In an interview by ESPN’s Arach Markazi, when asked about President Trump’s help in securing his son’s release from China, Ball retorted, “Who?” Then he went on to say, “What was he over there for? Don’t tell me nothing. Everybody wants to make it seem like he helped me out. As long as my boy’s back here, I’m fine, I’m happy with how things were handled. A lot of people like to say a lot of things that they thought happened over there. Like I told him, ‘They try to make a big deal out of nothing sometimes.’ I’m from L.A. I’ve seen a lot worse things happen than a guy taking some glasses. My son has built up enough character that one bad decision doesn’t define him. Now if you can go back and say when he was 12 years old he was shoplifting and stealing cars and going wild, then that’s a different thing.”

Wow, where do I begin? When it was first reported that the shoplifting had occurred, Lavar Ball said it was “no big deal.” And to be honest with you, I think this is where the problem comes from. I fully understand that he loves and wants to defend his son. Most fathers would. The problem, however, is that the father, in his own words says that stealing is no big deal. I cannot support that. But this simply goes in line with his comments after his son’s release. Now I don’t care if you are a



Lavar Ball

President Trump supporter or not. It simply does not matter in this case. But when a man (our President) stares the President of another country in the face and asks for something he knows he has no right to ask for, and that thing is your son’s freedom, you thank that man. Profusely; again and again and again. You thank that man until your lips are swelled shut and any misguided pride, hatred and bigotry that filled your soul is laid bare. Yes, Donald Trump is a Republican but he also freed your kid and possibly saved his life. He almost certainly saved his multimillion dollar career that is staring him in the face a couple of years for now.

That people, is the definition of ungrateful. How about unappreciative, thankless, rude, immature, discourteous, ill-mannered, mean-spirited, impolite, boorish, loutish, uncouth, shall I go on? Instead of thanking our President for his help, all Mr. Ball can do is pontificate about how he has seen much worse things in L.A. than a guy “taking some glasses.” Instead of being so hate filled, he needs to take a step back and recognize that his son is with him today only because of President Trump’s efforts.

Through it all, however, there is one thing I will agree with Mr. Ball 100%. This act by his son and the other two young men, should not define him. I honestly do not want LiAngelo to be defined by this event for his whole life. If each of us were defined by a single moment in time, and that moment was something we would rather forget, most of us would never get anywhere. Like I heard in a movie once, **“God doesn’t care who you were, He cares who you are.”** I do pray these young men learn from this, move on and not look back. I likewise do not want them to look in the mirror 50 years from now and think of themselves as criminals. They may have indeed committed a crime but that doesn’t have to define their life and character.

When I listened to their apologies, to me those young men sounded sincere. I think it might be time for Lavar Ball to take a quick lesson from his son.

Continued from original article on page 2B
The Fishing Cat
By Ron VanHerwyn

People are the biggest threat to the Fishing Cat as they have not only destroyed much of their unique wetland homes with increasing levels of industrial and commercial activity but they have also been known to hunt Fishing Cats over the years for their meat and fur. Despite now being a protected animal species, large seizures of Fishing Cat skins at local markets still occur which indicates that poachers are still decimating populations, particularly in certain areas. Another problem for Fishing Cats caused by Humans is the fact that in areas close to growing settlements, locals are often overfishing in the nearby lakes and rivers which means that the food available for the Fishing Cats is also declining fast.

The Fishing Cat was first described scientifically by Bennet in 1833 and was given its scientific name with the last past meaning "civet-like". Although they are not closely related at all, the Fishing Cat has a long, stocky body with short legs and a short tail which makes it look remarkably similar to these small carnivores. Although Fishing Cats tend to be most commonly found in a variety of watery lowland habitats, they are also known to inhabit areas at elevations of up to 5,000 ft depending on the

waterways in the area (a small population is actually found in parts of the Himalayas). The Fishing Cat is classed as part of the Leopard Cat lineage which means that its ancestors would have evolved around 6 million years ago. Other members of this feline group include the Leopard Cat itself, the Pallas Cat and the Flat-Headed Cat, to which the Fishing Cat is most closely related

Due to the fact that the Fishing Cat is seldom seen in the wild as they are nocturnal and their preferred habitats would have been quite inaccessible to people for some time, until the middle of the last century they were locally common throughout much of their native regions. However, the hunting of them by people for their meat and fur has obliterated populations in many areas and even today; they are still illegally killed in their hundreds to sell their skins onto the black market. The biggest problem facing the Fishing Cat though, is the drastically increasing levels of Human activity in their natural environments that is severely affecting not just the Fishing Cats, but also the incredibly unique and bio-diverse wetland habitats in which they live. Water draining for agriculture and to make way for roads, growing Human settlements and high levels of industry that pollutes the water with toxic substances has reduced their once vast natural range by nearly 50%.

Today, the Fishing Cat is listed by the IUCN as an animal species that is Endangered in its natural environment and could therefore be threatened with extinction in the not too distant future. The biggest threat to the Fishing Cat is habitat loss with many of their remaining pockets of wetland homes now considered to be protected areas (illegal activity in these areas though is still contributing to the loss of species in these regions). Conservation projects have been set up in a number of areas to protect both the Fishing Cats and their unique wetland habitats and the hunting and trade in the species is now illegal. Poaching however still continues with skins still being seized from markets in the Far East.





*The views of submitted editorials
may not be the express views of
The Alabama Gazette.*

John Sophocleus

THINK

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My first Gazette Christmas column contemplated how many were still haunted by Miss Greer Garson's voice in the opening narration of the 1958 animated version of "The Little Drummer Boy," one of the few indelible remaining memories of my youth from Christmases long past.

The King James Version of Luke 2:1 reads:

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed."

Her narration continued with, *"To disobey the Roman Emperor meant certain death,"* as the viewer watched the diverse procession to Bethlehem, *"...young and old; famous and mighty; and some not yet known, but would be revered for all time. They were good people who could ill afford the cruel tax about to be imposed upon them."*

For those like myself who believe in the power of God's word or the hardest zealot of the atheist religion (I don't share their belief in negative proof but God teaches me to be tolerant) it certainly is worthy to note the details of this child's birth celebrated every Christmas. The Gospels make it difficult to dismiss this Roman decree which determined Christ's grim birthplace into this world - in a cave with lowly animals and shepherds in the City of David.

Readers of past columns on despotic taxation will not be surprised I've found it timely to type once again about current politburo machinations unfolding in our modern Rome on the Potomac. To those interested in reading more on world tax history from ancient times to present, I always recommend Prof. Charles Adams' book entitled, *"For Good & Evil: the Impact of Taxes on the Course of Civilization,"* which includes how encompassing the power of Rome applied to Christ's time on earth. This earthly journey begins with Christ's birthplace soiled and dictated by Roman despotism as Caesar Augustus mandated return to cities of origin to be taxed. To understand the meaning of Jesus coming from the lineage of David is very powerful, if not predictable to anyone familiar with the history of that era and Old Testament teachings.

In 1996, House Majority Leader Dick Armey's office contacted me (the more prolific Prof. Laband was not in country) about the federal tax code given our research on how deleterious redistributive activity is to the US economy. Our prior research found almost a fourth of measured GNP (yes we're that old, before the more politically correct GDP nomenclature became the norm) was devoted to legal/political activity of this sort. Mr. Hauser (member of the board of overseers at the **Hoover Institution**) cited **Citizens for an Alternative Tax System** founding about 10% of this loss resulted solely from our complex, non-uniform tax code. Prof. Armey found the number one issue lobbied on Capitol Hill is the tax code, which must (Art. 1 Sec. 7) originate in the HoR.

I wasted little time reminding the Majority Leader's Chief of Staff the federal govt. was NOT designed to be financed by an income tax. Our first unconstitutional federal income tax imposed by Lincoln and the Republicans was finally abolished in 1872 along with efforts to repair the faith in our nation's currency diminished by our first fiat money issued under Republican hegemony. The federal income tax was reintroduced (without President Cleveland's signature) via the Wilson-Gorman Tariff in return for tax relief Ag and raw material producing States desired. The following year the SCotUS correctly ruled it unconstitutional (1895) and would not be implemented again until the 16th Amendment (1913). I further stressed the uniformity clause (Art. 1, Sec. 8, Clause 1) still applies and our thousands of pages of tax code were not put in place to facilitate uniformity (the Confederate Constitution added text to this clause to make clear their tax code would not be used to foster one branch of industry over another) but designed to promote specific interests over the general welfare of our citizens.

I told him little surprise Prof. Armey found the tax code the number one source of lobbying activity as the unconstitutional 435 limit (1929) reduced real representation where only about 200 members of Congress had to be bought/persuaded to pass some specific change in the tax code for some wealthy or well connected special interest. This **decreased** real representation **increases** incentives to hire lobbyists. If Majority Leader Armey sincerely wanted the influence and amount of lobbying activity to diminish in DC, abolish the labour union this 435 limit established, boxing out a more diverse, representative body impacting the price of political favours in the House. While this did not make it into Mr. Armey's 1996 "How Taxes Corrupt" *Wall Street Journal* editorial, text on uniformity did. Given the likelihood Prof. Armey or any other House member (certainly not Boob Riley) would take their oath of office seriously... when asked what I considered a 'second-best' solution, I suggested the Hall & Rabushka Plan - at that time it was the first many heard 'post-card sized tax form' words buzzing in DC.

Hall & Rabushka Plan would only allow a uniform standard deduction (Mr. Hauser used \$16k to be indexed to inflation in keeping with poverty line/median income data) for every taxpayer then a 20% flat tax on every taxable dollar earned above the set standard deduction for all. With median individual income at about \$32k; \$45k for households and poverty line approx. \$12k per person; \$25k for a 4 person household, something around \$16k may still be in range today. Someone earning \$16,001 would pay 20 cents in federal income tax which is about 0% (\$0.20/\$16,001) and one earning \$20,000 pays \$800 in federal income tax which is a 4% effective rate (\$800/\$20,000). Higher incomes pay closer to the 20% rate as this standard deduction (without any loopholes, AMT, etc.) becomes less significant. Consider an income of \$200,000 that pays \$36,800 in federal taxes which is an 18.4% effective rate - i.e., approaching the 20% rate.

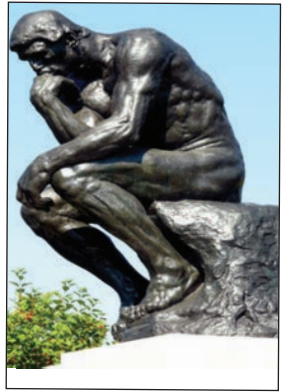
This would indeed send short-run shock waves through the tax preparation industry. Most members of Congress will not have the courage to move forward toward taxation of this sort more in line with the letter and Spirit of the document they've taken an oath to uphold. A moratorium on ANY other changes in the tax code must be a part of the plan and allow taxpayers time to adjust. The first year, taxpayers may file either the old form(s) or the postcard, then everyone must file the "Hall & Rabushka" postcard the following year. The only way to get northern shippers to secede from the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union was to guarantee the federal govt. would not abolish the importation of slaves for at least 20 years and it was in fact done the first year permitted in 1808. There is no reason such a long adjustment period is required for a change of this sort. Historically Americans have accepted taxation which does NOT exceed 20% and very quickly adapt to changes in the federal tax code. Those who champion 'progressive' taxation can tout the Hall & Rabushka Plan has very low incomes directly paying **NO** federal income tax and higher incomes pay more in real **and** nominal terms. Extremely high incomes (think large corporations) effectively pay 20% tax rates as the small nominal standard deduction will have minute impact on reducing their rate below the flat 20%.

There may be a few in our Alabama House delegation (Messrs Aderholt, Brooks, Palmer?) who understand the merits of this tax plan. My few interactions with my Congressman and Mr. Sessions suggest they're not intelligent enough to understand the economics of this tax plan. It doesn't really matter if 'Cash Register' Shelby understands, he's made it clear he cares more about political contributions than the general welfare of our State and nation. The current distraction of our special election is yet another in deceivers' weapons of mass distraction arsenal to thwart any discussion toward curbing our complex, despotic tax code currently addressed on Capitol Hill.

A short recap. Republicrats were clearly rattled when barely enough (50.3%) primary voters decided to reinstate the duly elected Alabama Supreme Court justice to avoid wasting even more taxpayer money in a run-off. Some said the 0.3% margin was driven by those who wanted to reverse federal Judge Myron Thompson's poor ruling and wrongful removal of this ELECTED judge however poor/incompetent this or any other judge shown her/himself to be. The sage old retort asserts, "Two wrongs do not make a right." This certainly applied to the Moore/Thompson debacle. Some forgave Moore sincerely thinking he did not know what he was doing. Also, Moore was placed in the subordinate position to Thompson who should have known better (although given his ivy league education, likely ignorant as well) and guarded/preserved Moore's civil rights even when the victim is not of a mind to know/understand his own rights. Most despairing, it appears Judge Thompson enjoys opportunities to use Roy Moore types to further destroy our civil rights in Alabama. It was long past time for Chief Justice Moore to mature and be an effective advocate for our state under federal hegemony.

Sadly, Moore squandered the wonderful second chance voters gave him to learn from past failure and use it well. I was among the voters who wanted to reinstate a Christian man worthy of forgiveness who I prayed had learned from past mistakes and hubris to be a sound Chief Jurist of Alabama. I sat at a table with Roy Moore in Auburn. It seems he simply cannot comprehend a Christian so confident in God's Word, Message and Power that I find those who wish to impose my faith on others repulsive. Much has been made of the child molestation charges which I would struggle with as legal charges. What I find repulsive is Roy Moore has continually shown himself as one who has no problem forcing his mind, body and understanding of good spirit on others just like Barr, Clinton, Condit, Conyers, Domenici, Edwards, Ensign, Frank, Franken, Foley, Gingrich, Hastert, Hyde, Kennedy, Packwood, Weiner and Trump who also quickly come to mind as more recent examples.

"... a decree from Caesar Augustus for all to be taxed" and current 'Weapons of Mass Distraction' deployed by our modern Rome on the Potomac.



Mitch McConnell's pouring money into reinstalling Strange to champion corporate welfare coupled with this first run of prohibiting crossover voting in taxpayer funded primary runoffs boxed out big govt. modern Democrat extremists from bailing out the corporate welfare extremist candidate they preferred over big govt. right social welfare extremist Moore. Current Chair of the Moore Campaign, Bill Armistead, who championed Felon Hubbard's special election to politically steal \$437 mil. from our trust fund via a special election (49 days before a general election where it was certain to fail) offers no confidence a Senator Moore will be any different than the big govt. extremists he'd replace. Those who want to vote for small government candidates (Books and Pittman combined didn't place second) can't survive the rigged primary process and aren't allowed on a general election ballot where our Sect. of State thinks it OK to eliminate elections denying voters' civil rights to write-in if there's only one duopoly candidate. Sect. Merrill thumbing his nose at the federal courts after ruling against Alabama's excessively restrictive ballot access laws on special elections makes the results even more despotic. Much ink and oxygen has been exerted on dynamics of weapons deployed these past weeks.

Now comes the hue and cry to return to wasting my vote on the modern Democrat after letting the corrupt Republicans back into Alabama without firing a shot. The interesting timing for this big govt. extremist is how long it took to go after the progressives who murdered four children in Birmingham. Nice to finally prosecute this cold case for PR purposes; where was the Party when prosecuting the progressives of that era may have made a difference? Justice delayed has indeed been justice denied. Where was Mr. Jones when I was fighting the wrongful taking of (mostly black, poor rural landowners) property by our corrupt, racist Alabama State Lands Division? Hard to imagine a Mr. Jones who's championing the same worn current progressives playbook (increase min. wage, etc.) which disproportionately harms teens, minorities discriminated against and single moms will be any more useful at stopping the harm done by the progressives of today. We (me and my eldest Godson Peter) have been fighting corruption against rural back churches in my county these past three years and I forecast Mr. Jones will be just as useless and dismissive getting the federal DoT's civil rights division to do anything about these wrongdoings as Sessions, Shelby and if/when elected a Senator Moore.

My conscious will not allow me to waste my vote on either of these two extremists anointed by this rigged duopoly system. From the outset I thought it was a squandered opportunity for the Alabama Constitution Party to endorse Moore. The Party's moniker suggests they'd champion the Constitution where their federal candidate would not be advancing any specific interest and allow competition to promote the general welfare. Imagine how Christianity would again prosper without coercive Moore types as an example turning off genuine Christians and those searching for God's Truth. The Libertarian Party of Alabama announced their write-in candidate (Ron Bishop) not allowed on the ballot and there's some other non-party/independent write-in candidates for those who wish to participate but can not bring themselves to waste their vote on either of these two flawed duopoly candidates allowed on the ballot. If enough non-duopoly voters show at the polls to beat the margin victory, the Republicrats will take notice. My forecast is yet another low voter turnout result continuing the current embarrassment under the corrupt dominant Party of the moment. Alabama is now as backward as the rest of the nation bouncing back and forth between the two corrupt Parties wondering why things improve for those in power as the general welfare continues to decline.

This column is intended to be at least one sobering moment in your 2017 Christmas celebration to think about the age old issue of standing against despotism in our federal, local and State governments. It is my sincere prayer all who know the power of Jesus Christ's teachings will take Him into their hearts this blessed season and overcome the weapons of mass distraction at the hands of the ruling elite who have made a modern Roman (Soviet style/command and control) government their god. I know the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ, Son of the true God is indeed greater than the spirit of evil in the sons of Nimrod, Caesar(s) et al because it is His name which remains above all nations. This small Child of God, relegated to be born in a cave at the behest of a despot setting the world on a course toward increasing darkness; in the City of David, with the lowest of mankind by worldly standards would do more to bring light and the Spirit of Zion to a wicked world than Rome could possibly contain. And yes... the Spirit of Zion has nothing to do with geography - it does not recognise geopolitical boundaries of man.

Continued on page 5A



Tom Ertl is a home builder in Tallahassee, Florida and is a member of a local Presbyterian Church (PCA). For over three decades Tom has worked with various Christian political organizations, including Freedom Council in the 80s. He is a former member of The Council For National Policy and has sat on various Christian ministry and political boards. He is also a publisher of Christian historical and theological works and is a columnist for NewsWithViews.

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Guest Editorial

“You Are Being Played”

An Open Letter To Alabama’s Christian Community:
“**You Are Being Played**”
Nov 22, 2017

Dear Alabama Christians,

In my 50 years of following national political races I don’t know if I’ve ever seen one as strange as the current U.S. Senate race in your state.

First, we had the national Republican Party in the September Senate run-off working against the state’s more popular candidate Judge Roy Moore in favor of their establishment candidate, and former D.C. lobbyist, Luther Strange. The D.C. Republicans flooded Strange with money only to see him lose by a significant 9-point margin.

Then, in the general election, this very same GOP-Washington establishment continues to undermine Moore in favor of electing a Senator from the Democratic Party. We might have to go all the way back to Goldwater to find anything that resembles these unusual political circumstances.

In their attempt to destroy their own candidate, the Republican hierarchy has colluded with their media nemesis, the Washington Post, to promote a smear campaign against Judge Roy Moore.

GOP – WASHINGTON POST COLLUSION

On November 9th, 2017, the Washington Post broke the story of four women with their alleged accounts of their 38-year-old dating experience with Roy Moore. As soon as the story broke, the usual cast of “Swamp” creatures surfaced with feigned outrage demanding that Moore step down from the race. McConnell, McCain, Flake, and Romney issued their immediate demand without any examination of facts. Their instant condemnation of Moore gave evidence of their orchestration. Within days, other GOP establishment elites including Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan, chimed in to condemn Moore.

The Washington Post describes the accusers claims of dates they went on with Moore when they were in their late teens. The more serious charge of the four was given by Leigh Corfman who alleged that, when she was 14, Moore sexually assaulted her.

Corfman would have been the key witness in bringing down Moore, but within days, substantial credibility issues of this witness were uncovered when it was found out that Corfman had been married three times, filed bankruptcy three times, and had accused three pastors of sexual misconduct. The last of these points completely discredited her testimony, but the national press and the GOP establishment continue to repeat the allegations as though they were true.

The Post story further crumbled when one of the accusers, Debbie Gibson, turned out to be a Democrat operative, having worked for Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden and at the time was campaigning for Doug Jones.

So when the initial round of accusers lacked the hoped-for effect, the establishment rolled out one Beverly Young Nelson on November 13, accompanied by none other than the infamous feminist, Gloria Allred, all set for a prime time New York City press conference. Should we expect anyone less than Ms. Allred for such an event?

Ms. Nelson produced a tearful scene of Moore taking her in his car when she was 16 years old behind a restaurant and sexually assaulting her. It was compelling theater complete with a yearbook signature, tears, tissues, and comforting hugs from Ms. Allred. So convincing was the display that at the time it moved some conservatives away from Moore.

But like Ms. Corfman, upon closer examination of the evidence, Ms. Nelson’s accounts also started crumbling. Within hours, photos of the yearbook were examined and found to be a forgery. Ms. Nelson’s step-son went public, declaring his step-mother’s allegations to be “one hundred percent lies” and on the following day, evidence surfaced revealing that Judge Moore had presided over Mrs. Nelson’s 1999 divorce without her objection. A second Moore accuser totally discredited!

By this time the citizens of Alabama were starting to awaken to the lies and smear campaign against Judge Moore.

SAUL ALINSKY TACTICS

The tactics used against Judge Moore are right out of the Marxist, Saul Alinsky’s playbook in his Rules for Radicals.

“Ridicule is man’s most potent weapon.”

“If you push a negative hard and deep enough it will break through into its counterside.”

“Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it.”

“Go after people and not institutions; people hurt faster than institutions. (This is cruel, but very effective. Direct, personalized criticism and ridicule works.)”

The opposition to Judge Roy Moore used a classic Alinsky approach of destroying the man, not his ideas. They know they cannot win the election debate over issues that affect the people of Alabama so they sought to destroy the person.

THE FALSE WITNESS BUSINESS MODEL

Always throughout human history, a deep pool of false witnesses has been available anytime and at any price, and 2017 Alabama is not an exception.

Usually, in the more public high-profile cases where corrupt men procure their liars, they do a more thorough job of vetting their false witnesses. Ms. Corfman and Ms. Nelson’s credibility was destroyed so quickly that we can conclude that their organizers have been very sloppy in their recruitment and orchestration.

Alabama Christians, do you think that the four women who came out at the same time on November 9 to give their story to the Washington Post did this spontaneously after 38 years had elapsed? Do you think Ms. Nelson also, after 38 plus years, had a sudden inspiration to call Gloria Allred to help ease her pain?

No and no. All of this has been orchestrated by political agents looking to destroy a good man. Can you imagine the expense, time, and research these men must have gone through to coordinate these attacks on Judge Moore? We also know from our own biblical history, false witnesses do not come without a cost.

Let me also ask you your thoughts on the Washington Post. Do you think that this deep-state paper which has continually labored to keep the pedophilia and assorted sexual perversions of their political associates under wraps, now on November 9, suddenly became concerned with the welfare of women in Alabama dating from 1977? Has the Washington Post suddenly seen the light about the moral condition of the country and its politicians?

No, not at all. BUT THEY KNOW YOU DO. They know that the Christian people of Alabama demand character in their political leaders while across the political aisle; issues of character are mostly irrelevant.

Thus, we have the real purpose of the Washington Post article: to orchestrate a smear campaign against Moore in order to suppress the Christian vote in the Alabama Senate race.

These people know the mind of the average Christian and their desire for godly character and public morality. If they can take the experience of dating younger women and turn it into the perception of an under-age sexual assault, then they would have driven a permanent wedge between Christian voters and their Christian candidate.

My call to the Christian community in Alabama is to stop being naïve. Seek to know how the world works. YOU ARE BEING PLAYED. Being played is defined as:

“Lied to, set up to be taken advantage of. To be cheated by a set up of actions or circumstances that have been deliberately planned.”

Do you think that instead of being emotionally manipulated by false reports it would be prudent to reserve judgment until the facts are discerned? Do you think the proverb applies to the circumstances regarding Judge Moore?

“The first one to present his case seems right, Until

another comes forward and questions him.”
Proverbs 18:17

BEARING FALSE WITNESS 38 YEARS LATER

In times past, bearing false witness (or more commonly known today as ‘slander’) came with severe penalties. In the case laws of the Bible, slander came with a greater civil penalty than many sexual sins and thievery. One can always restore a stolen bike or a car but how can a good name be restored after it is dragged through the mud with lies and deceit?

As a Christian, should not your outrage and anger be directed at these false witnesses and those who have orchestrated such lies?

For these women to bring up accusations based on an alleged incident 38 years ago is on its face, absurd. This is why in the Christian West we have “Statutes of Limitation” written into our legal system.

Sir William Blackstone, the most respected jurist who greatly impacted early American jurisprudence, wrote in his Commentaries on the Laws of England:

“The use of these statutes of limitation is to preserve the peace of the kingdom and to prevent those innumerable perjuries which might ensue if a man were allowed to bring an action for an injury committed at any distance of time.”

If the ruling establishment is successful in Judge Moore’s election defeat, then what Christian man in Alabama or the nation would not be susceptible to the same defamation when allegations, by themselves, become the new standard for guilt?

CONCLUSION

Conservatives across the country have written much about the out-of-state influences in your Senate race. There is an ever-growing number of Alabamians who realize that their Senate election is being manipulated by political operatives in Washington, D.C. They do not view this kindly.

The tide has taken a turn in the second week after the Post story broke. Many national commentators including President Trump are now taking a more reserved position, declaring: “Let the people of Alabama decide their own election.”

Christian, naiveté is not a virtue. Be aware of the deceptions of this world and the devices of how corrupt men manipulate both mind and emotion for their political purposes. Use your common sense and biblical wisdom to understand the recent events in your state.

Your Senate race has garnered national attention because it is one of the most important ones in decades. Important because it will help determine the leadership and future direction of the Republican Party and to the eventual restoration of the American republic.

This election goes beyond a battle between two opposite political views and candidates of Moore vs. Jones. It is also a battle against two forces with two different visions for the future of the GOP. The players are McConnell and Ryan on one side, representing the older establishment, globalist, Bush wing of the Republican Party vs. Steve Bannon and President Trump, who embody the America-First, anti-globalist, economic nationalism movement.

NOT voting for Judge Moore on December 12, is a vote for partial-birth abortion, same-sex marriage, globalism, open borders and a liberal Supreme Court.

Finally, remember the account in Genesis 39 when Joseph was falsely accused of a sexual assault by Potiphar’s wife. Joseph spent two years in an Egyptian prison before he was vindicated. We don’t have two years to wait. Judge Roy Moore needs to be vindicated by the people of Alabama on December 12.

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*The views of this editorial
may not express the views of
The Alabama Gazette.*

Continued from page 4A
John Sophocleus

Use this sort of Truth and Light as you celebrate the beginning of Jesus Christ’s path in this world during the Christmas season, understand the magnitude of the mission His Father set Him upon. If you truly believe and adhere to His teachings, it destroys the power of death and darkness in this world. Without this fear Rome’s (and the many leviathans to follow) ability to advance their despotic ends is thwarted. Jesus showed us the way - it is up to us to have the courage, faith and wisdom to follow. If we do not stand well against evil and corruption in our everyday lives, we are failing Him and the righteous efforts many suffered so mankind may not be compelled to endure the agony of Roman despotism again.

Postscript: many thanks to all who sent comments and more input about Mayor Fuller's 'moneychanger' game in Opelika. As I type this column at the end of another Thanksgiving celebration of our blessings, I'm reminded of the courage and wisdom of the Plymouth colony recorded by Governor Bradford. Imagine if they'd not given up on their failed common storehouse generating the famine and misery they endured to assign property rights to one's own harvest; we'd likely never know of their success at overcoming more public interest rhetoric and theory to actually prosper in reality securing God's blessings for themselves and their posterity. Liberty and property have a history of being a fertile environment to bring out the best in societies.





The Education Station... *By Bobbie Ames*

Bobbie Ames writes from The Hoffman Education Center for the Family, where the ministry promotes Christian Education that is foundational to the Historic Biblical Principle Approach. Consulting services are available through the Hoffman Research Library. She can be reached at P. O. Box 241405, Montgomery, AL 36124, or at bobbiehames@gmail.com.

The Crisis We Face Today: And the Only Solution

WE HAVE HEARD THE 13TH CENTURY CALLED THE AGE OF FAITH, THE 18TH CENTURY CALLED THE AGE OF REASON, AND THE 20TH CENTURY CALLED THE ATOMIC AGE.

Our current age has rightly been called

THE AGE OF IRRATIONALISM.

Today, it is common of many labeled "intellectuals" to despair of true knowledge. Government schools and colleges have given up moral absolutes as true knowledge.

For centuries, people of faith, whether Old Testament believers or New Testament scholars, believed that knowledge was contained in Holy Writ, and can be known to man. In fact, it was written for man's redemption.

Rationalism was something that was taken for granted generations ago. When discarded, what is lost? The word is taken in its ordinary sense for its cognitive faculty, that which perceives, compares, judges, and infers. Rationalism, in all of its forms, proceeds on the ground of Theism, that is the belief in a personal God. (Hodge, on Rationalism)

Dr. Sinclair Ferguson has written passionately about the spiritual power of the printed word, and especially, since the birth of the printing press. Even earlier, Paul from prison, asked Timothy to bring "his scrolls, the books, especially the parchments." **2 Timothy 4:13**

The lack of reading today is alarming. Reading Christian literature, in addition to our Bible reading, adds to the health of the Christian Church. Dr. Ferguson writes that Martin Luther was responsible for, amazingly, one-third of all the books published in the German language in the first half of the 16th Century. No wonder we need to celebrate the Reformation again and again. (Ferguson, [Read Any Good Books?](#))

Libraries are declining in possession of books, selecting technology instead. To this writer, this is a travesty. Suppose that every church had a goal to have a library filled with books. "Books which help bring us to the stature of the fullness of Christ." **Eph. 4:13**

Would it not be a goal for Christian parents to have their children sit under the teaching of Augustine, Calvin, Spurgeon, Bunyan, or Baxter? Paul longs for us to be connected with the Saints and prays so in **Eph. 3:18 & 19**.

Many in today's world have repudiated the belief that true knowledge is even available to man. They despair of knowledge, unable to embrace God's Word in total acceptance. If we cannot affirm the Virgin Birth, how can we affirm the inerrancy of Scripture? Let's face it, irrationalism has permeated our culture. Of all of its paths, the attack on Truth, on Revelation, on Logic, is the most damaging.

As Christian believers, we pray for Revival. Is it possible to have a truly Christian revival, if irrationalism has even invaded some of our churches through compromises? Our first duty is to affirm doctrine, theory, and then to apply that to our everyday practice. If American Christians do not affirm true Knowledge, how can the Church extend the power of the Gospel?

Decades ago, a missionary of world wide travel, came into the life of our family and ministry, visiting us when he was in the States numerous times. He brought a new understanding of Paul's writing in Romans to us all. He took us through the eleven chapters expanding on doctrine and theory, and then the last chapters on living that out in daily practice. Paul clearly explained it to help us avoid confusion and irrationalism. This is a promise, "Sin shall not have dominion

over you, because you are not under the law, but under Grace." **Romans 6:14**

However, note this: Sin is not dead to us or as an operating power in the world. We are aware of sin's working in the world, and can feel pressure in our own lives and circumstances.

With the Christmas season approaching, we have the assurance of God's Word. We have the personal revelation of who He is as the "I Am", the personal God. All the names and titles given to him, all the attributes ascribed to Him, all the works attributed to Him, are revelations of who He truly is. He is the Elohim, the Mighty One, the Holy One, the Omnipresent Spirit. He is the Creator, the Preserver, the Governor of all things. He is the Father. He is the hearer of prayer, the giver of all good. He feeds the young ravens. He clothes the flowers of the field. He is Love.

He so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. He is merciful, long suffering, abundant in goodness and truth. He is a very present help in every time of need; a refuge, a high tower, an exceeding great reward. He is our ruler and father, with whom we can commune. His favour is our life - his loving kindness is better than life. This divine revelation of God in his own nature and in his relation to us is not a delusion. It makes God known to us as He truly is. We therefore know God, but no creature can understand the Almighty unto perfection. (Hodge, Vol I p. 344-45)

As we view the Son, we view the Father. God has revealed Himself in the person of His Son. He and the Father are One. The Revelation that He made of Himself was the manifestation of God. The words of Christ, are the words of God. The works of Christ are the works of God. The love, mercy, tenderness, the forgiving grace; as well as the holiness, the severity, and power manifested by Christ, were all manifestations of who God truly is. We see, therefore, with our own eyes, who God is.

Philosophy must veil her face in the presence of Jesus Christ as God, manifest in the flesh. She may not presume in that presence to say that God is not, and is not known to be, what Christ Himself most clearly was. The doctrine that God is the object of certain and true knowledge, lies at the foundation of all religion and therefore, must never be given up. (Hodge, Vol I p. 345)

This writer is so grateful to the Alabama Gazette for letting us write on the deep meaning of Christmas, and the tragic cultural decay in our beloved Republic. May every Christian embrace the Gospel more intimately, and reach out more passionately to others. May the Scriptures and the Carols have more meaning than ever before in our hearts. May we, in our family life, renew our faith commitment to each other, to our local congregation, and to the embracing of the Word more diligently and more thankfully.

Romans 8:1 **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**

Romans; 8:28 **"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to His purpose."**

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Marcia Chambliss

The Chambliss Commentary



A Political Witch Hunt Influencing an Election

Entering the month of December, all I really want is to focus on the celebration of God's gift of the birth of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Not politics. And certainly not an incredibly nasty U.S. Senate race that is bringing unwanted attention to our beloved state.

Yet, here we are and we have a decision to make - one that will have a tremendous impact on our state and nation, and speculation of all manner is rampant about the message that will be sent with the election of either candidate.

Like many of you, I am disturbed by the allegations that have been made against Republican nominee Judge Roy Moore. The abuse of power in any form is contemptible in my mind, and those who exert it over others should and must be held accountable for their actions if they are indeed guilty.

But I'm also very disturbed by the fact that we live in a world that is quick to judge and condemn based on allegations. It's as if we have lost the ability to even stop and consider the meaning of the word.

An allegation is simply a statement that illegal activity or wrongdoing may have taken place, but not proof of said activity or wrongdoing. And while we have a legal system of justice that is based on innocent until proven guilty, the court of public opinion is unfortunately more than willing to convict and condemn based on allegation without fact.

That reaction is more closely aligned to mob mentality than the rule of law. And that is a sad and all too often dangerous mindset of our culture, whether it pertains to celebrity, politician, or even our family and friends.

It's basic human nature to believe the worst about someone when you don't care for their personality or their politics, and it's far too easy and convenient in our current culture of personal destruction. Allegations spread like wildfire, and once circulated, many make judgements and especially voting decisions based on that first headline. Add a candidate that is either loved or hated with equal passion, and you have a recipe for a high likelihood of emotions influencing elections. In my mind, it's an abuse of power by the media with little to no regard for due process.

What I'm finding most remarkable right now is the immediate rush to

condemnation by conservatives who otherwise preach the importance of our Constitution at each and every abuse of power by those on the left. As with any accusation of criminal or ethical misconduct against citizens of this nation, thorough investigations should be conducted, formal charges filed if warranted, and then a trial by jury in a courtroom to determine guilt or innocence, with the accused having adequate time to prepare for defense. What we've witnessed in the past weeks does not even closely resemble due process afforded to all; it's a political witch hunt, plain and simple, and it's a far too predictable pattern from the left and the elite establishment.

In full disclosure, I did not vote for Judge Moore in the primary; I supported one of his many opponents in that initial race. However, I did vote for him in the runoff because I, like many in our state and nation, believe that the current insider culture in our nation's Capital is detrimental to our future, and the only way of breaking its hold is to elect those we believe are also opposed to business as usual.

So I will stand firm in my decision to vote for Judge Moore on December 12th, not because I agree 100% with everything he has ever done in his political career, or because I'm condoning sexual misconduct, or that I'm a legalistic Christian fanatic who turns a blind eye to misdeeds from anyone on the Republican side of the aisle. No, it's because I still believe in due process, and I also can't ignore the suspicious timing of these bombshell allegations that have not surfaced in Judge Moore's prior campaigns. It's because I will always vote for someone who believes as I do in the right to life, that our Constitution still matters, and that our Lord is our ultimate authority. Should these allegations against Judge Moore later prove to be true, we still have laws that will provide recourse for removal and replacement, and I will admit that once again, I have been fooled by a politician.

But that day has yet to come, and this election is far too important for me to stay home or cast a vote for a write-in candidate that will ultimately deliver the win to a man who is diametrically opposed to my values regarding the right to life, the limited role of government, and conservative principles.

I still stand with Judge Roy Moore.

Marcia Chambliss has been involved in grassroots conservative politics since 2009 and has contributed opinion articles pertaining to and cultural issues to The Alabama Gazette since 2010.



Ed Jones
Football
Writer



AUBURN HAS GEORGIA ON ITS MIND



Auburn has a direct line to the 2017 National Championship. But, the path goes through the state of Georgia. First there is the SEC Championship in Atlanta's brand new Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Saturday, December 2nd. Another win over the Georgia Bulldogs locks up a date for Auburn in the NCAA top four football playoff in January. That sounds easy since the Tigers mauled the Bulldogs in Jordan-Hare Stadium on Saturday, November 11th. Beware, it is very difficult to beat a good team twice in one year and, make no mistake about it, Georgia is a good team. With a win over Auburn in Atlanta, Georgia goes to the playoff. Either way the path to the national championship runs right back through Georgia again. The same Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta is the site of the national championship in January. So, Auburn players, coaches and fans will have Georgia on their minds for the next month.

The semifinals of the playoffs will be played in the Rose Bowl and the Sugar Bowl. But, to Auburn, their championship run is through the State of Georgia. This is really a great opportunity for Auburn. The Atlanta area has the largest concentration of Auburn fans than any place in the country. Mercedes-Benz is sold out for the SEC championship game and the national title game. Expect the attendance to be 60% Georgia and 40% Auburn. There is no doubt in my mind that the Auburn fans played a big part in helping the Tigers beat Alabama on November 25th. The Alabama players had difficulty communicating and that led to several bad plays for the Tide.

Speaking of the Tide, there is an outside chance that they can make it into the final four. A loss by Wisconsin in the Big Ten Championship Game is one log that has to fall. Ohio State is quite capable of beating Wisconsin. The next log to fall would be a loss by Oklahoma to TCU in the Big 12 Championship Game. This is probably unlikely the way Oklahoma is playing now, but the TCU defense has risen to the occasion many times in the Coach Gary Patterson era. New Oklahoma coach, Lincoln Riley could make a rookie mistake, but don't count on it. Another scenario is to have Clemson lose to Miami in the ACC championship game. This would make Clemson 11-2 and Miami 11-1. If all these unlikely events occur, Oklahoma would be 11-2 versus Alabama's 11-1. Wisconsin would be 12-1 having lost to 11-2 Ohio State. Miami would be 11-1 and Clemson would be 11-2. Alabama's 11-1 stacks up well against any 11-2

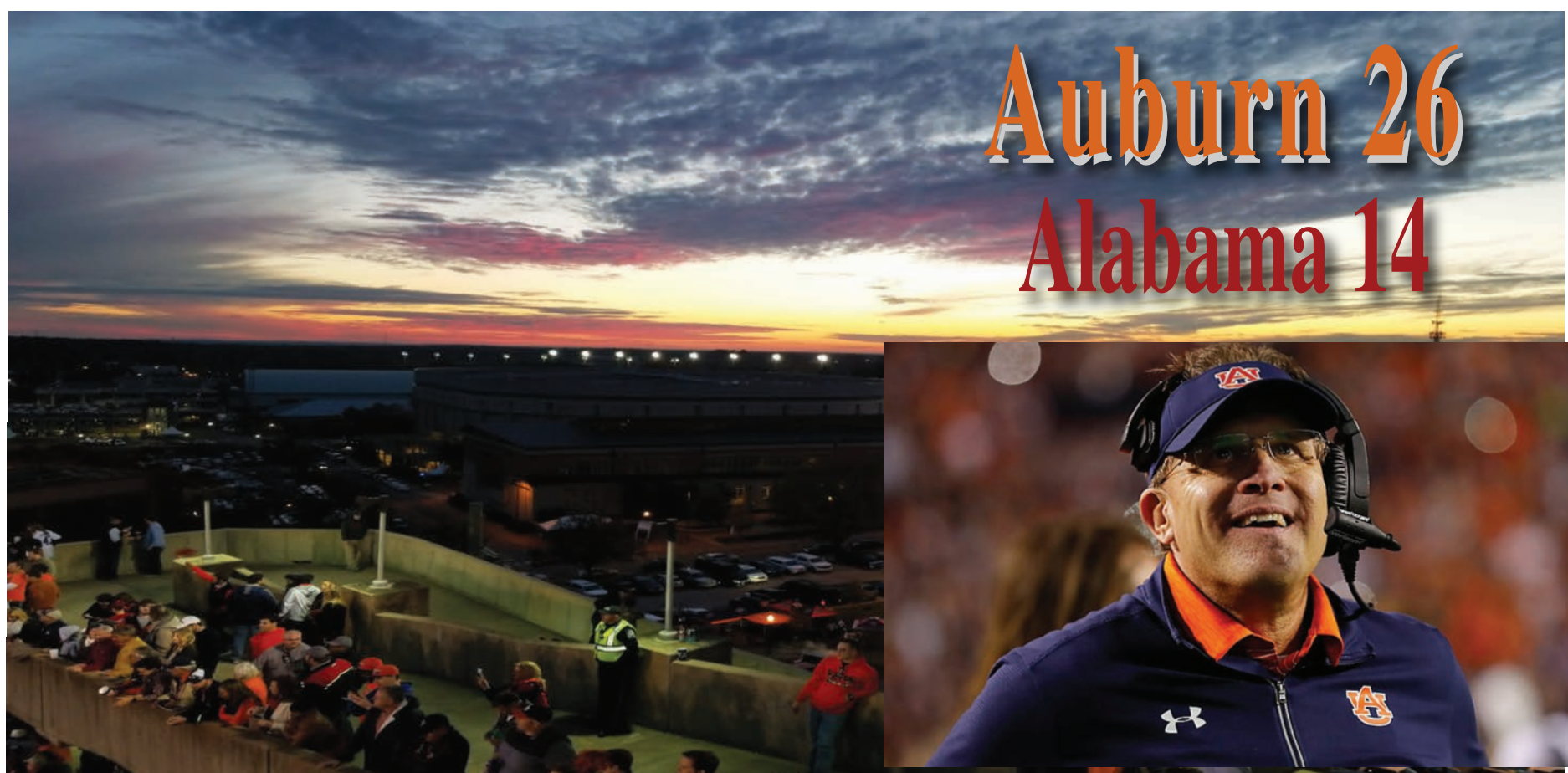
team, and well enough against Miami at 11-1 and Wisconsin at 12-1. Georgia has to lose to Auburn making Georgia 11-2, which will not top Alabama's 11-1. So, there is a chance for Alabama, be it a slender one. The NCAA four-team playoff has never been without Alabama. It might just happen this year.

Now, how did Auburn get to this place where they are on the brink of a second national championship run under the guidance of Coach Gus Malzahn? With a 6-2 record Auburn faced Texas A&M in College Station, undefeated Georgia at Jordan-Hare and undefeated Alabama in the Eagles Nest as well.

I wrote in my November column that six SEC coaches were in serious trouble with their administration, alumni officials and their fan base. They were Jim McElwain at Florida, Butch Jones at Tennessee, Bret Bielema at Arkansas and Kevin Sumlin at Texas A&M. Hugh Freeze had already been fired at Ole Miss. The sixth SEC coach that I listed was Gus Malzahn of Auburn. My exact words concerning Coach Malzahn was that the end of the season could get ugly. Auburn had given the LSU game away in October, and tried to use an unbelievable offensive game plan in a loss to Clemson by eight points in September. Auburn people were not happy. At 6-2, Auburn faced Texas A&M on the road, Georgia and Alabama at home. This looked like at best an 8-4 finish again for sure.

Credit Gus Malzahn with the perseverance and stamina to face this lineup with confidence in himself, his offensive coordinator and in his defensive coordinator. He became a Division 1 head coach during that stretch by deciding to give the offense to Coach Chip Lindsey and the defense to Coach Kevin Steele, giving him the opportunity to be a head coach doing what head coaches do. From this point in the season Auburn raced through those last four games with big wins over Texas A&M, Georgia and Alabama. That "feeble" 6-2 record became 10-2 with a chance to play for the national championship. I don't remember such a drastic turnaround in a very long time.

Congratulations to a good man who may have turned into a really good head coach, Gus Malzahn!



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Woods & Waters

Steve Long with Steve



Bow Season ... tracking a deer after it's been stuck with an arrow.

This month, I want to talk about how to anticipate tracking a deer after it's been stuck with an arrow. There are some tell-tale signs to keep an eye out for when the arrow hits that can give you a good idea of where you hit it and how long you need to wait before tracking it. Of course, I can right out tell you that shots to the head and neck aren't really what you want. Sure, they're pretty vital, but with all the bone, skin, muscle, and fur in the way, you're more likely than not just going to give that buck the shave of a lifetime and not a spot on the wall. Your main target is just behind the shoulder, where the heart is. A true shot through the heart will typically have that deer give a mule-kick, followed by a rather short meeting with the ground. In the rare case that the deer scampers off, and you're not sure where you tagged it, if the blood is a bright, almost pinkish color with some slight bubbling, you can bet that whitetail isn't too far off. The bubbling, for the curious, is from the arrow clipping the lungs, as it's pretty hard to shoot the heart without getting a bit of a lung shot.

Now, if you've ever been out there hunting deer, you know as well as I do that those animals rarely ever give you a good, clean, broadsided shot. Typically, you'll make do with the best shot you can get, so it pays to note what the deer does when it's hit, as well as what kind of blood trail you're looking at. Let's say you tag that buck in the spine. Odds are, with the thick bones and everything else, your arrow is going to break. However, a spine shot means that buck isn't going anywhere, but you'll need another shot to deliver that buck from its misery. Don't wait.

If you tag it in the gut, you're in for a long night. That sucker will take a few short steps, arch its back, tuck its tail right in tight, and slowly walk or trot out of the field before bedding down somewhere nearby. You want to take your time before trailing this deer, as a gut shot will normally be fatal, but not quick. If you push after that deer too quick and too soon, it'll get up and run off before bedding down again, making locating it far, far more difficult. Your arrow will have flecks of brown and green on it as well as blood, and you'll definitely know if it's a gut shot from the smell. Try to avoid this one as much as possible!

If you tag it in the liver, that deer is done for. However, like a gut shot, it will take some time before you'll safely be able to approach; 3-5 hours is probably a good rule to follow. Your arrow will be covered in a very, very dark red blood, with a good start to the trail as it slowly fades out. Liver shot deer can go anywhere from 200 yards to a quarter mile before bedding down. As for the initial hit, just like a lung shot, the deer will more than likely trot off a little bit, or maybe just walk. Unlike the lung hit, where the deer will shortly fall over, a liver shot deer will take time to find a good place to rest. Just be patient and be ready.

Of course, while aiming for the heart is optimal in all situations, if you pull too far over, you'll smack that arrow against the foreleg of the deer, right into the scapula, which, unfortunately for you, is designed to protect the deer's vitals. If you pull back towards the heart and vitals, you'll have meat in the freezer for sure, so hope, pray, and aim well, that your shot goes away from the bone. If you think the shot was high, up into the shoulder and bone, don't wait. Get down there and get ready to finish the job. If you're sure you nailed the vitals, then the wait is just a few minutes; a wounded animal is always dangerous to approach, so please be careful when approaching.

All that being said, we're gearing up for some gun hunting, so let's talk about deer roaming habits. As most of you know, the big old bucks don't get that way by being dumb, and every researcher worth his or her salt knows it too. Naturally, they're working hard to get to the bottom of those big bad bucks' mysteries, and



15 year old Jordan Murphy with a beautiful buck taken Thanksgiving afternoon.

our wildlife biologists and researchers have turned to the latest in gadgets and tech to help reveal just where that trophy's been hiding. Of course, I'm talking about GPS collars.

After tagging a buck with a collar, biologists can check up on their subjects through the Eye in the Sky, letting us know just what a buck does with his day. As it turns out, from multiple studies performed across the United States, they do a whole lot of waiting. Most bucks seem to stay right smack in whatever area they can find that's chock full of cover and food. Clearcuts with plenty of browse are a favorite, and they will stay in them all day, every day. Most studies have shown bucks will only leave well after hunting hours are over; we're talking 3 in the morning! Now, as the weather cools off, browse gets sparse, and the rut starts cranking up, those big boys will start to wander out of their comfort zone a bit more often. If you're a bowhunter, early season, you'll want to find a good thick-growth area with lots of protection, and try your darnedest to sneak up alongside it without getting caught. You might find yourself with a good story and a better trophy.

As gun season rolls around, stay patient; the big boys don't head out of their homes without good reason, so finding a buck in broad daylight is more or less like hitting the lottery. Be patient and resist the urge to leave the stand early. After the rut kicks in, all bets are off, as those lover boys aren't as concerned about safety as they are about those does.

Another thing to remember is that pressure will push deer off of their daily routine faster than anything else. GPS collars have shown that deer will adjust the same day they sense a hunter moving into an area, in as little as 12 hours. The average time for them to head back to an area with pressure is about 3 days, it seems. Keep your presence minimal and your impact light, or you might not get what you came for!

All in all, there's a whole lot more to go over, but we're already here at the start of the season. I hope all of you have prepared well and scouted out ahead of time, and I also hope all of you bow hunters managed to get a good story, if not a great trophy. So get out there, grab your camo and your ammo, get your Game Check ready, and go get'em!

Kritter Korner

The Fishing cat is yet another example of a cat that disproves the misconception that cats don't like water.



The Fishing Cat is a small to medium sized feline that is natively found throughout a number of countries in south-east Asia. Unlike other cat species found around the world (with the notable exception of the Jaguar) the Fishing Cat spends most of its life in areas of dense vegetation close to water and is an excellent swimmer. However, despite its water-loving lifestyle, the Fishing Cat is not particularly specially adapted to its semi-aquatic lifestyle with small teeth that are not well designed for holding onto slippery prey and only slight webbing between the toes on its front paws to help it to negotiate the slippery banks. Although the Fishing Cat is known to still be locally common in certain areas, the global population is severely under threat as it is thought that nearly 50% of their specific wetland habitats are under threat from increasing levels of Human activity throughout much of its natural range.

The Fishing Cat has a stocky and powerful body that is quite long in comparison to its short legs. Their short and coarse coat of fur is olive-grey in color and patterned with solid black spots that run the length of its body and often turn into black lines along the spine. The Fishing Cat has a short and flattened tail that is marked with black rings and can be used by the animal when swimming as it works in a similar way to a rudder on a boat, steering the Fishing Cat in the right direction through the water. Their small feet are slightly webbed but not any more so than many other feline species, but one of the biggest differences between the Fishing Cat and its relatives is that their claws are not fully retractable with the tips still sticking out slightly from the protective sheath of skin on their toes (most felines are able to completely retract their claws to prevent them from

Fishing Cat

have quite broad heads in relation to their body with small, rounded ears that are black on the back and have a distinctive white spot in the center.

The Fishing Cat is natively found throughout a number of countries in south-east Asia including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam along with the Indonesian Islands of Java and Sumatra. Although the Fishing Cat appears to have a wide geographical range, due to the fact that they prefer dense, wetland habitats they are only found in certain regions throughout these countries. Ideally, the Fishing Cat inhabits wetland areas where there is plenty of dense vegetation to provide cover both from predators but also to hide from potential prey, and can be found in a variety of aquatic regions that include mangrove swamps, rivers, lakes, marshes, reed beds and areas of forest close to streams. They are, however, severely threatened throughout much of their natural range as wetlands are drained for agriculture or often polluted by industry in the area. It is thought that 98% of the globally significant wetlands throughout south-east Asia are under threat and could even disappear completely.

The Fishing Cat is a nocturnal and solitary hunter that rests amongst dense vegetation during the day before heading to the water at night to find food. They are incredibly strong and capable swimmers and have been known to swim vast distances often in pursuit of a fish trying to get away. Fishing Cats are largely territorial animals that occupy ranges of up to 14 square miles (although the range of a female is often much less), with that of a male Fishing Cat overlapping the patches occupied by a number of females in the area. Fishing Cats are known to be relatively adaptable animals and in certain areas are even known to live around city suburbs with little vegetation and close to Human settlements. Their incredibly elusive and nocturnal lifestyle means that they are often hard to spot, but are susceptible to being trapped, poisoned, or accidentally caught in snares that are set-up to catch other forest animals, such as Deer.

Although little is really known about their breeding or social behavior in the wild, mating is thought to take place in January and February when a female Fishing Cat will call to males in the area, indicating that she is ready to mate. After a gestation period that lasts for between 60 and 70 days, she gives birth to

becoming blunt when they are not in use).

Fishing Cats have quite broad heads in relation to their body with small, rounded ears that are black on the back and have a distinctive white spot in the center.

1 - 4 kittens that weigh about 150 grams and are born blind. Fishing Cat kittens develop relatively slowly at first putting on an average of 11 grams in weight a day and don't open their eyes until they are just over two weeks old. At around 50 days old the kittens are able to start eating meat but are not weaned for at least another couple of months. Fishing Cats reach their adult size and are able to breed by the time they are nine months old and become completely independent of their mother about a month later when they leave to establish a territory of their own. Although it is thought that it is just the female who rears her young in the wild, captive males have been observed helping her to raise their offspring.

The Fishing Cat is a carnivorous animal that only hunts and consumes other animals in order to acquire all of the nutrients that it needs to survive. As its name suggests, aquatic animals make up the bulk of the Fishing Cat's diet with more than 70% of the food thought to be fish, followed by molluscs, frogs, snails, and snakes that are found in or close to the water. Fishing Cats are also known to hunt small mammals such as mice on land and will even target larger prey like civets, dogs, and livestock in areas close to settlements. Fishing Cats catch their prey in a couple of different ways, but tend to dive into the water once a fish has been spotted before catching it in its mouth (they are even known to dive into quite deep water and can surface under aquatic birds to catch them). The other method they use involves them sitting at the water's edge either on the bank or a rock and using their paw, they lightly tap the surface in a way that mimics an insect to attract fish. Once it is close enough the Fishing Cat then scoops the fish out of the water using its paw and flicks it onto dry land before eating it.

Due to the powerful build and aquatic nature of the Fishing Cat they are thought to have very few (if any) real natural predators in the wild. However, the Fishing Cat is often found in areas where they share their habitats with larger carnivorous mammals such as tigers and bears which could be of threat to them.



Ron VanHerwyn



Commissioners Corner, PSC

**Commissioner Chris “Chip” Beeker, Jr.
I Am Thankful**

In November we celebrate two holidays that cause us to reflect on our history and the need to remember the sacrifice of so many. Those holidays are Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. The month of November also reflects fall in its full array of colors, which serves to remind us of the need to be thankful for things we mostly take for granted every day.

I hope that you paused on Veterans Day to give thanks for those men and women who were brave and selfless enough to fight for our freedom. My 96-year-old father served at Pearl Harbor and was there on December 7, 1941. He is just one member of the greatest generation but he has been, throughout my life, a living example of someone who placed their life on the line for the freedoms we enjoy. There are not adequate words to express my gratitude towards the men and women who served in our military to protect us. For each of you, I am thankful. I am also thankful that we have someone in the White House who appreciates those who proudly wore their country’s uniform.

Of course, the other holiday in November during which we give thanks is Thanksgiving. This is a time when families unite, travel to be with one another, and enjoy fellowship. Thanksgiving is, however, more than just family. It is a time to remember God, from Whom all blessings flow, and being thankful for what He has done and continues to do in our lives. During the holidays we often see the best in people. People invite those who don’t have family into their homes to enjoy Thanksgiving and show a little more kindness than they do during other times of the year. But this is how we should live during the rest of the year. I am reminded of II Corinthians 9:11-12 “You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.”

With age, I find myself extra thankful for the little things in life. My family, health and well-being, and blessings which are too numerous to count. I encourage you to do something meaningful for someone this season, whether they be someone you know or someone you have never met. Recognize that God has blessed you and that you can be a blessing to others. Psalm 107 verses 8-9 say “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.” My prayer is that everyone who reads this has a blessed and joyous holiday season. Let us not take our blessings for granted and be reminded of how fortunate we are. I am indeed, truly thankful

The views of this editorial may not express the views of The Alabama Gazette.



Buddy Hicks

The Financial Corner √NEW YEAR PREP

I’m sure most of you, like myself, will have the usual resolutions of exercising more and eating better but what we need to add to that are resolutions concerning our finances. First, you’ll want to work out your budget for the year and then determine where there are holes in your financial design. Let’s start with your insurance needs. Make sure you have your health, dental and vision insurance in place. Next, take a look at your auto and homeowners insurance. Then you will want to review your life insurance and long term care insurance. Your insurance needs are the foundation of your financial needs. Once you have reviewed all of your insurance and filled any gaps that you may have found, then it is always a good idea to review your retirement savings. You may feel like you are fine with continuing to save for your retirement in the upcoming year at the same rate as you did this year. But, depending on what your upcoming budget looks like, you may need to make some changes. For instance, what if you got a raise in salary or you changed jobs and you are making more now. It may be prudent to increase your contribution rate. If you happened to lose your job or your salary is still the same but you picked up more debt this year, then you may need to reallocate to help accommodate your living expenses or to pay down debt. You may also want to look at what kind of traveling you may

Well, it’s that time of year again. Time to start thinking about your resolutions for the New Year and making your plans and goals for the New Year. I’m sure most of you, like myself, will have the usual resolutions of exercising more and eating better but what we need to add to that are resolutions concerning our finances. First, you’ll want to work out your budget for the year and then determine where there are holes in your financial design. Let’s start with your insurance needs. Make sure you have your health, dental and vision insurance in place. Next, take a look at your auto and homeowners insurance. Then you will want to review your life insurance and long term care insurance. Your insurance needs are the foundation of your financial needs. Once you have reviewed all of your insurance and filled any gaps that you may have found, then it is always a good idea to review your retirement savings. You may feel like you are fine with continuing to save for your retirement in the upcoming year at the same rate as you did this year. But, depending on what your upcoming budget looks like, you may need to make some changes. For instance, what if you got a raise in salary or you changed jobs and you are making more now. It may be prudent to increase your contribution rate. If you happened to lose your job or your salary is still the same but you picked up more debt this year, then you may need to reallocate to help accommodate your living expenses or to pay down debt. You may also want to look at what kind of traveling you may

plan on for the year or any vacations you plan on taking and how you want to pay for them. It doesn’t have to be an overwhelming process to plan for the upcoming year. Basically you want to make sure you have a plan which can lessen the opportunity for surprise budget shortfalls or that can put you in a better position to be able to handle any unexpected expenses that may come your way. Another good reason to prepare your upcoming budget now is because of the spending you may be doing this holiday season. There is usually a lot of money spent during the holiday season including gift shopping, decoration purchases, travel expenses, donations and cooking and baking expenses on top of the normal living expenses. If you haven’t budgeted for these additional holiday expenses and you have to rely on credit cards, then you need to budget to pay these expenses off in the coming year. You can also take this opportunity to budget for the expenses for the next year so that you won’t feel compelled to use credit cards in the next holiday season.

This is also a good time to assess any potential large expenses for the upcoming year. For example, the house you are living in may have some age to it and the heating and cooling systems or water heaters may be nearing the end of their lives and could be potential large untimely purchases in the new year. It may be time to have your house painted or other necessary repairs made or the roof replaced. Also, look at your vehicles. If they have a lot of miles on them, it may be time to look into replacing them or at least budgeting for possible upcoming repairs like new tires or brakes.

**Wealth Management Group, LLC
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No matter what your current situation is or what your upcoming year looks like, things can always change and you want to be as prepared as you can be. If you need help assessing your upcoming needs and preparing a budget, seek out a Financial Advisor that can sit with you and give you some guidance. With so many things that you cannot control, it is always prudent to focus on what you can control and do the best you can.

If you don’t have a Financial Advisor, please feel free to call me and I’ll be happy to set up a time to talk with you.

Buddy Hicks is a Financial Advisor with Wealth Management Group LLC an affiliate firm of Securian Financial Services and has over 18 years of experience in the financial services business. He is Life and Health Insurance licensed and FINRA registered with his Series 7 and Series 66 which allows him to be an Investment Advisor Representative and Registered Representative of and offer securities and investment advisory services through Securian Financial Services Inc, member FINRA / SIPC. He is an Alumnus of Troy University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business/Finance. He takes a process approach with all of his clients to help determine their goals and then works with them to put a strategy in place to help reach those goals. An area of importance of Buddy’s is his ability to intuitively listen to his clients so that he can fully understand their current situation and what their future needs might be.

The views of this editorial may not express the views of The Alabama Gazette.

Merry Christmas - Happy New Year2018!

*“May Light always surround you;
Hope kindle and rebound you.
May your Hurts turn to Healing;*

*Your Heart embrace Feeling.
May Wounds become Wisdom;
Every Kindness a Prism.
May Laughter infect you;
Your Passion resurrect you.*

*May Goodness inspire
your Deepest Desires.
Through all that you Reach For,
May your arms Never Tire.”
— D. Simone*



Flood Insurance

By John Martin

The views of this editorial may not express the views of The Alabama Gazette.

Catastrophic destruction wrought by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma this year, we have witnessed a great deal of wailing and gnashing of teeth in response to the failure of our National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to provide enough funding to repair the damage.

Why can’t our government settle the claims? For anybody with even a mediocre understanding of how insurance works, the answer is simple: The cost of covering the damage far exceeds the premiums that have been collected. The money is just not there.

Flood loss estimates for this year range from \$6.5 to \$9.5 billion for Texas and Louisiana and billions more for Florida and Puerto Rico. The 49 year old NFIP boondoggle, which is already about \$25 billion in debt, has only \$7.5 billion in cash and credit available. How much more tax gouging will it take to settle the shortfall? We don’t even know. Assessments of the damage are still in progress.

From the time NFIP was begun in 1968, it had been collecting artificially low premiums for high risk coverage. Once this taxpayer-subsidized no-brainer was established, people became very negligent on how and where they built their homes. Development on flood plains exploded. Millions of

property owners have had field days building expensive homes in flood-prone locations for the past 49 years. The mindset of no worries about flooding prevailed as long as “Uncle” was there to cover any damage that was certain to happen sooner or later—and often—multiple times. When major storms and floods arrived, like Katrina and Wilma in 2005, the taxpayers had to pony up. Since then, we enjoyed twelve years of limited storm damage, and people became even more negligent.

Some people have been much more reckless than others, and after suffering flood damage, kept repeating their mistakes. During the last 40 years, 3.8% of NFIP policyholders made 35.5% of the claims and collected 30.5% of the flood loss payments. A single Mississippi home was flooded 34 times and the owner collected \$633,000 in claims. Yet he could not be denied coverage or charged a premium based on risk. Obviously, a private company would never insure someone like this. He didn’t deserve to be insured. He was nothing more than a freeloader.

Today, NFIP provides about 98% of residential flood insurance. Harvey and Irma have impacted at least 25% (over 1.2 million) of the NFIP covered properties. We are faced with huge unsustainable claims. There is not nearly enough revenue to pay for them. In ethical terms, there is no way to pay. As we say, “The chickens have come home to roost.”

Government-run flood insurance, like Obamacare and government-run anything, is clearly a disaster. The reason private companies would never provide flood coverage with low premiums is that they would quickly lose money and become bankrupt. An insurance company, like any business, must make a profit to survive.

There is only one solution to this dilemma, but at least it’s a very simple one: Abolish and de-fund the NFIP immediately. Stop the program that encourages people to recklessly exploit the American taxpayers. In the long run, it will greatly reduce property losses and even save lives. We may feel sorry for the people who have lost their property, but we can’t ethically steal money from others to pay for it. Over time, volunteers can chip in and help the people rebuild. Yes, it will take a long time. But at least with a free market and government out of the way, people will learn how to build—or not build—in flood and storm prone locations.

If we quit subsidizing reckless development, it will stop on its own or at least slow down. People will be motivated to build responsibly. They can add fill before building homes in low-lying areas. On expensive beach front property, developers will have incentives to invest in sturdy reinforced concrete structures on well elevated foundations. It is foolhardy to skimp on a \$10 million building on a \$5 million waterfront lot in Florida where hurricanes and storm surges occur on a regular basis.

If it was up to private companies to provide flood insurance, there are several options that clients could take to mitigate the premiums. Avoid building on a flood plain or other flood prone area. Construct a mound and build a house on it. In coastal areas, build on reinforced concrete stilts. In storm prone areas, build with reinforced concrete and/or steel. A good insurance company could provide advice on how to build in a particular area to minimize risk and thus minimize the premium. That’s the way a free market works—for insurance or anything else. Once free of government intrusion, everybody benefits and nobody loses.

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TECH TALK

Repair or Replace - "My Thingamajig Done Got Slow"



Darnell Hughley

"Why can't I update my iTunes® software?" "My old Quicken® software that I've used for years now is no longer working?" "Where can I find this old type of cable that once connected my ancient printer?" "Hey! How on earth am I supposed to plug this new-fangled cable into my aged computer?" "What on earth is this 'thingamajiggy' supposed to be connected to now?"

Yep! We've all heard someone with an older computer system asking these questions. In fact, as the owner of a computer repair shop and as a professional technical consultant for several years now, if there is any one single

question I've gotten with any degree of repetition, it's this one: "I've used this same old software on my old computer for years – and with no problem. I intend to use it for more years without changing it. So, why do I need a new computer now?" Or even THIS as a conversation, "I'm not much into playing these new games nor do I need anything that new or fancy to play my Solitaire".

So, you're not much of a "gamer" and you say you don't need the top of the line equipment in your computer; but what about your cool and comfortable evenings wherein you want to simply snuggle up and relax watching some streamed media. Did you know that even streaming your Netflix in 4K needs not only a fast Internet connection, but hardware capable of playing it smoothly? Or, how about this one sir... You're trying to watch a YouTube® video on how to fix your garage door and it becomes to jagged and sketchy to view properly. You will more than likely spend more than you want trying to get that old desktop to have a capable graphics card - not to mention the next to impossible chore of changing the graphics card inside your laptop altogether just for such an upgrade.

Maybe you feel your hardware is fine, but your software is constantly asking you to upgrade it, but you can't because your computer says it requires a newer system to function properly. Fact is, if you've used the same program for a decade or more, you've gotten to know it well, and you no doubt feel safe and secure. Unfortunately, this feeling may be illusory. You're playing a very dangerous game. It's not one I recommend.

There are several problems with running old software. The most obvious is the one that concerns you: it could eventually stop working. There is also a risk that unpatched security holes could leave you vulnerable to new viruses and malware attacks.

Then, there is the danger of "Planned Obsolescence" to worry about. What's that? I'm Glad you asked – "Planned obsolescence is when a product is deliberately designed to have a specific life span. This is usually a shortened life span. In this way, when the product fails, the customer will want to buy another, up to date version." Planned obsolescence is, therefore, sometimes designed into a product, in order to encourage the customer to buy the next upgrade.

If you have a basic computer system that you haven't significantly upgraded that is more than four years old and in need of a major hardware repair (like a new motherboard or processor), it's best to start shopping around for a new computer. The cost to bring your system up to current standards is likely to far exceed the cost to replace it.

Despite the cost consideration of a new PC, there are definitely times when it makes sense to buy new instead of repairing old. The average lifespan of a desktop computer is five years, a laptop averages 3-4 years. After a few years, as already mentioned, aging hardware is more likely to fail, software begins to outpace your system's capabilities (leading to sluggish performance and slow boot up) and operating system upgrades have likely cycled through a few generations.

Now you're thinking to yourself, "Wow! Now that he mentioned it, my computer HAS become increasingly slower?" Slowness can be difficult to define, but you'll know it when you see it: you can make a cup of tea while your computer boots up, it grinds to a halt when you have more than half a dozen tabs open in your browser, and you can type a full sentence before a single word appears on screen.

For most people, the decision to replace a computer comes down to cost. Since a basic desktop computer starts at around \$300 and a laptop around \$500, most people consider replacing their system when a repair will cost \$250 or more. In fairness, there are less expensive alternatives when considering a replacement PC or laptop – namely the newer Cloud books and/or Chromebooks available on the market. These systems generally start at around \$180 - \$250, but are purely for content consumption (i.e., checking email or utilizing documents in the "cloud") and they were never intended to be replacements for those with real computing needs.

Keep in mind that cheaper computers may not include components that you want, such as an optical drive (for watching DVDs or loading data from a disc), touch screen capability or a fully functional operating system. Be sure to take stock of the features you need, before you price or compare a new system vs. repair.

Do yourself a favor and stop listening to the advice of your local "I-Know-A-Guy" computer guru and visit a reputable computer service center for professional advice on viable upgrade options or the possibility of a new (or refurbished) replacement system altogether.

Lastly, transferring data, installing programs, configuring printers and getting a new PC set up on your home network can be a daunting task. If you'll want professional assistance to get your new computer set up, factor in this cost before buying a new PC.

Darnell Hughley is the Owner, Certified Technician and Consultant for HY-Tech Solutions, LLC - having more than 23 years of total experience in the PC Repair and IT Consulting field.

Welcome



The Institute for Total Eye Care, P.C. is happy to announce

Elizabeth B. Keeble, M.D.

joined the practice in August 2017.

Dr. Keeble was born in Opelike, Alabama, but raised in Lanett, Alabama. She attended Huntingdon College here in Montgomery where she obtained a Bachelor's of Art degree in Biology and graduated Cum Laude. She then attended the University of

South Alabama in Mobile and obtained her Doctor of Medicine. She completed an internship at Baptist Health System in Birmingham and her ophthalmology residency at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.



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The Fruit Cake!

I am sure that every one of you have made this item, received it as a gift, or given it as a gift. Wished you did not eat the last one you ate, and called it everything except what it is. Found it hiding in your pantry, wished you found it before July. You cringed when your co-worker showed up at work and said, "Here, try this, I made it last week, and I want you to tell me what you think". In addition, every winter the same question comes to your mind, "Is this the same one that I gave away last year?" Yes, it is that time of year, it is Christmas time, and December is National Fruit Cake Month! A shortened recipe for fruitcake is a mixture of dried candied fruits, nuts, seeds, spices, and honey cooked in such a way that the resulting cake weighs more than the oven. Know this, knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruitcake.

All kidding aside, fruitcake has been popular in Europe since Roman times, when cooks mixed raisins, pine nuts, and pomegranate seeds into barley mash. In the Middle Ages, honey, dried fruits, and spices were added to bread dough for special occasions. For a while, fruitcake was considered semi-sacred, with laws in Europe until the end of the 18th century that restricted its making to celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, and weddings.



December is also **Egg Nog Month** and **Root Vegetable Month** and **Pear Month**. I cannot think what Egg Nog, Pears, and Fruitcake have in common with root vegetables. The first week of December is **National Handwashing Awareness Week**, but every week should be hand-washing awareness week. Of course, no Christmas would be complete without celebrating **Cookie Cutter Week**.

Christmas is the time we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Family traditions at Christmas are as strong as they are at Thanksgiving, and one of the biggest parts of both holidays is food. There is the smell of fresh cookies and pies baking in the oven combined with the holly, and pine that are always around this time of year. My family, as I was growing up, spent more time together at Christmas than Thanksgiving. Christmas was an extended holiday when school was out and we had more time to spend with the family. This meant that there was a crowd to feed, not just for Christmas but also for the days before and days after.

Pots of beans, soups, stews, or chili were on the stove every day. That was just for a quick lunch so family members could go out visiting neighbors or finish their Christmas shopping. Dinner was a more formal affair; at least it had a time when we were to eat. *Breakfast was the meal I looked forward to!* I still do! This is the time when a breakfast casserole would be the ideal thing to make. In addition, this is like many breakfast casseroles; it is to be made the night before and baked the next morning. This recipe is updated somewhat. Neither my grandmother nor my mother made a Hollandaise sauce. Neither bought English muffins. And forget about using Canadian Bacon. Moreover, I changed the recipe because it is too hard to make a Hollandaise sauce the traditional way, even though this is a holiday full of traditions. Though the name of this dish is somewhat misleading, it is still good and easy.

OVERNIGHT EGGS BENEDICT CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

One pound of ham, diced
(leftover Thanksgiving ham from the freezer or leftover Christmas ham)
Six English muffins diced
Eight whole eggs
Two cups of half-and-half (milk will do, but will not be as rich)
One-teaspoon onion powder
One-teaspoon salt
½-teaspoon paprika
½-teaspoon ground pepper



Hollandaise sauce
Four sticks of butter
Yolks from six eggs
Juice of two whole lemons
Cayenne pepper to taste.

Method

1. Butter a 2 ½ quart baking dish
2. Spread half of the ham in the baking dish and top with the English muffins, and then add remaining ham.
3. In a mixing bowl, whisk together the eight whole eggs, the half-and half, onion powder, salt, paprika, and the pepper.
4. Pour mixture over the ham and muffins in the baking dish.
5. Cover dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
6. The next morning, preheat oven to 375F.
7. Remove plastic wrap from dish and cover with aluminum foil and bake in the preheated oven for 45 minutes (you want the eggs to barely set)
8. Remove foil and bake for about 15-20 minutes more until eggs are completely set.
9. Remove from oven, and as it is slightly cooling, make the Hollandaise sauce
10. In a small saucepan, melt the butter until sizzling.
11. Place the yolks in a blender.
12. With the blender on low, allow the yolks to combine, and then slowly pour the hot butter in a small stream into the blender.
13. Keep pouring until all the butter is gone, then add half of the lemon juice. If sauce is too thick, add remaining juice. Stir in the salt and pour over the casserole. Sprinkle cayenne pepper for color over top. Serves 10.

Southern Cuisine

Being Southern

I read a column in a local paper a couple weeks back titled "What being Southern means to this ol' gal" written by Jaine Treadwell. It is a touching piece and since part of the story was about food in the South, I want to share some of the column with you.

She writes, "Being Southern is hog killings, chitlin' suppers, cane grindings and syrup makings. It's pulling corn and picking velvet beans. It's shelling peas on the front porch and drying peaches on the tin roof of the barn. It's cranking the ice cream freezer and making popsicles in the ice trays in the Frigidaire.

Being Southern is tomato sandwiches with homemade mayonnaise and black pepper and salt. It's turnip greens, fat-back, fried cornbread, sweet tater pie, and sweet tea. It's a cool glass of buttermilk and cold cornbread. It's a muffin or jellyroll wrapped in a dishcloth." I hope that our children and grandchildren will understand ssome of this, if not memories like these will be lost forever.



And yes, this is root vegetable month, and yes, I could eat roasted root vegetables every month. They were a hit when I prepared them for banquets. A good reason to prepare root vegetables, is that every time you fix them, the recipe changes due to what vegetables are available at that time, and what seasoning you used to prepare them. Try to season them to complement the main course of the meal. Any number of vegetables can be used for roasting. This recipes makes it easy to prep and cook, calling for only two, carrots and parsnips.

ROASTED CARROTS AND PARSNIPS, WITH HONEY-MUSTARD GLAZE

Adapted from a recipe from Marks and Spencers

Ingredients

One-pound carrots
One-pound parsnips
Four tablespoons olive oil
Four tablespoons honey
Two tablespoons wholegrain mustard
Salt

Beginning Prep:

Peel and cut vegetables into halves-lengthwise (quarters if vegetable is large)
If every piece is the same size, they will all cook evenly.



Method

1. Preheat oven to 400F.
2. Gently toss vegetables in large mixing bowl with 3 tablespoons of oil and salt to coat.
3. Place carrots and parsnips on a roasting tray and roast for 15 minutes, then remove and toss the vegetables.
4. Return to oven for another ten to fifteen minutes until softened but not mushy
5. While waiting for the vegetables to finish, whisk together the honey, mustard and remaining oil in a small bowl.
6. Remove vegetables from oven, pour the sauce over the vegetables, and gently toss to coat.
7. Return the tray to the oven for about five minutes to caramelize the sauce.
8. Arrange carrots and parsnips on a flat platter arranging them to alternate each vegetable.

Serves 6

Being the retired chef in the family, I am asked questions from family members on a wide range of culinary subjects. They range from: "Can you eat this part of this food?" to "What can you do with this left-over?" Sometimes, I ask the question, "Why are you throwing that away?" Or "Did you know you can eat that?" Here are a few answers to common questions I get.

- Yes, you can eat the rind on brie cheese. To me, it is like throwing away the crust of a loaf of bread. I even eat the skin of a baked potato!
- Parmesan cheese develops a hard rind that is hard to eat directly; but grated, it will add much to your Italian dishes. You can drop a piece of rind in a soup or stew to add flavor and remove it at service.
- Yes, you can eat unpeeled carrots, just wash them first. Same with celery leaves, and use them as an herb.
- Do not throw away the seeds from butternut squash or acorn squash. Rinse them off, dry, toss them with a little oil and salt, and roast them. It is like eating pumpkin seeds.
- Except for shiitake mushrooms, you can eat mushroom stems. Cut them up with the rest of the mushroom. Shiitake mushroom stems are woody and tough.
- The stems from most herbs are fine if chopped up with the leafy part, except rosemary. Rosemary stems will be like eating twigs.
- Lastly, after you cut off the root end, the entire green onion is edible, white, and green.

As I have stated in past columns, you need to know where your food is coming from and the best way to do that is to buy Alabama. A good place to start looking for wholesome food in Alabama is in Slocomb. Gaucho Farms is a family farm that produces chemical free fruits and vegetables, heirloom vegetable plants from certified organic, non-GMO seed and 100% grass-fed beef and lamb. And do not forget the free-range eggs and pastured broiler chickens and turkeys.

I know this is winter, but it is never too early to start planning for spring. The Gaucho Farm calendar starts with March LAMB DAYS. I met the owner, Suzanne Wright, at Whole Foods as she was giving samples of some of her products. You can contact her about happenings on the farm at:

www.gauchofarms.com or email to info@gauchofarms.com.

And their phone number is 334-803-4093.

Let us make it a point to find other farms like this, and spread the word, and help them flourish.

Please enjoy my last recipe, No-Cook Stuffed Tomatoes, on the next page. I hope you enjoy these recipes and share them with your family.

Merry Christmas!

Continued from previous page.

At my house, winter is a good time to cook. We can use the extra heat to warm up the place. However, there are times you just do not want to go to the kitchen and cook. I have seen good large tomatoes still in the grocery stores and this recipe does not require heating anything and it is an easy meal to prepare. The trickiest part is removing the insides of the tomatoes and still have them strong enough to hold their shape.

NO-COOK STUFFED TOMATOES

- Four large tomatoes, firm and round
- One tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- One lime
- Six ounces of feta cheese
- One mango
- One small red onion
- One tablespoon fresh cilantro
- One small jalapeno pepper



First Prep: Zest and juice the lime. Roughly chop the feta. Peel and remove pit from mango and finely chop. Finely chop the red onion. Chop the cilantro. Deseed and finely chop the jalapeno.

Method

- Carefully slice the top off each tomato to make a lid.
- Using a small knife, cut a cone shape into each tomato to release the core.
- Cut the core away from the flesh and discard the core.
- Finely dice the flesh and put in a medium bowl.
- Put a sieve over a small bowl.
- Use a teaspoon to hollow out the tomatoes, leaving enough of the outer border to retain sturdy shell.
- Put the seeds and flesh you cut out in the sieve to drain.
- Remove any large pieces of flesh and cut it up and add to the other diced tomato.
- Discard the remaining contents in the sieve, keep the juice
- Side note: This is the instructions given in the recipe. Simplified: Just remove as much of the insides of the tomatoes as possible, put in a sieve and save the juice. Keep as much flesh as possible and throw away the seeds.
- Make the dressing by mixing the saved tomato juice with the oil and lime zest.
- Season to taste and set aside.
- Combine the jalapeno, cilantro, onion,mango, and cheese with the saved diced tomato and pour the dressing over mixture.
- Divide the mixture among the hollowed-out tomatoes and top with the lid.
- Let set in a cool place for at least an hour to marinate before serving. Serves 4

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Christmas Joy



Judge
Peggy Givhan

Southern Gardening
Potpourri for DECEMBER by Peggy Givhan

I just love Christmas music which increases the magical spirit this time of year. Jingle bells, ginger bread men and silver wrapped Hershey Kisses are just the ticket to amp up the joy and happiness for the season. From Thanksgiving to Christmas we all have an opportunity to increase our joy and bestow joy on our family and friends for Christmas and Hanukah.

It appears that Christmas just gets earlier and earlier. This year I saw Christmas ads and gifts with Christmas wrap before Halloween. One could say this was pushing the envelope, but it could help to remind the slow pokes to make their lists and shop. But, some of the best gifts include those made from the kitchen. For instance, I had a bountiful harvest of figs in October from the LSU purple fig that comes in over a matter of 6 weeks. Fig preserves canned in jars with colorful tops made out of plaid squares cut with pinking shears and tied with colorful ribbon around the lid. Also, fig pepper jelly makes a great topper for cream cheese. As I may have lamented last month that the pear trees did not have a good year, I managed to pick enough for jars of great pear chutney. All are resting on the pantry shelf to place in gift bags for magnificent appearances on friends' and neighbors' doors.

Another great gift is the gift of flowers.

Poinsettias today come in all shades from pink to red, to spotted and pepper mint, to solid red and white. Of course since they are potted, these will be long lasting. Some people think that because poinsettias are forced to bloom this time of year, that they can with stand cold weather. Not true as they are tropical. For best results, keep indoors and do not over water.



I found at a garden center beautiful cyclamen just covered in red, peach, white, and pink blooms. This is an indoor plant in the winter and is long lived, at least a month. The purchase of narcissus bulbs would be a great investment. One can force them into bloom by placing the bulbs in a shallow bowl with some rocks and water, just covering the tips of the bulbs. Plus after they bloom, just plant into the garden and

next year they will bloom. Remember to let the tops slowly yellow and die. When forcing, keep the water level about the same as we do not want to rot the bulb. With this addition to your home or for a friend, the scent is heavenly.



Next would be the Amaryllis bulbs which can be forced into bloom the exact same way. There are Amaryllis bulbs which are miniatures and I have had this shorter variety marching along the mantel of the fireplace in the living room. What a show stopping display they make.

If we scour the nurseries and garden centers, brighten up your flower beds with dianthus, pansies and dusty miller. I bought, just last week, a tray of the biggest white petunias I have ever seen. In the late fall and early winter, petunias can do well in outdoor pots, or in the garden beds in a protected area (away from the wind), as they are truly a cool weather annual. They do have tolerance for the cold which bursts in this time of year. My petunias last year in outdoor pots survived freezing temps, but then I did tarp them when weather got below freezing levels. The other garden reminder is that is time to plant Asian lilies, sow poppy seeds and larkspur seeds. When sowing this seed, make sure the ground is bare of any mulch.



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**Chief Deputy
Kevin J. Murphy**

Christmas Safety

Christmas time is “open season” for burglars! Please make sure you dispose of boxes discreetly. Don’t put your boxes out by the curb for garbage pickup; instead, make sure they are folded as small as possible so they fit in your garbage can. Burglars don’t necessarily see this as the homeowner having a new TV but if they bought a new TV, they can probably afford another one. Together we can help reduce the number of burglaries occurring in our communities.



Montgomery County AL Sheriff's Office

Sheriff's Office APP

In case you missed last month's article, here it is again...

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office has a new phone app called “Montgomery County AL Sheriff” that can be accessed through your phone's app store. Once you have added this app to your phone, you can easily set your phone up to receive important push notifications. Push notifications are quick, important messages that can notify you of road closure(s), blocked road(s), anything pertinent to your travel, escapee, etc. While our app can help you with many things including checking to see if someone is in the county jail, it is most helpful to receive push notifications. After you have downloaded the app, go through the follow steps to make sure your phone is set up to receive the push notifications:

- Go to your phone's setting icon
- Scroll down and click “Applications”
- Scroll down to “MCSO” or “Montgomery County Sheriff”
OR
- Click “Application Manager”, if it doesn't take you directly to the location
- Click “Notifications”
- Turn ‘on’ “Allow Notifications” and “Previews in pop-ups”

You should be all set to receive the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office push notifications!

Firearms Familiarization Course

Our 2017 classes have concluded but you can register for a 2018 course with the 2018 dates pending. Please look for our January 2018 article for those pending dates. You can register to take one of our 2018 classes NOW and learn how to protect yourself! We know that learning how to protect yourself is very important in today's world.



The class is held at our newly dedicated Sheriff D.T. Marshall Firearms Training Center and lasts most of the day and is FREE to Montgomery County citizens! The morning session is classroom instruction on firearm safety and firearm laws. The afternoon session allows citizens to practice shooting on our Firing Range for the remainder of the class (if you would like). All classes are under the instruction of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Range Master.

Course Requirements:

- Montgomery County Citizen
- Obtain a Montgomery County
- Pistol Permit (prior to the course date)
- Complete an Application for the course

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Course Questions or to Obtain an Application?

Lisa Crenshaw@mc-ala.org

334.832.1339

Your safety is our primary concern; therefore, we ask that you do not bring children to this class.

Medication Disposal

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office has partnered with CVS Pharmacy to supply a new drug collection unit. The new unit is located at the Administrative Office of the Sheriff, at 100 South Lawrence (2nd floor lobby). This provides residents with a safe and environmentally responsible way to dispose of unwanted, unused or expired medication, including controlled substances.



Thank you for your continued support of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office!

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Anti-Bullying Campaign

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office has begun an ANTI-BULLYING campaign where we take our “Billy, the Beaver” mascot out to mentor fourth and fifth graders at local schools in Montgomery County.

Bullying has become a huge factor in today's society and it is up to us to help change this serious growing problem. If you are interested in having our agency come out and speak to your school, please contact Lisa at 832-1339.



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Sheriff Joe Sedinger

Church Safety

The Autauga County Sheriff's Office giving a presentation on Church Security to 9 local churches. Sheriff Sedinger and Lt. Campbell gave the presentation. This presentation was requested by several local pastors following the church shooting in Texas a few weeks ago. We are glad to assist our local pastors and churches as needed.

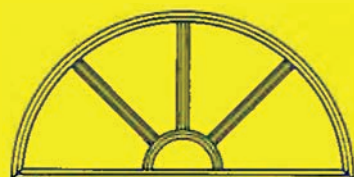
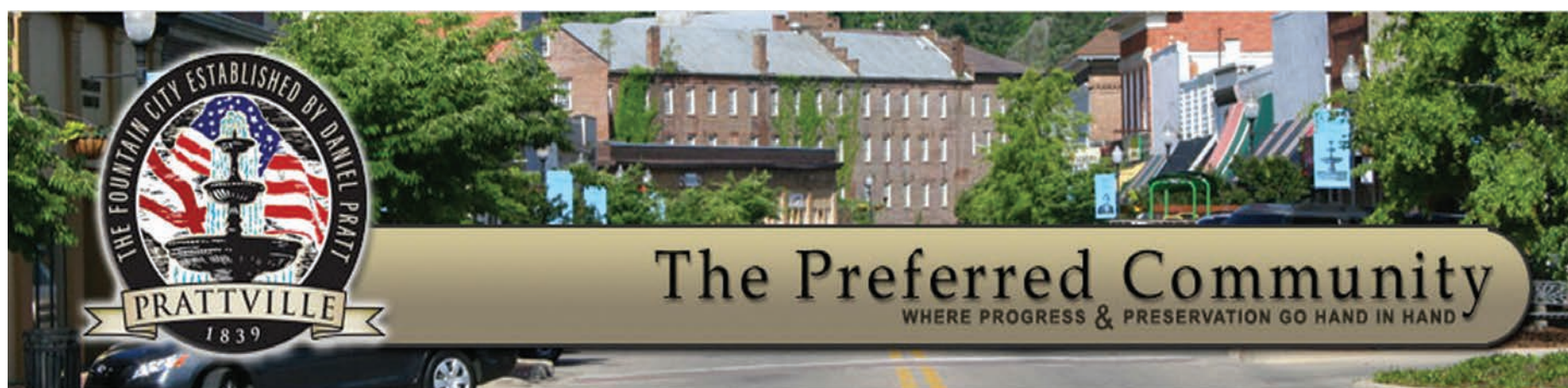


Merry Christmas

Happy New Year!

Autauga County Sheriff's Department.

*Have a Safe
Holiday Season!*



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Dr. John Bitter,
Editor Senior
Section

It's that time of the year when the thoughts of most of us turn to the celebration of Christmas.

It's also the time of the year when the squirrels come out of the woodwork and we're inundated with more nonsense than we want to endure as it relates to the holiday: it's principal characters, and its celebration.

From this person's viewpoint there are two tales that best represent Christmas and all it stands for; these being: O. Henry's The gift of the Magi, and Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol.

In the Gift we have a tale of love and sacrifice which emphasizes the spirit of Christmas, as we do in the Christmas Carol, and which is the dominant theme of Christmas as we know it in the western world.

Likewise, we have the relatively modern Christmas spirit as the Senior generation came to know it.

Gazette Seniors...

Thoughts of Christmas

We all know Dickens' famous yuletide epic which exemplifies the true spirit we want to believe is supposed to be inherent in Christmas.

Passionate love dominates O. Henry's epic as Jim and Della sacrifice their most cherished possession in order to be able to provide a most special gift for each other.

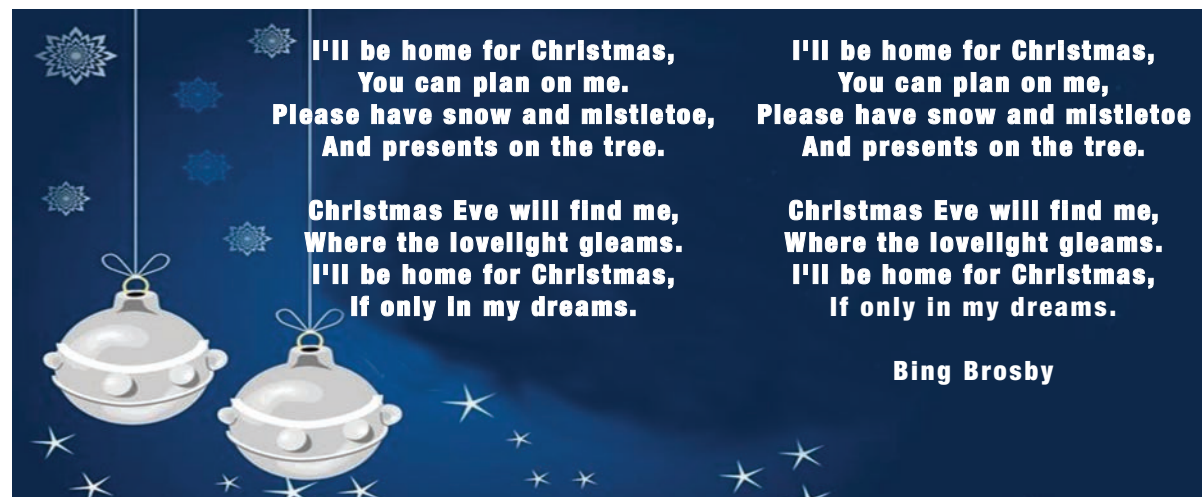
As do virtually all of O. Henry's stories, irony plays a dominant role, which makes the Gift of the magi all that more an example of the true Christmas spirit.

As we view the carnage that has resulted in our most recent presidential gathering, we must wonder what has happened to this spirit.

It looks as if the folks we elect to represent us are a bit off message during this yuletide season.

Whatever happened to "Good will to all men?"

Merry Christmas.



Yesterday is history
Tomorrow is a mystery
Today is a gift
That's why it's called the present



By Kyle' D. McKinney
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Female siblings, the youngest is holding a cup of hot chocolate and the father is looking at the siblings in the background.

Next payday, when you see a portion of your wages go toward FICA taxes, rest easier knowing that your investment in Social Security brings a lifetime of protections for you and your family.

From your first job and throughout your career, we track your earnings and give you credits for the contributions you've made through payroll taxes. Those credits can translate into important future benefits. As you prepare for a financially secure future, you should know about these five benefits that you, your spouse, and your children may become eligible for through Social Security:

Retirement benefits provide you with a continuous source of income later in life. If you've earned enough credits, you can start receiving your full retirement benefits at age 66 or 67 — depending on when you were born. You may choose to claim these benefits as early as age 62 at a permanently reduced rate, but waiting until after your full retirement age increases your benefit amount by up to 8 percent per year to age 70. Plan for your retirement at:

www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/retire.

Disability benefits offer a financial lifeline if you're struck by a serious medical condition that makes it impossible for you to work and provide for yourself and your family and is expected to last at least one year or to result in death. Learn more at: www.socialsecurity.gov/disability.

Child benefits support your minor children while you're receiving Social Security retirement benefits or disability benefits. This financial support also is available to adult children who become disabled before age 22. Grandchildren and stepchildren may qualify in certain situations. Please see: www.socialsecurity.gov/people/kids.



Spousal benefits supplement a couple's income if one of the two never worked or had low lifetime earnings. In some cases, this benefit is also available to divorced spouses. Please see:

www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/retire/applying6.html.

Survivor benefits ease the financial burden on your loved ones after you die by providing monthly payments to eligible widows, widowers, children, and dependent parents. It's likely the survivor benefits you have under Social Security carry greater value than your individual life-insurance policy. Read more about survivor benefits at: www.socialsecurity.gov/survivors.

You must meet specific eligibility requirements to receive any type of Social Security benefits.

Currently, Social Security provides benefits to more than 61 million American workers and their families. And we'll be there for you and your family through life's journey.

Learn more about all of our programs at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Kyle' McKinney, SSA Public Affairs Specialist, can be reached by e-mail at kylle.mckinney@ssa.gov.

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Soul Searching

Dr. Lester Spencer
Lead Pastor
St. James United Methodist Church
9045 Vaughn Road
Montgomery, AL

Did you know that 63% of Americans think that the Christmas season should include participating in a Christmas worship experience in a church? And have you heard another very interesting statistic, 7 in 10 Americans believe that Christmas would be a better experience if it had a more Christian focus?

Those stats do not surprise me at all. Why? Because deep down, I believe, that most folks know that there is something very beautiful, hopeful and mysterious about Christmas. They sense that this season is here to remind us that there is a God who loves us, that he invaded our world on that first Christmas and gave of himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

In John 3:16, the disciple John explains Christmas this way: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

This is why Christmas is one of my favorite seasons of the year, and attending worship with a church full of joyful and grateful Christians is a very special part of the Christmas festivities! I want to encourage you to plan on attending worship this Christmas season including a Christmas Eve service somewhere.

The German Monk Martin Luther was the great Church reformer in the 1500's who led the way in establishing the Protestant Church. According to some legends, it is said that he cut down the first ever-green Christmas tree and added lights. Martin Luther actually used candles - that sounds really dangerous but maybe easier to me than using the strands of lights we use today. I have a confession. I love Christmas tree lights on the tree, but I really hate wrapping them around the tree. One goes out, they all go out. Right? Am I the only one that dreads this? But it's always worth it once they are shining on the tree.

Anyway, back to the point, he is said to have established the tradition of putting up a Christmas Tree with lights. And, although the practice of celebrating Christmas Eve in various ways goes back to the fourth century AD, we know that Martin Luther, as a Protestant Pastor, celebrated Christmas Eve in 1538. Historians recount that he was in a jolly mood on that Christmas Eve and was singing joyfully and talking about the incarnation. They say he then sighed and said, "Oh, we poor men, that we should be so cold and indifferent to this great joy which has been given us."

So, from the fourth century until now, the Christmas season and Christmas Eve has become a great and joyful tradition in both the Protestant and the Catholic Churches around the world as we celebrate with two billion other Christ followers the birth of our Savior and Lord.

We have much to celebrate this and every Christmas season. The Angel announced to the shepherds that they brought Good News of Great Joy to All People - Christ the Savior has come! And Jesus Christ, our Savior has revealed to us that we have a God who loves us, a God who is with us, a God who is for us!

So, once again, may I joyfully encourage you to enhance your and your families Christmas experience this year - come and celebrate this Christmas season in a church near you on these Sunday's in December. And may we All join together with great joy in our hearts for All that Christ has done for All of us!

"Good news from heaven the Angels bring, Glad tidings to the earth they sing: To us this day a child is given, To crown us with the joy of heaven." - Martin Luther

Joyfully,
Dr. Lester Spencer

The Joy of Christmas

Come hear the Sounds of Christmas with the

Capitol Sounds Concert Band

Thursday, December 14th 7:30 P.M.

St. James United Methodist Church

9045 Vaughn Road
Montgomery, AL 36117

*Admission is Free
Donations Welcome*

Christ is Born



And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.
2 And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.
3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.
4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.
6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.
7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.
8 And there were in the same

country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.
10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.
13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

*Luke 2
King James Version*

The Prattville Community Chorus & Pops Present their Annual

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Jesus is the Reason for the Season!



Merry Christmas

Home Town Community News

Patricia Killough

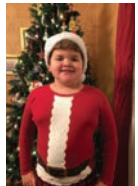


Please send me your family birthdays, anniversaries and weddings to alabamagazette@gmail.com

The Alabama Gazette will make every effort to include your submissions as space permits.



We Can't Wait for Christmas!



December Birthdays



- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Chris Hudson | Martha French |
| Emma Louise Wingard | 19 Brad Echols |
| 2 Faye Ann Mount | Ruth Cordle |
| Mike Northcutt | 20 Maggie Mills |
| Skeeter Rhodes | Susan Yost |
| 3 Alison Lee Riley | 21 Paula Marie Harsey |
| Cam Stanton | Katherine(Kaki) Hines |
| 4 Gail Cotney | Don Meadows (81st) |
| 5 Don Byrd | 22 Austin Champion |
| 6 Dean Tyner (83rd) | Paul Harper |
| 7 Jeannie Leigh Boyles | Robert Harrington |
| Tobias Grant | Dennis Woodall |
| Wayne Henry Morris, IV (1st) | 23 Kodee Harrison |
| Belle Sansom | Carla Johnson |
| Carol Woodall | 24 Joyce Turnipseed |
| 8 Meredith Sellars | Kaitlin Rowe |
| 9 Isabella Henderson | 25 JESUS CHRIST |
| 10 George Jones (89th) | Nancy Setzer |
| 11 Lauren Lane | 27 Sandy Brown |
| Chad Roberson | Austin Yost |
| Justin Sessions | 28 Andy Meadows |
| 12 Mollie Higgins | William Webb |
| 13 Anita Tylicki | 29 Amy Boyd |
| Jeanette Kinman | Mallory McGough |
| Landon Meadows | Mary Pat Sikes |
| 14 Fred Crowe | 30 Tiffany Hammock |
| Ken Stringer | Scott Takacs |
| 15 Michelle Brezinski | Sarah Watkins |
| 17 Betty Armistead | 31 Bethany Black Neubauer |
| Travers Grant | Addison Wise |
| Dorothy Kiser | Tex Woodall (50th) |
| Deborah Kirk | |



Congratulations

Josh and Christy Jones on the birth of their new baby girl, **Scarlett Mason Jones.**

She was born November 6, 2017 and weighed 6 lbs. 11 ozs. She was welcomed by her big brother, 10 year old Chayman Wilkins.

Happy Anniversary

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Dec. 1 Troy & Kim Worrell | Dec. 14 Ronnie & Michelle Blount |
| Dec. 4 Rich & Jacque Takacs | Scott & Debbie Mills |
| Dec. 7 Del & Prasertsi Atkinson | Dec. 16 Robert & Georgia Armstrong |
| Dec. 8 Buddy & Rhonda Black | Bill & Barbara Berg |
| Dec. 9 Perry & Nancy Butler | Dec. 18 William (Windy) & Linda Wingard (46th) |
| Danny & Kristie Richardson | Dec. 20 Wayne & Sarah Watkins |
| Dec. 10 Heath & Dana Crowe | Dec. 30 George & Jeannie Handey |
| Dec. 12 Tom & Caroline Vocino | |



Congratulations!

Billy and Claudia Sanders
December 19, 2017



Congratulations!

Jerry and Sarah Sanders
December 22, 2017

Please think of the less fortunate and give as much as you can now and throughout the New Year!

Sympathy to the families of...

Speed, Mary Frances (87).....Died November 3, 2017
Berry, "Charlie" (83).....Died November 17, 2017
Bishop, Sr., James Floyd "Jim" (78).....Died November 19, 2017
Kendrick, William G. (92).....Service November 21, 2017
Russell, MariettaDied November 23, 2017

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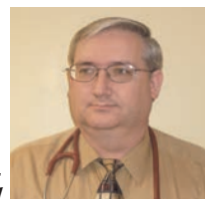
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"Every cell in your body functions like a car; it has its own engine. You can put the best gasoline (food) in, and the best oil (vitamins/minerals); but if you throw sand (chemical toxins & heavy metals) into the motor, the first two don't matter. At MEDAC, PC, we focus on helping to get the sand out of your motor. We also help with the food and the oil so that your motor can hum and run in the optimal way it was designed."

TODAY'S WOMAN

The Value of a Woman...Be very careful if you make a woman cry – because God counts her tears.



Tears and Laughter:

Twice as many Alabamians die each year from Suicide as Homicide

By Amanda Walker

Very early in the morning on November 6, a child in Etowah County notified Hokes Bluff police that a murder/suicide had taken place at her home. On November 1, in the middle of an ordinary day, a Vestavia Hills police officer stepped behind the Metro Diner, located next to the Vintage Barber Shop, and took his own life.

Sunday, November 5, a group of about 1,500 people participated in the Birmingham “Out of the Darkness Walk” at Heardmont Park in Hoover. Everyone participating walked in honor of a loved one lost to suicide.

While not new, “Out of the Darkness” walks are becoming increasingly popular. In recent weeks there have been walks in Montgomery, Daphne, Dothan, and Tuscaloosa. Last Sunday’s walk raised \$112,000 that will go toward research and helping finance suicide prevention programs.

In an open letter Eric Bartlett shared retrospectively his thoughts as he expressed his love for his 14-year-old son, Conner, who lost his life to suicide September 26. His dad laments, “We just didn’t even have a chance to save him.”

Connor had no signs of depression or mental illness and it is his father’s hope that when people understand the circumstances of Connor’s death that they will understand this can happen to anyone, anywhere. That we can’t assume anyone is safe from it, and that education and vigilance are vitally important.

When adults are stressed it is usually because of health, financial, or relationship problems. But with teens it is often social issues, being exposed to suicidal behavior through losing someone close to them, and not yet

having the skills to process their stress.

“Connor never seemed afraid of anything in life. He sought adventure in life and didn’t fear the end of it. He was deeply troubled by the evil in the world and struggled to understand why there was so much suffering, so much meanness, and why people hurt each other.”

Bartlett continues to sift through the days and events that led up to his son’s death. He worries his expectations, which were not particularly unusual or overly high, may have still added to his stress level. He questions if he should have, “gotten into his phone more,” and wishes he would have made him quit organized sports and encouraged him to do more of what he liked. “He didn’t like structured sports and would have been happier not doing them. We always told him he could quit any time and he probably wanted to but he kept on because he was a gifted athlete and because he was a pleaser; he always tried to do what parents and adults expected of him and what would make them happy; he didn’t want to disappoint anyone.”

“I have come to realize that a child’s happiness needs to be of paramount importance and if they are doing something that is not making them happy they should find something else. Now that I’ve lost a child I realize how really unimportant his grades were. There are lots of great paths in life and maybe we should let kids choose their own and encourage them to do what makes them happy during their short time on earth.”

The National Suicide Crisis Hotline is 1-800-273-TALK.



*Trisston Wright Burrows
Ms. Wheelchair America/Alabama 2005*

Trisston’s Tidbits...

By: Trisston Wright Burrows

www.trisstonwrightburrows.com

“The Greatest Gift of Love”

With the most popular holiday just around the corner, it seems like everyone is getting into the Christmas spirit. Stores are lining their aisles with Christmas goodies and decor, TV shows have switched to the theme of giving and love, and radio stations are playing beloved Christmas music. And why shouldn't they?

After all, **it is that time of year...the meaning of the season**, right?

This thought makes me think about the true meaning of Christmas. Christmas isn't just about giving or feeling loved, but it was about true love. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ, the Savior who came into this world to die... for everyone. Jesus was God's gift not to the deserving, not to the Jews, but to everyone.

So, I submit that Christmas should be spelled **L-O-V-E**. After all, this is the true Christmas message. Right?

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
John 3:16

That’s right, my friends! God gave us the gift of love on Christmas Day. It is truly said, “What the world needs now is love.” I need it. You need it. Your spouse needs it. Your child needs it. An elderly man or woman sitting alone in a nursing home today needs it. A child abandoned and alone in a children’s home needs it, too. Simply put, we all need love! God sent His one and only Son as the Savior. He knew we couldn’t save ourselves. So, He sent His Son to be born in a manger, to die on a cross, to rise again into glory, and to come again to redeem His church.

Today, let us remember the true meaning of Christmas...
Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men, for the Savior has come to show us how to love, and to give us the greatest gift of love.

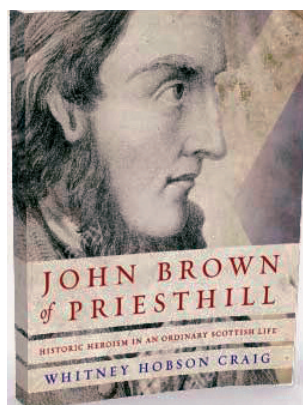
Merry Christmas & Many Blessings!

Congratulations - New Author

Whitney Hobson Craig

Whitney grew up learning about the Scottish Presbyterian tradition while she attended Emerald Mountain School in Alabama, a school that specialized in understanding the lessons of Christian history toward living the Biblical faith. A life-long reader, Whitney gravitates toward biographies and seeks to understand people’s place in history. She graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in Journalism and Political Science.

Whitney currently resides in South Bend, Indiana, with her husband and son. She works as a communications specialist with a local non-profit dedicated to providing choice and possibility to people with intellectual and development disabilities. In her spare time, Whitney enjoys cooking, CrossFit, and leading a small group for her church.



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Isaiah 9:6-7

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given.....

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December 5 – Tree Lighting (Gold Star Park)

December 7 – 6:00 p.m. – Decorating Contest

December 8 – 6:00 p.m. – Nativity/Luminary Night & Downtown Open House

December 9 – Christmas on the Coosa

7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. – Character Breakfast

10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. – Arts Crafts

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Car Show

2:00 p.m. – Street Parade

4:00 p.m. – Wakeboarding Santa Show

6:00 p.m. – Fireworks/Wakeboarding Santa

**December 11 – 7:00 p.m. – The LeFevre Quartet
Jonathan Wilburn**

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So as we approach the end of 2017, I ask you to give. I'm always amazed at how God supplies what we need. I'm always surprised at who He uses to help these families. It's like you guys just come out of nowhere. It's absolutely breathtaking to watch. Thank you! Please know that every dollar is appreciated. We are extremely grateful for your part in helping Elmore County families THRIVE.

See how you can start a fundraiser on Facebook for the Elmore County Fundraiser. Easy to do!

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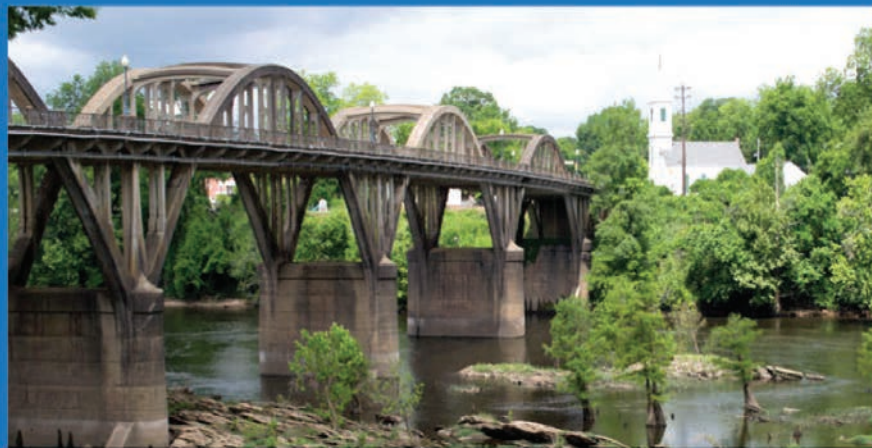


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Christmas is a season of great joy: a time for remembering the past and planning for the future. May the glorious message of peace and love fill you with joy during this wonderful season.



Merry Christmas from our family to yours!



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