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INSIDE

FEBRUARY
FEATURE
STORIES!

STEVE FLOWERS

"Health care Costs are
Major Concerns as
Legislators Craft the
State Budget"

Pg. A3

RON HOLTSFORD

"A Funeral and a Wedding"

Pg. A4

JOHN MARTIN

"Microsoft's Fail from
Grace" - Pg A5

COL JOHN EIDSMOE

Law of the Sea Treaty:
Should It Just Get 'Lost'?

Pg A6

History Bits and Pieces

JUDGE WILL SELLERS

JOHN TAYLOR

Pg. A7

Illegal immigration has flooded this country. While most of them come here for jobs and opportunity – many have not been. José Antonio Ibarra was a 26 year-old immigrant from Venezuela who had entered the United States illegally. Instead of getting a job and building a life here, he murdered college student Laken Riley in a park near Athens, Georgia when she resisted his attempted sexual assault. I don't remember any mass protests demanding that Riley's murderer be handed over to the mob and beaten to death.

There were no mass protests demanding justice for all the thousands of Laken Riley's killed by criminals dumped out of third world countries' jail. Over a million Americans have died from drug overdoses. Their forefathers fought and died protecting this country in wars all over the globe only to have a generation of American youth strung out on foreign drugs brought in by the same cartels who traffic human beings across our borders.

There have been no mass protests against fentanyl, cocaine, heroin or the criminal drug cartels who make billions of dollars peddling products that killed a million Americans in the last decade and have ruined the lives of millions more. These are the same people who as part of their standard business practices murder people in our country and their own by the hundreds. Mexico and Columbia both are fighting decades long wars with heavily armed narco-terrorist insurgents.

There are no mass protests against the drug cartels and the devastation they have done on both sides of the border. The crime created by the tons of drugs flooding our streets leads to all manner of crimes: theft to pay for drugs, violence to collect drug debts, and domestic violence in the families affected by the consumption of illegal drugs. We are supposed to just accept levels of crime higher than even in the old west and higher than in almost any other developed country in the world. Our prisons are overflowing with our own criminals and the criminals who immigrate here – many of them members of the cartels or dangerous gangs like MS13.

There are no mass protests complaining about crime or illegal immigrants who commit crimes. In public schools all over the country – including here in Alabama – teachers are having to teach children speaking English, Spanish, two or three different dialects of Mayan, Haitian creole French, whatever the Somalis are speaking, etc. and then we wonder why little Billy can't do math much less write three sentences about who Thomas Jefferson is even though we spend more money on education than any country in the world.

There are never any mass protests over the historically dreadful schools. Go to an emergency



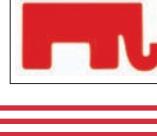
Biden era illegal immigrant encampment in Texas
Courtesy of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency X account

room at a typical American hospital and count how many languages you hear while waiting four hours to see a doctor.

There are no mass protests about the failing healthcare system in this country or about how flooding the country with low income persons from all over the globe and then putting them on Medicaid is crashing our healthcare system. We are supposed to stay calm and just accept all of this as our new reality. None of this was happening in a major way when I was growing up 50 years ago. Of course we have gone from a very manageable population of 215 million people in 1976 to 345 million today. Most of that insane growth was not due to larger families – American women actually are having fewer and fewer children. Instead much of that growth was due to immigration (much of it illegal immigration) and the children born to those immigrants. And then we wonder why housing costs are going up despite us building more and more tract housing on what was once productive American farmland.

There are no mass protests of Americans asking why our Congress in just two generations have completely destroyed the America that we all grew up in. As long as the stock market goes up everybody is just supposed to be happy. Then I flip on a TV sets and I see liberal Democrats in Minneapolis demonstrating in support of illegal immigration? ICE is not even trying to deport all of the 25 million illegal immigrants that are here. They are just trying to get rid of the worst of the bunch – the people who commit aggravated felonies. The kind of people who beat their wives, sell narcotics, drive drunk on our highways, and kill American like Laken Riley. Instead of getting mad over any of the real problems that we face, we get mad and demonize the brave law enforcement officers who are trying to keep us all safe. America at some point in the last fifty years sold its soul. You can kind of see that a whole lot of the rich and the powerful in this country have done their own private deals with the devil, but apparently we have also lost our minds along the way too.

To comment or to ask a question email:
brandonmreporter@gmail.com



Republican Races

Pgs A3 - A4

Honoring Our Heroes

Pg B1

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FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS

- 12th** Lincoln's Birthday
- 14th** Valentines Day
- 16th** Presidents Day
- 18th** Ash Wednesday
- 22nd** Washington's Birthday



COACH TOMMY TUBERVILLE

U.S. SENATOR FOR ALABAMA

Tuberville Calls Out Democrats for Hypocrisy on Obamacare

"For months, our Democratic colleagues have been fearmongering about our health care system. You know, they blamed everyone but themselves for the sky-rocketing premiums Americans are dealing with today."

The truth is, Obamacare destroyed—absolutely destroyed—our health care system. It is completely unaffordable. As a result, American families are now paying the enormous price for Barack Obama and woke Democrats' Obamacare system. Sure, the idea of Obamacare sounded—it sounded great. Who doesn't love the idea of free health care? But those of us who live in reality or understand basic economics knew this was never, ever going to work, which is why not a single Republican voted for it in the Senate or the House when it was voted on.

You see, Obamacare was always destined to fail. You can't pump billions of dollars into healthcare and not expect rampant fraud to take place. It's not possible. Nevertheless, woke Democrats rammed it through Congress, and it was signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010. It was the biggest overhaul of our health care system since Medicare and Medicaid in 1965.

On paper, it sounded great—expand access, protect people with preexisting conditions, and make insurance cheaper for families without employer plans. But to no one's surprise, what started as a bold Democratic dream of affordable coverage for all...it turned into a bloated mess. In fact, the only winners of Obamacare are the big insurance companies who are getting filthy rich on the taxpayers' money. Meanwhile, Americans are spending thousands of dollars on premiums for coverage that often doesn't cover their needs.

And Americans can thank nine of my current Democrat colleagues who voted 'Yes' on that final passage in December 2009, Senator[s] Murray, Cantwell, Wyden, Merkley, Schumer, Gillibrand, Coons, Durbin, Sanders, Tammy Baldwin, who was in the House at the time. These Democrats jam[med] this through with not a single Republican vote, **ignoring real concerns about how the system would limit competition, leading to lower standards of care.** Or how it would line the pockets of big insurance companies, **while forcing hardworking Americans to pay high premiums.** Or how it would **decrease transparency**, leading Americans who often leave the doctor's office not having a clue how much money they owe when they leave. **Or how rural hospitals would be forced to close their doors and doctors and nurses would be leaving the medical field because they couldn't make a living.**

They didn't care about any of it because they always knew we would end up today in the position we are in. Fifteen years later, they knew costs would become unaffordable for Americans. They knew that. But they were just fine with that because **their end goal is to have socialized medicine paid for by American taxpayers**, which by the way, has not worked anywhere in the world. They have terrible health care when they do that.

Obamacare was just the first step towards free health care for all. The first step. To start, Obamacare created state federal marketplaces where individuals could shop for coverage. These marketplaces were intended to be online [stores] for health plans.

By the way, if you remember this, they spent about ten billion dollars and couldn't get the health care website going, but we wasted all this money. When they launched this, it just crashed. People couldn't use it for weeks, months. It cost us hundreds of millions of dollars. That was a foreshadowing of the disaster to come if you just think about it.

On the marketplace. Health plans are sorted in different levels: bronze, silver gold and platinum. Each level shows how costs are split with bronze being the most basic and platinum being the best and higher coverage. For example, the middle-of-the-road silver plan means that the insurer pays for 70% of your care—the insurance companies. The enrollee pays the remaining 30% through deductibles, copays, and coinsurance. Regardless of tier status, each plan covers what is called essential health benefits. Things like hospital stays, maternity care, prescription, emergencies, and preventive services.

That sounds comprehensive, doesn't it? But it came at a heavy, heavy price, driving up costs from day one. This is where Democrats' real problem started. You know, they named this ridiculous bill, the '**Affordable Care Act**', so they couldn't have headlines on day one, saying how prices were going up.

So, what'd they do? To address this affordability issue, Democrats came up with two big financial plans to supposedly help with affordability. The first thing they did was create cost-sharing-reductions, which were designed for lower-income buyers who had the silver plan. Basically, CSRs allowed the government to help these silver plan enrollees pay out-of-pocket costs like deductibles and copays, shifting the bulk of the cost to who? The American taxpayers. By 2017, a court ruling stopped these ridiculous CSR payments, so insurance started raising silver plan prices to cover that gap that the court said you couldn't do. **As a result, families saw their premium jump 20-30% in some states.**

And the second big Democrat idea was the premium tax credits, which was created for people earning about \$15,000 [dollars] a year. And it was capped at those making \$60,000 [dollars] a year. Now this program ballooned during the pandemic when Democrats decided to expand these subsidies. In 2021, The American Rescue Plan got rid of the [\$60,000 dollar] income cap, meaning higher income Americans could now qualify for the subsidies. This meant that many lower-income Americans got zero premium plans for the very first time. This caused enrollment in the Obamacare to double in just five years, double from 11 million people enrolled in 2020 to 24 million in [2025].

Here we go. This was all thanks to fatter subsidies, slacker rules, and year-round special enrollment periods, which allowed people to sign up anytime—no questions asked. These exchanges didn't lower costs. They just shifted the bill to who? **The American taxpayer.**

Premiums kept rising, thanks to price gouging and decreased competition, but the taxpayer-funded subsidies temporarily shielded enrollees from seeing how much costs were going up. Take a family of four earning \$80,000 dollars, for example. They might have paid \$500 [dollars] a month for coverage before Democrats expanded these subsidies. Five hundred a month. But now, they're paying zero for coverage. **While you, the American taxpayer, are stuck with paying the rest of the bill. It's moving closer and closer to socialized medicine.**

This is all thanks to the Democrats', broken subsidy system. And guess who benefits the most? Not you.

A Joint Economic Committee report revealed that insurers and brokers are getting rich off of these subsidies. For every one dollar that is paid by the taxpayers, the families only get **34 cents of this one dollar**. The other, where does it go? It goes to the insurance companies or it just disappears. Wonder where that goes? That's not affordability. That is a straight-up scam that the American taxpayers are facing.

Even worse, these loose rules turned the marketplace into a fraud playground. Enhanced subsidies made plans free for people earning \$15,000-23,000 dollars year. So, of course, people started fudging the numbers to qualify for free coverage. Brokers and scammers piled on, [gaming] the system, claiming to enroll people for free coverage while stealing money for themselves. A Paragon Institute report estimated that there were 5—6.4 [million] cases of fraud last year alone.

To try to catch some of the fraud—the Government Accountability Office—they tried their own scam. They created 44 false applicants. They made up Social Security numbers. They ran it through the system. Shockingly, 96% of the Government Accountability Office's fake applications got approved. One hundred percent free health care.

It's hard to figure out how exactly these people are getting enrolled. Some are lying about their income. Some are double-dipping with Medicaid and some might just not be citizens of this country. Sound familiar? All of this fraud is hard to stop and hard to wrap your mind around.

But unfortunately, the scam of Obamacare is much bigger than fraudulent enrollees. That's because Obamacare just didn't destroy our health care system. It also paid for itself by getting the government involved in student loans. You heard me right. We're gonna pay this—Obamacare is gonna pay for it through student loans. So, loans went from being managed by the banks to the federal government—loaning to go to college. What a great idea. As a result, education is more expensive than ever. And listen to this: today, after [15] years, 45 million students across this country owe \$2 trillion dollars. Embarrassing. We are screwing over our young people who are just starting out in life—all to prop up this broken Obamacare system.

Obamacare promised lower costs and better care, but 15 years in, it has delivered just the opposite. **Obamacare premiums have nearly doubled since 2014, not to mention the outrageous bills you get after you leave the doctor. Quality health care has gone [down]. Hospitals all over the country have been forced to close. We're losing doctors and nurses [left and] right because these jobs don't pay what they used to.** Because we don't have transparency in the system, bad actors are able to hide prices, insurers face no real competition, and COVID subsidies allowed scammers to get rich off of fraudulent money that was intended for the most vulnerable.

So, no, this is not Republicans' fault, as you're hearing. Not a single Republican voted for this disaster called the Affordable Care Act. Democrats have voted for it then, and Democrats are the ones who own this disaster today.

Oh, by the way, **your premiums aren't going up 20% starting in January because of expiring COVID subsidies, like Democrats want you to believe.** That's not happening. These credits are going up only three, four, five percent. The rest of the premiums are going up because insurance companies are charging more.

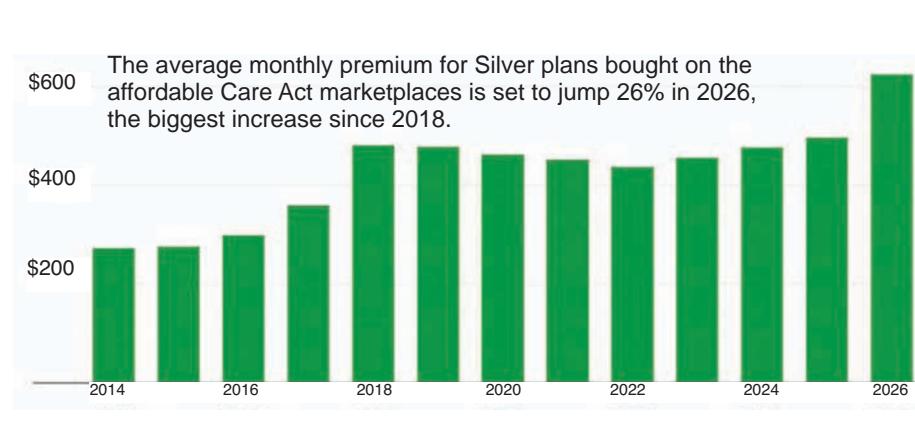
They're getting rich off the American taxpayers. That's what's happening. The way I see it, there are three main problems with the current healthcare system.

The first problem is that Democrats have created a broken system that needs to be repaired, and we're gonna do that. I'm glad to see several of my Republican colleagues are working on this daily. **I'm hopeful that any Republican plan will focus on the main issue: affordability.** The only way to lower costs is through more competition and more transparency. We need more plans to give Americans more of a choice when it comes to insurance plans. This is the only way to drive costs down.

The second problem is that Democrats allowed 20-30 million illegals to come into this country under Joe Biden, many of whom came from third-world countries. Now many of these people have never, ever been to the doctor—have all sorts of health problems. **These illegals are now overrunning our emergency rooms, and you, the American taxpayer, are paying for it.** Next time you go to the ER, see how long it takes you to get in and then blame the Democrats. And the next time a hospital in your town closes, as has happened all over my state of Alabama, blame the Democrats.

The third problem is that we are horribly sick in this country. Americans are the unhealthiest we have ever been. Seventy-four percent of Americans are either overweight or obese. More than 76% of Americans have at least one chronic disease. Cancer rates are increasing among young people at an alarming rate. If we do not start getting healthier in this country by working out, eating healthier, and getting rid of processed food and toxic ingredients, we are not going to make it. Our health care system was not built to support so many unhealthy people. Fifty years ago, you didn't have any of this crap because Americans were more active and didn't have all this processed food. We are over-medicated, overweight, and sicker than ever, and our healthcare system simply wasn't built to handle it. Thank God that Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is working around the clock to make America healthy again. We need it. And at the end of the day, Republicans have control of the Senate, the House, and the White House. We have no excuse not to do something about this health care disaster. We need to come up with a plan that actually delivers for the American people. This is not a Republican or Democrat problem. Every American is getting screwed—screwed over every day by this horrible health care system. The Republican Party is working to fix this. Let's grow a backbone and do what is right for the American people."

Senator Tommy Tuberville represents Alabama in the United States Senate and is a member of the Senate Armed Services, Agriculture, Veterans' Affairs, HELP and Aging Committees.





INSIDE THE STATEHOUSE With Steve Flowers

Steve Flowers is Alabama's leading political columnist. His weekly column appears in over 60 Alabama newspapers. Steve served 16 years in the state legislature. He may be reached at: <https://steveflowers.us/>



Healthcare Costs Are Major Concern as Legislators Craft the State Budgets

As the 2026 Legislative Session evolves, it is apparent that this year's annual session will be short and sweet. That is par for the course in an election year session. This is election year and all 105 House Seats, and all 35 Senate Seats are up for election. Therefore, it is an inherent historical reality that nothing consequential or controversial is addressed in a quadrennium ending election year.

However, it is a constitutional requirement that the legislature enact a budget – in fact, both budgets. Indeed, Alabama has two state budgets. We have a Special Education Trust Fund Budget, which encompasses two-thirds of Alabama's tax revenues, and of course, we have our General Fund Budget, which has one-third of all revenues. Even though crafting the state's budgets is difficult and mundane work, it is the most important chore of a legislature.



Fortunately, Alabama has some outstanding and experienced leaders, who chair the Budget Committees, do yeoman's work, and primarily write the budgets. The Chairmen of the Education Budget Committees are Senator Arthur Orr (R-Decatur) and Representative Danny Garrett (R-Trussville). The General Fund Budget Chairmen are Senator Greg Albritton (R-Escambia) and Representative Rex Reynolds (R-Huntsville). They do an excellent job.

The larger Education Budget will be a much tougher task this year because of the rising cost of healthcare, thus health insurance. The teachers' health insurance fund was founded by and is managed by Dr. David Bonner's well run Teachers Retirement System. This Public Education Health Insurance Plan (PEEHIP) has provided health insurance coverage to Alabama's education employees, retirees, and their dependents since its creation in 1983.

PEEHIP has kept their costs in line for nearly a decade without asking the legislature or members for more money. However, PEEHIP is facing a shortfall for fiscal year 2026, due to a significant decline in federal funding for educators

and education retirees. It is a nationwide problem.

There are three main reasons for this national problem:

1. Cuts to federal funding for Medicare retirees.
2. General inflation that is driving up the cost of everything,
3. Higher utilization by current members and retirees.

Folks are living longer, and those who are living longer expend a lot of healthcare dollars. State revenues probably will not be able to keep up with these rapidly rising costs. It will be a heavy lift for the legislature.

The cost of healthcare is not just an Alabama problem. It is a national problem and probably the paramount problem facing American consumers. The cost of health insurance has risen sharply for the third year in a row, reaching just under \$27,000 for a family plan. That is a 6% increase from the year before and builds on two prior years of 7% gains.

These figures are confirmed by the most trusted and largest health insurance analyst KFF. The latest KFF survey suggests that half the U.S. population gets health coverage through a job.

Hospital prices have also grown significantly in recent years for numerous reasons. There is an alarming increase of cancer in the working-age population. Employers are also seeing increased outlays on new and costly therapies, particularly the popular drugs known as GLP-1s, a category that includes the weight loss treatments Wegovy and Zepbound.

A good many private companies are shifting the increased cost of health insurance onto workers in the form of out-of-pocket charges such as deductibles and copayments. Legislators are struggling mightily with these problems as they craft the budgets.

This increased healthcare and health insurance cost will be a major issue in the upcoming midterm congressional elections. Millions of Americans who were covered under the Affordable Care Act have seen a significant increase in their health insurance premiums beginning this month. There will be political repercussions from voters come November. Who will be hurt politically remains to be seen but, generally, voters blame the party who is in the White House.

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



Perry O. Hooper Jr.

*Founder Let the People Speak
Former Alabama State Representative
Alabama State Republican Executive Committee*



Results, Not Applause: Trump Tells the World Economic Forum the Truth It Didn't Want to Hear

For more than thirty years, American presidents went to the Annual World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland looking for approval. From Bill Clinton through Barack Obama and Joe Biden, the ritual was the same: reassure the global elite, affirm their economic orthodoxy, and return home to explain why American workers had to "adjust." Davos was not a debate. It was a blessing ceremony. Donald Trump ended that era. He didn't go to Switzerland seeking approval. He went to tell them the era of deference is over—and that Europe, not America, is now the cautionary tale.

"Europe is not heading in the right direction," Trump told the Davos audience bluntly. **"The United States is."** The contrast could not be clearer. The United States is growing faster. Energy is cheaper. Capital is flowing in, not out. Jobs are being created across industries instead of subsidized on paper. These are not slogans. They are outcomes. America chose deregulation, tax relief, and energy abundance. Europe chose regulatory excess, energy scarcity, and bureaucratic comfort. The scoreboard reflects those choices.

Europe's leaders prefer to describe their stagnation as bad luck or unavoidable transition. Trump rejected that fiction outright. **"This didn't happen by accident," he said. "It happened because of decisions."** Europe made itself dependent on hostile energy suppliers like Germany shutting down nuclear in favor of Russian natural gas, then acted surprised when power costs spiked and factories shut down. It layered regulation on top of regulation, then wondered why investment slowed. It underinvested in defense for decades, then complained when American leverage followed. This did not happen to Europe. Europe chose it.

Trump framed America First not as isolation, but as proof that growth still works. **"America First does not mean America alone,"** he said. **"It means America strong."** That strength, he argued, is built on policies that reward production instead of punishing it. Lower taxes. Fewer rules. Reliable energy. When governments stop suffocating their own economies, people build, hire, and innovate. Europe was not being scolded. It was being shown the results.

The Greenland issue made many in the room visibly uncomfortable, but Trump did not retreat. **"We need Greenland,"** he said flatly. **"We need it for international security."** He tied the issue directly to the Arctic's growing importance as Russia and China expand their presence. Greenland is not theater. It is strategy. Shipping lanes, rare earths, missile defense, and the future balance of power are all at stake. Ignoring the Arctic does not make it irrelevant. It makes it dangerous.

Then came the predictable outrage over tariffs. Trump did not mince words. **"If we're treated unfairly, we're going to use tariffs,"** he said. **"We have to protect our workers."** This isn't complicated. This isn't cruel. This is math. Tariffs are leverage. They are not mandatory. They are not permanent. They are avoidable. They exist to enforce reciprocity. Europe cannot demand open access to the American consumer while shielding its own markets, subsidizing favored, and free-riding on U.S. defense commitments. If Europe wants free trade, it can practice it. If it prefers protection, America will protect its workers. That is not extremism. That is governance. Trump also addressed what Davos prefers to

discuss only in abstractions: affordability.

"People want to afford a home," he said. **"They want lower costs. And energy is a big part of that."** He connected high housing costs, inflation, and stagnant wages directly to energy scarcity and regulatory excess. Affordability begins with energy abundance, construction costs, stabilizes interest rates, reduces manufacturing expenses, and raises real wages. That is how prices come down in the real world, not through panels and press releases.

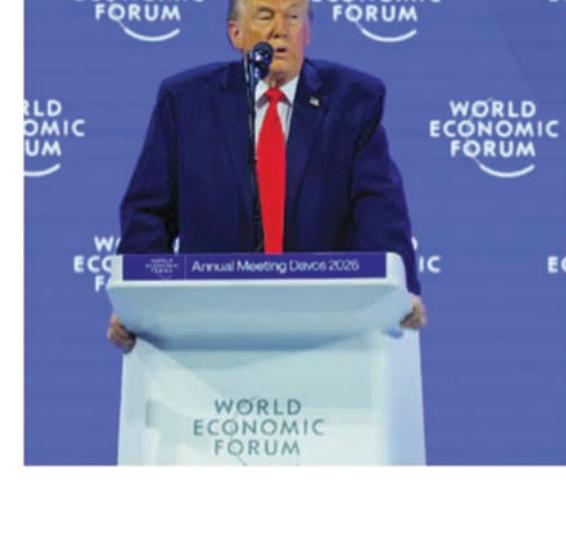
On foreign policy, Trump previewed a new concept he called a **"Board of Peace,"** intended to replace what he described as a failed, performative, U.N.-centered approach to conflict resolution. The premise was simple: results over resolutions, enforcement over symbolism, accountability over endless process. Trump pointed to his record of de-escalating conflicts not through speeches, but through leverage.

He cited Venezuela as one example, noting the collapse of the Maduro regime after sustained pressure and isolation, and contrasted that outcome with decades of diplomatic indulgence that produced nothing. **"We ended wars,"** Trump said. **"We didn't start them."** He noted—only half-jokingly—that such outcomes never earned him a Nobel Peace Prize, a reminder that global institutions tend to reward compliance rather than achievement.

What unsettled the Davos audience most was not any single policy. It was Trump's refusal to ask permission. **"We're done apologizing,"** he said. He did not soften his language. He did not chase applause. He did not pretend the post-war European model is still delivering when it clearly is not. He stated plainly that America will no longer subsidize stagnation, defend it by default, or imitate it out of habit.

Europe still has a choice. It can reform, compete, and grow, or it can continue managing decline with better talking points. That decision belongs to Europe. America's decision is already made.

Trump did not go to Davos to charm the room. He went to draw a line. And for once, the people who claim to run the global economy were forced to listen to a leader who measures success not by invitations or applause, but by outcomes. As Trump reminded them, **"Results matter."** And results do not need consensus.





Ronald A.
Holtsford

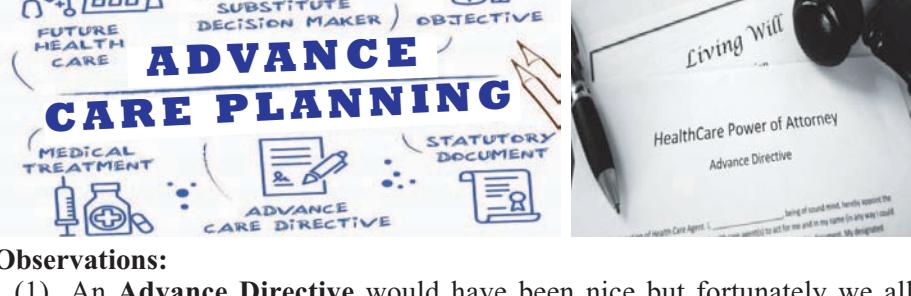
A FUNERAL AND A WEDDING



Not to be confused with the South Korean movie "Two Weddings and a Funeral" or the British movie, "Four Weddings and a Funeral", my real life January events nine years ago had nothing to do with "hooking up" and instead I endured the most grievous and oft dreaded death of a parent, my Mom and only two days after her funeral my oldest son, Matt (not his actual name) returned to Montgomery and married his most precious and beautiful fiancée, Lisa (not her actual name). How often does one experience an emotional high following such a heartbreak?

My involvement in the affairs of my grandparents following their deaths was one more as a laborer to help my parents with the physical assets in their homes. This time it was a parent and my siblings and I rallied to help our Dad as we endured the rather quick demise of our Mom and watched as Dad lost his wife of sixty-two years. Then in 2022 we lost Dad and I found myself as a patriarch of sorts, not envious when you are the oldest now living.

On a Saturday in January 2017 at about noon, Mom fell at home and Dad had an ambulance take her to a local hospital in north Alabama. Having a lack of a neurosurgeon she was then taken to UAB. Her condition rapidly deteriorated and within a few hours we were notified that her injury had now resulted in what was probably an unrecoverable situation. In the wee hours of Sunday morning Dad and I checked into the attached hotel only to receive a call a few hours later that she was further declining. In the darkness of the room I relayed to Dad the grim news. They had given Mom a medicine to raise her cardiac output because nothing was in place for her wishes in this type situation. My Mom had not completed an Advance Directive (Living Will) but Dad knew the decisions he would have to make. I remember shaking as I relayed Dad's wishes to the nurse that no heroic measures should be taken. She had been placed on a ventilator and an IV provided not only fluids but a port for other medicines to make her more comfortable. Before daylight on Sunday I went to sit by my Mom's bedside followed by my Dad an hour or two later. My siblings arrived from out of town shortly thereafter to be with the very person that carried us for nine months and brought our lives into the world and to be there for Dad in whatever had to be done. While Mom's vitals had been very low early that morning, she rallied that day and her vitals were very normal. While my brother kept watch over my Mom, Dad and I headed back that afternoon to our hometown so he could better pack a few things and we also called a local funeral home to begin the process of making arrangements. Even though we were told it is on an appointment basis the director was kind enough to wait until we got there late that afternoon. We returned to UAB late morning on Monday as my brother relayed to us that Mom's rally seemed to be over and life indeed was slipping away. A UAB faculty palliative care physician came by to speak to us regarding Mom's comfort and allowing Mom to transition to be with our Father in Heaven (my words not his). Early afternoon as palliative care was preparing to remove Mom from the ventilator she transitioned as the newest soprano into the Heavenly choir. A mere mortal seventy years in earthly church choirs was replaced by an eternal choir for which I am certain can never be surpassed. Can you imagine being in a choir with King David and praising God with a stronger voice than you ever had on earth?



Observations:

(1) An **Advance Directive** would have been nice but fortunately we all understood the futility of Mom's continuation of life and arrived at the same conclusion. I view Advance Directives a bit differently now; while I have known that withholding fluids and food amounts to starvation of sorts I had not appreciated that taking one off of a ventilator amounts to suffocation and of course we were not willing to allow that. The nurse told us that an anti

anxiety medicine is given frequently as the ventilator is removed so that the patient does not experience that sensation of suffocation. Continuous ventilator use does not keep one from dying and may result in pneumonia and/or lung infections after long-term use.

(2) **Take care of funeral arrangements ahead of time** because not only does the funeral home seek appointments but so does the cemetery. Even though my parents have plots purchased by my grandfather in 1970 you still have to pay for opening, closing, a vault and they have to survey the plots. Only after talking to the manager at the cemetery were we able to get one of their last "appointments" less than an hour after my Mom's death after I explained my Dad would have to come back to the Birmingham cemetery. Regardless of the appointment rule the counselor was INCREDIBLY helpful and compassionate in our time of need.

(3) I do not anticipate **probate** of my Mom's **estate** as all of my Mom's assets also seem to be in my Dad's name. It will be a different story after my Dad is gone. **Look for random insurance policies and carefully read the paperwork as some are paid directly to you or if not needed immediately may be rolled over to an instrument for you but with new beneficiaries.** I later suggested that my Dad consider a new Will since for instance my Mom was his primary beneficiary, named as primary Personal Representative and some family additions and subtractions have occurred since the last Will was prepared.

(4) While I have greatly appreciated my friends that have offered words of sympathy, **I have learned that only those that have lost at least one parent can offer real empathetic support.**

(5) Though there was an agreeable work around after not having an in place Advance Directive/ Living Will, I still advocate that each adult have one in place. **How did the mother of an estate planning lawyer not do what he preaches daily to his clients? She didn't want to think about death and chose not to address it.**

Two days after my Mom's funeral we celebrated the union of my son, Matt (not his name) and his fiancée Lisa (not her name). A beautiful photo of my Mom was prominently displayed at the wedding since my Mom had planned to be there. The tears that day were those of joy. Just as I became Dad to Matt thirty years ago before his wedding in place of his mostly absent father so did Matt become Dad to a sweet little girl whose father has not been a part of her life. Matt and I had a prior discussion more than a year earlier as he considered the same scenario that I had so many years before.

Final Observations:

(1) Young newlyweds that have few assets generally have no reason to consider a prenuptial agreement.

(2) The newlyweds should consider proper estate planning documents because they often have more than they realize and may need to give the other spouse the legal right under a durable power of attorney (health and financial) to perform some activities in place of a competent or incapacitated spouse.

(3) Depending on the exact situation Matt and Lisa may consider adoption as a choice for his wife's daughter. Should Lisa suffer an untimely demise, Matt would have no parental rights unless he is allowed by Lisa to adopt her daughter.

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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State Board of Education District 6: Cathi Bradford is challenging incumbent Marie Manning

State Board of Education District 8: Emily Jones, William Matthews, and Connie Spears

The GOP Alabama State Senate nominees are:

District 1 - Tim Melson
District 2 - John Roberts
District 3 - Arthur Orr
District 5 - Matt Woods
District 6 - Larry Stutts
District 7 - Sam Givhan
District 8 - Steve Livingston
District 9 - Wes Kitchens
District 11 - Lance Bell
District 12 - Keith Kelley
District 14 - April Weaver
District 17 - Shay Shelnutt
District 21 - Gerald Allen
District 25 - Russell "Ty" Taylor
District 26 - Will Barfoot
District 28 - Brent Comer
District 30 - Clyde Chambliss, Jr.
District 31 - Josh Carnley
District 35 - David Sessions

There will be Republican primary battles in districts where more than one candidate qualified for the Republican nomination for State Senate:

District 4 where J.R. Bowling is challenging incumbent Garlan Gudger
District 10 Jesse Battles and Amy Dozier Minton are challenging incumbent Andrew Jones.

District 13 Former Senator Gerald Dial is challenging incumbent Randy Price.

District 15 Scott Ortis is challenging incumbent Dan Roberts

District 16 Nate Carlson is challenging incumbent J.T. "Jabo" Waggoner

District 22 incumbent Greg Albritton is being challenged by Terry L. Waters

District 27 Doug Cannon is challenging incumbent Jay Hovey

District 29 incumbent Donnie Chesteen faces challenges from both Zachary J. Hurst and Val Glasgow Paul.

District 32 Mike Vandenheuvel is challenging incumbent Chris Elliott.

District 34 has former Senator Rusty Glover versus Doug Harwell

In the Alabama House of Representatives the GOP nominees are:

District 2 - Ben Harrison
District 3 - Kerry Bubba Underwood
District 4 - Parker Duncan Moore
District 5 - Danny F. Crawford
District 6 - Andy Whitt
District 9 - Scott Stadthagen
District 10 - Aaron Thomas
District 11 - Heath Allbright

... Continuee Page 5

THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARY IS ON MAY 19.

Republican Primary ballot.

There are numerous races being contested. Qualifying for both major party primary ballots ended on January 23. Below are the Republican candidates as we currently know them:

OPEN U.S. SENATE SEAT: Seth Burton, Dale Shelton Deas Jr., Jared Hudson, Steve Marshall, Barry Moore, Morgan Murphy, and Rodney Walker are all running.

Alabama's First Congressional District: Jerry Carl, James (Jimmy) Dees, Rhett Marques, Joshua McKee, John Mills, James Richardson, and Austin Sidwell are all running.

Hampton Harris is the GOP nominee in **CD2**.

Terri LaPoint is challenging incumbent Mike Rogers in **CD3**.

Tommy Barnes is challenging incumbent Robert B. Aderholt in **CD4**.

Incumbent Dale W. Strong is the GOP nominee in **CD5**.

Case Dixon is challenging incumbent Gary Palmer in **CD6**.

No Republican qualified to run against Congresswoman Terri Sewell (D-Selma) in **CD7**.

Governor the Republican candidates are: Ken McFeeters, Thomas Tuberville, and "Alabama" Will Santivasci.

Lieutenant Governor the Republican candidates are: Wes Allen, Pat Bishop, George Childress, Rick Pate, Stewart Hill Tankersley, Nicole Jones Wadsworth, and John Wahl. *(Pastor Dean Odle had qualified to run for Lt. Gov. but was denied ballot access by the Alabama Republican Steering Committee.)*

Attorney General: Pamela L. Casey, Jay Mitchell, and Katherine Robertson Secretary of State: Caroleene Dobson, Christopher Christian Horn, and Glenda S. Jackson

State Treasurer: incumbent Young Boozer versus Steve Lolley

State Auditor: Derek Chen is challenging incumbent Andrew Sorrell

Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries: Corey Hill, Christina Woerner McInnis, & Jack Williams

PSC Place 1: Matt Gentry is challenging incumbent Jeremy H. Oden

PSC Place 2: Priscilla Andrews, Chris Beeker (the incumbent), Jeffrey M. Boyd, Brent Woodall, and Jim Zig Zeigler

Associate Justice Place 7: Brad Mendheim

Associate Justice Place 8: Greg Shaw

Alabama Court of Civil Appeals Place 4: Benjamin M. Bowden

Alabama Court of Civil Appeals Place 5: Matt Fridy

Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals Place 4: Mary Windom

Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals Place 5: incumbent Beth Kellum is being challenged by Riggs Walker

State Board of Education District 2: Tracie West



John Martin

history, because this isn't just a privacy scandal. This is Microsoft accidentally revealing they've been building a global surveillance system disguised as an operating system, and now that users know, the revolt is just beginning."

So what did Gates and/or his executives do? Why are nation's defense departments all over the world so angry?

Windows 11 contains built-in spyware that has been collecting keystroke data, passwords, private messages, medical information, shopping activities, banking transactions—all transmitted to Microsoft.

The backlash was immediate and nuclear. By October, just three months later, windows 11 usage had dropped to 31% of all windows installations—down from 35% back in July. Remaining users are also bailing out. Microsoft had predicted a 50% adoption by then.

Windows 10 support officially ended on October 14, 2025. But 400,000,000 frightened people continued to use it because of the privacy invasions and other threats imbedded in the upgrade. The revolt against Microsoft and Windows 11 is now well under way.

For half a century, Microsoft had been the king of the personal computer software industry. On April 4, 1975, Bill Gates and his friend Paul Allen founded it in Albuquerque, New Mexico and developed and sold BASIC interpreters for the Altair 8800 PC, and later the OS for the original IBM PC. With these and later developments, he raked in astronomical profits and soon became the richest man in America.

The early versions were simple. The entire system could fit onto a single 256K floppy disk. In those days when RAM was scarce and expensive, software writers made every keystroke count to save space, reduce run time, and occupy less memory.

Those constraints soon changed. Disks and memory chips quickly became much cheaper. The price of a 5.25" double sided double density floppy dropped from \$3.00 in 1984 down to as little as 25 cents in 1990. In later years, software writers became paid by how many lines of code they wrote and sometimes ended up producing bloated programs that ran slower and hogged more memory.

In 1985, Gates developed the first Windows OS (Windows 1.0). It was Microsoft's first graphical user interface (GUI) built on MS-DOS, featuring drop-down menus, scroll bars, and icons, along with basic apps like Paint and Calculator.

Gates continued to make new versions—**Windows 2.x (1987)**, **Windows 3.0 (1990) & 3.1 (1992)**. Several versions followed—**95 (1995)**, **98 (1998)**, **ME (2000)** and **2000 (2000)**. Windows eventually outsold OS/2, and in the 1990s, had exceeded over 90% of the world's market share of personal computers. By the late 1990's, Microsoft had become the world's most valuable company, the first to top over \$500 billion in market value.

Finally in 2001, Microsoft created its finest OS ever—Windows XP. Users loved it for its stability, easy interpretation, respectable speed, and dependability. It rarely had issues. Its features included Office, Word, Paint, Picture Manager, Movie Maker, and others that actually worked. XP was praised by nearly every

Microsoft's Fall from Grace

In July, 2024, Germany's federal office for information security issued an urgent warning to order all government agencies to disconnect all windows 11 computers from its network. Several other countries quickly followed suit. The EU launched an immediate investigation. Despite not running Microsoft for 17 years, Bill Gates was dragged into an emergency PR meeting and blessed out with, *"This is the stupidest decision in company*

user. Gates should have crowned this nearly perfect OS and left it alone.

But he didn't. In spite of being loved by nearly everyone and working almost perfectly, Gates concocted "new" and "improved" **Windows Vista (2006)**, which was buggy and resource-intensive", and of course a flop. The next release, **Windows 7**, was almost as great as XP. It would have also been very successful if he had stayed with it. But no, his company had to keep "improving" it with the inferior editions of 8, 9, and 10. Finally on October 21, 2021, Microsoft released the **hated Windows 11**, promising "the biggest windows upgrade in a decade—a complete redesign—faster, more secure, better for productivity, built for the future."

After only four years, in 2025, users have become furious. Windows 11 contained numerous glitches and multitudes of ads and other annoying pop-ups in addition to the new mandated subscriptions and payware. It is now the most despised Windows version of all time. Drove of its users are switching to Linux and Mac. In an attempt to stop the hemorrhage, Microsoft ended support for Windows 10.

Windows 11 also has hardware requirements that instantly made millions of perfectly good older computers obsolete.

Microsoft won't let you install windows 11 without a Microsoft account any more. You must sign in with a Microsoft email and password. You must connect to the internet during installation. You have no offline or local account options. Microsoft controls your log in to your own computer.



Windows 7 and before contained Office for free. Windows 11 and later make it a \$100 per year subscription attached to your Microsoft account, which tracks and monetizes everything.

Could Windows 11 or 12 block Libre Office and other options? Who knows?

With these gimmicks, Microsoft reported \$252 billion in revenue for fiscal year 2025.

With Open AI and Windows 11, your computer makes your decisions and watches everything. Built-in spyware comes in to observe your buying habits, bank accounts, medical records, passwords, and web searches. You are forced to pay for your own malware and payware. You own nothing. Like a slave, you are just an extractable resource.

Greedy Microsoft has committed an unpardonable sin and is now beyond salvation. It can never be trusted again. Bye, Microsoft. Enjoy your bankruptcy.

SELL your Microsoft stock. Do NOT throw away your old computers. They work fine with Linux and other options.

SOURCES

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Continued from page 4

District 12 - Cindy Myrex
District 14 - Tim R. Wadsworth
District 15 - Leigh Hulsey
District 16 - Bryan Brinyark
District 18 - Jamie Kiel
District 19 - Donald Barnes
District 21 - Rex Reynolds
District 22 - Ritchie Whorton
District 23 - Mike Kirkland
District 24 - Nathaniel Ledbetter
District 25 - Phillip K. Rigsby
District 26 - Brock Colvin
District 27 - Jeana Ross
District 28 - Mack N Butler
District 29 - Mark A. Gidley
District 30 - Craig Lipscomb
District 31 - Troy S. Stubbs
District 32 - Joey Callahan
District 33 - Ben Robbins
District 34 - David Standridge
District 35 - Steve Hurst
District 36 - Randy Wood
District 38 - Kristin Nelson
District 39 - Ginny Shaver
District 41 - Corley Ellis
District 42 - Van Smith
District 43 - Arnold Mooney
District 44 - Danny Garrett
District 46 - David L. Faulkner
District 47 - Mike Shaw
District 49 - Russell Bedsole
District 51 - Allen Treadaway
District 61 - Ron Bolton
District 62 - Bill Lamb
District 63 - Norman Crow
District 64 - Donna Givens
District 66 - Alan Baker
District 68 - Fred Kelley
District 69 - Josh Pendergrass
District 70 - Ian M. Chwatuk
District 73 - Kenneth Paschal
District 74 - Alva Lambert
District 75 - Reed Ingram
District 79 - Joe Lovvorn
District 80 - Chris Blackshear
District 81 - Ed Oliver
District 82 - Kinsley Hammons
District 86 - Paul Lee
District 87 - Jeff Sorrells
District 88 - Jerry Starnes
District 89 - Marcus B. Paramore
District 90 - Chris Sells
District 92 - Matthew Hammett
District 94 - Jennifer Fidler
District 99 - Charlie Watts
District 100 - Mark Shirey
District 102 - Shane Stringer
District 104 - Margie Wilcox
District 105 - Chip Brown

There will be Republican primary battles for state House seats where more than one candidates qualified.

These are:

District 1 where Maurice McCaney is challenging incumbent Phillip Pettus

District 7 Angelo "Doc" Mancuso is challenging incumbent Ernie Yarbrough

District 8 Kevin Davenport versus Patrick Johnson

District 13 incumbent Greg Barnes is facing a challenge from Mike Elliott

District 17 Micheal Beck, Kevin Bradford, and Phil Segraves

District 20 former Congressman Mo Brooks is challenging incumbent James Lomax

District 37 John Jacobs, Donna Bailey McKay, and Jeff Monroe

District 40 Kaycee Cavender, Bill Lester, and Bill McAdams are challenging incumbent Chad Robertson.

District 45 John Dawson is challenging incumbent Susan DuBose.

District 48 Incumbent Jim Carns faces challenges from Lloyd Peebles and William Wentowski.

District 50 Bill Morris and Bryan K. Newell

District 65 Dee Ann Campbell and John Knapp

District 85 David Money is challenging incumbent Rick Rehm

District 91 Jody Linton versus Rod Morgan

District 93 "Stormin" Norman Horton is challenging incumbent Steve Clouse.

District 95 Elijah Davidson & Joe Freeman are challenging incumbent Frances Holk-Jones

District 96 Danielle Duggar is challenging incumbent Matt Simpson

District 101 Tim Manning is challenging incumbent Chris Pringle

The GOP nominees for Circuit Judge are:

Circuit 6, Place 4 Daniel F. Pruet

Circuit 6, Place 7 Dennis Stevenson, Sr.

Circuit 7, Place 4 Peggy P. Miller Lacher

Circuit 14, Place 1 Joeletta Barrentine

Circuit 20, Place 5 Todd Derrick

Circuit 23, Place 2 Alison Strickland Austin

Circuit 25, Place 1 Daryl Burt

Circuit 28, Place 5 Laurie Hoyt

Circuit 37, Place 4 Seth H. Donaldson

Circuit 38, Place 2 Brent Benson

Two circuit judge races have more than one candidate who qualified. These are:

There will be a GOP primary in **Circuit 19**, Place 5 between Carol Cook Carter, Bradley Earl Ekdahl, and Ali Patterson

In **Circuit 28**, Place 7 there will be a primary contest between Jeremiah Giles and Kristi Hagood

For District Judges the GOP nominees are:

District Judge Butler, Place 1

Nicki Myrick McFerrin

District Judge Cherokee, Place 1

Wes Mobley

District Judge Cleburne, Place 1

Melody Walker

District Judge Coffee, Place 1

Josh Wilson

District Judge Crenshaw, Place 1

Jon M. Folmar

District Judge Dale, Place 1

Stan Garner, Jr.

District Judge DeKalb, Place 1

Steve Whitmire

District Judge Elmore, Place 1

Ben Baxley

District Judge Escambia, Place 1

Eric Coale

District Judge Jackson, Place 1

Matt Mitchell

District Judge Lamar, Place 1

Jacob S. West

District Judge Madison, Place 4

John R. Allen

District Judge Madison, Place 5

Jeanne Dowdle Rizzardi

District Judge Marshall, Place 2

Zach Ross

District Judge Mobile, Place 3

C. Zackery Moore

District Judge Morgan, Place 1

Scott A. Slate

District Judge Morgan, Place 3

Kevin R. Kusta

District Judge St. Clair, Place 2

Robert L. Minor

District Judge Tallapoosa, Place 1

Donald (Chad) Harrison

District Judge Walker, Place 1

Henry Allred

There are several district judges where more than one candidate qualified as Republicans.

These are:

District Baldwin, Place 1

will have a Republican primary contest between Grant Blackburn, Warren T. Harbison, William "Liam" Scully, and Ashley W. Siebert

District Judge Elmore, Place 2

will have a GOP primary between Desirae Lewis and Dwight "Tray" M. Richardson III



Col John Eidsmoe

Law of the Sea Treaty: Should It Just Get 'LOST'?

Urging the U.S. Senate to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty (LOST), also called the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Admiral Robert Papp Jr. said not ratifying the treaty is "almost like having a winning lottery ticket that you don't cash in."

Maybe. But before cashing in a lottery ticket (or anything else), one should always read the fine print on the back. And the LOST has a lot of fine print: 475 pages, 17 Sections, 320 Articles, 9 Annexes, and over 158,000 words.

Drafted under United Nations auspices in 1982 and then slightly revised in 1994, the **LOST is a comprehensive agreement establishing maritime zones, regulating navigation, governing resources including seabed mining, environmental protection, and dispute resolution.** It has been called the "constitution for the oceans."

Among other things, LOST provides that nations have full authority over adjacent oceans up to 12 nautical miles from the coast and certain enforcement powers for 12 nautical miles beyond that, that nations have exclusive rights to harvest minerals in their continental shelf up to 350 nautical miles from the shoreline, and that the "high seas" beyond any national jurisdiction are open to all nations for navigation, flight, and scientific research.

The treaty also establishes the International Seabed Authority to regulate mineral harvesting in the international seabed area, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea to adjudicate disputes under the treaty, and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to evaluate conflicting claims over continental shelf territory.

Although the United States was a prime mover in negotiating this treaty, and although 169 nations and the European Union have ratified it, the **United States is not a party to it because it has never obtained the approval of 2/3 of the Senate (67 Senators) as required by the Constitution Article II Sec. 2 for treaties.** President Reagan's opposition to the treaty was a primary reason it was never ratified.

Currently, there is a renewed effort to persuade the Senate to ratify LOST. Treaty supporters argue that ratification is necessary to preserve access to global sea lanes, secure economic zones, and resist hostile action by foreign partners. They point to China as a special concern, because China is trying to reduce navigational rights of the U.S. Navy, has declared an illegal air defense zone in the East China Sea, has made illegal claims to control military research and intelligence gathering in various economic zones, has made illegal claims to control the Taiwan Strait, has harassed the Philippines over disputed island and shoals, and has obtained licenses for five deep-seabed sites for minerals necessary for microchip production. As Admiral Steve Abbot told the National Security Commission, "China is eating our lunch."

These are valid concerns, but it is unclear how ratification of LOST will help us meet these challenges. It would give us a voice on the various Commissions and Tribunals established by LOST, but this might not do much good if we are outvoted by nations hostile to the U.S.

The Heritage Foundation has thoroughly researched the treaty and has prepared a document titled "**7 Reasons U.S. Should Not Ratify UN Convention on the Law of the Sea**" <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/commentary/7-reasons-us-should-not-ratify-un-convention-the-law-the-sea>. As Heritage says, *For more than 30 years, through domestic law and bilateral agreements, the U.S. has established a legal framework for deep-seabed mining. U.S. accession would penalize U.S. companies by subjecting them to the whims of an unelected and unaccountable bureaucracy and would force them to pay excessive fees to the International Seabed Authority for redistribution to developing countries.*

Heritage contends that we can best protect our maritime rights through a strong navy rather than acceding to international agencies that probably do not have America's best interests at heart. Their study quotes Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio)



when he opposed ratification in 2012:

We simply are not persuaded that decisions by the International Seabed Authority and international tribunals empowered by this treaty will be more favorable to U.S. interests than bilateral negotiations, voluntary arbitration, and other traditional means of resolving maritime issues.

...[W]e are confident that our nation will continue to protect its navigational freedom, valid territorial claims, and other maritime rights.

On balance, we believe that the treaty's litigation exposure and impositions on U.S. sovereignty outweigh its potential benefits.

The Cato Institute produced a study titled "The Law of the Sea Treaty: Inconsistent With American Interests," <https://www.cato.org/testimony/law-sea-treaty-inconsistent-american-interests>, and concluded that the provisions establishing an International Seabed Authority are "Orwellian." They start with the fundamental premise that *"all unowned resources on the ocean's floor belong to the people of the world, meaning the United Nations."* The Authority is to be

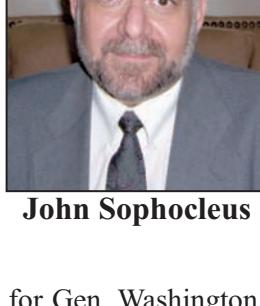
composed mostly of poorer nations that will impose regulations that benefit them at the expense of those who are seeking to develop these seabed resources. The Cato Institute also says concerning the navigation provision, Washington's refusal to sign the LOST left critics predicting chaos and combat on the high seas two decades ago – since then we have witnessed not one incident as a result of America's failure to join the LOST." Even the LOST as amended still has provisions like Article 144 that enquire the International Seabed Authority to *"promote and encourage the transfer to developing States technology and scientific knowledge so that all States Parties benefit therefrom."* The cooperation of America's trade partners, who have an incentive to protect American navigation because they want to buy and sell with America, is a better safeguard than an international agency composed of hostile nations.

President Trump has effectively ignored and bypassed LOST. In April 2025 he signed the "**Unleashing America's Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources**" Executive Order which directs U.S. agencies to expedite permits for deep-sea mining in international waters, thus effectively bypassing the International Seabed Authority.

Not only is LOST against America's best interests and an encroachment upon U.S. sovereignty; it also may be unconstitutional. Hofstra Constitutional Law Professor Julian G. Ku has published a law review article entitled "**Why Ratification of the U.N. Convention of the Law of the Sea May Violate Article III of the U.S. Constitution**," <https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1292&context=mjil>. He notes that international tribunals established under the treaty have jurisdiction over diverse matters such as *"fishing practices, actions on the high seas, scientific research of the marine environment, and intrusions into territorial seas or exclusive economic zones."* Because these tribunals have final authority to decide these disputes, member states are obligated by the treaty to give the decisions of these tribunals full force and effect. However, Article III of the U.S. Constitution provides that *"The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time establish."* Professor Ku notes that *"Although U.S. courts routinely enforce judgments of foreign courts, the Supreme Court has made it clear that such enforcement is made out of comity rather than binding obligation toward those foreign courts."* He cites two Supreme Court cases that raise similar questions, *Medellin v. Texas* (2008) concerning the International Court of Justice, and *Sanchez-Llamas v. Oregon* (2006) concerning the Vienna Convention, to which I would add *Reid v. Covert* (1957) which held that treaties may not supersede the U.S. Constitution.

Navigating the high seas can indeed be dangerous, and we naturally look for easy solutions. But when "LOST" at sea, we must not turn to the Sirens of Homer's *Odyssey*, the bird-like enchantresses whose beautiful voices lured sailors to shipwreck and death on rocky shores. Rather, we must steer a steady course, guided by the Constitution and by George Washington's admonition that we be careful of "entangling alliances."

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



John Sophocleus

Winter at Valley Forge Academy



THINK

Semiquincentennial of united colonies will begin with celebrating the 250th anniversary of declaring independence from British hegemony. Of the most gripping episodes in this hard fought victory, won a quarter millennium ago to break from the King of England was the 1777-8 winter campaign at Valley Forge; a crucible for Gen. Washington's newly minted Continental Army, strategically placed to keep watch over British forces in occupied Philadelphia. Enduring brutal cold, fatal disease, hunger, limited supplies, etc. compelled soldiers to build hovels for shelter. It was also a critical period of training under Prussian officer Baron von Steuben where this Army became a more formidable, disciplined force to reengage in the Spring.

With heavy hands I type Valley Forge Military Academy is permanently closing after their 2025-6 Academic year, ending operation May 2026 due to staffing and enrollment issues. Closer to home and with a heavier heart I type of the current winter at Southern Prep <https://southernprepacademy.org/> located at Camp Hill just off US Hwy 280 in East Central Alabama. Valley Forge closing will leave Southern Prep one of less than a dozen remaining prep schools with a Corps of Cadets (i.e., military) program in the nation we're blessed to have right here in Sweet Home Alabama.



My column readers know I'm a fan of Col. Ramsby (<https://www.alabamagazette.com/story/2024/06/01/opinion/col-ramsby-southern-prep-academys-12th-president/3376.html>) coming to Southern Prep Academy. He's lived up to the promise. The transformation is easily notable to those I've convinced to give Southern Prep another look to see the changes and return to the Academy's roots as an Ag school which morphed into a military academy exemplifying the notion of 'plowshares into swords' and vice versa as Alumnus Maj. Bill Roughton has stressed these past years. Noteworthy early

history includes George Washington Carver and Lyman Ward's connections through shared commitment to agricultural education in our region. Historical correspondence between Carver and Ward date back to the 1930s in the effort to improve farming practices, soil health, and livestock management for farmers across Alabama. Carver often shared his Tuskegee Institute research with Ward illustrating the long standing swords/plowshares tradition.

Recent events foreshadow many more 'swords into plowshares' and vice versa cycles in our State and nation's future. Southern Prep [SoPrep] is uniquely positioned to address that future and reconnect. I unapologetically relish seeing JROTC students sitting in the same classroom with civilian students as I witnessed ROTC in the student body at AU - some who may have never interacted with someone in military uniform prior. If you want to be a part of supporting <https://southernprepacademy.org/giving-funds/> this noble endeavor for Southern Prep getting through their difficult winter of transition, now is the time.

Winter at Valley Forge is cited as a crucial moment of great suffering and sacrifice, but the birth of a professional military which morphed into a force stronger and united to defeat the greatest military of the era whose hegemonic mercantilism was sucking the marrow out of a people longing for liberty. Southern Prep can continue that Spirit of sacrifice striving to regain and maintain Liberty by teaching our youth well with our support. Alabama Gazette readers include many who venerate our veterans and military history filled with honour and sacrifice. SoPrep is a way to support and shepherd future generations with their money, time and even getting their children/grandchildren to consider and attend SoPrep.

In closing, no legislator comes to mind more than Rep. Ed Oliver's efforts to keep this gem of East Central Alabama in his district an integral part of educating and training future soldiers for our State and nation. Past legislators like John Rice and Mark Tuggle are also in the mix as I hope to report more donors return to supporting this blessed endeavour. Congressman Rogers has also been contacted to assist in supporting SoPrep and JROTC integration in his district. Please thank those like Rep. Oliver and contact your legislator(s) to get them on board.

Postscript: along with AU Perspective, I'll also be submitting regular SoPrep Reports to The Alabama Gazette. Forgive delays in AU reporting, the pessimistic pall of fear on Plains increases, impeding positive as well as negative Perspective input for readers to consider.

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

HISTORY BITS AND PIECES

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



Justice Will Sellers

Charles was broke.

His father had spent lavishly and left the crown deeply in debt. Along with the throne, Charles inherited the existing financial obligations and a strained relationship with Parliament. If Charles believed Parliament would fund an extravagant coronation, he would be sorely mistaken.

As the delay lengthened, public anxiety grew. The coronation was not necessary to crown Charles as king, simple heredity did that, but it was a vital public display of royal power and legitimacy. Held in Westminster Abbey, the coronation was a religious ceremony meant to demonstrate that God had anointed Charles as the nation's ruler, uniting him with his people in a sacred bond of divine favor for a righteous and prosperous reign.

Charles embraced the doctrine of the divine right of kings, which he believed conferred spiritual authority upon him, especially in his dealings with Parliament, and sanctified his royal decrees. Parliament did not share this view. While many respected the king as an essential part of government and an integral element of English society, few believed he was infallible, above the law, or entitled to unquestioned obedience.

When the coronation finally took place, it lacked the grandeur traditionally associated with a new reign. There were no elaborate clothes, feasts, parades, or public processions; nothing for the king's subjects to enjoy or celebrate. Instead of uniting the kingdom around a hopeful beginning, Charles's coronation was restrained and joyless.

Rather than fostering kinship, Charles alienated his subjects. Religion remained a matter of paramount importance as many English people remembered the turmoil that occurred when monarchs embraced unpopular religious policies and enforced conformity through persecution. It had been less than 70 years since state-sponsored religion had sanctioned the persecution and execution of religious dissidents.

Instead of easing these concerns, Charles exacerbated them by marrying a French Catholic princess for political reasons. Because the coronation was a Protestant ceremony, she did not participate but observed from behind a screen. Rather than reassuring his subjects of religious moderation and tolerance, the coronation intensified fears that his wife's influence would shape the king's faith and policies. No one welcomed the thought of persecutions and instability.

When Charles I ascended the throne, English colonization in America was still tentative and fragile. Jamestown had survived only through great hardship, while Plymouth Colony remained small and precarious. Colonization during Charles's reign relied on joint-stock companies, proprietary grants, and royal charters. Although Charles did not prioritize colonial expansion, his policies indirectly shaped colonial growth through the granting and confirmation of charters.

Under Charles, colonies such as Massachusetts Bay and Maryland expanded.

The Massachusetts Bay Company received its royal charter from Charles, allowing Puritan leaders to establish a colony with an unusual degree of self-governance. Charles approved the charter largely for financial and political reasons, viewing colonization as a means of expanding English influence without



heavy royal expenditure. His treasury also pocketed the franchise fee associated with the charter.

In contrast, Charles's support for Maryland, granted to Lord Baltimore, was less about remuneration and reflected his desire to reward loyal supporters and provide stability for English Catholics. Maryland was intended as a proprietary colony where Catholics could worship freely, though it ultimately attracted a diverse population. Through these grants, Charles unintentionally shaped the religious and political diversity of the American colonies.

But Charles I's religious policies also encouraged emigration. His support for the Church of England and a High-Church Anglican style of worship alienated Puritans, who sought further reform and feared a return to Catholic practices.

During the period when Charles ruled without Parliament, religious conformity was more strictly enforced, and dissenters faced fines, imprisonment, or social marginalization. For many Puritans, particularly those with the financial means to relocate, America offered an escape from religious intolerance. Tens of thousands migrated to New England, where they established communities centered on religious autonomy.

The colonies became havens for groups seeking greater religious freedom, reinforcing patterns of self-governance and local political organization that would later define colonial political culture.

Charles's frequent use of prerogative power, including taxation without parliamentary consent, further alarmed his subjects. These tensions extended to the colonies, where settlers closely followed political developments in England with alarm.

Charles's inability to tightly supervise colonial affairs allowed colonies to develop representative assemblies, local courts, and systems of taxation modeled on English institutions. This autonomy fostered a political culture that valued local control and resistance to distant authority. The failure to impose consistent royal oversight further entrenched colonial self-rule as colonists experienced liberty to govern themselves in local, representative governments.

The outbreak of the English Civil War significantly altered migration patterns to America. Emigration increased as royalists, parliamentarians, and religious minorities sought safety overseas. New England attracted supporters of Parliament, while colonies such as Virginia and Maryland received greater numbers of royalist sympathizers.

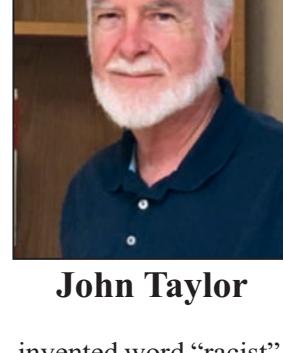
Parliament's execution of Charles I marked an unprecedented rejection of divinely ordained monarchy. In America, the absence of a monarch and the instability of Oliver Cromwell's Commonwealth reduced centralized oversight of the colonies. Under this benign neglect, colonial governments consolidated power and refined local institutions, laying the groundwork for future resistance to imperial control.

The experience of self-governance during a period of imperial weakness reinforced colonial expectations of autonomy. Colonists grew accustomed to managing their own affairs and interpreting English liberties in local contexts. These habits would later shape resistance to British reforms and ultimately contribute to the American Revolution.

Charles I's coronation 400 years ago increased colonial development both in terms of the people who left England and in the English institutions and practical experiences they brought with them. Through charter grants, religious policies, and political conflict, he inadvertently influenced migration to the colonies and allowed colonial self-government to prosper.

Will Sellers is a graduate of Hillsdale College and an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of Alabama. He is best reached at jws@willsellers.com.

Lincoln, Military Force and Constitutional Subterfuge



John Taylor

invented word "racist" to demonize, marginalize, or silence anyone who deviated from the approved government narrative.

Internet searches about Lincoln's unconstitutional actions typically result in the claim he did not actually violate the constitution or his violations were justified in saving the geographical union. Furthermore, the South's belief in a voluntary union and State sovereignty—based on overwhelming evidence—is routinely trivialized by the "Lincoln Cultists."

Did Lincoln violate the U.S. Constitution or did he have implicit dictatorial powers to prevent the South from governing itself? Based on the commentary of the Founders and the voluntary manner in which the constitution was ratified, the federal government has no power to invade a State and/or force said State to remain in the union. Most presidents knew this. Lincoln either did not acknowledge this fact or he was surreptitiously pressured to ignore it.

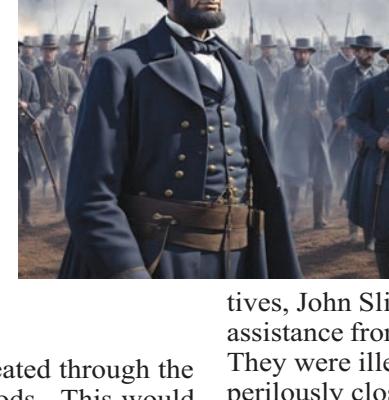
Lincoln insisted the union existed before the States and was created through the 1774 Articles of Association, a boycott of imported British goods. This would have been a shock to Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and even Hamilton. Although the seceding States held conventions and voted to leave the Union in a similar manner to the way they joined it, Lincoln claimed they did not literally leave the Union.

A few constitutional violations are as follows:

War Declared Without Consent of Congress: Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 11, 12: The reinforcement of Forts Sumter and Pickens were acts of war and had been understood as such dating back to the presidency of James Buchanan. Reinforcement achieved the results Lincoln anticipated.

Suspension of the writ of habeas corpus: Article 1, Section 2, The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may provide it. The Constitution gives this power to Congress. Lincoln took it upon himself to assume this power. Voting to leave a voluntary union is not a rebellion.

Blockading ports: Article 1, Section 8, Unauthorized declaration of war through Blockading Ports of States that Were Held by the Federal Government to still be in the Union. This brings up the absurd question – can a country blockade its



own ports?

Illegal suspension of free speech and free press: Amendment 1, Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. The Bill of Rights describes what the federal government has no jurisdiction over. The federal government's only legitimate powers are those delegated by the States in Article 1, Section 8. Beyond that, the States can pretty much do what they want.

Coercion: Article IV: The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities in the several States. Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops from each State to invade the seven seceded States undermined the basis of the creation of the American Republic.

Fugitive Slave Law: Article IV, Section II, Clause 3—No person held to Service of Labour in one State, under the laws thereof; escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour; but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due. As bizarre as it sounds today, failure to return escaped slaves violated the Constitution. Lincoln's idol, Henry Clay, was largely responsible for the most draconian parts of this act.

International law: The Trent Affair—Two Southern representatives, John Slidell and James Mason, were dispatched by Jefferson Davis to seek assistance from Great Britain and France toward gaining Southern independence. They were illegally removed from The Trent, a British mail ship. England came perilously close to going to war with the North after this episode.

Instead of negotiating with the States, Lincoln refused to diffuse a situation that should not have been elevated to war. Why did Lincoln and the Radical Republicans play fast and loose with the Constitution in their efforts to deny the right of self-government to the Southern States? The "Court Historians" will do all they can to obfuscate the answer.

Sources: Union At All Costs: From Confederation to Consolidation, by John M. Taylor; Was Davis a Traitor?, by Albert Taylor Bledsoe; "The Cult of Lincoln," America's Caesar: The Decline and Fall of Republican Government in the United States of America, by Greg Loren Durand, Originally from Life of Abraham Lincoln (1872), by Ward H. Lamon; Facts and Falsehoods, by George Edmonds, Original source: Memories of the Men Who Saved the Union (1887), by Donn Piatt; President James Buchanan stated the federal government has no constitutional power to coerce a seceded State back into the Union. The Articles of Association was a response to the Intolerable Acts where Britain economically punished the colonies. Lincoln initially supported full enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act. Relentless efforts have been made to have the Bill of Rights apply to the States through the 14th Amendment and the tactic known as incorporation.



Rob Tate

Robservations...

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE FOOTBALL: A QUARTER CENTURY OF MEDIOCITY

Let me start off with one reality. I am a Tennessee graduate. I graduated back in the early 1980s and have been a Vol fan for decades. I am, however, more of a realist and my overwhelming attention is given to other pursuits. Especially things with wings on them. That being said, I still sometimes wear my more subdued Tennessee apparel which is dangerous since I now live deep in the heart of University of Alabama country. But now that the 2025 season is over, I felt compelled to write this missive that will undoubtedly anger some. As the Apostle Paul stated, *"Have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?"*

One thing I have come to admire is University of Alabama football. This was especially true during the Saban years. Their approach to playing the game was impressive. Every game, they walked on the field like they **"owned the place."** You know what? They did. They had an attitude of daring and a swagger that challenged their opponent before the game even started. **"We are here and we are going to kick your butt. Try to stop us if you can."** When you would watch them play, it was like the Borg on Star Trek. You might hit them with something they did not expect but they would regroup, adapt and shut down that effort on every subsequent attempt. It was impressive to watch.

Enter Tennessee. Sad. Disappointing. Mediocre. Any more negative adjectives just add to it. For the last 26 years, a full quarter of a century, I have watched a team that is only average at best; below average in fact. Our overall SEC record reflects this. I have watched teams go onto the field hoping to **"not lose"** as opposed to **"we are going to stomp the stuffing out of our opponent."** We may accomplish this against St. Mary's School for the Blind, but where it counts and where **"the rubber hits the road,"** Tennessee is sadly lacking. This is our sad and disappointing quarter century legacy.

After the epic first half ending of our last Alabama game, the 99-yard pick six, I sat back and started thinking. The pick was not a surprise to me but rather was almost a given; inevitable in fact. I wondered at exactly what point was Tennessee's true football character going to show up? They did not disappoint. But as I started looking at our program, I asked myself the question, **"Over the last 26 years, since the year 2,000, how has Tennessee faired against our chief antagonists Alabama, Florida and Georgia?"** Yes, we can beat up on some other teams enough to get the Tennessee faithful to chant the sad, "It's great to be a Tennessee Volunteer," but against our chief opponents, crickets.

So, I went to the UT website and looked at each season since 2000. I only looked at Tennessee against AL, FL and GA and our overall SEC record per year. I included the Tennessee coaches per year as well. You will see this in the table below. When looking at the table, you can certainly derive some other stats but these are the ones that I found most interesting and dare I say, damning. In this 26-year period, Tennessee went 20-58 against these three teams. 10 of these wins came from 2000-2006 seasons. Therefore, only ten total wins came from 2007-2025 seasons. Thus, during this nineteen-year period, TN was a horrid 10-47. The win (+)/ loss (-) margins against these three teams are as follows: AL +6.5 and -23.2; FL +8.4 and -13.8; GA +8.7 and -17.5. These numbers are bad but may not show the true extent of Tennessee's poor performances because there were many games, with a loss that was only 2, 3 or maybe 5 points which brought the average down. Arguably more impressive is that 13 times TN lost by a score of 20-30 points. Nine times we lost by 30-40 points and once by greater than 40. Between the 2017 and 2021 seasons, TN failed to beat either team once. In this 0-15 run, TN lost by an average of 26.5 points.

What I derive from these numbers is that Tennessee never or rarely "beats" these three teams. Yes, we may win, but are we really beating them? No. The reverse? We see TN losing by scores of 31, 31, 31, 35, 37, 39, 26, 24, 27, 29, 28 and more. We have a couple decisive wins but not many. The win this year against FL was a pleasant change. Where our three major opponents walk on the field with the intent of winning, TN enters a game, seemingly hoping not to lose. Not the same

thing. So many times, we see Tennessee take a lead early in the game and then seemingly revert to a philosophy of, **"Let's not lose. Let's just hang on for 30 minutes and we will win."** It seems as though they never consider the wartime principle of dislocation and exploitation. Hit your enemy, damage them, but keep up the pressure and NEVER let him recover. Tennessee bloodies their opponent's nose and then hands them a tissue while watching them come back and win.

Do you remember our game against LSU when Dooley was the coach? Last play of the game. LSU on the goal line. We stop; we win. We stopped them! We won! Wait. 12 men on the field. LSU gets another shot and we lose. Penalties at critical times, missed and blocked field goals for the win, it is a never-ending disappointment.

Until Tennessee can consistently beat these three teams, we are little more than posers. Are we really serious contenders? Not yet. The Tennessee faithful continually show up and listen to Rocky Top while our beloved orange and white gets trounced on the field. We have to develop a culture of victory and excellence in our football program. It used to exist but now? You tell me. This table shows a quarter of a century of non-existent excellence and mediocrity. And for what it is worth, excellence does not equate to winning a national championship every year but rather excellence in the way the game is approached and in doing the small things at the right time so as not to hurt your team. Do I have the answer? Nope. I am not a coach being paid million of dollars per year and for what it is worth, they apparently do not have the answer either. As for me, I will sit back, watch the occasional UT game, hope for the best and then happily switch the channel to an interesting WWII documentary. There at least the Germans made a decent attempt at winning.

TENNESSEE FOOTBALL 2000-2025: A QUARTER CENTURY OF MEDIOCITY			
YEAR	AL	FL	GA
2000	W +10	L -4	L -11
2001	W +10	W +2	L -2
2002	L -20	L -17	L -5
2003	W +8	W +14	L -27
2004	W +4	W +2	W +5
2005	L -3	L -9	L -13
2006	W +3	L -1	W +18
2007	L -24	L -39	W +21
2008	L -20	L -24	L -12
2009	L -2	L -10	W +26
2010	L -31	L -14	L -27
2011	L -31	L -10	L -8
2012	L -31	L -17	L -7
2013	L -35	L -14	L -3
2014	L -14	L -1	L -3
2015	L -5	L -1	W +7
2016	L -39	W +10	W +3
2017	L -38	L -6	L -41
2018	L -37	L -26	L -26
2019	L -22	L -31	L -29
2020	L -31	L -12	L -23
2021	L -28	L -24	L -24
2022	W +3	W +5	L -14
2023	L -14	L -13	L -28
2024	W +7	W +6	L -14
2025	L -17	W +20	L -3
Total	7/19	7/19	6/20
Wins/Losses			102-105
Collective vs.			20/58
AL, FL, GA	Fulmer Jones	Kiffin Pruitt	Dooley Heupel

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

CROSSWORD

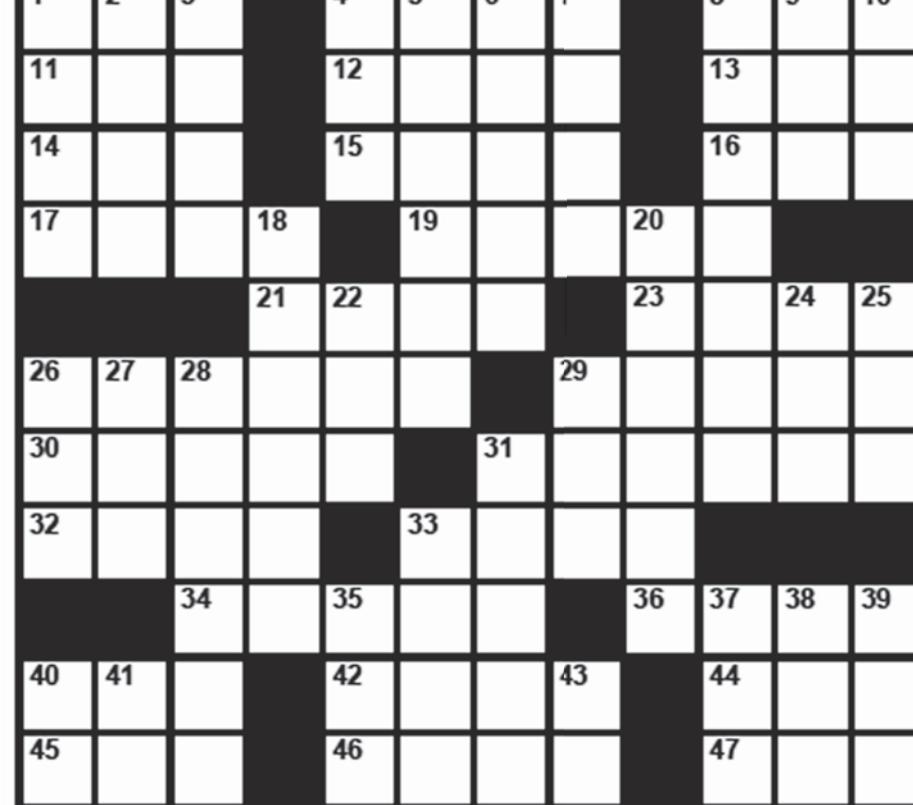
by Myles Meller

Across

- 1 **in hand**
- 4 **Evidence**
- 8 **Animal house**
- 11 **Hearth residue**
- 12 **Polecat's defense**
- 13 **Kind of deposit**
- 14 **Rest**
- 15 **Vocal number**
- 16 **Construction vehicle, for short**
- 17 **Room coolers**
- 19 **Lowest in consideration**
- 21 **Cereal**
- 23 **Cheat, in a way**
- 26 **Farm carts**
- 29 **"The ___ Musketeers"**
- 30 **Cleanser**
- 31 **"Alice ___ Live Here Anymore"**
- 32 **February gift**
- 33 **Feel as if**
- 34 **Almost falls**
- 36 **Word often before after**
- 40 **Person indicated**
- 42 **Shadow**
- 44 **Vision provider**
- 45 **muffs**
- 46 **Upper hand**
- 47 **What some caddies carry**
- 48 **We ___ family**
- 49 **Darn, as socks**
- 50 **Unpaired**

Down

- 1 **Two quarters**
- 2 **Eastern land mass**
- 3 **At that point**
- 4 **Interactive promotional outlet, with com**
- 5 **Grown-ups**
- 6 **Audio qualities**
- 7 **Neck of the woods**
- 8 **They do checkups**
- 9 **Historic time**
- 10 **Fishing equipment**
- 18 **With less delay**
- 20 **Strategy**
- 22 **One marching in a column**
- 24 **Fountain for one**
- 25 **At this time**
- 26 **Combat**
- 27 **Green light**
- 28 **Motion**
- 29 **Musician's taper**
- 31 **Scheme**
- 33 **Garden tool**
- 35 **Checklist bit**
- 37 **Cancel a bill**
- 38 **Sized up**
- 39 **Use a book**
- 40 **Sure!**
- 41 **Crew member**
- 43 **Marshaled**



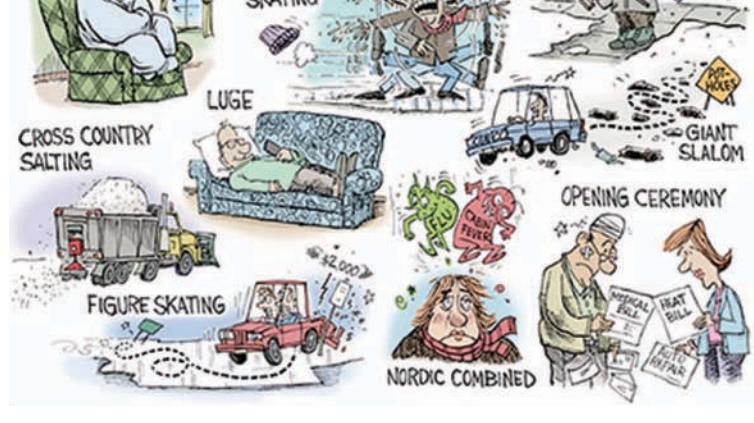
Answers on page B2

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Community Lifestyles

NOTICE!

PLEASE GO TO OUR WEBSITE
AND VIEW THIS ISSUE AND
UPCOMING ISSUES ALONG
WITH CURRENT NEWS!
www.alabamagazette.com

Honoring Our Heroes



UPCOMING AREA EVENTS FOR VETERANS



River Region Veterans Coalition Meeting 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Monday, Feb 23 6:00pm

Feast Buffet

5831 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery, AL 36117

Arrive no later than 5:30 pm for Buffet Meal at \$12.00 per person

RRVC was formed one year ago to bring together veteran service organizations, government agencies, and community partners into a collaborative, apolitical coalition serving the greater Montgomery area. Over the past year, the coalition has grown to include a broad cross-section of veteran and community organizations and has completed several notable projects supporting local service members and veterans.

Veteran events provided by River Region Veterans Coalition



H. Keith Rudolph
TSGT, US Air Force (Ret.)
President, River Region Veterans Coalition (RRVC)
8174 Ansley Trace
Montgomery, AL 36117
E-mail: keithou2000@gmail.com
Cell phone: (334) 303-4102

American Legion Post 2

Monday, Feb 9 4pm

Candi Peagler of COSA Hope4Heroes is Guest Speaker

Feast Buffet Restaurant, 5831 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery, AL 36117.

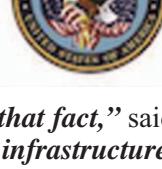
#GETHOPE Recovery is Possible & QPR Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Training

BondFire Ranch Fire Ring on the Back Forty

Saturday, Feb 21 4:30pm-6:30pm

Bryan Eddy and crew are kicking off the new year the BondFire way — gathered around the fire, sharing stories, laughter, and meaningful conversation. Bring a chair, a warm layer, and a friend. Whether you come for the conversation, the crackle of the fire, or simply the fellowship, there's a place for you around the flames. We can't wait to welcome you back to the fire.

VA to Invest All-time High of nearly \$5B to Improve Health Care Infrastructure



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Central Alabama Veterans
Health Care System

The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced it will spend \$4.8 billion in fiscal year 2026 to modernize, repair and improve health care facilities as part of the Veterans Health Administration's Non-Recurring Maintenance program, which makes infrastructure improvements to health care facilities to ensure safe and effective patient care.

This is the largest single-year NRM investment in VA's history.

The NRM program funds one-time maintenance projects for facilities, equipment or infrastructure that are not part of routine, recurring maintenance. These projects include significant maintenance, replacements or upgrades needed to maintain operational capability and advance health care delivery.

"Under President Trump, VA is putting Veterans first, and this historic

investment underscores that fact," said VA Secretary Doug Collins. "Improved facilities, equipment and infrastructure mean better care for Veterans, and these funds will enable VA to achieve that goal."

The funding will cover projects at VA facilities across the nation and includes: \$2.8 billion to repair and upgrade outdated infrastructure systems in medical facilities. \$1 billion for maintenance and modernization of electronic health record systems, including facility preparation for future EHRM updates. \$500 million for major building upgrades like elevators, electrical systems, and boiler plants. \$500 million to modernize medical centers for current and future care.

VA will determine specific projects on a quarterly basis. The full list of the projects for the first quarter of FY26 totals \$468 million.

COACH TOMMY TUBERVILLE

U.S. SENATOR FOR ALABAMA



Tuberville Honors
Antonio Parker of Montgomery
as February
"Veteran of the Month"

that he would get his own education. And in 1981—one week after graduating high school—Antonio enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. What began as a way to pay for a college education and keep his promise to his mother, led Antonio to 28 years of military service, including more than ten deployments. During this time, he earned five degrees focusing on business and leadership.

After retiring from the military in 2009, Antonio's focus shifted to empowering those around him in the Montgomery area. He's completed 59 marathons and loves to help others lead healthier lives. Throughout the years, he has planned multiple community health events, including his 'Fit-4-Life' 5k, where all proceeds go toward education for those in need.

It's no wonder that such an extraordinary person is nicknamed 'Superman' by his colleague, Officer Benjamin Duffy, who says that Antonio is, 'truly an exceptional man, great patriot, and an even better Alabamian!' It's my honor to recognize Antonio Parker as the 'February Veteran of the Month.'"

Watch the full video honoring Antonio Parker at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcyCoonChkU>

Constituents can nominate an Alabama veteran and submit their information to Sen. Tuberville's office for consideration in the 2026 "Veteran of the Month" series by emailing press_office@tuberville.senate.gov.



U.S. Marine Corps
Master Gunnery Sergeant
Antonio Parker

YOU ARE NEVER
ALONE...

Always Remember the
Men and Women who have served our great na-
tion and the sacrifices they made.

Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

www.veteranscrisisline.net

IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU REMEMBER OUR VETERANS DURING THE UPCOMING HOLIDAY SEASON.
MAKE A POINT TO SAY "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE" WHEN YOU SEE A VETERAN WEARING HIS SERVICE CAP.
HE IS WEARING HIS CAP BECAUSE IS PROUD OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE HIS COUNTRY.

GOD BLESS AMERICA!

Veterans February Birthdays

Joe Panza
Dudley Frank Christian
Anthony Baggiano
Karen Brantner
Jeffery Newton
James Edward Klingler
Andrew E. Lindsey

February 2nd
February 6th
February 12th
February 16th
February 16th
February 19th
February 25th



PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH, 2026

By the President of the United States of America A Proclamation

This year, we celebrate the most significant milestone in our Nation's history: 250 glorious years of American independence. From the very beginning, our country has been blessed with countless black American heroes. For more than two and a half centuries, these legends have made timeless contributions to our government, laws, military, economy, workforce, and culture. With their tremendous legacy in mind, as President, I proclaim that "black history" is not distinct from American history — rather, the history of black Americans is an indispensable chapter in our grand American story.

America's founding was rooted in the belief that every man, woman, and child is created equal, "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," and free to live lives in "pursuit of Happiness." For 250 years, these principles have inspired and informed the independent, bold, and pioneering American spirit. It is our bedrock belief in equality that drove black American icons to help fulfill the promise of these principles. And it is our unwavering commitment to liberty that continues to sustain our Nation's greatness.

This month, we are also reminded that the source of our strength is rooted not in our differences, but in our shared commitment to freedom under one beautiful American flag. For decades, the progressive movement and far-left politicians have sought to needlessly divide our citizens on the basis of race, painting a toxic and distorted and disfigured vision of our history, heritage, and heroes. This month, however, we do not celebrate our differences. Instead, we celebrate the contributions of black Americans to our national greatness and their enduring commitment to the American principles of liberty, justice, and equality — the principles that wrested the Western Hemisphere from monarchies and empires, ended slavery, saved Europe, put a man on the moon, and built the freest, most just, and most prosperous society ever known to mankind.

Since the great Prince Estabrook became the first black man to shed his blood for our emerging Nation at the Battle of Lexington more than 250 years ago, heroic black Americans have valiantly fought for our liberty on the fields of battle, in the pews of our churches, and in our shops, restaurants, and businesses. Across every generation, legendary black Americans have fiercely defended the values

set forth in our Declaration of Independence and helped to make our Republic the greatest country in the history of the world. From the unflinching faith of Lemuel Haynes, the soaring prose of Phillis Wheatley, and the unmatched resolve of Harriet Tubman to the towering intellect of Frederick Douglass, the fearlessness of Jesse Owens, and the brilliance of Katherine Johnson and Thomas Sowell, countless black patriots have stood as the vanguards of our freedom — and are among some of the most heroic Americans to have ever lived.

As President, I am fighting to restore the Nation that these titans helped build, and to make America greater than ever before. In their honor, and to commemorate 250 years of American liberty, I have authorized the construction of the National Garden of American Heroes, a new statuary park honoring our greatest Americans, including black icons like Booker T. Washington, Jackie Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Coretta Scott King, Muhammad Ali, and many others. Last spring, I also signed an Executive Order to promote excellence and innovation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities so the next generation of leaders in the black community will learn from these great American examples. And I am fighting every day to make our neighborhoods safer, groceries more affordable, and the American Dream more attainable for all Americans.

My Administration will never stop working to ensure that our country and every future generation of American citizens remain guided by the same truth: We are one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2026 as National Black History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fiftieth.

DONALD J. TRUMP

Montgomery County Probate Court Invites Community Artists to Participate in Black History Month Exhibit

The Montgomery County Probate Court invites community members of all ages and skill levels to submit original artwork for a special Black History Month exhibit titled Through the Artist's Eye: Montgomery's Black History. The exhibit will be on public display at the Juliette Hampton Morgan Memorial Library throughout February 2026.

Selected works will be exhibited beginning Friday, February 13, 2026, and will remain on display through the end of the month. An opening reception will take place on Friday, February 13, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., featuring remarks from library leadership and Montgomery County Probate Judge J.C. Love III. Participating artists are strongly encouraged to attend and engage with attendees about their work.

The exhibit seeks artwork that reflects the theme of Montgomery's Black history. Submissions may include paintings, photographs, sculptures, collages, and other visual art forms. Due to limited exhibit space, artists are encouraged to be mindful when submitting larger works. Artists whose work is not selected will have their submissions returned.

Artwork submission details are as follows:

Submission Deadline: Monday, February 9, 2026, by 4:30 p.m.

Drop-off Location: Montgomery County Archives, 101 Lawrence Street, at the corner of Washington Avenue and St. Lawrence Street

Entrance: Street level. Use the call box by the door for admittance

Each submission must include the artist's name, title of the artwork, and contact information. Artists must also provide their own display equipment, such as easels or stands, if needed. All artists will be notified regarding the selection status of their work.

Crossword Puzzle Answers from Page A8



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Chief Deputy
Kevin Murphy



The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) is led by Sheriff Derrick Cunningham and employs over 350 criminal justice professionals, including 156 sworn deputies. The MCSO is a customer-centric organization with the goal of providing professional law enforcement services to the citizens of Montgomery County. The Sheriff's Office is comprised of five major divisions, the Montgomery County Detention Facility, the Montgomery County Juvenile Detention Facility, and many other specialized units. The MCSO is a full-service law enforcement agency that uses the latest technology and methods to serve the community and ensure public safety.

The priority of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office is the welfare and protection of the citizens of Montgomery County. We work hard at putting our citizens and communities first. The Mission of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office is to provide the best law enforcement protection and service for Montgomery County.

Montgomery City/County EMA Earns StormReady Distinction

The Montgomery City/County Emergency Management Agency has been officially recognized as **StormReady** by the National Weather Service, a prestigious designation that underscores the agency's commitment to emergency preparedness, severe weather readiness, and public safety.

The **StormReady** program is a nationwide initiative that recognizes communities and emergency management agencies that have met rigorous standards for severe weather planning, communication, and response. Earning this designation reflects years of coordinated planning, investment in warning systems, training, and strong partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies.

"This designation highlights the critical role our Emergency Management Agency plays in protecting lives and property," said Wade Lyles, Director of the Montgomery City/County Emergency Management Agency. *"StormReady status is not awarded lightly. It represents a comprehensive approach to preparedness, from advanced warning capabilities and emergency operations planning to public education and interagency coordination."*

To qualify as **StormReady**, agencies must demonstrate the ability to receive and disseminate timely weather warnings, maintain a formal hazardous weather plan, conduct regular emergency exercises, and provide ongoing outreach to ensure residents understand how to respond when severe weather threatens. The designation signals to the public that emergency protocols are in place and that responders are trained and equipped to act quickly when conditions deteriorate.

The National Weather Service emphasized that while no community can be made completely immune to severe weather, **StormReady** communities are better positioned to minimize risk and improve outcomes during emergencies. Montgomery's designation is valid through November 7, 2029.

Local officials noted that the recognition affirms the agency's daily work behind the scenes, including preparedness planning, coordination with first responders, and continuous efforts to improve resilience across the city and county.

"This is about readiness, accountability, and trust," Lyles added. *"When severe weather strikes, our residents deserve confidence that their emergency management agency is prepared to respond. **StormReady** status reinforces that commitment."*

For more information on emergency preparedness resources and severe weather safety, residents are encouraged to follow guidance provided by the Montgomery City County Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service.



OPEN ENROLLMENT

Community Emergency Response Team

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, including: fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and basic first aid. CERT prepares you to care for yourself and your neighbor during a disaster situation. Join a dedicated group of volunteers ready to support first responders, providing vital support during times of crisis.

- ✓ Learn Life Saving Skills
- ✓ Train in Search and Rescue
- ✓ Disaster Simulation
- ✓ Learn Disaster Medical Training

ENROLL TODAY

Starting April 20th & Ending May 2nd
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Saturday, May 2nd: Final Exercise 8am

**115 South Perry St.
Montgomery, AL 36104**
+334-832-2515
www.montgomerysheriff.com






AUTAUGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



(334) 361-2500

162 W 4th Street,
Prattville, AL

www.autaugasheriff.org



Sheriff
Mark Harrell

ELMORE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



(334) 567-5546

8955 US-231

Wetumpka, AL 36092

[https://www.elmoreso.com](http://www.elmoreso.com)



Sheriff
Bill Franklin

LOWNDES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



(334) 548-2222

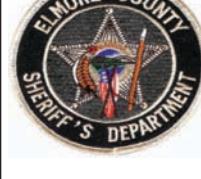
1 S Washington St
Hayneville, AL 36040

[www.facebook.com/
LowndesCountyAlabamaSheriffsOffice/](http://www.facebook.com/LowndesCountyAlabamaSheriffsOffice/)



Sheriff
Chris West

BULLOCK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



(334) 738-2670

217 North Prairie Street

Union Springs, AL 36089

bullockcountysheriff@ustconline.net



Sheriff
Raymond Rodgers

Today's Woman

Trisston's Tidbits:

By: Trisston Wright Burrows

Ms. Wheelchair America/Alabama 2005
site.trisstonwrightburrows.com



"Put the Stones Down"

One of the most misunderstood moments in the Gospels is also one of the most beautiful. They drag a woman to Jesus who was caught in adultery...one of the most heinous sins. She was publicly exposed and ashamed. They ask Jesus a question they thought they already knew the answer to. Should we stone her? Jesus doesn't argue doctrine. He doesn't raise His voice and He doesn't shame anyone.

He just says, "He without sin, cast the first stone" John 8:7

One by one the stones hit the ground and the accusers walked away. Then Jesus looks at her and asks, "Where are your accusers? And she says, there are none, Lord. He replies, neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more." John 8:10-11

Here's what hit me years later about that story. That woman isn't just her. That

woman is all of us. Different sins, different weaknesses, different traumas. But every one of us has stood there... exposed, ashamed, and convinced that we were disqualified. And Jesus doesn't meet us with condemnation either. He meets us with clarity and compassion. "Go and sin no more" isn't a threat. It's an invitation not do better or else, but you were made for more.

Religion loves stones. Jesus loved people. But here's the part we so often miss most of the time. The stones aren't in other people's hands. They are in own hands. We are often the first to accuse others and ourselves. The first ones to shame ourselves. The first ones to decide we are unworthy.

I think that same voice speaks to us now. He without sin cast the first stone. So we dropped them, not to excuse our behavior, but to stop beating ourselves into paralysis. This is why it's personal to me. Because when I was at my worst, not polished, not put together, but broken, that's when God found me. Not after I cleaned myself up, but right in the middle of my mess. God's love is not transactional and it doesn't come with prerequisites. He meets us exactly where we are and loves us there. He loves us too much to lie to us, too much to leave us small, too much to let us stay stuck. That's grace and truth, my friend! The gospel is not about gatekeeping heaven. It's about rescuing the lost. So put the stones down, especially the ones you are holding against yourself. Skip the shame. Skip the unworthiness spiral and get to work becoming who you are meant to be.

I love you...and more importantly, God loves you!

Happy Valentine's Day & Many Blessings!

KATIE BRITT

U.S. SENATOR FOR ALABAMA



One-Year Anniversary of Laken Riley Act being signed into Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Katie Britt (R-Alabama) commemorated the one-year anniversary of President Donald J. Trump (R) signing the Laken Riley Act into law. This bipartisan, landmark piece of legislation was the first bill signed into law by President Trump in his second term. The effort to pass the bill was led by Senator Britt in the United States Senate. It was the first major immigration enforcement and border security-related legislation passed since 1996.

"Americans have grown accustomed to empty talk from politicians in Washington, but the signing of the Laken Riley Act a year ago today signaled to Americans everywhere that the Trump Administration and Senate Republicans are committed to taking action on the issues that matter most to them," said Senator Britt. *"The Laken Riley Act is keeping Americans safe by requiring the detention of illegal aliens arrested for violent crimes such as murder, rape, sexual abuse, and assault on police officers, and the success of this legislation is seen in the numbers, with more than 17,500 criminal illegal aliens taken off our streets and unable to commit further crimes."*

Since the Laken Riley Act was signed into law, more than 17,500 illegal aliens have been arrested under the authority of the law. These actions to protect families and communities stand in stark contrast to the Biden-Harris Administration's policies that resulted in over half a million illegal aliens on Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) non-detained docket by mid 2024 who had criminal convictions or pending criminal charges and were released back into the United States.

On February 22, 2024 Georgia 22-year-old Georgia nursing student Laken Hope Riley was jogging near the University of Georgia campus, when Jose Antonio Ibarra attempted to sexually assault young Laken. She resisted so he killed her. The crime became a national flashpoint since Ibarra, was in the U.S. illegally. There have been numerous Americans killed by people illegally in the country; but this case became the one that finally stirred the public and our elected leaders into action.

Senator Britt said, *"If this commonsense legislation had been on the books, Laken would likely still be with us today; we will never forget her. I'm proud to have played a role in her legacy and in the effort to keep Americans safe, with the hope that no other family will have to experience the heartache and tragedy Laken's did."*

At the bill signing a year ago, President Trump said that 425,000 criminals were illegally in the country and were loose on the streets. 13,099 of them had been convicted of murders.

"Under the Trump administration, we're moving with urgency and speed to get these vicious and violent criminals the hell out of our country and to restore law and order to our suburbs, our cities, and our towns," said Trump.

Katie Britt was elected in 2022 after previous experience as Executive Director of the Business Council of Alabama, an attorney, and Senator Richard Shelby's chief of staff.



Sarah Ross

February is American Heart Month

February marks American Heart Month, an annual reminder that heart health matters for all of us, whether we are prioritizing daily cardiovascular exercise, eating a balanced diet, or adhering to medication regimens prescribed for conditions such as high blood pressure. One of the most basic, accessible ways to check on your cardiovascular status is by monitoring your blood pressure. Although this sounds straightforward, accuracy is essential and proper technique matters whether you are measuring

at home or in a clinician's office. To ensure reliable results, sit comfortably with your back supported, feet flat on the floor and uncrossed, and your arm at heart level; use a properly sized upper-arm cuff, and take multiple readings spaced a minute or two apart for a clear picture of your numbers. If you are unsure how to take blood pressure correctly, consult your physician or health professional for guidance before interpreting your results.

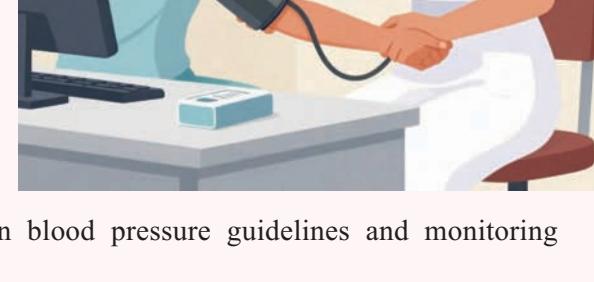
According to the American Heart Association (AHA), normal blood pressure is defined as a reading less than 120/80 mm Hg, while elevated blood pressure falls in the range of 120–129 systolic with a diastolic reading below 80. Stage 1 hypertension includes systolic readings between 130–139 or diastolic between 80–89, and Stage 2 hypertension is a systolic pressure of 140 or higher or diastolic of 90 or higher. For better visualization, see attached chart. It is important to emphasize that physicians typically do not diagnose hypertension from a single reading; rather, they rely on multiple measurements over time to make an accurate diagnosis and determine the best treatment plan. Keeping a home blood pressure log can be extremely helpful for your clinician, recording morning and evening readings over days or weeks gives valuable insight into your blood pressure trends, which is far more informative than a solitary snapshot taken during a 20–30 minute office visit. Maintaining your blood pressure within a healthy range is critical because persistent high pressure places chronic stress on blood vessels and organs. Over time, this stress can lead to damage first seen in smaller vessels, such as those in the eyes, and progress to more serious complications including heart failure, kidney disease, or stroke; this is why hypertension is often referred to as "the silent killer," since severe damage may occur without obvious symptoms.

In addition to blood pressure monitoring, the AHA highlights the importance of lifestyle habits known to support heart health (such as following the DASH dietary pattern rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, maintaining a healthy weight, engaging in regular physical activity, limiting sodium and alcohol intake, and managing stress and sleep quality) because these factors influence blood pressure and overall cardiovascular risk. Especially during February, when colder temperatures can contribute to elevated readings due to vessel constriction and changes in activity patterns, staying vigilant with blood pressure checks is worthwhile for local residents.

Finally, while blood pressure is a cornerstone of cardiovascular risk assessment, comprehensive heart health also includes discussions about cholesterol management, rhythm abnormalities such as atrial fibrillation, and routine screenings based on age and risk factors. By knowing your numbers, taking medications as prescribed, and partnering with your health care provider, you can take meaningful action this American Heart Month to protect your heart now and into the future. (Sources: American Heart Association blood pressure guidelines and monitoring recommendations.)

(see chart below)

BP Category	Systolic	Diastolic
Normal	<120 mmHg	and <80 mmHg
Elevated	120-129mmHg	and <80 mmHg
Hypertension		
Stage 1	130-139 mmHg	or 80-89 mmHg
Stage 2	>140 mmHg	or >90 mmHg



American Heart Association blood pressure guidelines and monitoring recommendations.



Citation:

<https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000001356#sec-6-1>

Pay it forward, Sarah Ross



JUDGE PEGGY GIVHAN

Southern Gardening Potpourri for February



It certainly appears that this February may not be the harbinger of spring, but a continuation of January cold. There are a couple of bright spots this month we can celebrate. On February 14th, Valentines Day, and on February, 17th Mardi Gras. And as they say in New Orleans, "laissez les bons temps rouler" --let the good times roll. So get out the purple, green and gold, and have a great time. Valentine's Day should bring to mind the power of Love. Love sent out to friends, family, and basically everyone will make our world a better place.

Planting for February

There are many spring blooming bulbs that can still be planted this month because it has been so cold. They may be late bloomers, but that is ok. Daffodils, all varieties, will do well when planted now. In the South, we do not need to plant bulbs deep in the ground since our ground does not freeze. The quickest and easiest procedure is to place the bulbs on top of the soil, and then cover with about an inch of soil. If you are naturalizing them, dig out the grass, place bulbs on top of soil and then cover with dirt. If you had planned ahead for the naturalizing of these bulbs, you would have sprayed a herbicide to kill the grass sometime in October or November when temperatures were above 60 degrees. As I always advocate, making plans in advance saves time. I would not put out bone meal with the bulbs at this time as it attracts squirrels and frisky dogs. It is also best to camouflage these efforts with mulch such as leaves, or pine straw.

An herb which can be planted any time of the year and lives indefinitely, is chives. This is an all weather plant, withstanding the heat and humidity of our summers and thriving in the freezing temperatures of our winters. I grow it mainly for culinary purposes. They have a very mild delicate onion-like flavor and for those who cannot eat onions, they make a wonderful substitute. These make wonderful pass along plants.

My favorite flower for winter to spring bloom is dianthus which can be called a workhorse and can be planted in February. This perennial is slightly fragrant, drops its dead heads, and can withstand freezing weather. They are known for a vast array of color and some blooms are multi-colored. The blooms resemble tiny carnations with a pleasant fresh scent. I noticed many years ago that as I am



Chaenomeles speciosa (Flowering Quince)

is a hardy, deciduous, 6-10 ft. shrub known for early spring blooms in red, pink, or white before leaves appear. It thrives in full sun, well-drained soil, and USDA Zones 4-9, requiring minimal maintenance once established. It produces edible, yellow-green fruit used for jellies

weeding around the pansies, dusty miller and snapdragons, there are no weeds among the dianthus.

PLANT OF THE MONTH-FLOWERING QUINCE (Chaenomeles speciosa)

We have finally featured a plant-shrub for which every brown thumb can find success. Flowering Quince is totally indestructible as it requires little care, tolerates poor soil, does well in sun or shade, withstands extremes in temperature, and even thrives with neglect. It makes a good cut flower, easy to propagate and also has culinary uses. Blooming around groundhog day, what a beautiful testament to spring than to have several Flowering Quince sporting fusca white and red blooms.

**Happy Valentines Day
Happy Mardi Gras
and Good Gardening**

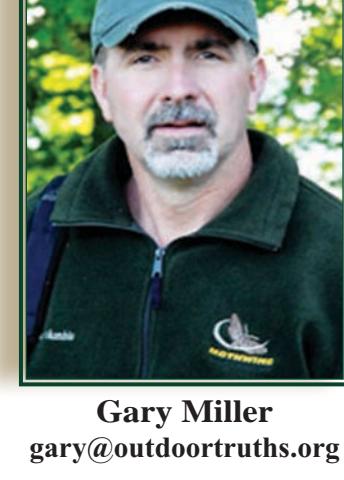


THE REAL PURPOSE

My hunting season is over. I have scheduled a couple of fishing trips, but they are a few weeks away. Until then, I am surrounded by everything man-made. I don't mind this too much after a season of God-made stuff, but I need to return to the God-made stuff quickly. But not for the hunting or fishing, but for the God of the stuff. You see, most of the time when I go to the woods I am going for the purpose of pursuit – whether that is for the purpose of scouting or hunting. When I'm in the woods I'm thinking about deer or turkey. When I'm on the water, it's usually with a fishing rod. The point is that while I'm surrounded by the very handiwork of God when I am outside, I am focused on a more mundane activity. And sometimes (not all the time) my purpose doesn't line up with my place. Let me explain.

What I need right now more than anything, is to be surrounded by creation for the purpose of being with and hearing from the Creator. My purpose needs to line up with my place. And yours does too. As you know because you hear it from me all the time, creation is the first way God spoke to his people, and it is still the first way He does it. Sure, the Bible is what we as Christians look to more than anything. But creation is how God speaks to believers and unbelievers all over the world. It is God confronting us head on with something so great that we must contemplate His desire to include us. And those of us who are Christians need to

lean into hearing God through creation as well as through the scriptures. But to do that, we have to get in creation for this specific purpose. So, here's what I'm going to do and maybe it's something that you might want to do. Go to the woods or get in your boat and go to the lake, for the express purpose of hearing what God might want to say to you through His many masterpieces. When you get there simply ask God, "What do you want to say to me while I'm here?" And then, shut up, look at all the wonders around you, and listen. And then be able to answer this question should someone ask, and your life depended on it. "What was the one thing God wanted you to know from your time in the woods or on the water?" Be able to answer that question. If you and I do this, we will have perfectly used creation for the primary purpose it was meant. And I can't help to believe the man-made world we are returning to, will be filled with a greater joy as well.



Gary Miller
gary@outdoortruths.org

Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 21 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men's events for churches and associations. gary@outdoortruths.org



Humane Society of Elmore County News
255 Central Plank Road (Hwy 9) Wetumpka, Alabama 36092
PHONE: (334) 567-3377

Hours:
Mon-Fri: 8am - 5pm
Sat: 8am - 4pm



Adopt a Pet for Valentines Day

OUR ADOPTION HOURS

AFTER we receive & approve the Adoption Application we will set up appointments:

MON – FRI: 10 am - 4 pm. SAT: 10 am - 3 pm.

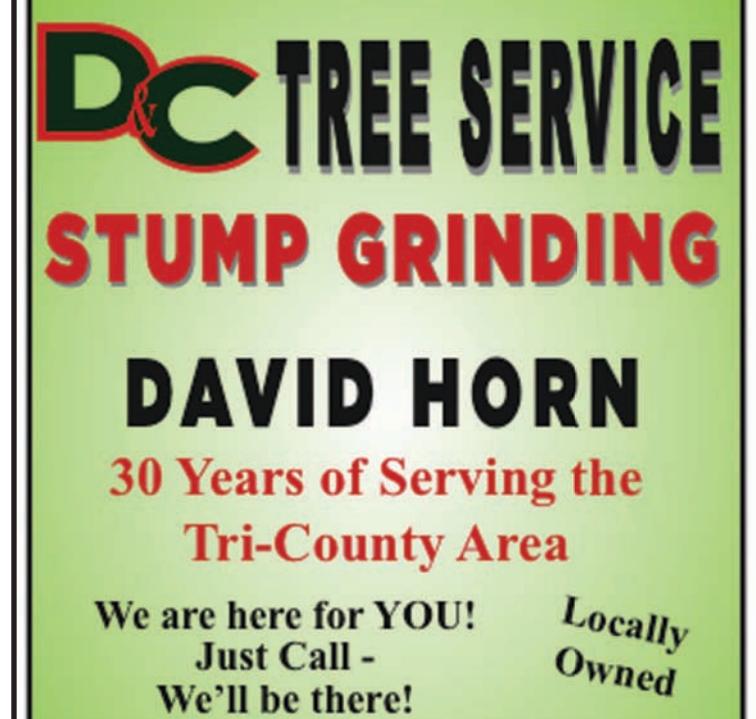
CLOSED Sundays and Major Holidays



THE TAILS END THRIFT STORE
Operating Hours: Thur, Fri & Sat 9am-3pm
Hours for donations: Thur, Fri & Sat 9am-12pm
255 Central Plank Rd Wetumpka, Alabama 36092

Phone: (334) 567-3377

This is the place if you are looking for clothing, toys, knick-knacks, furniture and other treasures. Our prices can't be beat and all proceeds support the care of our animals and upkeep of the shelter.



Soul Searching...



Dr. Lester Spencer
President Pro Tem
Alabama Emerald Coast Conference
9001 Vaughn Road, Montgomery, Alabama, 36117
Email: Lester@aecgmc.org
Tel: (334) 245-0260 - Web: www.aecgmc.org



The Power Within You

Many people feel powerless in so many areas of their lives. Many feel powerless to change their circumstances, their anxieties, their worries, their relationships, their marriages, their children, their financial conditions, their jobs, their bad habits, their addictions, their attitudes and so many other things in their lives they would like to change.

Would you like to experience a fresh power in your life?

You can!

Did you know that Jesus came to offer us the power to change as well as the power to impact others too?

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.”

Jesus, Acts 1:8

Did you know?

“The same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead is available to you!”

Paul, Ephesians 1:20

Tony Robbins is one of the most successful and powerful motivational speakers in the world with over 6.5 million followers on social media, many #1 Best Selling books, and a net worth of over \$600 million. People flock to his in-person and on-line seminars by the ten of thousands, and they pay a great deal of money to attend. I actually agree with a lot of things Tony Robbins teaches and find him to be a very wise and generous person as well as a person of integrity. I do not know exactly where Tony Robbins stands in terms of his faith, but I do know that many of his principles are actually based on the wisdom and principles we find in the Bible as well as the teachings of Jesus himself. He often quotes the Bible and Jesus.

Why are people so attracted to Tony Robbins and his books and seminars? I believe it is because he teaches people how to gain control and discover power within their lives. His books and seminars have such intriguing titles as, “**Unleash the Power within You**” and “**Unlimited Power**”. People who want more power in their lives are drawn to his teachings.

The truth is that many people feel powerless to change their lives and circumstances. So, people are anxious to hear and learn any ways that might help them gain more power and control over their lives which often seem totally out of control and often overwhelming.

But there is one point in particular where I would disagree with Tony Robbins. Robbins teaches that the power is within us ourselves to make the changes we can and may need to make. But, as a Christ follower, I would proclaim that the power to change and the power to take control over our lives comes from God not from ourselves. I believe the Holy Spirit, God’s Spirit, the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead, is the One who empowers us. When we invite the Risen Christ and the Spirit of God to live inside us, then we avail ourselves of His power in our lives. The power to change!

Paul says it this way,

“I have strength to face all conditions by the power Christ gives me.” Paul, Philippians 4:13

In fact, Paul goes on to say in **2 Corinthians 12:9** that we can’t do it on our own



power. Paul claims that left up to our own power to make the changes in our lives and to gain control, we are in fact weak.

“But he (the Lord) said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness.’ Therefore, (Paul says) I will boast all the more boldly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. For the Spirit God gives us does not make us timid or afraid but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

I am so glad I do not have to struggle through this life on my own power. Frankly, I am not sure I would make it. The pressures. The let downs. The betrayals. The hurts. The pain. The brokenness.

I am so thankful that God has unleashed His power in me through the Risen Christ living in me and the Holy Spirit who dwells in me.

You too can experience the unleashed power of God in your life. You can know the power of the Risen Christ living in you and the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you. So, to summarize Paul, the Spirit God gives us does not make us timid and afraid, rather the Spirit God gives us unleashes God’s power in us to change the way we love, live and lead.

What must you do to Unleash God’s Power in your life?

1. Believe Jesus Christ is who he says he is and that he died on a cross for your sins and mine. And that God raised him from the dead. (John 3:16-17)
2. Accept God’s free gift of grace, forgiveness and salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
3. Invite the Risen Christ into your heart and receive the gift and the Power of the Holy Spirit. (Philippians 2:10-11 and Acts 1:8)
4. Commit your self to be a believer and a follower for Jesus Christ from this day forward. (Matthew 4:19)

Unleash His power Within You!

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

FIRST CHOICE
WOMEN'S MEDICAL CENTER

Worried about privacy?
CONFIDENTIALITY IS OUR PRIORITY.

Website: firstchoicemontgomery.com

Phone: (334) 260-8010

Mon. - Thurs. 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Fri. - 8:30 - Noon

380 Mendel Pkwy E Montgomery, AL 36117

Elmore County Pregnancy Center

104 Company St., Wetumpka, Alabama

[@elmorecountypregnancycenter](http://elmorecountypregnancycenter)

Call (334) 567-1955

LIFE ON WHEELS



We are serving women in Montgomery, Elmore, and Autauga counties five days a week!
Check our schedule tab to see our location or call us on the mobile unit at 334-202-4994.

www.lifeonwheelsalabama.com



January Support Group Meeting

February 10 @ 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Frazer Church

6000 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery

Room 8114

Lisa Hoffman, Health and Wellness Coach

Join our free support group meetings at 5:30pm every 2nd Tuesday of the month. Our meetings are open to breast cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, family members, and friends. These meetings feature inspiring talks from survivors, doctors, and other experts. It's also a wonderful opportunity to connect with others who understand your journey.

Home Town Community News

Events - Local Celebrations

MONTGOMERY

Sweethearts Day at the Montgomery Zoo
Feb 14th 9:30AM-4PM
2301 Coliseum Parkway, Montgomery, Alabama 36110

Mardi Gras Celebration Downtown Montgomery

Feb 14th 3PM - 6PM
Court Square Fountain - 1 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Montgomery Whitewater

Feb 14th 9:00 AM
Sadie Hawkins Shuffle 5K & Polar Plunge Trivia Nights.
1100 Maxwell Blvd, Montgomery, AL 36104

Montgomery ZOO

Feb 16th 9:3-AM - 3:30PM
Presidents Day (Zoo/Museum)
2301 Coliseum Parkway, Montgomery, Alabama 36110

Feb 21st 5:30PM - 8:30PM
Mann Museum Flashlight Tour.
2301 Coliseum Parkway, Montgomery, Alabama 36110

PRATTVILLE

Camp Stew Sale

Sat, 07 Feb, 2026 at 10AM - 12PM
100 Maple St, Alabama 36067

Prattville Lodge #89 is selling its famous Camp Stew in order to raise funds for a building improvement. The Stew is \$12.00 per quart. We are planning on cooking 200 quarts and they usually go pretty fast so pre-order yours today!

MILLBROOK

The Millbrook Revelers Mardi Gras Festival and Parade

Feb 7th 9AM.
The Festival grounds will officially open at 9 AM.
The Parade will begin at Noon.
The Mardi Gras Parade starts at noon after the staging at the Mill Creek Park.
Millcreek Park is located behind The Smokehouse Bar-B-Q restaurant on Main Street. There will be personnel on site to direct you to your starting position.

WETUMPKA

Valentine Market

Feb 7th 9AM - 1PM
City of Wetumpka Farmers Market
304 East Coosa Street, Wetumpka, AL 36092
Phone: 334-567-5147

Elmore County Celebrates America250 – My True Roots to the American Revolution with True Lewis

Feb 26th. 10AM
410 S. Main Street, Wetumpka, AL 36092
Phone: 334-567-5097
Join family historian, U.S. Army Veteran, and DAR member True Lewis for her inspiring presentation My True Roots to the American Revolution. In this Elmore County 250 program, Lewis shares her personal journey of discovering her ancestral ties to the Revolution, weaving together history, genealogy, and family stories that highlight the enduring legacy of America's fight for independence.

**NOW
IS THE TIME TO
INCORPORATE!**

Hope Hull Community

Donations can be dropped off at Mosley's store on Hwy 31

CONTACT US
Website: hopehull.us
Facebook: Hope Hull Incorporated
Email: hopehullal@gmail.com
Phone: (334)313-3005 (David)

Important Note:

We also need to begin identifying who will serve as the mayor and the initial five council members. These individuals must be selected from the town-at-large.
As required by Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 11-43-2.

Snowdoun Community

Funds are needed for the groundwork and to move forward.

Snowdoun Community
Website: www.snowdounal.us
Email: snowdounal@gmail.com
Please send your donation to:
Snowdoun Community Center
6145 Norman Bridge Road, Montgomery, AL 36105
(334)603-1449

WHY INCORPORATE?

- Protect farmland and rural character
- Gain local control over zoning, development, and land use
- Preserve community values
- Support agricultural businesses
- Avoid annexation by the city of Montgomery
- Empower residents to make decisions that directly affect their community.
- Protect property values

INCORPORATION MEANS:

- Local Control
- Protecting our land and agricultural heritage
- Keeping decisions close to home
- Having a say in zoning, development and services, taxation with representation.
- Preserving our community's identity.

Happy Valentine's Day



DELIVERY PERSONNEL NEEDED!

Help Wanted Immediately!



We need people to deliver our papers to businesses in Montgomery, Prattville, Millbrook, and Wetumpka.

Call: 334-356-6700 Email: alabamagazette@gmail.com

Articles submitted and shared from The Montgomery Rotary Club.



The COGnition

The Official Publication of the Montgomery Rotary Club

Glenn Halbrooks,



**Rotary Program
January 12, 2026**

Dr. Harsimran Baweja

The Founding Director of the
Auburn University Physical
Therapy (AUPT) Program



Dr. Harsimran Baweja is the Founding Director of the Auburn University Physical Therapy (AUPT) Program, where he leads the creation of a nationally competitive curriculum grounded in innovation, clinical excellence, and Auburn's land-grant mission.

A neuroscientist and licensed physical therapist, Dr. Baweja specializes in motor control, balance, and sensorimotor function across the lifespan, with a focus on fall risk, aging, and neurorehabilitation. His research integrates advanced technologies—including wearable sensors, virtual reality, and cognitive-motor tools—to improve mobility and reduce fall risk in older adults and individuals with neurological conditions. He is deeply

committed to expanding access to rehabilitation in rural Alabama, using telehealth, mobile PT delivery, and community partnerships to address health disparities.

Clinically, he brings extensive expertise in neurorehabilitation, geriatrics, and balance disorders, and is dedicated to preparing exceptional future clinicians.

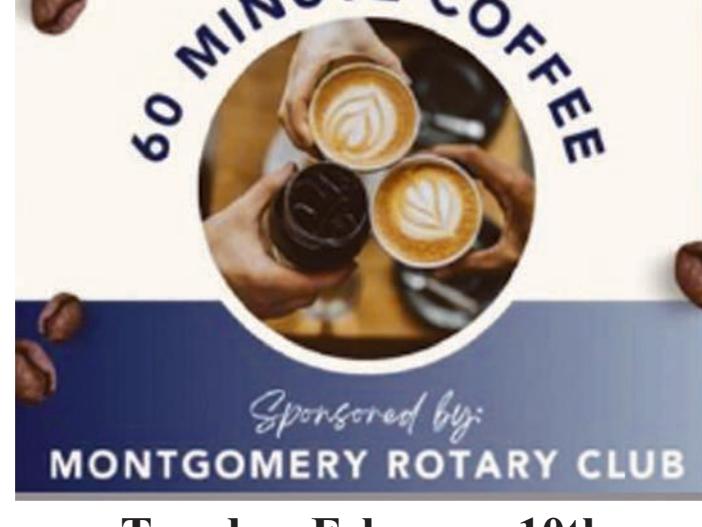
To find out more about the School of Kinesiology please visit:
<https://education.auburn.edu/kinesiology/>

International Officers from Maxwell

Rotary hosted International Officers from Maxwell AFB on February 3. The Montgomery Rotary Club has been meeting and greeting soldiers from around the world. For over 30 years. It is a chance to exchange ideas and make lasting friendships. Spouses often come in traditional dress of the represented country. Over 70 countries are represented. The Alabama Activities Center provided the perfect venue the evening, serving as the rally point for these dedicated soldiers with wonderful food and drink flowing for all.



Mark your calendar!



Tuesday, February 10th

8:00 am – 9:00 am

RSA Activity Center

201 Dexter Avenue

Our club, along with the other 2 Montgomery clubs, will host another fun morning of fellowship again this year!
We are in need of door prizes to give away.

JOIN A ROTARY CLUB NEAR YOU!

• **Prattville-Millbrook Sunrise**
3050 Lanark Road, Millbrook, AL
36054
334-313-3160
<http://www.prattvillenmillbrooksunrise rotary.com>

• **RSA Alabama Activity Center**
201 Dexter Ave, Montgomery, AL
36104
Meets Monday, 12:00
Two blocks west of State Capitol.

• **Senior Connection**
304 Park Plaza, Clanton, AL 35045
Meets Wednesday, 12:00
205-755-7105
www.rotaryclubofchiltoncounty.org

• **Montgomery Capital**
Wynlakes Golf & Country Club
7900 Wynlakes Blvd, Montgomery,
AL 36117
334-239-0655
Meets Thursday, 12:00

• **Greenville Area Chamber of Commerce**
1 Depot Square Greenville, AL
36037
334-382-4201
Meets Thursday, 12:00

Contact us at 334-356-6700
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**We need 2 volunteers for Wednesday,
February 4th & March 4th.**

There is a sign-up sheet at the Monday meetings.