

Daylight Savings Time Ends Nov. 3

Set your clocks back one hour!

Messenger

Volume 46, Issue 44 November 1, 2024 50 cents

7 DAY FORECAST						
Friday Nov. 1	Saturday Nov. 2	Sunday Nov. 3	Monday Nov. 4	Tuesday Nov. 5	Wednesday Nov. 6	Thursday Nov. 7
High: 79 Low: 61	High: 83 Low: 60	High: 81 Low: 62	High: 79 Low: 63	High: 83 Low: 62	High: 80 Low: 59	High: 74 Low: 51



Page 1B

J'Alan Terry rushed for almost 200 yards in Coosa Christian's 35-21 victory over Tuscaloosa Academy on Oct. 25.

Photo by Chris McCarthy



Page 5B

Hokes Bluff's Bryce Whikaker currently leads the local football coverage area in rushing.

Photo by Chris McCarthy



Page 1B

Rocky Peek was recently named boys basketball coach at Coosa Christian.

Courtesy of Average Joe's Sports Talk

Interim fire chief named for Gadsden Fire Department

Gadsden Mayor Craig Ford announced that Derrick Sherrell will serve as Interim Fire Chief while the city searches for a new fire chief. Sherrell assumed into the role on Friday, October 4.

Sherrell, who was a Battalion Chief, stepped into the interim role following the departure of Wil Reed, who recently accepted the position of Etowah County 911 Executive Director.

The city's human resources department will soon post the Gadsden Fire Chief position to begin accepting applications for consideration by the Gadsden Civil Service Board. The position will be posted for a minimum of 30 days to accept all possible quali-

fied applications.

In the meantime, Interim Fire Chief Sherrell will manage the day-to-day operations of the department. Sherrell is a 30-year veteran of the Gadsden Fire Department with a combined nine years of prior experience as a firefighter and ambulance paramedic.

Sherrell was named Assistant Chief in 2021 (that position has since been re-titled to Battalion Chief) and previously served as the department's drug coordinator and acting Emergency Medical Services Chief.

"We want to thank Chief Reed for his 27 years of service to the people of Gadsden," said Ford. "I also want to thank Chief Sherrell for stepping in to fill the gap while the Civil Service

Board prepares to select the city's next Fire Chief. This is a critical position overseeing a department of more than 100 line personnel, seven fire stations, a training academy, a fire prevention bureau, hazmat responses, search and rescue and more. With most of our calls being for emergency medical services, the people of Gadsden depend on our fire department and its leadership to provide excellent, highly organized and professional services in a moment's notice. I am looking forward to working with the men and women of our department during this transition and hope the Civil Service Board will be able to select the best possible candidate to the fire chief position in the next few months."



Courtesy of City of Gadsden
Derrick Sherrell will serve as Interim Fire Chief while the city searches for a new fire chief.



Rainbow City celebrates Halloween



The City of Rainbow City celebrated Halloween with their annual Rainbow City Fall Festival at Vivian Lee Maddox Sports Complex on Saturday, Oct. 26. The young and young at heart enjoyed treats from vendors, a flashlight candy hunt, food trucks and a showing of "Monsters Inc." The annual event usually draws large crowds and this year was no different. Participants dressed as astronauts, dinosaurs, baseball players, cats, members of Ghost Busters and more.

Photos courtesy of the City of Rainbow City.

Patriots Association announces inductees

The Gadsden-Etowah Patriots Association invites local residents on Nov. 6 to honor those who have given to their country or their community, and to recognize veterans, with the annual Patriots Day luncheon and Hall of Honor induction at The Venue at Coosa Landing, followed by the Veterans Day parade in downtown Gadsden.

This year's Hall of Honor inductees are William Carl Monk Jr., Michael A. Bolton, Etowah County Probate Judge Scott W. Hassell, Rainbow City Mayor Joe R. Taylor and retired Master Sergeant Lee Vadis Campbell.

Michael A. Bolton. Bolton was born and raised in Etowah County and has distinguished himself with two parallel careers in public service spanning several decades. He joined the U.S. Army in 1980 as a military policeman. He then served with the 3rd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, and then with the 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces (Airborne). He was deployed for Operation Desert Storm, where he served as Chemical NCO of that Special Forces B Team. Bolton's high level of performance during his 15 years of service led him to the rank of Staff Sergeant. His numerous military awards include National Defense Ribbon, Army Achievement Medal, Army Commendation Medal and Master Parachutist Badge among others. Parallel to his military career, Bolton served in the Gadsden Fire Department for 32 years, attaining the rank of Commander. He is a nationally registered paramedic, a member of the Etowah County Special Operations Group (SWAT) and a tactical instructor. Bolton's commitment to family and his continued service in the Etowah County Sheriff's office and as a former deputy coroner underscores his dedication to community and service. Bolton currently serves as the Nuisance and Abatement Official for Rainbow City. He has two children and two grandchildren.

The Honorable Scott W. Hassell. Hassell is a lifelong resident of Etowah County. Prior to being elected as Judge of Probate for Etowah County in 2018, Judge Hassell served in the Alabama National Guard as a Cavalry Scout for 14 years. He served one term as a Councilman for the City of Hokes Bluff and worked with the Etowah County Sheriff's Office, culminating his 21 years of service there as the Chief of Corrections. He holds both undergraduate and advanced academic degrees including a PhD in cognitive and behavioral psychology. In 2024 Judge Hassell was appointed to the Commission on Adult Guardianships and Conservatorships by the Alabama Supreme Court. He developed the first long term therapeutic community treatment program located in a local detention center in the State of Alabama. In addition, he developed the MCAT (Mobile Crisis Assistance Team) that provides 24/7 emergency access to mental health services in our county. Judge Hassell was key to the re-establishment of the American Legion Post No. 5 and instrumental to reviving the Veterans Memorial Park.

Patriots Association inductees - page 3A

OBITUARIES



Dr. Peggy J. Williams

GADSDEN - Prestige Memorial Funeral Home and Crematory sadly announces the passing of Dr. Peggy J. Williams, age 75, of Gadsden, AL, who traded time for eternity on Friday, October 25, 2024. She is survived by her loving Daughters. We ask that you please keep The Williams family and those that may be going through the same lifted in prayer. A public viewing and a celebration of life is planned for November 1, 2024 at 16th Street Baptist Church in Gadsden. Viewing is set for 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Celebration of life will begin at 12 p.m.

of Uriah; son, Rusty (Trish) Hammond, of Somerville; grandson, Colton (Victoria) Hammond, of Colorado Springs; and granddaughters, Kayla Bell, of Uriah, and Chloe Hammond, of Ashville.

Pallbearers are Colton Hammond, Skip Bell, Jason Green, Keith Newton, Philip Gleason, and Mark Ward. Honorary pallbearers are Donald Ray Bush, Robert Beason, and Hoyt Washburn.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Embrace (Methodist Children's Home).
Morgan Funeral Chapel is in charge of arrangements.



Joyce Perry Spakes

GADSDEN - Joyce Perry Spakes ran into the arms of Jesus on Wednesday, October 23, 2024.

Joyce was born to Tommie and Lila Mae Perry in Gadsden, AL, on February 23, 1955. She was 69 years old. Joyce was a property manager for many years but was a writer at heart and was published by The National Library of Poetry: Verdant Lands of Spring. She was fueled by Jesus and coffee. Joyce loved Jesus, her (sweetie) husband, daughters, "grand ones," kitties, and coffee. Joyce was a woman full of love and wisdom from a life well lived. Her family was the most important thing in her world and time spent with the ones she loved was the air she breathed. Family and friends were naturally drawn to her warmth and charm. Her incredible strength, kindness, and generosity knew no bounds. She lived by Luke 6:38, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Joyce was an avid fan of The Wizard of Oz, now she can honestly say that there is no place like home.

Joyce was preceded in death by her parents, Tommie and Lila Mae Perry;

sisters, Janette Perry and Brenda Chapman.

Joyce is survived by her husband, Barnard Spakes, Gadsden; daughters, Kimberly (Phillip) Smith, Ohatchee and Brandy (Jonathan) Harrell, Ohatchee; grandchildren, Erin (Matthew) Servarit, Glencoe; Courtney (Issiack) Reeves, Eastaboga; and Charles Harrell, Ohatchee; great-grandchildren, Julien Servarit and Jane Reeves; brother, Larry (Paula) Perry; sister-in-law, Lynne Lowe; nieces, Rhonda Taylor, Tammy Brady, Cynthia Freeman, Sheila West, and Lana Yarbrough; and nephews, Jeff Hare and Donnie Perry.

Pallbearers were her sons-in-law, Phillip Smith, and Jonathan Harrell; grandson, Charles Harrell; grandsons-in-law, Matthew Sevarit and Issiack Reeves; and nephew-in-law, James Taylor.

Services and visitation were held at Morgan Funeral Chapel and Crematory on Sunday, October 27, 2024. Sister Teresa Chapman of The Church of Love officiated. Burial followed at Forest Cemetery in Gadsden, AL.

Kenneth Earl Stephens

RAINBOW CITY - Kenneth Earl Stephens, age 87, of Rainbow City, Alabama passed away on Tuesday, October 29, 2024.

Betty Jo Alford

GADSDEN - Betty Foreman Alford, age 91, formerly of Gadsden, Alabama, passed away on Sunday, October 27th, 2024.

A graveside memorial service was held on Wednesday, October 30th, 2024, at Crestwood Cemetery. The eulogy was given by Betty's pastor, Reverend Daniel Barkley, from Gadsden Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Gadsden.

Betty was born to Eugene Foreman and Ruby Burson Foreman on November 1st, 1932, in Gadsden, Alabama. She was the oldest daughter and one of five children in the Foreman family. In 1950, Betty graduated from Glencoe High School.

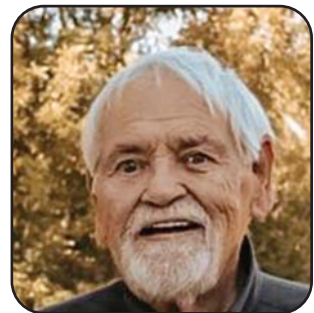
After graduation, she married Herston Eugene Alford - the older brother of her lifelong friend, Margaret Alford Miller. Together, Betty and Herston welcomed daughter Pamela in 1956, and son Dale in 1961. Betty was a member of Gadsden Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and she participated as a

member of the Cora Walker Missionary Circle which was named after her grandmother. She was a devoted mother and grandmother, and always donated her time to support her children and grandchildren. She enjoyed sewing and gardening, and she spent much of her time sewing wedding dresses and tending to her backyard rose garden over the years. Betty was also an avid fisher in her younger years, entering bass fishing tournaments and enjoying time on the lake.

Betty is preceded in passing by her husband, Herston Alford; son, Dale Alford; grandchildren's father, Jeffrey Pruitt; parents, Eugene and Ruby Foreman; and brothers, Billy Foreman and Don Foreman.

She is survived by her daughter, Pamela Pruitt; granddaughter, Bethany Nielcen (Ryan); grandson, Andrew Pruitt (Brittany); sisters, Shirley Prater and Lynn Keener (Terry Mack); as well as a host of nieces and nephews.

A special thank you is given to the doctors, nurses, and staff at The Gardens Assisted Living of Pelham, Brookwood Medical Center of Birmingham, and Campus Hospice Care of Birmingham for their kind and compassionate care of Betty in the latter years of her life.



Charles Frank Warneke

Charles Frank Warneke passed away Tuesday, October 29, 2024.

He is survived by his wife, Carolee Warneke, their son Chuck (Tammy) Warneke, their children Taylor (Crystal) Warneke, Sydney (Isaac) McDonald, Daughter Jackie Dillmore and her son Hayden. Daughter Cathy Campbell and her son Wesley Nelson and his daughter Owena. Nephews Mike and Chuck Manning.

Mr. Warneke was born in Eunice New Mexico, attended The University of Southern Mississippi. Retired from McDonald's Corporation as Regional Supervisor for several restaurants. He was a member of St. Mark Methodist Church, in Golden Springs, where he grew in his faith. There will

be no funeral or memorial service as requested by the deceased.

Mallory A. Orr

FORT PAYNE - Ms. Mallory A. Orr, 38, of Fort Payne, AL, passed away on Tuesday, October 22, 2024.

She is survived by her loving family.

Services to be announced.

We ask that you please keep this family in your hearts and prayers during their time of bereavement.

Arrangements under the direction of West Gadsden Funeral Home.



Maxine B. Jones

RAINBOW CITY - Graveside services were held Thursday, October 31, 2024, at Jefferson Memorial Gardens in Trussville, for Maxine Jones, age 102, of Rainbow City. Brandon Yopp officiated.

Mrs. Jones was born in Parrish, Alabama on August 22, 1922. One of nine siblings, she was a devoted member of Cherry Street Baptist church for 26 years and exhibited compassion in visiting shut-ins. She retired as a nurse from St. Vincent's Hospital in Birmingham.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Della Burkett; father, Bascomb Burkett; her husband and several brothers and sisters.

Mrs. Jones is survived by her sons, Robert (Joy) Long and Terry (Kimberly) Busenlehner; grandchildren, Patrick (Chrisi) Long, Heather (Matthew) Kadman, Allison (Brian) Therrien, and Bethany (Brandon) Yopp; great-grandchildren: Grace (Hayden), Abby, Carter, Jacob, Ryan, Kaileigh, John, Maeve, Hayes, and Mac; and brothers, Charles Burkett and James Burkett.

Pallbearers were Michael Burkett, Matthew Kadman, Ryan Kadman, and Jacob Larson.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Maxine's memory may be made to Cherry Street Baptist Church, 520 Cleveland Ave. Attalla, AL 35954

Special thanks to her wonderful and compassionate caregivers: Carrie Harden, Candace Montgomery, Betty Watts, Sam Entekin, Joy Flenord, Kim Malcom, Alba Archer, and Gentiva Hospice.

Bonnie Jean Champion

GADSDEN - Bonnie Jean Champion, age 80, of Gadsden, Alabama passed away on Sunday, October 27, 2024.



Cynthia A. Plummer

CENTRE - Cynthia Anne Plummer, age 76, of Centre, Alabama passed away on Wednesday, October 30, 2024.

Arrangements will be announced at a later time.



Mary D. Alford

Gadsden Memorial Funeral Home announces, with deepest sympathy, the passing of Mrs. Mary Alford on Friday, October 25, 2024.

Funeral service for Mrs. Alford will be at 1:00 PM on Saturday, November 2, 2024 at Shiloh Baptist Church. Pastor Alando Thornton, Officiating and Rev. Robert L. Heflin, Jr., Eulogist.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating in memory of Mary Alford to the Randolph County Training School Legacy Scholarship Fund, a worthy cause that she was passionate about supporting. Checks can be made payable to RCTS Scholarship Fund, c/o Gene Thornton, P.O. Box 1411, Roanoke, AL 36274.

Please remember the family in your prayers.

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NEWS

Gadsden State Phi Theta Kappa helps brighten up campus

Thanks to a collaborative effort between Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Gadsden State Alumni Association, Gadsden State Community College's Wallace Drive Campus Quad is getting a fresh look and added functionality. The organizations are making significant improvements to the outdoor space in an effort to create an inviting environment for students to study, socialize and enjoy the campus.

"Our PTK president, Collins Davis, came up with the idea for the improvement project," said PTK advisor Melissa Davis. "His goal was to create a vibrant and welcoming space for students. Our PTK members and the alumni association want to make the quad a place students are proud of. It's been inspiring to see this vision come to life."

The college's alumni association provided the initiative's funding by purchasing new shrubs and successfully securing nearly \$10,000 through a Margin of Excellence grant. This funding allowed for the addition of four new park benches and three tables with seating. PTK members contributed their time and effort by rearranging existing outdoor furniture, spreading fresh pine straw and planting new shrubs. The collaborative project culminated in a Clean-up Day on Oct. 25.

"The opportunity to partner with the alumni association on this project has been incredibly rewarding for our students," Davis said. "It's meaningful for them to engage in campus improvements that will benefit their fellow students. They're proud to have had a direct hand in enhancing the quad."

Alumni association president Julie White views the project as an important contribution to student life.

"Outdoor spaces like the quad provide a wonderful environment for students to study, gather and build community. Our goal is to make the quad a comfortable and inviting space that enriches the campus experience. We are thrilled to see this vision come together through our partnership with PTK."



Courtesy of Gadsden State Community College

Members of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Gadsden State Alumni Association participate in Clean-Up Day on Oct. 25.



Submitted photo

Beginner Showmanship winners in the Youth Sheep Show at the Alabama National Fair October 12 in Montgomery were, pictured from left: Brooklyn Ray of Cullman County, grand champion; Thomas Hill of Chambers County, reserve champion; Cohen Hill of Etowah County, third place; Gideon Wrenn of St. Clair County, fourth place; and Haddy Rasco of Cullman County, fifth place. Beginner Showmanship is for exhibitors ages 4-8. Alabama Farmers Federation and Alfa Insurance sponsored youth livestock events at the fair. Pictured with the winners are Paul Hodges of Montgomery County Kiwanis Club (left) and AFF Executive Director Paul Pinyan (right).

Patriots Association inductees - From 1A

He has over 35 years of ministry service and is currently the senior pastor of First Baptist Church Southside. Judge Hassell and his wife Mindy have one son who is currently serving in the USAF.

Honorable Mayor Joe R. Taylor. Taylor is a native of Etowah County. Mayor Taylor joined the US Army Reserve in 1980, serving in the 3rd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery, and with the 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne). He deployed to Operation Desert Storm, and after his return, served as the lead instructor for the NCO Professional Development Branch of the U.S. Army Reserve Forces School. He finished his military career as the Battalion Air Operations NCO for the 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as a Master Sergeant. His military awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Reserve Component Overseas Ribbon and Membership in the Order of Saint Barbara, with skills awards including Master Parachutist and Italian Jumpmaster Wings. Concurrently, Mayor Taylor served with distinction for 25 years with the Gadsden Fire Department, attaining the rank of Fire Commander. There he served as lead instructor during recruitment classes and was Vice President of the Professional Firefighters of Alabama. After leaving the fire service, Mayor Taylor continued in business but felt a calling back to public service. In 2020 he was elected as the Mayor of Rainbow City, which has been recognized as the "Safest City in Alabama" for the last four years. He and his wife Rachel have four children and one granddaughter.

Master Sergeant (Ret) Lee Vadis Campbell. Campbell is a lifetime resident of Etowah County. After being drafted into the United States Army in 1961, he served 23 years, distinguishing himself through three combat tours in Vietnam, three tours in Germany, an assignment to Fort McClellan where he trained Noncommissioned Officers and at Fort Jackson, South Carolina for four years as a drill sergeant. Following a final tour in Germany, Campbell retired in 1984. During his military career, Campbell was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Bronze Star Medal, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, the Drill Sergeant Identification Badge and numerous other decorations and citations. After retirement from his military career, Campbell continued his life of service to his country and community while working for

the Gadsden Board of Education as the custodian at Eura Brown Elementary School. There he gained the respect and affection of many administrators, teachers, parents and students. Campbell is the President of the Gadsden Horseshoe Club that hosts the state championship every year. He was inducted into the Alabama Horseshoe Player Hall of Fame in 2014. Campbell's wife is deceased. He has one daughter who lives in Germany.

William Carl Monk, Jr. Monk hailed from Etowah County. In 1968 he joined the 152nd Armor Division of the Alabama National Guard and was assigned to Company B in Heflin. Monk spent eight years in the Alabama National Guard serving as a Sergeant (E-5) Tank Commander and in the Headquarters Company, Transportation Section. During this same period, after studying Criminal Justice at Gadsden State Junior College, he graduated from the Northeast Alabama Police Academy. Monk joined the Gadsden Police Department and was assigned to the narcotics squad, working undercover and confiscating large quantities of marijuana, LSD and heroin from drug dealers in both Etowah and DeKalb counties. He served in the Gadsden Police Department for 14 years, working in the Patrol, Traffic and Detective Divisions. After his career in public service, he became a professional truck driver, working for Ryder Driving and Leasing, Paxair Industrial Gases and Etowah County School Bus Transportation. Monk is a member of the Gadsden/Etowah Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No. 2 and a board member of the Gadsden/Etowah Patriots Association. In 2019 he was awarded the Colonel Ola Lee Mize Spirit Award for procuring a Huey Helicopter for Patriots Park at Noccalula Falls. Monk is now retired and lives in Gadsden.

Association Chair Joyce Shelley said the program this year will feature a special performance of the Gadsden State Community College Show Band.

Doors will open at 11 a.m. and the program will begin at 11:45 a.m. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased from association members or call Joyce Shelley at 256-504-6917. The parade will begin at 1 p.m. For more information, contact Greater Gadsden Tourism at 256-549-0351.

DGI to host Plaid Friday

As a more relaxing and enjoyable alternative to the big box store Black Friday chaos, merchants in downtown Gadsden invite shoppers to participate in Plaid Friday, a nationwide initiative that encourages shopping local and supporting small and independent retailers on the biggest day for holiday sales. The date for this year's Plaid Friday is November 29.

A movement that offers an alternative to the fast pace of big box shopping while showing support for local merchants, Plaid Friday originated in Oakland, Calif. in 2009. The event's name was chosen from the idea of weaving individual threads of small businesses together to create a strong fabric that celebrates independent businesses. It is believed downtown Gadsden is the only city in Alabama to host Plain Friday.

"As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, Downtown Gadsden, Inc., would like to remind everyone of the importance of shopping and dining local this season," said Downtown Gadsden, Inc. (DGI) director Kay Moore. "The traditional post-turkey shopping frenzy known as Black Friday can feel overwhelming, chaotic and impersonal. This year, on Friday, November 29, opt for Plaid Friday as a way to slow down and shop with your friends and neighbors in a relaxed downtown environment."

Plaid Friday precedes Small Business Saturday, meaning holiday shop-

pers can turn their two-day, post-Thanksgiving shopping excursions into 48 hours of opportunities to support small businesses.

Shoppers should look for signage or hashtags on social media, such as #plaidfriday, #shoplocal and #dinelocal and are encouraged to wear plaid clothing on Plaid Friday to show support for locally owned businesses in the community.

"Plaid Friday isn't just about finding great gifts; it's about investing in our own community," said Moore. "Every dollar spent here means so much more because it goes back into our local economy, strengthening our neighborhoods and supporting jobs. All you need to do is to pull that plaid out of your

closet to show your support and meet your friends for a slower pace and less chaotic day downtown."

Moore noted that several stores will offer extended hours; however, shoppers should check with each store to confirm their holiday shopping hours. For a list of DGI member businesses, visit https://downtowngadsden.com/member_type/retail/.

Downtown Gadsden is also filled with a nice selection of local-owned restaurants that are sure to please the whole family. Visit https://downtowngadsden.com/member_type/restaurants/ ahead of time to see what is available and to make a plan.

For more information, visit www.downtowngadsden.com.

WHAT TO KNOW

Event: Plaid Friday

When: Friday, November 29

Where: Businesses located in downtown Gadsden

More Info: Plaid Friday is an alternative to Black Friday. Merchants invite shoppers to participate in the nationwide initiative that encourages shopping local retailers.

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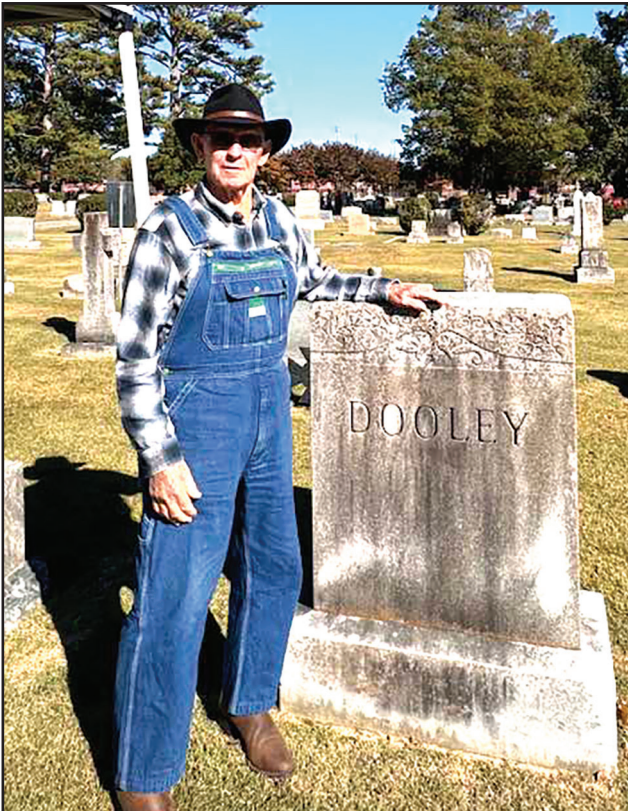
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Forrest Cemetery comes to life during annual A Walk Thru Time



Photos courtesy of Sherry Butler Clayton

Mike Bryant (pictured above at left) portrayed his great-great grandfather James Powell Dooley and Jonathan Couch (pictured above at right) portrayed his great-great grandfather Joseph Wiley Hammond during the 15th Annual Walk Through Time event on Oct. 20 at Forrest Cemetery in Gadsden.

GSCC receives Margin of Excellence grants

Three Margin of Excellence grants were recently awarded to members of Gadsden State Community College's faculty and staff after being selected by a committee of nine co-workers and community members.

Psychology instructor Julie White was awarded \$10,483 for improvements to the multipurpose outdoor space for students on the Wallace Drive Campus. Mathematics instructors Danny Wilborn and Tammy Morgan both were awarded \$9,517. The funds will be used to send instructors within the Division of Mathematics to the American Association of Two-Year Colleges National Conference in November in Atlanta, Ga.

Athletic director and head baseball coach Blake Lewis was awarded \$5,000 for the Cardinal Lounge. The funds will assist in furnishing Phase 1 of the student-athlete lounge area

and meeting space that will be used for studying, team activities, coaches' meetings and mentoring sessions.

"These prestigious awards honor faculty and staff members who have presented projects that reflect their exceptional dedication, creativity and commitment to student success," said Dr. Dana Davis, the college's committee liaison and budget manager. "The committee carefully reviewed nominations and were able to identify those projects that will significantly impact and benefit Gadsden State students."

The Margin of Excellence Committee awarded a total of \$25,000 in grants for the 2024-25 academic year.

In 1989, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Gadsden State an endowment challenge grant. The following academic year, Gadsden State raised \$370,500 from faculty,

staff and community supporters. With the federal match, Gadsden State had an endowment fund of \$741,000, which was to be held in an interest-bearing account for 20 years. This money is used to fund scholarships and special projects for students through the Margin of Excellence Grant.

Funding can be awarded for equipment for instructional or operational use, special events or projects, student scholarships, professional development, special cultural and educational programs, speakers, publications or other areas that benefit and assist our students, faculty or staff.

"Congratulations to the recipients of this year's Margin of Excellence grants," Davis said. "I know these projects will have a lasting impact on our students, employees and Gadsden State."



Submitted photo

2023 Hokes Bluff High School graduate and Auburn University junior Bryer Morrison (pictured at right) recently won the Alabama Farmers Federation's inaugural statewide Collegiate Discussion Meet and received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Federation and Farm Bureau Bank. He will represent Alabama during the American Farm Bureau Federation FUSION Conference in Denver in March 2025. Morrison is studying animal sciences at Auburn. Pictured with Morrison is AFF Young Farmers Division Director Hunter McBrayer.

UPCOMING BLOOD DRIVES

- Friday, Nov. 1**
Gadsden Regional
1007 Goodyear Ave
Gadsden, AL. 35903
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 15**
Premiere Cinemas 16
- 1001 Rainbow Drive**
Gadsden, AL 35901
1 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 20**
Hokes Bluff High School
1865 Appalachian Hwy
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Blood donors needed

The American Red Cross continues to work to restock critically needed blood products uncollected due to the ongoing impact of Hurricane Helene's devastation in the Southeast. Donors outside of affected areas are encouraged to make an appointment to give now and help keep the blood supply stable in the weeks to come.

Since making landfall, the storm and its aftermath have led to the cancellation of more than 100 blood drives, causing thousands of blood and platelet donations to go uncollected. For so many people living with urgent medical care needs, blood transfusions are essential, and donations in the Southeast are key to keeping our nationwide network stocked. The Red Cross operates through a national inventory with the ability to move blood wherever and whenever it is needed most.

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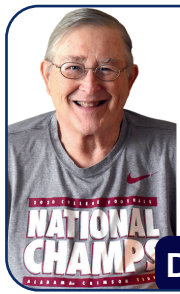
SMILE 2

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LIFESTYLE

The Vagabond - James Aiken earned fame as attorney, war hero



Looking at the History

Danny Crowover

Among the pioneer citizens and builders of Gadsden was James Aiken, one of the ablest lawyers of the state of Alabama. It is no exaggeration to say that Aiken was probably one of the best loved men of his day due to his high character and the good examples he set throughout his life.

Aiken was born in Fairfield District, South Carolina, on Aug. 8, 1830, as the son of William and Elizabeth (Stitt) Aiken.

William Aiken was born in County Antrim, Ireland, and came to the U.S. in 1820. The Stitt family also came from Ireland. The Aikens settled in Fairfield District. William Aiken reared four children, two of whom, Robert S. and William M., died from wounds while serving the Confederate army during the Civil War.

James Aiken was reared on a farm until he was 17 years old and received during that period a public-school education. In 1847, he was appointed a cadet at the South Carolina Military Academy and graduated from that institution in 1851. Aiken taught school for several years, and in 1854, he

came to Randolph County, Alabama, where he taught school for two years.

Aiken read law while he taught school and was admitted to the bar in 1856. Aiken's services were in demand throughout northeast Alabama due to his ability and devotion to the interest of his clients.

In July of 1861, Aiken raised a company of volunteers for the Confederate army. Aiken led Company D of the Thirteenth Alabama Regiment in many hotly contested battles. He was seriously wounded at the battle of Seven Pines and did not rejoin his command until the following year. Aiken was also wounded at Chancellorsville and again at Bristow's Station. He was promoted to rank of major after Seven Pines and to lieutenant colonel after Chancellorsville.

While Aiken served in the war, the people of Randolph County elected him to the legislature and he came home long enough to serve one session. He moved Gadsden in 1869. In 1875, he was elected a delegate to the historical constitutional convention and in February of 1885 was appointed circuit judge by Governor O'Neal.

Aiken married Mrs. L.N. McClelland, daughter of Lindsey and Lucinda Weaver, of Calhoun County. The couple had four children: Robert Aiken, Mrs. Annie Faucett of Gadsden and Mrs. Lucy Conner of Enterprise. Another son died in 1897. Aiken died in June of 1908 and is buried at Forrest Cemetery in Gadsden.

Contact Danny Crowover at dkcrown@bellsouth.net.

Trump or Harris - who will be our next U.S. President?

America will elect its 47th president on Tuesday, Nov. 5. At least 99 percent of the votes will be cast by American citizens. With millions of illegal immigrants having poured through our country's southern border over the past four years, there will be some illegal ballots cast by non-citizens. The opening of the border by the Democratic administration was permitted to allow these illegal immigrants to vote Democratic.

Fortunately, most of these illegal votes will be cast in California since Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott had the foresight to steer the flow of illegal immigrants into his state to California or bus them to other liberal Democratic sanctuary cities. Thus, any illegal immigrant votes will not affect the bottom-line result, because these states are left-wing, blue Democratic states anyway. The illegal votes will merely run up the score in the national election total votes for the Democrats, which is irrelevant.

As you know, we do not elect our president by popular vote but by an electoral college system, whereby each state casts the same number of electoral votes as they have members of U.S. Congress. The magic number of electoral votes is 270. That's the number you should be watching for as you surmise the election results this Tuesday.

As late as six decades ago in the 1960

U.S. Presidential election between Republican Richard Nixon and Democrat John F. Kennedy 40 states were in play that were not predetermined by party preference. People voted for the person and not the party. Therefore, Nixon and Kennedy had to campaign in all 40 states, and their appearance and campaigning made a difference. That is why John Kennedy selected his enemy Lyndon Johnson to be his vice-presidential running mate in order to carry the State of Texas.

Today, the election is exactly and diametrically the opposite as 1960. In this Tuesday's U.S. Presidential Electoral College Election, there are only seven states in play that really matter. The hay is in the barn in 43 states. The country is divided along party lines like never before in its history. That's why the polling reveals a 48/48 split since the move by the Democrats to swap Joe Biden for Kamala Harris. If Mickey Mouse were the Republican nominee, he would carry Alabama and Kansas. By the same token, if Donald Duck were the Democratic nominee, he would carry California and New York.

Again, as you are watching the results come in on Tuesday night, ignore the national horse race numbers. A Democrat will get the most votes because there are more voters in California and New York than there are in Alabama and Kansas. As soon as the polls close, the news channels will

color 43 states either red or blue, because the exit polls will tell them what everyone knows and that is that these states are in the bank or as we would say in red states, "the hay is in the barn." Most of the country, geographically, including most of the less populous states, will be covered in red. The blue will stick out on the left coast states of California, Washington and Oregon, one blue state in the middle of the country in Illinois and the other end of the country in New York and New Jersey.

The battle for the White House will be waged in the seven pivotal swing battleground states where the partisan divide is especially divided and will decide the election: Georgia and North Carolina in the South, Arizona and Nevada in the West and the three rustbelt midwestern states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

The Democrats were going to lose the election with Joe Biden at the top of the ticket. Younger Democratic voters were not going to vote for a decrepit and senile old white man. They were not going to vote for Trump, either, and would have just stayed home.

However, the orchestrated maneuver to replace Biden with Kamala Harris was a brilliant ploy. She, being a liberal Democrat of mixed origin and of color, has brought the younger Democratic base Black voter into the fold that will turn out to vote for Kamala Harris. That is what has made this



INSIDE THE STATEHOUSE

Steve Flowers

a 48/48 percent horse race, which leaves the 4 percent undecided vote in these seven states - the golden circle of voters. Although Harris brings home the young Black Democratic voter, polling shows that this golden circle of undecided voters made up of white middleclass suburban women may not be solidly in her corner. These women - probably from Michigan and/or Wisconsin - will more than likely decide who the next president will be. However, turnout is the ultimate key to this race, as it is in any close election.

Is the Trump older and conservative Republican base more enthused and motivated, or does the liberal Democratic base get their voters to the polls for Harris? We will see next week.

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

♀ WOMAN TO WOMAN ♀

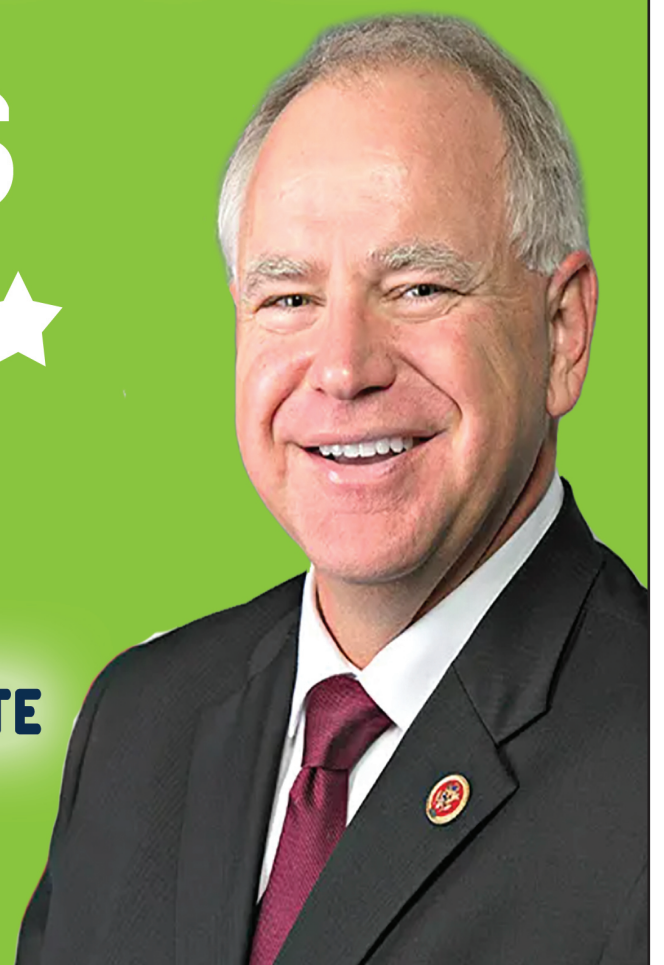
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Halloween and Election Day

For Halloween, our family enjoys going to my father-in-law's house for chili, hot cocoa, candy and movies. My sister and brother-in-law bring over a trailer of hay for all the kids to ride around the neighborhood to trick-or-treat, and it is just a lovely and pleasant time. Ever since my kids were babies, I've tended to go with simple, often homemade costumes. Between previous Halloween and theatre costumes, we usually have enough items to create fun looks that are low cost and low stress. This year, for example, my youngest wore a flowered dress and elf ears on Halloween morning and said she was a woodland elf. My middle daughter wore cat ears and all black, and her big sister did some cute cat makeup for her. My oldest loves the creativity of putting her own costumes together with her best friend, and she went as an SNL character. Jason and I usually go as ourselves, but with a few festive touches. This year, I wore a headband that looked like Maleficent horns from a distance but were actually little witch legs.

My students often dress up for Halloween, as well. I always bring candy because they

may be young adults, but they still enjoy the treats and fun. We have low-key classes on Halloween, with fun music playing, while we work on a current writing assignment, comparing party plans and admiring one another's creativity. I have really grown to love Halloween in my middle age, much more than I ever thought I would. I think a big part of that is because of the enjoyment in seeing others express their own creativity, yes, but even more in seeing the joy it brings to all of us when we admire one another's get-ups.

There is a post circulating on social media that has really stuck in my mind this Halloween season. I couldn't find it to quote, of course, but a general paraphrase is something like how, on Halloween, we compliment others on their deformities, grotesque costumes, silliness and oddities - and invite them to laugh with us and share candy. The post then asks a simple question: Why can't we always treat others this way?

Halloween happens every year, but every four years, it happens right before a major election, and political tensions are often as scary or scarier than any Halloween fright.

Yet, just like Halloween, the season comes and goes, and we are all still family and friends, neighbors and community members. The unknown is scary, yes - it is why so many enjoy haunted houses and jump scares. But we know so much more than we don't about those around us. We know that most of us want to be happy, healthy and safe. We know who our family members, friends, neighbors and community members really are by how we have watched them act and treat others. We know that elected officials come and go, but communities stand together.

Halloween allows us all the freedom to express our creativity and have fun with the things that are scary. Our country allows us all the freedom to express our beliefs and ideals at the ballot box, and the unknown can be scary. But, this Halloween and election season, may we all remember that behind the costumes and makeup, behind the yard signs and t-shirt slogans, there are very real people like us who just want to be seen and appreciated, who just want to live happy, healthy and safe lives. May we all channel the acceptance we freely show others on Halloween all



throughout next week and beyond, remembering that we know enough about one another as fellow humans to treat those around us with decency, love, compassion, appreciation and tolerance.

As Dickens reminds us: "Do the wise thing and the kind thing too, and make the best of us and not the worst."

Tabitha Bozeman teaches English at Gadsden State Community College, is the editor-in-chief of the Cardinal Arts Journal and is a published writer and poet. She is also the founder of Riverside Writers, a local workshop group for writers. The opinions expressed are her own and do not represent any organization she is a part of. She may be reached at tabithabozeaman@gmail.com.



The Best Chocolate Brownie Ever, Apple Cake and Oreo Delight

Let's bake some goodies this week. I want to begin with the best chocolate brownie recipe ever.

- The Best Chocolate Brownie Ever**
- 1 1/2 cups self-rising flour
 - 2 cups sugar
 - 1 cup Crisco oil
 - 4 eggs, beaten
 - 8 tablespoons cocoa
 - 1 tablespoon vanilla flavoring
 - 1 cup chopped pecans

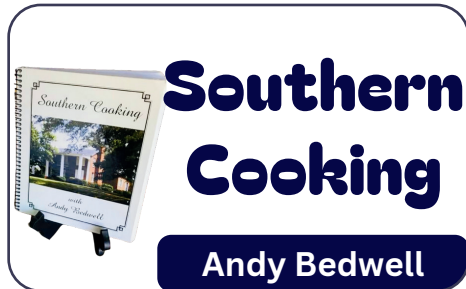
Sift flour, sugar and cocoa together. You will not have any holes or lumps in the batter if you sift. Add pecans. Then add the rest of the ingredients and mix well. Pour into a greased 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Andy's Note: Be sure and set the timer. This is very important. They may not look done, but they are done. Cool and cut in squares, and if you want to be fancy, you can drizzle the top with white chocolate.

- Apple Cake with Caramel Glaze**
- 2 cups self-rising flour
 - 2 cups sugar
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 1 cup Crisco oil
 - 1 can apple pie filling
 - 1 cup chopped pecans

Mix by hand all ingredients. Pour into a greased pan and bake at 350 degrees for one hour or until done.

- For the glaze:**
- 1 cup light brown sugar
 - 1 stick margarine
 - 1/4 cup milk
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla



Mix brown sugar, milk, and vanilla in saucepan. Cook for three minutes stirring constantly. Pour over warm cake.

Andy's Note: I love anything that includes apples. This is easy and it is so good with a hot cup of coffee. This recipe reminds me so much of my Southern roots. When I was a child, I could remember that every relative that I visited had apple trees.

- Oreo Delight**
- 1 large pack of Oreos
 - 1 stick butter, melted
 - 1 large Cool Whip
 - 2 large boxes of vanilla instant pudding
 - 3 1/2 cups cold milk
 - 8 ounces cream cheese, softened

Crush Oreos. Set aside 1/2 cup of Oreos for topping. Mix remaining Oreos and butter. Press in a large dish. Mix puddings and milk. Add cream cheese and Cool Whip until smooth. Pour over Oreo crust. Top with remaining Oreos.

Andy's Note: Please, mothers and grandmothers, let your grandchildren make this recipe. Not only will they enjoy putting this together; they will want to eat it right away.

Happy Baking, Andy

Andy Bedwell's cookbook, "Southern Cooking with Andy Bedwell," can be purchased at the Messenger on Rainbow Drive.

THE MESSENGER'S PICK FOR EVENT OF THE WEEK

Adopt Your Boo at HSPRAC

Find your fur-ever friend at this event

The Humane Society Pet Rescue and Adoption Center in Gadsden will host Adopt Your Boo, an adoption event from Nov. 1 - 2. The event will be held at the facility located at 4200 Brooke Avenue in Gadsden. Adoption fees are just \$31 during the event. For more information, call 256-442-1347.



Submit events by email to khoskins@gadsdenmessenger.com.

November 1 - 2
The Humane Society Pet Rescue and Adoption Center in Gadsden will host Adopt Your Boo, an adoption event from Nov. 1 - 2 at the facility located at 4200 Brooke Avenue in Gadsden. Adoption fees are just \$31 during the event. For more information, call 256-442-1347.

November 22 - 24
Experience all the magic of the holiday classic with original costume designs, dazzling scenery and a host of characters as the Downtown Dance Conservatory presents "The Nutcracker Princess" at Gadsden City High School. The Downtown Dance Artists Company perform along with a children's cast. Show times are Friday, November 22 at 6 p.m., Saturday, November 23 at 1 p.m., Saturday, November 23 at 6 p.m. and Sunday, November 24 at 2 p.m. Tickets are on sale now.

November 23
Smith Tomato will present the 4th annual "A Country Christmas Event at the Coosa Landing" on November 23 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Over 70 art and craft vendors and food vendors will be present. There will be free pictures with Santa Claus and a table to write letters to Santa. Admission is \$8 per person, kids 12 and under are free.

November 28 - Jan. 4
Christmas at The Falls will begin on Thursday,

November 28 from, 4 - 9 p.m. and will run through Jan. 4. The exhibit will be closed from December 24 - 25. Come see millions of Christmas lights! Tickets are on sale now. Call 256-549-4663 or visit NoccalulaFallsPark.com

November 29 - Jan. 4
Get ready for the 2nd annual Christmas on the Coosa ice-skating experience. The ice rink returns on November 29 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The real ice rink near Moragne Park will close for the season on Jan. 4. For more information, call Janet Tarrance at 256-549-4658 or Valerie Galbreath at 256-549-4643.

November 29 - 30
Plaid Friday and Small Business Saturday are coming to downtown Gadsden November 29 - 30. Wear your plaid with pride and shop local. Visit downtown Gadsden for Plaid Friday and shop and dine with our small businesses. Avoid the rush of Black Friday and spend an enjoyable day with friends and family instead. Santa will be walking around too.

December 2

Join the City of Southside for a Christmas Parade and tree lighting event at Southside City Hall from 5 - 7 p.m. December 2. The free event will feature food trucks, the Pride of Southside Marching Band and Santa will also make an appearance. For more information, contact City Hall.

December 3
Join the City of Gadsden for the annual Christmas Parade down Broad Street. The parade begins at 6 p.m.

December 5
Join the City of Attalla for a Christmas Parade and tree lighting event in downtown Attalla. The tree lighting will be held at 5:30 p.m. and the parade will begin at 6 p.m. The event is free to attend.

December 6
Join the City of Gadsden for a Christmas tree lighting event at 344 South 1st Street at 6 p.m. Music from the Theatre of Gadsden Christmas Carolers will begin at 5 p.m. and music from Gadsden Christmas Brass Band will begin at 5:15 p.m. The event is free to attend.

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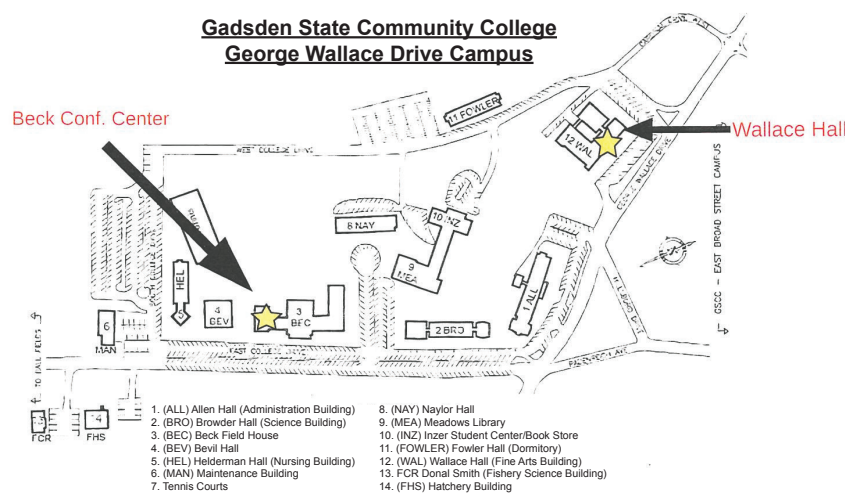
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Wallace Hall is currently being renovated and will not be available for the 2024 General Election. The Etowah County Commission has designated the Beck Conference Center at Gadsden State Community College as the alternate location. It is right next to the GSCC gym and is located on the same campus.

Gadsden State Community College
George Wallace Drive Campus



Beck Conference Center is located next to the gym
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61st Annual Northeast Alabama Winter Coin Show

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DEVOTIONALS

His presence and His Voice



This past week, I visited Cloudland State Park in Georgia to camp with some friends, hike during the day and sit around the campfire at night and just be still in God's creation.

As I sat on the porch in the early hours of Thursday morning, I looked out to see the beautiful fall-colored leaves and listened to the clear sound of the wind coming across the mountains. I could not help but think about how awesome our God is and thanked Him for His beautiful creation. Two words that He brings came to mind: presence and voice. You see, one of the main reasons went to Cloudland was to unplug from my normal routine, be quiet and seek His presence and His voice for multiple situations currently taking place in our nation, in Israel, and in my own life. I believe the Lord wants me to dig deeper to understand not only the depth of those two words as they relate to Jesus but

to understand what it means to have more of His presence and voice in my life.

As I was reading the Gospel of John, chapter 10, I noticed that the word "voice" is found all throughout the chapter. Not only was I excited to find this word mentioned so often; I was also challenged once again by this single word. John 10: 2-5 says, "But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger; they will run from him, because they do not know his voice." As I read those verses, I began to ask myself the following questions:

What does it mean to know my Shepherd's voice? In order to know someone's voice, I must first know the person. The way I know and come to learn about my Lord is to read His Word, the Bible. In the Bible, I learn the character, the passion and the heart of my Heavenly Father. I begin to learn what brings Him joy and what His desires are for me. Before I can ever know His voice, I must first know Him!

What hinders my ability to hear His voice in my life? It is so easy to let the things

of this world (i.e., social media, activity, television, my daily schedule) drown out the sound of His voice in my life. Weekly and even daily at times, I have to check those areas in my life to make sure their voice is not being heard over my Father's voice.

What are the strangers in my life I need to run from? These strangers might look different for each of us, but we all have them. Half of the battle is won when we are able to recognize these strangers in our lives. It is key to have an exit plan in place when faced with these strangers or temptations that keep us from hearing the voice of our Lord.

It is the Lord's desire to give us visions and dreams and to speak to each one of us. However, we must know Him first and then make sure our hearts and minds are open to hear from Him. John 10:10 in the Passion translation says it beautifully: "A thief has only one thing in mind - he wants to steal, slaughter and destroy. But I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect: life in its fullness until you overflow."

May you begin to hear His voice more clearly in your life today. God is saving the best for last! Hallelujah!

If you would like continued prayer, feel free to email me at tonij77@gmail.com. I would love to pray for you!

Bible Verse of the Week



Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

- Psalms 37: 4-5
King James Version



Verse for Kids

Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.

- Isaiah 26:4
King James Version

The turning of the tables

Who would be welcome at Jesus's table? Everyone, of course - absolutely anyone and everybody. The only ones chastised at Jesus' table are those who reject Him and those who refuse to repent and judge those who do. Jesus chastises those who demand to "go their own way" rather than "go and sin no more." Let's look at a table or two.

The Pharisee's Table (Luke 7:36-50). To the Pharisee's credit, He invited Jesus to his table. Culturally, this was an expression of honor and friendship. Just two verses before, Jesus complained about how He was called a "glutton and winebibber" because, unlike John the Baptist, He did not fast continually. But note in verse 34 that Jesus was rightly called a "friend of tax collectors and sinners."

Thank God for that. But the Pharisee did not know Jesus very well, for the second after a public sinner walked into His house to see Jesus, the dinner party was ruined.

This precious woman had the desperate need to see Jesus. I say "desperate need" because if you are a Christian, you understand this moment.

To come to Christ and be converted, you must experience that horrible and wonderful moment when the Holy Spirit illuminates your sin and gives you the grace to confess and repent.

I remember my heart beating out of my chest during that moment, so desperately wanting to hide my sin but even more desperately wanting to be free from it. Do you remember that moment?

Oh, that sinner woman's desperation in Luke 7:36-50! To come into that home knowing she would be hated by the Pharisee and embarrassed in front of the Disciples. Would Jesus reject her also?

Biblical scholars have suggested that

this woman was likely a prostitute. They speculate that she was possibly Mary, the sister of Lazarus, which is a beautiful thought when you re-examine the Lazarus story (John 11).

It is also speculated that the woman was a prostitute for the wealthy, as the "alabaster box of ointment" had a value of an entire year's salary. Lastly, it is speculated that the woman was a prostitute for the religious, much like the woman rescued by Jesus from stoning in John 8. That is possibly why the Pharisee recognized her.

To be blunt, it is often the religious and wealthy that do shameful sexual things that scandalize so many people. It was true of my childhood pastor who baptized me and it's been true of me in the past. It is still true in my heart apart from Christ.

But this precious woman knelt behind Jesus and poured out her sins with tears of repentance, and poured out her treasure as a penance, just as we Catholics do when we go to the Sacrament of Confession. I'm sorry to be so vulgar, but how many men had she had done unspeakable things and being taken advantage of by those that could have rescued her financially and spiritually? And here, the only Righteous Judge welcomed this woman at table. Again, this is an expression of honor and friendship.

The moment was so impactful that Jesus immediately crafted a parable explaining why some Christians love God with a passion that is hard to fathom and some have to coax a flickering flame. May we sinners always remember that we are welcome at His table, but may we balance that welcome with the command to "go and sin no more" (John 8:11). May we go to Confession with this story in mind.

And may this Scripture ring in our hearts as we prepare to approach His Table



at Mass. Early in the Eucharistic celebration we pray The Confiteor and rightly "get put in our place" in hopes that by the end of the Mass, our Lord Jesus is in His proper place on the throne of our heart. We humbly pray:

"I confess to Almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do; through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God."

Brian Cook is a Cropwell native and a graduate of Pell City High School and Gadsden State Community College and studied music and history at Jacksonville State. He and his wife Hope have five children. A self-described "on-again, off-again bi-vocational part-time" Protestant minister for almost 20 years, Brian converted to Catholicism in April 2021. They attend Saint James Catholic Church in Gadsden. With no formal training (Acts 4:13), Brian is active in the Catechetical training of children and adults. His book "The Devotion to Christ" can be found on Amazon. He is available for speaking and teaching engagements in any parish, church, or group setting. He may be contacted at thedtc@protonmail.com or thedevotiontochrist@gmail.com.

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The Lord is my Light & my Salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1

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SPORTS

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Football

The Alabama High School Athletic Association announced earlier this week that Coosa Christian School's varsity football program has been fined and placed on probation for playing an ineligible player in violation of the Coaching Outside School Year Rule. As a result, Coosa Christian's program must forfeit all games won that the ineligible student participated in. Coosa Christian reported the student played in one varsity game versus Cleveland on Oct. 4, a game which the Conquerors won by a score of 43-0.

The AHSAA Rule II Section 15 states that "No administrator, coach or non-faculty coach from a school's staff may hold organized practice (except during allowable period) or competition for its school or its feeder school students (grades 7-12) outside the sports season during the school year. Members of a school coaching staff are allowed to coach girls or boys students from his/her school teams during the off-season during the school year within the allowable period as described below. Any coach that coaches a student from another school in practice or competition renders that student or offending coach ineligible at the coach's school in the sport in which the violation occurred for the next school season."

The forfeit did not impact Coosa's place at No. 1 in Class 2A Region 7 standings. Both the Conquerors and Southeastern are now 5-1 in region play, with Coosa Christian holding the tiebreaker with a 42-7 win on Sept. 6.

Pike Liberal Arts High School's varsity football program has been fined and placed on probation for playing an ineligible player in violation of the AHSAA Transfer Rule. As a result, the school must forfeit all games won that the ineligible student participated in which include three region wins and three non-region wins.

Volleyball

Gadsden State went 1-1 this past week to end its season at 7-22 overall and 1-11 in Alabama Community College Conference play.

On Oct. 21, The Lady Cardinals swept Andrew College, 25-19, 25-21, 17-25 at Beck Gymnasium. For Gadsden State, Ella Garmany had 19 kills, followed by Kaleigh Butler with 11, Makasia Crawford with seven and Savannah Hall with six.

Emma Earl distributed 28 assists, while Ellie Carden served up three aces. Allie Bryant came up with 17 digs, followed by Kinslee Gray with 10, Earl with nine, Hall with four, Carden with three and Garmany and Lacie Roer with two each.

On Oct. 23, the Lady Cardinals lost to Lawson State, 25-21, 26-28, 22-25, 18-25 at Beck Gymnasium. Butler had 21 kills, followed by Garmany with 14, Crawford with five and Hall with three.

New Coosa coach installing team-first mentality

By Chris McCarthy
Publisher

Ball hogs and loafers are persona non grata for the 2024-25 Coosa Christian varsity boys basketball team.

"I'm trying to build a 'We vs. Me' mentality," said the Rocky Peek, the team's new head coach. "We want to build a unit that doesn't care so much about personal achievements but rather team accomplishments. We want to compete at a state championship level, and it's going to take a lot of work and definitely will be a different style and pace of basketball for our players to adjust to."

Peek possesses the chops to demand such unselfish play. From 2017-19 at Marshall Christian Academy in Albertville, he guided the Stallions to a 76-12 record, a state championship, two Final Four appearances and three region titles while competing in the Alabama Christian Athletics Association.

"My goals are always high in whatever I do," said Peek, a 1994 graduate of Ohatchee High School. "You have to aim for the top or you will stay at the bottom. We need everyone focus on the team and what they can achieve as the season progresses."

For Conquerors fans who appreciate a face-paced style, Peek intends to press the gas pedal early and often this season.

"We're going to be very up tempo and we want to score a lot and play aggressive defense. Whether we're in full court or a match up halfcourt situation we're going to play at the same tempo."

Several athletes on the roster are members of the school's football and basketball teams, which reached the Class 1A state finals and semifinals, respectively, last season. Peek sees that success as an intangible that should help the basketball program.

New Coosa coach - page 3B



Courtesy of Average Joe's Sports Talk

Coosa Christian varsity boys basketball coach Rocky Peek (left) and team member Jaylen Jones participate in the Etowah County Basketball Media Day on Oct. 27 at Sparks Orthopedics and Sports Medicine in Rainbow City.



Chris McCarthy/Messenger

Coosa Christian's J'Alan Terry (1) attempts to elude Tuscaloosa Academy's Jamarion White (55) during the Conquerors' 35-21 victory in high school football on Friday, Oct. 25 in Gadsden.



Photo courtesy of Alex Chaney

Hokes Bluff's Anderson Morgan makes a catch in front of Oneonta's Santana Lofton during the Eagles' 42-7 win in high school football on Friday, Oct. 25 at Hokes Bluff.

AHSAA hits Coosa with penalties, fine, probation

Coosa Christian School's varsity football program has been fined and placed on restrictive probation effective immediately and concluding at the end of the 2025 football championship series (December 5, 2025) for playing an ineligible player in violation of the Coaching Outside School Year Rule.

The original report from Coosa Christian stated the student in question participated in only one varsity game this season. Upon further investigation, it was confirmed by the AHSAA that the ineligible student played in five games. As a result, and in addition to restrictive probation, Coosa Christian's football program must forfeit all games won that the ineligible student participated in which now totals five (Cleveland, Southeastern, Falkville, Susan Moore and Cold Springs). The investigation is still ongoing, according to an AHSAA press release.

Coosa Christian School has been provided specific conditions to meet prior to the 2025 football season and as a result may appear before the AHSAA Central Board of Control at its July Board meeting for possible reinstatement into the 2025 championship season.

The AHSAA Rule II Section 15 states that "No administrator, coach or non-faculty coach from a school's staff may hold organized practice (except during allowable period) or competition for its school or its feeder school students (grades 7-12) outside the sports season during the school year. Members of a school coaching staff are allowed to coach girls or boys students from his/her school teams during the off-season during the school year within the allowable period as described below. Any coach that coaches a student from another school in practice or competition renders that student or offending coach ineligible at the coach's school in the sport in which the violation occurred for the next school season."

The Class 2A Region 6 standings are as follows after being updated to reflect said forfeits:

1. Southeastern: 7-2 overall, 6-0 in region
2. Falkville: 6-3 overall, 5-1 in region
3. Susan Moore: 4-5 overall, 4-2 in region
4. Cold Spring: 5-5 overall, 3-3 in region
5. Cleveland: 3-6 overall, 2-4 in region
6. Coosa Christian: 5-5 overall, 1-5 in region
7. West End: 1-9 overall, 0-6 in region

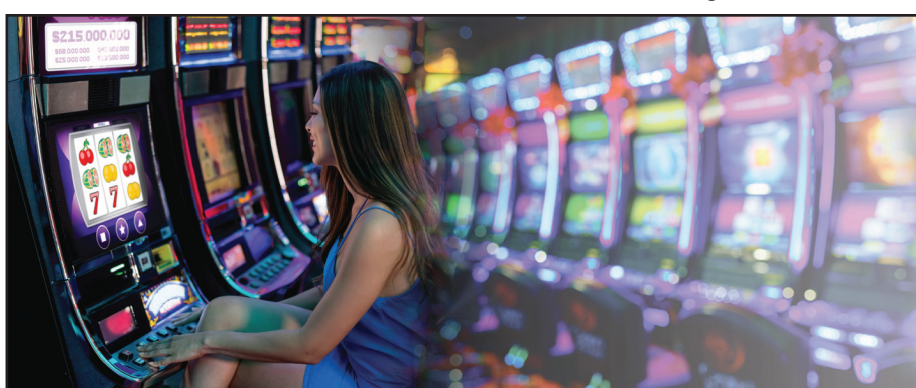
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@ Wisconsin	W. 42-10
vs. Georgia	W. 41-34
@ Vanderbilt	L. 35-40
vs. S. Carolina	W. 27-25
@ Tennessee	L. 17-24
vs. Missouri	W. 0-34
@ LSU	Nov. 9
vs. Mercer	Nov. 16
@ Oklahoma	Nov. 23
vs. Auburn	Nov. 30

Nov. 2 vs. Vanderbilt at 11:45 a.m. on ESPN

vs. Ala. A&M	W. 73-3
vs. California	L. 14-21
vs. New Mexico	W. 45-19
vs. Arkansas	L. 24-14
vs. Oklahoma	L. 24-24
@ Georgia	L. 13-31
@ Missouri	L. 17-21
@ Kentucky	W. 24-10
vs. Vanderbilt	Nov. 2
vs. Louisiana Mon.	Nov. 16
vs. Texas A&M	Nov. 23
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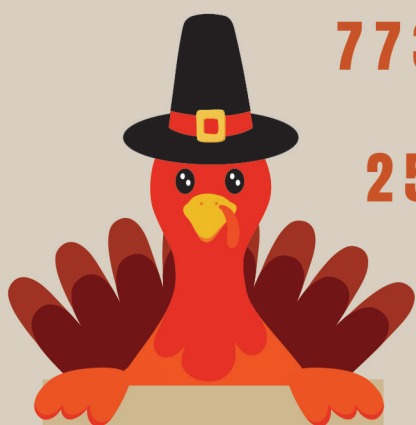
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