

THE ORIGINAL

Alabaster

NEWSLETTER

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MERRY CHRISTMAS



Alabaster

A Word from the
Editor & Publisher, Ted Vodde



"Oh yes this is Christmas and what have you done?" asks John Lennon in his song. It's not a bad question. We measure our lives each Christmas as we strive for peace on Earth, good will to men and get ready for the new year.

No doubt there will be holiday treats aplenty, and bright trees, and presents. But let's don't forget there are people in circumstances that are difficult everyday only magnified by the holiday.

So you could consider getting an Angel from an Angel tree where you can provide Christmas gifts for a child whose parent is incarcerated. That's as close as I can see to being a real live Santa and spreading love to strangers.

There are several articles in this issue that talk about opportunities to help out others during the holidays. Let's put our high

minded principles into action and help someone else and make the spirit of love come alive.

Christmas is also a time of tradition. I fondly remember taking my little daughter and her grandma down to the end of the street to meet Santa Claus as he arrived on the firetruck. I had never lived anywhere before that did that and I found it a charming tradition.

I know this is a labor of love from the city's firefighters. They, like the public safety officers, are the ones we count on to rush toward trouble to help others.

Working overtime to bring joy to the children of the city is a good thing and these fine officers are taking time away from their families to bring joy to others.

I want to take this opportunity to thank

Mayor Marty Handlon, City Manager George Henry, Fire Chief Jim Golden and the members of the Alabaster Fire and Rescue Service for their hard work in maintaining this wonderful holiday tradition.

Let's don't forget the Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 7th. It begins at Ernest McCarty Ford and heads down 31, turns at the old city hall (now the Police Dept.) ending just before Buck Creek Park.

Again our city workers help organize and oversee the event so that it is a colorful, safe event for all.

There's lots of fun, dancing, music, candy, and good times.

From our family here at the Original Alabaster Newsletter to yours, have a safe and happy holiday season. Merry Christmas!

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WATCH FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SANTA STOPS

Santa's helpers at the Alabaster Fire Department prepare for the touring routes of Santa Claus throughout their city's neighborhoods. The event, which takes place December 24th (Christmas Eve), continues to be one that the Fire Department eagerly looks forward to and one that the community of Alabaster has enjoyed for many years. This year will be no exception. The guys at AFRS continue giving extra time and effort to make sure all goes well and everyone in the City, "naughty or nice," has an opportunity to catch a glimpse of the "Jolly Ole' Elf!" However, The Touring of Santa Routes grows to a bigger event each year. "The continuous growth and diversity of our great city causes us to change and

adapt as well. We realize that some of our citizens plan Christmas Eve around 'the touring of Santa'. We've spent extra time and effort,



planning and preparing for this in hopes that all goes very well! We want everyone to see Santa that wants to" says Fire Chief Jim Golden. So with that in mind, here are some route

facts and information:
 *Look for the yellow and red Santa Stop signs in your neighborhood (strategically placed throughout, beginning December 1st) *Santa will stop at these sites only!
 *Stop time will run 5-7 minutes at each site *Routes begin at approx. 1:00 P.M.
 *Routes end at approx. 8:00 P.M.
Fire engines are subject to respond to emergencies throughout the routes. With this in mind, please be looking for Santa 30 minutes before/after his estimated time of arrival. Santa arrival times will be regularly updated on our website: www.alabasterfire.org and our social media sites: facebook.com/AlabasterFire &



twitter.com/AlabasterFire.
 ***Please remember the Fire Department is still responsible for responding to emergencies during the routes. Therefore, in the event they are called to an emergency, Santa route scheduling will be altered.
 If you have any questions or need additional information, please email AFRS@alabasterfire.org or call 664-6818.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS EVE SANTA SCHEDULE



Following are estimated arrival times for Santa on Alabaster Fire Engines on Christmas Eve. Santa will be stopping at designated Santa Stop Signs in neighborhoods; he will not be able to stop at individual homes or go on every street in each neighborhood.

We ask that you and your family gather near the designated yellow and red Santa Stop signs.

Fire engines are subject to respond to emergencies throughout the routes. With this in mind, please be looking for Santa 30 minutes before/after his estimated time of arrival. Santa arrival times will be regularly updated on our website: www.alabasterfire.org and our social media sites: www.facebook.com/AlabasterFire and www.twitter.com/AlabasterFire.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email afd@alabasterfire.org or call 664-6818.

1:00 Portsouth
Norwick Forest
Kingwood / Spring Gate
Cedar Grove

1:30 Cedar Grove MHP
Sterling Gate

1:40 Northwest / Olde Town

1:45 Southwind
Meadowlark/Willow
Creek/Willow Point

1:50 Woodland Hills

2:15 Cambridge Pointe I
Summerbrook
Chinaberry

2:25 Eaglewood Estates
Navajo Hills

2:40 Greenfield

2:45 Applegate
Knox MHP

2:50 Maylene

2:55 Cambridge point II

3:00 The View Apartments

3:00 Grande View Gardens

3:05 Grande View Estates

3:10 Ashford Heights

3:20 Northeast/Hickory Hills
Shalimar

3:25 Autumn Ridge

3:35 Bermuda Lake /
Oakwood

3:55 Amberly Woods

4:00 Peavine MHP
Berryhill

4:15 Lake Terrace
Southwest

4:20 Wellington Manor

4:25 Apache Ridge

4:35 Weatherly
Maplewood / Shady Oak Ln.

4:45 Mission Hills
Navajo Pines

4:55 Wynlake

5:00 1st Ave/2000 Block

5:10 Silver Creek

Stoney Meadows

5:20 Siluria Cedar Meadows
Park Forest

5:30 Fox Valley

5:35 Woodbrook Apts.

5:50 Park Forest Village

5:50 Buck Creek Landing

6:00 Meadowview/Willow Glen
Douglas Meadows Smokey Ridge

6:10 Park Place

6:15 Tanglewood

6:25 The Meadows

6:30 Windy Oaks Timber Ridge

6:35 Keystone MHP Southeast
Iron Wood

6:45 Stage Coach

6:50 Kentwood Scottsdale

7:00 Dogwood Forest /
Forest Hills

7:10 Lake Forest

7:20 Carriage Hills

7:25 Terri Lynn MHP

7:30 Green Valley The Grove

7:40 Wisteria

7:45 Mountain Lake

Return to the North Pole!
HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

SANTA'S VILLAGE AT FIRE STATION #1 DEC. 1- 31

The Alabaster Fire & Rescue Service would like to invite the children of Alabaster to Santa's Village located at Fire Station # 1 on 9th St. N.W. across from the Library. The Village will open December 1st and run through December 31st. **Santa's Village Hours: Sunday-Thursday 5 - 9 p.m Friday - Saturday 5 - 10 p.m.**



BACKPACK BUDDIES FIGHTING CHILDHOOD HUNGER

For over 120 kids at Alabaster City Schools, their stomachs will be a little bit fuller this weekend thanks to a local program called Backpack Buddies.

Backpack Buddies, which is a part of Vineyard Family Services, provides food for kids, ages 5 to 12, who are at risk for food insecurity throughout Shelby County. Kids who are selected for the program receive easy-to-fix foods that they can take home with them on Fridays to help offset any lack of food they may face over the weekend.

"In Alabaster City Schools, we have 121 students that we feed every single week, with a total of 450 a week throughout Shelby County," said Program Director

Stephanie Grissom.

The foods that kids receive each week might include pop-top meals, juice boxes, granola bars, fruit cups, pudding cups, mini pop-top veggie cans and other nutritious items.

With Christmas break coming up, Grissom said the program will double up on its food deliveries to ensure that kids have enough to eat throughout the holidays.

"On Christmas break and spring break, we double deliver," said Grissom. "Plus we put in little toys and candy too."

December is also a good time for volunteers to get involved with the program firsthand. The program will be holding a community-wide packing party on Dec. 7, where people can help pack food

bags.

"We open up our doors for anyone to come that wants to help pack Buddy bags," said Grissom. "It's a very family-friendly event. We have balloons and donuts for the kids. We want to affirm children helping other children in need."

The packing party will start at 9 a.m. at the Inverness Vineyard Church on Valleydale Road. At the last packing party, 50 people attended and packed over 400 bags. The kids also decorated Christmas stockings, which are being delivered in conjunction with the Buddy bags.

"It was just a really sweet, good event that the community could all be a part of," said Grissom.

The Backpack Buddies

program first began in 2008 serving two area schools. Now it's up to 21 different schools, serving 450 children.

"The only way we can do that is by having partners that work with us," said Grissom. "We're very grateful to the community for everything that they do to make this possible."

Some of the groups providing support in Alabaster include Westwood Baptist Church, Crossbridge Community, Women of AT&T and the Darden Foundation.

Currently, the program is also raising money to purchase a delivery van. For more information, go to vfsdads.com/backpack-buddies. Or email Grissom at Stephie@vfsdads.com.

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FALL FESTIVAL FUN FOR ALL

Despite the chilly fall weather, this year's Fall Fest drew a large crowd of local residents to the Buck Creek Trail to enjoy the day's festivities. The annual festival took place on Saturday, Oct. 26, on the trail behind the Alabaster Senior Center.

The event featured live music by 2BLU and the Lucky Stiffs, a variety of tasty food options, inflatables for the kids and plenty of vendors selling everything from jewelry to gym memberships.

Local craftsman Joel Jones, an Alabaster resident, was there for the first time selling items he made on a wood lathe.

"It's going well," said Jones. "There are a lot of folks. It looks like a great turnout, a lot of people stopping by."

Photographer Paul David Carby of Alabaster was there promoting his local photog-

raphy business, which specializes in custom-designed portraiture. He said this was his second time as a vendor at Fall Fest.

"We were here last year," said Carby. "We're back again this year, and of course, we're loving it."

The variety of vendors wasn't limited to the arts, however, as there were representatives from the YMCA, Avon, maurices, Fit 24, Oak Mountain Community Church, Sowers of Seed, Alabama Partners for Clean Air and many others.

Pam Mays, a local representative for health and fitness company Nutrie, said she'd attended the festival in the past but not as a vendor.

"This is my first time as a vendor," said Mays.

"There are lots of people coming by, and of course, we have candy for the chil-

dren."

Another Alabaster resident and first-time vendor Kathryn Moore said she was pleased with the help the Parks and Recreation Department staff provided in unloading and setting up along the trail.

"It was very nice," said Moore.

Moore is a local photographer who creates customized wall hangings using real-world photographs to represent letters from the alphabet.

"I take pictures of architecture and nature and I look for letters, and when I see the letter I take the picture of. Then we put them together to make first names or last names or initials," said Moore.

She said the crowd started to grow as the weather warmed up.

"The traffic has been very steady," said Moore.

Carmen Emery, another Alabaster resident, was there



promoting her Premier Home Shows. As an independent jeweler, Emery holds jewelry shows at people's houses, featuring Premier high-fashion jewelry.

"I've had a pretty good response to my drawing," said Emery. "I'm giving away two \$25 gift certificates."

Some of the food vendors at this year's festival included Frios Gourmet Pops, My Peeps Hotdogs and Sliders, Kona Ice and Full Moon Bar-B-Que.

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EVANGEL SCHOOL WINS ROBOTICS CONTEST

The Evangel Christian School Lightning robotics team participated in the 2013 Blazer BEST Robotics Competition held at Bartow Arena on Saturday, October 26th. BEST, which stands for Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology, is a competition for middle and high schools that challenges teams to build a robot that perform specific tasks.

Each year the BEST program develops a different themed competition with multiple objectives. This year the concept behind the challenge was to build a robot to perform the tasks necessary to construct a "virtual CPU". The students not only have to build a robot that can perform all of the functions of the game but also develop the strategy necessary to maximize the number of points in 3-minute rounds.

This year the "playing field" was composed of 3 different parts. The first station required the robot to pick up dowels and place them in various locations with the more difficult locations scoring more points. The second station involved retrieving coat hangers and hanging them on hooks. While this might seem to be a simple task, the easily movable hooks made placing the hangers extremely difficult. The third station involved placing puzzle pieces into matching shaped slots.

Each round required two participants per team, the first student (the spotter) moved the robot trolley while the second student (the driver) operated the robot through a remote control. Success required close communication and teamwork between the spotter and driver.

The seeding round consisted of 6 rounds with the top 8 teams moving to the semi-finals. ECS had the highest total in the seeding round. The semi-final round consisted of 3 rounds with the top 4 teams moving to the finals.

The final 4 teams in the competition were ECS, Homewood Middle School, Evangel Classical Christian School and Spain Park High School. During the final round all of the teams performed very well with Homewood Middle taking first place and ECS tallying the second highest total points.

After finishing in 8th place last year in their first year of participating in the competition, ECS finished this



(front) Carson Adair, Daniel Harrison, Hudson Daniels, Joshua Reeves, (back) Wilson Grimes, Jordan Bailey, Noah Barrows, Stephen Daniels (sponsor)

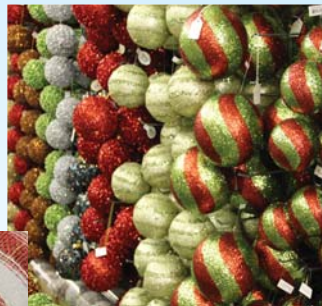
year in second place out of 20 Birmingham area schools. The top two teams from Blazer BEST advance to the regional championship. ECS will join 55 other teams from 6 states around the Southeast to compete in the 2013 South's BEST Championship to be held at Auburn University on December 7-8.

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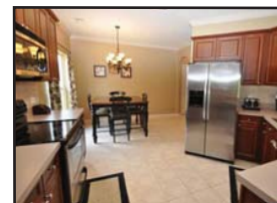
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Alabaster BUSINESS PROFILE

HOME ACCENTS

For Christmas decorating around the house, Home Accents in Pelham offers a plethora of unique options, ranging from Christmas trees and wreaths to ornaments and ribbons.

"We sell trees and garlands and wreaths and ornaments and floral, everything you can use basically to decorate your house for the holiday," said Home Accents owner and founder Harold Pearson Sr.

For those in the market for a new Christmas tree,



Plenty of collegiate ornaments & gifts! Pick your team!



Harold Pearson Sr., owner, with Lisa Stubbs and Harold Pearson Jr.

Home Accents offers a wide selection of artificial trees, including a seven-and-a-half foot Carolina Frazier and a seven-and-a-half foot White Richmond. Both trees come pre-lit with 800 lights to make them easy to set up in the home.

Home Accents also has plenty of items that would make great gifts. Holiday shoppers can find a large assortment of collegiate items, featuring their favorite college sports team, like Auburn or Alabama.

"We have a lot of collegiate stuff," said Pearson. "We're very fortunate to live in a state that has two outstanding, or really four outstanding, football programs, and the fans are

very loyal. They want to wear it or show it."

Some of the collegiate items include ornaments, ribbons, lamps, stickers, plates, cups, pennants and even car coasters that fit inside the cup holders in vehicles. Pearson said the car coaster is an especially popular item right

now.

"They can add it to a stocking or give it to a friend," said Pearson.

Home Accents is located off Highway 31 beside the Cozumel Grill in the Shelby Mart shopping center. Pearson first opened Home Accents with a business partner in Pensacola, Fla., in 1989. Today, he has two stores, which he runs with his family here in Central Alabama.

"We opened this store in the year 2000, and we have one other store in Northport," said Pearson.

In addition to its holiday merchandise, Home Accents offers a range of other items for the home, including lamps, pillows, mirrors and even wicker furniture.



A wide selection of pre-lit Christmas Trees

"We're a home décor store that sells wishes, wants and desires," said Pearson. "We have products that help you decorate your home to make it comfortable."

For some items, like wreaths, Home Accents can actually customize the product for customers.

"We can put it together, or the customer can buy it and put it together themselves," said Pearson.

For the holiday season, Home Accents will be open seven days a week. For more information, visit them on their Facebook page by searching "Home Accents Pelham."



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ARDOVINO SELECTED FOR NATIONAL HONOR BAND

Sam Ardovino from Thompson High School in Alabaster, AL has been selected as a member of the 2013 NafME All-National Honor Band sponsored by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME).

Sam joined more than 670 of the most musically talented and skilled high school students in the United States to perform at a gala concert on October 30, 2013 in Nashville, Tennessee.

These exceptional students prepared remarkably challenging music that they performed under the baton of four of the most prominent conductors in the United States: Dr. Peter Boonschaft, Miriam Burns, Rollo Dilworth, and Rodney Whitaker.

The NafME All-National Honors Ensembles, consisting of a concert band, symphony

orchestra, mixed chorus, and jazz ensemble, are organized by members of the National Association for Music Education. The concert band and symphony orchestra each have approximately 150 instrumentalists, the jazz ensemble had 20 instrumentalists, and the mixed chorus had approximately 350 vocalists. Eligible students have qualified for their state-level honor ensemble program and competed against top students for a spot in these national honor ensembles.

The 2013 NafME All-National Honors Ensembles performed for an audience of thousands on Wednesday, October 30, 2013, in the Presidential Ballroom of the Gaylord Opryland Hotel, in Nashville, TN. For program information please visit <http://musiced.nafme.org>

/all-national-honor-ensembles/.

National Association for Music Education, among the world's largest arts education organizations, is the only association that addresses all aspects of music education. NafME advocates at the local, state, and national levels; provides resources for teachers, parents, and administrators; hosts professional development events; and offers a variety of opportunities for students and teachers. The Association orchestrates success for millions of students nationwide and has supported music educators at all teaching levels for more than a century.

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Sam Ardovino from Thompson High was chosen to perform with the All-National Honor Band at Opryland Hotel.



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LUNG CANCER AWARENESS

At the Alabaster City Council meeting on Nov. 4, Alabaster Mayor Marty Handlon proclaimed the month of November as Lung Cancer Awareness Month for the City of Alabaster.

The proclamation, which Handlon read before the Council, indicated the widespread and serious nature of the disease, saying it will claim "approximately 3,300 lives in Alabama this year, far outnumbering deaths due to breast cancer, prostate and colon cancers combined."

The proclamation further indicated that "an estimated 4,500 new cases of lung cancer will be discovered in Alabama this year."

According to the proclamation, "approximately 15 percent of lung cancer cases occur in people who have never smoked, and over 40 percent in those who have formerly smoked."

The proclamation further indicated that the five-year survival rate for lung cancer is only 16 percent, though the National Lung Cancer Partnership is working to double that rate by 2022. Significantly, however, funding for lung cancer research still trails that of other cancers.

According to the National Lung Cancer Partnership, early detection is important in the treatment of lung cancer. Some of the signs and symptoms of lung cancer may include bloody coughs, recurring respiratory infections, an enduring cough that's new or different and aches or pains in the shoulders, back or chest.

For more information about lung cancer, go to www.NationalLungCancerPartnership.org. Or visit the American Lung Association at www.lung.org.

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(from Left) Coaches Jeff Allison, Brandon Byars and Keller Williams agent Tim Mitchell presenting the grant.

Tim Mitchell with Keller Williams Realty recently awarded a grant to another area school. Riverchase Middle School teacher and basketball coach Brandon Byars received a \$200 grant for the 7th & 8th grades basketball teams. Tim's exclusive School-Grant promotion is for any area school, public or private, in the Alabaster or Jefferson and Shelby County areas for the next 2013-2014 school year. His exclusive School-Grant promotion provides grants that go directly to our area teachers and their

classrooms (or to a specific department) when any parent or staff member uses Tim Mitchell to help buy or sell a home. This promotion is a great way to help support our schools and is available to anyone in the community who has a local school connection or fundraiser they would like to support. Please contact Tim Mitchell directly at 305-8756, or via e-mail tim-mitchell@kw.com, for more special discounts & details to take advantage of his exclusive School-Grant program.

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LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

Every Wednesday
10:15 am Outreach Stories at area daycares
3:30 pm Tunes & Tales for all ages in the meeting room
1st Thursday 1:00 pm
Friends of Library Bookmenders
Every Friday 10:30 am
Toddler Tales (2s, 3s) 10:30 in the meeting room. Children must be with an adult.

LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
TUES. DEC. 3 6PM

LIBRARY CLOSED:
Nov. 28 - Dec. 1 Thanksgiving
Dec. 24 & 25th for Christmas

Dec. 31 Library Closes at 5pm for New Years Eve

LIBRARY ADULT ACTIVITIES

Adult Computer Classes - Call or come by to sign up. 664-6822.
Wednesday, December 4, 10 am - Computer Basics
Wednesday, December 11, 10 am - Basic Internet & Email

Positive Maturity Job Workshops - Join us as A.W.A.R.E. volunteer Denise Stamps guides job seekers 50 and over through the process of returning to the workplace. Programs take place in the meeting room.

Thursday, December 5, 10 am. Orientation Workshop
Thursday, December 12, 10 am. Resume Workshop
Thursday, December 19, 10 am. Interviewing Skills Workshop

Library Book Group - Thursday, December 19, 2013. 7 pm - Join us in our discussion of "A Cup of Tea" by Amy Ephron. When a privileged New York socialite, Rosemary Fell, and a penniless young woman, Eleanor Smith, fall in love with the same man, they question whether the triangle of passions will destroy them or bring them closer. Program takes place in the meeting room.

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LIBRARY KIDS ACTIVITIES

Monday, December 2 Lego League 4:00pm-4:45pm Kids of all ages can play with Legos of all sizes in the meeting room. Children age 6 years and younger must be with an adult.
Tuesday, December 10 Gingerbread House Workshop 6:15pm Our workshop leader has everything for the makings of tasty-looking houses! Families must sign up in advance and pre-pay \$3.00 per house when they sign up by Sunday, December 8. If paying by check, please make it out to the library. Meets in the meeting room. All children must be with an adult. Don't forget your camera!

Friday, December 13 American Girls Club 4pm Girls 7 years old and older can come with or without a doll for a holiday surprise. Meets in the meeting room.

Tuesday, December 17 An Evening with Santa 6:30pm-7:15pm Santa & Mrs. Claus will listen to children's Christmas wishes in the meeting room. All children must be with an adult. Don't forget your camera!

Wednesday, December 18 Holiday Party! 10:00am-11:30am Children and their caregivers are invited to come for a fun-filled morning featuring Santa and Mrs. Claus and gingerbread man decorating in the meeting room -- plus a horse-drawn carriage ride around the library! Don't forget your camera! All children must be with an adult.




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CITY CHRISTMAS PARADE SAT. DEC. 7TH

The holiday season is just around the corner, which means it's time for local residents to start thinking about their plans for the Alabaster Christmas Parade.

This year, the Alabaster Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, Dec. 7. The theme for this year's parade is "Wishin' for a White Christmas." The theme was selected by the students at Creek View Elementary School and Meadow View Elementary School.

Parade participants were able to start registering for the parade on Monday, Oct. 14. The entry forms are available to print on the City of Alabaster website.

"You can't sign up online, but you can get the form online and bring it to us or mail it to us," said Parks and Recreation Director Tim Hamm.

According to Hamm, the Christmas Parade will once again take the traditional parade route on U.S. 31, past the old city hall and in front of the municipal annex on First Street Southwest. It will end at the intersection in front of the CVS Pharmacy.

Hamm said people were pleased to have the parade back on 31 after it moved temporarily to the shopping center off Interstate 65. The only issue with the traditional route is the possibility of trains, he said.

"The logistics of it aren't hard," said Hamm. "You just have to worry about trains. I think we had three trains last year."

The Alabaster Christmas Parade is traditionally one of the largest in the state. During the parade, southbound traffic



on 31 will be switched over to the northbound side, while the southbound lane is shut down.

For more information, call the Parks and

Recreation Department at 664-6840. Entry forms can be found on the City of Alabaster website at www.cityofalabaster.com.



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Alabaster

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PARKS & REC OFFICE

The Parks and Recreation Office is located inside the Depot at 100 Depot Street, Alabaster Office Hours: Mon. thru Fri. 8 am until 5 pm Phone: 205-664-6840 www.alabasterparks.org

CHRISTMAS PARADE

The annual Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 10 AM. The parade location will be Highway 31 South beginning at Ernest McCarty Ford and ending at Southbrook Village. The 2013 theme is "Wishin' For A White Christmas". The parade is filled with floats, entertainment, and lots of candy! Don't miss out on a fun filled morning.

BASKETBALL

Youth Basketball is underway with 325 participants. Teams will play a regular season, and all teams will finish with a tournament excluding Kindergarten and First Grade.

SPRING SOCCER

Soccer registration will begin on Jan. 6 and run thru Jan. 17. You can register online at www.alabasterparks.org from 8 AM, Jan. 6 thru 5 PM, Jan. 17. You can register in person from 8 AM until 5 PM Monday thru Friday at the Depot (Parks & Recreation Office). **Saturday registration will be on Jan. 11 from 10 AM until 2 PM at the Depot.** New players should bring a copy of their birth certificate with them. Leagues begin at age 4. Registration Fee: \$85 for U6/U8. \$105 for U9 & older. Non-residents: additional \$10 per child.

COACHES NEEDED

Volunteer coaches are needed for spring sports including Baseball, Girl's Softball, and Soccer. If you are interested in coaching, please contact Alabaster Parks & Recreation.

PAVILIONS FOR RENT

Outdoor Rental Facilities: Several of our City Parks offer pavilions for rental use. The best way to make sure your event happens at the location of your choice is to contact Parks & Recreation before our books are filled with reservations. Pavilions are available for use by permit only. There is a \$40 rental fee and an additional refundable \$40 deposit which must be paid before your reservation is complete.



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START SMART BASKETBALL

Registration will begin on Dec. 9 at 8:00 AM. Registration will end as soon as we have 15 children signed up, OR on Dec. 20; whichever occurs first. Start Smart Basketball teaches children, ages 3 & 4, the basic motor skills necessary to play organized Basketball while they work one-on-one and spend quality time with their parents. Start Smart is held one hour per week for six weeks with a game and party at the conclusion of the program. In order for the program to make, we must have a minimum of 10 children. Registration Fee: \$85 (plus \$10 for non-residents).

Spring Baseball/Softball Signup

Baseball/Softball registration will begin on Jan. 6 and run thru Jan. 17. You can register online at www.alabasterparks.org from 8 AM, Jan. 6 thru 5 PM, Jan. 17. You can register in person from 8 AM until 5 PM Monday thru Friday at the Depot (Parks & Recreation Office). **Saturday registration will be on Jan. 11 from 10 AM until 2 PM at the Alabaster Senior Center.** New players should bring a copy of their birth certificate with them. Registration Fee: \$160 for 1st child; \$130 for 2nd child; \$100 for 3rd child; \$100 for 5-year-old T-ball; \$85 for 4-year-old T-ball.



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THE MERRY CHRISTMAS BILL

by Rep. April Weaver



Representative April Weaver

With just a few more shopping days until Christmas, members of the legislature continue to prepare their next year's legislative agendas for the 2014 session that will begin in January. I have already prefiled several bills for the upcoming session. One of the bills I have prefiled is the "Merry Christmas bill" which is similar to the bill passed in Texas last year that protects Christmas and other winter holiday celebrations in public schools from legal challenges. There seems to be an insurgence of organizations trying to take away our religious freedoms and we want to be sure in Alabama our public school teachers and religious freedoms are protected.

While the legislation specifies that schools may not constitutionally favor one religion over another, it protects the rights of Alabama public school

teachers and students to offer traditional winter celebration greetings such as "Merry Christmas". The bill also allows schools to educate students about the history of traditional winter celebrations and display scenes or symbols associated with the season, such as a nativity scene, menorah, or a Christmas tree.

This bill is about freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. Alabama is a state of strong values and we believe that everyone should be able to offer their winter celebration greeting of their choice - without punishment. While it is a shame that a law like this is required, as our nation continues on a path where it seems to be less culturally acceptable to openly celebrate these holidays as we have in past generations, our teachers have enough on their plate to worry about. They certainly don't need to be concerned about whether or not they can be sued if they can call a Christmas tree a Christmas tree.

Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas!

April Weaver



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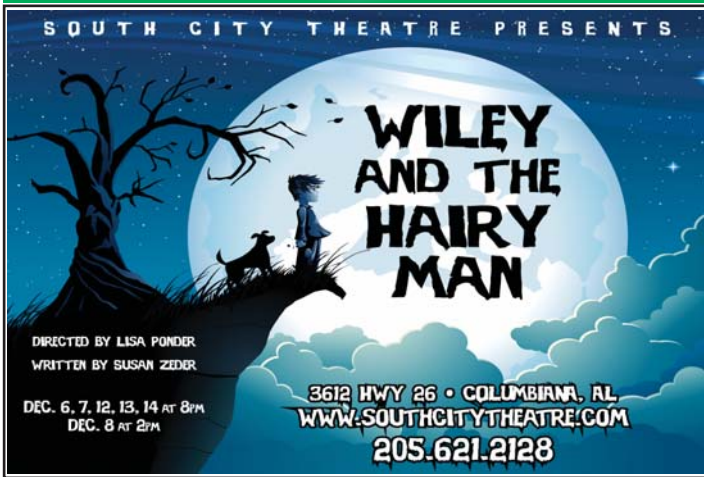


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South City Theatre -- the best "little" award-winning theatre in Alabama-- offers a marriage of entertainment delights in their 2013-14 season. Artistic Director Sue Ellen Gerrells explains, "there's something old, something new, something borrowed and one acts, too!"

South City Theatre presents "WILEY AND THE HAIRY MAN", directed by Lisa Ponder, will be staged December 6-14.

Something new...and borrowed from a folk tale, Wiley and the Hairy Man, set deep within the mysterious Alabama Swamp, centers around a young fatherless boy, his conjure-woman mother, his faithful dog, and the Hairy Man who haunts Wiley's days and dreams. In an exciting duel of wits, Wiley learns to rely upon his own resources and conquers two villains: the Hairy Man

and his own fear. For the young and young-at-heart!

Performances are scheduled for Evening Time: Dec 6, 7, 12, 13, 14 at 8:00pm Matinee Time: Dec 8, at 2:00pm

Tickets are \$15 general admission or \$12 seniors and students. Season tickets are a value at \$60 for one admission to each production. For more information or to make reservations, go to www.southcitytheatre.com or call the box office at (205) 621-2126. Performances are at 8 pm.

The new South City Theatre is located on County Road 26 approximately 3.5 miles past the Camp Branch Civic center. To get there, take Highway 31 south and simply turn left at County Road 26. The theatre will be on the right.

www.southcitytheatre.com on Twitter @SouthCityTheatr

SEEKING A PART-TIME SALES ASSOCIATE

The Original Alabaster Newsletter is seeking an experienced sales associate to help market the publication on a part-time basis to advertisers in the city and surrounding area. This 100% commissioned position will work with management and graphic artists to perform sales and service under regular deadlines. If you enjoy working with people, we'd enjoy meeting you. Send a cover letter & resume to tedvodde@gmail.com.

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HOLIDAY SAFETY

Even though overall crime in Alabaster is relatively low, residents should remain vigilant in our efforts to keep our community a safe place to live and work. Remember with the holiday season approaching we can expect more traffic in our neighborhoods and shopping centers. This also means that criminals of all sorts may be scoping citizens looking for quick, easy targets. As you prepare for this shopping season, also be prepared by securing your cars from criminals. One crime that citizens can easily help prevent is auto burglaries. Thefts from vehicles occur at all hours of the day and night. All auto burglaries have one thing in common: something of value to steal. Do not leave valuables in our car, if you can avoid it. Vehicles with valuables in plain sight are very tempting to criminals. In almost

all car burglaries that have been reported to the police, the vehicles had been left unlocked. Don't let your vehicle be an easy target. Secure your vehicle by rolling up the windows and locking the doors. Remove valuables from your vehicle and secure them in your home or trunk. Report all suspicious activity to the Alabaster Police Department at 663-7401 or call 911.

A final word: Do Not Confront Anyone. Your life is precious; property can be replaced! Be alert, be aware and be prepared to be a good witness. You are our "eyes and ears" and you make a difference. Let's all have a safe and secure holiday season!

Curtis Rigney
Chief of Police

SANTA AT POST OFC. DEC. 14

For any children wanting to talk to Santa Claus this year before Christmas Eve arrives, they'll have a chance when he visits the Alabaster Post Office. Santa and Mrs. Claus are scheduled to visit the Alabaster Post Office on Saturday, December 14th, from 9 a.m. to noon.

For the past ten years, the Alabaster Post Office has celebrated Christmas by hosting Mr. and Mrs. Claus and entertaining local kids with treats and balloons.

"We'll have Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and we'll have a person here doing balloons for the kids," said Alabaster Postmaster Michael Renda. "We'll also have refreshments for the kids and the adults."

According to Renda, Santa and Mrs. Claus will be greeting guests in the Post



Office lobby, just to the left of the main entrance. Renda says families should bring their own cameras to take pictures. Also, if there's a line, Renda says it should form along the hallway in front of the Post Office boxes.

"We normally have anywhere from around 80 to 100 people," said Renda.

As usual, the Post Office will be closed this year on Christmas Day (Wednesday, December 25), as well as on New Year's Day (Wednesday, January 1). For more information, contact Renda at 621-2628.

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ARCA HOLDS PYLON RACES AT LIMESTONE PARK

On Saturday, Oct. 26, the Alabaster Radio Control Association (ARCA) hosted a day of Club 40 pylon racing. The races took place at the club's Limestone Park flying field and featured some 14 different pilots and over 25 different races.

"We flew a total of 25 heat races to allow the pilots to accumulate all the points they could," said Contest Director Dave Phillips II. "We then took the top four pilots and placed them in the A Main event. The next eight pilots went into the B and C Main."

Pylon racing is a unique opportunity for RC pilots to compete against one another as they pilot their RC aircraft around a set of pylons. To make the competition fair, and a true reflection of pilot skill, they all use the same type of planes, with the same

motor and same fuel.

With the competitors divided into three different groups, the pilots then competed for the top places in each division. The winners of the A Main division were Mike Tally (first place), John McGowan (second), BJ Swope (third) and Mike Conner (fourth).

The winners of the B Main group were Greg Doe (first), Dave Phillips (second), Ernie Duffy (third) and Jim Reining (fourth).

The top finishers in the C Main group were Danny McDevitt (first), Dilmer Lily (second), Will Swope (third) and Tim Batt (fourth).

With several planes in the air at the same time, pylon racing has the potential to create some midair RC carnage, but thankfully for the pilots, the damage was minimal this year.



The Club 40 Pylon racers were ready to take to the air!

"Our crash total was limited to just three air-planes, with one midair where Tim Batt got together with Will Swope before the race was started," said Phillips. "Tim landed his plane with very little damage, but Will was not so lucky. He lost his right wing when they hit and continued to fly with the wing missing. When he tried to land and had to pull the power off, the plane rolled over and went in."

This year's race was held on one of the coldest days of the year, so it was appropriate that the club also held a chili cook-off

during lunch. The winner of the chili competition was Jim Reining.

"We picked three club members to taste each contestant's chili and score it from one to ten. We then totaled the points and came up with the winner," said Phillips. "I don't know how they picked a winner, as I tried all of them myself and did not find a bad one in the bunch."

According to club member Leslie Harrison, the Club 40 races ran from around 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"It went great," Harrison said.

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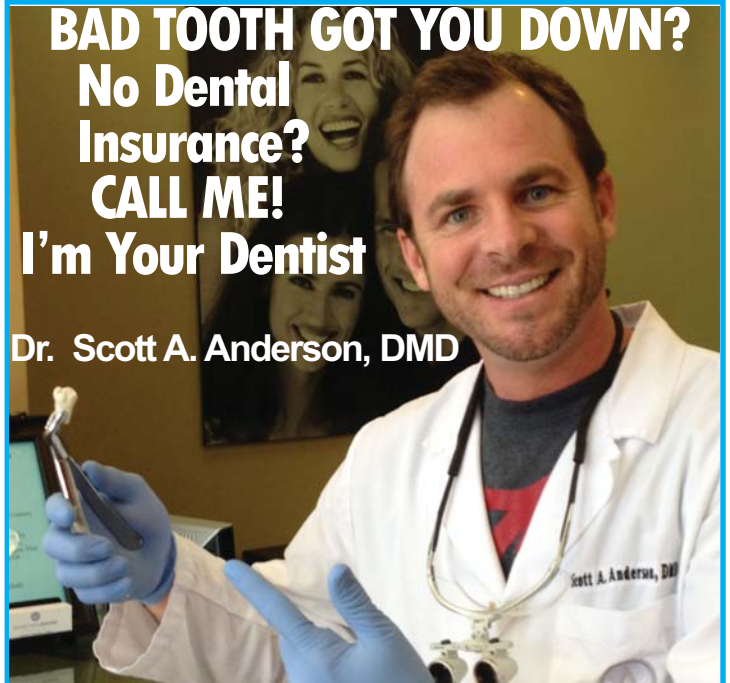
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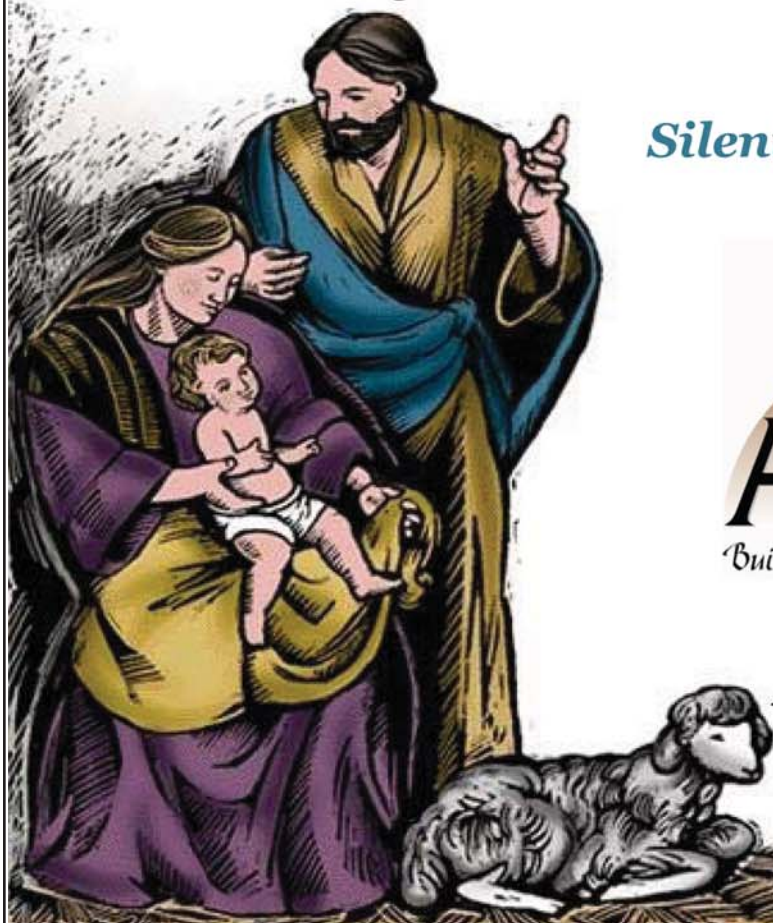
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GUN CLASSES PLANNED

Local gun manufacturer Red Dot Arms will be offering introductory gun classes this winter at its location off Shelby County 87. Owner Randall Booth said they're planning to hold two different beginner classes, though the dates haven't been set yet.

"We're going to have a First Steps handgun class. It's an NRA First Steps class," said Booth. "We'll probably have an NRA Basic handgun class and it's an eight-hour class, so it'll be two Saturdays."

The First Steps class is a three-and-a-half hour class. The Basic class will be two four-hour sessions over two Saturdays. The classes will be held at Red Dot Arms manufacturing facility, which is located at 127 Mayhall Drive in Alabaster. For details and dates, visit the Red Dot Arms website at Reddotarms.us.

Since opening its new facility earlier this year, Red Dot Arms has held a number of interesting classes. In November, they had an owner maintenance class for the AR-15 that covered gun safety, cleaning, assembly, disassembly and other topics. They've also had handgun classes for ladies and a class called "The Law of the Gun," which covered legal issues surrounding firearms.

"We have all sorts of firearms classes," said Booth.

Red Dot Arms, which is owned and operated by the

Booth family, manufactures AR-15 upper and lower assemblies at its manufacturing facility in Alabaster.

According to Booth, those who simply assemble rifles are technically considered "manufacturers," but at Red Dot Arms, they actually machine their own parts from billet aluminum.

"As a gun manufacturer, you can buy parts and put guns together, or you can buy your machinery like we did and make your own parts and be a true, full-blown manufacturer," said Booth.

Booth first started out fixing and assembling firearms from his home, but as his business started to grow, he decided to move into a larger facility.

"We leased this facility in February of 2013. It took us some time to get the license moved from the previous location to here through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms," said Booth. "They issued the license mid-April, and we started manufacturing at that point at this facility."

In addition to manufacturing firearms and holding classes, Red Dot Arms also sells a variety of parts and apparel from its retail shop in the front. Red Dot Arms is open Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, call 382-4246.

Cut Your Taxes: 5 Year-End Tips

Most of us don't want to think about taxes around the holidays, but there are some things you can do to offset your tax bill in 2014.

- 1. Deduct Business Expenses** If you started your own business or began freelancing or working from home, gather up those business-related receipts. The cost of work-related travel, food, office supplies can be deducted from your taxable income.
- 2. Review Medical Expenses** Know that you can deduct your out-of-pocket medical expenses. If you're thinking of getting any elective surgery - even LASIK - that expense, plus other out-of-pocket medical care you paid this year for, could help reduce your taxable income..
- 3. Donate** Charitable donations may be tax deductible up to 50% of your adjustable gross income. Time to start cleaning out the closet!
- 4. Offset Capital Gains** If you've cashed in on some gains, look for losing stocks in your portfolio. If you sell them before the end of the year to end up, the net loss can offset your short-term capital gains.
- 5. Boost Retirement Savings** If you've neglected to save this year, it's not too late to get aggressive and further reduce your taxable income.

If you have any questions on this information, please give us a call.

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CHRISTMAS MARKET DEC. 7 AT BUCK CREEK PARK

Local nonprofit organization Sowers of Seed will be hosting its annual Christmas Market on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This year's holiday bazaar will be held at Buck Creek Park by the concession stand near the football field.

"The Christmas Market is being held at Buck Creek Park," said Sowers of Seed founder Lynn Coleman. "It's the same day as the parade in Alabaster."

The market will feature over 30 different vendors selling a variety of fun and interesting products, giving residents a great opportunity to get started on their Christmas shopping.

Some of the vendors this year will include Sassy Frass Tees, Bluefin Market, Fay's Frills, Jim Z bracelets, Keepin' Knit Real, Usborne Books and Divalicious Creations.

This is the third year that

the organization has held a Christmas market, but it will be the first time it's been held at the park. Because of the new location, it's enabled the event to expand quite a bit.

"We've doubled our size from last year, so that'll be fun," said Coleman.

Coleman said they plan to distribute postcards the day of the parade to help publicize the event.

The event will also feature food, so people who have been to the Christmas parade, or who have participated in the parade, can stop by and grab a bite to eat.

"We've been given permission to use the concession stand, so we'll have concessions available," said Coleman.

Concessions will include chili, chicken tenders, nachos and more. Oak Mountain Community Church will be also selling desserts at the event, like homemade cookies and such.

For those who have participated in Sowers of Seed's Christmas luminary lighting in the past, the group is selling luminaries again this year. Rather than taking orders, however, they'll be selling them directly at the Christmas Market.

"They'll be available at the Christmas Market," said Coleman.

The lighting for the Christmas luminaries this year will be on Saturday, Dec. 21. Sowers of Seed will also have its cookbooks available for purchase.

"Look for the banner," said Coleman. "We'll have information there about our program. We'll be close to the front."

Money raised from the event will help fund Sowers of Seed's summer lunch program, which provides healthy meals to kids in need.



"These kids qualify for free and reduced lunch during the school year, so we fill in that nutritional gap during the summer," said Coleman.

For more information about Sowers of Seed, go to Sowersofseedal.com. For anyone wanting to purchase additional luminaries, email sowersofseed@hotmail.com

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SALVATION ARMY GEARING UP FOR CHRISTMAS

It's nearly time for the holidays, which means the Salvation Army will soon be kicking off its annual Christmas programs. For local residents, that means plenty of opportunities to enjoy the holiday season by helping someone in need.

The Salvation Army's well-known Red Kettle Campaign is one of the organization's largest fundraisers, and it's scheduled to run this year from Nov. 15 to Dec. 24. Residents can look for the red donation kettles in front of various retailers around the area starting in just a couple of weeks.

Funds raised through the campaign are used to fund various local programs, including social services.

"That's not just money that's used at Christmas time," said Brian Wallace, the director of public relations with the Greater Birmingham Salvation Army. "It's used throughout the entire year, and we rely very heavily on it. We have over 14 programs area-wide, including in Shelby County."

The Salvation Army's Angel Tree program is another terrific opportunity to help out a family in need. By adopting Angels who are represented on various Angel Trees around Birmingham, residents can provide a fun and memorable Christmas for children who might otherwise go without.

According to Lt. Brian Leonard of the Shelby County Salvation Army, the Cracker Barrel restaurant off Highway 119 in Pelham will have an Angel Tree. He also said people can call the Salvation Army in Alabaster to adopt Angels.

The season also brings a number of opportunities for local residents to volunteer. The Red Kettle Campaign needs volunteers to ring the bells at donation stations. Groups are encouraged to participate so they can divide up the shifts, which last from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"We're currently taking volunteers and getting them on the schedule," said Leonard. "Every year, we do have to hire people but we try to get as many volunteers as we can to help offset the cost of having to pay people. So we're looking for both volunteers and people to come in and apply for the job of bell-ringer."

To apply for a bell-ringer position, Leonard suggests stopping by the Salvation Army office in Alabaster and applying in person. The office is located at 108 Plaza Circle.

"They can just come into our office here and we have applications on hand," said Leonard.

To volunteer for a shift, Leonard said people can call the Salvation Army at 663-7105. When the day of

their shift comes, someone from the Salvation Army will meet them at the location.

"We would meet them at the location at 10 a.m. with the kettle and bells and everything they would need," said Leonard.

Volunteers are also needed to assist with Angel Tree distribution. Distribution day is scheduled for Dec. 14, and volunteers will be needed the week prior to that, plus the day of distribution.

Last year, the Shelby County Salvation Army



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was able to help over 600 children receive Christmas gifts. For more information, go to BirminghamSalvationArmy.org

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COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

At the Alabaster City Council's Nov. 4 meeting, the City Council approved an ordinance that will make it easier for small vendors to participate in local, short-term events.

According to the ordinance, vendors with anticipated sales below \$1,000 will not be required to pay a deposit for taxes. The ordinance also set the cost of a temporary event license for vendors at \$25 per event. (Vendors with a permanent location in the City won't be required to pay the \$25 if they have a current business license and are already submitting.)

For vendors anticipating more than \$1,000 in sales, a cash deposit will be required on an escalating basis. For anticipated sales between \$1,001 and \$2,500, vendors will pay a cash tax

deposit of \$50. For anticipated sales of \$2,501 to \$5,000, it is \$100; for \$5,001 to \$10,000, it is \$200; and for anticipated sales above \$10,000, it is \$400.

The new ordinance defines special and temporary events as "short term events held within the City limits, including, but not limited to, arts and crafts shows, holiday merchants, trade shows, festivals, fairs or any other temporary business that does not intend to establish a permanent location such as temporary kiosks in malls, Christmas, summertime vendors, etc. wherein retail sales of food, beverages, crafts, services, and/or goods are offered."

According to the ordinance, organizers of such events must obtain a special event license and submit a list of participating vendors

that includes the vendor's name, address and business phone number, along with a "general description of the goods and/or services offered by each vendor." The special events license for organizers is \$150.

Councilwoman Stacy Rakestraw introduced the ordinance (No. 13-013), which was an amendment to a previous ordinance from 2007 (No. 07-007) regarding business licenses. Three new definitions were added to the ordinance, along with the new fee schedule. The remainder of the original ordinance will remain unchanged.

During the public hearing portion of the meeting,



there were no speakers for or against the new ordinance.

To view the ordinance in its entirety, go to the City of Alabaster website (www.cityofalabaster.com) and click on the link for "City Council Resolutions & Ordinances" under the "Online Services" tab. Then click on "Ordinance 13-013 Special Events License" to view a PDF of the new ordinance.



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BAPTIST SHELBY EARNS TOP PERFORMER IN QUALITY

Shelby Baptist Medical Center in Alabaster was recently named a "Top Performer on Key Quality Measures" by the Joint Commission, a leading accreditor of healthcare organizations in America.

It was the third year in a row that three Baptist Health System hospitals were honored with the accolade. Joining Shelby Baptist on the list were Princeton Baptist in Birmingham and Walker Baptist in Jasper.

According to the Joint Commission's website (www.jointcommission.org), the Top Performer on Key Quality Measures program recognizes hospitals that attain "excellence on accountability measure performance. The program is based on data reported in the previous year about evidence-based clinical processes that are shown to be the best treatments for certain conditions, including heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, surgical care, children's asthma, inpatient psychiatric services, stroke, venous thromboembolism and immunization."

The areas in which all three Baptist hospitals were recognized were heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care.

In a press release, Baptist Health Systems President and CEO Shane Spees said, "Safe, effective care is what matters most to our patients. Physicians and staff at our hospitals understand that and strive daily to deliver safe, effective care. That is why Baptist Health System has made a strong commitment to use evidence-based clinical care processes that have been proven to lead to the best possible outcomes. We are proud to receive, again this year, the distinction of being named 'Top Performers' by The Joint Commission."

The Joint Commission is an independent, nonprofit organization that certifies and accredits some 20,000 health organizations in the United States. It was originally founded in 1951, when the American College of Physicians, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Association joined together with the American College of Surgeons to form the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals. Today, it's the largest and oldest accrediting body in the industry.

According to the Joint Commission website, the

distinction of "Top Performer" places Shelby Baptist among "the top 33 percent of all Joint Commission-accredited hospitals that reported accountability measure performance data for 2012."

For more information, visit the Joint Commission online at www.jointcommission.org.

A full list of the top performing hospitals can be downloaded from the site, along with



information about the commission.



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DECEMBER SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Tai-yoga-lites Flow Class- 1st and 3rd Monday, and 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 1pm. This class will combine Tai Chi, Yoga and Pilates. All other Mondays and Thursdays will be basic Tai Chi. Space is limited. Encouraged donation of \$2/class.

Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program- Wednesdays at 10am. Space is limited. Encouraged donation of \$2/class.

Zumba Gold- This explosive exercise program is designed so that everyone can do it. You will see a variety of styles: Meringue, Salsa, Cha Cha, Cumbia, Belly Dance, Flamenco, Tango and Rock and Roll rhythms. Zumba Gold guarantees you will have fun while you are getting a great workout. Join us every Wednesday at 1pm.

Encouraged donation of \$2/class.

Zumba Gold Toning- Join us for a dynamic class using lightweight resistance training. This class can help participants prevent age-related bone loss, increase muscle strength and

definition, decrease body fat and improve mobility, posture, coordination and cognition. Fridays from 1-2pm. \$2 donation encouraged.

Line dancing- join us on Thursdays for the 9:30am intermediate class or the 10:30am beginner class. No experience necessary. \$2 donation encouraged!

NEW Intergenerational Program "Making Memories"- Friday, January 3 from 10am-12pm. We are inviting our seniors and their grandchildren or great grand children (ages 3-12) to join in a fun day together. We will have fun with a magician, create a nature craft and a craft to take home. We will also enjoy pizza for lunch. Space is limited. Cost is \$8 for one senior and one child.

NEW- It's a TANGLED WORLD- Jan 14, 21, 28, Feb 4 from 12:30-2pm.

Join Jan Rogers for basic classes in creating ZENTANGLE© inspired pen and ink drawings. There are NO MISTAKES!

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RELAX at the same time. It's fun, and after four classes you will draw like a pro. You will complete your own pattern for a new (insulated) coffee mug and at least one Valentine's card for a loved one. Cost is \$12/person. Space is limited. Sign ups begin December 2.

"Preserving Family Memories Through Scrapbooking" taught by C.D. McKinnon Ever wonder what to do with all of those shoeboxes full of pictures and "stuff" you saved? Join us for a scrapbooking crop and learn how to turn those treasured memories into beautiful scrapbooks that tell your family's story. In each class you will learn a new technique to help you create beautiful family albums. Class will be held on

December 9 from 12pm-3pm. Bring \$5 cash to each class. You will need to bring your own pictures and supplies. Some supplies will be available to purchase.

Upcoming Book Club- join us for our next class on Friday, January 24 at 10am. We will meet every 4th Friday to discuss the book and introduce a

new book. Sign up at the senior center.

Basic Windows 8 Demo- Tuesday, December 3 from 12:30-2pm. Free demo class to learn more about how to navigate Windows 8. Call to reserve your spot.

You won't want to miss all the activities at the senior center: Wii Bowling -Tuesdays 12pm
Zumba Gold (exercise)- Wednesdays 1pm
Beginner/Inter Line dancing - Thursdays 9:30am
Beginner Line Dancing - Thursday 10:30am
Tempo exercise - Fridays 10am
Zumba Gold Toning- Fridays 1-2pm
Bridge- Thursday 12-3pm
Rook- Wednesdays 9:00am
Timeless Treasures (singing) - Monday 10am

If you would like more information concerning senior programs, please contact Alabaster Senior Center at 663-1307 or awalters@cityofalabaster.com

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NATURE'S COLORS FOR THE SEASON by David Frings



As most of us prepare for the Christmas holiday season, we are busy shopping for those special gifts, baking cookies, and putting up all of the beautiful decorations in the traditional shades of red and green. Things are so busy in preparation for the day that we often forget to sit down a take a moment for ourselves to rejuvenate in quiet and solitude. A great way to take a moment to unwind is by doing a little birding. Alabaster is blessed with a diversity of locations that are great for watching our fine feathered friends. These range from the facilities located at Limestone Park to the Buck

Creek Trail to your own backyard.

During the busy holiday season a fifteen minute break for some backyard birding may just do the trick. Setting your yard up for bird watching is simple. All you need are the three basics of life: food, water, and shelter. Shelter is easy and you probably already have this in the form of trees and shrubs. You do not need a forest; just some thick evergreen shrubs will do fine to shelter the birds from the cold winds of winter. Food and shelter can be in the form of bird feeders and baths that can be purchased at the Alabaster PetSmart, Lowes or Wal-Mart to simple trays and pans already on hand for that tight budget. Bird food can also be purchased at these same retailers.

A great bird to look for in your backyard is the northern cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) donning its rich red Christmas red plumage.

Males are a brilliant red with a crest, conical-shaped beak, and black mask. The female cardinals are a buff-brown with some red in their crest and wings. The cardinal is a year round resident of Alabama and frequents backyard habitats in addition to the edges of woodland and cleared areas. Their diet includes a variety of seeds, grains, berries, buds, and insects. Providing the nutritional needs of cardinals is easy for a backyard habitat or feeding station. A good winter seed mix that has a high content in large seeds such as Sunflower and Safflower will do the trick. Cardinals are very fond of eating black sunflower seeds as are many other residents of your backyard.

If you decide to begin feeding the birds, please continue this practice through the winter since they will begin to depend on this food supplement for



Male Cardinal

their winter diet. If you have never setup a feeding station in your backyard for birds, I hope that you will give it a try this year. It can be a great source of entertainment and is very educational, particularly if you pick up one of the many field guides for birding at our Books-A-Million. Give a gift of nature this holiday season.

David Frings is an Adjunct Professor of Environmental Management and Director of the Oak Mountain Interpretive Center Samford University located at Oak Mtn State Park

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Calendar of Events

- Dec. 2, City Council Meeting 7 pm Chamber
- Dec. 3, Water Board 7pm Chamber
Library Board 6pm ALS Library
- Dec. 4, Municipal Court 9 am & 2 pm Chamber
Public Safety Committee 6pm Conference
- Dec. 9, Board of Education 6:00 pm Chamber
- Dec.10, Housing & Abatement Board 5:00pm Conference
- Dec.11, Municipal Court 9 am & 2 pm Chamber
- Dec.12, Finance Committee 5:30 pm Conference
- Dec.16, City Council Meeting 7 pm Chamber
- Dec.18, Municipal Court 9 am & 2 pm Chamber
Sewer Committee 6 pm Chamber
- Dec.19, Public Works Committee 5 pm Chamber
Economic Development Committee 5:30 pm Conf.
- Dec.16, Board of Adjustments 6:30 pm Conference
- Dec.17, Planning & Zoning 7 pm Conference
- Dec.24&25, CITY OFFICES CLOSED
FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

Meetings are now held in the new City Hall next to the Senior Center. Chamber refers to the large meeting chamber and conference refers to the conference room in the new facility. Questions about a meeting? Call 664-6800. A full 2013 Calendar is available for reference at www.cityofalabaster.com

~ December 2013 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Marty Handlon, Mayor
handlon@cityofalabaster.com
664-6800
Sophie Martin, Ward 1
martin@cityofalabaster.com
358-8742
Bob Hicks, Ward 2
hicks@cityofalabaster.com
663-1801

Stacy Rakestraw, Ward 3
rakestraw@cityofalabaster.com
621-0168
Rick Walters, Ward 4
walters@cityofalabaster.com
281-7394
Russell Bedsole, Ward 5
bedsole@cityofalabaster.com
663-6212

Scott Brakefield, Ward 6
brakefield@cityofalabaster.com
685-0302
Tommy Ryals, Ward 7
ryals@cityofalabaster.com
664-1301
George Henry, City Manager and City Clerk
ghenry@cityofalabaster.com
664-6800

BUSINESS LICENSES DUE

It's that time of year again! Business owners should be receiving a Renewal Notice in the mail the first week in December for your City of Alabaster Business License. The license is due before January 31, 2014. There will be a 15% penalty to all licenses received after that date. If you have had a change of address for your business, please contact our office at 664-6844 or you may email us at revenue@cityofalabaster.com. Remember our offices are now at 1953 Municipal Way suite 101.



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205-664-2345

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Fax: 205-664-2340 Cell: 205-5876070
coverflip@hotmail.com

CITY DEPARTMENT PHONE NUMBERS • Non-emergency Police matters 663-7401 • Animal Control 664-6761
• Personnel Dept 664-6838 • Code Enforcement 664-5907 • Revenue/Business License Dept 664-6844
• Alabaster Water Board 663-6155 • Garbage/recycling bins 664-6800 • Alabaster Parks & Recreation 664-6840



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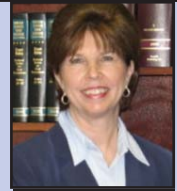
663-6088

718 Fulton Springs Rd. (Hwy 26)
Take Hwy 119 turn left at the light past the new Publix at White Stone Center.

Elizabeth A. Roland
Attorney at Law

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