

THE ORIGINAL

Alabaster

NEWSLETTER

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2013



Girls Basketball

**SHELBY
COUNTY
CHAMPS**

Alabaster

A Word from the Editor & Publisher, Ted Vodde



"THINK" signs were first posted in IBM offices by CEO Thomas Watson. It is ubiquitous in their culture appearing on walls, desks, printed pads and was eventually used for IBM's line of notebook computers called THINKpads.

Note that there was no asterisk on the signs telling people what to think

about. So what are you supposed to think about? About how to do your job better, about how to create an invention to fulfill a need, about how to best work with your team to achieve your goals and the list goes on. As the carpenter's rule is "measure twice, cut once." Thinking is to take the measure of a situation - to think it through, to ponder from the Latin *ponderare* which means to weigh - in this case to weigh the pro and cons and facets of any action or opportunity.

Maybe American culture could benefit from some THINK signs.

Who teaches us how to THINK? If you'll take a look across from this col-

umn you'll see a picture of some proud folks who are the first Teachers of the Year in the Alabaster School System. Teachers don't have it easy at all. And yes, I've been one so I know whereof I speak.

Each day is a performance of sorts and an engagement with youth to give them facts and have them THINK about them. That's a good part of what homework is about - to take the facts you've learned, THINK about them and draw conclusions based on the facts and look at interactions of facts in the intricate web we've created called civilization.

I bet you remember some of your teachers. I know you have some special ones that made you THINK to consider the world and your place in it and how you might make it a better place.

I remember Mr. Mora in my high school in Florida that brought in

recordings of the Metropolitan Opera and speaking several languages and having a box at the opera, taught us what the operas were about and their creation and history. And Dr. Detweiler at the University of Florida who made me laugh out loud when talking about the reporting of politics and his experiences.

Even if you're not a school teacher, you are a teacher. Especially if you have children. You're teaching them about how to deal with life by letting them observe how you deal with it. And they do observe.

And so congratulations to the Teachers of the Year and how they help their students to learn to THINK for themselves.

So for everyone, let's THINK about things, especially things like Valentine's Day which is Feb. 14. I THINK you better not forget that one...

COUNCIL REPEALS FIREARMS ORDINANCE

At its regularly-scheduled meeting on Monday, Jan. 6, the Alabaster City Council passed a trio of ordinances, including one to repeal Section 74-4 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Alabaster, which prohibited "the carrying of certain weapons and fireworks" in the city's municipal parks.

The language was repealed to ensure that the city's ordinances are in line with the state's new gun law, known as Act 2013-283. The gun bill, which was signed into law by Gov. Robert Bentley on May 22, 2013 and became effective Aug. 1, 2013, strictly limits the authority of municipalities to regu-

late firearm-related activities in the state.

Section 7 of the Act specifically says, "Any existing orders, ordinances, or rules promulgated or enforced contrary to the terms of this section are null and void and any future order, ordinance, or rules shall comply with this section."

In an email following the council meeting, City Manager George Henry characterized the repeal as a "housekeeping" measure, saying the language no longer needed to be in the ordinance since it was no longer enforceable.

The ordinance itself (No. 14-003) also says that Act 2013-283 "preempts

city ordinances in relation to the carrying of firearms."

To view the state's entire gun law, along with a detailed legal analysis, go to the Alabama Office of Prosecution Services online at www.alabamaprosecutor.com.

The council also passed an ordinance (No. 14-001) that would allow the Alabaster Water Board to sell personal property valued at less than \$15,000 without having to further seek the consent of the City Council.

In a roll call vote on the matter, the ordinance passed unanimously 7-0. There were no comments from the audience during the public hearing.

Another ordinance (No. 14-002) added penalties for failure to comply with court orders and failure to appear in court.

According to the ordinance, violators will be punished "by a fine not to exceed \$500.00 and/or imprisonment or a sentence of hard labor for the city for a period not to exceed six months at the discretion of the court trying the case."

City ordinances are viewable online at the City of Alabaster website (www.cityofalabaster.com). For specific questions, contact City Hall at 664-6800.

WE'RE ALWAYS ONLINE AT WWW.ALABASTERNEWSLETTER.COM! CHECK IT OUT!



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SCHOOL BOARD HONORS TEACHERS

At its Jan. 15 meeting, the Alabaster City Board of Education honored the Alabaster City Schools Teachers of the Year.

The honorees for this year included Kathy Matthews (kindergarten teacher at Meadow View Elementary), Karri Allen (kindergarten teacher at Creek View Elementary), Shay Traywick (fifth grade teacher at Thompson Intermediate), Melanie Bales (sixth grade teacher at Thompson Sixth Grade Center), Amanda Wilbanks (seventh grade science teacher at Thompson Middle School) and Katie Mantel (Career Technical Education teacher/Marketing at Thompson High School).

Each of the six received a certificate and \$100 to be used in their classrooms.

There was also a reception held for the teachers, featuring artwork created by Alabaster students.

"We are very fortunate to have wonderful teachers in our school system," said Dr. Wayne Vickers, superintendent of the Alabaster City Schools.

According to Vickers, the elementary and secondary finalists who move on to the state competition will be recognized at a meeting in February. They will also receive a plaque and a \$500 stipend.

The meeting had a distinctly celebratory mood, as Vickers and the school



Alabaster School System recently selected its first set of Teachers of the Year

principals also took the opportunity to thank school board members for their service to the schools.

"Our five board members serve without any compensation," said Vickers. "I can tell you from

someone that's worked in four or five different school systems over 24 years that you will not find a finer group of board members."

In response, School

(CONT' ON PAGE 17)

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Girls Basketball SHELBY COUNTY CHAMPS

The Thompson High School Girls Varsity Basketball team is rolling along this season under first-year Head Coach Josh Golden. In December, the team captured its second straight Shelby County Tournament title, and they're currently in second place in the Area, with a 2-1 record.

"It's going well," said Golden. "Right now we're 14-5. Over the break, we won the county championship, second year in a row. We beat Oak Mountain in the finals, and Oak Mountain's got a really good team. That's the third time we've beaten them this year, and they've all been close. I think we beat them by two, by five and by seven."

Golden came to Thompson after coaching

the Boys Basketball team at Sylacauga High School the last two years. He's also coached the Boys and Girls teams at Tuscaloosa Academy, and he played college basketball at Huntingdon College in Montgomery.

"This is my ninth year as a head coach," said Golden. "I was also a graduate assistant coach at the University of Montevallo for two years."

When he arrived in June, he took the squad to a couple of summer camps, where they started putting the building blocks in place. They started slowly at UAB but showed improvement at the Birmingham Southern camp.

"I think we went 7-2 at Birmingham Southern but still were trying to figure it out. It's one of those things where any time you take over a new job, it's a matter of just implementing your system and getting people to understand where to be and what's expected of them," said Golden.

Since then, the team has continued to show steady improvement. So far, they're undefeated at home.

"I feel like we've gotten better since day one and continue to get better now," Golden said. "We're a lot better now than we were at the beginning of November, and I hope a month from now, we'll be better than we are now. But so far it's been a very good group. They work hard. They're a fun group to coach."

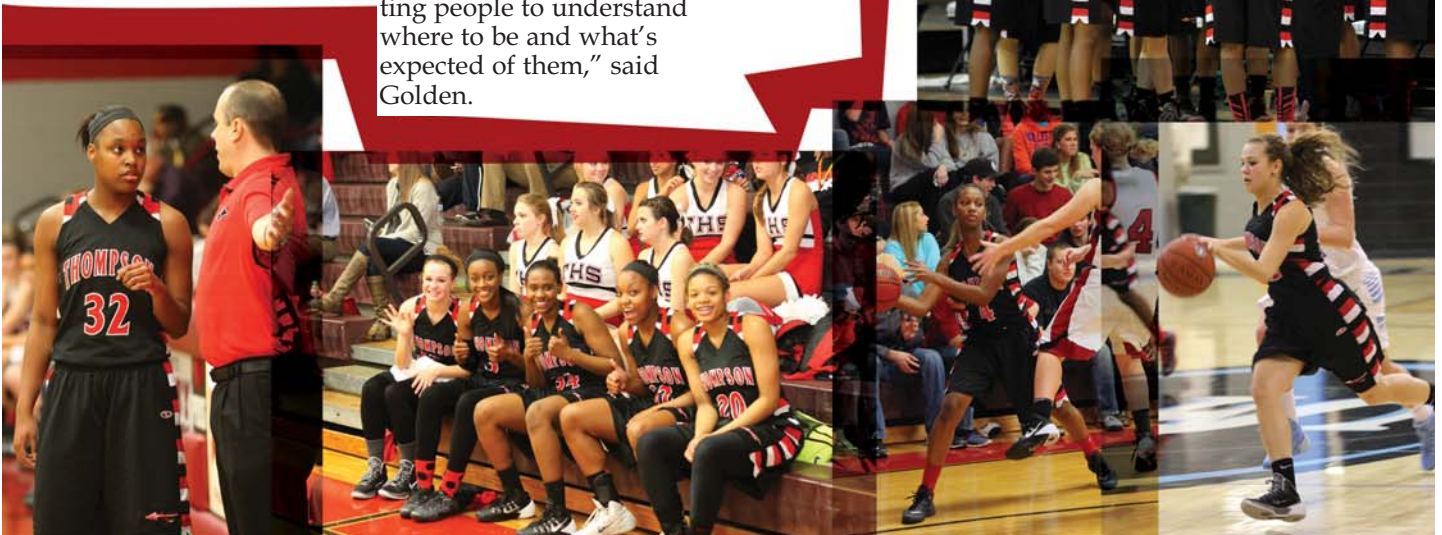
One of the unique things about the team is the amount of depth it has. The roster has 12 girls, and Golden said they're all capable players.

"Everybody that's on our roster is able to play for us," he said.

Offensively, the team likes to score in transition, which means playing good, aggressive defense.

"We play a lot of full-court man. We also play the 1-3-1," said Golden. "We kind of mix it up. We play some 3-2 as well and do some trapping out of the different defenses. We never play the same thing all game."

The Warriors finish their regular-season schedule at home against Huffman on Feb. 3. The Area Tournament will start on Feb. 6.



LET A TRAVEL AGENT HELP YOU PLAN YOUR NEXT TRIP

Travel agents have been around for many years. They actually started back in the 1800's by helping people book their passenger train tickets. As the train schedules grew across the US, it became more and more difficult to remember the routes and days of weeks the trains would operate. The need for a travel expert was born.

Today, travel is more difficult than ever to navigate. The internet is an amazing tool that offers the world right at your fingertips. It also offers thousands of opinions and reviews. Sometime sifting through all that information can actually leave you more confused than ever. That is where today's travel agent comes in to play. You can reach out to a local travel agent that can help you sort through all that informa-

tion and recommend the perfect vacation for you.

Many times the agents are specialists in certain destinations around the globe. Their first-hand knowledge can be a valuable tool when planning your trip. I always recommend doing some research first. Narrow down your choices and use the web for information. Then reach out to a professional travel agent and let them work their magic. They have access to all the reputable travel companies that offer vacation packages to destinations around the world. They can recommend the best time to travel, must-see sights, and recommend hotels and resorts to fit any budget.

I have heard people say they feel travel agents tend to be too expensive. That is simply not the case. Many times their pricing is the same or lower than the internet sites plus you get

to support a local business. Agents offer a wide range of products. You can go with a more value minded vacation or you may have saved up and want to go luxury all the way. Just let the agent know your goals for the trip along with your budget and they will go to work for you.

There are many new choices in travel as well. Some options you never even thought of before. Eco-tourism is very popular. Visiting rainforests and hiking unexplored areas appeal to adventurous travelers.

River Cruising is becoming one of the most popular ways to see Europe. You spend 7-14 days slowly navigating the famous rivers of Europe and get up close and personal with the quaint towns along the way. You will enjoy gourmet cuisine and local entertainment all while visiting a new town every day. This is worth a spot on your bucket list for



James Keller is a Travel Manager with Adventure Travel

sure.

So the next time you start planning that trip to Disney World or start looking for a river cruise vacation, I encourage you to call your local travel agent. Give them a try and you just might be surprised by the time and money you save. Plus, the advice you get could be priceless.




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SEN. WARD CHAIRMAN OF JOINT ENERGY TASK FORCE



Senator Cam Ward

Citing his national footprint on state-level energy policy, The Joint Legislative Committee on Energy Policy voted unanimously to elevate Senator Cam Ward (R-Alabaster) to serve as Chairman.

"I'm honored that my colleagues see me as a leader, and have chosen to give me this opportunity," Ward said. "I was present at the conception of this

committee, and to see that hard work pay off, and be given a chance to make a real difference in our state energy policy, and the jobs that it brings, is a real proud moment for me."

Ward has emerged as a leader on energy issues in Alabama, and regionally, through his work with associations of state legislative leaders such as Southern Legislative Conference, State Agriculture and Rural Leaders and as Vice Chairman of The Energy Taskforce for The National Conference of State Legislatures.

Ward was recently in Oklahoma City to meet with a group of Agriculture Committee Chairmen to see how those two vital interests can better work together. Ward was the Keynote

Speaker for The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Legislative Lunch, speaking to them about the importance of The Port of Mobile in regional energy policy, and the recent attacks on Alabama's energy interests by environmental groups such as The Sierra Club.

"Cam is passionate about energy policy, and he is known as a leader in national energy committee circles, so this is a no brainer," Senate President Pro Tempore Del Marsh (R-Anniston) said. "Cam just gets it, and that's why you see him out in front on vital issues like energy."

"My plan is to share the good news about energy exploration and creation in Alabama, and the threats that the current administra-

tion and EPA policies pose to this vital industry," Ward said. "Alabama ranks 13th in Energy production, and has the highest percentage of "mix" in base load production of any southeastern state. That's a fancy way of saying we're in the top 25% of energy producing states, and we get our energy from a diverse set of fuels: hydroelectric, nuclear, coal and renewables. Each one of the industries creates jobs for our state, and each receives industry-specific tax incentives to ensure lower consumer costs, and higher worker retention rates."



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RED KETTLE CAMPAIGN A SUCCESS

The Salvation Army relies on its Red Kettle campaign to fund many of its programs throughout the year, and this year, the holiday drive went very well for the Shelby County Corps.

The Shelby County Corps, which is based in Alabaster, serves underprivileged families throughout Shelby and Chilton Counties. According to Lt. Jamie Leonard, who runs the corps with her husband Lt. Brian Leonard, this year they were able to raise \$132,000, well surpassing their goal of \$100,000.

"What that means is the amount of money that we had already planned and set aside for overhead costs, all of that is now covered," said Lt. Jamie Leonard. "It's completely and totally covered."

That means that more money will be able to be used for the Salvation Army's social services.

"Whereas before we were counting on being able to use \$75,000 out of that \$100,000 as direct service, now we have a full \$100,000," said Lt. Jamie Leonard.

Leonard said their initial concerns over a shortened fundraising season proved to be unnecessary.

"It was hands-down one of the easiest and most fulfilling and most profitable Christmas seasons that either of us have ever had anything to do with," she said.

The fundraising results weren't limited to Shelby County either. Brian Wallace, the director of public relations for the Birmingham Salvation Army, said the entire area had a good year.

"We knew we'd have a week less this year, so we were proactive," said

Wallace. "We sold sponsorships for some of the kettles this year. We essentially sold advertisements on the kettles. Each company paid for their logo to be on there."

Wallace said they had another unique aspect to their fundraising this year in that someone donated a diamond ring during the Red Kettle campaign. According to Wallace, the lady who donated the ring had been a supporter of the Salvation Army for years, and she bought the ring with a donation in mind.

"She bought it with the idea of holding onto it and seeing if there was a way to resell it and eventually help us," said Wallace. "She was going to have some kind of silent auction, but she got skin cancer and was not able to do that. So she decided, you know what, I want to give it to them, so she



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dropped it in one of our kettles."

According to Wallace, they had the ring appraised, and it was valued at \$1,500. It was dropped in a kettle at Brookwood Village.

For more information, go to www.birminghamssalvationarmy.org or call the Shelby County Salvation Army at 663-7105.

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CHESS TOURNAMENTS UPCOMING

For local kids interested in "The Royal Game," there are several opportunities coming up this spring to get involved at a competitive level.

Thanks to locally-based Caesar Chess, there will be three scholastic chess tournaments over the next two months, including the Alabaster Scholastic Chess Tournament, which will be held Saturday, March 1, at Thompson Intermediate School.

This is the sixth year that Caesar Chess has held a tournament in Alabaster. It will include two rated sections (Open for K-12 and Middle for K-6) and a nonrated section (Novice for K-6/beginners). Check in time is from 8 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. Advance registration is encouraged. Fees to participate are \$20 for Open and Middle sections and \$15 for Novice. Trophies and medals will

be awarded at noon, with both individual and team awards being given.

The deadline to enter is Saturday, Feb. 22. Entry forms can be found online at the Caesar Chess website (www.caesarchess.com). The tournament is open to all public, private and home school students.

"It's open to K-12 students at all schools," said Caesar Lawrence, founder of Caesar Chess. "A lot of the home-school and private school kids think they can't participate. Yes, they can. It's open to everybody."

In addition to the Alabaster tournament, there are two other opportunities coming up as well. On Saturday, Feb. 8 and Sunday, Feb. 9, the Queen of Hearts tournament will be held at the AUM Taylor Center in Montgomery. The Queen of Hearts tour-

namment is presented by the Montgomery Chess Club, and it's now in its 42nd year. That tournament includes both a scholastic division and an adult division.

On Saturday, March 15 and Sunday, March 16, the Alabama Scholastic Chess Championships will be held at Comer Hall at the University of Montevallo.

"That's the scholastic state championship," said Lawrence. "The last two years, we've had over 200 people."

According to Lawrence, chess overall is on the rise in the state of Alabama. He said their statistics indicate a 21 percent increase last year in the number of people playing chess.

"More and more people are playing chess," he said, "and those numbers are somewhat skewed



because they don't show the not-rated section. A lot of my kids play not rated."

The number of tournaments has also grown over the years. Caesar Chess is now averaging approximately two tournaments a month.

"I'm running 25 tournaments a year," said Lawrence. "That's different from 1995 when we only had five."

Caesar Chess also teaches chess at Thompson Intermediate School. For more information, email CaesarChess@yahoo.com.

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THS WRESTLING WINS

The Thompson High School Wrestling team won the fifth-annual Alabama Duals over the weekend of Jan. 10. The tournament, which was held at Thompson High School, drew teams from around the state, as well as from Florida, Tennessee and Louisiana.

"It went awesome," said Thompson Head Coach Shawn Weltzin. "We had a good response on the teams that came. I think every team came away with nine or ten matches, so it was really good competition."

Thompson actually fielded two different teams for the tournament, and their second squad, Thompson High School "Red," ended up finishing in 13th place.

"We had a full starting roster and then our backups on the other side," said Weltzin. "Our backups finished 13th out of 20, so that's really good."

Some of the other local teams participating included Oak Mountain, Spain Park, Pelham and Chelsea. Jesuit High School of New Orleans placed second overall, and the Baylor School (Chattanooga) finished in third.

Earlier in January, the Warriors traveled to Rochester, Minn., to participate in one of the nation's

premier wrestling events called the Clash. This was the second year that the team has traveled north for the event, and Weltzin said it was a good experience wrestling against that caliber of competition.

"We're starting to get where we can handle that competition and that level of wrestling," he said. "Hopefully each time we go up, we get a little bit closer and win more matches."

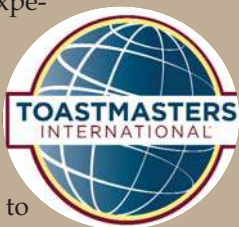
In February, the Warriors will be setting their sights on the state tournament. To get qualified, they'll head to Montgomery for the 6A Super Sectionals Feb. 7-8.

"We have to finish top eight for each weight class," said Weltzin. "If they finish top eight in that tournament, then they qualify for state. That following weekend will be the state tournament in Huntsville."

The AHSAA 6A State Tournament will be held at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville. The Warriors are the three-time defending state champions. To follow the Warriors, go to Thompsonwrestlingfamily.com.

Circle of Champions Toastmasters

We are part of the Toastmasters International group. We are an organization which helps people on their public speaking skills. Whether you are experienced at public speaking or have never done public speaking, you can still benefit from participating in our group. We are a self-paced group. Our meetings are encouraging, educational, and fun. The cost to visit is nothing, and the cost to join is relatively inexpensive. We meet every 1st and 3rd Monday (excluding holidays) at 6:30 PM. Our meeting location is Abundant Life Church, 1625 Kent Dairy Rd., Alabaster, AL.



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Alabaster

BUSINESS PROFILE

SALON 5

For residents in search of a quality hair salon with a friendly staff, there's a new local option that may be just the place. Salon 5, located on U.S. 31, offers a full range of hair and nail services in a warm and inviting location.

"We are a full-service salon, in that we do anything hair-related," said owner Tracy Daniel. "We do cuts, colors, perms, all of the hair services. Then we have two manicurists here, so we do all nail services. Anything hair and nail-related, we have got you covered."

Daniel opened Salon 5 in April of 2013 after working for many years at a salon in Pelham. When the owner there decided to retire, Daniel said it made sense to try to keep the staff together.

"Five of us worked together at Hair Pizazz in Pelham for 19 years," she said. "The lady who owned Hair Pizazz, Barbara, retired, and we



Row 1: Owner Tracy Daniel Row 2: Annette Bullard, Meghan Overton, Dawn Hill, Kathy Wright Row 3: Ameer Maddox, Mandy Barker, Paula Smith, Debbie Lovelady, Christine Bargman

didn't want to separate so I decided to open up here and the girls came with me."

Daniel said she was able to open in Alabaster right after Hair Pizazz closed, thanks to some extra long hours getting the new location ready.

"I worked around the clock," she said. "I worked at Hair Pizazz all day, came down here and worked all night. We had the contractors working in the daytime, and we'd come down and paint walls at night. We opened up and didn't miss a

beat."

According to Daniel, the decision to locate in Alabaster was a good one. Not only did most of their previous clients come with them, but they've also been able to add new clients.

"Since we've been here, amazing things have happened," said Daniel. "We've been so incredibly busy. This has been the most amazing location for us. We're just so happy to be in Alabaster."

Since opening in April, Daniel said they've added

two manicurists and three more hairstylists. They were also recognized for their work in Shelby Living's annual Best of the Best contest.

"We won Best of the Best Salon for 2013," said Daniel. "I can't even tell you how blessed we are. It's all because of this group. We have the most amazing group of people here."

In terms of its clients, Daniel said Salon 5 can handle the whole family.

"We do men, women and kids," she said.

Salon 5 is open five days a week, Tuesday through Saturday. It's located on the ground floor in the building beside the Alabaster Police Department. For more information, visit Salon 5 on Facebook by going to Facebook.com and searching "Salon 5."



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LEGISLATORS DISCUSS NEW SESSION

On Wednesday, Jan. 8, Shelby County's state legislative delegates gathered at the Greater Shelby County Chamber of Commerce in Pelham to discuss a variety of issues related to the new legislative session.

The meeting was hosted by the Chamber's Governmental Affairs Work Group, which meets once a month as part of the group's ShelbyOne initiative.

"We're committed to working together with our state legislative delegation in a collaborative partnership to address needs and opportunities here in Shelby County," said Chamber Chair Bill Keller. "The first step in that process is through events like this."

Participating legislators included state Sens. Cam Ward and Jabo Waggoner, along with state Reps. April Weaver, Jim Carns, Mary Sue McClurkin, Jim McClendon and Kurt Wallace.

After a brief introduction from each, they answered questions from the audience on topics ranging from transportation funding and family law to Congress and Common Core. One of the recurring themes of the night was the general challenge that Alabama legislators face in managing budgetary issues.

"As many of you know,

Alabama has two budgets," said Ward. "We have an education budget and a general fund budget. We're one of the few states left that I believe has that structure. In short, roughly about 80 percent of all your tax dollars goes to education, and 20 percent pays for the rest of the government."

Of the general fund budget, Ward said about 65 percent goes to pay for the state's prisons and Medicaid costs.

Carns added that Alabama also has a higher-than-average amount of earmarking.

"The national average on earmarking for all states is 26 percent. In Alabama, we earmark 88 percent of our budgets," said Carns.

Ward noted that the education budget had shown some growth recently, and he expects that to be a hot topic in Montgomery.

"There's some differing opinion of what to do with that growth," he said. "I think you'll hear that debate quite a bit in the incoming session."

Other issues likely to arise include the paying down of the debt, rising health care costs for teachers and state employees, prison overcrowding and roads.

"We have the most overcrowded prison system in the United States of America today," said Ward.

Weaver said she expects



State legislators pictured are (L to R) Jim McClendon, Kurt Wallace, Cam Ward, April Weaver and Jabo Waggoner.

to see a bill proposed to offer protections to taxpayers.

"One of the things you're going to see on the House Republican caucus agenda this year is the Alabama Taxpayer Audit Protection Act, and basically what that's going to say is there's no IRS targeting of individuals based on political beliefs," said Weaver.

State Rep. Mike Hill and state Sen. Slade Blackwell were unable to attend the meeting due to previous obligations. For more information on the new legislative session, visit the Alabama Legislature website at www.legislature.state.al.us.



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**TREE GIVEAWAY
SATURDAY,
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VETERAN'S PARK
REGISTRATION 8 AM
DISTRIBUTION 9 AM**

The City of Alabaster's Parks and Recreation Department will be hosting its annual Arbor Day celebration on Saturday, Feb. 22. As usual, the event will feature a free tree giveaway for residents. The tree giveaway will be held at the Veterans Park maintenance building, with registration set to begin at 8 a.m.

"We got 140 five-gallon trees we're going to be giving away," said Parks and Recreation Director Tim Hamm.

The annual event is organized each year to help residents beautify their yards. This year, the department will be giving away a variety of beautiful trees, including crape myrtles, magnolias and maples.

"We're also giving away a sapling with each five-

gallon tree," said Hamm.

Registration for the trees begins at 8 a.m. Numbers will be passed out to people in the order in which they arrive. The trees will be handed out beginning at 9 a.m.

A local Boy Scout troop is also expected to help with the event, carrying trees for people to their cars.

Hamm said there will be 200 saplings provided this year, so there will be some saplings available after the five-gallon trees are gone. He also said they'll be there until 12:00 noon or until all the trees are handed out.

Veterans Park is located at 7305 Highway 119. For more information, contact the Alabaster Parks and Recreation Department at 664-6840.

HELPING CHEERLEADERS

At its Jan. 15 meeting, the Alabaster Board of Education voted to help out the Thompson High School Cheerleaders with a \$2,500 transfer.

The competitive cheerleaders recently qualified for a national cheerleading competition in Orlando, Fla., and the funds will go to help them pay for the trip.

"I'm so very proud," said Alabaster City Schools Superintendent Dr. Wayne Vickers. "That is a great honor."

Prior to the donation, the squad had already raised \$7,500. At the board meeting, school board member Derek Henderson congratulated the squad and thanked them "for making Alabaster proud."

In other news, the board voted to create a newsletter for the new school system after Vickers' recommendation on the item. Vickers said the publication would

initially be published about three times a year to help keep stakeholders informed.

"We can communicate and send things out, starting out about three times a year, so everybody in this community can find out the great things that are going on in our schools," said Vickers. "I not only want our parents to know about it, I also want those whose children graduated years ago, I want them to connect with what's going on."

For the latest with the Alabaster City School district, visit them online at www.alabasterschools.org. The district is also on Twitter at [Twitter.com/alabasterk12](https://twitter.com/alabasterk12).

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HISTORICAL DRAMA FEB. 9

On Sunday, Feb. 9, Emmanuel Temple Holiness Church in Alabaster will be hosting a historical drama entitled "The Cry of a Black Slave: Struggling for the Dream." The drama, which will consist of praise dancing and improvised dialogue, will run from 5:30 p.m. to approximately 7:30 p.m.

Cofounder and director Yolanda Thomas said the show is designed to depict the struggle of African-Americans throughout history. It will feature several important historical figures, including Emmett Till, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Thomas came up with the idea last year with Kennedy Cooper of Apostolic Way of Life Church.

"We wanted to put on a drama to tell about history.

Last year we started it and our theme was 'Lord, Loose Me from These Chains,'" said Thomas. "We got together and just wanted to put on something to take us from back where we were to where we are today."

This is the second year that the church has hosted the event, and Thomas said she hopes to draw another big crowd.

"My heart's desire was to bring together our local churches to break all religion beliefs and racial barriers that tend to separate us. We are hoping this drama will capture the hearts of many as it portrays the struggle," she said.

Emmanuel Temple Holiness Church is located at 680 Highway 11 in Alabaster.

THE CRY OF A BLACK SLAVE
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2014
5:30 PM

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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 ADULT ACTIVITIES

Job Search Workshops will resume in mid April.

Free AARP Tax Help for Seniors - February through early April. Available by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the meeting room. Call or come by the Albert L. Scott Library to sign up. 664-6822.

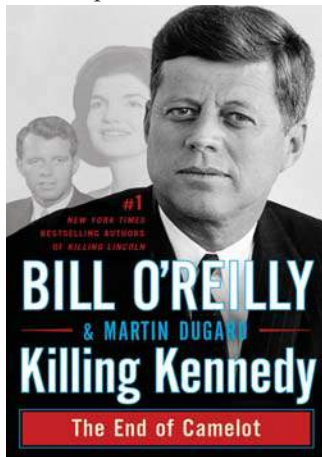
Valentine's Day Cookie Decorating Class - February 3rd at 3:30 pm - Join us for a cookie decorating class by the experts at K&J's Elegant Pastries. Call or come by the Albert L. Scott Library to sign up. 664-6822.

Crochet Crash Course - Local author and designer Diane Stone will be teaching adults the basics of crochet. Students will also learn to read and follow a beginner crochet pattern. Students will need to bring a size G or H aluminum crochet hook the night of the first class.

Monday, February 3rd at 6 pm
Monday, February 10th at 6 pm
Monday, February 17th at 6 pm
Monday, February 24th at 6 pm
Program takes place in the meeting room. Limited number of seats available. Call or come by the Albert L. Scott Library to sign up. 664-6822.

Adult Computer Classes - Due to popular demand we are now offering three computer classes a month through May. Call or come by the Albert L. Scott Library to sign up 664-6822.
Wednesday, February 5th at 10 am - Microsoft Excel 2007 Pt. 1
Wednesday, February 12th at 10 am - Microsoft Excel 2007 Pt. 2
Wednesday, February 19th at 10 am - Computer Basics

Library Book Group - Thursday, February 20th at 7 pm - Join us in our discussion of **Killing Kennedy** by Bill O'Reilly. The host of The O'Reilly Factor recounts the brutal murder of John F. Kennedy--and how gunshots on a Dallas afternoon not only killed a beloved president but also sent the nation into the cataclysmic division of the Vietnam War and its culture-changing aftermath. Program takes place in the meeting room.



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LIBRARY KIDS ACTIVITIES

February 4 Lego League 6pm-6:45pm Children who love building with blocks will love making new creations and new friends during the Lego League. Kids 6 years old and younger must be with an adult. The activity is in the meeting room.

February 7 Valentine Craft & Reader's Theater 4pm Kids in kindergarten and higher can get ready for Valentine's Day during this program featuring a craft and reader's theater fun. Sign up is required for this program that occurs in the meeting room. Children 6 years old and younger must be with an adult.

February 10 Homeschool Happening: February Reader's Theater Round up 11am-12noon

Students can take part in a reader's theater round up to mark February's themes of: Presidents Day, Black History Month, and Valentine's Day. No memorizing just the fun of learning and acting. Kids in first grade and higher can sign up. Program is in the meeting room.

February 14 American Girls Club 4pm Girls 7 years old and older can sign up to learn about Addy's world by enacting Friendship and Freedom, A Play about Addy. Come with or without a doll. Parents can be in the audience. Meets in the meeting room.

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MISS HEART OF ALABASTER CROWNS WINNERS

The second-annual Miss Heart of Alabaster pageant was held on Saturday, Jan. 11, at the Thompson High School auditorium. The event drew over 30 local participants who were eager to compete for the various division crowns.

"It went great," said organizer Joy Letson. "The first year I had 29 contestants, and this year I had 36 so it's growing."

The pageant was divided into five different age divisions, with winners awarded for each division. This year's winners received a crown and a satin embroidered "Miss Heart of Alabaster" sash.

The winners for the 2014 Miss Heart of Alabaster pageant were Jayla Forbes (Tiny Queen), Olivia Grace Kelly (Princess Queen), Jennah Alivia Brown (Pre-teen

Queen), Cydney Fields (Junior-teen Queen) and Courtney Fields (Teen queen).

Letson said she created the pageant as a fundraiser to help combat heart disease, as well as a fun event for local girls. A portion of the proceeds are donated to the American Heart Association.

"We tried to come up with a fundraiser and to do something for the girls in the community," said Letson. "So we came up with the Heart of Alabaster."

For the pageant, contestants were asked to perform a "beauty walk" for the judges, which meant they had to follow a certain pattern on the auditorium stage. Next year, Letson said she may add more elements to the event.

"Next year, I'm considering having each one introduce themselves,"

said Letson, "their name and age and where they're from, because we don't limit it to Alabaster residents. That's something I want to add next year."

Letson said she had the highest participation in the younger divisions this year, though she hopes to increase participation among the older divisions in the future.

"You always have a lot more little girls than high school," she said. "I'm hoping each year it will grow."

According to Letson, the feedback she received on the event this year was very positive.

"All the girls had a good time, so that's the big



(L to R) Jayla Forbes, Ollivia Grace Kelly, and Jennah Alivia Brown

thing," she said.

The Miss Heart of Alabaster pageant was sponsored by Glitz and Gowns by Missy, an Alabaster dress shop that specializes in pageant and prom dresses. For more information, visit the Miss Heart of Alabaster Facebook page at [Facebook.com/MissHeartOfAlabasterPageant](https://www.facebook.com/MissHeartOfAlabasterPageant).



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TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

(CON'T FROM PAGE 3)

Board member Ty Quarles said he was "thrilled" to be a part of the school system and that he was pleased with how things have been going.

"I get the question often, how are we doing?" said Quarles. "I'm very proud to tell them we're doing absolutely great. And we're getting greater by the day."

School Board member Dr. John Myrick shared Quarles' enthusiasm, calling it a "pleasure" to serve on the board.

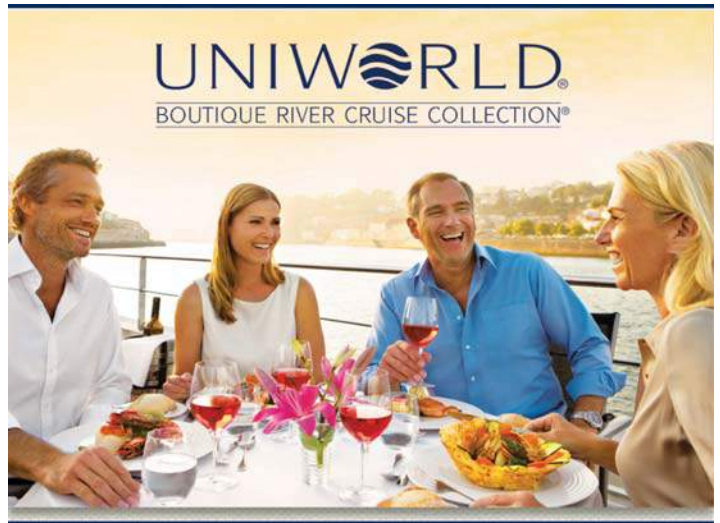
"I cannot tell you what a pleasure it is to work with all of you and be a part of this committee," said Myrick.

Others recognized during the meeting included Thompson High School volleyball player Kelsea

Bivins, who was named Shelby County Player of the Year, and Thompson Middle School Band Director Connie Hammond, who was recently recognized in School Band and Orchestra magazine.

Thompson High School junior Katelin Molan also presented two tablets to the school system after raising money through her non-profit organization, HIS Special Hands.

For more information, visit Alabaster City Schools online at Alabasterschools.org.



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ARBOR DAY TREE GIVEAWAY

140 free trees and 200 seedlings will be given away on Saturday, Feb. 22, at Veterans Park in the Maintenance Shop. Registration will begin at 8 AM. Tree distribution will begin at

ADULT SOFTBALL SIGNUP

Registration for teams (not individuals) will begin on March 3 and end on March 31 at the Depot.

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.

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

Feb. 1: Baseball Observations at the Thompson High School Baseball Field located off of Thompson Road:

- 8:30 am – Farm (Machine Pitch – age 7/8)
- 10:30 am – T-Ball (age 5); Coach Pitch (age 6); Metro (age 13/14)
- 12:30 pm – Minor (age 9/10); Major (age 11/12)

Children will need to bring cleats and glove.

Feb. 2: Softball Observations at Warrior Park located off of Thompson Road:

- 1:00 pm – 6U (age 5/6) on Field A
- 1:00 pm – 8U (age 7/8) on Field B
- 2:00 pm – 10U (age 9/10) on Field A
- 2:00 pm – 12U (age 11/12) on Field B

Feb. 10 – 15: Uniform fittings at Buck Creek Field House. Time to be announced depending on team assignments.

Feb. 23 from 1 pm – 4 pm: THS Softball Camp for ages 5-14 at THS Softball Field located at 100 Warrior Drive. \$25 for early registration/\$30 for walk-ups. \$10 extra for pitching. Contact: Michelle Holdbrooks at 205-965-8655.

Feb. 24: Fields open for practice.

SOCCER

Feb. 18 at 6 pm: Coaches Clinic at the Municipal Park on the 3 Acre Field. Feb. 20: Fields open for practice.

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TOUGH ETHICS LAWS by Rep. April Weaver



Representative April Weaver

In the 2010 special session, the Alabama Legislature made it very clear that providing an accountable and transparent government is a top priority. The body passed sweeping ethics reforms that took Alabama from having some of the weakest ethics laws in the nation to some of the strongest. From banning PAC to PAC transfers and "double dipping" to giving the Ethics Commission more investigative authority and limiting lobbyist gifts, Alabama has moved light-years ahead when it comes to government transparency.

To ensure that Alabama ethics laws remain some of the strongest in the country, it is imperative to continue

looking for ways to improve. In that vein, legislation has been proposed that bans former legislators from lobbying either house of the legislature for two years after leaving office. I strongly support passage of this bill because it is a continued, and necessary step in the right direction to eliminate this "revolving door" issue.

Alabama law currently states that a public official who resigns his or her position is prohibited from representing clients or lobbying his or her former agency, department, or legislative body for a period of two years. However, an Ethics Commission opinion issued in 2003 stated that a two-year ban on lobbying by former lawmakers applied only to the House in which they served. Legislation has been proposed this session that closes this loophole and bans former legislators from lobbying either House for two years after leaving office. Again, providing an accountable and transparent government is a top priority. I hope by the time you read this column, it is well on its way to being law.



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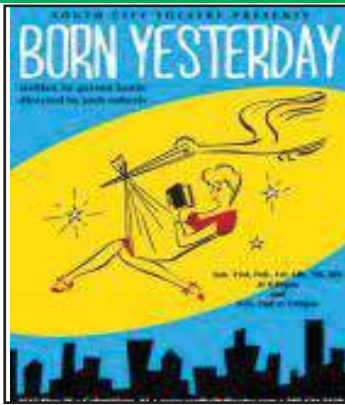
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COMEDY JAN. 31 - FEB. 8

South City Theatre presents "Born Yesterday" by Garson Kanin. Jan 31, Feb 1, Feb 6, to Feb 8, at 8 PM. Matinee Time: Feb 2, 2:00pm An uncouth, corrupt rich junk dealer, Harry Brock, brings his showgirl mistress Billie Dawn with him to Washington, D.C. When Billie's ignorance becomes a liability to Brock's business dealings, he hires a journalist, Paul Verrall, to educate his girlfriend. In the process of learning, Billie Dawn realizes how corrupt Harry is and begins interfering with his plans to bribe a Congressman into passing legislation that would allow Brock's business to make more money with hilarious results.

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 reserva-



tions, go to www.southcitytheatre.com or call the box office at (205) 621-2126.

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



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NEW JOBS COME TO ALABASTER

The city will soon have a new workforce of up to 170 jobs, according to Alabaster's director of industrial development Cam Ward. Ward said that the new distribution center for Hibbett Sports should open around February 14th in the Shelby West Corporate Park. Shelby West Corporate Park, which is owned and operated by the Shelby County Economic and Industrial Development Authority, is located adjacent to the Shelby County Airport on I-65 South.

This success story is the result of an agreement between the locally based sports retailer, Shelby County, and the City of Alabaster during the spring of 2012. Cooperation between the

city and county led to the agreement being signed in July of that year, preventing jobs from leaving the state and bringing the new workforce to Alabaster.

Hibbett will join previous success stories already located in the corporate park such as True Blue Logistics, Thompson Tractor, BTC Wholesale, and the newest member, Alabama Crown Distributors, which brought an additional 75 jobs to the city.

The new distribution center will be approximately 360,000 square feet on the 59 acre site. The expansion will allow Hibbett to expand their retail market and open additional stores in the future. Hibbett currently has stores in 26 states where it targets markets in



The new Hibbett Distribution Center in Shelby West Corporate park by the airport is expected to open around Feb. 14

small to medium-sized cities and towns. The new workforce will be comprised primarily of existing employees from the corporation's current facility in Jefferson County but may also include approximately 20 new jobs in order to man the larger facility. Hibbett received approximately \$2.2 million in state, county, and local tax abatements over a

10 year period to entice them to the Alabaster site. The Alabaster site not only allowed Hibbett to immediately expand their distribution center and support new retail stores but also affords them room for extensive growth in the future.

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FEBRUARY SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Using Smart Phones in 2014- Tuesday, February 4 from 12pm-1:30pm- With today's smart phones transforming to computers in your pocket many people are not aware of all the fun and informative things your smart phone can do for you. Allan Wilson with Wilson Computer Support will teach you how to get the most out of your smart phone. Topics that we will cover include, "How to use GPA navigation", "Setting up and checking your email on your phone", and "how to install applications safely on your phone". Bring your smart phone and your questions. Stop by and sign up at the center.

Intro to Medicine Making- Have you ever wanted to make your own Medicines or body care products? Or wondered what the difference between a salve and a tincture was? Come join Clinical Herbalist Cameron Strouss, **Wednesday, February 12th at 11:45**, for an educational/demonstration based class on what types of medicines and products you can make at home and the applications of each. We look forward to seeing you there!

AARP- Smart Driver Class- February 25 - 9am-3:30pm at the Senior Center. This is a 6 hour classroom refresher that can help the effects of aging on your driving and how you can adjust your Driving. Cost is \$15.00/AARP member and \$20.00/AARP nonmember. Bring your own lunch. Make checks payable to AARP.

Zumba Gold I- Relatively high intensity, low-impact fitness class featuring Latin and World rhythms and the same party flavor as regular Zumba. A great cardio workout that is fun!
Wednesday 1-2pm. Cost is \$2/class.

NEW Zumba Gold II - New to Zumba Gold? This is the perfect place to get started. Low intensity, low-impact dance/fitness class with an opportunity to break-down and learn basic Latin and World rhythms. Same party flavor and fun as Zumba I. **Wednesday 2:15pm-3pm. Cost is \$2/class.**

Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program- Wednesday at 10am. Space is limited. Cost \$2/class.

NEW Watercolor Class- All painting levels are welcome. Come learn how to paint with watercolor. **Wednesdays from 1-3pm.** \$25/4 classes each month and includes your paper. Must sign up.

NEW- It's a TANGLED WORLD- Feb 18, 25, March 4, 11 from 12:30-2pm. Join Jan Rogers for basic classes in creating ZEN-TANGLE© inspired pen and ink drawings. There are NO MISTAKES! Give up your fears and produce interesting new designs from your practice. This art form allows you to draw and 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 St Patrick's Day

card for a loved one. Cost is \$12/person. Space is limited.

Drumming Program- join us on February 4 at 10am. No experience necessary but the benefits are endless. The benefits of drumming: improve your mood, increase circulation, and improve focus, low impact exercise and creativity. No charge for this program.

Tour of downtown Birmingham and Lunch- a step-on guide will take us on a tour of downtown Birmingham. You will see many historical sites and enjoy lunch out in the community. We will be traveling on the 25 passenger bus. Cost is \$5 to hold your spot. Bring \$10-\$12 for lunch. Space is limited.
Upcoming Book Club- join us for our next class on Friday, February 28 at 10am. We will meet every 4th Friday to discuss the book and introduce a new book. Sign up at the senior center.

You won't want to miss all

the activities at the Senior Center:

- Timeless Treasures (singing): Mondays at 10 am
- Wii Bowling: Tuesdays at 12 pm
- Rook: Wednesdays at 9:00 am
- Arthritis Foundation Exercise: Wednesdays at 10:00 am
- Zumba Gold I (exercise): Wednesdays at 1 pm
- Zumba Gold II (exercise): Wednesdays from 2:15 pm until 3:00 pm
- Beginner/Inter Line dancing: Thursdays at 9:30 am
- Beginner Line Dancing: Thursdays at 10:30 am
- Bridge: Thursdays from 12 pm until 3 pm
- Tempo exercise: Fridays at 10 am
- Zumba Gold Toning: Fridays from 1 pm until 2 pm

If you would like more information concerning Senior programs, please contact the Alabaster Senior Center at 205-663-1307 or awalters@cityofalabaster.com

ALABASTER-PELHAM ROTARY CLUB

Meets weekly on Thursdays at noon in Suite 100, Physicians Building, Shelby Baptist Medical Center, 1000 1st Street North, Alabaster. If you would like to learn more about Rotary, please join us for lunch to see our involvement in the community and see what Rotary International is doing worldwide. For any questions or information contact us at 982-2664 or stop by on any Thursday.



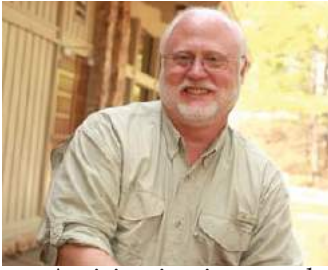
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An Operation of Anticipation by David Frings



Anticipation is a word that was used effectively in a Hunts Ketchup commercial several years ago to bring attention to a slow-flowing product. The same word can be used to describe the achievement of a goal that I set four years ago. It seemed like a simple goal that developed as I began a quest to observe as many endangered plant and animal species as possible. In my studies, I read about our native whooping cranes and how they were brought back from a decimated flock of 16 birds in 1941, to the current population numbering approximately 500 birds.

The success of the



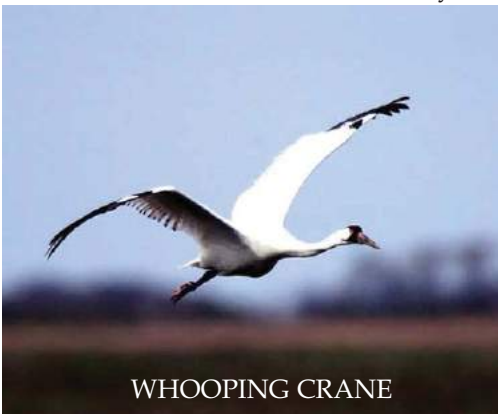
An Ultralight Aircraft Guides the Migration of the Whooping Cranes

recovery can be attributed to the protection that is now afforded to the whoopers and their critical habitat as well as a successful conservation program which includes captive breeding and release. Part of this program is called Operation Migration (see www.operationmigration.org) which is an escort services for newly fledged captive-bred whooping cranes. Operation Migration is a nonprofit organization that leads each annual graduating class of cranes 1113 miles via ultralight aircraft along the route from the Wisconsin based breeding facility to St. Marks

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WHOOPING CRANE


National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. There are 22 planned stops along the annual migration, and enthusiasts can follow the progress each day from the organization's website. This is where my antic-

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

- Feb. 3, City Council Meeting 7 pm Chamber
- Feb. 4, Water Board 7pm Chamber
Municipal Court 9 am & 2 pm Chamber
Public Safety Committee 6pm Conference
- Feb. 8, Municipal Court 9 am & 2 pm Chamber
- Feb.10, Board of Education 6:00 pm Chamber
- Feb.11, Housing & Abatement Board 5:00pm Conference
- Feb.13, Finance Committee 5:30 pm Conference
- Feb.20, Public Works Committee 5 pm Chamber
Economic Development Committee 5:30 pm Conf.
- Feb.17, City Council Meeting 7 pm Chamber
- Feb.18, Driving School, 7pm
- Feb.24, Board of Adjustments 6:30 pm Conference
Library Board 6pm ALS Library
- Feb. 25, Planning & Zoning 7 pm Conference
- Feb. 26, Municipal Court 9 am & 2 pm Chamber
Sewer Committee 6 pm Chamber

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.

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						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	

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
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621-0168
Rick Walters, Ward 4
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281-7394
Russell Bedsole, Ward 5
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663-6212

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



ARBOR DAY TREE GIVEAWAY
140 FREE TREES and 200 seedlings will be given away on Saturday, Feb. 22, at Veterans Park in the Maintenance Shop. Registration will begin at 8 AM. Tree distribution will begin at 9 AM.

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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