

THE ORIGINAL

Alabaster

NEWSLETTER

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SNOW GOES DOWN



Alabaster

A Word from the Editor & Publisher, Ted Vodde



Even though it's the March issue and we're looking ahead at the coming of Spring (whew!), we have to cast our glance backward at the "Snowmageddon" event

that paralyzed the state. It was a test of character for many. Some had to persevere and endure slow going and trying multiple times to get home and finally hitting on a winning combination to get home. Many were not so lucky. They were stuck in cars or taking shelter in any number of businesses that welcomed stranded travelers. The reaction of many was to see what they could do to help people stranded and worried...from kids having an unplanned sleep-

over at school to folks sitting in the aisles of a convenience mart to people preparing food for the stranded and making sure people get needed prescriptions.

We selected a number of stories from the Snowmageddon and have showcased them for your here starting below me and continuing on page 4.

People have already learned from the experience. Governments are looking at more extensive supplies of salt and brine, weathermen are taking no chances in predictions, schools are not risking another event by just cancelling school if a storm possibility exists.

Above all, people kept a good attitude and buoyed up their morale in the face of chaos. One

woman summed it up in a facebook entry that said, "I just peed in a coffee cup in my car, now I can check that off my bucket list!"

On another note, our Kitty of almost 20 years passed away Feb. 13th. As any pet lover knows, they become a part of the family and whatever happens, they are there sharing in it and being with you because they want to be with you. And with cats, it's definitely up to them. I put a picture of Kitty on the back page with a poem I wrote several years ago that you may enjoy.

Special thanks to the staff at Shelby Animal Hospital for their understanding and caring with Kitty in her final moments.

WINTER STORM BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE

January saw one of the most debilitating snowstorms to hit the area in many years as local traffic slowed to a standstill, leaving motorists stranded all across the Birmingham metro. But despite the stress and inconvenience caused by the storm, there was also a bright side, as it revealed the good in the many people who were willing to lend a helping hand.

Lt. Jamie Leonard Salvation Army

Lt. Jamie Leonard was returning from Birmingham, when she herself got caught in traffic. After waiting an incredible 15 hours in her car, she eventually decided to abandon the vehicle in favor of a nearby hotel, where she found hundreds of others in the same dispiriting situation. Rather than simply waiting it out in her room, however,

she decided to try to help make things better. She walked to a nearby Walmart, where she purchased the supplies necessary to cook the others dinner.

"The hotel didn't have a kitchen, so I thought of beef stew and how easy it would be to cook that for everyone that was stranded at the hotel," said Leonard.

Leonard said the situation was difficult, but she knew she was meant to be there to help.

"It was scary for them," she said. "I was scared, too. My husband had just had surgery, and I wanted to be there with him. But I was where I was supposed to be."

Will Cholewinski

When Will Cholewinski, owner of Chubb's Grub Station in Alabaster, saw

the snow begin that Tuesday, he knew it was going to be a long day. But rather than close the doors and head home, he decided to stay open and provide food and warmth to anyone that might need it.

"Anybody that needed to come in, that was cold and needed a place to warm up, I stayed open," said

Cholewinski. "We stayed open the whole time. We gave out hot chocolate. The Methodist church over there did a phenomenal job. They had a bunch of kids and a bunch of stranded folks over there."

Cholewinski said he ended up spending the

(CONT' ON PAGE 5)

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We welcome your comments, suggestions & story ideas. Call 620-5505 and e-mail tedvodde@gmail.com or tedvodde@alabasternewsletter.com

KIDS FIRST HONOR KING WITH DAY OF SERVICE

For this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Kids First Awareness Community Learning Center in Alabaster hosted a day of service to help out friends and neighbors in the area.

Kids First, which is located off Simmsville Road, is a community-oriented after-school program that emphasizes the importance of both education and social responsibility.

This was the fourth year that the center has hosted a Martin Luther King Jr. Day event, though this year's event had a slightly different emphasis than in the past.

"This year I wanted to do something a little bit different," said Executive Director Cindy Hawkins.

The idea for this year's program was to help others in the community. The day started off with volunteers providing some

much-needed maintenance for a number of homes in the area.

"The first part of the morning, I think we had about 45, maybe 50, volunteers to come in," said Hawkins.

They pressure-washed two homes and painted a third. They also added some steps to a home the day before. Hawkins said she was pleased with the number of volunteers who showed up to participate.

"It was a pretty exciting day because I didn't think as many people were going to come as did," she said. "It was just a great day."

A number of volunteers came from the University of Montevallo and Calera High School.

Following the service portion of the day, everyone gathered back at the community center to enjoy food and fellowship.

"The mayor came out around lunchtime, and she did some speaking," said

Hawkins. "She gave some encouraging words to the community. Cena Davis was also on hand, from the school system."

Martin Luther King Jr. Day has been a federal holiday since 1983. In 1994, Congress also named it a Day of Service in recognition of King's commitment to service. In a 1968 sermon called "The Drum Major Instinct," King said, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve."

Hawkins said the day was a good reminder of the importance of helping one another.

"We've got to keep



Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. addresses the crowd at the Mall in Washington for his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

blessing people that are less fortunate than us. The whole point is to help somebody that needs the help, and you start with helping your neighbors," she said.

In 2011, Kids First unveiled a new street sign commemorating King. It was the first of its kind in Shelby County. For more information on Kids First, visit them online at Kidsfirst123.com.

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ALABAMA

SNOWMAGGEDON

(CON'T FROM PAGE 2)

night at the restaurant, though he finally locked the doors around 11:30 or 12:00.

"There were people across the parking lot at the church, taking care of kids that weren't their kids, being away from their families," he said. "I just wanted to stay and try to do my part."

Bob Anderson

Local resident Bob Anderson, who heads up the Alabaster Radio Control Association, was at a dentist appointment that morning when he first realized the weather might be worse than expected.

"I got in the dentist chair, and when I looked outside, the car was covered," said Anderson.

Anderson left Pelham around 10:30 a.m. on his way back to Alabaster but didn't end up getting home till nearly 8 p.m.

"I've never seen anything like it," he said, noting that the trip usually takes less than twenty

minutes.

He was lucky though, in that he did actually make it back home. One of his colleagues from work got as far as Kingwood before realizing she wouldn't be getting much further.

"That's as far as she could make it," said Anderson. "It just happened to be right by my house, and she ended up having to spend the night with us."

Keyla Handley

For Columbiana resident Keyla Handley, her hero came in the form of her husband, who was working dispatch that day for the Columbiana Police Department.

Handley, who normally travels through Alabaster on her way home from work, was able to avoid getting stranded thanks to her husband's timely updates on road conditions.

"My husband called me while I'm sitting in Alabaster on 31, and he

tells me, don't go 26 home, you can't get over Payne Mountain. I said okay, I'll go on down 31 and hit 70. Well, he calls me back about 45 minutes later and says don't go 70, you can't get past where the dump is," recalled Handley.

Some five and a half hours later, she finally did make it back home, via Highway 25 in Calera.

"It was just a miracle that he was there that day and could give me the tips to not go which way," said Handley.

Brooklere Pharmacy

While many businesses were understandably closed during the storm, at least one local pharmacy managed to open up on Wednesday, thanks to two very dedicated employees.

"I think we probably walked about two miles," said Brooklere Pharmacist Anna Ray Wertheim.

On Tuesday, when she hadn't been able to get home, Wertheim had spent the night at Pharmacy Technician Katie Ji's house in Alabaster. The next day,

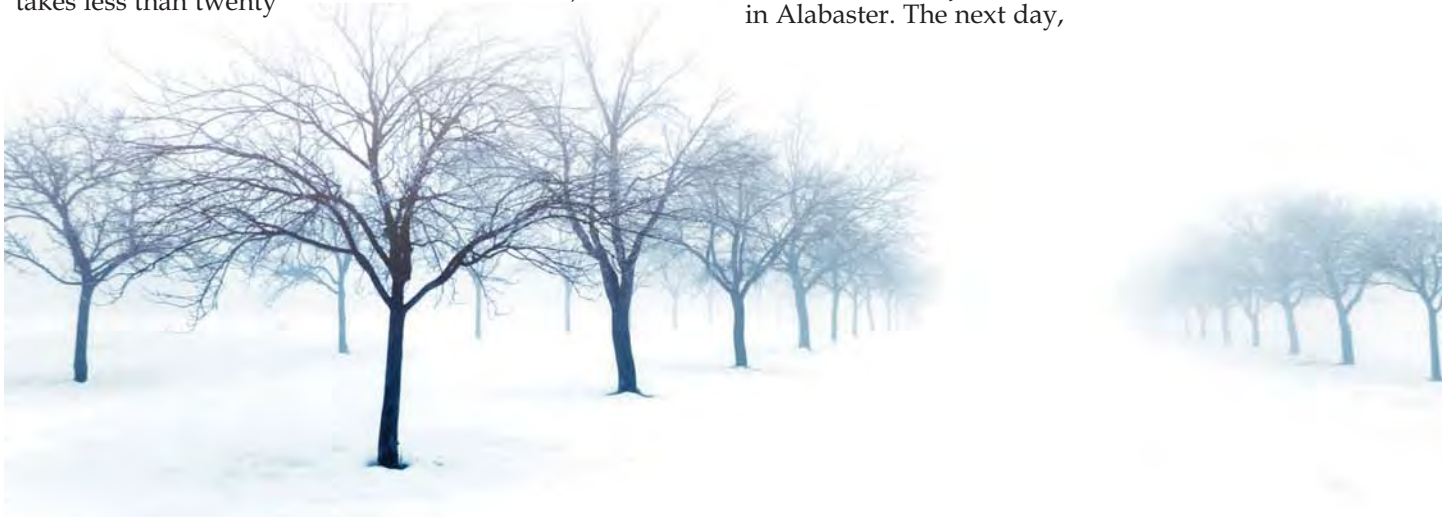
the two set out by foot to make sure their patients at Brooklere were still taken care of.

"We opened up the drive-through and put a sign on the front doors," said Wertheim. "People that had four-wheel-drives and trucks were able to come and get medications that they needed."

Turned out, customers were so thankful that one of them offered to come back and pick them up.

"What I love about this community is the camaraderie," said Wertheim, "the fact that we had patients who so appreciated us being here that they were willing to get back out in it and give us a ride home. That was very, very nice."

The Jan. 28 snowstorm is likely one that Alabama residents will never forget. But thanks to the many kind gestures that were seen across the area, some of those memories may not be so bad.



WORKING FOR OUR MILITARY by Rep. April Weaver



Representative April Weaver

The Alabama Legislature recently held a Joint Session to honor the military heroes of our state during Alabama Military Appreciation Day. As I look back over the last few years, I am pleased to see progress that has been made on military support legislation and I am proud to have supported these bills.

Alabama House of Representatives - Military Support Legislation

2012 Act 2012-168: The "Heroes for Hire" Tax Credit Act - Gives a tax credit to businesses that hire veterans that have recently returned from war and veterans who start their own businesses in Alabama.

Act 2012-303: Sets a minimum perimeter of 1000 feet, or two blocks, for any disruption of a funeral in Alabama. The law was needed because the hate group known as the "Westboro Baptist Church" commonly disrupts the funer-

al and burial ceremonies of fallen military personnel across the nation, and had done so in Alabama before the passage of this law.

Act 2012-562: Bond issue to prepare Alabama for BRAC.

2013 Act 2013-266:

\$50 million bond issue to provide for the construction, maintenance, and renovation of National Guard armories. This amendment will be included on the 2014 General Election ballot.

Act 2013-350: Requires certain Alabama licensure boards to adopt policies crediting military education, training or service towards the qualifications required to receive an Alabama license or certification, and requires each board of a state public education institution, community college or technical school to award certain educational credits to a veteran enrolled in the institution for courses that were part of the student's military training or service

Act 2013-423: Requires that active service members (including National Guard), their spouses, and their dependents, and some veterans be considered residents of Alabama for purposes of determining in-state tuition.

2014 HB62: Changes the deadline for candidates to qualify for an elected office to

no later than 76 days before a primary or general election to comply with the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. This ensures that the Secretary of State has the appropriate amount of time necessary to send absentee ballots to military personnel overseas and get them back in time to be counted. (This bill has passed both Houses and is awaiting signature by the Governor.)

SB80: The Military Land Use Planning Act encourages cities and military bases to communicate about certain land use changes surrounding bases. The bill is a recommendation of the Military Stability Commission and was proposed after findings that land use surrounding military bases played a large role in closures during the last round of BRAC. (The bill has passed both Houses and

is awaiting signature by the Governor.)

HB193: Provides deployed military members extra time to renew their vehicle registration. (The bill now goes to the Senate.)

HB329: Provides additional eligibility options for veteran's drivers licenses and creates a veteran nondriver identification card. (The bill now goes to the Senate)

HB211: Creates a special disabled veteran's hunting license free of charge. (The bill now goes to the Senate.)

As we all know, our freedom isn't free. I would like to share my appreciation with all military families of our area for the sacrifices you have made. Again, I am proud to support military support legislation and I will continue to do so as long as I serve as your State Representative. Thank you again for allowing me the privilege to serve you!

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TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION



Senator Cam Ward

Governor Bentley chose two Shelby county legislators, Senator Cam Ward (R-Alabaster) and Rep. Mike Hill (R-Columbiana) to carry his signature transparency legislation for the 2014 Regular Session of The Alabama Legislature. "This bill is needed because of the erosion of the provisions in The Open Meetings Act through

Supreme Court decisions. Senator Ward said, "transparency is the cornerstone to establishing public trust with its government, and these court rulings tear that trust to shreds."

"We are dedicated to ensuring the public's right to know, and have direct access to, the way our elected officials conduct the people's business," Ward said. "This is a step in the right direction to restoring the intent of the Open Meetings Act, and guaranteeing the constitutionality of those provisions."

Several recent court cases weakened the provision of the Alabama Open Meetings Act of 2005. The court held that legislative bodies could avoid public

meetings by forming subcommittees that deliberate the proposed matters in committee, but wait until the entire body meets again to vote on them. They also held that a citizen did not have the right to sue a commission or legislative body if they would not receive the civil fines. These rulings in essence gutted the Open Meetings Act.

"The public has a right to know not only what our commissions and legislative bodies vote on, but also how those decisions were arrived at," Hill said. "A government that does not allow citizen redress to laws is a government that



is teetering on dictatorship. We're going to fix these problems so the people of Alabama can have the confidence in their governing bodies and the decisions they make affecting their lives."

The Governor held a press conference in Montgomery this morning to announce this legislation, and that he had chosen Senator Ward and Rep. Hill to carry this legislation.

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FIRST OF THE "FOUR SISTERS" DAY TRIP BY TED VODDE

If you like to take day trips, you can't do much better than to visit what I call "The Four Sisters" in north-east Alabama.

What I refer to as "The Four Sisters" are four beautiful waterfalls in northeast Alabama:

Noccalula Falls, High Falls, Little River Falls, and DeSoto Falls.

Why sisters? Because at their full flow, the falls look like bridal veils.

They are close enough together so that you can see them all in one day. These impressive waterfalls are best seen in Winter and early Spring when water flows are at a peak. If you wait until the dead of summer, you'll find they are a trickle. This month I'm going to focus on the first two you would encounter, then next



NOCCALULA FALLS

month I'll follow up with the other two.

Also, when you go up and visit, be sure to eat at some of the great restaurants in the area to help the local economy.

First up is the most famous and that's Noccalula Falls in Gadsden. Located just 4 miles from the Interstate exit, it is an impressive Falls that you can drive right up to. The falls is named for a

Native American princess that flung herself from the Falls rather than marry a brave from another village instead of the man she loved. I lived in east Tennessee and went to the Great Smoky Mountains often and there is no waterfall there to compare to any of these.

If you like fried catfish check out Top of the River in Gadsden. Whole or filet, you can't beat it.

After Noccalula, the next exit up take a left and head for Geraldine where a few

miles past Hwy 75 on Hwy 227 is High Falls County Park. This is one of the most impressive waterfalls I have ever seen. At 330 feet wide and dropping almost 60 feet, when

it's at full flow it's breathtaking. And you can walk right up to the edge of the Falls. There is a picnic pavilion at the top of the hill where you can look down and see the full breadth of the falls. At the bottom of the hill you can see the full falls flowing into a natural bridge. There is also a converted covered bridge across Town Creek. It is also a great place for wildflowers in Springtime. Next month I'll talk about Little River Canyon and DeSoto Falls. Gotta leave room for pictures!



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CHAMBER 'KEEPING IT REAL' AT THS

Ninth-grade students at Thompson High School recently had an opportunity to see what life after school might be like thanks to a program organized by the Greater Shelby County Chamber of Commerce.

The "Keeping it Real" program, which the Chamber of Commerce launched last fall, aims to teach high school kids throughout the county the importance of financial responsibility and education.

"It's a financial literacy program," said Keyla Handley, community and workforce development manager with the Chamber of Commerce. "It goes hand-in-hand with the career prep classes that all ninth-grade students have to take now."

The two-day program

teaches students important concepts like the difference between gross and net income. It also involves a hands-on component that allows students to visit various stations where they can "pay bills" based on their randomly-assigned monthly incomes. Some of the stations include transportation, housing, clothing, groceries and childcare.

"We set up 12 booths," said Handley. "And what they do is they have to take however much they have for their monthly salary, and they have to go around and pay bills for the month."

For example, students are allowed to choose from five or six different cars, and then they have to take that amount out of their money for the month.

Handley said she was especially impressed by the Thompson students, who seemed to understand the value of furthering their education.

"That was one of the big ones. At Thompson I noticed a lot of students were going back and getting a better education," she said. "At the education table, they have a cost to get your education, but you also get to add a percentage to your monthly income. We're trying to show that, yes, you're going to have to pay for this education but you're going to be bettering yourself in the long run. I was very excited to see there was always a line at education. That was great."

The Chamber of Commerce first hosted the program in September at Cornerstone Christian

School in Columbiana. The Thompson program was held Jan. 16-17. The Chamber will continue visiting other county schools through April 2014.

According to Handley, the program is conducted by Chamber of Commerce staff and volunteers.

"Most of the people that are there are volunteers from different businesses from all over Shelby County," she said.

The Keeping it Real program is part of the Greater Shelby County Chamber of Commerce ShelbyOne initiative, which aims to help better Shelby County's workforce. For more information, visit the Chamber of Commerce online at www.shelbychamber.org.



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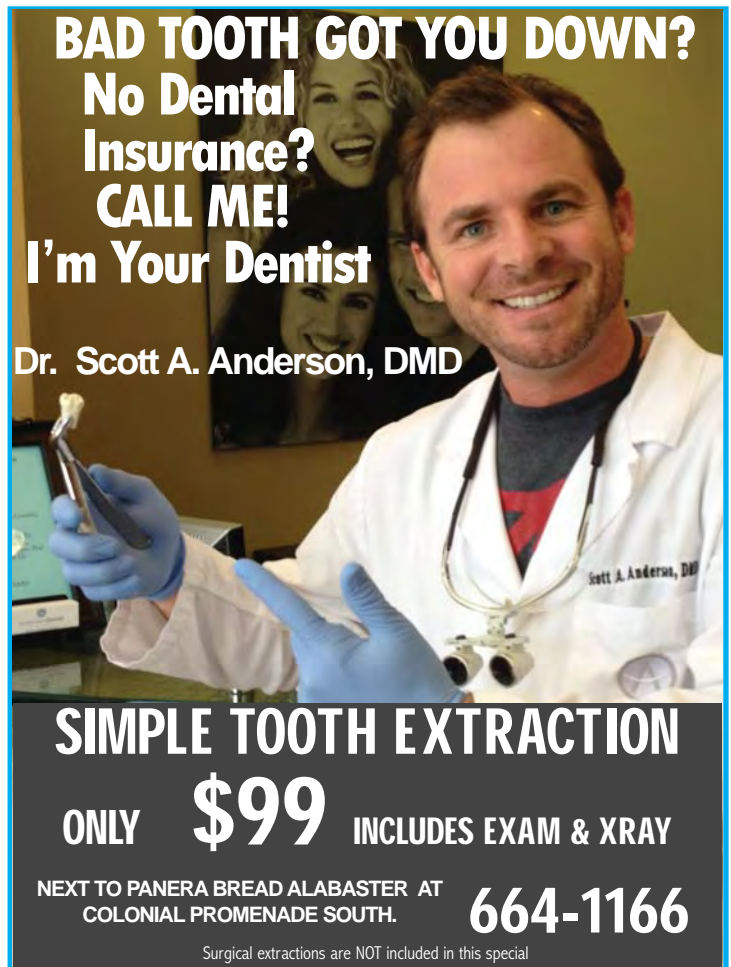
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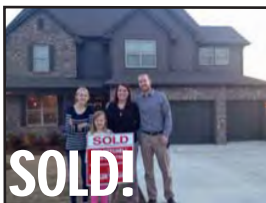
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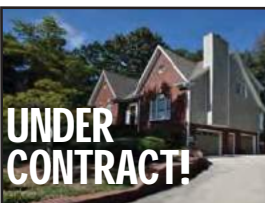
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Alabaster BUSINESS PROFILE

CHUBB'S GRUB STATION

For folks who love good, quality, American-style food, there's a new restaurant in Alabaster that is definitely worth a visit. Chubb's Grub Station, located next to the Hallmark store in Southbrook Village, offers customers a variety of scrumptious options, all cooked fresh to order.

"I won't serve you something frozen," said owner Will Cholewinski. "I won't serve you something out of a can."

The philosophy of fresh



MARK BURGER



SHRIMP PO BOY

food and ample portions has already served him well as word-of-mouth has started to spread about the eatery. It has a 96 percent rating on Urbanspoon and was recently featured on ABC 33/40. The restaurant also recently hit 1,000 "Likes" on Facebook.

"It's been a blessing," said Cholewinski. "We opened the doors doing the amount of business I was hoping we'd do three months into it."

Cholewinski opened the restaurant in October of 2013, after renting the kitchen at Zydeco in Birmingham for over a year. Prior to that, he was the general manager at Full Moon Bar-B-Que in Alabaster for over six years. According to Cholewinski, the food business is something he's been interested in literally since he was just a kid.

"I got an Easy-Bake Oven when I was seven, and I started selling Easy-Bake



The two people pictured with owner Will Cholewinski (center, in the Pirates cap) are Chris Scarpulla and Karin Conlon.

Oven cakes and paying the boys after they got done laughing at me to deliver my cakes around the neighborhood," he said. "It just went from there."

His interest in food does not stop with just the restaurant however. Cholewinski also has an interest in making sure that everyone has an opportunity to eat. At Chubb's, people can donate nonperishable foods in a donation bin by the counter. The donations are given weekly to Manna Charities, an Alabaster program that helps feed hungry families in the area.

"I want to get people back to taking care of people," he said. "Any time that you come in, if you bring two nonperishable food

items, you get a free drink." Chubb's is also unique in that there's no television in the dining area. Cholewinski said that helps foster conversation among the diners. "The whole thing is for people to come here and have a conversation and exchange ideas and be a family," he said.

If things continue to go well for the restaurant, Cholewinski said he hopes to open another location in Chelsea sometime in 2015. For more information, visit Chubb's Grub Station online at www.chubbsgrub.com. Or better yet, stop by and enjoy one of their many great-tasting burgers or sandwiches.



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THE STUDENTS SIGN LETTERS OF INTENT

Thompson High School had five student-athletes sign letters of intent this year on National Signing Day. The five students included track athletes Michael Johnson (University of Montevallo), Jaalen Jones (University of Miami) and Erika Kulp (Troy University), as well as football players Eric Reeves (Faulkner University) and Jake Allen (Miles College).

A signing ceremony was held at the school for the athletes as they took an important step towards pursuing their college educations. Coach Mike Montgomery called it a great day in school history, having that many students being able to participate in a signing-day event.

During the ceremony, Johnson expressed his gratitude to those who supported him throughout his high school career.

"When I first started, I really didn't know if I'd be able to run in college or not," said Johnson. "I thank you all so very much for helping make this possible."

Jones, whom Montgomery called humble and dedicated, also thanked his teammates and his family.

"I thank everybody for coming out today and supporting me," said Jones. "Thank you for everything."

Montgomery called Kulp one of the toughest athletes he's had the opportunity to coach. She said she was especially honored to be signing with a Division I school.

Reeves expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to be able to continue his football career in college.

"I would like to thank all the coaches and every-



L to R - Jake Allen, Football - Miles College; Eric Reeves, Football - Faulkner University; Michael Johnson, Track - University of Montevallo; Jaalen Jones, Track - University of Miami; Erica Kulp, Track - Troy University.

body that supported me," said Reeves. "I'm truly blessed."

According to Montgomery, Allen is expected to be a long snapper for the Miles football team.

"I want to thank God for giving me the opportunity to be in this situation," said

Allen.

Montgomery closed the ceremony by praising the example that the five signees have set for others.

"These young people have shown that they are committed to success and being the best at their craft," said Montgomery.

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CITY NAMED IN "10 BEST"

The City of Alabaster found itself on another "best of" list recently when it landed on the Movoto blog's "10 Best Places in Alabama."

The Movoto blog, which highlights the "Lighter Side of Real Estate," named Alabaster the tenth best place in the state of Alabama.

Among the reasons it cited were the low student-to-teacher ratios in the schools, low unemployment rate and high median household income.

The other cities to make the list included Albertville, Mountain Brook, Chelsea, Enterprise, Calera, Florence, Pelham, Madison, and at No. 1, Auburn.

According to the post, the list was compiled using seven different criteria, which included amenities, quality of life (cost of living, median home price,

median rent, median household income and teacher per student ratio), crime, tax rates, unemployment, commute times and weather. Also, the survey only looked at cities with populations greater than 5,000. That resulted in a total of 102 locations in all.

According to the post, Alabaster "scored well across the board, but particularly aced it in education, with a student to teacher ratio of just 13:1."

Movoto Real Estate is an online real estate brokerage. Its blog is known for its unique city-based research and its fun, quirky style.

To view the blog post, including a shot of downtown Alabaster, go to www.movoto.com/blog/to-p-ten/best-places-in-alabama.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL CHAMPS



On Saturday, Feb. 8, the Thompson High School Girls Basketball team won the Class 6A, Area 7 title with a 41-34 win over Wetumpka High School.

The Lady Warriors jumped out to an early lead with an impressive defensive performance in the first half. They led 11 to 3 after just one quarter and 21 to 8 at halftime.

Playing at home, the Lady Indians narrowed the gap to just four points at the end of the third quarter, however, and briefly took the lead during the fourth. But Thompson finished strong, as they were able to pull away down the stretch to secure the Area 7 championship.

With the tournament win, Thompson advanced to

play Oak Mountain in the sub-regional round of the state tournament. That contest was scheduled for Feb. 13 at Thompson High School in Alabaster.

In the first round of the area tournament on Thursday, Feb. 6, the Lady Warriors defeated Stanhope-Elmore 68-49.

The Thompson High School Boys Basketball team also advanced to sub-regional play, as they made it to the area final with a 63-54 come-from-behind victory over Prattville. In the championship game on Feb. 10, the Warriors lost to a strong Wetumpka team 67-42. The Thompson Boys were scheduled to play Area 8 winner Spain Park on Feb. 14.

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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 Mtg. Tues.
March 25 at 6pm

LIBRARY ADULT ACTIVITIES

Job Search Workshops will resume in mid April.

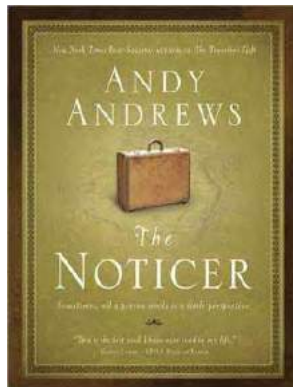
Free AARP Tax Help for Seniors - February through early April. Available by appointment on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the meeting room. Call or come by the Albert L. Scott Library to sign up. 664-6822.

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, March 5th at 10 am - Basic Internet & Email
Wednesday, March 12th at 10 am - Microsoft Word 2007 Pt. 1
Wednesday, March 19th at 10 am - Microsoft Word 2007 Pt. 2

Downton Abbey Tea & Trivia - March 10th at 6 pm - Think you know all there is to know about Downton Abbey? Come test your knowledge and maybe win a prize! Enjoy delicious snacks, teas, and see if you have what it takes to win! Registration is required. Call or come by the Albert L. Scott Library to sign up. 664-6822.

Cake & Culture - Sunday, March 16th at 2 pm - Have you tried traditional composting before, and it didn't work? How would you like to be able to compost all of your kitchen scraps, and not have to add browns and greens or turn anything and still have soil in four weeks? Well it is possible! Join Betty Elder to learn this new way of composting.

Library Book Group - Thursday, March 20th at 7 pm - Join us in our discussion of *The Noticer* by Andy Andrews. Explains the perspective of looking at hardships and situations from different, positive viewpoints, using the fictional characters of an Alabama town and a mysterious drifter to present the perspective. Program takes place in the meeting room.



Library Board Meeting - Tuesday, March 25th at 6 pm

Friends Spring Book Sale April 25-27

The Friends of the Albert L. Scott Library will hold its Spring Book Sale April 25-27 at the library. **Friday night, April 25, is a members-only preview sale from 5-7 p.m. Memberships will be available for as little as \$10.** Saturday's hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., while Sunday's hours are 1-3 p.m. Sunday will be "Fill-A-Bag Day," with customers able to fill a brown paper bag with books for only \$5. Patrons may donate books and DVDs directly to the library by bringing them to the front desk. These donations are tax-deductible. "The Spring Book Sale is a major event in our fundraising efforts to support the library," said Stephanie Billings, president of the Friends of the Library. "We look forward to seeing all of our supporters there."

LIBRARY KIDS ACTIVITIES

March 4 Lego League 6pm-6:45pm. Kids of all ages who love creating colorful constructions will love making new buildings and buddies during this program. Youngsters 6 years old and younger must be with an adult. The activity is in the meeting room.

March 10 Homeschool Happening: Absolutely Alabaster History 11:00am-12:00 noon. We'll have a visit from Mr. Bobby Joe Seales of the Shelby County Historical Society. He'll give a multi-media presentation on Alabaster's history! Programs are for students in 1st grade & higher. Children under 7 years old must be with an adult. Please sign up. Program is in the meeting room.

March 14 American Girls Club Talent Show 4pm Girls who are 7 years old and older can sign up to learn about Isabelle, the new American Girl of the Year 2014. She's a dancer who celebrates creativity and talents. During this gathering we invite girls to show off what they can do at a talent show. Girls performing need to prepare to go no longer than 2 minutes. Come show your talent: singing, dancing, playing an instrument; show a few photos or art work, tell a few jokes. Girls can also just be in the audience. Come with or without a doll. Parents can be in the audience; any siblings in the audience must be with an adult. Program is in the meeting room.

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ARCA MEMBERS STAYING BUSY - CONTEST APR. 26-27

Members of the Alabaster Radio Control Association (ARCA) are staying busy these days despite the cold winter weather. In February, they planned to partner with Thompson Intermediate School to help teach kids about aviation, and in April, they're planning to host a pattern contest at Limestone Park.

According to club member Leslie Harrison, the group's educational program will be held at Thompson Intermediate School on Feb. 24, 25, and 27. He said they've conducted programs for several years at different schools in the past. This year, they'll be working with the gifted students at TIS.

"The teachers are going to be doing an aviation unit, and then we'll go in on those three days," said Harrison.

ARCA members will be

setting up their model aircraft in the library, where the students will get a chance to check them out firsthand.

"Then after that, they'll be building rubber-band airplanes and we'll go out on the football field or somewhere and let them fly their rubber-band airplanes," said Harrison. "Then if we have time, a few of us that have electric planes will do a flying demonstration for them."

The SPA Pattern Contest will take place April 26-27. The event will be held at the club's flying field at Limestone Park in Alabaster. Pattern flying is when RC pilots maneuver their planes through a pre-determined set of movements in the sky.

"There are set patterns that they have to fly. One might be like a circle or a loop. There may be a roll," said Harrison.

A group of judges will judge the participants according to how well they execute the set maneuver

and then assign the participant a score. Harrison said participants will be divided according to skill level, based on whether they're a novice or more of an expert.

The SPA is the Senior Pattern Association, which was founded in 1991 by an RC enthusiast named Mickey Walker. According to the group's website (www.seniorpattern.com), it was created to bring back the fun and simplicity of



The ARCA will fly radio controlled airplanes like this one at Limestone Park at the SPA Pattern Contest on April 26th and 27th.

flying vintage aircraft from the '70s. A list of SPA-approved planes is included on their website, along with a 2014 contest calendar.

For anyone interested in attending the pattern contest, the flying field is located at Limestone Park in Alabaster. Limestone Park is just south of Saginaw Pipe off U.S. 31. The airstrip is located in the back, just beyond the pond.

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Student of Year Nominations

The Greater Shelby County Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for its 2014 Student of the Year and Educator of the Year awards. Nominees will be chosen and submitted by school principals from the nominees' respective schools in Shelby County. Nominations are due by Friday, March 7.

Two different students will be chosen for the Student of the Year award, one from the college track and one from the career track. The Educator of the Year award will recognize both an elementary school teacher and a secondary school teacher.

According to Keyla Handley, community and workforce development manager with the Chamber of Commerce, all of the nominees will be recognized at an awards lunch-

eon on Wednesday, April 30.

"Anyone who is nominated will be recognized at our April luncheon. We will also announce our recipients at that time as well," said Handley.

According to Student of the Year nomination form, the award is meant to recognize excellence in the classroom. Nominees must be seniors attending either a public or private high school located in Shelby County. They should also be active in extracurricular activities.

According to Handley, all four of the award winners will receive a \$750 cash stipend.

To learn more or to view the nomination forms, visit the Greater Shelby County Chamber of Commerce online at www.shelbychamber.org.

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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

YOUTH SOCCER

Practices for Spring Soccer began in late February. Games will begin at Municipal Park on March 15. Picture Day is scheduled for March 16.

ADULT SOFTBALL SIGNUP

Registration for teams (not individuals) will begin on March 3 at 8:00 am and end on March 31 at 5:00 pm at the Depot. Fee: \$280.00. No registration form accepted without payment in full. Five leagues will be offered: Open Coed, Coed Church, Open Rec., Open Competitive, and Men's Church. Teams may begin practicing once their entry fee has been paid. Leagues will begin play in May. For more information, please contact Morgan Lawley at 664-6840 or mnlawley@cityofalabaster.com

Youth Baseball/Girl's Softball

Practice began for Spring Baseball and Girl's Softball on Feb. 24. Games will begin on March 31. Opening Day/Picture Day is scheduled for April 5 at Veterans Park.

START SMART BASEBALL

March 3 - 8:00 am: Registration will begin for Start Smart Baseball at the Depot. Registration will close out once 20 children have registered, or at 5:00 pm on March 14, whichever occurs first. The fee is \$85 (\$95 for non-residents). The program is designed for children ages 3 and 4 as of April 1, 2014. It is a six week program with emphasis on fundamentals. It begins with a parent meeting on March 25 at 6:00 pm. The six week sessions will be held on Tuesdays at 6:00 pm beginning April 1 and ending May 6. There will be a game and pizza/cupcake party on May 10 at 10:00 am. Registration must be done in person at the Parks and Recreation office. Birth Certificate copies are required for new participants.

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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"RUN 4 MIKE 5K" APRIL 12 AT VETERANS PARK

Local runners have another date to add to their calendars this spring as the "Run 4 Mike 5K" returns to Veterans Park in Alabaster.

The second-annual event, which raises funds for the Mike L. Jezdimir Transverse Myelitis Foundation, will be held on Saturday, April 12. The day is scheduled to begin at 6 a.m. with the 5K race set to begin at 7 a.m. The event also features a one-mile Fun Run for those who want to participate but might not be up for the full 5K.

The event was created last year to help raise awareness about the rare spinal cord disease transverse myelitis. Funds raised from the event will go to support research at UAB for non-traumatic spinal cord diseases, like transverse myelitis and multiple sclerosis.

The event is organized by the Mike L. Jezdimir Transverse Myelitis Foundation, which is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting awareness and raising money for transverse myelitis research.

According to the foundation website, Jezdimir contracted transverse myelitis in 1967, when he was just 17 years old. Despite initially being paralyzed from the neck down, Jezdimir has been able to successfully fight the disease and live a remarkably full life.

To register for the event, go to Active.com and search "Run 4 Mike." Registration forms are also available online at the foundation website ([www.mikestransverse-](http://www.mikestransversemyelitis.com)

[myelitis.com](http://www.mikestransversemyelitis.com)). Participants can print out the form and mail it, along with their payment, to Mike L. Jezdimir TM Foundation, 239 Grande View Parkway, Maylene, AL 35114. Checks should be made payable to Mike L. Jezdimir TM Foundation.

Race divisions for the 5K are 0-12, 13-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+ and overall. The cost for the 5K is \$30 for adults and \$15 for those 12 and under. T-shirts will be given to participants, though availability may be limited for same-day registrants. To participate in the Fun Run, the cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under.

According to the Active.com registration page, 100 percent of the profits from the event will be donated to UAB for research. From the registration page: "We are dedicated to finding a cure and prevention for this rare spinal cord disease. We feel confident that by working with the scientists and researchers at UAB that one day we will be free from a disease that is so traumatic on patients and families."

For more information, visit the Mike L. Jezdimir Transverse Myelitis Foundation online at www.mikestransversemyelitis.com. The foundation can also be found on Facebook at Facebook.com/mljtransversemyelitisfoundation.



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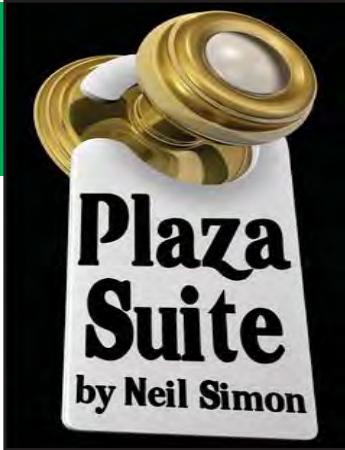
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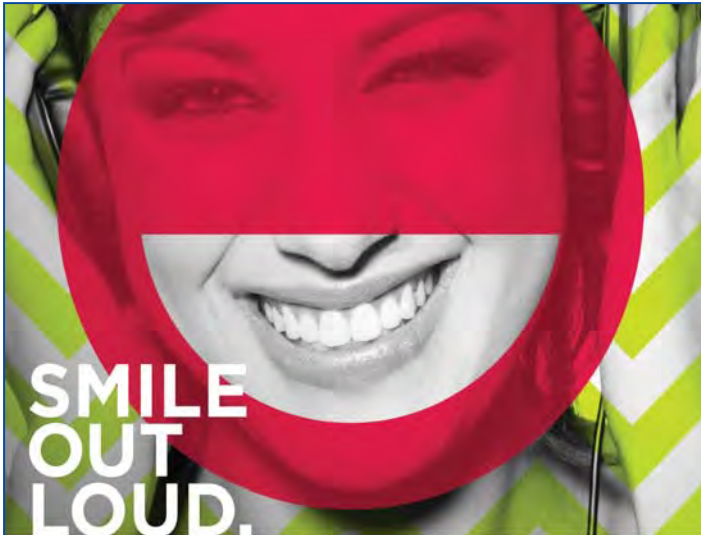
CLASSIC COMEDY APR. 4 - 12

South City Theatre presents Neil Simon's "Plaza Suite" April 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 @ 8 p.m. and April 6 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for general admission or \$12 for senior/students. Reservations are strongly recommended. Call 205-621-2128. Michael Bridges directs. Hilarity abounds in this portrait of three couples successively occupying a suite at the Plaza. A suburban couple take the suite while their house is being painted and it turns out to be the one in which they honeymooned 23 (or was it 24?) years before and was yesterday's anniversary, or is it today? This wry tale of marriage in tatters is followed by the exploits of a Hollywood producer who, after three marriages, is looking for fresh fields. He calls a childhood sweetheart, now a suburban housewife, for a little sexual diversion. Over the years she has idolized him from afar and is now more than the match he bargained for. The last couple is a mother and father fighting about the best



way to get their daughter out of the bathroom and down to the ballroom where guests await her or as Mother yells, "I want you to come out of that bathroom and get married!" For more information or to make reservations, go to www.southcitytheatre.com or call the box office at (205) 621-2128.

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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THOMPSON TO JOIN NEW CLASS 7A

At its winter meeting in January, the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) Central Board of Control approved a new seven-class system for the state's athletic programs. The new system is set to begin with the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years.

Though reclassification is done every two years, this is the first time the AHSAA has expanded the number of classes since 1984.

In an AHSAA press release, Central Board President Lamar Brooks said the new system will allow more students to experience championship play.

"The seven-classification system will allow

more student-athletes to participate in championship events and more will experience first-hand what it means to play in some of the best venues in our state," said Brooks. "With the addition of an extra championship game, revenues should increase which will mean much-needed additional money for all schools through the AHSAA revenue sharing program."

The new Class 7A will include the state's 32 largest high schools, which includes Alabaster's Thompson High School. The class will be divided further into four regions. Thompson will be in Region 3, along with Hewitt-Trussville, Hoover, Mountain Brook, Oak Mountain, Spain Park,

Tuscaloosa County and Vestavia Hills. Pelham High School incidentally will remain in Class 6A, while Calera will move to Class 5A.

AHSAA Executive Director Steve Savarese echoed Brooks in saying the new system would benefit the state's student-athletes. One of the benefits cited is that the new system will allow the AHSAA to group schools more closely according to enrollment.

"It also will allow more schools to make the state playoffs and will crown more state champions than at any other time in the history of our organization," said Savarese.

According to the AHSAA, Alabama schools were grouped into four classes from 1964 to 1983. Prior to that, they were

grouped into just two classes from 1947 to 1964 and only one before 1947.

At its winter meeting, the board also voted to allow high school football teams 11 weeks to play 10 games. The schedule will allow for a non-region game to be played on the week of Aug. 21, though some schools may still elect to hold a traditional, non-counting jamboree. The move is intended to give schools more flexibility in scheduling non-region games.

For more information, visit the AHSAA online at www.ahsaa.com.




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MARCH SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Capturing Memorable Images with Your Digital Camera- Tuesday, April 22 and 29th from 12-3pm (Two 3 hour sessions). So you've gotten that new digital camera...NOW WHAT? This class is designed to introduce the student to basic concepts in photography and digital camera operations including: image capture, image transfer, image processing and image sharing. Whether you've got a simple "point and shoot" digital camera or a more complex digital SLR, you can gain skill and confidence in your ability to capture memorable images. Bring your camera and your user's manual. Cost is \$8/person. Space is limited. Sign up begins March 3.

Gardening- join us on the 3rd Tuesday of each month for gardening class. This year we will be learning about composting; aquaponics; hydroponics; how to design planted pots, herbs, and how to incorporate them into your garden; canning, freezing, and how to properly store food; and much more. Cost is \$5/person/class. Stop by the Senior Center for more information.

Paper Craft Class- Join us for an ongoing class to learn the basics of paper crafting. Whether you want to make your own hand-made cards, or create beautiful scrapbooks to preserve family memories, this class is for you. In each class, you will make examples of 1-2 new techniques which can be used to make your own personalized creations during the class. Join us for fun and creativity as well as discovering your hidden talents. This class is usually

taught the second Monday of the month from 12-3 pm. Cost: \$5/class.

NEW Head to Toe Fitness Class- Mondays from 1-2pm. Build muscular strength, increase your cardiovascular endurance, and improve your balance, flexibility and range of motion as you have fun and move to the music! Do all this seated or standing.....it's your choice! This class will incorporate the use of hand weights, resistance tubing, balls, etc. into an enjoyable exercise class that will help you manage your activities of everyday living with ease. So join us as we strengthen our body, mind and spirit, and support each other in the pursuit to make everyday a healthier day! \$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. Wednesday 2:15pm-3pm. \$2/class.

Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program- Wednesdays at 10am. Space is limited. \$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.

Drumming Program- join us on March 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. **Paul Bryant Museum and Dreamland BBQ in Tuscaloosa- Thursday, March 6.** We will take a self-guided tour of the Paul Bryant Museum in Tuscaloosa. We will eat lunch at Dreamland BBQ. We will be traveling on the 25 passenger bus. Cost is \$1 to hold your spot. Bring \$1.00 for the tour and \$12-\$15 for lunch. Space is limited.

Do you like to shop? On Thursday, March 20 we will visit a few thrift and consignment shops in Hoover. This will be a fun, laid back day. We will enjoy lunch at a Japanese restaurant on Hwy 150. Cost is \$1 to hold your spot. Bring money for lunch. Space is limited.

Upcoming Book Club- join us on for our next class on Friday, March 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
- Head to Toe Fitness: Mondays from 1:00 pm until 2:00 pm
- 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 for beginners): 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

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March of the Salamander by David Frings



It was a cold February night barely ten degrees above the freezing mark. The overcast day now gave way to a steady cold rain as the sun set beneath the horizon, and all the while an army of invaders prepared to advance. As the night progressed and the rain continued, the invaders emerged from their subterranean layers and made their way down the slope on their bellies through a combination of leaves, mud, and water. Those in the lead positions poised at the water's edge as if to wait for the others following in their footsteps. Now you are probably thinking that the narrative above is the beginning of a

good old fashioned World War II movie but the invaders that I am referring to are not human. They are spotted salamanders which belong to a group of amphibians referred to as mole salamanders. Most people do not realize that many species of amphibians breed during the cooler months of the year in the fall and winter. The spotted salamander, *Ambystoma maculatum*, spends most of its life in burrows below the ground where they feed on worms and a variety of crustaceans. In Alabama, armies of spotted salamanders, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, emerge from their subterranean homes to seek out areas to breed and lay their eggs. They look for seasonal bodies of water called vernal pools in which to breed and deposit their eggs. Vernal pools are important ecosystems for amphibians because being seasonal means that

these reservoirs do not support populations of fish that would eat amphibian eggs.

I have been monitoring and studying one of these areas for the past five years in Oak Mountain State Park. The night of the march to the pool is really only fit for salamanders since temperatures are in the low forties and the rainfall is steady. The salamanders gather in groups with multiple males battling for the favor of the females. Each female lays a rather large mass of eggs, about the size of a baseball, which she attaches to a submerged branch. After the eggs are laid, the adults make their way back to the subterranean labyrinth until next year. Eggs usually begin to hatch in late March or April. The young are in a larva stage with gills which ties them to the pool which typically begins to slowly evaporate. If the juveniles are lucky enough to have water during their



Salamander

development period, they will emerge as young fully formed salamanders in late May or early June. The juveniles then migrate up the slope to join their parents in the world beneath the forest floor until it is their time to join the March of the Salamander.

If this story spurs your interest in nature, please contact me at dmfrings@samford.edu for a list of nature seminars we will offer in 2014 at the Oak Mountain Interpretive Center.

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

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

MARCH

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| 30 | 31 | | | | | |



Kitty and the Turkey By Ted Vodde

Kitty by the window
Kitty on the ledge
Kitty better watch out
Kitty's on the edge.

Turkey on the counter
A plump and juicy treat
Kitty's kinda hungry
Kitty wants to eat.

Kitty sees the turkey
Kitty knows it's good
Kitty wants to eat some
If only Kitty could.

Kitty's got ideas
Kitty's in a groove
When nobody's lookin'
Kitty makes her move.

Up onto the counter
She leaps with all her might
Creepin' close to turkey
Kitty takes a bite.

Forbidden fruit's the sweetest
And the treat tastes really fine
Another bite and quickly down
Kitty's running out of time.

Mommy serves the turkey
Nothing ever shows
Kitty's had a sample
And only Kitty knows.

Kitty's on the couch now
Curled in Papa's cap
Kitty's had her luncheon
And now it's time to nap.

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Tommy Ryals, Ward 7
ryals@cityofalabaster.com
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George Henry,
City Manager and City Clerk
ghenry@cityofalabaster.com
664-6800

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• Personnel Dept 664-6838 • Code Enforcement 664-5907 • Revenue/Business License Dept 664-6844
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