

Inside The Tribune:
Local – pages A-2 - A-5
Calendar – page A-5
Opinion – page A-6
Sports – B section

**Clay reaps record
tax revenues,
page A-4**

**Bright memories
of Blue Light
Specials, page A-6**

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The Trussville Tribune

Thursday, September 12, 2013 Your weekly news source for Trussville, Clay and Pinson www.trussvilletribune.com

Fry-Down is a simple idea that creates big ripple

by Scott Buttram

Publisher

Cahaba River Society Executive Director Beth Stewart had a simple idea: Establish a fundraising event that brought people closer to the river to see firsthand the resource her organization is committed to preserving.

Little did she know that the decision to plant the Cahaba River Fry-Down at Trussville Springs would result in such a popular metro-wide event within just a few years. In 2012, the third year, the event drew more than 600 people. The fourth annual Fry-Down will take place on Sunday, Sept.



photo courtesy of the Cahaba Fry-Down organizers

Seen at the 2012 Fry-Down: Rick Journey, Fry-Down MC, enjoys George Sarris' cooking demo and stories.

29, from noon until 4 p.m.

The Cahaba has long been a pride for Clay, where the river begins, and for Trussville, which has built multiple parks around Alabama's longest remaining stretch

of free-flowing river as it passes through town. And the history between Trussville and CRS is an extensive one, so maybe choosing Trussville was as natural as the river itself.

"CRS was very pleased to be a resource to the Hewitt-Trussville High School design team to help think through how a big project straddling the river could be built in a way that not only helped protect the Cahaba, but also engaged the students for education," Stewart said. "We met several times with the engineers and architects to explore ways to preserve as much forest along the river as possible, and ways to get rain to soak into the ground instead of running off to cause problems in the river, such as erosion and pollution. The result-

see CAHABA page A-7

Bob Smith Construction awarded bid for Green Drive repair

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Trussville City Council awarded a bid Tuesday night to Bob Smith Construction to perform repairs on Green Drive. Bob Smith Construction, which is based in Trussville, had submitted the low bid of \$379,000.

Seven companies made bids on the project.

"We had several very competitive bids," Councilman Buddy Choat said. "We were expecting this bid to come in at around half a million dollars."

The road has been closed since last May when storm water washed away soil beneath the road next to the culverts.



file photo by Ron Burkett

Green Drive in Trussville remains closed.

Construction is expected to begin within two weeks. Trussville Streets and Sanitation Superintendent Wayne Sullivan said last month that replacing and repairing the culverts would take about two months. Mayor Gene Melton estimated that the work will be completed by late October or mid-November.

Bob Smith Construction had a base bid of \$379,000 with a deduct of \$30,000. The next-closest bid was Veterans Landscaping, which had a base bid of

see GREEN DRIVE page A-3

Pinson votes to buy Rock School property

by Scott Buttram

Publisher

The Pinson City Council voted Friday to purchase the Rock School currently owned by Solid Rock Church for \$975,000. The 4-2 vote came in a continuation of Thursday's council meeting and followed an executive session to discuss the purchase of the property. Councilman Robbie Roberts and Council-



photo courtesy of Solid Rock Church

Solid Rock Church, shown in 2009

woman Joy McCain voted against the agreement. The purchase is con-

tingent on Solid Rock Church obtaining the former New Covenant

Fellowship building on Pinson Valley Parkway.

The new purchase price is \$100,000 more than the original agreed upon price of \$875,000. However, the new agreement allows for limited use of the fields behind the Pinson Valley Parkway property for PVYA, the youth sports organization. Specifics on that use were not outlined at the meeting.

see PINSON page A-3

Pinson park work could begin by February

by Lee Weyhrich

Staff Writer

Construction on Phase One of the Pinson park project could begin as soon as February.

Landscape architect Jane Ross of engineering and architecture firm Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood presented updated plans for the park at the Pinson City Council

meeting last Thursday. Since Ross last brought plans for the park before the council, many changes have been made to the design. The new plans are based on findings from a topographical survey done on the property, which is off Center Point Road between Sweeney Hollow Road and Glen Brook Road. They incorporate many existing natural



photo by Lee Weyhrich

Updated plans for the Pinson park incorporate many existing natural features.

features and place the main building on the top of the hill overlooking both the playground and the amphitheater.

Besides the playground and amphitheater, Phase One includes a walking trail, an event center, a maintenance building and a nine-hole disc golf course with three practice holes. At an estimated cost of \$1.2 million, Ross expects the

project to be completed in 10 to 12 months, and no later than February 2015.

The amphitheater will be made up of terraced grassy areas, capable of seating 230 people. The covered stage will be 36 feet by 40 feet with a backing wall.

The event center will include a party room with garage-style doors that open onto a covered

patio, restrooms with shower facilities, a ranger's office with a view of most of the park's major features, storage, and a pump room and ticket booth for a future splash pad.

The splash pad, with separate sections for children ages 2-5 and for children 5-12, has been added as an alternate in

see PARK page A-3

Trussville contracts with Advanced Disposal for trash, recycling

by Scott Buttram

Publisher

The Trussville City Council voted Tuesday night to can Waste Management, the city's current trash pickup provider. The council awarded a bid to Advanced Disposal for trash collection that includes weekly recycling pickup.

"We had a problem holding Waste Management accountable with the old contract," Mayor Gene Melton said. "I think this new contract resolves that."

Melton said the trucks will be equipped with GPS and cameras to verify service to residents. There will not be any charge to residents for garbage or recycling pickup, continuing the city policy of free service. The

new contract begins Dec. 1.

Also Tuesday night, a public hearing was held for two zoning changes. The first involved rezoning phase four of the Stockton subdivision from R2 residential to Q-R-G, which would be qualified garden homes. The second hearing was to consider rezoning 4604 Deerfoot Parkway from R2 residential to C2 commercial zoning.

Melton said the stadium, the bridge over Husky Parkway and the Green Drive projects are all moving forward. An additional monitoring station was approved to keep check on any potential erosion into the Cahaba River during construction. Beth Stewart, executive director of the Cahaba River Society, said Tuesday that her organization had been working

with Rick Nail in regard to the engineering for the bridge.

In other council news, an alcohol license request for Log Cabin on Gadsden Highway was carried over until the next meeting. The council also passed resolutions recognizing Andrew Patterson for winning the gold medal in the Deaf Olympics and for Turn Trussville Gold.

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LOCAL

Former Miss Trussville takes stage in Atlantic City on Sunday

by David Knox

For The Tribune

Area residents have a rooting interest in Sunday night's Miss America pageant. And that particular contestant hasn't been shy about showing her allegiance, either.

Miss Alabama Chandler Champion, a Leeds resident, University of Alabama student and former Miss Trussville, created something of a stir by showing off a houndstooth gown and matching shoes for a pre-pageant parade. And during rehearsals for the pageant, she wore a T-shirt emblazoned with

“Roll Tide” on it as well. Champion, 20, won the Miss Alabama crown in while competing as Miss Leeds Area. She previously competed in Miss Alabama pageants as Miss Center Point as well as Miss Trussville, no doubt demonstrating a resiliency and commitment to the “process”

that Alabama football coach Nick Saban would appreciate.

But the dress — made by Ann Northington, it features a black top with a houndstooth sash and bottom, with “Roll Tide” printed down the front and the 2012 Alabama BCS National Championship logo on the back -- has brought her nationwide attention already, especially from online sports bloggers.

One example comes from Tom Fornelli of CBS Sports' “Eye on College Football” blog:

“If you're one of the millions of Eye on College Football readers who wish we had more Miss America coverage here, well, you are going to love this post.

“This year's Miss Alabama, who is named Chandler Champion (seriously, that's her name. The state of Alabama literally breeds Champions), had a special dress designed for her in the Miss America pageant. And the dress has a familiar theme.

“That's, um, well, that's uh...ROLL TIDE!”

“Seriously, I may be wrong here, but I'm starting to think the Tide are just a little too important to the fine people of Alabama.”

Chandler, a junior



photo courtesy of Miss Alabama Pageant

Chandler Champion

majoring in dance and broadcast journalism at Alabama, is a graduate of the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham. She's actually not the only UA student competing in Atlantic City, N.J. Haley Wil-

liams, a junior from Saline, Mich., a public relations major with minors in philosophy and art history, is Miss Michigan.

ABC will televise the pageant's final night Sunday at 8 p.m.



photo courtesy of Miss Alabama Pageant

Chandler Champion rehearses for Sunday's Miss America pageant.

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8 Trussville Girl Scouts earn big honors

by David Knox

For The Tribune

Eight members of Girl Scout Troop 30981, all students at Paine Intermediate School, recently earned the highest award a Girl Scout Junior can attain.

Brooklyn Stooksberry, Camden DeSimone, Caraline Cox, Caroline Rowe, Elise Tennyson, Isabella Vidales, Machaela Charles and Summer Stephens each received the Girl Scout Bronze Award for their project Warm and Fuzzy for Jessie's Place.

The girls hosted an event where they taught Girl Scouts of all ages from other troops how to make hats and scarves. They also took up purchased hats, scarves, gloves and socks from attendees, which they do-



photo courtesy of Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama

Members of the Bronze Award winning Girl Scout Troop 30981 are Brooklyn Stooksberry, Camden DeSimone, Caraline Cox, Caroline Rowe, Elise Tennyson, Isabella Vidales, Machaela Charles and Summer Stephens.

nated to Jessie's Place.

Jessie's Place, a part of the Jimmie Hale Mission, was established in 1998 as a haven for homeless and hurting women and children seeking shelter while preparing to reach self-sufficiency. They become involved in daily life skills training, Bible studies, case management, counseling, education remediation, career readiness, and children's programs including play therapy.

The Girl Scout Bronze Award is the highest award a Girl Scout Junior (fourth- and fifth-graders) can earn. This award recognizes that a Girl Scout Junior has gained the leadership and planning skills required to follow through with a project that makes a positive difference in her community.

PINSON continued from page A-1

"We will be confirming everything by our own appraisal," Mayor Hoyt Sanders said. "Should everything work out, there would be another instrument at a later time that would authorize a general obligation warrant upon the city that would be subject to council voting at that time."

Councilman Joe Cochran said the historic value of the 1921 Rock School appealed to him as well as its possible uses.

"There are fields behind the Solid Rock church today that could be used for youth football, softball practice facilities, which we're always short-handed on,"

Cochran said. "The front portion of the building could be re-purposed to become an expanded library. You could have some city services running out of that building, as well."

McCain said her opposition came from financial concerns of the purchase.

"I haven't seen enough figures in our budget that said we can afford this at this time," McCain said. "It's a financial thing that I'm worried about. We've got so much going on that I don't want to be stretched out with our money. I don't want to take away from one project for this."

Roberts also expressed concern over the expen-

diture required by the city to make the purchase, despite his emotional ties to the building where he attended school.

"I just don't think this is a wise decision, given where we are as a city," Roberts said, citing the city's relatively young age. "I'm concerned about what we may have to give up to make this work and I don't want to see us put ourselves in that situation. This is a luxury that we just can't afford right now."

There was no set time frame for the purchase, as the agreement is contingent on several variables before the deal can be closed.

GREEN DRIVE continued from page A-1

\$383,604 but included an add of \$43,397. Milam and Co. bid \$384,689 with a deduct of \$266.67, and Abramson LLC bid \$385,000.

The other three bids totaled \$421,675 with an add of \$10,000, \$432,119.60 and

\$434,000 with an \$18,000 deduct.

Earlier this year, the council approved Schoel Engineering to do the engineering for the repairs at a cost of \$30,600.

Green Drive remains closed from Norrell Drive to Trussville-Clay

Road. The road is a popular link from Chalkville Mountain Road to Trussville-Clay Road, on which Hewitt-Trussville Middle School is located.

Scott Buttram contributed to this story.

PARK continued from page A-1

Phase One if there are still funds available at the end of the first phase. This splash pad design would allow for 90 children to use the facility at one time. There will also be covered sitting areas for parents at both the splash pad and the nearby playground. If the splash pad is not feasible in this phase, it will

likely be part of Phase Two the following year.

Also discussed was the color scheme of the park's buildings. Ross suggested blues and grays, but the council overwhelmingly rejected that in favor of Pinson Valley High School's cardinal.

Non-related items discussed Thursday were

Pinson's new sidewalk, which city officials say will help increase safety along the highways, especially on game nights. The council also discussed moving the annual Christmas parade from the second weekend in December to the first weekend to avoid scheduling conflicts.

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Trussville native graduates from Marine basic training

For The Tribune

With deep pride and love, Tim and Ronda Odom announce the graduation of their son Timothy "Wyatt" Odom from the United States Marine Corps Basic Training on Friday, Aug. 30, 2013, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C.

Timothy Wyatt Odom, a Hewitt-Trussville graduate of the Class of 2013, recently completed basic training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C.

Pvt. Odom successfully completed 13 weeks of training designed to challenge new Marine recruits both physically and mentally. Pvt. Odom and his fellow recruits began their training each day at 5 a.m., running three miles and performing calisthenics. In addition to the physical conditioning program, Pvt. Odom spent numerous hours in classroom and field assignments, which included learning first aid, uniform regulations, combat water survival, marksmanship, and hand-to-hand combat and assorted weapons training. They performed close order drill and operated as a small infantry unit during field training.

Pvt. Odom also received instructions



submitted photo

Timothy Wyatt Odom

on the Marine Corps' core values --- honor, courage and commitment, and what the words mean in guiding personal and professional conduct. Pvt. Odom and fellow recruits ended the training phase with the Crucible, a 54-hour team effort and problem solving evolution. After graduation from Parris Island, Pvt. Odom will be stationed at Camp Geiger N.C. for four weeks of Marine combat training. Wyatt has committed to a four-year enlistment with the United States Marine Corps.

Info session tonight for Trussville Boy Scouts

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

An information session about the Trussville Cub and Boy Scouts is planned for tonight at Paine Intermediate School.

The meeting is from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the school's cafeteria.

The meeting is for boys and parents to better understand what Trussville's Cub and

Boy Scouts programs are about and the role they play in the community.

The Trussville Cub and Boy Scouts has open enrollment and the groups want parents, grandparents and guardians to consider enrolling their sons in Pack 216.

Pack leaders will be on hand to answer questions and share the nuts and bolts of the program and the activities they do with the boys.

To learn more about

the program, visit www.pack216.org or www.BeAScout.org.

For more information, contact Charlotte Stanley at creative@alabamastanleys.com, Tony Gagliano at tgservices4u@yahoo.com or Andy McClure at amotor94@aol.com.

Contact Gary Lloyd at news@trussvilletribune.com and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

Martial arts academy hosting safety event Saturday

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Birmingham Academy of Martial Arts in Trussville will host its Annual Free Family Safety Event on Saturday.

The free event to the public begins at 1:30 p.m. and lasts until 3:30

p.m.

The Trussville Police Department, Trussville Fire Department and FBI will be in attendance to share tips on keeping families safe. There will also be free children's self defense, women's self defense and men's self defense classes.

There will also be door prizes.

The academy is located next to the YMCA off Valley Road in Trussville.

For more information, call 205-909-3720 or visit www.BhamMartialArts.com

Contact Gary Lloyd at news@trussvilletribune.com and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

Clay collects record tax revenue in August

by Lee Weyhrich

Staff Writer

The city of Clay last week announced that it recorded the most tax revenue in the city's history last month.

In August, the city generated \$101,000 in tax revenue, beating the previous all-time total by

\$11,000. Clay incorporated as a city in 2000.

The new revenue came as a surprise, especially with the sales tax holiday tax-free weekend taking place that month, City Manager Ronnie Dixon said.

The Clay City Council last month voted to increase the city's sales tax by two cents. Shoppers

in Clay will now pay a 10 percent tax on every dollar spent. This is the first time sales taxes have fluctuated in Clay since 2003. Ten percent of the increase will be designated to Clay's schools, 35 percent will go towards public safety and the remaining 55 percent will be reserved for the city's budget.

The city council last week did agree to spend \$39,811 for an electrical generator for Clay City Hall. In case of a disaster, city hall will act as a command center for emergency response. Clay's two fire departments already have generators for emergency use. Dixon said the city could save \$14,000 by buying the generator

at this time. The council also recognized Clay-Chalkville High School wrestler Nick Weldon, who will be competing in the 2013 Journeyman Wrestling Classic in Niskayuna, N.Y., on Sept. 29.

The Education Foundation Committee, an independent fundraising organization for Clay schools,

has donated 42 computers to Clay-Chalkville High School. The organization relies entirely on donations from companies and other foundations, with no funding coming from the Jefferson County school system or city. Of the 42 computers, 26 are laptops. The committee has applied for 501(c)(3) status.

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Turkey Creek preserve receives environmental grant

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Turkey Creek Nature Preserve in Pinson has received a grant as part of the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program.

Birmingham-Southern College will lead bank and in-stream restoration at Turkey Creek Nature Preserve along a 100-foot stretch to support the vermilion darter – a species of fish found only in Turkey Creek. The project will reduce sediment to increase the darter’s habitat range and decrease population isolation. A stream-



photo courtesy of Turkey Creek Nature Preserve

Turkey Creek Nature Preserve in Pinson

bank access point and pavilion will also be constructed.

Other areas receiving grants include Village Creek in Jef-

erson County, Alma Bryant High School in Mobile County and Troy University in Pike County.

The awards leverage more than \$1.5 million in partner funding and in-kind services for stream bank and coastal restoration.

“These projects are successful because they are based on partnerships among conservation groups, businesses, schools, landowners and many others,” said Matt Bowden, Alabama Power’s vice president of Environmental Affairs. “Since joining the partnership in 2006, more than 20 projects in Alabama have restored

more than 100 acres of wetlands and 6,000 feet of creek and stream bank.”

Alabama Power participates in the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program as part of Southern Company’s partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Association of Counties and the Wildlife Habitat Council.

This year, Southern Company, the regional corporate sponsor of the program, is providing \$202,439 to 11 projects that, combined with project and partner matching funds and in-kind services, will re-

sult in nearly \$3.5 million.

“With the help of public, private and corporate funders, the Five Star and Urban Waters program supports dynamic conservation work across the country,” said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. “These grants not only protect and restore the places that fish and wildlife need, but also enhance natural amenities for the entire community.”

Contact Gary Lloyd at news@trussvilletribune.com and follow him on Twitter @GaryALloyd.

Spydels to play at car show Saturday

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Spydels will perform Saturday at a car show at Clayridge Baptist Church in Clay.

The car show and live performance will last from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

There is no charge to at-

tend the event.

The Spydels got their start in the mid 1960s, made up of Hewitt-Trussville High School students.

Last year, three of the original six members joined with two new members to play at Clayridge Baptist Church in a reuniting effort.

The band last year con-

sisted of Arvel Crumpton, Linda Crumpton, Ray Wright, Buzz Payne and Chuck Hawkins. The other original band members include Joe P. Sims, Mike McKee and Billy Freeny.

Clayridge Baptist Church is located at 6712 Old Springville Road in Clay.



file photo

The Spydels

Clay, Pinson libraries face off in ‘Food for Fines’

by David Knox

For The Tribune

For the second straight year, a little friendly neighborhood competition between a couple of local libraries can benefit area food pantries.

The Pinson and Clay public libraries are vying to see which can top the other during the Public Libraries of Jefferson County’s “Food

for Fines” drive.

The campaign, in its sixth year, allows patrons to donate canned goods and other nonperishable foods in place of paying their fines. During the month of September, libraries waive \$1 in fines for each food item donated, up to \$10 per library card. Fines will be waived for late charges only, not for lost or damaged books.

Donations are being

accepted at all 40 libraries affiliated with the Jefferson County library cooperative. Last year, they collected 21,896 food items, which was 700 more food items than in 2011.

Libraries will be donating the food to various organizations in the Birmingham area. Like last year, Clay will be giving its to the food pantry at Clay United Methodist Church and

Pinson’s will again go to the food pantry at Solid Rock Church. Pinson topped Clay last year in their competition, collecting 704 items to Clay’s 269.

Suggested food items include baby food, cereals, soup, canned juice, canned fruit, canned vegetables, peanut butter, crackers, rice, pasta, pasta sauce, dried beans, side dishes and snack foods. Items that will

not be accepted include dentured cans, rusted cans, damaged items, open packages and homemade food. Expiration dates must be visible, and the food must be in date.

Even if you don’t have an overdue item, the libraries welcome items for the food drive. But if you do have overdue fines, this would be a good time to get them wiped out. The PLJC di-

rectors recently voted to increase fines on books, magazines and books on CD from 15 cents per day to 25 cents per day. This will be the first fine increase in eight years. The increase applies to all 40 libraries affiliated with the PLJC. Funding cuts by the Jefferson County Commission and the state necessitated the fine increase, which goes into effect Oct. 1.

CALENDAR

Western square dance Sept. 23, Sept. 30

Kurly Q’s Square Dance Club will sponsor “Western Style” square dance lessons on Sept. 23 and Sept. 30 at Purser-Ray Hall at Odenville Middle School at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call 205-467-7907 or 205-525-5128.

Wrestling at Palmedale Homesteads Community Center

GCW Wrestling is the first Saturday each month at 7 p.m. at the Palmedale Homesteads Community Center. The Mark Taylor Band performs the fourth Saturday each month, clogging and line dancing, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

‘The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe’ is ACTA’s fall show

ACTA will present “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,” based on the classic story by C.S. Lewis,

as its fall show. Dates are Oct. 4, 5, 6 and 12 (two shows) and 13. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$8 for students/children and \$10 for seniors (ages 60+). Call ACTA at 655-3902 for reservations.

Clay-Pinson chamber meets

The Clay-Pinson Chamber of Commerce will hold its monthly meeting Tuesday at Grayson Valley Country Club. A “meet and greet” period begins at 11:30 a.m. with lunch at noon. Cost is \$12.

TASTE in Trussville is Sept. 19

Trussville’s Art Show and Tasting Event will be next Thursday at the Trussville Civic Center. TASTE will last from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. There will be various foods to sample from area restaurants. Mark Dunn will be back to provide musical entertainment. Tickets are \$20 and are available at the Trussville Area Chamber of Commerce office. A limited

number of tickets will be available at the door for \$30. For more information, call the chamber office at 205-655-7535.

Cycle boot camp in Trussville

Misty Marlow’s cycle boot camp and spin class is every Monday at the Trussville Civic Center at 6:15 p.m. For more information, call the civic center at 205-655-2503.



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OPINION

‘Attention K-Mart shoppers!’ Those Blue Light Specials helped brighten Friday night family outings

When I was growing up, a Friday night family outing often meant a trip to the old K-Mart in Roebuck. In those days, the retail options in Trussville were limited, so to shop one of the big-box discount stores required a bit of travel. It was less than 10 miles away, but for some reason, the distance seemed greater back then.

We'd wander up and down the aisles, checking out everything from the newly stocked merchandise to the clearance racks. While Mama and I scouted for bargains among the household goods and clothing items, Daddy and my brothers headed over to the toy and automotive departments.

We ultimately reconvened at The Grill (the snack bar at the back

of the store), where we sipped Cokes, shared a bag of popcorn and waited for the next Blue Light Special to come along.

For the benefit of anyone who may not know – or after all these years, remember – Blue Light Specials were surprise announcements of deep discounts offered for a limited time, usually 10 or 15 minutes, on specific merchandise. A cart equipped with a flashing blue light atop a tall pole was rolled to where the bathmats or motor oil or whatever was displayed, and that's when the fun began.

As the light was activated, an announcement came over the PA system: "Attention, K-Mart shoppers! For the next 15 minutes, we're offering a Blue Light Special in (for example) our girls' department on pull-

over shirts for \$1.50..." prompting the mothers of young daughters from all over the store to rush toward the blue light as if it were the end of the rainbow and girls' pullover shirts were the gold.

Speed was essential since supplies were always limited, and the desired size or color or quantity might not be available but a minute or two. And as inventory decreased, the possibility for all-out warfare on the sales floor increased.

I once watched in utter fascination as two grown women staged a near-catfight over the last size 12-husky pair of boys' jeans on the rack. I honestly thought fists were about to fly, and I couldn't decide whether to flee or stick around for the show. As it was, a salesperson stepped in to defuse the



June Mathews
Somewhere in the Middle...

situation.

Depending on the item(s) offered, Mama might join the rush to the flashing light or send one of us kids to scout out the merchandise. We never knew what we'd leave the store with – a huge bag of sandpaper toilet tissue, a pair of ill-fitting \$1.99 Keds knockoffs for each member of the family or a giant economy-size box of powdered laundry detergent that seemed to last

forever.

One of Mama's more memorable purchases was a package of men's patterned boxer shorts featuring bright green shamrocks on white. I don't think Daddy was especially impressed with his new undergarments, but he wore them anyway. Better new shamrock boxers than raggedy old plain ones, I guess.

At age 9 or 10, I considered the Friday night K-Mart excursions great fun. But as I moved into my teens, I began snubbing family time in favor of dates, school activities and spend-the-night parties.

Now, though, I'd give just about anything to experience one of those Blue Light Special nights again. No, they weren't fancy occasions or big sporting events or beach

vacations – all of which we also had plenty of in those days.

They were just no-frills times of family togetherness with a flashy touch of discount store excitement thrown in.

And for my clothes-conscious classmates who thought the white skirt with big brown polka dots and matching knit top I wore the first day of junior high was exceptionally cute: Yep, even though I would have DIED before admitting it, that outfit was a Blue Light Special purchased during one of those family outings.

Now don't you wish you'd gone to K-Mart on Friday nights back then, too?

Email June Mathews at jmathews120@charter.net.

Astigmatism could be cause of blurry vision

I spend about a quarter of my workday explaining this one to patients, so I'd thought I'd touch on it here. Most eyes aren't perfect. Even if you think you have 20/20 vision, it's pretty typical to have another condition. But it could be so minor you might not even notice it. It's called astigmatism and often goes hand-in-hand with other vision problems, like nearsightedness or

farsightedness. Like these well-known vision conditions, astigmatism is very treatable.

What exactly is astigmatism? Well, in a perfectly shaped eye, the cornea, or surface layer, is a sphere, like a baseball. It allows light to enter your eyes at the right angle and focus just so on the retina. That means your vision is sharp and crisp. But with astigmatism, the cornea's shape is more like a foot-



Dr. Zack Steele, O.D.

ball than a baseball. This irregularity makes the light rays focus on two points on the retina, not

one. This causes blurry, distorted vision. Many notice this problem more at night, when astigmatism can scatter light and increase glare.

Most people have some degree of astigmatism. But if it's mild, you may not even realize you have it. At the other end of the scale, severe astigmatism is most definitely noticeable, causing blurred vision and sometimes eye fatigue and headaches, too.

Whether you have mild or severe astigmatism,

it's completely correctable.

For mild cases, you probably won't need a prescription. Glasses or contacts are the ticket for more noticeable cases. Contacts come in a huge variety. Both rigid contact lenses and soft lenses, called toric lenses, can take care of astigmatism. Rigid lenses are made of a breathable plastic that is custom-fit to the shape of the cornea. Soft lenses are made of gel-like plastic containing varying amounts of water.

Another option is vision correction surgery which can work very well in correcting astigmatism. See your eye doctor for the best treatment options for you. If you have questions about astigmatism, please call our office at 655-4838.

Dr. Zack Steele is a 2003 graduate of UAB School of Optometry. His practice, Trussville Vision Care, is located on Chalkville Road in downtown Trussville.

Study: Obamacare would increase Alabamians' costs by 60 percent

by Scott Buttram

Publisher

A new study released by the Society of Actuaries on the impact of President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act on states brings good news and bad news for Alabama.

First, the good news. The study predicts that the number of uninsured Alabamians could fall from the current rate of 14.7 percent to 4.9 percent assuming the

state expands Medicaid coverage. Governor Robert Bentley has repeatedly stated that he has no intention of expanding coverage, so it remains to be seen if those reductions will be realized.

The bad news, according to the impact study, is that the influx of currently uninsured people will drive the cost of non-group insurance policies up by 60.3 percent for Alabamians. The only states showing a higher increase were California, Idaho, Indiana and

Maryland, with Indiana leading the way with a 68 percent jump in cost.

To be sure, not everyone is in agreement with the figures produced in the study. Obamacare supporters are quick to point out that actuaries' job is to predict costs so that insurance companies can plan ahead and make sure premiums cover those costs. Detractors of the study believe the SOA is overstating the numbers to err on the side of caution.

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National Wildlife Federation offers free native trees for groups to plant

Organizations may hold tree plantings or give trees away as part of Trees for Wildlife program

by David Knox

For The Tribune

The National Wildlife Federation is currently taking applications from organizations and groups wishing to hold a native tree planting this fall as part of its Trees for Wildlife program.

Trees for Wildlife is an educational program that provides adult leaders hands-on science-based activities to help young

people learn about the importance of trees to communities and wildlife and how to plant and take care of trees for the future.

"Increasing urbanization has impacted the nation's tree canopy by reducing the number of trees within urban and suburban America," said Eliza Russell, director of education programs at National Wildlife Federation. "Tree planting events provide opportunities to educate and

prepare the next generation of environmental stewards, expand the world inventory of trees and protect and improve natural resources."

Free native species tree seedlings are currently available to partners, volunteers, schools, NWF affiliates and community groups. These trees have been donated for planting by NWF members and donors. All trees that are planted will be native to the region where they will be



planted.

Applicants can choose from three different types of events in their application, either a tree planting at a physical location, a community tree giveaway or a combination of both. Due to

high demand, not all applicants will be accepted. The deadline to apply is Sept. 21. Applications are available at www.nwf.org/trees/apply.

The National Wildlife Federation is also seeking donations of trees to NWF's Tree Bank. NWF's Tree Bank was created through the generous support of its members to provide trees, planting supplies and educational resources to schools, community groups and partners

who plant the trees in their community. You may contribute to the fund by sponsoring trees, adoptions or donating.

Learn more about the Trees for Wildlife program and how to apply to potentially receive trees for a community service project at www.nwf.org/trees

The National Wildlife Federation is America's largest conservation organization.

Hewitt-Trussville baseball coach to address chamber

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

Hewitt-Trussville varsity baseball coach Jeff Mauldin will be the featured speaker at next Thursday's Trussville Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

The luncheon begins Sept. 19 at 11:30 a.m. at the Trussville Civic Center. Reservations are \$17 each and are due by noon Sept. 17.

Mauldin, in his first year, led Hewitt-Trussville to a 34-13 record, its best in school history, and reached the Class 6A

state championship series in Montgomery for the first time in school history. It lost to Pelham in the state championship, Mauldin's former school.

Mauldin has 428 career wins. He compiled a 176-51 record in his six years at Pelham. He coached the 2003 Class 6A state champion Clay-Chalkville team, and finished runner-up in the title series in 2005 and 2006 at Clay-Chalkville.

For more information about the luncheon, call the chamber office at 205-655-7535.

CAHABA continued from page A-1

ing design -- the stream buffer and hillside open space, the bioswales in the upper parking lot, the woodland parking, the reuse of runoff for landscape irrigation -- is one we still hold up as a model to developers. Most of these river-saving innovations also saved money in the construction."

Stewart and her group had also helped Trussville Springs restore the river to its natural state as it flows through the neighborhood and will serve as the background to the Fry-Down.

"More recently, we've met with the engineer for the stadium bridge, Rick Nail, to explore ways to have as little impact on the Cahaba as possible," Stewart said. "Over the years the CRS Shane Hulsey CLEAN program

has had a special relationship with HTHS. We have brought many students into the Cahaba there at the school for hands-on science education. David Dobbs and his classes have also supported Fry-Down for several years by providing volunteers."

As the popularity of the event grew, so did the reach. What began as a small local catfish cooking competition with ecological education disguised as fun for local children has grown into a metro-wide happening.

Of the 29 event sponsors, only four -- Amerex,

Trussville Springs, The Trussville Tribune and Reich Companies -- are local. The remaining 25 come from around the greater Birmingham region. Among those sponsors is Weld for Birmingham which has emerged as the pre-eminent newspaper for metro Birmingham.

"Trussville is an important part of our growing region, and we think it's important to support fun events and good causes whenever and wherever we can," said Weld publisher Mark Kelly. "While Weld's primary

focus is on the city of Birmingham, we want to be a news and information source for the entire region. That's reflected in our general business plan, and in the stories we cover in our newspaper and online."

So far, 11 cook teams are scheduled to compete in the catfish competition. A full schedule of children's events is planned as well as live entertainment. The new edition to the event is the Fry-Down Beer Garden, which will showcase beers from local craft breweries.

CCMS band invited to prestigious national clinic

by Gary Lloyd

Editor

The Clay-Chalkville Middle School Band has been invited to perform as a feature ensemble at the Southeastern United States Concert Band Clinic.

The invitation came this summer from the SEUS Board of Directors, asking the band to perform on Friday, Dec. 6. The band will perform for more than 400 middle school band students and directors from Florida, Georgia, Mississippi,

Tennessee, Arkansas and Alabama. In attendance at the concert will be several university and pre-service music educators, as well as internationally known composer Quincy Hilliard.

Only two middle school bands throughout the Southeastern United States are invited each year. Flat Rock Middle School from Tyrone, Ga., is the other band invited to perform. The Southeastern United States Band Clinic has been in existence 41 years, but the middle school version of the national

clinic has only been occurring for the past 15 years, making the Clay-Chalkville Middle School Band one of 30 middle school bands to participate in the event.

Band Director Chris Walker said the invitation comes through evaluation of the band's history of success over the years. The Clay-Chalkville Middle School Band has approximately 400 members in the sixth through eighth grades. The band is under the direction of Walker and Erin McLaughlin.





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Clay's McClure cooks up a winner

by David Knox

For The Tribune

Clay is home to the state's "Cornbread Queen."

"I've been dubbed that, but I'm sure I'm not. I'm sure there's someone in the state better," said Polly McClure, "but I'll have to live with it for awhile."

Fact is, no one cooked up a batch of cornbread better than did McClure, as she took first place in the Alabama Farmers Federation Women's Leadership Division Heritage Cooking Contest last Thursday in Montgomery.

McClure said her winning recipe, Cajun Party Cornbread, is a favorite among family and friends. While the dish has a hint of the bayou, the ingredients include Alabama-grown products.

"It's really an adaptation of a recipe a lady at our church (Faith United Methodist Church), Jimmie Sue Foy, makes," McClure said. "My husband and I both love Cajun food, and we wanted to add that Cajun flair to it. We got some Conecuh sausage, some Alabama wild-grown shrimp, added a little bit of Cajun seasoning, and that's where we came up with the recipe."

McClure, who baked the dish in a traditional cast iron skillet, described it as a Cajun pizza with a cornbread crust.

"It's got that great cornbread flavor on the bottom with cream corn, sour cream and a little bit of Cajun seasoning," she said. "On top are the shrimp, Conecuh sausage and Monterey Jack cheese. All of that goes together to make a tasty dish that can be a main entree, or served as a side. Our favorite side at home



photo courtesy of Alabama Farmers Federation

Polly McClure of Clay won first place in the Alabama Farmers Federation Women's Leadership Division Heritage Cooking Contest in Montgomery last Thursday. The contest pitted cooks from 34 Alabama counties against each other to find the best cornbread recipe.

is gumbo, which my husband happens to make very well. You can also serve it with cole slaw."

McClure, who won the Jefferson County Heritage Cooking Contest earlier this year, received \$150 as the state winner.

The Heritage Cooking Contest is held annually to highlight Alabama agriculture and to acknowledge the tradition of sharing and preparing favorite recipes.

McClure adds the title of "Cornbread Queen" to a list of others. She is the statewide coordinator of Reach Out and Read-Alabama, a literacy program that promotes reading through children's visits to the pediatrician, including counseling about the importance of reading and distributing free children's books.

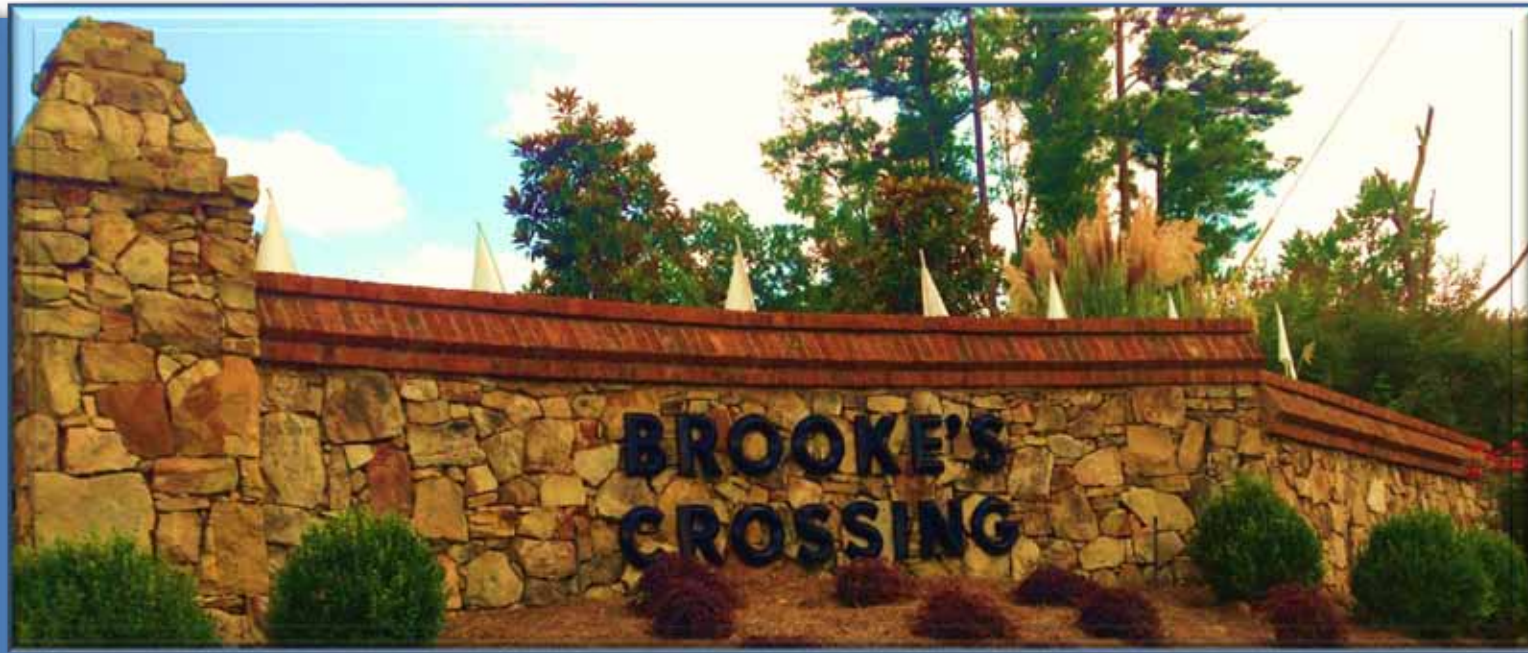
She and her husband of 38 years, Norman, are charter

members of Faith church, and she is active there as well. "I guess I've done just about everything there is to do there," she laughed.

If that doesn't keep her as busy as a bee, then there's the other thing she and Norman do — beekeeping. "Norman has been doing it a long time. We're starting to get our hives back in good shape."

But right now, it's the "Cornbread Queen" designation she's wearing. Her husband shares her love of cooking, and one other thing they love to do together is prepare meals for the Ronald McDonald House in Birmingham, which provides housing and meals for families that have a child in a hospital. "We love to cook and we love to use our love of cooking once a month to do that. It's a great thing Birmingham does for those families."

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