

Centreville Press

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Jamesio Rhine Named New Head Coach of Bibb County Basketball

BY CANDACE JOHNSON
REPORTER

Bibb County Athletics is ushering in a new era on the court with the appointment of Jamesio Rhine as the new Head Coach for both the Men's and Women's Basketball teams at Bibb County High School.

Although the basketball season officially tips off in November, Coach Rhine is already making his presence felt. He's kicking off his tenure by leading the BMC Wellness Center's Basketball Camp, running from July 21–25. The camp is open to all, with a fee of \$75 for BMC members and \$100 for non-members.

Rhine brings a lifelong passion for the game and a wealth of experience to the role. "I've been passionate about basketball since I was 7 years old and have played from youth leagues to the professional level," he shared. His coaching résumé includes assistant roles with JV and Varsity boys' teams, private training from 2021 to 2023, and now, leadership of the BMC Basketball Camp.

A Bibb County native and proud graduate of Bibb County High School, Rhine says returning to his alma mater is a full-circle moment. "My love for basketball and my desire to inspire younger generations made this an easy decision. It's a privilege to give back to the program that helped shape me."

Rhine's vision for the program is rooted in more than just wins and

losses. He aims to build a team culture centered on character, discipline, and teamwork. "I want to develop well-rounded student-athletes who lead in the classroom, in the community, and on the court," he said. "Through hard work, accountability, and a culture of excellence, I want every player to leave the program prepared for life beyond basketball."

To foster unity and trust, Rhine plans to emphasize relationship-building and open communication. "We'll create a culture where every player has a voice and mutual respect is expected. Team-building activities, leadership development, and shared goals will be at the heart of everything we do."

See Rhine on page 2



New Access Road at Brent Elementary Aims to Ease Traffic Flow

BY SHEILA DUNCAN
REPORTER

A new access road leading to Brent Elementary School is currently under construction, bringing much-anticipated relief to parents, school staff, and nearby residents. The new roadway is designed to improve the flow of traffic during busy morning drop-offs and afternoon pickups.

For years, congestion along McMillian Street has caused delays and frustration for both

school traffic and those living in the surrounding neighborhood. The new road will provide an alternate route that helps reduce the buildup of cars on McMillian, making the area safer and more efficient for everyone.

Construction progress has been steady, with crews working diligently to ensure the road is completed in time for the upcoming school year. Superintendent Kevin Comer says, "We still have to have a final approval from the State so that may hold up being able

to officially use the new access road when school starts, but we look forward to the new access road being open as soon as possible to help alleviate traffic congestion throughout the adjoining neighborhoods and will hopefully speed up the car rider line for parents as well."

This project marks a positive step forward in addressing long-standing traffic issues while prioritizing student safety and community convenience.

Bibb Medical Center's Free CNA Program Offers Hands-On Training and Life-Changing Opportunities

BY SHEILA DUNCAN
REPORTER

At Bibb Medical Center, the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program is more than just a class—it's a gateway into the healthcare field, offering hands-on training, real-world experience, and a path to a rewarding career.

Led by longtime nurse and instructor Barbara Terry, the program is built on more than four decades of healthcare experience. Since joining BMC in 1997, Barbara has worked across hospital floors, emergency rooms, and nursing homes, bringing valuable knowledge to every class.

What began as an occasional course has now grown into a full-fledged program with several ses-

sions offered throughout the year. The program provides a fast-paced, supportive learning environment with small class sizes that allow for one-on-one instruction and hands-on practice.

Students receive both classroom instruction and in-facility training within the nursing home at BMC. Topics covered include infection control, CPR, patient safety, vital signs, resident rights, and more offering a comprehensive foundation in patient care.

No previous healthcare experience is needed to enroll. The program is ideal for those exploring a career in healthcare or looking for a steppingstone to future opportunities such as nursing or allied health professions.

One of the program's most impactful features is its focus on compassion and dignity in patient care, emphasizing not just the technical side of healthcare, but the human connection that CNAs foster with their patients.

Even better—this high-quality training is completely free. While CNA programs elsewhere can cost up to \$1,200, BMC offers it at no cost to participants. Most students secure jobs shortly after passing their State Registry exam.

Applications for the next CNA class are open now and will close on July 25. If you or someone you know is ready to take the first step toward a meaningful and impactful career, don't miss this opportunity.

Treasure Forest Hosts AFOA Guest Speaker at Brent-Centreville Library

BY SHEILA DUNCAN
REPORTER

On Thursday, July 24, the Bibb County Treasure Forest group held its monthly meeting at the Brent-Centreville Library, featuring special guest speaker Kim Nick from the Alabama Forest Owners' Association (AFOA).

Kim shared valuable insights about the organization, which is Alabama's largest provider of recreational liability insurance. In addition to insurance, AFOA offers a wide range of resources to its members—especially

focused on landowner education.

Founded in 1981 by a small group of forest landowners, AFOA has grown to include several thousand members across Alabama and beyond. These members are united by a common bond: the challenges and rewards of owning forested land.

AFOA's mission is to serve as an advocate for forest landowners and keep them informed on issues affecting forest management, ownership, and use. Whether you

currently own timberland or hope to one day, AFOA membership offers tools, support, and a community dedicated to responsible forest.



- August 1st- Grand Opening of Bibb County Expo Center
- August 4th- West Blocton Town Park Expansion Ribbon Cutting at 9:00 am at 512 Oak St. West Blocton, AL
- August 5th- State Farm Woodstock Office Ribbon Cutting at 10:00 am at 20026 Hwy. 11 Woodstock, AL
- August 7th- First day for Bibb County Schools
- August 22nd- Brierfield Ironworks Movie Night! This is a FREE event. There will be food trucks available. Movie will be outdoors, so bring your blankets or lawn chairs! Movie starts at 7pm.
- August 28th - Treasure Forest of Bibb meeting at 6:30 pm at Brent/Centreville Library
- September 5th: Brierfield Ironworks Movie Night! This is a FREE event. There will be food trucks available. Movie will be outdoors, so bring your blankets or lawn chairs! Movie starts at 7pm.
- September 20th: Brierfield Ironworks' Car Show and Flea Market from 10am-2pm! The Car Show will be judged at 1pm. We will have food trucks, vendors and live music!
- September 25th - Treasure Forest of Bibb meeting at 6:30 pm at Brent/Centreville Library.



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NEWS



Politics in Person

Get to Know our Candidates In the heart of campaign season, it’s easy to get lost in slogans, yard signs, and sound bites. But behind every candidacy is a real person with a story, a purpose, and a passion for serving the community. In this special feature, we bring politics to a personal level—introducing you to Roxy Shuttlesworth, a local face with big ideas and a commitment to making a difference. From early influences on current motivations, we take a closer look at the person behind the platform.

Roxy Shuttlesworth Announces Candidacy for Centreville City Council, District 4
Roxy Shuttlesworth is proud to announce her candidacy for Centreville City Council, District 4. A lifelong resident of the area, Roxy is deeply committed to serving her community and being a voice for all citizens—regardless of age, background, or beliefs.
Roxy is the daughter of Jackie Horton, wife to Bobby Shuttlesworth, and mother to two daughters, Megan and Morgan. She is also a proud grandmother to four grandsons, who are the center of her world. After more than 15 years of dedicated service at First US, Roxy retired to help care for her grandchildren. Her passion for serving others continued through volunteer roles as the youth basketball treasurer and as treasurer of the BCHS Basketball Booster Club. She currently works part-time at the local baseball field concession stand, where she enjoys staying connected with members of the community.
Roxy is running for City Council because she believes Centreville deserves leaders who do more than show up twice a month. She wants to be actively involved in the process of making Centreville better—a place where there should be growth, unity, and forward progress thinking is prioritized. Her goal is to bring a strong, steady voice to the council—one that represents all people and promotes working together as a team. She also recognizes and supports the vital role of city employees and their ongoing contributions to the city's success.
“I’m not a politician—I’m your neighbor,” says Shuttlesworth. “I simply want to help move Centreville forward and ensure that every voice is heard.”

WEST BLOCTON TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting Date: July 7, 2025

The Town Council of the Town of West Blocton, Alabama met in a Regular Council Meeting at the Municipal Building on Monday, July 7, 2025, at 7:00pm. A quorum being present, Mayor Daniel Sims called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Prayer was led by Fred Lynch. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Glenn Johnson, Roll was called by Town Clerk Brandy Fancher. Present: Fred Lynch, Glenn Johnson, Holly Barnett, Blane Sherron, and Kristen Nash

Absent:
Mayor Notes:
We are extending the date to accept closed bids for sidewalk end cap upgrades through July 24, 2025 @ 4pm.
4th of July Celebration was a big hit. We appreciate all the hard work that was put into making the event so successful. There has been nothing but positive feedback from the community. Karmen Mccory, Taylor Bagi and Casey Thrasher did an amazing job entertaining. We are thankful to have been able to recognize each veteran and look forward to next year.
I. Council Approval:
Previous Council Meeting Minutes 6-16-2025
Council Member Glenn Johnson made the motion to approve the previous Council Meeting Minutes for 6-16-2025. Motion was seconded by Council Member Blane Sherron. All in

favor and motion so carried
Resolution 2025-010 Councilmember Place 1 Elected without Opposition
Roll Call Vote was used to approve Resolution 2025-010 to accept Freddie Lynch as Council Member 1 being elected without opposition. Council Member Glenn Johnson-YES Council Member Holly Barnett - YES Council Member Blane Sherron-YES Council Member Kristen Nash-YES NO-0 YES-4 Motion Passes
Resolution 2025-011 Councilmember Place 2 Elected without Opposition
Roll Call Vote was used to approve Resolution 2025-011 to accept Howard Glenn Johnson as Council Member 2 being elected without opposition. Council Member Fred Lynch-YES Council Member Holly Barnett - YES Council Member Blane Sherron-YES Council Member Kristen Nash-YES NO-0 YES-4 Motion Passes
Resolution 2025-012 Councilmember Place 4 Elected without Opposition
Roll Call Vote was used to approve Resolution 2025-012 to accept Anthony Blane Sherron as Council Member 4 being elected without opposition. Council Member Fred Lynch-YES Council Member Glenn Johnson - YES Council Member Holly Barnett - YES Council Member Kristen Nash-

YES NO-0 YES-4 Motion Passes
Certificate of Election for Council Member Place 1
Roll Call Vote was used to accept Certificate of Election for Council Member Place 1 Freddie Lynch. Council Member Glenn Johnson - YES Council Member Holly Barnett - YES Council Member Blane Sherron-YES Council Member Kristen Nash-YES NO-0 YES-4 Motion Passes
Certificate of Election for Council Member Place 2
Roll Call Vote was used to accept Certificate of Election for Council Member Place 2 Howard Glenn Johnson. Council Member Fred Lynch - YES Council Member Holly Barnett - YES Council Member Blane Sherron-YES Council Member Kristen Nash-YES NO-0 YES-4 Motion Passes
Certificate of Election for Council Member Place 4
Roll Call Vote was used to accept Certificate of Election for Council Member Place 4 Anthony Blane Sherron. Council Member Fred Lynch - YES Council Member Glenn Johnson - YES Council Member Holly Barnett- NO Council Member Kristen Nash-YES NO-1 YES-3 Motion Passes
See West Blocton Minutes on page 3

Bibb County Schools will continue free lunches for all children

SPECIAL TO THE PRESS

Bibb County Schools announced its policy for free and reduced-price meals for children served in schools under the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. For School Year 2025-2026 Bibb County Schools will continue participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). No further action is required of you. This USDA provision allows your child(ren) to participate in the school meal programs without having to pay a fee or submit a meal application.
CEP is a key provision of the Healthy, Hunger Free

Kids Act of 2010, which allows schools and school districts in low-income areas to eliminate school meal applications and serve breakfast and lunch at no charge to all enrolled students. CEP gives food service professionals more time to focus on preparing nutritious meals that their students will enjoy and gives students more time to eat those meals by cutting down on time spent in the lunch line. More importantly, by offering all students a nutritious breakfast and lunch at no cost, CEP helps ensure more students come to class well-nourished and ready to learn.
Children need healthy

meals to learn. Bibb County Schools offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast and lunch meals will follow the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines for healthy school meals, so please encourage students to participate. “In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability.”
Parents or guardians who need further information may contact Karie Jane Davis, Child Nutrition Program Director davisk@bibbed.org or 205-926-9881.

Rhine

Rhine from page 1
Looking ahead, Rhine is focused on laying a strong foundation for the upcoming season. His goals include helping players grow in confidence, compete with heart, and represent Bibb County with pride.
He also hopes the basketball program will become a cornerstone of school spirit and student success. “I want our program to promote academic achievement, unity, and leadership throughout the campus,” he said.
Rhine credits much of his coaching philosophy to his former mentor, Coach

Ron Radford of Southern Union State Community College. “His mentorship helped shape my understanding of the game and how to lead with purpose and integrity.”
With passion, purpose,

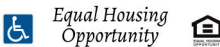
and a deep connection to the community, Coach Jamesio Rhine is ready to lead Bibb County basketball into an exciting new chapter.

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NEWS

Brierfield Park Launches new Summer Tradition

BY CANDACE JOHNSON
REPORTER

The Brierfield Ironworks Historical State Park is excited to launch its new summer tradition: “Friday Movie Night at the Furnace.” The free outdoor movie series kicks off on July 25 at 8 p.m. with “A Minecraft Movie.”

The park, located at 240 Furnace Parkway in Brierfield, is known for its historic ruins of the Bibb Furnace and offers a range of activities including

camping, cabins, and family events.

Guests are invited to arrive as early as 5 p.m., with snacks and sweets available until 9 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets for a relaxing night under the stars. It’s the perfect chance to enjoy a fun evening while catching up on exciting new films.

The movie lineup continues with “How to Train Your Dragon” (2025) on Aug. 22 and wraps up with “Jurassic World: Rebirth”

on Sept. 5, both starting at 8 p.m.

But the fun doesn’t end there. On Sept. 20, the park will also host a Car Show and Flea Market from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Think you have the best ride in town? Awards will be presented at 2 p.m., and the event will feature live gospel music and food trucks for a full day of family-friendly fun.

For more details, visit the Brierfield Ironworks Historical State Park’s official website.

New 483 Area Code Implementation to Begin in 2026 for Central/Southeast Alabama

SPECIAL TO THE PRESS

Customers in the 334 area code region are encouraged to begin 10-digit dialing prior to scheduled implementation of the new 483 area code overlay Feb. 23, 2026.

The permissive 10-digit dialing window will allow customers to become adjusted prior to mandatory 10-digit dialing, which will take effect Jan. 23, 2026.

Implementation of the new 483 area code

ensures customers will have enough supply of new telephone numbers to serve the area, as numbering resources for the 334 area code are scheduled to exhaust by the third quarter of 2026.

New customers, or customers requesting an additional telephone line, may be assigned the new 483 area code, pending activation. The implementation will not affect existing service for customers within the 334 area code region.

The Alabama Public Service Commission approved the new 483 area code overlay on March 6, 2024, for Alabama area code 334, which serves Selma, Montgomery, Prattville, Pike Road, Tuskegee, Auburn, Opelika, Phenix City, Eufaula, Dothan, Enterprise, Troy, Greenville and a large area of central and southeast Alabama.

No changes will be made when dialing three-digit numbers, such as 911 and others.

The Negative Effects of Children Having Cell Phones

Why New Laws Banning Phones in Schools May Be a Step in the Right Direction

BY WHITNEY BUZBEE
REPORTER

As concerns grow about the impact of smartphones on children, many states are beginning to take action. Several school districts—and even entire states—have recently implemented “no cell phones in school” laws aimed at reducing distractions and improving student focus. These laws prohibit or severely restrict the use of cell phones during school hours, and the move has been widely supported by teachers, administrators, and child development experts. The reasoning behind these laws is clear: despite their convenience, cell phones can do more harm than good when it comes to a child’s overall development.

While cell phones offer communication, entertainment, and access to information, their downsides—especially when placed in the hands of young children—are becoming increasingly hard to ignore. From mental health challenges to poor academic performance, the consequences of early and unrestricted cell phone use are serious and far-reaching.

Mental Health and Emotional Well-being:

Studies have shown that high smartphone use is associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem in children and teens. Social media apps can expose children to cyberbullying, unrealistic beauty standards, and a constant stream of peer comparison. Over time, this can lead to emotional distress and damage their sense of self-worth.

Reduced Attention Span and Academic Performance: One of the main reasons behind the school phone bans is that smartphones interfere with learning. Students often find it hard to resist checking messages or scrolling through social media, even during class. This distraction leads to reduced focus, lower test scores, and a decrease in meaningful classroom engagement.

Physical Health Concerns: Cell phone use can also negatively affect physical health. Children who spend hours on screens may experience eye strain, headaches, poor posture, and reduced sleep quality due to blue light exposure. Additionally, screen time often replaces physical activity, contributing to rising childhood obesity rates.

Delayed Social Skills Development: Frequent

phone use can hinder real-world social interaction, which is crucial for emotional intelligence and communication skills. Children who rely on texting or social media for communication may struggle with face-to-face conversations and conflict resolution.

Exposure to Inappropriate Content and Online Dangers: Even with filters and parental controls, smartphones can give children access to harmful content, including violence, explicit material, and online predators. Without careful supervision, children may also become involved in risky online trends or challenges that can lead to dangerous behavior.

The recent push for no cell phones in schools is more than just a rule change—it reflects a growing awareness of how deeply cell phone use can affect children’s development. While smartphones are an unavoidable part of modern life, it’s essential to delay and limit their use in young children. Parents and educators should work together to create boundaries, encourage real-world interaction, and promote a healthier, more balanced relationship with technology.

WEST BLOCTON TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting Date: July 7, 2025

West Blocton Minutes
from page 2

WBHS ATHLETIC GRAPHIC-BASEBALL

Roll Call Vote was used to approve\$ 1,000 Sponsor for Baseball Media Graphic. Council Member Fred Lynch - YES Glenn Johnson-YES Council Member Holly Barnett - YES Council Member Blane Sherron-YES Council Member Kristen Nash-YES NO-0 YES-5 Motion Passes 83 Holders Lawn Care

Roll Call Vote was used to approve 83 Holders Lawn Care to cut grass every 2 weeks for \$1100.00. Council Member Fred Lynch - YES Glenn Johnson-YES Council Member Holly Barnett -Abstain due to she uses his

services. Council Member Blane Sherron-YES Council Member Kristen Nash-YES NO-0 YES-4 Motion Passes

April Financial Report Roll Call Vote was used to approve April Financials. Council Member Fred Lynch - YES Glenn Johnson-YES Council Member Holly Barnett - YES Council Member Blane Sherron-YES Council Member Kristen Nash-YES NO-0 YES-5 Motion Passes May Financial Report

Roll Call Vote was used to approve May Financials. Council Member Fred Lynch - YES Glenn Johnson-YES Council Member Holly Barnett- YES Council Member Blane Sherron-YES Council Member

Kristen Nash-YES NO-0 YES-5 Motion Passes

Halloween Trick or Treat on Main Date

Council Member Kristen Nash made the motion to approve Halloween Trick or Treat on Main to be held Thursday, October 30, 2025 from 6pm-9pm. Motion was seconded by Council Member Holly Barnett. All in favor and motion so carried

Citizens to Speak - None

There being no further business to come before the Town Council at this time, Council Member Glenn Johnson made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Blane Sherron. All in favor and motion so carried.

The Economic Struggles of Rural Municipalities in Alabama

How The Rise & Fall of Twix-n-Tween and Internet Sales Taxes Tell the Story of Small Towns in Alabama

BY MIKE HOBSON
REPORTER

mike.hobson@centrevillepress.com

According to the Alabama League of Municipalities, the state of Alabama contains 466 municipalities and of those, approximately 406 have populations under 12,000. The top 5 cities in Alabama are Huntsville (Pop. 225k), Birmingham (Pop. 196k), Montgomery (Pop. 195k), Mobile (Pop. 182k) and Tuscaloosa (Pop. 111k). There are only 66 Alabama cities with more than 10k population.

In 2019 the Cullman Tribune featured Bibb County in a Bi-Centennial publication about the history of the State. Just like any other traveler who passed through Bibb County during the second half of the Twentieth Century, many of them have a fond memory of Twix-N-Tween.

Ben Johnson wrote “ the famous Twix-N-Tween Restaurant which was a “must eat” friendly place on the Bibb County stretch of highway between Montgomery and Tuscaloosa. For more than 50 years, the Twix-N-Tween only closed on Christmas Days. The Twix-N-Tweenstarted in Centreville in 1952..... “

Twix is now a fond relic of the past and the economic fortunes of Brent & Centreville, like other small towns in Alabama, closely parallels and follows the rise and decline of the Twix. The author of this article grew up amid this transformation and has witnessed the events of the last 80 years.

Back in the mid Twentieth Century almost all motorists, East-West, or North to South, passed through the intersection we still call Four Points, by way of U.S. Highways 82 & 25 or AL-5, regardless of their destination. And Twix-N-Tween was brilliantly located at the intersection. Twix thrived, and so did the fortunes of other small businesses in the two towns.

The business districts of Brent & Centreville thrived in those days. You could buy what you needed in the towns. Not only would

famous BBQ from Twix, there were clothing stores like Nix & Co, Daily-James and Pierson Hardware, Western Auto, the 5&10, the Yellow Front, Meigs Rexall Drug, Ritz Theatre, Cleveland Grocery, Nix Pool Room, Elam Shoe Shop, Chism Cleaners, Peoples Bank and Henderson Furniture. There was Meigs Gulf with a Greyhound bus station, cafe and barber shop in the back. We even boasted a Pontiac store and International Harvester tractor dealership. You could visit your dentist or a physician in professional offices or reside in the Bank Building upper floors. All of these historic businesses thrived on the Court Square. The hustle & bustle of any Saturday was legendary.

Centreville also had Wood-Crews Chevrolet, Freeman Motor Parts, OK Rubber Welders, a taxi stand, an ice house, a cotton gin, train depot, Hobson Auto Parts, Wallace Grocery, Belcher Motor Company, Stacy Drug, Skataway Roller Rink & Putt-Putt Golf, and T.W. Stone Grocery with its own stockyard and cattle kill operation out back. Then there was the biggest enterprise of all, the W.E. Belcher Lumber Company with its own Commissary. Down at the Goldman Hayes barber shop you could not only get a hot towel strait razor shave and a haircut, you could still avail yourself of a hot shower.

There was the “rolling store” that delivered groceries from Centreville direct to rural homes across the county. Mr. Al-

gie Langford sold tons of Standard Coffee all over Bibb County from the back of his panel van.

Brent bustled with Ward Mercantile, James Hardware, Bibb Supply, Meigs Drug Store, Brent Hotel, Brent Bank, Piggly Wiggly, Daily Faucette Motor Company, H&S Auto Parts, and an Allis-Chalmers tractor dealership, not to mention a cotton warehouse and a railroad depot. And, a thriving lumber mill we remember as the Olon Belcher Lumber Company. Don’t forget N.D. Cass where wooden toys were manufactured for years. A 1973 tornado destroyed much of that business district; it never really came back to Brent’s main street.

Brent & Centreville were both supported by several fine gas stations, restaurants, and automobile repair facilities. Automobiles were washed by hand in those days and usually blow dried with a 60 mph trip around the circuit.

Twix was born at the boom of the post World War II era. The national economy was exploding, hard working people were improving their family incomes, travelling increased exponentially accompanied by the baby boom, and the world was good.

What we called progress brought new roads. Bypasses were built around the towns to allow traffic to avoid the business districts. Big box stores emerged in the largest cities, attracting shoppers away from the small town merchants that depended on local sales.

See Economic Struggles on page 7

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OUR GOAL: The Centreville Press is published proudly for the citizens of Bibb County and adjoining counties by Bibb Community Media, Inc., Centreville, AL. Our Goal is to produce quality, profitable, community-oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty and a strong dedication towards printing the truth.

OUR POLICIES: Signed letters to the editor welcomed. Please limit to 300 words and include address and phone number. Liability for an error will not exceed the cost of space occupied by the error. Political endorsements will only be accepted through paid advertisements. We cannot be responsible for return of pictures or material unless stamped, return addressed envelope is included.

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Bibbville Baptist
Woodstock 938-2015

Brent Baptist
Brent 926-7687

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Centreville 926-5927

Calvary Baptist
Centreville 926-4079

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2590 Camp Branch Rd
West Blocton

Cedar Grove Baptist
West Blocton 938-0828

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Deer Creek Missionary
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Centreville 225-0460

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Brierfield 665-4865

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Liberty Baptist
Duncanville 759-9647 / 759-4074

Liberty Freewill Baptist
926-6496

Little Hope Primitive Baptist
Centreville 926-4236

Lowerytown Baptist
West Blocton 938-2436

Lucille Baptist
West Blocton 966-3556

Mission Baptist
Woodstock 938-7096

Mt. Carmel Baptist
West Blocton 938-2379

Mt. Ebell Baptist
Brent 926-9223

Mt. Grove Baptist
938-3410

Mt. Moriah Baptist
West Blocton 926-5425

Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church
Brent 926-9009

Mt. Tabor Baptist
Brent 926-7156

Mt. Zion Baptist
Centreville 334-366-5903

New Hebron Baptist
West Blocton 938-2101

New Hope Missionary Baptist
Randolph 334-366-1199

New Life Baptist Church
Centreville 205-541-7072

New Pleasant Valley
Brent 926-9045

Pinegrove Missionary Baptist
Brent 225-0139

Pineview Baptist
Brent 926-9280

Pleasant Sabine Baptist
Centreville 926-3867

Pondville Baptist
Brent 926-9211

Randolph Baptist 366-4296

Reno Baptist Church
Caffee Junction 477-5058

Rising Star Baptist
Centreville 926-4115

Rehobeth Baptist
Lawley 663-2907

Schultz Creek Baptist
West Blocton 938-9766

Shady Grove Baptist
Randolph 366-1163

Shady Grove II Baptist
West Blocton 938-0120
Pastor 834-2557

Shiloh Baptist
Centreville 926-7041

Six Mile Baptist
Brierfield

Smith Hill Baptist
West Blocton 938-2379

Thomas Mill Baptist
Centreville 926-6882

Union Baptist Church
722 Magnolia St
West Blocton

West Blocton First Baptist
938-7392

BIBLE
Grace Bible
Woodstock 938-7763

CATHOLIC
Church Of The Holy Spirit
Tuscaloosa 553-9733

St. Thomas
The Apostle Church
Montevallo 663-3936

CHRISTIAN
Marvel Christian Union
Montevallo 345-7018

CHURCH OF CHRIST
Centreville Church Of Christ
926-LOVE

North Bibb Church of Christ
Woodstock 477-6121

West Blocton
Church of Christ
West Blocton 938-7108

Evangelist Temple
Brent 926-6430

CHURCH OF GOD
Church of God of Prophecy
at Eoline
256-393-9625
Pastor Shane Pate

Church Of God Of Prophecy
West Blocton 938-2788

Caffee Junction Church Of
God
205-477-5468

River of Life Church of God
9225 Hwy 82, Brent
205-926-7600

West Blocton Church of God
City Rd. 21 Smith Hill
205-966-4988

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LORD JESUS CHRIST**
2300 South Scottsville Rd
Centreville 926-5393

EPISCOPAL
The Church Of The Holy
Comforter
Montevallo 665-2769

St. Andrews Episcopal
Church
925 Plowman Street
Montevallo 665-1667

HOLINESS
Deliverance Temple Holiness

Four Points 926-5565

Word of Faith Worship Cen-
ter
Centreville 926-4555

Free Will Apostolic Holiness
Antioch 926-9252

Real Truth Holiness Church
646 S. Scottsville Road
Brent 926-5009

Trinity Spirit Holiness Church
Centreville 926-4321

METHODIST
Brent Bible Methodist
812-675-1543
210 4th St. Brent, AL

Brent Methodist
190 Tabernacle Rd.
Brent, AL

Pondville Methodist
9:15 - 10 AM Sundays
Freindship Rd. • Brent

Friendship Bible Methodist
Church
205-225-4000
Co. Rd. 16 Brent, AL

Ada Chapel Bible
Methodist Church
12540 N. Scottsville Rd.
West Blocton, AL
513-254-8241

West Blocton Bible
Methodist Church
355 Camellia Lane, West
Blocton
205.826.5763

Mt. Sinai Church
Centreville 256-577-8137

James Chapel
A.M.E. Zion Church
926-5607

Bible Methodist
West Blocton 938-0091

Hopewell A.M.E. Zion
Harrisburg 926-5777

New Hope AME
West Blocton 540-8016

Tabernacle United Methodist
Lawley

Waymon Chapel AME
Brierfield 205-665-4730

West Scottsville
United Methodist Church
North Scottsville Road
451-3624

NAZARENE
Ridgeville Church Of The
Nazarene
Brent

Spencer Church Of The
Nazarene
Brent

PENTECOSTAL
New Life West Blocton
Pastor Greg Brock
205.441.2809

First United Pentecostal
Church of Centreville

PRESBYTERIAN
Brent Presbyterian P.C.A.
926-4722

Centreville First
Presbyterian P.C.A.
926-4261

Green Pond Presbyterian
Presbyterian Church Rd
205-938-2344

Pleasant Hill Upper Cumber-
land Presbyterian Church
Centreville 926-4409

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST
First Brent Seventh Day Ad-
ventist
926-6328

NON-DENOMINATIONAL
Fellowship Community
926-6800

Scottsville Union Church
Co. Rd. 9
Scottsville 205-503-6096

Victory Tabernacle Church
1008 Walnut Street •
Centreville
926-9455 or 361-2763
Pastor Butch Tucker

Yahweh's Harvest
926-9044

The Refreshing Place Church
24865 Hwy. 5
Woodstock, AL 35188
Pastor Wayne Keeton

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489 Co. Rd. 162 (Heiberger)
Marion, AL 36756
334-683-4933
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Sandy Chapel Community
Church
926-4934



FORGIVENESS IS FOR EVERYONE

“Be kind and compas-
sionate to one another, for-
giving each other, just as in
Christ God forgave you.”
Ephesians 4:32

Forgiveness is one of the
most powerful and chal-
lenging acts a believer can
practice. It’s not always
easy—especially when the
pain runs deep—but it is
always necessary. Forgive-
ness is not just a gift we of-
fer to others; it is a gift we
give ourselves. When we
forgive, we open our hearts
to healing, restoration, and
the freedom God desires for
us all.

In Scripture, forgiveness
isn’t suggested—it’s com-
manded. Jesus made this
clear in the Lord’s Prayer:
“Forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who
trespass against us” (Mat-
thew 6:12). We are not only
recipients of God’s mercy;
we are called to extend
that same mercy to others.
To forgive is to obey God’s

will, and obedience always
leads us closer to Him.

Holding on to bitterness
and resentment is like car-
rying a heavy burden that
God never intended us to
bear. Unforgiveness traps
us in the past, keeps wounds
open, and poisons our
hearts. But forgiveness re-
leases that weight. It doesn’t
mean we forget or excuse
what happened—it means
we choose not to let it con-
trol us anymore. Forgive-
ness is an act of faith, trust-
ing that God is just and that
healing is possible through
Him.

There is no greater ex-
ample of forgiveness than
Jesus. On the cross, He
prayed for those who cruci-
fied Him, saying, “Father,
forgive them, for they know
not what they do” (Luke
23:34). He forgave those
who mocked Him, aban-
doned Him, and nailed Him
to a tree. When we forgive
others, especially when it’s

hard, we reflect the radical
love of Christ. We become
living testimonies of grace.

While some relationships
may never return to what
they once were, forgiveness
opens the door for reconcil-
iation and peace. It softens
hardened hearts and allows
God to work in situations
we can’t fix on our own.
Even if the other person
never apologizes or chang-
es, choosing to forgive re-
moves the barrier between
us and God and makes room
for His healing power.

Forgiveness isn’t a feel-
ing—it’s a choice. It’s a
daily decision to live with a
heart that is free, not bound
by anger or hurt. When we
choose forgiveness, we
walk in the footsteps of Je-
sus and invite others to ex-
perience the same freedom
we’ve found in Him. Let
us be people who forgive
quickly, love deeply, and
trust fully in the One who
forgave us first.

COMMUNITY NEWS



From Iowa, after a stop off in Ar-
kansas; Jo Hinson and granddaugh-
ter Pepper arrived Thursday; visiting
cousins here. Peggy Marchant, Janice
Deason and Diana Dailey met them in
Tuscaloosa for dinner before they all
met at my home. Jo Kitchen & Ruth
Deason joined us for fellowship. On
Friday, Stace Hinson and daughters
Giada & Halle arrived. They also live in
Iowa and stopped in Kentucky (seeing
other relatives) on the way here. Luke
& Tracey Holladay allowed me to take
Stace, Giada, Pepper & Halle swim-
ming after dinner. Dinner was Roast
Beef, Cream Potatoes, Carrots, Green
Beans, Pickled Beets, Cornbread, Wa-
termelon & Cantaloupe. Diana and her
daughter Deanna and Jo Kitchen joined
us for dinner. Peggy Marchant, Janice
Deason & Ruth Deason joined Jo & Jo

for cards. Saturday morning the Iowa
relatives left for Dauphin Island; join-
ing many others for a family vacation.

Last weekend, Jera & Alan Fortner,
Ruth Deason, Chad & Stacey Thomp-
son, & Jim Kirkendall helped move
LaShelle & Ronnie Kinney to my
house. LaShelle will soon have re-
placement ankle surgery and will re-
cover here. Steve & Kristy Mullins
will be caring for Geneva Mullins.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY this week Jean
Johnston 8-1, Tim Carter 8-6, Jerry S
ioes & Judah Garcia 8-7, Alan Fortner,
Kesley Petty & Ed Todd 8-8.

HAPPY 11th ANNIVERSARY Jona-
than & Bianca Hannah.

Prayers for good health & healing
Robbie Todd & Amy Ellison.

Call 478-396-2543 to share your
news.



Birthday wishes go out to several
that have birthdays in July, Kasey Bar-
ton, Jonah Brewer (5), Derek Thomp-
son, Teresa Suttle, Peggy Simmons,
Darla Browning, Linda Buckalew,
Kathy Watkins, Kipton McGee (3),
Faith Thompson, Sara Hallmark, Tom
Claire, Gena Caffee Dowdle, Hollie
Rowland, Amy Boyd and Hilary Perry.
Sympathy goes out to the family of
Irma Lagrone who passed away re-
cently. Graveside services were held
on Wednesday, July 23, 2025 at Pine-
land Cemetery.

Anniversary wishes go out to Frank
and Alice Barton who recently cele-
brated they 35th wedding anniversary.

Those recently enjoying a barbe-
cue and swimming party with Larry

and Vicki Speights were children and
grandchildren, Laura Blumefeld and
Lily, Stacie Brewer, Phoenix and Jo-
nah.

We wish to extend sincere sympa-
thy to the family of Cathy Jones who
passed away on July 18, 2025. Grave-
side services were held on July 22,
2025 at Pondville Cemetery. Cathy
will be greatly missed by family and
friends.

Birthday wishes go out to Amy Watts
Boykin, August 3, 2025.

Sympathy goes out to the family of
Sandra K. Ingram who passed away re-
cently.

If you have news call it in at 205-
316-1181.

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LIFESTYLE

The Oldest Churches in Alabama: Preserving the State’s Spiritual Heritage

BY WHITNEY BUZBEE
REPORTER

Alabama, rich in Southern history and culture, is also home to some of the oldest churches in the southeastern United States. These historic sanctuaries are more than just buildings—they are monuments to the enduring faith, resilience, and community spirit that helped shape the state. From early missionary outposts to churches that withstood war, fire, and time, Alabama’s oldest churches are living testimonies to generations of worship and devotion.

Christ Church Cathedral – Mobile (Founded 1823): Located in downtown Mobile, Christ Church Cathedral is

one of the oldest Protestant congregations in Alabama and the first Episcopal church in the state. Though the congregation began meeting in the 1820s, the current Greek Revival building was completed in 1840. Christ Church played a major role in early religious life in Mobile and became the seat of the Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast in 2005.

St. John’s Episcopal Church – Montgomery (Founded 1834): Established in the capital city of Montgomery, St. John’s Episcopal Church has been a cornerstone of religious life in central Alabama since the early 19th century. Completed in 1855, the church is known for its beautiful

Gothic Revival architecture and stained glass windows. It is historically significant as the church where Jefferson Davis worshipped during his time in Montgomery as president of the Confederacy.

Old Cahawba Methodist Church – Cahawba (Founded mid-1800s): In the now-abandoned town of Cahawba, Alabama’s first state capital, stands the remains of one of the state’s earliest Methodist churches. Though the original structure has deteriorated, its historic significance remains. The church served as a center for both religious and social life during the town’s brief heyday in the mid-1800s. The site is now preserved as part of Old Cahawba Archaeological Park.

Ebenezer Baptist Church – Selma (Founded 1866): Though younger than some colonial-era congregations, Ebenezer Baptist Church in Selma holds historic importance due to its ties to the Civil Rights Movement. Founded just after the Civil War by freedmen, the church became a beacon of hope and activism. It served as a meeting place during the voting rights campaign and the Selma to Montgomery marches in the 1960s.

St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church – Prairieville (Built 1853): This small country church in Hale County is one of the oldest surviving Carpenter Gothic churches in the South. Nestled among the rural farmland of the

Black Belt, St. Andrew’s has remained largely unchanged since its construction in 1853. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and stands as a symbol of rural religious life in antebellum Alabama.

Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church – Montgomery (Founded 1877): Originally founded as the Second Colored Baptist Church, this congregation would later call Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as its pastor. Though it was founded after the Civil War, its spiritual and historical influence is enormous. The church became a central hub for the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Civil Rights Movement. It remains an active place of worship

and a powerful historical landmark.

Many of Alabama’s oldest churches are still active today, welcoming worshippers and tourists alike. Others stand quiet, preserved as historical sites. Regardless of their current role, these churches are treasures—architecturally, spiritually, and culturally. They connect the present with the past, reminding us of the role faith has played in the formation of communities and the shaping of history. Whether nestled in city streets or tucked among rolling farmland, Alabama’s oldest churches continue to tell stories of hope, endurance, and an unwavering trust in God that spans centuries.

ALABAMA LEGAL JOURNAL

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PROBATE NOTICE

Probate Court of Bibb County, Alabama Case No. 2025PC22 In the matter of the estate of Linda Hyde, Deceased

Notice to Creditors
Take notice that Letters of Testamentary having been granted to Kimberly Jean Pylant, as Executrix of the estate of Linda Hyde, deceased on the 24th day of May, 2024, by the Honorable Stephanie Kemmer, Judge of Probate. Notice is hereby given that

In the matter of the estate of John William Breasseale, deceased Probate Court of Bibb County, Alabama Case No. 2025PC052 Notice of Publication

Take notice that Letters of Administration have been granted to Cody Breasseale on the 21st day of July, 2025 by the Honorable Stephanie Kemmer, Judge of Probate of Bibb County Probate Court, Alabama and that all parties having claims against said

all persons having claims against the said estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law of the same will be barred.

Kimberly Jean Pylant
Executrix of the estate of Linda Hyde
Christopher R. Smitherman
Attorney for Estate
725 West Street
Montevallo, AL 35115
Centreville Press
July 18, 25 & August 1, 2025

estate should file the same with the probate Court of said county within the time allowed by law, or they will be barred.

Done this day of July 21, 2025
Judge of Probate
Stephanie W Kemmer
Lindsey Eastwood
Eastwood Estate & Probate Law
2001 Park Place, Suite 510
Birmingham, AL 35203
Centreville Press
July 25, August 1 & 8, 2025

In the Probate Court of Bibb County, Alabama In the matter of the estate of Evelyn Allean Chambers, Deceased Case No. 2025-PC057 Notice of Publication

Take notice that Letters of Administration having been granted to Kevin Chambers, personal Representative of the estate of Evelyn Allean Chambers, deceased, on the 21st day of July, 2025, by the Honorable Step-

hanie W. Kemmer, Judge of the Probate Court of Bibb County, Alabama.

Notice is hereby given that all persons having claims against the said estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law of the same will be barred.

Anthony B. Johnson
Johnson Law Firm
Post Office Box 188
Centreville, AL 35042
Centreville Press
August 1, 8 & 15, 2025

NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE:

MILTON MCKINNEY DBA MCKINNEY WRECKER gives Notice of Foreclosure of Lien and intent to sell these vehicles on 09/03/2025, 10:30 AM at 4901 TRUMAN ALDRICH PKWY, WEST BLOCTON, AL 35184-2101, pursuant to subsection 32-13-3 of the Alabama Statutes. MILTON MCKINNEY DBA MCKINNEY WRECKER reserves the right to accept or reject any and/or all bids.

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1HGGC22552A028887
2002 HOND ACCORD
1N4AL3AP2JC279871
2018 NISS ALTIMA
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2004 FORD F150
2FTZF1723XCA12052
1999 FORD F150
2G1FD1E38F9106923
2015 CHEV CAMARO
2G1WB5EKXA1178329
2010 CHEV IMPALA
3KPF24AD4PE552633
2023 KIA KORTE
Centreville Press
July 25 & August 5, 2025

MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

Default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness secured by that certain mortgage executed on July 15, 2004 by Arthur Edward Lott, Sr., single man, originally in favor of Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for RBMG, Inc., and recorded in 138 at 522 on July 20, 2004, and modified in and modified by agreement recorded October 6, 2014 in Book 298, Page 302 and further modified by agreement recorded August 2, 2016 in Book 318, Page 744 and further modified by agreement recorded February 22, 2019 in Book 350, Page 179, in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Bibb County, Alabama, and secured indebtedness having been transferred to Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.. LOGS Legal Group LLP, as counsel for Mortgagee or Transferee and under and by virtue of power of sale contained in the said mortgage will, on September 4, 2025, sell at public outcry to the highest bidder at the main entrance of the Bibb County, Alabama, Courthouse in the City of Centreville, during the legal hours of sale, the following real estate situated in Bibb County, Alabama, to wit:

A PARCEL OF LAND CONTAINING 3.68 ACRES, LOCATED IN THE NW1/4 OF THE NE1/4, SECTION 21, TOWNSHIP 23 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST, BIBB COUNTY, ALABAMA, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCE AT THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF SAID ¼-1/4 SECTION AND RUN NORTH 03 DEGREES 42 MINUTES

57 SECONDS WEST ALONG THE WEST BOUNDARY 721.57 FEET TO AN IRON ON A FENCE LINE, SAID POINT BEING THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE RUN NORTH 02 DEGREES 11 MINUTES 59 SECONDS WEST ALONG SAID FENCE 208.98 FEET TO AN IRON; THENCE RUN NORTH 82 DEGREES 11 MINUTES 21 SECONDS EAST 743.59 FEET TO AN IRON PIN ON THE WEST RIGHT OF WAY OF ALABAMA HIGHWAY NO. 58; THENCE RUN SOUTH 23 DEGREES 32 MINUTES 58 SECONDS EAST ALONG SAID RIGHT OF WAY 210.0 FEET TO AN IRON PIN; THENCE RUN SOUTH 81 DEGREES 46 MINUTES 52 SECONDS WEST 821.0 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

For informational purposes only, the property address is: 2087 University Way, Centreville, AL 35042.

Any property address provided is not part of the legal description of the property sold herein and in the event of any discrepancy, the legal description referenced herein shall control.

This sale is made for the purpose of paying the indebtedness secured by said mortgage, as well as the expenses of foreclosure. Furthermore, the property to be offered pursuant to this notice of sale is being offered for sale, transfer and conveyance AS IS, WHERE IS. Neither the mortgagee, nor the officers, directors, attorneys, employees, agents or authorized representative of the mortgagee make any representation or warranty relating to the title

or any physical, environmental, health or safety conditions existing in, on, at or relating to the property offered for sale. Any and all responsibilities or liabilities arising out of or in any way relating to any such condition, including those suggested by Code of Ala. (1975) § 35-4-271, expressly are disclaimed. This sale is subject to all prior liens and encumbrances and unpaid taxes and assessments including any transfer tax associated with the foreclosure. The successful bidder must tender a non-refundable deposit of Five Thousand Dollars and no/100 (\$5,000.00) in certified or cash funds at the time and place of the sale. The balance of the purchase price must be paid in certified funds by close of business on the next business day thereafter at the Law Office of LOGS Legal Group LLP at the address indicated below. LOGS Legal Group LLP reserves the

right to award the bid to the next highest bidder, or to reschedule the sale, should the highest bidder fail to timely tender the total amount due.

Alabama law gives some persons who have an interest in property the right to redeem the property under certain circumstances. Programs may also exist that help persons avoid or delay the foreclosure process. An attorney should be consulted to help you understand these rights and programs as a part of the foreclosure process.

Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., and its successors and assigns

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July 18, 25 & August 1, 2025

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at Bibb County's Rich History

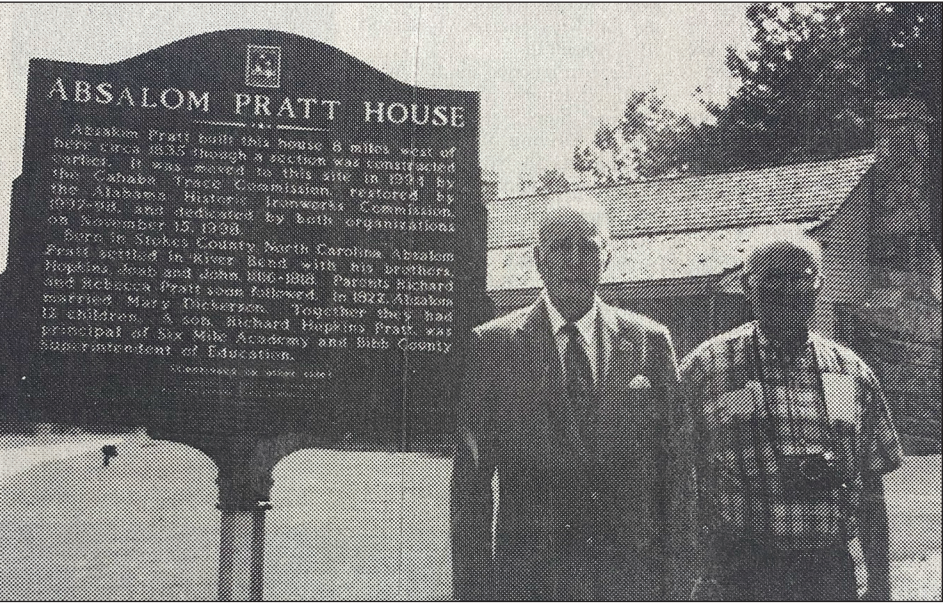
By Sheila Duncan



"Any man who doesn't understand where he comes from, has little hope of understanding where he may be going."

Welcome to our historical journey, where we delve into the rich tapestry of our past through the pages of *The Centreville Press*. Below, you will find articles from what we call the "morgue" – a collection of past articles that once graced our newspaper. These narratives provide a fascinating glimpse into the events, stories, and voices that shaped our community. So, let's embark on a journey through the narratives that once filled our pages, preserving the legacy and memories of yesteryears capturing the essence of bygone eras with vivid detail.

25 YEARS AGO



Absalom Pratt Historical Marker Unveiled

Members of the Pratt family gathered at the 1835 Absalom Pratt House on July 4th, during their annual reunion, to unveil a historical marker commemorating the history of the house and its original builder.

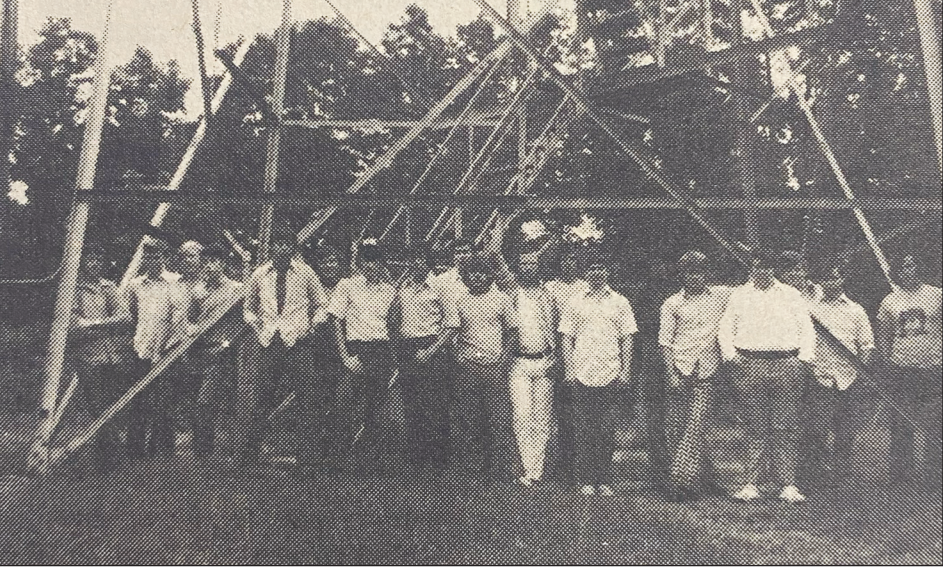
Born in North Carolina, Absalom Pratt settled in the River Bend with his brothers, Hopkins, Joab and John around 1816-1818. In 1822, he married Mary Dickerson and together they had 12 children.

A son, Richard Hopkins Pratt, served as the principal of the Six Mile Academy and Bibb County Superintendent of Education.

Absalom was appointed colonel of militia in 1841 and was the Schultz Creek Baptist Church clerk from 1840-1844. He died of typhoid fever in 1845. His wife, Mary lived until 1882. The last family members, great-grandsons of Absalom, born in the house were Leonard Callaway, Jr., Francis David and Clarence William Pratt, all of whom served in World War I

The house was moved to its present site in 1994, along Hwy. 25 near Brierfield Ironworks Historical Park and serves as the office of the Cahaba Trace Commission.

50 YEARS AGO



Nineteen Forestry students from the Bibb County Vocational school were given a guided tour of activities on the Oakmulgee Ranger District of the Talladega National Forest on May 15. Activities visited were areas concerned with rough reduction burning, timber sales and salvage cuttings, timber stand improvement, wildlife protection and recreation.

Bibb County Vocational students visit U.S. Forest Service Pondville Lookout Tower.

Multi-Resource Management of the National Forest was demonstrated to the students. Mr. Roger Brothers is instructor for the forestry class. The tour was directed by John Yancy and Dick Sampson, Foresters on the Oakmulgee Ranger District.

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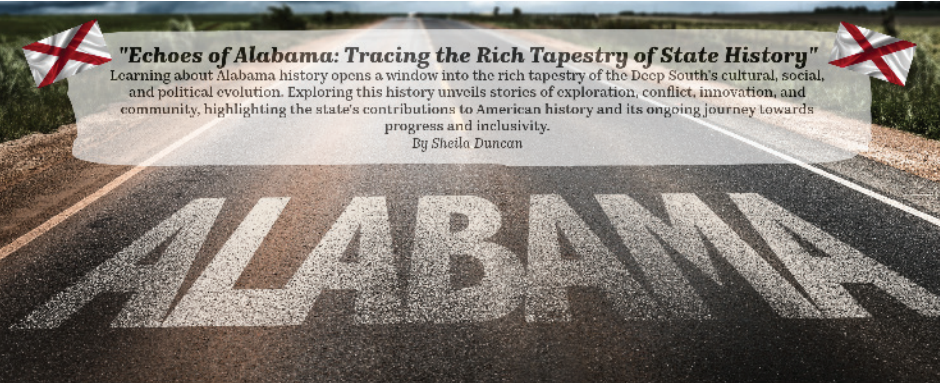
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ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
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Dismals Canyon: A Hidden Gem of Alabama's Natural and Native History

BY SHEILA DUNCAN
REPORTER

Tucked away in Franklin County near the small town of Phil Campbell lies one of Alabama's most enchanting and historically rich natural wonders—**Dismals Canyon**. Known for its mysterious beauty, rare glowing creatures, and deep historical roots, the canyon offers visitors more than just a scenic hike—it's a journey through time.

Formed over **300 million years ago**, the canyon's towering sandstone walls, boulder-strewn paths, and cool, shaded grottos paint a picture of an ancient world untouched by time. Carved by erosion through the ages, Dismals Canyon provides a pristine look into Alabama's prehistoric landscape.

Long before modern discovery, **Native American tribes**, particularly the Chickasaw, found refuge in the canyon's sheltering rock walls. Oral history and legends tell of Native people using the canyon to hide from forced removal during the Trail of Tears. Its rugged terrain made it an ideal place to avoid capture, and remnants of Native life have been found throughout the area.

Later, in the pioneer and early settlement era, Dismals Canyon became a hideout for outlaws and fugitives. Its winding trails and hidden chambers offered the perfect cover for those looking to disappear.

But what truly sets Dismals Canyon apart from anywhere else in Alabama—or the world—is its population of **Dismalites**. These rare bioluminescent insects, similar to glowworms, emit a soft blue-green light in the canyon's darkest areas. Nighttime tours during the warmer months reveal a spectacular natural light show that feels almost magical. These insects are found in only a handful of places across the globe, making the canyon an international point of interest for scientists and nature lovers alike.

In modern times, Dismals Canyon is a **Nation-**

al Natural Landmark and is privately owned and carefully preserved. Visitors can enjoy guided tours, waterfalls such as **Rainbow Falls**, overnight stays in rustic cabins, and of course, the glow of the famous Dismalites. With a mix of breathtaking beauty and

rich cultural history, the canyon stands as a tribute to Alabama's wild past and its natural heritage.

For those seeking adventure, history, or just a peaceful walk through the wonders of nature, **Dismals Canyon** is truly a treasure worth exploring.



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NEWS

What you can do to mitigate the damages in Bibb County, Alabama

Fighting Back Against The Sexual Abuse of Children and Human Trafficking

BY MIKE HOBSON
REPORTER
mike.hobson@centrevillepress.com

Bibb County Alabama is reeling from this week’s disclosure of a child predator sex ring, that has been manipulating and abusing minor children for more than three years, prior to its discovery. Keep reading this story to find out what you can do to help these children and the organizations that are in place to support them.

Seven adults have already been jailed and charged with a wide range of criminal offenses. The alleged perpetrators include parents and relatives of some of the child victims. Ten child victims (male and female) ranging in ages from 3 to 15 have already been identified and taken into protective custody. All of the children affected so far are local residents. The Bibb County sheriff announced in a press conference this week that more arrests will be forthcoming and they expect to identify many more child victims. It is a horrific gut-wrenching story.

The disclosure and arrest of the perpetrators is only the beginning of this story. The child victims face a lifetime of spiraling challenges to deal with the issues of abuse, public reaction to their plight, and a myriad of their future human health issues and psychological trauma. As Sheriff Jody Wade said “the child victims will never recover from this horror. The best we can hope for is that they are able to bury the awful memories and move forward with a productive life.”

In addition to local law enforcement, the Bibb County Department of Human Resources has been instrumental in the investigation and removal of identified children into protective custody.

The non-profit Central Al-

abama Children’s Advocacy Center has been involved in this case since the investigation was launched and victims were identified. The Alabama Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers, Inc. (ANCAC or The Network) is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to promote the multi-disciplinary process in fostering an abuse-free society for Alabama’s children and support the development of the Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) model through public awareness, training and collaborative partnerships. The Network achieves this mission with 45 Children’s Advocacy Centers serving 67 counties with forensic interviewing, evaluations, medical referrals, and counseling services.

The problem of child sexual abuse and human trafficking is not limited geographically to Bibb County, Alabama. New stories appear in the media almost every day with stark revelations across Alabama and the nation telling of the magnifying explosion of these types of discoveries and events. The children of our nation are at risk everywhere. It opens the eyes of adults when this strikes in your own community.

The sexual abuse of children takes many forms. Direct physical and sexual abuse, production of pornographic images and the exposure of these images to minors, and the actual sale of forced child sex acts to pedophiles and predators. Human trafficking enters the picture when children are moved around, across county or state lines, for commercial sex purposes.

Multiple organizations estimate that 500,000 predators are online every day, leaving minors vulnerable each time they access a social media account.

Some of the factors that lead to these events are included below. This is not an exhaustive

list, only a cursory review.

The following statistics are courtesy of ParentsTogether, a nonprofit organization providing independent reporting and commentary on issues that affect kids and families.

1 in 3 children are first exposed to social media at age 5 or younger.

1 in 3 children are expected to have an unwelcome sexual experience online before they turn 18.

Younger social media exposure correlates with more sexual harm online and peaks for kids who start using social media at 11-12 – the age around which most American children get their first smartphone.

43% of kids exposed to inappropriate sexual content online were under 13.

Kids with disabilities, special needs, or who identify as transgender are 2-4x more likely to send explicit images of themselves than their peers.

The most chilling fact about these statistics is that they only reflect the reported numbers. Human trafficking lives in the shadows, meaning it is impossible to ever know how many cases are happening without being reported.

<https://ourrescue.org/education/research-and-trends/human-trafficking-statistics>

In 2024, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) received more than 27,800 reports of possible child sex trafficking. This year President Donald Trump and Vice-President J.D. Vance have reported that more than 320,00 children who crossed our border into the United States are presently unaccounted for.

Child sex trafficking is a form of child abuse that occurs when a child under 18 is advertised, solicited or exploited through a commercial sex act. A commercial sex act is any sex act where something

of value – such as money, food, drugs or a place to stay – is given to or received by any person for sexual activity.

While any child can be targeted by a trafficker, research, data and survivor lived experience and expertise have revealed traffickers and buyers often target youth who lack strong support networks, have experienced violence in the past, are experiencing homelessness, or are marginalized by society. When youth feel like they are not loved, supported, or like they don’t belong they become ever more vulnerable to unsafe situations. Traffickers are masters of manipulation and prey upon vulnerabilities using psychological pressure, false promises, actions of perceived love/support and intimidation to control and sexually exploit the child for their benefit. The issue of child sex trafficking is complex. Understanding the various forms of child sex trafficking and indicators can create opportunities for prevention, identification, and response. Most importantly NCMEC embraces and encourages all efforts on this issue to be survivor-informed, child-centered, and trauma-informed.

<https://www.ncmec.org/the-issues/trafficking>

Recruitment

Data shows that trafficking victims are generally recruited by someone they

know - such as a family member or caregiver (33%), an intimate partner (28%), or an employer (22%). As a whole, the internet remained the top reported recruitment location. Recent Migration/Relocation remained the most frequently reported risk factor or vulnerability identified, applying to just over half (54%) of all likely victims with a known risk factor/vulnerability; this also applied to 93%

of likely victims of labor trafficking.

<https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Polaris-Analysis-of-2021-Data-from-the-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline.pdf>

What Can You Do To Protect Children

Don’t be shy or timid about learning what your children are doing with internet access and the use of free apps. Limit access to and the use of internet devices, such as cell-phones. Monitor what your children are doing and seeing online.

The State of Alabama recently passed a new law aimed at reducing children’s pre-occupation with and use of phones, explicitly during school hours. Governor Kay Ivey has signed the FOCUS Act, prohibiting students’ use of smart phones and other wireless devices inside Alabama’s public schools. Support your local school’s efforts to implement compliance with these new laws and find out how they can help protect children.

Educate yourself. Look for online resources to help you learn about predators and the safe use of internet devices for your own children.

Consult the plethora of online resources to inform yourself about the problem and recommended steps to follow with your family. One excellent starting point are informational materials available from the U.S. Department of Justice. You can find them by visiting the link below:

<https://www.justice.gov/psc/national-strategy-child-exploitation-prevention-and-interdiction>

One helpful video has been produced by Shared Hope International and you can view it online at the following link:

<https://sharedhope.org/what-we-do/prevent/aware->

ness/internetsafety/

Look for State and local non-profit organizations who use donations for the sole purpose of promoting the well-being, health and safety of our children and consider supporting them financially. Small donations can make a difference.

Sharpen your vigilance and powers of observation. Do not hesitate to report suspicious activity or signs of illegal activity. If you see something say something. Let law enforcement and child protective services do the investigation.

Finally and most importantly Pray without ceasing.

Pray for the safety and healing of child predator victims and the reformation of a broken segment of our society that preys upon the lives and futures of innocent children.

Pray for the law enforcement and court officers that are pulled into the dark web of predators to enforce our laws and protect our children.

Pray for the social workers, adolescent counselors and justice system workers that are faced with the horrors and subsequent consequences of child predation.

Engaging in Prayer has no pre-requisites. The power of prayer does not flow from us; it is not special words we say or the special way we say them or even how often we say them. The power of prayer is not based on a certain direction we face or a certain position of our bodies. The power of prayer does not come from the use of artifacts or icons or candles or beads. The power of prayer comes from the omnipotent One who hears our prayers. Prayer places us in contact with Almighty God. Whatever the answer to our prayers, the God to whom we pray is the source of the power of prayer. He can hear us and will answer us, according to His perfect will and timing.

Economic Struggle

Economic Struggle from page 3

Local sales tax dollars melted away from the municipalities as tax revenues transformed with changing shopping trends. The nearby big city Mayors never complained as their brick & mortar store sales exploded, accepting the benefits and tax revenues of shoppers from outside their city limits.

Within 25 years of the birth of Twix the business landscape in Brent and Centreville was drastically changed, along with its tax base. Before the century ended almost every business mentioned above was shuttered and not to be seen again.

This story was not unlike other rural towns in Alabama. Interstate highways and feeder roads have changed traffic patterns & shopping habits. The manner we acquire the goods we need in daily life have all evolved and shifted with the economic headwinds. Like other small towns in Alabama municipalities have suffered trying to rebuild their sales tax base, balance budgets, struggling to fund and run government and provide citizen services.

The Rise of Internet Sales Tax

Fast Forward to 2015. We have conquered outer space and landed on the moon. An International Space Station circles the globe over our heads. The ubiquitous internet arrived and matured. Internet sales exploded, and changed the playing field again, for all Alabama municipalities. By 2015 online sales were a mainstay for the shopping world, and purchases made on the internet escaped all Alabama sales taxes. Sales tax growth was plummeting for the State.

Alabama state lawmakers reacted and passed the Simplified Sellers Use Tax Remittance Act (Act 2015-448) in 2015. The U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling allowing states to force online shoppers to pay sales tax. The Alabama act allowed eligible sellers to sell their goods or services in Alabama from a location outside of the state with an easily-accessible method to collect tax on sales made. By 2025 the SSUT collections were humming along, distributing much needed sales tax revenues to counties, cities, and towns statewide

Due to the way the SSUT program is currently written through legislation, the 8 percent flat tax applies to all sales regardless of the locality the product or service was delivered to in Alabama. The tax is divided up with approximately 4 percent given to the state with the remaining approximate 4 percent distributed between local government. The state distributes its earnings with 1 percent for the Education Trust Fund and 3 percent for the General Fund. Counties receive about 1.6 percent of the SSUT earnings and municipalities receive 2.4 percent.

As of today the SSUT has disbursed \$363, 569,474 in internet sales tax collections for this year alone.

The SSUT has been a lifesaver for the economies of small towns like Brent & Centreville. For example in calendar year 2024 Centreville received \$236,249. in collected internet sales taxes, Brent received \$250,762. and the Bibb County Commission received a total of \$770,330 according to ADOR online reporting. Add in \$102,684 for West Blocton & \$124,199 for Woodstock you get a total of \$1,484,224 allocated to Bibb County governments from SSUT collections.

The Latest Threat To Small Town Economies

Centreville Mayor Mike Oakley, a Board Member for the Alabama League of Municipalities recently disclosed a new looming threat to the fiscal health of small towns in Alabama, including Brent-Centreville-West Blocton-Woodstock & the Bibb County Commission.

Today, some of the larger cities in Alabama are unhappy and grumbling about the distribution formula for the SSUT online taxes. Unsurprisingly, they are grasping for a bigger slice of the pie, according to Mayor Oakley. “If they are successful, it will be at the expense of small towns like ours in Bibb County,” according to Oakley.

The storm is brewing in none other than our neighboring town of Tuscaloosa. On Monday, April 7, Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox hosted a summit on the SSUT issue and invited more than 50 mayors from across the state to discuss the issue. During the summit, Maddox and fellow mayors, discussed the issues with the current SSUT system, outlining how it was affecting several large municipalities.

As part of the summit, Maddox presented Destination Sourcing as a possible solution to the issue which would change online sales to be based on the location of where the buyer takes possession of the item sold. Destination Sourcing would fix the fiscal losses that certain major municipalities are experiencing through the SSUT system, however, any smaller municipalities that were benefitting from the population distribution could see a decrease in funding, according to Maddox.

Tuscaloosa Mayor Maddox is trying to start a grass-roots movement and seeks to force the state to revisit how their SSUT distribution is structured. Several other larger cities have indicated they are willing to join Tuscaloosa in a lawsuit against the State of Alabama. It is all designed to garner a larger sales tax benefit for towns like Tuscaloosa, said Mayor Oakley.

“It’s the distribution of the SSUT sales tax that has put counties and cities at odds since its inception. When a consumer buys an item at a brick-and-mortar store within city limits, the city keeps a majority of the tax revenue. When that item is bought online, counties and cities statewide takes a slice of the revenue”, according to Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson.

“If you’re in a smaller city, you’re getting some of Mobile’s tax money,” Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson said. “There are a lot of people that are perfectly happy because they’re taking other people’s money.”

“When the SSUT was passed into law, 7.5% of sales nationwide were made online, according to Stimpson. In 2024, that amount rose to 16%. With that rise in online sales, Stimpson said the SSUT becomes more costly each year.”

Mayor Maddox makes the same arguments, claiming that Tuscaloosa is entitled to all of the tax revenues derived from online sales. Maddox said Tuscaloosa could use that lost revenue for infrastructure, economic development and public safety.

How much did Tuscaloosa and the other large cities collect from internet sales from out of state vendors prior to the enactment of SSUT ? The answer is a resounding zero. Same for everybody else in Alabama. Now only a

few of the largest cities are complaining about how the collected SSUT funds are distributed.

Sonny Brasfield, Executive Director of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, said county governments use the additional money they get from the SSUT for many of the same sectors.

“I don’t really understand the point that he’s trying to make, just to be honest,” Brasfield said. “I don’t think there’s an argument to be made to treat bigger cities differently than you treat the rest of local government.”

Brasfield said much of the money funneled to the counties is used for court operations, law enforcement, economic development and infrastructure needs.

Mayor Oakley of Centreville says that “the big town Mayors are clouding or masking the real issue and making arguments that don’t wash. Their problem is the same story that every rural town has already experienced and suffered through. Consumers, regardless of where they live, are now buying more through online vendors, not local stores, whether rural or big town brick and mortar.

“As online sales increase it was to the detriment of the local tax base, and the SSUT is the only tool that has provided a remedy that helps all towns in Alabama. After all, the basis for the SSUT is an 8% sales tax that applies to sellers that do not have a residence in the state, said Oakley.

“Big town Mayors seem to overlook or minimize that their own citizens are often buying from online, out of town vendors, not always local, and they are suffering the same pain small towns have felt for decades, before SSUT arrived. But they seem to think the tax revenue should be all theirs, says Oakley. Our legislature came up with a formula that helps every small city and town in the State in the face of the internet sales revolution. I don’t think we are going to see them reverse course to please the big cities.

“The Destination Sourcing concept is a smoke and mirrors plan designed to invade the legislative solution for fair tax distribution already in place and would take revenues that are being used to provide citizen services in smaller municipalities. Twix-N-Tween is not coming back” said Oakley.

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NEWS

From Fundamentals to Future Champions:
West Blocton Hosts Youth Basketball Camp

BY CANDACE JOHNSON
REPORTER

West Blocton High School recently hosted a youth basketball camp for students in grades 3–6, followed by a minicamp for younger players in kindergarten through second grade. The youth camp ran on June 23, 24, 26, and 27 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., offering kids the chance to develop their basketball fundamentals while having fun on the court.

Throughout the interactive four-day camp, participants dribbled, passed, and shot their way through skill-building drills and games. The registration fee for the youth camp was \$50.

The fun didn’t stop there. On July 12, the excitement continued with a special

minicamp tailored for K–2 students, held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Children from West Blocton Elementary, Woodstock Elementary, Brent Elementary, Randolph Elementary, Cahawba Christian Academy, and surrounding schools were invited to take part.

The minicamp emphasized a supportive and encouraging environment, allowing the younger players to learn new skills, build confidence, and make new friends.

The motto for this year’s camp was “From Fundamentals to Future Champions,” reflecting its mission to teach the basics of basketball in a fun and approachable way, while also planting the seeds for the next generation of players.

Photos courtesy of Allen Photography + Events



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