

Centreville Press

Volume 148 | Issue 1 | 75¢ | January 2, 2026 | Full Digital Edition

Subscriber Access www.bibbvoice.com

205.926.9769 | editor@centrevillepress.com



Spirit of Christmas Awards Celebrate Community Giving in Woodstock

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

The Town of Woodstock gathered Friday, December 5, for the 9th Annual Small Town Christmas Event and Spirit of Christmas Awards, celebrating the season through creativity, generosity, and a shared love for community.

The festive evening brought together local businesses, churches, and community organizations as they transformed decorated tents into holiday-themed displays. Each display competed for cash prizes that were awarded to local nonprofit organizations, turning holiday cheer into meaningful community support.

The Grand Prize of \$1,000, sponsored by The Kelley Group, LLC, was awarded to the Bibb County Probate Office and Tax Assessor's Office for their "Oldtime Tree Market and Toys" display, benefiting Compassion & Hope Food



Basket of Bibb County. "The Spirit of Christmas Awards show what can happen when our community comes together with a shared goal of helping others," said Woodstock Mayor Jeff Dodson in a Town of Woodstock press release. "We're incredibly grateful to everyone who participated and attended."

Town Clerk Tiffney McCulley echoed

those sentiments, adding, "This event reflects the heart of Woodstock. We are a small town, but when it comes to supporting our neighbors and spreading Christmas cheer, our community truly shines."

Additional award recipients included:

- Runner-Up (\$750): West Alabama Bank – Gingerbread House Charity: Garrett's

- Second Place (\$500): Cahaba Medical Care – Have a Healthy Holiday Charity: Cahaba Medical Care Foundation (Psychiatry Center in Woodstock)

- Third Place (\$350): First US Bank – Santa's Sweet Snack Shop Charity: Shop with a Cop

- Honorable Mention (\$200): Wood-

stock Drug – Merry Christmas Charity: Neighborhood Bridges Bibb County

- Honorable Mention (\$200): John Rich – State Farm Agent – North Pole Insurance Charity: Colorectal Cancer Alliance

In addition to The Kelley Group's generous support, the Town of Woodstock also extends its gratitude to an anonymous donor

who contributed to the prize fund.

The Town of Woodstock thanks all participating businesses, organizations, volunteers, and families who helped make the 9th Annual Small Town Christmas Event a joyful celebration of generosity, togetherness, and holiday spirit.

Bibb County Head Start Offers Parenting Classes to Support Families in 2026

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

Parents and caregivers in Bibb County are invited to take part in a series of empowering and practical parenting classes offered through the Bibb County Head Start program in partnership with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Beginning in January 2026, these free sessions are designed to support families as they build strong foundations at home – financially, emotionally, and physically.

Held every other Thursday at 10 a.m. at the BMC Wellness Center (1006 Walnut Street, Centreville), the 2026 Head Start Parenting Classes will cover a wide range of helpful topics aimed at strengthening families and promoting healthy lifestyles.

The schedule includes:

- January 8 – Budget Planning
- January 22 – Tackling Debt
- February 12 – Eat Smart, Move More
- February 26 – Eat Smart, Move More
- March 12 – Eat Smart, Move More
- April 9 – Eat Smart, Move More
- April 23 – Container Gardening
- May 14 – 24/7 Dads
- May 28 – 24/7 Dads (held at BMC Wellness Center)

Each session is designed to provide practical tools, encouragement, and community connection for parents and caregivers navigating the joys and challenges of raising children. From financial wellness to nutrition, parenting engagement, and hands-

on learning, these classes aim to meet families where they are and help them grow with confidence.

The program is hosted by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) and is open to all families. Participation is free, and everyone is welcome.

For more information or questions about the Head Start Parenting Classes, contact Misty Weems or Miracle Benson at (205) 926-9384. Those needing accessibility accommodations may also reach out to (205) 926-4310.

This series is a wonderful opportunity for families to connect, learn, and thrive together – one Thursday at a time.

Bibb County Head Start Parenting Classes 2026 Schedule

- January 8th - Budget Planning
- January 22nd - Tackling Debt
- February 12th - Eat Smart Move More
- February 26th - Eat Smart Move More
- March 12th - Eat Smart Move More
- April 9th - Eat Smart Move More
- April 23rd - Container Gardening
- May 14th - 24/7 Dads
- May 28th - 24/7 Dads @ BMC Wellness Center

Questions about Head Start?
Contact Misty Weems or Miracle Benson at (205) 926-9384

Every Other Thursday at 10 AM

1006 Walnut Street
Centreville, AL

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Everyone is welcome! Please contact us at 205-926-4310 if you have any accessibility needs.

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NEWS

Pre-filed bill would allow Alabamians with disabilities to receive absentee ballot help

Source: *Alabama Reflector*

An Alabama lawmaker has pre-filed a bill for the 2026 legislative session that would allow a voter with a disability to have assistance with filling out an absentee ballot.

HB 45, sponsored by Rep. Adline Clarke, D-Mobile, would require the Secretary of State to change the absentee ballot application to allow another person to submit the disabled voter's ballot. On existing absentee ballots, only the voter can submit the ballot except in the case of "medical emergency absentee applications."

"I've had constituents complain to me about not being able to hand deliver an absentee ballot application on behalf of a loved one or a neighbor," Clarke said in an interview. "I do believe that state law allows for us to be good Samaritans and to help the disabled with the entire absentee voting process."

In 2024, Senate Pro Tempore Garlan Gudger, R-Culman, passed SB 1, which prohibited any payment for assistance in absentee bal-

lot applications or to "knowingly" provide an absentee ballot with pre-filled information. A group of five non-profit, non-partisan organizations filed a lawsuit against the state, saying that Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act preempts the law.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit deferred its decision on the case to the Alabama Supreme Court, according to a Dec. 15 court filing, due to questions it had about the law.

This is the third session Clarke has filed the bill. Each year Clarke filed the bill, it was not considered in its respective House committee. Clarke said she hopes pre-filing the bill will help move it through, but only about one third of filed bills are passed each year.

"Sometimes a third of those get passed, which means two thirds of them don't," Clarke said. "We have to keep trying."

Because the bill has not been considered in the past, Clarke said she has not heard any specific concerns about it. There is no fiscal note attached to

the bill. "I think that most people probably print the application from the Secretary of State's website, and so I don't see this as an additional cost to the state," she said.

The bill defines disability as it is defined in federal law, as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of the applicant."

Larry Canada, legal director of the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP), said in an interview including the definition strengthens the bill. ADAP is one of the five plaintiffs in the SB 1 lawsuit.

"It's not a one-size-fits-all," Canada said. "If you have someone with mobility issues, someone who is blind, for instance, they need assistance, and this defines disability the way the federal government defines it. I think it's a good step."

While ADAP is not legally allowed to lobby for policies due to its federal funding, Canada said ADAP's purpose is to educate those with disabilities on their rights.

"What our concern

is, is that people with disabilities are allowed to exercise their constitutional right to vote. To us, it doesn't matter whether they're Republican, Democrat, Independent, everyone has a right to vote who is a citizen of this country and in this state with the residency rules that we have for voting," Canada said. "To us, anything that impedes that is a violation of federal law, period."

The bill allows a voter with disabilities to be assisted by a designee to fill out the absentee ballot application and ballot, and allows the designee to deliver the application and ballot to the mail or the absentee election manager.

"It is the humane, considerate, compassionate thing to do is to make it legal for disabled individuals to be able to get the help that they need with returning an absentee election ballot application," Clarke said. "We should all put ourselves in the shoes of disabled individuals, and do the right thing here."

The 2026 legislative session begins on Jan. 13.

Rural Health Transformation Program unlocks over \$203million for Alabama

MONTGOMERY — Governor Kay Ivey on Monday announced Alabama has officially received its award number from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for the federal Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), formally approving Alabama's plan and unlocking \$203,404,327 in first-year funding. The five-year program, seeking to help improve healthcare access, quality and outcomes in the state, will be administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA).

"We are very pleased Alabama will be awarded more than \$203 million in the first year of the Rural Health Transformation Program. After President Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act into law in July, Alabama got to work

preparing for this program so we could hit the ground running once our state's new comprehensive rural health strategy was approved," said Governor Ivey. "Now that it has been approved, we will take the next steps to ensure our citizens and communities benefit for generations. Making America Healthy Again begins in rural America, and I look forward to being able to improve health care across Alabama."

The RHTP was established under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which Congress passed in July and was signed by President Trump. Shortly after the law's passage, Governor Ivey directed state agencies to begin developing a comprehensive rural health strategy to ensure Alabama was prepared once the program launched.

"Governor Ivey

knows how important this program will be to the people of Alabama, and ADECA appreciates the trust she has placed in us to administer it," said ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell.

In November, Governor Ivey announced Alabama's plan had been submitted to CMS for approval. In December, Governor Ivey signed an executive order establishing the Alabama Rural Health Transformation Advisory Group to advise on implementation, policy development and oversight so the state would be positioned to move quickly upon approval.

The plan includes 11 initiatives:

- Collaborative Electronic Health Record (EHR), IT and Cybersecurity Initiative
- Rural Health Initiative
- Maternal and Fetal Health Initiative
- Rural Workforce Initiative
- Cancer Digital Regionalization Initiative
- Simulation Training Initiative
- Statewide EMS Trauma and Stroke Initiative
- EMS Treat-In-Place Initiative
- Mental Health Initiative
- Community Medicine Initiative
- Rural Health Practice Initiative

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- Statewide EMS Trauma and Stroke Initiative
- EMS Treat-In-Place Initiative
- Mental Health Initiative
- Community Medicine Initiative
- Rural Health Practice Initiative

It was developed with the input and collaboration of the Governor's Office, ADECA, the Alabama Department of Finance, the Alabama Medicaid Agency and the Alabama State Health Planning and Development Agency, along with dozens of stakeholders, healthcare experts and lawmakers.

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April Weaver
Alabama State Senator

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LOCAL & GOVERNMENT

Centreville News

By Brenda Hubbard

We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family of Albert Wayne Melton who passed away on December 14, 2025. Services were held on December 19 at Centreville Baptist Church.

Sympathy is also extended to the family of Emily Bamberg England who passed away on December 15, 2025. Services were held on Monday, December 22, 2025.

Birthday wishes go out to several that will have a birthday in January. Lisa Holdsambeck, Kathleen Davis, Rhonda Cook, Jennifer Anderson, Gene Caddis, Melissa Marchant Wallen, Hope Sonnier and Doris Newman.

Get well wishes and prayers go out to Jerry Pow who has been a patient at Grandview Hospital in Birmingham.

Belated birthday wishes to Jamie Schmidt who celebrated on December 20, 2025.

On Tuesday night December 16, 2025 the Bunco group had such a great time at the home of Vickie Brown. Lots of good food and laughter. They always have a blast together. Those present were Jodi Hamby, Karol McCaleb, Connie Owens, Henri Sonnier, Ann Lawley, Fran Kornegay, Charlotte West, Emily Blake, Nancy Carlee, Jenny

Hobson, Susan Young and hostess Vickie Brown.

Anniversary wishes go out to Bill and Jean Carlee who celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary on December 20, 2025.

Alan Nelson celebrated his birthday on Saturday, December 20, 2025. We want to send belated birthday wishes to Alan.

Sympathy goes out to the family of Raymond Brown Jr., age 77, who passed away on December 17, 2025. Services were held on Monday, December 22, 2025 in Tuscaloosa.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family of Nell Stripling, age 83, who passed away on Sunday, December 21, 2025 at Bibb Medical Center. Graveside services were held on Friday December 26, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at Pineland Memorial Park, Centreville, AL. Nell will be missed greatly by her family and many friends.

Belated birthday wishes go out to Katlin Clark who recently celebrated her 40th birthday. Katlin is the daughter of Keith and Lisa Cox Booth. Belated birthday wishes also go out to Wayne Bush who celebrated his birthday recently.

If you have news call it in at 205-316-1181. Take care and God Bless.

Bibb County GOP Announces 2026 Election Information

BY MIKE HOBSON REPORTER

mike.hobson@centrevillepress.com
Bibb County GOP Chairman April Weaver announced Friday that local qualifying for the Republican Primary and open Bibb County elected positions will begin on January 5, 2026. Qualifying dates will match those announced by the Alabama GOP. Qualifying will begin at 8:30 a.m. and remain open through Friday, January 23, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Local races for Bibb County are as follows:

- Bibb County Sheriff
- Bibb County Tax Assessor/Collector
- Bibb County Board of Education Superintendent
- Board of Education- Place 1

- (Incumbent Morris Moody)

- Bibb County Commissioners District 2 & 4 - (Incumbents Charles Caddell and Ty Corbell)

Key dates for the 2026 election cycle include:

- ALGOP Primary Election: Tuesday, May 19, 2026
- ALGOP Primary Runoff Election: Tuesday, June 16, 2026
- General Election: Tuesday, November 3, 2026

For more information on how to qualify as a local republican candidate, please call Bob County chairman April Weaver at 205-541-6424. Qualifying fees are 2% of the annual salary applicable to any remunerative office, \$50.00 for an unremunerative office.

Six Mile Cabin's Pioneer Roots

BY CANACE JOHNSON REPORTER

We previously delved into the historical Six Mile log cabin now owned by the Weaver Family and located along U.S. Highway 25 in the Six Mile community. Now we continue to explore the important history and background of the original owners, the Clabaugh family, and their roots. Bibb County is known for its historical significance, with its rich history beginning in 1818 and Alabama entered Statehood. Bibb County made history, being known as a major producer of iron and coal, and being named after Alabama's first governor. Something that you may not have known about the area's pioneers are their ties to Former U.S. Presidents and historical wars and battles.

John Clabaugh was a member of the Clabaugh family, whose family migrated to Alabama from East Tennessee, and finally to Texas. The early 19th century was a time of great change and national expansion for the country. During the War of 1812, tensions escalated between the United States and Great Britain. Because of this, General Andrew Jackson called upon volunteers from Tennessee,

which gave the state its current nickname: "The Volunteer State." Among these volunteers was John Clabaugh.

Clabaugh left his family to enlist as a private in Captain John Roper's Company, Colonel William Lillard's 2nd Regiment of the East Tennessee Volunteers. Under General Andrew Jackson, Clabaugh fought against the Creek Nation in the infamous Battles of Talladega and Horseshoe Bend. After being discharged on Feb. 8, 1814, John returned safely to his Tennessee family with new experiences and ready to take advantage of the newly obtained territory.

John Clabaugh and his wife Elizabeth embarked on a migration with Elizabeth's extended family. From there, they likely moved along the Tennessee River then to the Alabama wilderness, and finally settled in Bibb County, Alabama. This migration made them among Bibb County's first pioneer families.

Once settled, Clabaugh quickly became active in civic life. As a constable, he maintained law and order in a county still shaping its governance. He helped manage elections and oversaw road maintenance in

his militia district, ensuring that vital infrastructure kept pace with the needs of a growing population. In religious life, the family was connected to Cahaba Valley Baptist Church in Brierfield, a congregation that remains active today. Clabaugh quickly became involved in religious life as well, establishing himself within the Cahaba Valley Baptist Church, which still stands in Brierfield.

John Clabaugh established a farm located at Six Mile Creek, which provided vital resources such as fertile land, crops, and access to water. It was also a source for local trade, which further helped contribute to the county's economy. John's farm on Six Mile Creek provided fertile land, water access, and a base for both family sustenance and local trade. In the agricultural economy of the 1800s, such farms were essential to community survival and economic growth. Today, his contributions are preserved in the historical record and in the ongoing rehabilitation of landmarks like the Weaver Cabin, reminders of the families who helped shape Bibb County's identity.

Built in the 1800s, the Six Mile log cabin is a rare surviving ex-

ample of early settler craftsmanship. The cabin's preservation links directly to the pioneer era when families like the Clabaughs cleared land, built homes, and established farms along Six Mile Creek. Rehabilitation efforts honor that history while providing a tangible connection for future generations.

As Bibb County continued to grow, its developing communities eventually needed more than farms, churches, and hand-built roads; they needed the financial structure to support expanding commerce. The Clabaugh family's influence extended into this next chapter as well. Historical records indicate that members of the family were connected to the formation of the Real Estate Banking Company in Selma, reflecting their role in the broader economic growth of central Alabama. This involvement shows how early settlers like the Clabaughs helped shape not only the civic and religious foundations of Bibb County but also the emerging financial networks that would later support towns such as Centreville, Brent, and the wider region.

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EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

Democratic Candidate Qualifying dates for the 2026 election were set by the Bibb County Democratic Executive Committee to begin Monday, January 5, 2026 at 9.am, and end Friday, January 23, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in accordance with Alabama election law.

Candidates seeking a County spot on the Democratic Primary ballot must qualify with County Chairwoman Joyce Rice. The County ballot positions include Sheriff, County Commissioner Districts 2 and 4, Tax Assessor/Collector, and Board of Education Dist. 1. candidates for Bibb County Executive Committee must qualify for a 4-year term also.

Contact Information: Joyce Rice, 205-217-3505 Email: joycerice65@gmail.com

Staying Informed, Staying Engaged: Looking Ahead to Bibb County's 2026 Elections

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

As our community continues to grow and evolve, staying informed about local leadership and civic opportunities remains an important part of supporting one another. The 2026 election cycle will bring several key races that directly impact Bibb County, and residents are encouraged to stay engaged, informed, and ready to participate.

Voters will have the opportunity to help shape the future of our community through the following local offices up for election:

- Bibb County Sheriff
- Bibb County Tax Assessor/Collector
- Bibb County Board of Education Superintendent
- Board of Education – Place 1 (Incumbent: Morris Moody)

• Bibb County Commissioners – Districts 2 & 4 (Incumbents: Charles Caddell and Ty Corbell)

These positions play an important role in public safety, education, fiscal responsibility, and the overall well-being of our county. Participating in local elections is one of the most direct ways residents can support the values and future they want to see in Bibb County.

As these elections approach, community members are encouraged to learn about the candidates, ask questions, and make plans to vote. Local elections shape everyday life – from schools and public services to infrastructure and community programs.

When neighbors stay informed and engaged, our community grows stronger.

We Lost Some Good Ones This Year

Inside the Statehouse
By Steve Flowers

December 31, 2025:

As is my custom for the past 21 years, my year end column illuminates Alabama political luminaries that passed away this year. We lost some good ones.

Former State Senator and Lt. Governor George McMillan passed away in Birmingham at 81. George was a vivacious, delightful gentleman, who never met a stranger. I never knew anyone who ever met George that did not like him. He began his meteoric political career at an early age. He was elected to the State Senate from Jefferson County in 1974 and was elected Lt. Governor in 1978. He lost a razor-thin election to George Wallace for Governor in 1982. Many predicted he would win that race and, if elected, would have given Alabama a "New South" Governor.

Former State Representative and ABC Administrator Mac Gipson passed away in July at 89. Mac represented Autauga and Elmore Counties for 16 years in the House of Representatives. He was appointed head of the Alabama Beverage Control Board by Governor Robert Bentley. He remained head of the ABC until his retirement at the end of 2022, having served under Governors Bentley and Kay Ivey. Gipson was the successful owner and founder of Gipson's Tire stores in Prattville and Millbrook. Mac was a good man and a good legislative friend.

Another legislative friend, Ralph Burke, passed away in July. Ralph represented DeKalb County in the Alabama House of Representatives from 1983 to 1998. He was an educator by profession. Ralph was a graduate of Jacksonville State and was a lifetime advocate for his alma mater. He was only 65.

Another of my favorite legislative colleagues, William "Bill" Drinkard, passed away in July at 79 at his home in Springville. He served in both the House and Senate from Etowah and St. Clair Counties from 1978 to 1990. He had a diversified business career as a store owner, hospital administrator, and a real estate developer. Bill was a diligent and good legislator.

Julian McPhillips was a renowned lawyer, and loyal Democratic Party leader in Alabama for over four decades. He passed away in Montgomery in April at age 78. His family had a deep heritage in Alabama. His father was a legendary Episcopal priest. He was born in Birmingham in 1946, but raised in Cullman. He graduated from Princeton cum laude and was an all-Ivy League wrestler. He then graduated from Columbia Law School. Julian worked as a Wall Street lawyer from 1971 to 1975. He moved back to Alabama in 1975 and began working as Assistant to Attorney General Bill Baxley. He ran for Attorney General of Alabama in 1978, and ran second in a nine man field. He spent the rest of his life as a progressive lawyer and civic and civil rights leader in Montgomery.

Tom Walker was the Founder and President Emeritus of the American Village in Montevallo. Tom conceived the idea of the American Village in the 1980's. His vision accomplished the establishment of one of Alabama's treasures. American Village teaches American history and civics. He built an amazing 188-acre campus in Montevallo. The campus has served over three-quarters of a million students and draws thousands of public visitors each year. Tom was a good man. His quiet and humble demeanor will be missed. The American Village was his life and legacy. He passed away in September.

Former Jefferson County State Senator Bill Cabaniss passed away early in the year at 86 in Birmingham. He was a Republican before it was cool. He was born and raised in Mountain Brook and lived there all his life. He was a lifetime Republican and was considered one of the pioneers of the modern Republican Party in Alabama. After his tenure in the Alabama legislature, President George H.W. Bush, who was Cabaniss' lifetime friend, made him ambassador to the Czech Republic.

Dr. Annette Shelby passed away in July in Tuscaloosa at the age of 86. Dr. Shelby was the wife of our iconic, retired U.S. Senator Richard Shelby. She was very accomplished in her own right. She was a renowned educator. She was a distinguished, tenured Professor of Business at Georgetown University, as well as the University of Alabama. She was an integral part of Senator Shelby's career, and a good many of the magnificent buildings on most of Alabama's university campuses bear both Richard and Annette Shelby's names.

An Alabama political legend, Ann Bedsole, passed on December 1, at age 95 in Mobile. Bedsole was the first Republican female elected to the Alabama House of Representatives and later the first female elected to the Alabama State Senate. She was a fine lady and an outstanding legislator. Her word was as good as gold.

We lost some good ones in 2025.

See you next year.

Steve Flowers is Alabama's leading political columnist. His weekly column appears in over 60 Alabama newspapers. He served 16 years in the state legislature. Steve may be reached at steve@steveflowers.us.



Centreville Press

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The Centreville Press (USPS #098-880) is published each Friday by Bibb Community Media Inc., Centreville, AL 35042.

2026 Yearly Subscription Rates: \$45.00 All Access + tax
Periodicals postage paid at Centreville, AL 35042.

POST MASTER: Send address changes to
Centreville Press, P.O. Box 127, Centreville, AL 35042

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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 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

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West Blocton 938-9766 | James Chapel
A.M.E. Zion Church
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Brent 926-7687 | Shady Grove Baptist
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‘Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

On a picnic on a beautiful sunny day on Long Island Sound with her four-year-old daughter, Lily, and her husband, William, Louisa Stead could scarcely imagine that her life was about to be irrevocably changed forever. While enjoying their picnic, they all of a sudden heard the frantic cries of a young boy. Startled into action, they saw the boy out in the water, drowning - and without hesitation Mr. Stead dove into the water to rescue him. Devastatingly, his attempt was unsuccessful, and they both drowned in the waters. All the while, Louisa and her daughter watched helplessly through this unexpected tragedy.

In the blink of an eye, Louisa and Lily were on their own. A widow with a child to support, the next season of their life became quite destitute as she struggled to find a way to provide for them both in her soul-deep grief. Ever relying on the Lord and her faith, God provided time and time again, and they made it through. It is recorded that for several years following, money for food for them was scarce - but the Lord provided their every need. On the day that she penned the hymn "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus," it began like any

other - but sometime throughout the day she heard a knock on the door. When she went to see who it was, no one was there - instead, she found a small package on her doorstep with food and money, but no name to show who it was from. That same day, she wrote the words: "Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His word."

Trusting in the Lord to provide for your every need may sound easy in theory, as He is the omnipotent God of all - but putting that trust into practice in your daily life can be both difficult and terrifying. All throughout history, God has proven over and over just how He cares for His children by providing needs both great and small. With the Israelites wandering the desert for 40 years, he provided daily manna from heaven (Exodus 16), and He shut the mouths of the lions when Daniel was thrown in the lions' den (Daniel 6). Can you think of how the Lord has provided for you across your life? I can assure you, He's provided for you in ways that you'll never even realize, ways you didn't even know you needed. Even in the unseen, may we always "rest upon His promise, just to know, 'Thus saith the Lord!'"



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NEWS - A LOOK BACK AT 1976

Hunt For Bank Robbers Continues In County



Comedian Bob Hope talks with Rep. Walter Flowers, D-Ala., before testifying at a recent hearing held by Flowers' House Judiciary subcommittee on administrative law and governmental relations. Hope urged the subcommittee to approve a federal charter for United Services Organizations (USO), a group which provides social services for military personnel.

Authorities are still searching for the kidnapers of Eddie McMillan, arsonists who burned the Mt. Carmel Pastorium, and robbers of the Bank of West Blocton, all last Monday morning. Evidence reveals that the same group did the entire series of crimes.

Several good leads are being investigated, according to Sheriff Glen Smitherman. Smitherman said Monday that an eye witness to the bank robbery (which netted \$20,000) has come forward and reported that in addition to the three masked men who entered the bank, there was a woman who stayed outside the car the entire time. The Sheriff did not give the name of the witness. The Sheriff also said the job appears to be either from local people or they did an excellent job of casing the area.

The series of events started on Sunday night when Eddie McMillan, of Centreville, was captured inside his home around 11:30 p.m., was tied, and gagged. He managed to free himself at 10:00 a.m. Monday and alerted the Sheriff's Department and reported his abduction and the theft of his automobile and two trucks. The trucks were later found near the River Bend Bridge and McMillan's car was apparently used in the bank job. The bandits, following a high-speed chase with the officers, left the River Bend Road and traveled 3 miles out a log road and apparently got out the other end of the road before additional law officers arrived.

The next event was the setting on fire of the Church Pastorium. It was done to create a diversion away from the bank and while the fire department and a number of other citizens were fighting the fire, the robbery took place.

A man armed with a deer rifle saw what was going on and fired at the fleeing car. Deputy Billy Sims joined the chase and reported over the car radio that the fleeing robbers were firing at him with a rifle. Sims said he could hear the whistle of the slugs as they whizzed by his car. Sims gave chase until they left the main road. It was from that point the massive manhunt took place.

FBI Agents, Sheriff Smitherman and his force and all three city officers have worked on the case since the robbery.

Automatic cameras at the bank showed the actual hold-up. Though the men wore ski masks, according to the Sheriff, they (the pictures) revealed a number of other clues.

Rumors have circulated around the county that all three men had been arrested. This is just not so, said Sheriff Smitherman. He said his office has been moving 24 hours a day since last Monday, and would continue until the case is solved. Smitherman declined to name any suspects and said evidence was being poured over by outside officers to help close the case.

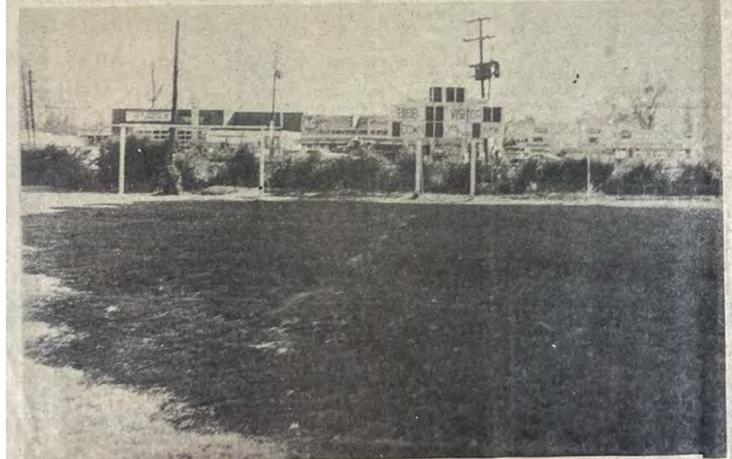


LOUISIANA GROUP AT CENTREVILLE CHURCH

Rev. James Wallace, left, formerly of Centreville, now Assistant Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Gonzales, Louisiana, and Mr. Jerry Causey, right, Minister of Music, and a group of young people from their church, presented a musical and puppet program at the morning service at The Southern Methodist Church of Centreville Sunday. Rev. Wallace is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Collie Wallace of Centreville.

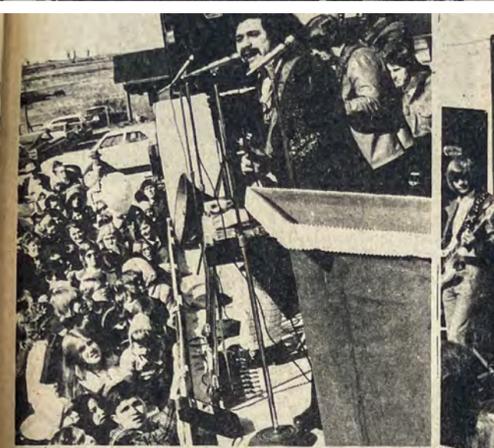


Mrs. Louise Rogan from Centreville, Alabama, was recently elected Secretary to the West Alabama Rehabilitation Center Board of Directors at its Annual Board of Directors Meeting. She is shown pictured above with the Chairman of the West Alabama Rehabilitation Center Board of Directors, Mr. Dawson Christian, and Field Representative of the Alabama Society, Mr. Paul H. (Dixie) Dunbar, at the Center's Orientation for New Board Members. Mrs. Rogan was appointed to the Board in 1974 to serve a three-year term by the President of the Alabama Society. Mrs. Lelia Griffin, also from Centreville, was appointed at the same time to serve as a member of the West Alabama Rehabilitation Center Board of Directors, as a representative from Bibb County. The Center serves handicapped individuals from an eight county area which include Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Sumter, and Tuscaloosa Counties, and is located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.



BCHS FOOTBALL FIELD BURNED

Prompt action by the fire department quickly quenched a grass fire started by an unknown arsonist that scorched a corner of the Bibb County High School football field Tuesday last week. Above photo was taken just after the firemen completed their work.



FREDDY FENDER PERFORMS
Tammy Wynette (R) was big hit, too



Performers warm up big crowd Brent celebrates a special day

BRENT—The weather was cold but three of the nation's top country and gospel singers plus a host of state entertainers quickly warmed up a crowd of more than 10,000 persons here Monday at the Brent Dedication and Promotion Day.

The special day was held to help celebrate the rebuilding of the town which was destroyed in the May 27, 1973 tornado.

Nationally-known singers featured were Freddy Fender, Tammy Wynette and Jimmy Davis. Other state entertainers included Country Boy Eddie and his group from Birmingham and local singers Tanya Goodson and Sharon Davis. Master of ceremonies for the program was Tom York, a Birmingham television announcer.

"I was extremely well-pleased with the turnout considering the weather," said Fred Davis, a Brent businessman and former probate judge who promoted the special day.

"It was one of the biggest thrills of my life," he said. "The performers were just great."

Early performers on the program did experience some cold weather problems and the entertainers stayed inside until time to perform. Ms. Wynette has a new record titled "Til I Can Make It On My Own" which will be out in about 10 days and she believes it will be a hit.

Tammy lives in Nashville and travels about 15 days a month making public appearances throughout the nation. In mid-January she will be making a swing through South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. She just returned from a two-week vacation in Mexico.

Fender, known as the "King of Tex-Mex country rock" had only three hours of sleep before performing but was still a standout.

The applause was plentiful as he sang numbers like "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights," "Today I Started Loving You Again" and "Before The Next Teardrop Falls."

Fender said he enjoys Southern people and coming to Alabama wasn't a new experience for him. Previously, he has appeared

in Birmingham, Mobile and Ozark.

Fender lives in Houston, Tex., but said he considers Louisiana a second home. He lived in New Orleans for several years.

Fender's popularity continues to rise at a rapid pace. He goes to Los Angeles Wednesday to tape a television show with Tony Orlando and Dawn. He will be appearing on the Bobby Vinton Show in March and was on the New Year's Eve Wide World Special with Neil Sedaka.

Gospel singer Jimmy Davis, former governor of Louisiana, and his wife, Anna, were the first of the three nationally-known folks to sing. He served as governor of Louisiana for two terms, 1948-52 and 1960-64.

Davis has been singing gospel music for more than 25 years and is in the publishing and recording business in addition to singing.

Cahawba Christian Academy sold barbecued chicken dinners and 20 display booth also added to the day's festivities.

And their was no doubting the enthusiasm of the crowd. Lt. Gov. Jere Beasley and U.S. Rep. Walter Flowers

both spoke briefly, but each admitted he couldn't sing and quickly returned the spotlight to the musicians.

Lewis McCray, executive director of the West Alabama Planning and Development Council, presented Brent Mayor Melford Worrell with an aerial picture taken the day after the Brent tornado. The picture is to hang in the city hall.

The thoughts of performing in freezing weather were frightening to Ms. Wynette, who is known as the "First Lady of Country Music."

"When I woke up this morning I think it was 19 degrees," she said. "I just couldn't think about working outside with it that cold," she added.

The weather warmed up considerably before she sang in the afternoon, though, and she was a crowd pleaser. She had the crowd applauding after each number, singing hit songs like "Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad," "Stand By Your Man," "Woman To Woman" and "Send Me No Roses." She completed her singing with a gospel song, "Amazing Grace."

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Sheriff Jody Wade
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May your homes be filled with peace, faith and family this New Year Season 2026.

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The BACK PAGE

BLOcton Sports Grill Announces December "Love Your Neighbor" Winner, Glenn Johnson

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

The spirit of kindness continues to shine in Bibb County as BLOcton Sports Grill announces the December winner of its Love Your Neighbor campaign – Glenn Johnson!

Each month, the Love Your Neighbor campaign highlights individuals who make a positive difference in the community, whether through quiet acts of kindness, generosity, or simply showing up for others. December's recognition is especially meaningful as it comes during a season centered on giving, gratitude, and togetherness.

As the December honoree, Glenn Johnson is being treated to a free pizza from

BLOcton Sports Grill, a small but heartfelt way to say thank you for helping make our community a better place.

The Love Your Neighbor campaign continues to remind us that kindness doesn't have to be grand to be impactful. A smile, a helping hand, or a thoughtful gesture can go a long way – and BLOcton Sports Grill is proud to celebrate those who lead with heart.

Congratulations, Glenn, and thank you for being a bright spot in our community!

To learn more about upcoming Love Your Neighbor recognitions or how you can nominate someone, follow BLOcton Sports Grill on social media and stay tuned for future announcements.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
– Mark 12:31
Together, let's make West Blocton a better community:

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Happy New Year 2026

Judge Stephanie Lemmer & Bibb County Probate Office



Happy
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Bibb Medical Center

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In the year ahead, we remain committed to providing you and your loved ones with the highest standard of care, support, and healing. May 2026 bring you good health, happiness, and hope.

Here's to a year filled with health, recovery, and new beginnings.

With warmest wishes,

BMC