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Learning, Safety, and Science Shine During James Spann's Visit to Randolph Elementary



BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

Randolph Elementary School students were treated to a truly

unforgettable experience this morning as they welcomed the extraordinary Mr. James Spann to campus. The visit offered far more

than just a lesson on weather — it was an engaging, inspiring opportunity that blended science, safety, and curiosity in a way only

a passionate educator can.

Students gained invaluable insight into the fascinating world of meteorology, learn-

ing how weather forms, why storms behave the way they do, and how to stay safe when severe weather threatens. From understanding tornadoes to developing a deeper respect for the immense power of nature, the experience helped students see weather not just as something that happens around them, but as something worth studying, respecting, and understanding.

One of the most meaningful takeaways from the day was the reminder of just how fortunate Alabama is to have a meteorologist like James Spann. His genuine care for the children of this state goes far beyond forecasting. Through his visits, outreach, and commitment to education, Mr. Spann inspires young minds to develop a love and appreciation for me-

teorology while empowering them with knowledge that can truly save lives. His ability to connect with students and spark curiosity is helping nurture the next generation of scientists, problem-solvers, and meteorologists.

The future is bright at Randolph Elementary as students continue to explore science with excitement and confidence. The school extends heartfelt thanks to Mr. Spann for sharing his time, knowledge, and passion with RES students.

Be sure to look for Randolph Elementary School on Mr. Spann's streaming and social media platforms, as well as on ABC 33/40 this afternoon, this evening, and tomorrow morning as this special visit continues to make waves across our community.

Bibb County Pet Welfare to Host Spay and Neuter Event Jan. 22

BY CANDACE JOHNSON
REPORTER

Pet owners from Bibb County and surrounding areas have an affordable opportunity to spay or neuter their pets through a scheduled transport program coordinated out of Woodstock. The program helps reduce pet overpopulation while making essential veterinary care more accessible for families.

On the morning of transport, participants will meet promptly at 6 a.m. at Woodstock First Baptist Church, on Jan. 22, where all required paperwork will be completed before pets are safely loaded for travel. From there, animals will be transported to the Alabama Spay Neuter Clinic in Irondale, a trusted facility that specializes in low-cost spay and neuter services. Following their procedures, pets will be returned to the same pickup location later that afternoon at approximately 4 p.m.

Due to the program's popularity, appoint-

ments are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and prepayment is required to secure a spot. Once an appointment is scheduled, pet owners will receive an invoice via PayPal and may pay using a debit or credit card. Organizers stress that missed appointments are non-refundable and non-transferable, making timely participation essential.

The transport program is open to residents of any county, provided owners can meet at the Woodstock pickup location or arrange to take their pet directly to the clinic on the day of transport.

Those interested in scheduling their pet for the program are asked to send a message or text only; no phone calls will be accepted. Messages should include the owner's name, home address, phone number, and email address.

Organizers encourage pet owners to act quickly, as available appointments tend to fill fast.



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NEWS

Legal Aid Urges Alabamians to Seek Free, Trusted Help During Tax Season



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FREE

As tax season begins, Legal Services Alabama (LSA) is reminding residents that free, trustworthy help is available for eligible individuals and families navigating tax filing challenges.

LSA provides assistance with common tax issues, including tax disputes, IRS notices, identity theft related to tax fraud, and access to free tax preparation services for qualifying taxpayers.

These services are especially critical for low-income workers, seniors, veterans, and families who may be vulnerable to costly filing errors or scams.

According to LSA Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) Director, Maceo Kirkland, “During the tax filing season, the most frequent challenges facing clients is obtaining assistance in preparing and filing their returns, gathering the necessary tax forms from third parties such as employers and other entities to whom they provided services in order to prepare their returns, and frequent audits by the IRS which disproportionately target low-income taxpayers.”

LSA also encourages taxpayers to be aware of tax-related scams, including fake IRS communications and fraudulent tax preparers, which tend to increase during filing season.

“Low Income Taxpayer Clinics assist low-income people with federal tax controversies by communicating with the IRS on their behalf to challenge the federal tax liability that has been assessed by the IRS. Legal aid can also assist the taxpayers by working out affordable collection options with the IRS if the liability cannot be successfully challenged,” says Kirkland.

Alabamians who need help or want to learn more about free legal tax assistance can visit www.legalservicesalabama.org/apply-for-services or reach our Call Center at 866-456-4995 to see if they qualify for free LSA legal services.

SNAP Transactions for Out of State and Online Automatically Turned Off

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – The Alabama Department of Human Resources is pleased to announce a new system enhancement that automatically defaults all EBT cards to block out-of-state and online transactions. This change will be effective Thursday, January 22, 2026.

While these transaction blocks are in place, EBT cards will automatically be placed in a “Block High-Risk Transaction” card status and purchases cannot be made in stores outside of Alabama or online.

If a cardholder wishes to make a purchase outside of Alabama or online, they must first unlock their card via the ConnectEBT Mobile App, ConnectEBT website, or the EBT Customer Service phone number.

“We are extremely pleased to announce this new feature because it should curtail more of the electronic fraud that is stealing funds from eligible clients,” said Commissioner Nancy Buckner. “Over the past year we have implemented a number of new security features, with the assistance of our EBT card vendor, working to ensure SNAP benefits stay in the hands of Alabama families that need them.”

All in-state purchases will continue to be processed as usual.

Steps on each of these options can be found on DHR’s website under the Food Assistance Division here.

For additional information or questions regarding this change, clients may contact the Food Assistance Division at 1-800-997-8888 or visit the local county DHR office.



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School Choice is Expanding for Alabama Families



By Andrew Campanella



When some people think about K–12 school choice, they often picture families in large metropolitan areas touring dozens of schools in search of the right fit. That certainly happens, but education options for families in Alabama and across the country are continuing to evolve.

A new survey shows that last year, one in five parents living in suburbs, small towns, and rural communities enrolled their children in new schools—the same rate as the national average. However, when asked about the year ahead, 43% of parents in small towns say they are likely to explore new school options, compared to 71% of parents who live in larger cities.

This gap is less about interest and more about a lingering perception that families in less populated areas lack opportunities to exercise choice in how and where their children learn.

In Alabama, parents have more education options than they may realize, even in smaller towns and rural communities. In addition to assigned traditional public schools, the Yellowhammer State has taken steps in recent years to give families more flexibility in choosing learning

environments.

Within the public education system, tuition-free schooling options include charter schools (available in some areas) and theme-based magnet schools (available in several districts). In limited situations, parents may also be able to send their children to traditional public schools outside of their assigned zones, if seats are available.

Parents can also consider private schools, and Alabama’s CHOOSE Act helps eligible families make private education more affordable by providing funding through an education savings account that can be used for private school tuition and other approved education expenses.

Many Alabama families choose to educate their children at home, and homeschooling communities and learning collaboratives can be found across the state—including in smaller towns. Meanwhile, new options, such as community-based learning environments—called microschoools—are opening and providing additional opportunities for families who may not have easy access to traditional brick-and-mortar schools.

Finally, Alabama offers full-time, tuition-free public online schools. Far from the emergency remote learning of the pandemic era, these programs pair students with qualified teachers and provide structured instruction along with opportunities for students to interact with

their classmates.

If you want to explore these education options in advance of the 2026–27 school year, the time to begin that process is now. National School Choice Week begins January 25, with 390 school events across Alabama, including school fairs, open houses, parent nights, and information sessions.

Families in small towns may find that their education options feel more limited than those available in larger cities. But that does not mean meaningful choices do not exist. If you are considering a change—whether your child is entering a new grade level, you are looking for a better fit, or you simply want to understand what is available—taking time now to explore your options can be worthwhile. You may be surprised by what you find, and the right choice could make a lasting difference for your child’s future.

To access a free guide to K–12 school choice options in Alabama, visit <https://myschoolchoice.com/alabama>.

Andrew Campanella is the CEO of the National School Choice Awareness Foundation, the nonprofit organization that coordinates National School Choice Week, Navigate School Choice, and Conoce tus Opciones Escolares. He is also the author of The School Choice Roadmap: 7 Steps to Choosing the Right School for Your Child.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama Encourages Residents to Get Flu Shot

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is reminding Alabamians there’s still time to get a flu shot. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Alabama is currently classified at a high level of flu activity and statewide cases continue to rise.

This increase aligns with national trends. The CDC estimates the United States has experienced at least 7.5 million flu illnesses, 81,000 hospitalizations, and 3,100

deaths so far this season. Health officials warn flu activity has not yet peaked and is expected to remain elevated in the coming weeks.

“Protecting the health of Alabamians remains our highest priority,” said Dr. Dow Briggs, Executive Vice President, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. “With Alabama now at a high level of flu activity, we strongly encourage those who have not yet received their flu shot to do so as soon as possible.

Vaccination continues to be the most effective way to reduce the severity of illness and prevent complications.”

Flu vaccines are widely available at pharmacies, physician offices, and public health clinics throughout Alabama. Most Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama health plans cover the flu shot at no out of pocket cost when members receive the vaccine from an in-network provider.

LOCAL & GOVERNMENT

Centreville News

By Brenda Hubbard

We wish to extend sympathy to the family of Billie Shadwick who passed away on December 28, 2025. Graveside services were held on December 31, 2025 at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church cemetery, West Blocton, AL. Billie will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

The BCHS Class of 1961 met for their annual monthly meeting on January 2, 2026. As always, they had a good time.

Anniversary wishes go out to Claude and Kathy Crews who recently celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary.

The WMU of Brent Baptist Church met on Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

Anniversary wishes

Gov. Ivey awards \$2.3 million in grants to assist domestic violence, sexual assault victims in central and west Alabama

MONTGOMERY – Gov. Kay Ivey has awarded nine grants totaling about \$2.3 million for programs to assist victims of crimes including domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking in Alabama.

“Victims of these terrible crimes deserve to have a safe haven where they receive professional care and the chance for healing and justice,” Gov. Ivey said. “These grants will fund programs that provide essential services to people in a time of urgent need.”

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs is administering the grants with funds made available by the U.S. Department of Justice.

“These programs offer victims of these crimes protection from further harm and guidance in moving forward,” ADECA Director Kenneth Boswell said. “ADECA stands with Gov. Ivey in support of organizations and professionals that help people rebuild their lives.”

Below are details of the grant awards.

YWCA Central Alabama - \$517,913 for services including emergency shelter, personal advocacy and referral to other community agencies in Blount, Jefferson and St. Clair counties.

Family Resource Center of Northwest Alabama Inc. - \$128,529 to aid victims of domestic violence in Walker County with services including assistance with navigating the criminal and civil justice systems and filing compensation claims.

Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama - \$246,182 to assist vic-

go out to Michael and Devlon Watts who recently celebrated their 24th wedding anniversary.

Those joining Larry and Vicki Speights for New Year’s Day were children and grandchildren: Jim and Laura Blumenfeld and Lily, Casey and Stacie Brewer, Jonah and Phoenix. All enjoyed delicious food that you have for New Year’s Day, all returning home reporting a wonderful day.

Belated birthday wishes go out to Mrs. Margaret Ann Edmonds who recently celebrated her 90th birthday.

If you have news, call I in to 205-316-1181. Take care – God Bless.

Thank You, Jeff McGee, for Your Leadership and Lasting Impact on Centreville Main Street



BY SAVANNA LOGAN REPORTER

As Centreville Main Street marks the completion of an important chapter, we want to pause and offer our sincere gratitude to Jeff McGee, the first-ever Board President of Centreville Main Street. Jeff’s leadership helped turn a shared vision into meaningful action, laying a strong foundation for the organization and setting the standard for what true service to community looks like.

From the very beginning, Jeff was part of the team that helped bring Centreville Main Street to life. His commitment showed not

only in big-picture leadership, but also in the countless details that make events and initiatives successful. Whether it was planning behind the scenes or making sure city streets were cleaned and spotless after every event and parade, Jeff was always there to ensure things were done well and done right.

Jeff has been a driving force behind all of Centreville Main Street’s events, but his favorite, and one of the organization’s most successful, has been the Cahaba Auto Fest Car and Motorcycle Show. Thanks to his passion and dedication, the event

was such a hit that it will now become an annual tradition in Centreville. His generosity also played a major role in advancing fundraising efforts, including donating a truck to raffle in support of the organization’s mission.

Beyond events and daily meetings, Jeff’s support has been constant and wide-ranging. He has ensured Centreville Main Street always had what it needed to succeed – from meeting spaces and event venues to sponsorships, supplies, advocacy, volunteers, and a willingness to step in wherever help was needed.

While Jeff is stepping away from the role of Board President, his commitment to Centreville Main Street and the community remains strong. He will continue serving on the board and looks forward to further restoring his historic properties in Uptown Centreville, helping to strengthen and revitalize the city for generations to come.

Please join us in thanking Jeff McGee for his leadership, service, and unwavering support of Centreville Main Street and our city’s ongoing revitalization. His impact will be felt for years to come.

Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama Revitalizes Jaycee Park Club for Tuscaloosa



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF WEST ALABAMA

TUSCALOOSA, AL (January 15, 2026) - Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama will welcome Boys & Girls Clubs of America national executive leadership team to Tuscaloosa on January 19 for a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service that will help transform the Jaycee Park Club, underscoring a shared commitment to service, community, and creating opportunity for local youth. This MLK Day of Service, rooted in Dr. King’s call to action and often described as “a day on, not a day off,” will bring together Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama staff, community volunteers, partners and senior executives from Boys & Girls Clubs of America for hands-on improvement projects at the Club. “Our Club is at the heart of this neighborhood, and it means so much to have national leaders join our community to roll up their sleeves alongside us,” said Kim Turner, President

& CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama. “These renovations will give our kids safer, brighter, and more inspiring spaces where they can learn, grow, and imagine their futures. We’re deeply grateful for the support that made this day possible.” The Jaycee Park Club renovation is supported by a \$95,000 grant, along with in-kind donations from national partners, to create a more welcoming and functional environment for Club youth. Service day upgrades will include new flooring, fresh paint, door repairs, new furniture, updated technology, and murals designed to reflect the pride, history, and culture of the surrounding community. “Dr. King taught us that service is a powerful force for change, especially when we invest in the next generation,” said Jim Clark, President & CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of America. “By revitalizing Club spaces, we’re doing more than

improving buildings. We’re strengthening places where young people feel safe, supported, inspired, and truly known.”

In addition, Maytag, a longtime partner of Boys & Girls Clubs of America, has donated a new refrigerator to support the Club’s food programming and help ensure kids and teens who attend have reliable access to nutritious snacks and meals. The day of service will conclude with a community celebration at the Club, welcoming families, partners, and supporters to tour the renovated space, and celebrate the collective effort behind the improvements. Guests are welcome to visit the site from 5:00-6:00 PM at the Jaycee Park Clubhouse for an open house and sneak peek of the updated facility located at 2201 Alberta Parkway, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404. For more than 160 years, Boys & Girls Clubs have provided young people with the relation-

ships, resources, and opportunities they need to succeed. Observing Martin Luther King Jr. Day through service reflects Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama’s ongoing commitment to building stronger, more equitable communities for all youth.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama

Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama has been a cornerstone in the community, providing young

people with the guidance, resources, and skills they need to reach their full potential. Our

mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach

their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. For more than 63 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama has served local youth as a fun, safe place to belong and to become.

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Upcoming Year a Big One in Alabama for State Politics and Elections

By Paul DeMarco

So the year 2026 has finally arrived and for Alabama it means a busy election year ahead. For those seeking elective office in the state, candidates can qualify from January 5th through January 23th. The party primary elections are on May 19th, and if there are any run-offs, they are set for June 16th. And finally, the general election will be next fall on November 3rd. All of the state constitutional officers and state lawmakers will be on the ballot. In addition, all of the federal congressional seats and one United States senate seat are up for grabs. Local elections across the state will also include county offices and judges as well. Finally, there will be several constitutional amendments on the ballot including strengthening Aniah’s Law, with an amendment allowing judges more discretion to keep those accused of violent crimes behind bars.

In the meantime, this week, Governor Kay Ivey will give her last state of the state address at the Alabama Capitol building. Ivey has served as the governor of Alabama since 2017. She won a full term as governor in the 2018 election and was re-elected in 2022. Governor Ivey has served for years in public office from treasurer, to lieutenant governor to the state’s top office, which she ascended to upon the resignation of Robert Bentley. She took office with the promise to right the ship and there has never been a hint of wrongdoing during her term of office as the governor. She has led through the pandemic and then treatment after being diagnosed with lung cancer. Governor Ivey has a long legacy of service to Alabama, and there will be plenty of time to judge her governorship when she leaves office. But for now, as she promotes her legislative agenda to lawmakers for the final time, it will be interesting to see what her priorities will be as she closes out her last year in office.

Finally, a recent United States Supreme Court ruling has set the stage for the redistricting battles of 2025 to continue into 2026. The Court gave the green light for Texas to move forward with a newly drawn Congressional map that will likely mean five new GOP seats in the United States Congress. Of course, the fight is going on in multiple states across the Nation with both red and blue state legislatures using their muscle to redraw districts to play a role on who will control Congress after the mid-term elections. And if the United States Supreme Court rules in favor of Louisiana in another redistricting case next June, count on Alabama to take the stage next.

Alabama currently has five Republican and two Democrats representing the state in Congress. But don’t be surprised as Alabama Legislators may come back and redraw the map to draw the Democrats out of their federal seats completely as many states in New England have done to Republicans. There is still a while to go but with Democrats in states like California and New York muscling out the GOP, Alabama will step up to the plate to join the fight for sure.

So as we kick off the new year, get ready for a busy and important year in Alabama politics.

Paul DeMarco is a former member of the Alabama House of Representatives and Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. He can be found on X, at @Paul_DeMarco.



Arthur Orr – Legislature’s Most Valuable Player

Inside the Statehouse
By Steve Flowers

As this last legislative session of the quadrennium moves forward, these four years would have to be rated as an overwhelming success.

The only constitutional requirement that the Alabama Legislature has to adhere to in their three-and-a-half-month annual session is to pass the state’s budgets.

They have seen an exponential increase in state income to be budgeted over the last four years. Last year’s Education Budget was \$12.1 billion. The General Fund was \$3.7 billion.

When the Republicans captured the legislature in 2021, which was last vestige of Democratic remains in the Heart of Dixie, they put an immediate and consequential mark on Alabama government.

Arguably, our State Constitution rests the most power of the triumvirate of constitutional powers in the Legislative Branch.

The logical reason is because the legislature controls the state purse strings. Thus, the adage “those who have the gold make the rules.” Additionally, most campaign contributions by all political action committees and special interest groups flow to legislative candidates, especially incumbents. Legislative contributions dwarf gubernatorial and judicial races.

When Republicans finally took control of the legislature in 2010, they put a conservative stamp on Alabama’s legislative process and budgeting. This continued diligence towards a conservative, fiscally prudent stewardship of Alabama tax dollars has been the hallmark of the super majority Republican legislature the past four years.

Prior to 2010, the Democrats in Alabama spent money just like the Democrats in Washington did. They spent like drunken sailors with no regard for budgets, fiscal restraint, nor adherence to Alabama’s constitutional mandate to have a balanced budget. The Democratic legislature of bygone years would often circumvent Alabama’s constitutional budget mandate, which then would result in proration.

To the contrary, the state has not been in proration in any year of the 15-year Republican majority reign, neither has there been a year when they did not save money in “rainy day” funds. The one constant in this sterling, stellar, prudent budgeting has been that State Senator Arthur Orr (R-Decatur) has been in charge.

Because the Education Budget comprises over two-thirds of Alabama’s income and budget, Senator Orr, as Chairman of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee, deserves the award as the “most valuable player” for the quadrennium 2022-2026.

Senator Orr more than likely deserves it for the last quadrennium, 2018-2022, also. He has written the State’s Education Budget for the past 12 years. He first became Chairman of the Budget Committee in 2014. He also chaired the General Fund Finance and Taxation Committee for four years before that. He is, without question, the most valuable player in the legislature and many would argue, the most powerful player in state government.

Doing a job for 12 years provides wisdom to the process. Orr knows the Education Budget like nobody in state history. We have had some long-time Budget Chairmen in the past, but none have reached the pinnacle of success of Senator Arthur Orr.

Fortunately for Alabama, Senator Orr will be returning for another four-year term in the Senate, and you can bet your bottom dollar that he will, again, be Chairman of the Senate Finance and Taxation Education Budget Committee for the next four years.

Arthur Orr is only 60 years old. He was born in Decatur in 1965. Orr was first elected to the Alabama State Senate in 2006; therefore, he has been Morgan County’s State Senator for 20 years. He has been Chairman of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee for 12 of those years.

Arthur Orr is a sixth generation Alabamian. He graduated from Wake Forest University, and with honors from the University of Alabama School of Law. He has been successful in his law practice and is currently Executive Vice President of Finance for Cook’s Pest Control, a 2000 employee, national corporation based out of Decatur.

Arthur and his wife, the former Amy Bethshares of Decatur, have one son named Jack and a daughter, Anna.

Arthur Orr is an Alabama treasure.

See you next week.

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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Liberty Baptist Duncanville 759-9647 / 759-4074	River of Life Church of God 9225 Hwy 82, Brent 205-926-7600	The Refreshing Place Church 24865 Hwy. 5 Woodstock, AL 35188 Pastor Wayne Keeton
Liberty Freewill Baptist 926-6496	West Blocton Church of God Cty Rd. 21 Smith Hill 205-966-4988	God's House of Prayer 489 Co. Rd. 162 (Heiberg- er) Marion, AL 36756 334-683-4933 Every Sunday 11:00 a.m.
Little Hope Primitive Bap- tist Centreville 926-4236	CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST 2300 South Scottsville Rd Centreville 926-5393	Sandy Chapel Community Church 926-4934
Lowerytown Baptist West Blocton 938-2436	EPISCOPAL The Church Of The Holy Comforter Montevallo 665-2769	
Lucille Baptist West Blocton 966-3556	St. Andrews Episcopal Church 925 Plowman Street Montevallo 665-1667	
Mission Baptist Woodstock 938-7096	HOLINESS Deliverance Temple Holi- ness Four Points 926-5565	
Mt. Carmel Baptist West Blocton 938-2379	Word of Faith Worship Center Centreville 926-4555	
Mt. Ebell Baptist Brent 926-9223	Free Will Apostolic Holi- ness Antioch 926-9252	
Mt. Grove Baptist 938-3410	Real Truth Holiness Church 646 S. Scottsville Road Brent 926-5009	
Mt. Moriah Baptist West Blocton 926-5425	Trinity Spirit Holiness Church Centreville 926-4321	
Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church Brent 926-9009	METHODIST	
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		



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"He Giveth More Grace"

Annie Johnson Flint, author of this week's hymn "But He Giveth More Grace," came from exceedingly humble means. She was born on Christmas Eve in the year 1866 to Eldon and Jean Johnson. After losing her mother shortly after the birth of her younger sister a few years later, her father was unable to cope well with his crippling grief. For the next two years that followed, Annie, her sister, and their father lived with a widowed friend. She had children of her own, and over time it became evident that to her, Annie and her sister were nothing more than an added burden to the household.

By what Annie later in her life deemed as divine providence, a local schoolteacher (who the children affectionately knew as "Aunt Susie") could not help but notice the distressing situation Annie and her sister were in. In time "Aunt Susie" offered the suggestion that Annie and her sister go to live with a childless Christian couple – the Flints. Of course, this required their father to allow his daughters to be adopted by others, and for two reasons, he relented his rights over his daughters: his serious illness that he had fallen victim to which shortly after resulted in his death, and the fact that the Flints were Baptists, as he had always hoped that no matter what happened to him, his daughters would be brought up in a Baptist tradition.

In stark contrast to what they had always known, Annie and her sister found themselves in a loving, warm, and welcoming home with the Flints. After their official adoption, they added their new surname of Flint to their own names. At being presented the Gospel from every perceivable perspective in her new daily life, Annie received Christ into her heart at the young age of eight. As she grew up, she began to develop an interest in reading and writing, much at the encouragement of her adopted father who owned an extensive library that he offered Annie at her leisure. Because of this, Annie began to herself dabble in writing her own poetry to express her emotions about the beauty of God's creation that she paid keen attention to.

In one of Annie's journals, it was recorded that she wrote: "We are going to have rain today. My robin has just changed his note. He never sings in that tone unless the rain is coming." Surely enough, it rained!

As she became an adult, it was shortly into her career as the schoolteacher in the very same school where she had once been a student herself that signs of severe arthritis began to appear. Soon after as her symptoms grew steadily worse, she was forced to make the decision to give up teaching as she could no longer walk on her own. Soon after, her adopted parents both died within a few months of each other, leaving Annie with not only crippling infirmities, but also debilitating grief. Faced with financial hardship and physical helplessness, Annie humbly cast her hopelessness to the One who redeems and restores – and she did so through poetry, which several later would be turned into hymns, such as "He Giveth More Grace."

Through her writing being published, the Lord used her grief for good in that others were able to be blessed and comforted by her words, but also her financial burdens were eased with the new source of income. While she often wondered why God saw it fit to leave people in a life of suffering, she chose to cling to Paul's message in 2 Corinthians and to lean into the truth of the passage: But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (12:9).

Given an intimate knowledge of God's unending grace, somehow Annie Johnson Flint was able to find joy in the Lord in spite of her earthly suffering. After her arthritis and other ailments grew worse over the course of her life, she went to be with her Savior on September 8, 1932. How blessed we are to be able to also find through her words, years and years later, comfort and assurance in God's provision and promises to those whose hearts are turned towards Him!

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NEWS - AND A LOOK BACK AT 1976

Bibb County Schools Celebrates Teachers and Education Support Professionals of the Year

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN **REPORTER** Bibb County Schools is proud to recognize the exceptional educators and support staff who go above and beyond each day to serve students, families, and schools across the district. These individuals represent the heart of our classrooms and campuses, and their dedication, compassion, and commitment do not go unnoticed.

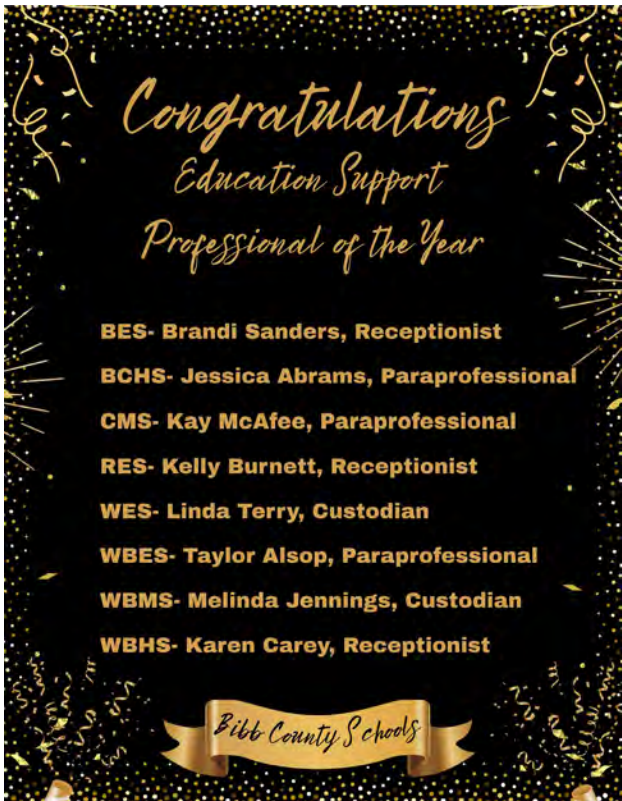
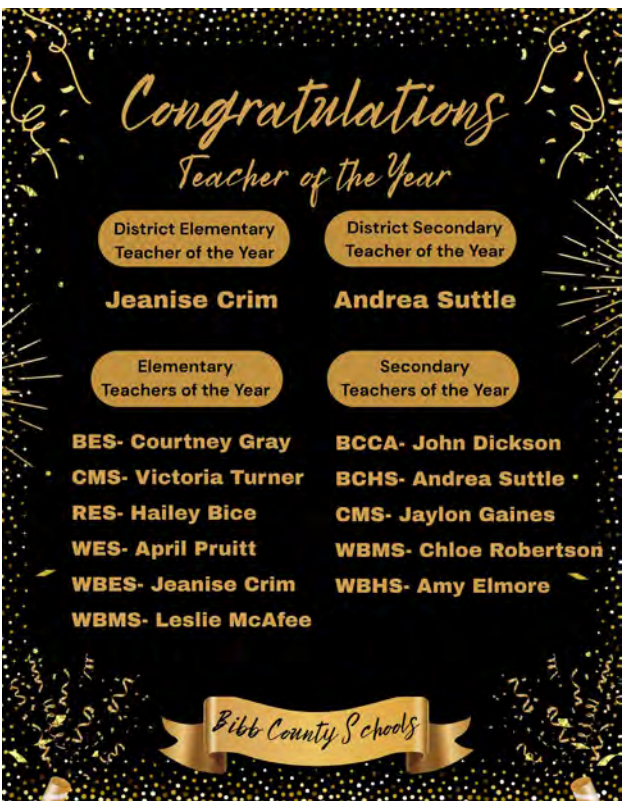
This year's District Elementary Teacher of the Year is Jeanise Crim, whose passion for learning and student success continues to make a lasting impact. The honor of District Secondary Teacher of the Year goes to Andrea Suttle, recognized for her leadership, dedication, and excellence in secondary education.

Bibb County also proudly honors the following Elementary Teachers of the Year, each of whom plays a vital role in shaping young learners:

- BES – Courtney Gray
- CMS – Victoria Turner
- RES – Hailey Bice
- WES – April Pruitt
- WBES – Jeanise Crim
- WBMS – Leslie McAfee

The district's Secondary Teachers of the Year are being celebrated for their commitment to guiding, mentoring, and inspiring students during critical years of growth:

- BCCA – John Dickson
- BCHS – Andrea Suttle
- CMS – Jaylon Gaines
- WBMS – Chloe Roberts
- WBHS – Amy Elmore



In addition to our teachers, Bibb County Schools is honored to recognize the invaluable contributions of our Education Support Professionals of the Year. These individuals help keep schools running smoothly and create welcoming, supportive environments for students and staff alike:

- BES – Brandi Sanders, Receptionist
- BCHS – Jessica Abrams, Paraprofessional
- CMS – Kay McAfee, Paraprofessional
- RES – Kelly Burnett, Receptionist
- WES – Linda Terry, Custodian
- WBES – Taylor Alsop, Paraprofessional
- WBMS – Melinda Jennings, Custodian
- WBHS – Karen Carey, Receptionist

A Honor Roll

Randolph Elementary

Erik Amador
Blaykelyn Bailey
Emma Bracknell
Keaton Dowdell
Emmi Gray
Trinity Griggs
Wyatt Handley
Shelby Hedrick
Kamdyn Hicks
Charli Johnson
John Luke McMillan
Brantley Nesbitt
Lynli Reese Simmons
Ainsley Smith
Calvin Smith
Lauren Smith
Wade Smith
Mia Tucker
Sara Wilson

Bibb County Schools Foundation Grants



During the fall semester, the Bibb County Schools Foundation (BCSF) presented its annual grants to personnel of the Bibb County School System. Thirty-five grants, ranging from \$200.00 to \$500.00, were awarded to various personnel across the school district in order to enhance learning experiences and opportunities for our students. The grants totaled over \$16,300.00! The BCSF members visited each school to deliver grant checks and goodie bags to the grant recipients. Bibb County Career Academy teachers Darel McKinney and Catherine Cleckler are pictured with Ms. Donna Brothers.

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DAVIS BROTHERS PROVE GOOD TEAM

Brothers Scott Davis and Freddie Davis made a go twosome Saturday night when the town boys defeated th BCHS faculty team by a handsome score.

The BACK PAGE

January Gardening Made Simple with Extension’s Seasonal Checklist

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

Not sure what to plant or prep right now? Extension has you covered. A new seasonal planting checklist is helping Alabama gardeners stay on track as the new year begins, offering timely guidance for both home gardens and landscapes.

In Alabama, January is the time to focus on cool-season preparation and planning. Gardeners can take advantage of this slower season by tackling a few key tasks that set the stage for success later in the year. This month is ideal for planting cool-season vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, onions, lettuces, beets, peas, radishes, Swiss chard, turnips, and more. It's also a prime time to plant certain fruit crops, including apples, peaches, pears, and grapes.

Beyond planting, January is an important window for pruning many fruit trees and ornamentals,

helping encourage healthy growth once spring arrives. Gardeners are also encouraged to test their soil now, allowing plenty of time to address nutrient needs before peak planting season begins.

To help gardeners dive deeper into the details, Extension has shared two trusted, research-based resources:

- Home Gardeners Planting Guide: <https://www.aces.edu/go/5710>

- Alabama Gardeners Calendar: <https://www.aces.edu/go/5711>

And remember, help is always just a phone call away. The Master Gardener Helpline is available to answer questions and provide expert, research-based advice at (877) 252-4769.

Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just getting started, January is the perfect time to plan, prepare, and grow with confidence – and Extension is here to help every step of the way.



JANUARY PLANTING CHECKLIST

VEGETABLES

- ▣ Cabbage
- ▣ Cauliflower
- ▣ Onions
- ▣ Lettuces
- ▣ Beets
- ▣ Mustard
- ▣ Peas
- ▣ Radishes
- ▣ Swiss Chard
- ▣ Turnips

FRUIT

- ▣ Apple
- ▣ Peach
- ▣ Pears
- ▣ Grapes

FLOWERS & BULBS

- ▣ Hardy Annuals
- ▣ Roses
- ▣ Lillies (expect Madonna)

THINGS TO DO

- ▣ Prune dormant trees
- ▣ Get a soil test

Visit the website to learn more about the exact planting dates for your region in Alabama.



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SENIOR SOCIAL & BENEFITS

JANUARY 21ST

Join us at BMC Wellness Center from 11:00am-12:00pm for an informational Senior Social & Benefits Meeting focused on fitness benefits for individuals who no longer qualify for certain programs. Attendees will also receive assistance with applying for SFMNP farmers market vouchers. Refreshments will be provided!

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