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APRIL 2024

THE HODGES

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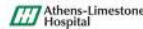
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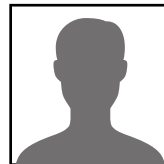
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DEAR RESIDENTS _____

If you are reading this, thank you. I cannot possibly express my gratitude enough to everyone for their expressions of happiness that this magazine has brought them already. We've only been going since July, and we are rocking and rolling with content from folks such as yourself. I wanted this magazine to be a home for you to share your stories, your students of the month, your little league highlights, your recipes and pets and so much more. So far, we are doing that and I'd love to keep doing it. In fact, the more stuff you submit, the more pages this magazine is going to need so don't be shy, share anything and we will try to find a way to publish it next month.

Please enjoy the April issue of East Athens Living and be kind to each other.



ARKY SHEA
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February 10	March
March 10	April
April 10	May
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June 10	July
July 10	August
August 10	September
September 10	October
October 10	November
November 10	December

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STUDENT OF THE MONTH:

BRELEIGH ANDERSON

by Will Anderson

Breleigh Anderson, my sister, is nine years old and attends Athens iAcademy. Breleigh is in the third grade and loves learning. Most of the time when you ask her what she wants to be when she grows up, she will say a teacher, but sometimes she says a veterinarian. She loves people and animals. Breleigh is the reigning "Miss Pre-Teen Spirit of Athens" and the "Alabama State Ambassador" for the Sassy Supremes Pageant System. She plays soccer, basketball, and is a member of the Athens iAcademy Spanish Club. Additionally, she is taking baton lessons, Karate, and is a former Girl Scout.

In 2020, while in Kindergarten, she was the recipient of the Limestone County District Attorney's Superhero Award. Brian C. T. Jones, Limestone County District Attorney stated, "We created the superhero award to highlight kids that have a positive attitude, that have good attendance because we want to go after the truancy issues in our community, good leadership skills, and an all-around good kid."

Most recently, she won First Place in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest for second and third graders. Her essay was titled, "My Thank You Letter to Martin Luther King, Jr."

Breleigh also loves to volunteer and help out in the community. She has helped me collect Gatorade, food, goody baskets and cards to distribute to the homeless community. As the reigning Miss Pre-Teen Spirit of Athens, she participated in a book drive that partnered with Make A Way Foundation and Toodlebugs to help further promote education, understanding, and awareness of those with special needs. She wants to help young people understand and interact in a positive way with their peers who have special needs.

Although she is young, she truly has a servant's heart and is an inspiration to me to be the best that I can be.

Do you know a student that deserves to be spotlighted in East Athens Living? E-mail your nomination to markwhite@bestversionmedia.com.



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NEXT STEP FARMS

by Mark White

In Harvest, on a quaint countryside, there is a special needs farm called Next Step Farms. This extraordinary sanctuary was created so individuals with special needs could find solace, friendship, and a sense of belonging.

The farm was founded by Robin Kramer, a compassionate soul with a heart of gold. This effort was inspired by her own experiences working as a special needs teacher. Robin dreamed of creating a space where people of all abilities could thrive and reach their full potential.

"I am a retired special education teacher from Madison County Schools. I spent all 25 years working with the special needs population. Even in my college career, I knew that special needs individuals after age 21 had limited opportunities after their school career ended. After 10 years of teaching, it went from a head matter to a heart matter," said Kramer.

At Next Step Farms, every individual is welcomed with open arms and celebrated for their uniqueness. The farm offered a wide range of activities tailored to meet the specific needs of each person. There are opportunities inside to learn life skills and outside to connect with nature and learn outdoor responsibilities.

"We teach functioning daily living skills. We started teaching them how to apply those skills. In the kitchen, they learn how to make food items like jams, jellies, and pickles. Outside, they learn area by building a chicken coop. They learn the life cycle of a chicken by the chicken being in the room. We hatch eggs. We watch chickens lay eggs. We watch the circle of life," said Kramer.

One of the most heartwarming aspects of Next Step Farms is the sense of community it fosters. The individuals formed strong bonds with one another and support each other through their challenges. They celebrated each other's successes, big and small, and learned from each other's experiences. This gives the clients at Next Step Farms purpose.

"My clients want purpose. If we're honest with ourselves, that's what all of us want. We all want to be valued and we all want to feel we have a purpose," said Kramer.

The farm organizes regular events for families and the wider community. These events provided a platform for raising awareness about special needs and showcase the incredible talents and abilities of the individuals at Next Step Farms. You can find out more about Next Step Farms by visiting NextStepFarms.org.

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THE HODGES

by Mark White | photos by Fly Leaf Photography

When it came to learning the game of golf, Lee had some guidance from some older friends early on.

"I had played at Canebrake, so I had a lot of buddies who played out there. They were older than me, it seems all my friends are older than me. Craig Whitt and Stewart Whitt, they both played at Athens and are really good players who helped me. Stew played for Alabama. Of course, I learned from my dad and started working with Steven Purrier who I still work with today," said Lee.

Lee began dating his future wife, Savannah, when they were both sophomores in high school, Lee at Ardmore and Savannah at Elkmont.

"We met at a basketball game. I was playing basketball for Ardmore and she was cheerleading for Elkmont. One of the guys on my team was a cousin to Savannah and that's how we met," said Lee.

As the spouse of a golfer, Savannah shared her thoughts on the golfing lifestyle.

"It's interesting. It took me a while to get used to it, because our experiences are different from our friends' experiences. I just really got plugged in with the wives of other golfers. I got involved with the PGA Wives Association and accepted this as our new normal. I'm very thankful that we get to do it together," said Savannah.

One of Savannah's favorite parts of being on the Tour is giving back.

"We get to see some really cool places and experience some things that we wouldn't otherwise. Through the PGA Wives Foundation, we get to help charities throughout the country. It gives us such a broad spectrum of who we get to touch. We partner with a lot of children's charity programs. First Tee programs reach out to underprivileged children and gives them a chance to experience golf. We also partner with organizations who help children with special needs," said Savannah.

The Hodges' also donate to the Stacy Wolfe Breast Cancer Foundation.

In addition to small town life, Lee and Savannah have experienced big city life.

"We lived in Birmingham for two years. We realized quickly that just wasn't for us. We are small town people. We like to come home and be able to get a coffee in five minutes or walk our dog around the neighborhood. It's home and that's the kind of people we are," said Lee.

After winning the PGA Tour event at the 3M Open in July 2023, Lee Hodges became a household name in the golf world. Still a local guy, Lee was born in Huntsville and was raised in Ardmore.

"It was great. I loved the small town and the small town feel. I loved everybody kind of knowing everybody. A lot of people know who my dad is around here which is great. I get all my athletic ability from my mom. Nobody really knows that, but seriously, I really loved growing up around here," said Lee.

With his parents living at Southern Gayles, Lee began playing golf at an early age.

"I always played with my dad and kind of tinkered around, but I probably started really playing when I was 12 I would say. That's when I got serious and began focusing on getting better," said Lee.

Early on, Lee was a smaller kid and that led him to the decision to play golf.

"I loved baseball and all my friends played baseball. I didn't know I was going to be a great golfer. My dad took me to the Ardmore High School field one day to hit balls. I think he knew that I shouldn't play baseball. Baseball and golf were played in the same season and I was starting to pick. I couldn't even hit the ball out of the infield because I was so small and decided to play golf and it worked out," said Lee.

“It feels good to be around people who are similar to us. We are 15-20 minutes from both of our parents. We get to see our nieces and nephews grow up while we’re home. Everybody knows everyone. I’ll have people stop me in the grocery store and ask me about Lee’s golf. Even if they don’t know us personally, they feel close to us because we are local,” said Savannah.

Since the big PGA win in July, Lee said life hasn’t changed that much at home.

“It’s changed less at home than everywhere else. I’m still the same guy that people have known all my life. It’s definitely different on the road with more people asking for my time. I don’t mind. I’ll sign autographs until my hand falls off because I know one day people won’t want them. I have a lot more fans. It’s cool to have people root for you,” said Lee.

For the first time in his career, Lee will get to play in the country’s most prestigious golf tournament this

month as a result of his 3M Open win last July. Hodges will tee off at

the Masters Tournament, April 11-14 in Augusta, Georgia for a chance to win the coveted Green Jacket.



If someone were considering coming to Limestone County, Lee and Savannah have some thoughts.

“It’s what you’re looking for in a small town. We miss home when we’re away. We love it. My caddie comes up from Birmingham and he says there’s just no place like it anywhere. We love the people and the small town feel,” said Lee.

“Everyone is so nice here and they go out of their way to be nice. That’s so rare in today’s society. No matter where you are in Athens, it’s so unique. Everyone is so supportive. I know we feel supported. People want the best for you. It really is the small town atmosphere,” said Savannah.



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Each day we're reminded that the true essence of home lies in the bonds we share and the memories we create with our loved ones. By embracing principles of comfort, connection, and sustainability in home design, we not only enhance our quality of life today but also lay the foundation for a brighter tomorrow.

DISCOVERING COMMUNITY GEMS:

As you embark on your quest for the perfect home, don't forget to explore the hidden treasures each community holds. Picture

serene fishing ponds for lazy afternoons, winding walking trails for family strolls, or even vibrant clubhouse hubs with sparkling pools for sunny days. These little touches can truly elevate the happiness and well-being of your loved ones.

ENSURING SAFETY & SECURITY:

When planning your new home with your builder, prioritize safety and security measures for peace of mind. Think about incorporating indoor cameras, cutting-edge fire alarm systems, and childproofing features to create a safe haven for your family.

EMBRACING ENERGY EFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY:

Nowadays, a hallmark of quality craftsmanship lies in the integration of sustainable energy-efficient features. Not only do these choices lessen our environmental footprint, but they also lighten the load on family budgets with lower utility costs. Consider incorporating energy-efficient appliances and eco-friendly building materials into your new home's construction.

Whether you're a builder shaping the future of communities or a homeowner envisioning your dream space, may the insights and inspiration shared in the Builder's Corner empower you to create homes that truly enrich the lives of families for generations to come.

FAMILY-CENTRIC LIVING: DESIGNING HOMES FOR COMFORT, CONNECTION & SUSTAINABILITY

by **Molly Kate Goar**



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Top: Associate Broker Ron Webster, VP of Community Relations Shannon Elliott, at the "Chil-estate Chili" booth in support of the Hospice of Limestone County Chili Challenge. Right: Shannon won the People's Choice Award! Left: We would like to welcome Ryan and Lanie Worshek of the Worshek Group to E&V Limestone!

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13823 Zehner Rd · Athens: Beautifully updated brick home on secluded 6.77 acres. Kitchen w/ quartz counters, ample cabinets. Updated lighting throughout. 24x50 heated/cooled workshop. **\$600,000**

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12100 Two Rivers Dr L-1 · Athens: Luxury waterfront condo in gated Two Rivers, The Pointe. Stunning Elk/TN River views, 3BR, 3BA, gym, elevator. 1st-floor unit, 2 patios, furnished, boat slip, & more. **\$589,900**

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202 Wellington Road · Athens: Fabulous 2-Story in an established neighborhood, Spacious Lot, Primary Suite, Hardwood Floors, Granite Kitchen, Updated Amenities, Large Backyard with Fireplace **\$440,000**

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19895 Wells Rd · Madison: Charming 4BR Brick Home: Spacious Lot, Wood Floors, Fireplace, Luxury Master Suite, Appliances Included. Features Detached Shop, Recent Roof & HVAC. **\$365,000**

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103 Clubhouse Ln · Madison: ORRB location. Charming 4BR/3 BA brick home w/ spacious sun room. Living room boasts hardwood floors, trey ceiling w/ crown molding, & gas-log fireplace. **\$339,900**

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22157 Saratoga Dr · Athens: Must-see 4BR/ 2BA home in east-side neighborhood. Features eat-in kitchen, dining, living area w/ gas fireplace. Covered back porch; partial basement workshop. **\$325,000**

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17258 Brooklawn St · Athens: 3BR, 2BA Home. Open Floorplan, Gourmet Bistro Kitchen with Granite, Chef's Island, Isolated Master Suite with Marble, Tankless Water Heater, Large Porch, Rear Garage. **\$315,000**

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21704 Daveen Dr · Elkmont: Remarkable ranch home, custom features, exceptional craftsmanship. Open floor plan, perfect kitchen w/ tiled backsplash, adjoining dining, large gathering room w/ wood fireplace. **\$288,000**

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23287 Toone Road · Elkmont: 3BR/2BA Large Lot, Minutes from I-65, Modern Finishes. LVP & Tile Floors, Trey Ceilings, Whirlpool Tub, Extended Patio, New Privacy Fence, & Updated Kitchen. **\$285,000**

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Congratulations to Executive Broker, Ginna Chittam and Advisor, Shannon Elliott on their prestigious Ruby and Onyx Awards for 2023!



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IS THERE AN IDEAL TIME TO LIST YOUR HOME?

by Beth Medley

I am often asked, when is the “BEST” time of the year to list a home. According to the National Association of Realtors®, April is a great month to list a home. Although we are blessed with a very robust housing market in north Alabama, Spring is considered a great time to sell a home for several reasons.

WEATHER: In North Alabama, like many parts of the world, spring brings milder weather, which can make the process of selling a home more pleasant. Potential buyers are more willing to get out and attend open houses when the weather is nice.

CURB APPEAL: Springtime showcases homes at their best. Trees and flowers are blooming, lawns are green, and the overall curb appeal of a property is often at its peak. This can make a significant difference in attracting buyers and creating a positive first impression.

DAYLIGHT: Longer days mean more daylight hours for showings, which can be particularly advantageous for people who work during the day. Buyers have more time to view homes in the afternoon and evening.

FAMILIES PLANNING MOVES: Many families with children prefer to move during the summer months when kids are out of school. Selling in the spring allows for a closing date in the early summer, aligning well with

these families’ timelines and making it possible to move before the next school year starts.

TAX REFUNDS: Tax refund season falls in the spring, and some potential buyers may use their refunds for a down payment or other home-buying expenses.

MARKET ACTIVITY: Spring often sees an increase in market activity. More homes are listed, which means more competition, but also more potential buyers looking for their new home.

FRESH START: Spring symbolizes new beginnings, making it a psychologically favorable time for people to make big changes—like buying a new home!

It is important to note that the best time to sell a home can vary based on location, market conditions and individual circumstances. It’s always a good idea to consult with a local realtor who can provide insights into the specific market trends in the area. As we know, north Alabama, is an anomaly for many “market trends” and “norms.” Local economic developments can drive the ideal time to sell your home. As always, if I can help you in any way, I would be honored to be your real estate resource of choice!

BETH MEDLEY
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SPRING LOOKS THAT'LL HAVE YOU STYLIN' IN 2024

by Kristin Pippin, Owner Rad Rags Boutique

Ah, spring. The sun is shining, the birds are chirping and the smell of shopping for fresh looks is in the air.

PASTELS AND FLORALS. This is one of my favorite things I'm seeing for the spring! You are going to see beautiful palettes of pinks, purples, blues and greens on dresses and more. There are so many ways to style this look that you can't go wrong. One of my favorites patterns I'm seeing in this trend are vintage florals that flirt with color and pattern mixes.

SETS. Sets are here to stay for the spring and I am seeing some beautiful new blues, yellows and greens. Neutrals are still going to be very big with Ivory in particular being on trend. You will see short sets, skirt sets and pant sets in soft fabrics such as knit, linen and cotton. You will also see active sets that will feature jackets, shorts and skirts. Matching sets will instantly elevate your look and give you the effortless style we all crave.

MONOCHROME COLOR SCHEMES. Think colors that will never go out of style. Black, taupe and various shades of whites. The great thing about the staple neutral colors are that they pair really well with each other. The great thing about monochrome outfits for spring is that they don't have to be neutrals. You can easily play with colors, prints and patterns without having to step way outside of your comfort zone. Don't forget

you can always throw on a belt or sash for a fun way to accessorize a monochromatic look.

SKIRTS/SKORTS. Skirts began making a comeback last year and I am in love with all the different ways you can style these. I've been seeing tennis skirts and tennis dresses with skorts and the good news is you don't have to play tennis to pull off this look. The French girl style skirt has also been popping up everywhere. I love how simple these skirts are and the small details, like high slits, that keep this look current.

CARGO. This one is going to be hit or miss with some, but the cargo style is coming back. With the 90's and early 2000's coming on strong you will see cargo pants, denim, skirts and shorts making their way into stores. A great way to style this look is to pair your cargos with a simple and fitted top. You can accessorize with jewelry to give it a feminine feel. I have seen some really cute jogger sets that have the cargo pockets and would be a great way to dip your toe into the trend.

Even if none of these trends are for you, it's important to remember to wear what makes you feel comfortable. And wearing a smile will always be in style.



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Athens-Limestone Hospital is pleased to welcome Dr. Stocks to Athens Community Care located inside the Athens Limestone Tower on Hwy 72. Dr. Stocks is a compassionate family practice physician who is committed to personalized care for each individual patient. Whether you need help managing a chronic illness or an annual check-up, Dr. Stocks is here to care for you and your family.



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LISTENING

IS THE GREATEST DIAGNOSTIC TOOL



By **Susan Claborn**

In high school, Jeremy Stocks' biology class sparked his interest to become a physician. Majoring in chemistry in college provided shadowing opportunities that solidified his desire to make a difference as a doctor.

His education included research studies, so why did Dr. Stocks choose medicine over research? "I love science and research, but I choose medicine because I always wanted to make a change," shares Stocks. "In research, change can take years before it reaches people. In medicine I can see a patient and start to impact their life immediately."

Originally from Mississippi, Dr. Stocks came to Huntsville during his residency and shadowed Dr. Maples in the Athens area. "The people melted my heart and I couldn't stay away," states Stocks.

Dr. Stocks' philosophy of care is to listen to the patient. "I have to hear their story to gather information. I cannot just apply my own knowledge. If I do that, then I am using biases and assumptions instead of listening," states Stocks. As a proponent of tough love, he is a patient's biggest cheerleader but they must be willing to do the work. Dr. Stocks is working to become a fellow in obesity medicine, recognizing that fixing obesity contributes to changing other obesity-related health issues.

Dr. Stocks uses the algorithms of his education while also using his training to understand when it is necessary to deviate from the traditional

path of care. Dr. Stocks considers listening to his patients his most important diagnostic tool. Dr. Stocks also shares that patients should expect an overload of information, "It is important that my patients understand what I am communicating. I love art and drawing and I use that in communicating. I utilize a white board to draw out explanations to reinforce the conversation."

Patients recommend Dr. Stocks by sharing that he listens, he pays attention and if he does not have the answer, he will find it. He is honest and persistent. We are so fortunate to have Dr. Stocks join Athens Community Care to provide family medicine for families in the Athens-Limestone and surrounding areas.

DR. JEREMY D. STOCKS— ATHENS COMMUNITY CARE, FAMILY MEDICINE

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- UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL CENTER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, DOCTORATE OF MEDICINE
- JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY, BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CHEMISTRY, MAGNA CUM LAUDE

THE IMPORTANCE OF PELVIC FLOOR THERAPY

by Dr. Klaire Moore

There's a lot that gets discussed when a woman gets pregnant and then goes on her journey. Everything gets a big chapter in a book from the right vitamins to take, to the foods to avoid, to monitoring your blood pressure, to pain relievers that are allowed and on, and on and on. One thing that I rarely heard discussed ever and much less thru my two pregnancies was the mother's pelvic floor.

I've walked the path of pregnancy and postpartum recovery firsthand. Through my own journey, I've come to deeply understand the importance of proactive self-care and the transformative impact it can have on women's health.

Pregnancy and childbirth are profound life experiences, but they can also bring about physical challenges and discomfort. The women in this community need to be equipped with the tools and techniques to maintain optimal pelvic health throughout their pregnancy journey. By addressing issues such as pelvic pain, incontinence, and pelvic organ prolapse early on, we can help mothers minimize discomfort and maximize their overall well-being. Through our specialized pelvic floor therapy sessions,

My personal experiences with pelvic health issues during and after pregnancy ignited a passion within me to empower other women to

prioritize their well-being. I sought out what wasn't being taught to me and looked into a holistic approach to pelvic floor health, emphasizing prevention and early intervention.

I know that a place for mothers seeking comprehensive support and guidance throughout their pregnancy and postpartum phases was necessary so I created it: ReKreate PT and found skilled pelvic floor physical therapists who are committed to providing personalized care tailored to each client's unique needs.

We also have to recognize that pregnancy doesn't have to be done alone, or even with just a significant other. ReKreate PT offers the support of a compassionate and experienced doula. Our doula is dedicated to enhancing the birthing experience for mothers and their partners, providing emotional guidance, physical comfort measures, and advocacy throughout labor and delivery.

Every woman deserves to feel empowered and supported during one of the most transformative periods of her life. It's not just about bringing a new life into the world, it's so much more. It's time we prioritize your pelvic health and create a foundation for lasting wellness before, during and after the most joyous day of your life.



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APRIL

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

NALZS PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

Pick up your paddle and join the North Alabama Zoological Society (NALZS) for its inaugural Pickleball Tournament. Make it serious or just have fun with friends. However serious you are, you'll be playing for a good cause! All funds generated from this event will go toward the mission of NALZS to bring a zoo to North Alabama. Register on PickleBall-Brackets.com website.

COST: \$25

TIME: 8:00am

LOCATION: Big Spring Memorial Park, 350 Market Street E.

THE UBORA FEST

The Uborra Fest is an event celebrating the contribution of African American culture to the Athens-Limestone community and the world at large. Uborra, the Swahili word for "Excellence", captures the essence of what black music, theatre, cuisine, innovation, and leadership is all about.

COST: FREE

TIME: 3:00pm

LOCATION: Athens State University Ballroom, 335 E. Bryan St

CRUISE-IN ON THE SQUARE

Shine 'em up & bring 'em on out for a good time on The Square in Beautiful & Historic Downtown Athens. We ask everyone to leave parking on the north side of the square for patrons of our restaurant partners. We also ask that attendees do not reserve or block parking places. It's first come, first served on parking.

COST: FREE

TIME: 6:00pm

LOCATION: Downtown Athens

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

GETTIN' DIRTY AT THE LIBRARY: PRUNING FOR BLOOMS

Limestone County Master Gardeners Association Lecture Series "Gettin' Dirty At The Library" Presents: "Pruning for Blooms" by Jayne Luetzow.

COST: FREE

TIME: 11:00am

LOCATION: Public Library, 603 S. Jefferson St



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FRIDAY, APRIL 19

NIGHT AT THE DERBY

Wear your big hats & experience a taste of Kentucky at the inaugural fundraiser benefitting the Athens Boys & Girls Club.

TIME: 6:00pm - 9:00pm

LOCATION: Alabama Veterans Museum and Archives, 100 Pryor St. West

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

EARTH DAY EXPO

Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful and Athens State University are excited to host the 2024 Earth Day Expo! Enjoy Steve Trash-Rockin' Eco Hero's music, magic, and laughter, the amazing wonders of a Soap Bubble Circus, a petting zoo and more! We will have a host of vendors with everything from plant tips to local products to art!

TIME: 10:00am - 3:00pm

COST: FREE

LOCATION: Athens State University Gymnasium

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

FRIDAYS AFTER FIVE MUSIC SERIES: SOUL NIGHT WITH THE MIDNIGHTERS.

The first Athens Main Street Fridays After Five Music Series will be Soul Night with The Midnighters. Attendees are encouraged to bring a lawn chair to enjoy the music.

COST: FREE

TIME: 5:00pm

LOCATION: Downtown Athens

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

17TH ANNUAL ATHENS CAR, TRUCK AND BIKE SHOW ON THE SQUARE

Annual charity event with proceeds going to Limestone County Churches Involved, Hospice of Limestone County and Athens Limestone Community Action Association (Trinity Fort Henderson Project). Cash prize every 15 minutes.

COST: \$20 per car to register

TIME: 9:00am - 1:00pm

LOCATION: Downtown Athens U.S. Highway 31/100 U.S. Highway 31



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