


# LAKE SIDE *LIVING*

Relive the 2026 LakeFest Experience

- ▶ Sylacauga Celebrates the Magic of Marble
- ▶ An Evening with a Pell City Author
- ▶ At the Kymulga Grist Mill & Bridge Festival

*See inside for more!*

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ON THE COVER: A view from the stage during the Velcro Pygmies' concert at LakeFest 2026. Photo by Kasey Flurry

# LAKESIDE *LIVING*

*Covering life along  
Logan Martin Lake since 1994*

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# BETWEEN THE LINES



## The search for the Logan Martin monster

I was reminded recently – during a conversation with Lakeside Living contributor Susan Cook – about a long-held belief I developed after coming to Logan Martin.

“I still think it’s a good idea,” Susan said.

“It’s been some time since I thought about that.”

“It’s worth revisiting,” she replied. “Every lake should have its own monster.”

“Thank you,” I said. “I was a definite advocate of that for a while. If Logan Martin were to acquire one, what do you think would be a good name for lake monster?”

“Well, Loch Ness obviously went with Nessie, so for Logan Martin Lake...how about Marty? Simple, relatable, and easy to pronounce.”

It was my turn to agree. And now that we had a good name, all we needed is the monster. At least that’s what I thought at the time. Later I would learn that Marty had already appeared and been named a number of years before.

You can see him swimming near top left in the accompanying photo, taken by Marty spotter Stacey Sheppard, who captured his image (and shared it in the All Things Logan Martin Lake Facebook group) as he passed by his pier. “He is here all year,” she told me, “but shows himself mostly in spring.”

So Logan Martin joins lakes in such countries as Argentina, Turkey, Japan, Uganda, Norway, and Thailand and such states as Maine, Florida, Texas, Montana, Oregon, Iowa, and our neighbor Georgia (where the Altamaha River is home to a 30-foot cryptoid with a snake-like head and flippers) in having a monster. And that’s fitting. As much as lakes are happy, peaceful settings for tranquil reflection and fun recreation, they can also be mysterious places. The calm or even choppy waters of a lake tantalizingly cover what lies beneath, capturing the imagination. Legends

of sunken ships, ruins of submerged villages, and underwater bell towers from which chimes still sound are attached to many natural lakes, and even man-made bodies of water such as Logan Martin can fuel creative thought about what might lie beneath.

If you’d like to see more photos – and even a video or two – of Marty, visit the All Things Logan Martin Lake and River Rats of the Logan Martin groups on Facebook. He pops up every now and then in the feed, and there’s plenty more informative and entertaining content shared there by group members.

Here at Lakeside Living, we hope you will find this month’s content similarly informative and entertaining. In this issue, we take a look back at some recent events around the lakeside area, such as Sylacauga’s Magic of Marble Festival, the Kymulga Grist Mill & Bridge Festival near Childersburg, and, of course, the 2026 Logan Martin LakeFest & Boat Show. And that’s just for starters.

As always, thank you for joining us and making Lakeside Living part of your monthly routine. Be sure to wave at Marty if you see him.



A verified sighting of Marty, the Logan Martin monster.



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# HOOK, LINE & SINKER

## Helpful hits for reeling in early **SUMMER BASS**

**W**hen I think of June, I think of big bass schooled up on river ledges. Fresh off a long spawn, these hungry bass will be schooled up offshore and ready to feed. Here are some tactics that can help increase your catch rates during the first month of summer.

Bass will be prevalent in the month of June. Early mornings, I opt for a top water bite. Spoons and Pop-R style baits will be my choice. Sea walls and rocky banks near deeper water will hold fish early. As the sun starts to shine, leading to higher water temperatures, I tend to start graphing and looking for offshore schools.

When looking for offshore schools of bass, it helps to use electronics. These electronics can show bass schooled up on points and ledges. Idle around high-percentage areas, like humps and points. Once you locate the fish, try throwing larger

crankbaits. A Shaky Head or Carolina Rig is always a great follow-up bait to catch bass in offshore schools.

Some of my favorite June bass baits are the Davis Shaky Head paired with a Davis Shaky Worm and a Strike King 6 XD crankbait in shad color. I try to focus on main river ledges and points. These are excellent places to fan cast a large deep diving crankbait for schools of bass.

Once you locate these schools of bass, the bite can be fast and prevalent. Be sure to take precaution

when unhooking these feisty bass on crankbaits. And remember to take a kid fishing!!

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A local's first look at the Logan Martin

# LakeFest & Boat Show

Written by **CHERITH GLOVER FLUKER**

Photographed by **TUCKER WEBB**

I've attended LakeFest before, but the last time I was there, I wasn't a spectator. I was a teacher, supervising students and managing responsibilities, constantly scanning crowds the way educators instinctively do when they are responsible for other people's children.

I remember hearing the music in the background and catching glimpses of the boats and vendors as we moved from one task to another, but I never fully settled into the experience itself. I was physically at LakeFest but mentally somewhere between executing tasks and trying to keep everyone safe.

This year felt entirely different. I went to LakeFest for me.

I packed my lawn chair, grabbed my sunglasses, and headed toward Lakeside Park with no agenda other than enjoying the day. Somewhere between walking through the gates and hearing the first notes of live music, I realized how long it had been since I allowed myself to experience an event without multitasking my way through it. And it ended up being one of the best days I've had in a long time.

The first thing that struck me was how much LakeFest has grown. The event felt massive compared to the version I



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remembered years ago. Cars steadily filled the parking lots, golf carts zipped by, and crowds poured into the park from every direction. But somehow, none of it felt stressful or disorganized. Traffic flowed smoothly. Volunteers greeted people with smiles and clear directions. Everyone appeared to maneuver through the crowd without issue. Even with the large turnout, it didn't feel chaotic.

You could tell there were countless moving pieces behind the scenes, and whoever oversees the logistics of LakeFest deserves enormous credit.

Full disclosure, I do not own a boat. Nor am I in the market to purchase one. So walking into the South's largest in-water boat show, I wondered whether I would feel out of place. Surely this was an event for seasoned boaters, lake homeowners, and people who knew the difference between boat models.

Turns out, none of that mattered. I found myself wandering through the boat exhibits completely fascinated. I slow-walked past sleek pontoons and luxury boats. I overheard conversations about horsepower and financing options that meant absolutely

nothing to me, yet somehow I still found myself imagining what it would feel like to spend an entire Saturday floating across Logan Martin Lake in full relaxation mode.

The vendor village pulled me in next. One thing I appreciated about LakeFest was how intentional the vendors felt. Instead of rows of random booths, the selection reflected the personality of the community itself. There were local businesses, handcrafted goods, lake lifestyle brands, artists, and small shops that carried a variety of items.

I browsed slowly, stopping to chat with vendors and learn the stories behind their businesses. I picked up a few gifts, grabbed business cards, and entered every raffle I came across. I discovered businesses I hadn't heard of before despite living nearby. That's one of the things I love most about local festivals. They remind you that your community is full of creative, talented people building meaningful things right in your own backyard.

Of course, no festival experience is complete without food. I approached the food truck lineup with full commitment. Wings, hot dogs, lemonade, soft pretzels, coffee, you name it. I sampled





my way through the afternoon with absolutely no shame. The smell of grilled food drifted through the park all day long, mixing with sunscreen, lake air, and funnel cake. The exact combo that screams summer festival.

I may or may not have made multiple laps around the food trucks.

But as fun as the food, vendors, and boats were, the highlight of my time at LakeFest happened later in the evening when I finally unfolded my lawn chair and settled in for the concert. The Velcro Pygmies took the stage and completely transformed the atmosphere.

The Velcro Pygmies played the first note, and the crowd was instantly theirs. Rolling through “Highway to Hell,” “Purple Rain,” and “Sweet Home Alabama,” they played songs people didn’t just know – they felt.

Suddenly strangers were singing together. Teenagers and older couples danced side by side. People who had probably never met before were laughing, clapping, and shouting lyrics in unison. And sitting there in my lawn chair, looking around at the crowd, I found myself reflecting on why events like LakeFest matter so much.

Yes, it’s a boat show. Yes, it’s live music and food trucks and





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vendors. But it's also something bigger than that.

Local festivals create space for community at a time when people often feel disconnected from one another. They remind us to gather. To support local businesses. To share experiences with neighbors.

For a few hours, nobody seemed distracted by work emails, stress, or the heaviness that so often fills our news feeds and timelines. People were simply present.

And that's what stayed with me most after I left.

The feeling of reconnecting not just with the community

around me, but with myself. The realization that somewhere along the way, adulthood can make us forget how important it is to simply enjoy things without productivity attached to them.

By the end of the night, as I folded up my chair and made my way back through the crowd, I realized I hadn't just attended LakeFest this year. I had finally experienced it.

LakeFest and Boat Show is held annually at Lakeside Park, 2801 Stemley Bridge Road, Pell City, Alabama. The event is free and family-friendly. Visit [loganmartinlakefest.com](http://loganmartinlakefest.com) for information on next year's dates.





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# At the Kymulga Grist Mill & Bridge Festival

Petting zoo by the Talladega Creek is a highlight of this year's community event



## *Seeing the Lake with* **SARAH ELIZABETH**



Written by **DR. SARAH ELIZABETH MOREMAN**  
Photographed by **TUCKER WEBB**

**R**emembering the mugginess of last year's visit to the Kymulga Grist Mill and Bridge Festival, the verdant greens sharply vivid after the rains the previous night, I adjust the long sleeves of my thick-ribbed top to cover my arms. I then slide out of the rental SUV, which I chose since I am taking presents (lots of them) to South Carolina after I stop by the festival.

It is graduation season, and I have three niblings graduating from high schools across the South. Actually, two high schools and one home school program. The one in South

Carolina graduates from a strong Latin School homeschool program to which my sister contributes, teaching either Latin or economics, depending on the year.

Since my sister is taking my graduating nephew, along with my niece who will be graduating early next year, to Italy as a way to top off their Classical Latin education, I purchased carry-on luggage specifically adhering to strict international guidelines. Having been to Spain a few weeks earlier, I observed how important it is to have the right size carry-on, especially when my sister informed me that they are joining this group in Boston. They have been instructed to bring carry-on luggage only, no checked bags, since they will be traipsing all over the cobblestoned streets of Rome and Venice.

Pulling myself back to the present, I take in my

surroundings as I walk towards the entrance to the festival. Honorable Dale Price, District Judge for Talladega District, greets me, welcoming me to the festival and sharing some suggestions. I thank him before turning toward the screened-in pavilion, which I did not visit last year but want to try this time. Families and groups of all sizes and shapes gather in various forms of interaction over Styrofoam plates filled with grilled hamburgers and hotdogs, baked beans, and potato chips.

The smells of grilled meat fill my nostrils, making my mouth water. I delay the urge to get a plate myself, deciding to walk around the place first before eating. When I step out onto the wooden deck overlooking Talladega Creek, which runs under the covered bridge, built around 1861, I immediately spot a paddling of ducks. Some are white, while others are bold in coloring, which must be the wood ducks. The way they glide through the water so effortlessly and gracefully soothes me, reminding me to slow down and enjoy life.

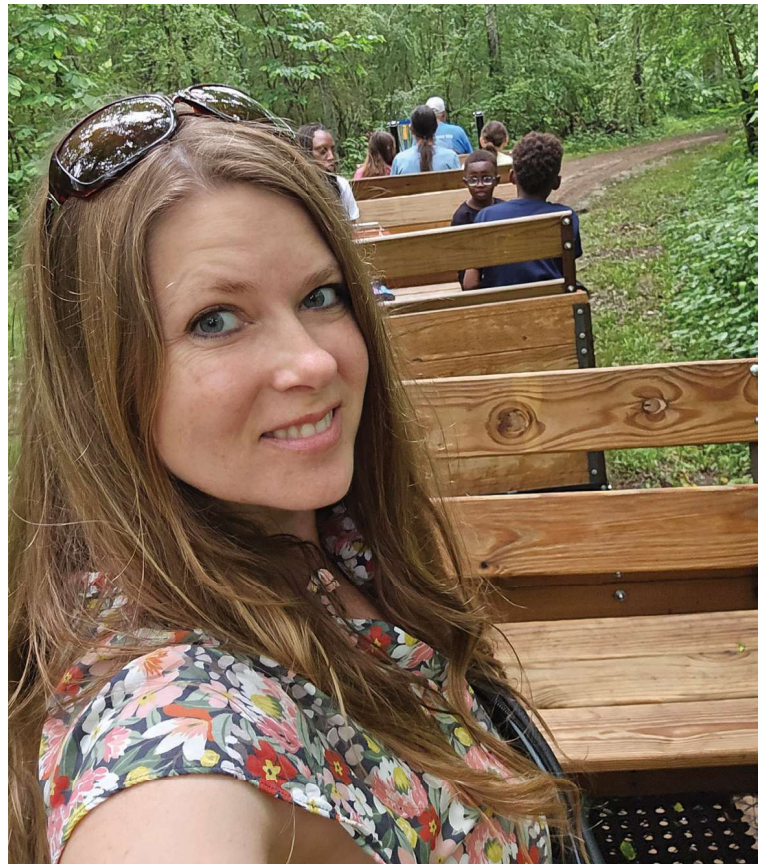
A breeze combs through my hair, causing me to shiver. Deciding to warm up by having that cheeseburger, I move back inside. I thank the volunteers in their black shirts with a large, bold "C" representing Childersburg High School as they hand me a plate with my burger. The savory taste of the grilled meat makes me groan with satisfaction. Props to the volunteers who worked hard to offer a juicy grilled lunch.

Wiping away any remnants of my lunch, I rise from the picnic table to continue my meandering through the festival. Even with the sun in its full brightness, the air still feels a bit chilly, in the 60s. This is definitely not the May I remember from recent years. May is usually warm like last year, and this unexpected coolness, rather than the muggy humidity I expected after the rains earlier this week, gives the experience a different feel, forcing me to see the festival in a slightly different light.

A golf cart rolls past, then stops. I glance over to see a white-bearded man in overalls and a black shirt imprinted with the festival logo on the chest pocket. What keeps my attention longer is the tiny teacup yorkie in his front large pocket, a bib pocket as they call it. I let out an "Ooh, let me take a picture."

He then leans into the golf cart and carries on, as I turn my attention to the tented booths and the crowds milling around each of them. Pork skins, hats, arrowheads, crafts, baked sweets such as pound cake, and pies. There is a long line at the lemonade booth, which tells me of its reputation for homemade freshness.

Beyond this lemonade-anticipating crowd, my eyes are drawn to a large, hulking, humped animal. A camel? My eyes shifts to the handwritten words advertising a petting zoo for a three-dollar fee. Deciding to save the petting zoo as my last stop, I meander to the right, toward the beckoning sign that reads "Gem Mining." Curiosity pulls me towards a long wooden trough, where a scattering of people lean over it with square wooden frames fitted with metal screens, sifting through muddied water. Rough, colored pebbles and stones have been



collected. Seeing these gems, I wonder what the girls who hold them in their hands will do with them. Will they craft jewelry with the stones? Or glue them to a board or into a shadowbox? Or use them for some handmade board game?

I return to the petting zoo, stepping closer to the corral where the camel stands inside. The camel's dark eyes are deep and watchful, as if it has been waiting for me to come closer. Its movements are slow and steady, while the little ponies in the next corral bump into one another. The goats, alpacas, bunnies, and a large tortoise are in the adjacent pens. I smile at their energy as they eagerly receive carrots from other bystanders.

A girl is riding a saddled pony in a large circle around the grassy area, with a woman handler gently guiding the pony by the halter. Her parents stand by, taking pictures of this memory for the little girl to treasure for years. I still look at my own pony-riding photos in their sepia tones and smile. Little girls should have their pony-riding moments if they cannot get a pony for Christmas.

A young boy rushes around, feeding not only carrots but also feed in a red Solo cup. I watch as he steps up to the camel to offer it. The camel graciously moves its mouth, muzzling into the Solo cup. A hairy piglet, leashed on the outside of the camel's corral and lying next to a large water bowl, oinks as the camel partakes the snack. I walk over to pet the pig, then the camel on their noses. Their skin is rough, yet pleasing to the touch. I cannot remember if I have ever petted either of these species, though I believe I have been around them at other fairs and festivals that offer a petting zoo. Then I recall



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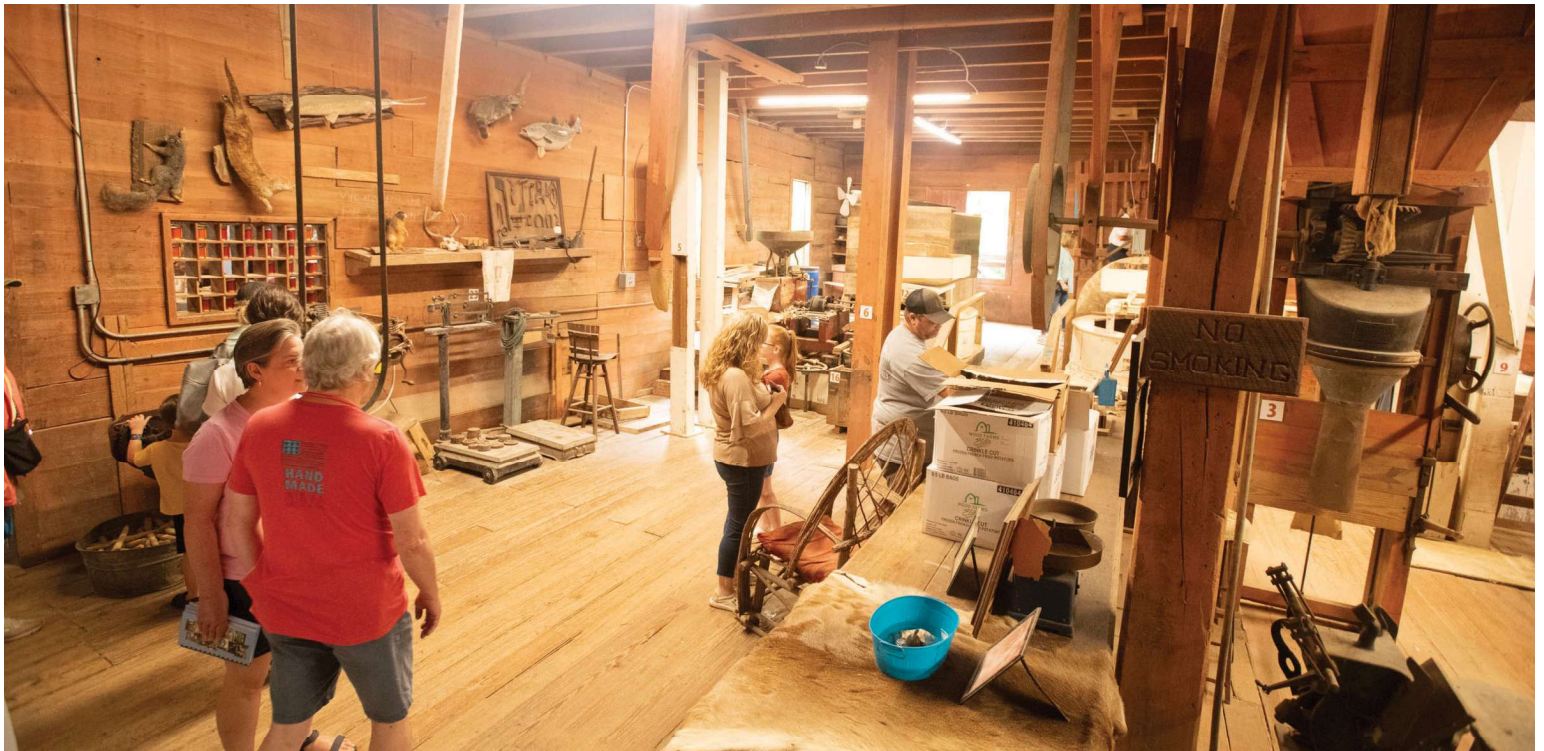


two years ago at Christmas, when a Baptist church in Opelika hosted a live nativity that included a camel, along with wooly sheep and donkeys. I digress, I have seen camels from afar in nativity or resurrection performances.

However, I believe this is the first time I have touched a camel, which inspires me to mentally plan a trip to Morocco or Egypt for a camel-riding experience. This musing reminds me that I need to hurry and hit the road to South Carolina to

bring the right-sized carry-on luggage to my sister, graduating nephew, and soon-to-graduate niece for their Italy trip. I also bought several essentials such as power banks, adaptors, antibacterial wipes, tissues, and thin journals with good pens to memorialize experiences and observations.

Still, I need to at least enjoy more of the petting zoo experience by picking up a bearded dragon to let it latch on to my shoulder and upper arm. I softly talk to it as I pet its scaly





skin before placing it back in its cage. I then unravel the small ball python named Slither before pulling it out of its plastic tub next to the bearded dragon. I like holding snakes, as their limbless bodies fascinate me with their strength as they move. After appreciating the snake for a few minutes, I hand it over

to the young boy waiting for his turn to hold it.

With that, I leave the petting zoo and be on my way to South Carolina, the memories of the morning clinging to my mind. The unseasonable coolness is perfect for this year's festival, and the petting zoo gets to be enjoyed to its fullest.



# *At the Magic of Marble Festival*



Sylacauga hosts

## **‘FAMILY REUNION’** *of talented, inspiring sculptors*

Written by **CHERITH GLOVER FLUKER**  
Photography by **TUCKER WEBB**

**I** grew up less than 20 miles from Sylacauga. For most of my life, that was just a fact. One of those pieces of information that, as a kid, you file away without ever really thinking about it.

I knew people called it the Marble City. You absorb that growing up in Alabama, learn it in school, hear it at the dinner table, and then eventually it just becomes background noise. After a while, you nod and move on.

My uncle worked at one of the marble quarries. I know this the way I know a lot of things about my childhood – in pieces, without the full picture. I remember riding out there in the summers with my aunt to take him lunch. We’d pull up, chat a bit, hand off the lunch, and head back home. I never once thought to ask what he actually did at work. Never thought to look around. It was just where my uncle worked.

I’ve been thinking a lot lately about the things I took for granted growing up. I now think about the places I drove past, the stories I didn’t think to ask about, and the history sitting right underneath my feet that I never bothered to look down

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and notice. The older I get, the more I want to go back and pay attention this time. I want to learn the things I should have learned years ago. I've found that the more I understand about where I'm from, the more I love it. Alabama keeps surprising me.

So when a colleague mentioned the Magic of Marble Festival in passing, I was intrigued. I realized that I'd been ignoring something that deserved my attention all along. I decided to go.

The festival began in 2008 as a cultural exchange between Alabama's arts council and Pietrasanta, Italy, the city synonymous with the marble Michelangelo used. This same stone is the one Sylacauga's white marble is most often compared to. Every spring for 12 days, Central Park in downtown Sylacauga fills with sculptors from across the country and around the world. They claim a block of marble, set up their tools, and spend nearly two weeks turning raw stone into finished work. They work openly, allowing anyone who wanders through a front row seat to see sculptors at work.

I wandered through on a Tuesday morning.

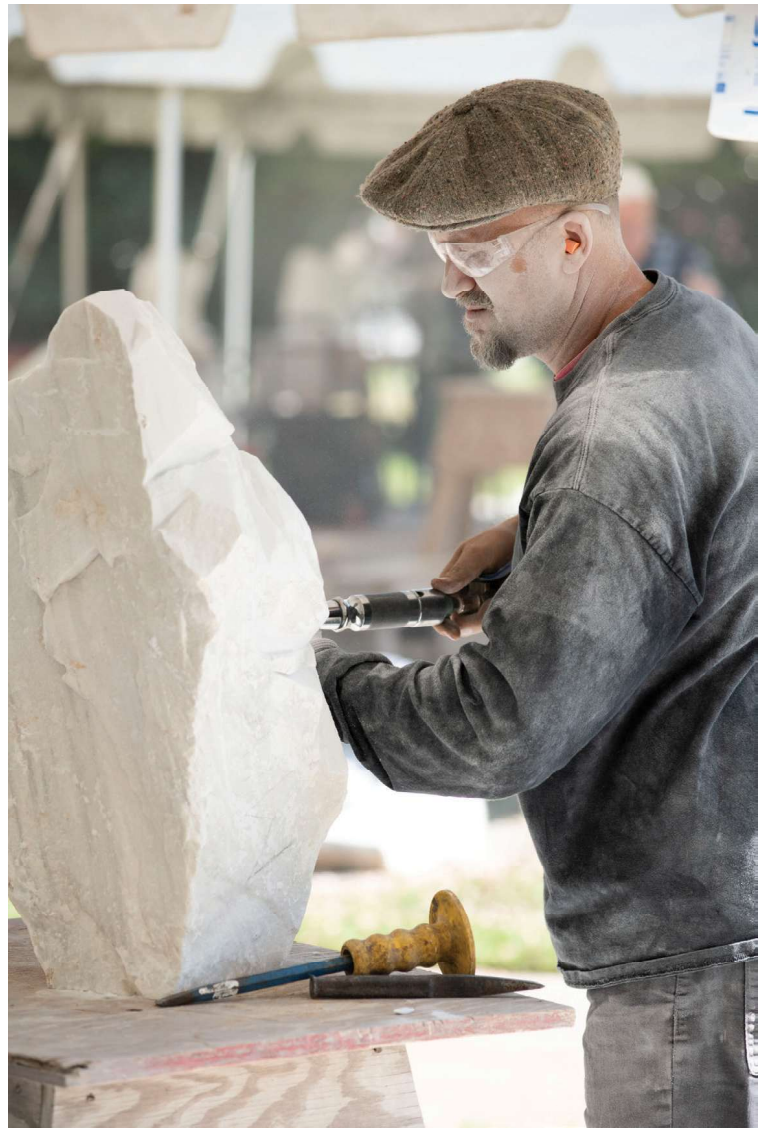
As I approached the sculpting area, the sound met me first. Sounds of angle grinders and other tools that somehow, the closer I got, felt less like noise and more like rhythm. Under a long tent, artists stood at their blocks in various states of concentration. Some had barely started, a few tentative lines scored into the surface, still just observing. Others were deep in it, bending close to study a curve, stepping back, then stepping forward again. Marble dust moved through the air like smoke, settling on the worktables, the tools, the sculptors' clothes and hair. Nobody seemed to mind.

I was wearing a black dress. Rookie mistake. The second day, I came more prepared.

What I hadn't anticipated was how welcoming everything felt. I'd imagined artists in fierce concentration, heads down, too absorbed to be interrupted. Instead, I found the park had the warmth of people genuinely glad to share what they love. Sculptors stopped mid-chisel to answer my questions, pointing out details in their work, explaining their process with an intentional patience, and even offering me a chisel to try my hand at sculpting. Several of them told me some version of the same thing: their mission isn't just to make beautiful things. It's to make sure the next generation picks up the tools. They want to inspire. You could feel that intention in the way they talked to everyone who wandered over. Nobody was turned away from the conversation.

One long-timer called the festival a family reunion. Another said it was about picking up conversations right where you left them the year before. You could feel the particular comfort of people who don't need to explain themselves to each other and the particular generosity of people who want to bring you into that circle anyway.

I walked across the street to the B.B. Comer Memorial

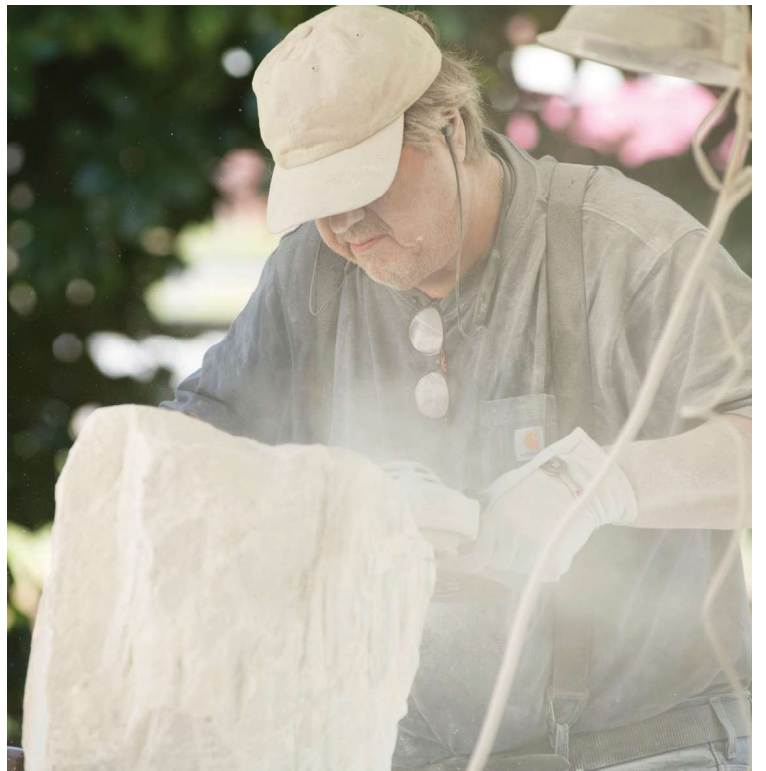


Library, which holds past festival pieces in its permanent collection and runs a marble art sale room during the event. Then I made my way to a lecture: From Soul to Stone: The Artistic Journey of Charles and Ada Cummings.

I'm glad I didn't skip it.

Charles and Ada are from Titus, Alabama – small town, central Alabama, the kind of place that doesn't show up on many lists. Charles spent the better part of four decades in the optical business before retiring and, almost on a whim, picking up a carving tool. Wood first, then marble. Ada came alongside him. Now they return to the festival every year, and the room they drew was full – sculptors, festival regulars, curious newcomers, all of us leaning in.

They moved through their story carefully, the way people do when they've lived something rather than just rehearsed it. They talked about the strangeness of starting over late, about learning to read stone the way you learn to read a person – slowly, with a lot of wrong assumptions before the right ones settle in. Ada spoke about the meditative quality of the work, how the resistance of the marble demands a presence that's hard to find anywhere else. Charles talked about the mistakes.



He didn't shy away from them or rush past them. He said firmly, the way someone says a thing they've come to believe all the way through: the mistakes are where the learning is.

At some point the room stopped being a presentation and became something else — a conversation, then laughter, then that particular feeling of being somewhere you didn't expect to belong and finding that you do.

Before it ended, someone asked the Cummings what kept drawing them back. Charles looked around the room for a moment and said simply, "Family." He meant the sculptors. He meant the people who come back to this park every April and pick up right where they left off. But sitting there, on my very first visit, surrounded by people I'd never met, I felt it too.

I drove home the same way I've driven that road my whole life. But I was thinking about marble. About what it means to



grow up next to something extraordinary and never stop to look at it. About how much Alabama has been trying to show me all along, if I'd just been paying attention.

The Cummings found their art after four decades in another life. I found a piece of my home I didn't know I was missing.

I didn't have to go far. I just had to stop driving past it.





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# An evening with a Local Author

Pell City-based travel writer shares secrets from her new book

Written and photographed by **DR. SARAH ELIZABETH MOREMAN**

While waiting for a gap in Birmingham rush hour traffic, I gaze in awe at the brilliant sunset, as if it were painted music in silent form. I feel the melodic notes in its hues, each pink puff of cloud touching my synapses, signaling an emotional release of aesthetic awe, a gentle sense of satisfaction in experiencing such beauty.

Seeing a gap, I quickly make my way across the road to the corner building where books are displayed with handwritten love notes accompanying them, encouraging them to be read. Little Professor: A Bookshop is always inviting, not only for bookworms but also for intimate gatherings such as this one, An Insider Evening with Cherith Glover Fluker.

Over the past year, I had subconsciously heard her name mentioned in writing circles, especially within Javacia Harris Bowser's See Jane Write Collective. Whenever we share our writing wins, we celebrate one another, cheering each other on to keep writing. It was during one of those virtual meetings, as

we shared out successes, that I became aware of this woman's enthusiasm when the Pell City-based writer announced that she had published a book. I clapped and joined in, typing out in the chat my congratulations for her accomplishment.

It was not until recently that I was formally introduced via text message to this woman whose name had often crossed my social media newsfeed and writing circles. Since then, I have seen her name more frequently and sensed her enthusiasm through her online presence. When I learned that Little Professor would be hosting an event about her published book, *Secret Birmingham: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure*, I decided to attend and finally meet her in person.

With the blazing sunset still shimmering in my heart, I step through the glass doors of Little Professor and am greeted by an equally brilliant smile. It is a smile I instinctively recognize as an extension of her enthusiastic personality. I walk toward her, extending my hand. "Cherith? I am Sarah Elizabeth."

Her smile, already unmistakable and surely her trademark, brightens even more as she confirms that she is Cherith. We naturally fall into an easy rhythm of conversation about writing,

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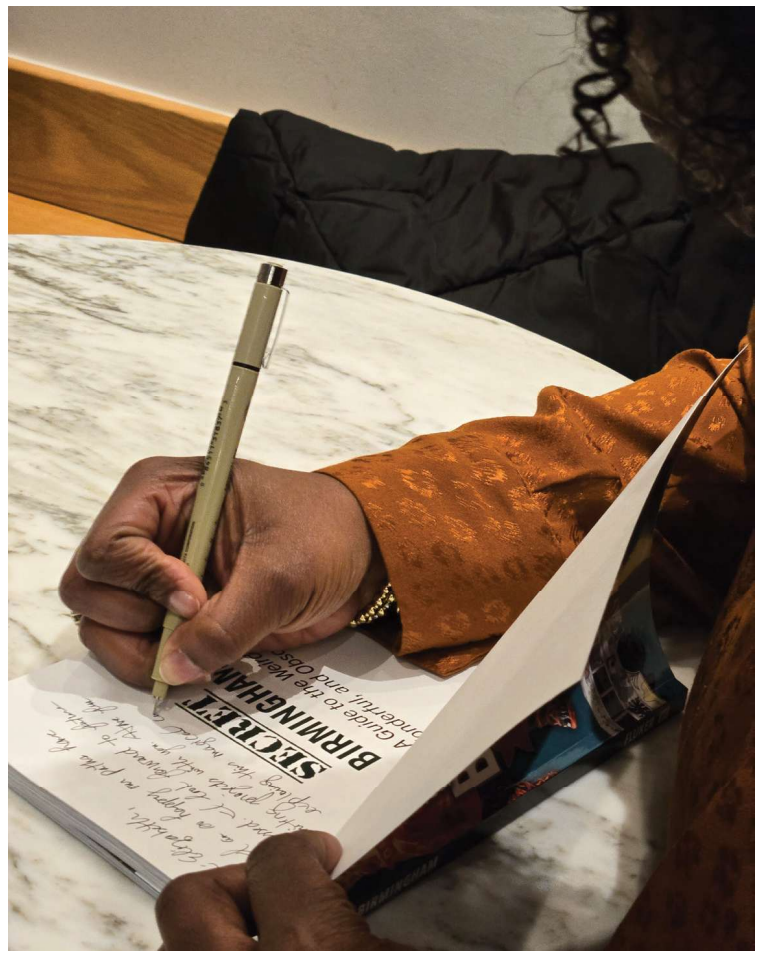
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Pell City author Cherith G. Fluker signs copies of her recently published book.



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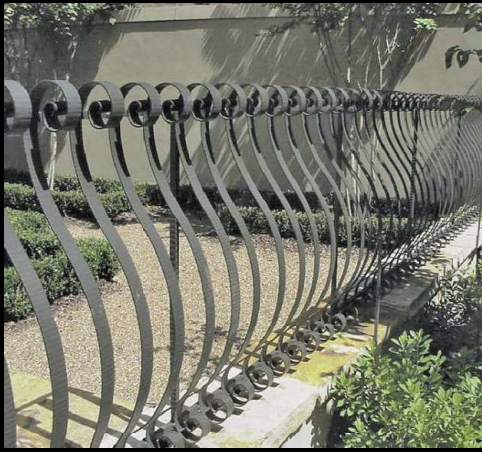
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specifically about Lakeside Living, to which be both contribute.

I hear someone call out, and I watch as Cherith, still smiling at me, turns her head to respond that she will be there shortly. I nod in that direction, "We can talk later. I am looking forward to hearing what you will share tonight." Because we already feel an instant bond formed through mutual connections and a shared love of writing, we embrace before she walks towards the voice calling for her attention.

I turn toward the windows. In front of them, window benches and a few round wood bistro tables are arranged, creating a cozy venue for such events. Beyond the glass, the sky remains a deep jewel blue, with glittery threads of sunset gold weaving through the darkening hues. Traffic along 18th Street in Homewood adds another blur of lights to the gathering twilight.

Deciding to sit next to the photographer, judging from his equipment, I ask whether it is all right for me to take the seat beside him. He encouragingly waves me over. I smile and place my oversized corduroy hobo bag on the bench before pulling off my heavy suede winter coat, which I bought when I first lived in Birmingham more than two decades ago. I fondly think of it as my "Birmingham" coat, because my hometown of Auburn, though only two hours away, was never quite as cold as Birmingham.

When I later lived on the Coosa River, the coat felt impractical. A snow parka would have made more sense, and I did not want to risk ruining such a beautiful piece near the water. So I tucked it away until I moved back to the 'Ham.

The nostalgia I feel this evening, surrounded by books and cheerful conversations, settles over me as I meander along the shelves, my senses alert for the event to begin. I take in how the displays reflect the season, with Valentine's Day around the corner. Notecards covered with a variety of handwritten, compelling commentaries are tucked inside books, peeking out for us to read and perhaps persuading us to purchase that particular title.

I notice several that I would love to buy, but that will be for another day. Tonight belongs to Cherith, and I realize I need to pick up my own copy of her published *Secret Birmingham: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure*, the very heart of tonight's event.

After spotting Cherith seated at her designated place beside a stack of her published books, I make my way back to my seat



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and wait. After the remaining guests settle in, the woman who handed me my reserved copy from behind the counter steps forward.

“Thank you all so much for being here. I am Meredith Robinson, the store owner, and we are truly honored to have Cherith Glover Fluker with us tonight, as well as Chanda Temple, who will be interviewing her.” She turns towards Cherith and Chanda. “Thank you both for being here. We are so excited about this book and all the secrets we have learned about Birmingham. I have a feeling we are going to get the true insider perspective tonight. Thank you again to everyone for coming. I will now turn it over to you, Chanda.” She steps aside as we begin to clap, welcoming the official start of the event.

Chanda, in her gorgeous brown dress, holds up a microphone and smiles as she leads the conversation, asking Cherith questions and drawing out the deeper reasons why the award-winning author of *Secret Birmingham* chose to create this niche of storytelling through vignette-style narratives with each hidden secret of the Magic City presented on its own two-page spread in the 180-page publication.

Cherith, with her trademarked smile, looks out at us listeners as she shares her “why” story, beginning five years earlier when she endured a series of difficult losses while continuing to teach others how to write. Between 2019 and 2020, she lost both of her parents within three months of each other, and she also became an empty nester as her two youngest children left for college. Although she started a blog during the pandemic, the losses of her loved ones dimmed her outlook on life.

“I needed to find a way to bring some joy back to my life, so I started writing somehow,” Cherith recounts, her smile now carrying a deeper meaning. “I have been sort of lurking in the background of See Jane Write, a writing community that Javacia started. I realized I needed to plug in, because people were like, ‘just write that.’ I was writing for myself, but I really wanted to do more with it. I started the blog, which focused on travel. It grew over time, and I knew I wanted to do other things outside of writing a blog.”

Cherith pauses before declaring, “I wanted to write a book.”

She smiles before continuing. “It was something I had been thinking about for a while. I connected with a publisher.” She explains that the meeting with the publisher proved challenging



because his questions suggested that he did not believe a book about Talladega, where she grew up, would have much potential in the market.

“Publishers have one thing in mind. They want to sell books.” She says plainly, describing how the conversation eventually shifted when the publisher returned with a different angle on her proposal. “He reached back out to me and said, ‘I have an idea if you’re willing to do it. Write a book about Birmingham.’”

She pauses before recalling her own response. “I was like, ‘I don’t know if I can do that, because I’m not from Birmingham, and it was not the idea I had.’ You know how girls can be when we don’t get our way.” Laughter ripples through the audience at the playful tone in her voice.

The publisher, however, insisted that she could.

Cherith turned to her closest confidant, her husband. He helped her realize how connected she already was to

Birmingham. Her father had worked in Birmingham for many years, and Cherith herself worked nearby in Jefferson County Schools for five years. That conversation with her husband led her down a path of reflection, reminding her how much of her own story was already intertwined with the city of Birmingham.

Cherith was so caught up in reflecting on how her life had been woven together with Birmingham through work, local boards, and community service that she nearly let the opportunity slip away. The publisher called again and remarked, "I'm gonna take your silence as a no." It had been through email, and Cherith quickly picked up the phone and called.

"I'll do it." Cherith announced to the publisher on the other end of the line.

Subsequently, the book project took fourteen months, with Cherith conducting most of the research herself. Her wariness about writing a book on Birmingham stemmed from a quiet fear that perhaps it was too easy, almost too good to be true. The path toward completing the book seemed to unfold naturally, as people and places continually appeared to guide her along, connecting her with the right individuals who helped move the project forward.

As an empty nester, she often found that many weekend evenings unfolded differently than before. Instead of going out to a restaurant, she and her husband would park the car and walk, taking in the magic of the city, or drive down unfamiliar roads, allowing Birmingham's secrets to reveal themselves naturally.

When Cherith pauses, Chanda uses the moment as a natural segue to her follow-up question: "Did the publisher give you the title of the book, or did you?"

"That's a great question; I get asked it a lot," Cherith replies. "People often ask me, 'How did you come up with *Secret Birmingham: A Guide to the Weird, Wonderful, and Obscure?*'" Cherith gestures toward a glossy stack of her award-winning book, its eye-catching teal-blue color festooned with collage-style photos and the bold white title in the center. "The publisher focuses a certain niche of books, a series of 'one hundred things to do' books, and then the Secret series for cities across the United States, such as *Secret Memphis*, *Secret Fort Lauderdale*, or *Secret New York*. I really didn't have much flexibility with the title; it had to fit their niche. The publisher had resources that I didn't, and well...the two kids are taking all the money, which motivated me to get this done." The audience laughs.

When the laughter tapers off, Cherith softly says, "I'm so glad that I did."

Cherith shares snippets of meeting people and hearing their personal stories. She discovers how much readers value the narratives in her book, which often spark dialogue. One person told her, "I would have never thought to ask my mom about Gus' Hot Dogs and when it started." Connections are what Cherith treasures the most through this book project and its aftermath.

Elaborates on her process, she explains that she maintains a list of must-have items, whether they are secret or not. "It is always a balance," she says. "I try to select things that are etched into the story of Birmingham. It was also important for me to



include some things like Talladega."

At the mention of Talladega, my eyes drop to my own copy of the book, lingering on the photo of Talladega Superspeedway, where race cars sit in formation, ready to roar off at full speed.

Speaking in a softer tone to convey respect, she adds, "In a way, I hope to honor the places I could not include in the book by hosting events at them. I also have space on my blog where I can highlight some of these places."

Cherith emphasizes the importance of connection through networking and writing communities, which led to collaborations such as securing photography from strangers willing to share their talents through groups like "Alabama the Beautiful" and "I Love Alabama" on Facebook. One gentleman, Wally, insisted on fulfilling her wish list of specific photographs; he refused her offers of payment and instead supported her work by continuing to share his photography. His reason: "I've been having fun telling people that my photos are in this book."

"What was the hardest thing in writing this book?" an attendee asks, pressing Cherith to share more.

"Good question. I have not been asked that before, but I'm glad you did. The hardest thing, I think, was narrowing it down... not necessarily the places, but the work itself. There were so many stories to tell. Trying to choose the right words to do them justice, while keeping each to 200 to 300 words, was a challenge. I wanted to say enough without diminishing the story behind

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each secret of Birmingham.”

Cherith's words wrap the evening beautifully. As the gathering breaks into smaller conversations, she begins signing books. From these interactions, I notice how Cherith connects with others, always talking to strangers, joking about how her husband expected her to be kidnapped so many times, and sharing the stories behind her book with visitors to Birmingham while keeping locals in mind.

Seated and observing, I see a few editors and publishers in attendance, including Kall McNutt of Birmingham Lifestyle and Christiana Roussel, an award-winning lifestyle journalist for StyleBlueprint. Watching them greet Cherith underscores the evening as a celebration of a writing-focused community.

Smiling, Cherith engages with everyone, hugging and laughing. I cannot help but smile too. I then begin placing my notebook and pens inside my hobo bag. I leave out my copy of the book for Cherith to sign.

When I approach her to sign my copy, I compliment her on a wonderful evening of storytelling and mention that I loved listening to her; the English teacher in her truly shined.

I ask what she does these days since leaving teaching. She explains that she works remotely for HMH, a learning technology company, still supporting schools. She leads a team of instructional coaches who visit schools across Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, keeping her connected to education in a broader way.

Curious, I ask how she has managed thirty-seven, and

counting, events to speak about her book.

Her response reflects community inspiration: Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, Girl Scout troops, festivals, senior living facilities, book clubs, and even a booth at the Pepper Place market on a Saturday. It seems one event naturally leads to the next, creating a domino effect of recognition for her book.

“I love talking about this book. I love meeting people. It really makes me happy.”

I smile and tell her again how glad I am to have met her, listening to her speak as only an English teacher could.

“It was hard to stop teaching because I loved it, but I needed something different. After my parents passed away and my kids moved on, my world felt upside down, and I needed a change.”

Out of the corner of my eye, I see a young man nearby. I nod and ask, “Is that your son?”

She smiles. “Yes, that’s Jordan. He lives here in Birmingham. We are going to Luca.” Thinking of the restaurant a few buildings over, I imagine the good food and wonderful margaritas. I hug her, wishing her a lovely dinner with her son.

Pulling the strap of the hobo bag over my shoulder, I slip away into the night, a deep inky blue, as others gather around Cherith, letting her special evening linger a little longer.

As soon as I sit inside my vehicle, I open the book to see what Cherith wrote. My heart warms as I read her handwriting. What she wrote, I will keep it to myself. My own secret in this city of Birmingham.



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Written by **CHRIS BLANKENSHIP**

Photography by **TUCKER WEBB**

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**F**rom the mountains of the Tennessee Valley to the shores of the Gulf Coast, and everything in-between (such as Logan Martin and Lay lakes), Alabama is second to none in the country when it comes to beautiful outdoors and recreation.

Whether it’s camping and hiking across state parks,

fishing our streams, rivers, coastlines and bays, or hunting in our state’s sprawling forests – there is truly something for everyone who has a love and appreciation for the outdoors.

But Alabama’s natural beauty is about more than just recreation. It is a powerful economic asset – and one that is increasingly central to our state’s ability to compete for talent in a rapidly changing economy.

Today, when individuals and families are deciding where to live, one of the first questions they ask is simple: What is the quality of life? And a major part of that answer is access

to outdoor recreation. People want to know if they can bike on scenic trails, paddle down clean rivers, hike through preserved lands or spend weekends hunting and fishing. They want to live in places that allow them to unplug, recharge and connect with nature.

Alabama is uniquely positioned to meet that demand. We have the natural resources that people across the country are searching for – but we must be intentional about leveraging them.

Each year, Alabama produces more talented graduates than ever before. Yet too many of those young people leave our state in search of opportunities and lifestyles they believe they cannot find here. If we are serious about retaining that talent, and attracting new talent from outside our borders, we must fully embrace and promote what makes Alabama special.

That is exactly what we are doing through Innovate Alabama, a statewide public-private partnership focused on entrepreneurship and economic growth. As chairman of the Outdoor Recreation Committee, I have seen firsthand how our natural assets are becoming one of our strongest tools in this effort.

Innovate Alabama recognizes that talent drives economic development. And talent today is mobile. Young professionals, entrepreneurs and innovators are choosing where to live based not only on job opportunities, but on lifestyle. By elevating outdoor recreation as a central part of our value proposition, we are showing that Alabama offers both.

And it is working.

We are hearing directly from entrepreneurs and young professionals who have launched businesses through Innovate Alabama programs that access to our outdoors, and the quality of life it creates, has been one of the most compelling reasons they chose to build their future here. They are finding that in Alabama, they do not have to choose between career success and a high quality of life. They can have both.

That is a powerful message, and one we must continue to amplify.

We have been blessed with incredible natural resources. Now, we must continue to invest in them, protect them and ensure access to them. By doing so, we are not only preserving our heritage, but we are building our future.

At the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, we are committed to expanding access to outdoor recreation opportunities across the state. Since 2017, we have invested more than \$500 million in outdoor recreation access improvements! Whether it is improving our state parks, enhancing trails and waterways access or conserving critical habitats, our work is directly tied to Alabama's long-term economic success.



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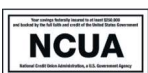
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By working in partnership with Innovate Alabama, we will continue to position our outdoors as a cornerstone of our growth strategy, helping us retain the talented young people who might otherwise leave, while attracting new individuals and businesses who are looking for a place to thrive.

Alabama's great outdoors are more than a point of pride.

They are a competitive advantage. And if we continue to lean into that advantage, we will ensure that our state remains not only a beautiful place to visit, but one of the best places in the country to live, work and build a future.

Blankenship is commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and chairman of the Innovate Alabama Outdoor Recreation Committee.

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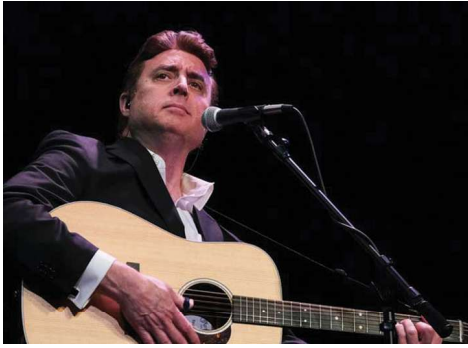


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<b>6.99%</b>	FOR	<b>24</b>
APR*		MONTHS





# CALENDAR OF Events



**JUNE 5**

## THE HIGHWAYMEN SHOW

Talladega's Historic Ritz Theatre hosts this country music concert at 7 p.m. The Highwaymen Show – American Outlaw Tribute is the only touring Highwaymen show in the world that pays tribute to all four of the original Highwaymen: Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, and Kris Kristofferson. Don't miss this trip down memory lane with the unforgettable hits of the iconic superstars: "Highwayman," "Mama, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys," "Always on My Mind" and "Me and Bobby McGee." Tickets are \$35 each, available at [www.ritzallaega.com](http://www.ritzallaega.com).



**JUNE 6**

## HOMETOWN BLOCK PARTY

The beloved community event – returning for the 27th year – is scheduled for 2-9 p.m. in downtown Pell City. From the lake and local schools to downtown and small-town charm, this year's block party is all about giving attendees tangible ways to celebrate what makes the Gateway to Logan Martin special. Live local music across multiple stages, an auto show benefiting The Children's Place, dancing in the streets, a free kids' area, and a marketplace will be available. For full details, visit the event's Facebook page.



**JUNE 13**

## COOSA RIVER RAMBLE PADDLE RACE

Join the Coosa Riverkeeper for this inaugural event at Lakeside Park in Pell City. This family-friendly outdoor event will celebrate the start of summer with the paddle race, cheering on the racers, free yoga, vendors, food trucks, kids' activities, music, and more. Events include a 5k, 10k, 24k and a recreational fun float race open to SUP, kayaks, and canoes! Registration includes entry to the race, swag bag, access to all activities, and lunch. Learn more and register at [CoosaRiver.org/Ramble](http://CoosaRiver.org/Ramble).

**JUNE 13**

## FISHIN' WITH DAD

Sylacauga Parks and Recreation hosts this family-friendly fishing tournament celebrating Father's Day a week early. The event invites dads and children of all ages to enjoy quality time together outdoors. The tournament will be held at Lake Howard (850 Lake Howard Road) from 6:30-10 a.m. Prizes will be awarded for Biggest Bass, Biggest Panfish (bluegill, crappie, and yellow perch), and Biggest Catfish. Free Chick-fil-A biscuits will be provided to the first 20 participants to arrive. Guests may launch a boat or fish from the bank or pier. Registration is free; however, participants are encouraged to pre-register at [www.sylacauga.recdesk.com](http://www.sylacauga.recdesk.com). Participants must follow all Alabama fishing regulations. Additional event rules and weigh-in procedures will be provided at check-in.



**JUNE 20**

## RIVERSIDE POKER RUN

Another beloved community event, the 17th annual poker run returns to Riverside Landing from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Registration will be open at the landing from 4-7 p.m. June 19 and 10 a.m.-1 p.m. the day of the event. The run will feature 8 docks, including a Mystery Dock, and cash prizes will be awarded. The event is presented by the Riverside Beautification Organization. For more information, email [riversidebeautification@gmail.com](mailto:riversidebeautification@gmail.com).



# CALENDAR OF Events

**JUNE 26**

## **STAR-SPANGLED SYLACAUGA**

This Independence Day-themed event and annual fireworks display is scheduled for 5-9 p.m. at Bluebell Central Park, presented by Coosa Pines Federal Credit Union. The Sylacauga Chamber of Commerce invites the public to this night of music, food, games, and family fun. The park opens at 5 p.m., and fireworks will begin at sundown. Admission is free, and food trucks will be on site. For full details, visit the event's Facebook page.



**JUNE 27**

## **LEE GREENWOOD**

The Oxford Performing Arts Center hosts the country music star as part of the Webb Concrete Classic Country Series. Throughout his expansive career, Greenwood has earned multiple CMA and ACM Awards, and a multitude of other recognitions. His discography includes 22 studio albums, seven compilation albums, seven number-one hits, and 38 singles, including songs like "It Turns Me Inside Out," "Ring On Her Finger Time on Her Hands," "She's Lyin'," "I Don't Mind the Thorns if You're the Rose," "Dixie Road," and his standout hit, "God Bless the U.S.A." Showtime is 7:30 p.m., and tickets are available at [www.oxfordpac.org](http://www.oxfordpac.org).

## **JUNE 27 - AVIATION DAY**

Sylacauga Municipal Airport hosts this fun day for the whole family. There will be airplanes, gliders, helicopters, and RC planes to see, as well as many pilots to talk with. The event is scheduled for 10 a.m.-1 p.m., and admission is free. There will be food trucks on site and kids' activities available. The airport is at 195 Airport Road. For more details, visit the event's Facebook page.



**JUNE 6-17**

## **SPOTLIGHT SUMMER DRAMA CAMP**

CEPA's Spotlight Kids Camp is back for another summer of singing, dancing, and arts education. The annual summer program is for students ages 7-17 to come together to create a full musical in less than two weeks. Students are assisted by camp staff as they prepare their audition, rehearse their role, and create sets and costumes to bring their show to life. Spotlight Kids Summer Drama Camp is a Monday-Friday full-day camp, specific dates and times listed below. Students are required to provide their own cold lunches that do not require refrigeration.

The cost: \$365 per student, which includes admission to camp, daily snack, camp t-shirt, and two vouchers to the showcase performance. Registration and more information are available at [www.pellcitycepa.com/camp](http://www.pellcitycepa.com/camp).



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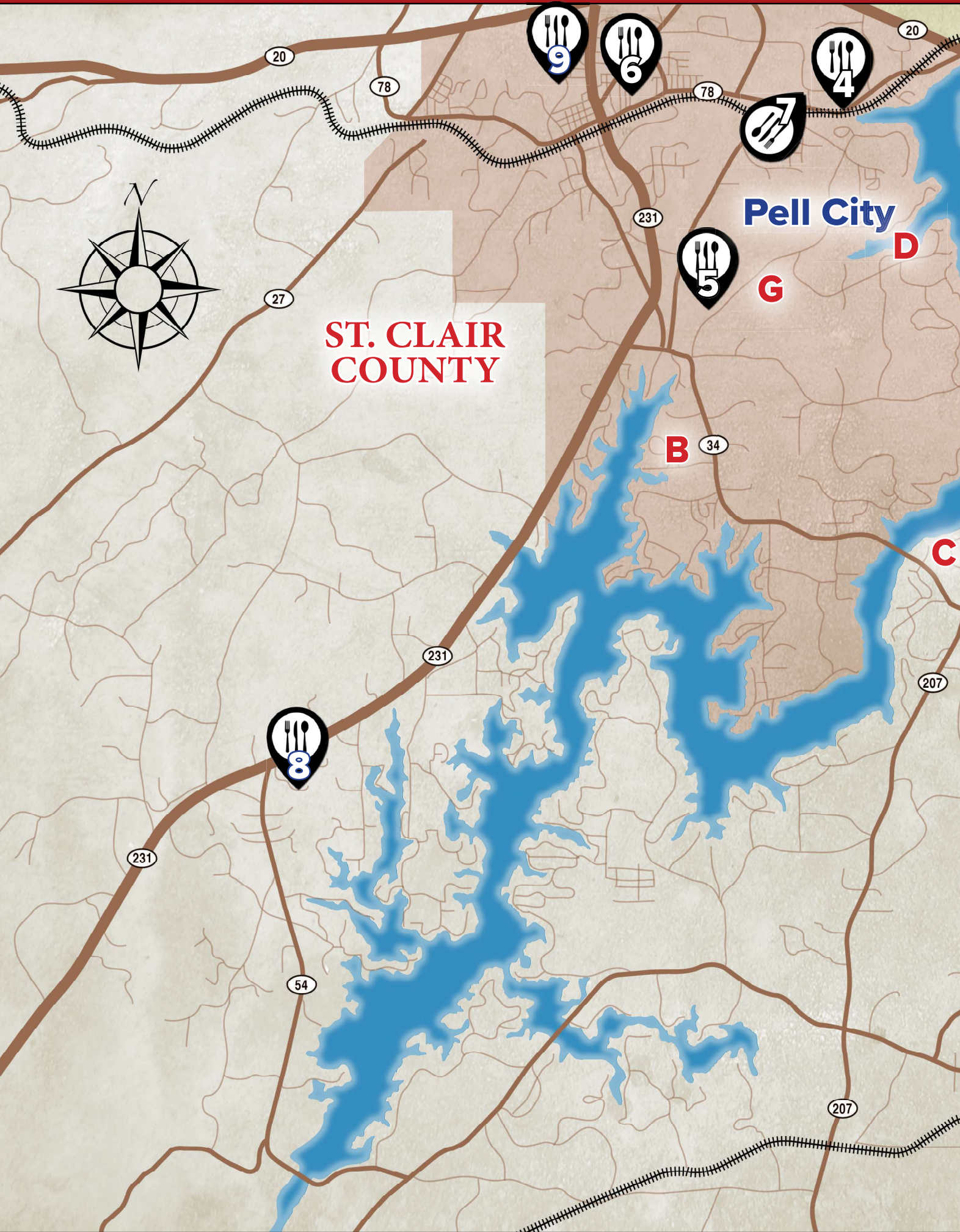
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**ST. CLAIR  
COUNTY**

**Pell City**



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**D**

**C**

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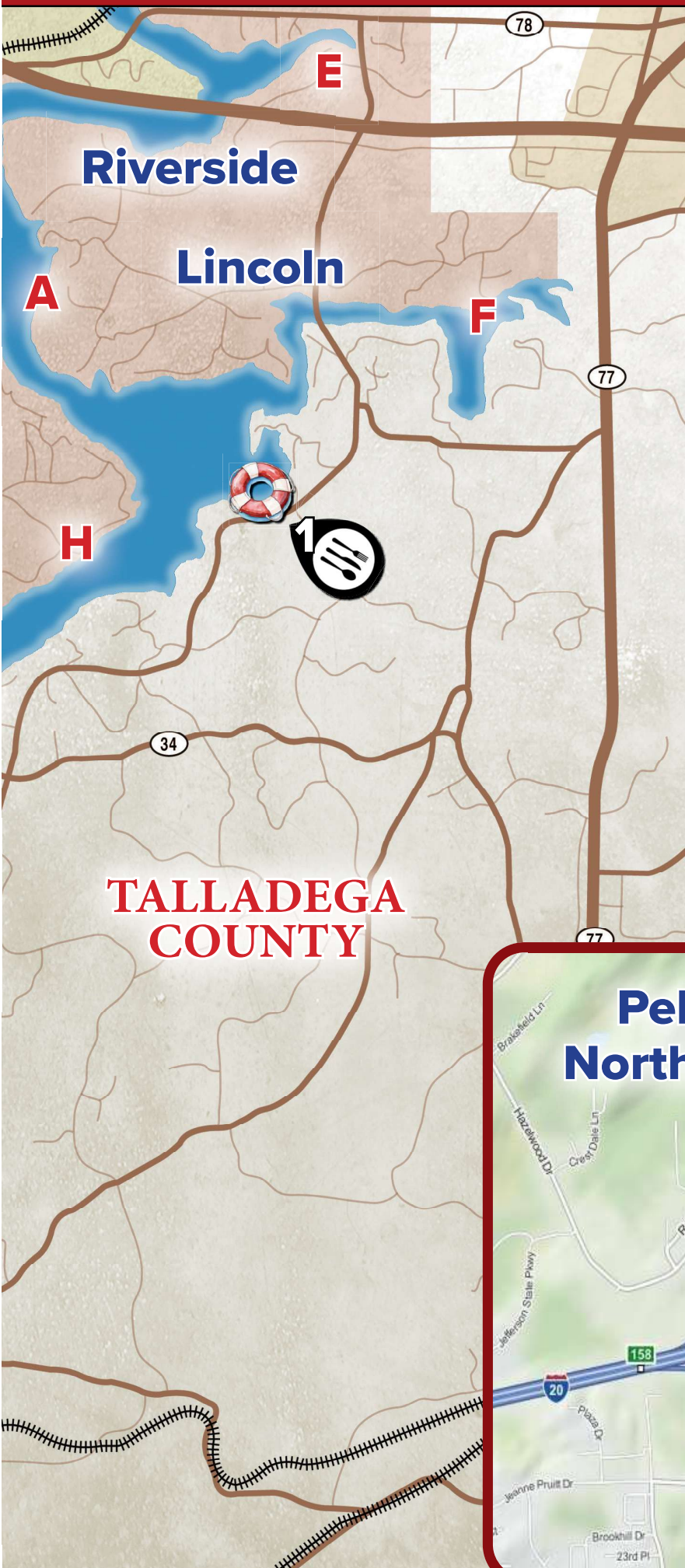
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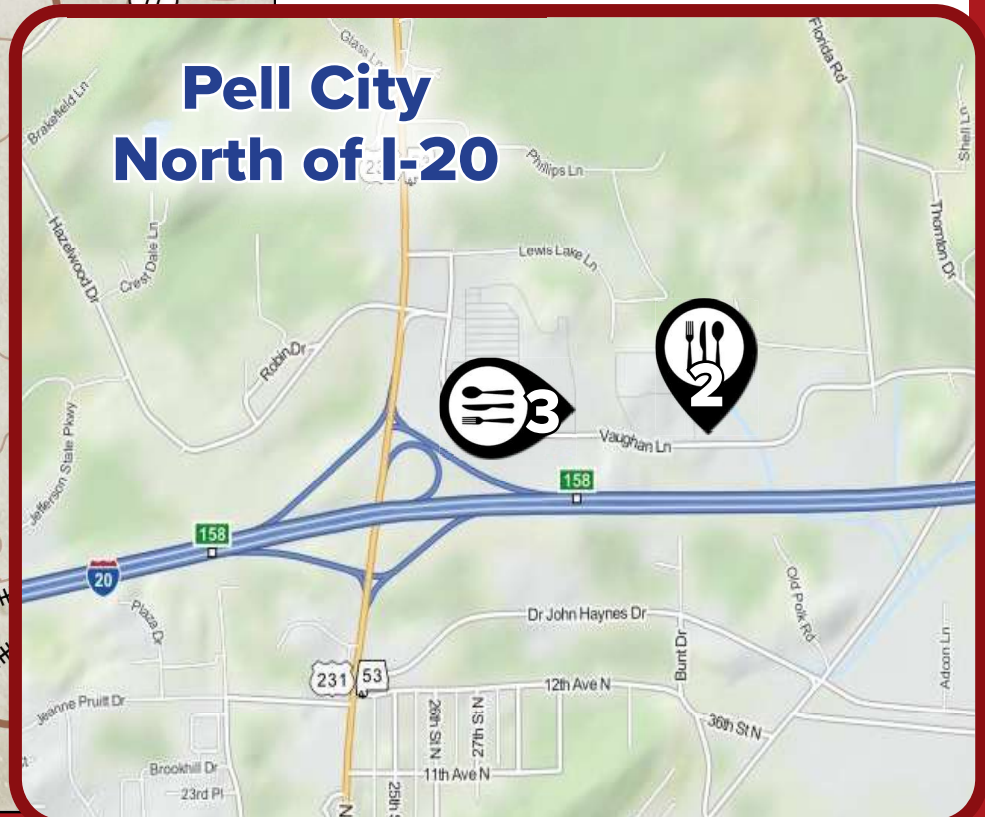


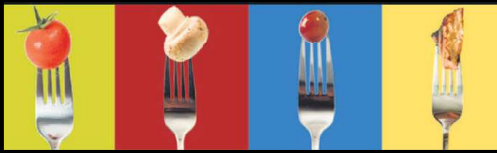


# A Lakeside Living guide to **LOGAN MARTIN**

- 1 – Poor House Branch Marina**
- 2 – Aztecas Mexican**
- 3 – Jade East**
- 4 – Triple G’s**
- 5 – Jimmy’s Country Store**
- 6 – Pell City Steak House**
- 7 – Oishi Asian Restaurant**
- 8 – Coosa Cafe & Creamery**
- 9 – Daylight Donuts**

- A – Logan Martin Dam**
- B – Lakeside Park**
- C – Stemley Bridge**
- D – St. Clair Airport**
- E – Mays Bend**
- F – Choccolocco Creek**
- G – Dye Creek**
- H – Blue Eye Creek**





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Breakfast Saturday: 5 a.m.-10:30 a.m.  
Saturday Lunch: 11 a.m.-2 p.m.



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**Karen Bain**  
205-473-4613

**Adam Bain**  
205-369-2704

[Karenbainfgre@gmail.com](mailto:Karenbainfgre@gmail.com)

[LoganMartinLakeTeam.com](http://LoganMartinLakeTeam.com)



**13100 Alabama Hwy 174**  
MLS# 21436628  
**\$819,000**



**211 Kewanee Lane**  
MLS# 21446518  
**\$775,000**



**40 Camelot Lane**  
MLS# 21440368  
**\$749,900**



**24 Woods Ferry Rd**  
MLS# 21441810  
**\$695,000**



**881 Ridgeway Circle**  
MLS# 21443107  
**\$649,900**



**605 Tenbury Lane**  
MLS# 21449243  
**\$399,900**



**1409 23rd St. South**  
MLS# 21417765  
**\$395,000**



**1940 Linden Street**  
MLS# 21440553  
**\$339,900**

## LAND LOTS



**118 Saint Judes Ln**  
MLS# 21441623  
**\$263,000**



**LOT 29 WAITES DR.**  
CROPWELL, AL  
**\$274,900**  
1.21 ACRES MAIN CHANNEL  
WATER AS WELL AS SLOUGH SIDE  
WITH DEEP WATER



**600 COSWELL AVE.**  
MLS# 21442387  
**\$199,900**  
1.1 ACRES  
**COMMERCIAL LOT IN EDEN**

**145 CHERRY LN**  
PELL CITY  
MLS# 21442303  
**\$30,000**  
**.63 ACRES**

GREAT BUILDING LOT IN CUL-DE-SAC.  
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**264 KRADLE KOVE DRIVE**  
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**NEW LISTING**



**243 ROCK INN POINT**  
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**\$1,300,000**

**THIS ELEGANT LAKEFRONT HOME OFFERS BREATHTAKING SUNRISE VIEWS FROM A LEVEL LOT DESIGNED FOR EASY LIVING AND ENTERTAINING. THE SPACIOUS LAYOUT FEATURES MAIN-LEVEL LIVING WITH ADDITIONAL UPSTAIRS SPACE FOR GUESTS OR A PRIVATE RETREAT, PLUS TWO LUXURIOUS PRIMARY SUITES WITH SITTING AREAS. ENJOY STUNNING LAKE AND INFINITY POOL VIEWS FROM THE MAIN LIVING AREA, AN OPEN KITCHEN AND DINING SPACE WITH FIREPLACE, AND A LARGE SECOND DEN PERFECT FOR GATHERINGS. OUTDOORS, RELAX BY THE INFINITY POOL, POOL HOUSE, EXPANSIVE PATIO, AND COVERED LAKESIDE PORCH. CONVENIENTLY LOCATED NEAR SHOPPING AND THE INTERSTATE.**





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Jeff Jones



Misty Knight



Alesia Mitcham



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Tina Stallings




Shawn Story



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**UNDER CONTRACT**



**\$1,350,000 - 785 Blue River Dr - NEW CUSTOM 4 bedroom, 3/2 (half) bath home on the LAKE! This home features Living Room, Dining Room with 10' ceilings and 4 bedrooms on main level with bonus room and half bath above the garage. Covered outdoor patio with stone fireplace and outdoor kitchen. Panoramic view of the main channel of Logan Martin. Rare Find with New Lakefront**  
 MLS# 21442609 • Call Jeff 205/369-5830



**\$509,000 - 84 River Terrace Dr. - ENJOY LAKE LIVING** in this low-maintenance 2 bedroom, 2 bath home that features open living room kitchen and view from most rooms. The unfinished basement has potential for additional living space and has 2-car garage with room for up to four vehicles, plus 2-car carport, covered boat parking, pavilion and concrete golf cart path to the covered pier and year round water.  
 MLS #21446083 • Call Laurie 205/365-3639



**\$619,000 - 13100 Alabama Highway 174 - STUNNING ALL-BRICKS** bedroom 3 full and 2 half bath home that features modern luxury with country charm with custom cabinets, granite countertops, brick paver floors and tongue and groove ceilings. Spacious Living room offers beamed ceiling and fireplace, office, and a finished second story with den/bedroom and bath. Basement provides endless possibilities. Located on 17.1 FENCED and crossed fenced ACRES with barn, orchard and above ground pool and open pasture.  
 MLS #21436628 • Call Karen 205/473-4613 or Adam 205/369-2704



**\$575,000 - 260 Riverview Dr - UNIQUE DESIGN** and very spacious 1.5 story 3 bedroom, 3.5 bath home that features large family room with floor to vaulted ceiling stone fireplace, dining room and eat in kitchen, screened in porch and open deck. This and master bedroom, master bath are located on main level with upstairs having walkway that overlooks family room to lead to the two bedrooms. Finished basement with den and bonus room with 2-car garage. Updated dock and fenced, slope back yard.  
 MLS #21447694 • Call Brenda 205/812-4141



**\$425,000 - 1673 Pine Harbor Rd. - CONVENIENT LOCATION** and DESIRABLE one level, brick 3 bedroom, 3 bath home that features living room with fireplace and bookshelves, dining room and kitchen with breakfast room. Bonus room on the back can serve as sunroom and whatever needed and additional upstairs room for another bedroom with the bath. Home consists of attached 2-car garage as well as one detached, ideal for yard equipment and located on nice level fenced yard in the Pine Harbor Subdivision.  
 MLS #21447843 • Call Brenda 205/812-4141



**SOLD**

**\$1,400,000 - 705 Lakeview Crest Dr. - LUXURY LAKE LIVING** with this full brick, stacked stone and amazing trim 4 bedroom, 4 bath one level home that features 14' coffered ceiling in the family room with black marble gas fireplace, open floor plan with dining room, DREAM kitchen with vaulted, decorated beams breakfast nook, basement with large den with fireplace, second kitchen, two bedrooms, baths and office. Home features 4-car garage with one 2-car detached, double boat slip, plus SAFE ROOM and ELEVATOR  
 MLS #21439271 • Call Karen 205/473-4613



**\$799,900 - 211 Kewanee Lane - BEAUTIFULLY REMODELED LAKEFRONT** 4 bedroom, 4 bath home that features open concept design with living room, dining area and updated kitchen. The main level features three bedrooms and updated master bath with the basement having den, recreation room, full bath and in-law suite with bedroom and kitchenette area. Home has private dock, boat lift, and stone firepit.  
 MLS #21446518 • Call Karen 205/473-4613



**\$758,000 - 11 Pinewell Drive - CUSTOM MODERN** 4 bedroom 2.5 bath FARMHOUSE that features open-concept design gourmet kitchen, soaring ceilings and flood of natural light. This is located on 5 ACRE peaceful, property with privacy and just minutes from local amenities.  
 MLS #21439249 • Call Laurie 205/365-3639



**\$925,000 - 203 Allen Rd. - NEW UNDER CONSTRUCTION WATERFRONT** 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath one level home that features living room with fireplace, dining room and master bedroom and two others on the main level with downstairs to have family room, bedroom, bath and exercise room and 2-car garage. This is a one of a kind lot, located in Pell City and scheduled completion date is July  
 MLS #21442530 • Call Jeff 205/368-5830



**\$749,000 - 40 Camelot Ln - REMODELED AND ON MAIN CHANNEL** with SPECTACULAR VIEWS is this 3 bedroom, 2 bath home that is ready for the summer fun! Home features prefinished hardwood floors granite countertops, abundance of beautiful cabinets, open floor plan for entertaining, sunroom, covered deck and wrap around porch, 4-car garage, boat dock with two slips and sidewalk to the lake. Low maintenance and move in ready.  
 MLS #21440368 • Call Karen 205/473-4613



**SOLD**

**\$199,900 - 1010 1st Place S. - GREAT LOCATION** for this 3 bedroom, 2 bath one level move in ready home, located close to downtown Pell City, schools and shopping. Home features nice family room, kitchen along with the bedrooms and laundry room and easy access to I-20 and Hwy 78.  
 MLS #21426715 • Call Mike 205/527-4217



**\$555,000 - 688 Rushing Springs Rd. - FULLY REMODELED** 2-story 4 bedroom, 3 bath home that features family room, keeping room with fireplace and separate dining room. Finished basement features extra living or recreation space 2-car garage on main level, covered porches and 12x16 storage building.  
 MLS #21435049 • Call Laurie 205/365-3639



**\$278,000 - 164 Bayou Ridge Ln - SPACIOUS 4 bedroom, 2 bath WATERFRONT** mobile home features family room with fireplace, massive kitchen with large serving island, master suite with luxurious bathroom with large walk-in closet. Enjoy having your private boat launch with the deep-water slough and conveniently located to hwy 34.  
 MLS #21427202 • Call Laurie 205/365-3639



**UNDER CONTRACT**

**\$629,000 - 199 Bagley Dr. - PRIVACY GATED** 6 bedrooms 3.5 bath 2 story home located on approximately 11 SECLUDED ACRES that offers a lifestyle like no other with each bedroom that offers a private balcony. Also features a detached 2-bedroom, 1 bath guest house complete with full basement and 2 car garage bays, one large enough for RV. The home has so many unique items and is located in Trussville with rare privacy and minutes to Birmingham and Springville.  
 MLS #21424083 • Call Laurie 205/365-3639



**\$875,000 - 755 Blue River Dr. - WHAT A VIEW** with this one level 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bath home that is sitting on a knoll overlooking the main channel that features living room with vaulted ceiling finished with pine and stone fireplace, large open kitchen and master suite that has abundant windows overlooking the lake. The rear covered patio boasts a wood burning fireplace. This is one to SEE!  
 MLS #21442608 • Call Jeff 205/369-5830



**\$395,000 - 1409 23rd Street S. - CHECK OUT** this unique property in the city limits. A house on 2.8 Acres and another parcel with 7.5 Acres that are meles and bounds. (Not included in the subdivision). This property has beautiful hardwood trees, a large barn/storage building, pole barn, great garden spot.  
 MLS #21417765 • Call Karen 205/473-4613



**\$1,250,000 - 150 Two Eagles Ln - CHECK OUT** this unique property in the city limits. A house on 2.8 Acres and another parcel with 7.5 Acres that are meles and bounds. (Not included in the subdivision). This property has beautiful hardwood trees, a large barn/storage building, pole barn, great garden spot.  
 MLS #21422124 • Call Laurie 205/365-3639

**“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” -Matthew 11:28**



**Laurie Brasher**  
Realtor®

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Welcome Home. Imagine waking to birdsong, sipping your morning coffee on the wraparound lanai, and watching the sun rise over your own five-acre paradise. This isn't just a house—it's a feeling. A beautifully crafted custom modern farmhouse featuring 4 bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms sits on 5+ peaceful acres.

**11 Pinewell Dr., Cropwell**  
**\$758,000**



**495 Levine Rd., Odenville**  
**\$238,000**

This 3-bedroom, 2-bath home features a split-bedroom layout for added privacy, an eat-in kitchen, cozy family room with fireplace, and a full daylight basement with bathroom plumbing stubbed for future expansion. Relax on the screened-in deck and enjoy the extra-tall fenced yard—perfect for pets, play, and privacy!



**7708 Jayden Dr., Trussville**  
**\$579,000**

Located in the sought-after Stockton community, this 4BR/3BA home features an open floor plan, vaulted living room with gas fireplace, and oversized sliding doors to a covered patio. Kitchen includes granite island, farmhouse sink, ample cabinetry, and stainless appliances. Main level offers a primary suite + guest bedrooms and full bath. Large flat fenced backyard



**688 Rushing Springs Rd**  
**\$555,000**

Stunning fully remodeled 2-story home with approx. 3,912 ± sq ft, offering 4BR/3BA plus a finished basement situated on 1 acre just minutes from Honda, Talladega Superspeedway, and Lincoln's shopping & dining. Updates include NEW HVAC, water heater, flooring, paint, kitchen and much more—move in ready!



**131 Wolf Creek Rd. N., Pell City**  
**\$238,000**

Convenient one-level living in the growing Eden/Pell City area! This 3BR/2BA home is just 1.4 miles from I-20 and only 28 minutes to Birmingham, featuring granite countertops, a separate dining area, spacious primary suite, level yard, large storage building, and a peaceful wooded backdrop for added privacy!



**1189 Mountain Laurel Cir., Moody**  
**\$395,000**

Open floor plan designed for entertaining, featuring a vaulted living room with expansive windows and scenic views. Gourmet kitchen and dining area open to a covered patio. Spacious bedrooms, walk-in closets, smart home package, and stainless side by side refrigerator included.



**5306 Lee Rd., Pell City**  
**\$398,900**

Space, flexibility, and room to grow! This 4BR/2.5BA home features a spacious family room, formal dining, kitchen with breakfast bar & pantry, flexible bonus/music room, expansive primary suite with adjoining office space, large deck, above-ground pool, and a backyard perfect for entertaining, gardening, or play!



**190 Crawford Ln., Springville**  
**\$279,900**

Just minutes from the growing city of Springville, this beautifully updated 4-bedroom home offers fresh flooring, professionally painted interiors and move-in ready comfort. Enjoy your private backyard retreat featuring a covered deck, above-ground pool, and fully fenced yard—perfect for relaxing or entertaining all summer long



**15 County Rd 12, Odenville**  
**\$249,900**

Just 26 miles from Birmingham, this remodeled 3BR/3BA home offers modern updates and a prime location near dining, shopping, and schools. Enjoy a spacious layout, updated kitchen with new appliances, large back deck, and fenced yard—perfect for entertaining, kids, and pets. Move-in ready! Don't miss this one!



**821 Twin Ridge Dr., Gardendale**  
**\$268,000**

Over 1,600 sq ft of updated, one level living with a private wooded backyard. Open living area with soaring ceilings and fireplace, eat-in kitchen plus dining room, and a spacious primary suite with office and in-suite laundry. Fenced yard, carport, and a prime location—don't miss it!



**84 Terrace Dr., Talladega**  
**\$469,900**

Lake living at its best in this low-maintenance 2BR/2BA home with an open floor plan and stunning water views from most rooms. Enjoy granite countertops, island seating, covered deck and patios, plus a 1,680 sq ft main level and unfinished basement ready to expand. Covered pier on year-round water, boat parking, pavilion, multiple outbuildings and views of Stenley Bridge.



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# #1 Team Across 3 Lakes Lay • Logan • Neely

47.5 +/- ACRES



1150 Camp Creek Rd  
MLS# 21439261  
**\$664,900**

UNDER CONTRACT



475 River Forest  
Talladega  
Condo  
**\$269,900**

LOGAN MARIN LAKE



488 Rabbit Point Rd  
Cropwell  
**\$534,900**

LOGAN MARTIN LAKE



115 Riverview Lane  
3 BR, 2 BA  
**\$469,900**

NEW LISTING

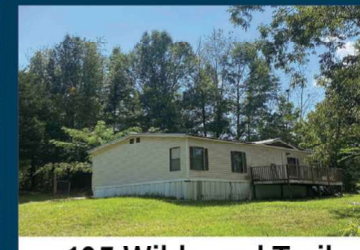


390 Coosa Island Road  
4 BR, 2 BA  
**\$374,900**

UNDER CONTRACT



885 Lock 4 Road  
Riverside  
**\$325,000**



105 Wildwood Trail,  
Leeds  
3 BR, 2 BA  
**\$167,000**

NEW LISTING



59 Coosa Island Road  
3BR, 2 BA  
w/Deeded Lot & Boathouse  
**\$285,000**

UNDER CONTRACT



11 Summit Ln  
Lincoln  
1 BR, 1 BA  
**\$115,000**

UNDER CONTRACT



1907 Robinhood Dr  
Oxford  
3 BR, 2.5 BA  
**\$325,000**



91 AL Hwy 144  
Ragland  
2 BR, 1 BA  
**\$119,900**



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REALTY



8169 Carrington Dr  
Trussville  
4 BR, 4.5 BA  
**\$585,000**



NEW LISTING



405 Frankies Rd.  
Vincent  
**\$749,900**



## NEW COMMUNITY ON LOGAN MARTIN LAKE



165 Clear Springs Dr, Lincoln  
**\$665,000**

2,400+ sq ft lake homes on stilts—out of the floodplain and close to the water. 4BR/2BA with a spacious open layout, quartz kitchen, large island, and water views with a stone fireplace. Beautiful primary suite, flexible extra rooms, and endless space underneath for outdoor living, storage, or boats. Be ready for the 2026 lake season!



175 Clear Springs Dr, Lincoln  
**\$665,000**

THIS OUTDOOR KITCHEN IS CALLING YOU HOME!  
Stunning stilt homes with lake views and a beachy feel. Enjoy a covered deck with outdoor kitchen, fridge, and stone fireplace. Open floorplan with lake-facing living, dining, and kitchen. 3BR layout with a spacious primary suite, quartz finishes, soaking tub, and walk-in closet. Bonus office nook and high-end upgrades throughout. Waterfront living at its finest—come see it!



## LAND LISTINGS



0 Morning Glory Cir., Lot 1  
Talladega  
**\$15,000**



LAY LAKE

0 Shore Side Ln  
Lay Lake Lot  
Lots #137 & #138  
**\$159,900**



WATER ACCESS  
LOGAN MARTIN

26 Waters Edge,  
Pell City  
Land/Lot  
**\$35,000**



1835 NW Old Hwy 26  
Land  
**\$175,000**



LAY LAKE BANNER

181 Stillwater Trl  
Lay Lake Lot  
**\$99,000**



**Donna Breland**  
 Broker/Realtor®  
 205-910-8799



**1822 Cogswell Avenue**  
**Pell City, AL, 35125**

**205-354-8911**



**Paul Golden**  
 Realtor®  
 205-369-3270



**Garrett Burgess**  
 Realtor®  
 256-489-5815



**Lauren Holladay**  
 Realtor®  
 205-218-0090

**NEW LISTING**



**385 Lee Circle**  
 MLS# 21453273  
**\$154,900**

**NEW LISTING**



**475 River Forest Ln Ste 3420**  
 MLS# 21452486  
**\$294,900**

**UNDER CONTRACT  
 WATERFRONT**



**112 Blue Eye Rd. West**  
 MLS# 21452717  
**\$424,900**

**BEAUTIFUL HOME, POOL, ACREAGE**



**160 Hitching Post Cir, Cropwell**  
 MLS# 21441190  
**\$575,000**

**LINCOLN SCHOOLS -ACREAGE W/ 2 HOMES**



**4265 Stemley Rd, Talladega**  
 MLS# 21427041  
**\$499,900**

**WATERFRONT**



**7148 Skyline Drive, Pell City**  
 4BR/2.5BA MLS# 21450059  
**\$1,100,000**

**NEW LISTING**



**401 Allen Road, Pell City**  
 3BR/2BA  
**\$974,900**

**NEW LISTING**



**4957 Smith Trl., Pell City**  
 MLS# 21452761  
**\$324,900**

**COMMERCIAL PROPERTY  
 4.6 ACRES AWAITS NEW DEVELOPMENT**



**0 Vaughn Ln, Pell City**  
 MLS# 21373880  
**\$2,000,000**

**COMMERCIAL PROPERTY  
 INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY**



**220 Kings Circle, Pell City**  
 MLS# 21441639  
**\$1,500,000**

**LAKE LOT**



**1315 Rabbit Branch Rd, Cropwell**  
 MLS# 21443662  
**\$79,900**

**UNDER CONTRACT**



**15 Old Roadway, Cropwell, AL**  
 MLS# 21389324  
**\$407,900**

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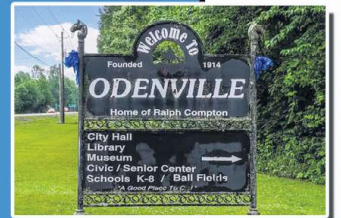
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to or from St. Clair County  
or the surrounding areas?

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NEW LISTING  
UNDER CONTRACT



3121 6th Ave. N,  
Pell City, 35125

MLS# 21450140

**\$219,900**



155 Nottingham Drive,  
Pell City, 35128

MLS# 21449227

**\$574,900**

LAKE LISTING  
GREAT NEW PRICE



508 Lindy Cir  
Pell City, AL 35128

MLS# 21438352

**\$1,499,999**

NEW LISTING  
ACREAGE



150 Killough Ln,  
Talladega, 35160

MLS# 21450373

**\$449,900**

NEW LISTING  
UNDER CONTRACT



408 4th St. North,  
Pell City, 35125

MLS# 21451028

**\$239,900**

NEW LISTING  
LAKE LISTING



215 Davis Acres Dr.,  
Alpine 35014

MLS# 21451847

**\$799,900**



4480 County Road 44 Unit 60  
Leesburg, AL 35983

MLS# 21444388

**\$385,000**

LAKE VIEW



475 River Forest Ln #1150  
Talladega, 35160

MLS# 21449066

**\$289,900**

GORGEOUS POOL



335 Gray Fox Rd  
Springville, AL 35126

MLS# 21445598

**\$674,900**



LAKE RESORT  
GREAT NEW PRICE



GREAT NEW PRICE



115 Eastland Way Lincoln, AL 35096

MLS# 21434170

**\$439,900**

NEW LISTING  
UNDER CONTRACT



20 Heatherwood Dr,  
Talladega, 35160

MLS# 21452188

**\$329,900**

LAKE VIEW



475 River Forest Ln Ste 3220

MLS# 21431835

**\$249,900**

GOLF COURSE  
GREAT NEW PRICE



245 Rome Beauty Cir

MLS# 21452062

**\$849,900**

NEW LISTING  
LAKE LISTING



200 W Lake Hill Drive  
Talladega 35160

MLS# 21452540

**\$399,900**



NEW LISTING



4203 Masters Road  
Pell City, 35128

MLS# 21452556

**\$199,900**

NEW LISTING  
CABIN WITH ACREAGE



544 Fann Road  
Steele, 35987

MLS# 21452663

**\$399,900**



# Caran Wilbanks

Your Friendly Lake & Neighborhood Realtor



205.368.9772

2319 Cogswell Ave Pell City, AL 35125



### 732 River Bend Cir Talladega, \$850,000

Beautifully remodeled in 2020, this stunning waterfront property offers year-round water access on a large, level lot with 280 ft of shoreline. Enjoy a 2-slip floating boathouse with lift, boat launch and "Spider be gone" systems on both the house and boathouse.

MLS 21432733



### 40 Guy Drive Lincoln, \$230,000

This well maintained 3-bedroom, 2 bath home offers comfort and convenience just minutes from launching your boat on Logan Martin Lake, with a pleasant lake view to enjoy. Inside, you'll find fresh interior paint, granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, and a spacious kitchen with an island perfect for cooking and gathering. The home also features a double car garage and a tall crawl space you can stand up in for extra storage or access. Outside, enjoy a fenced backyard complete with firepit, ideal for relaxing evenings. Conveniently located near I-20 for easy commute.

MLS 21449926



PRIVATE LAKE

### 105 Point Aquarius Dr Alpine, \$22,000

Level lot offering a great view of a private lake, with scattered mature trees and excellent privacy. Peaceful setting ideal for a custom home, yet conveniently located near a golf course and just minutes from Logan Martin Lake. A rare blend of seclusion, scenery and recreation. Approximate 1/2 acre

MLS 21440722



NEW LISTING

### 16 Lelola, Lane Cropwell, \$140,000

Enjoy lake living with a beautiful view of Logan Martin Lake from a spacious big-screen porch—perfect for relaxing or entertaining. This completely remodeled 2-bedroom, 2-bath home (2011, 14x66) sits on a desirable corner lot, offering privacy and charm. The property includes a 16x32 garage/storage building, ideal for boats, tools, or hobbies. Located in a welcoming community with access to a boat launch and pier, it's perfect for water lovers. Move-in ready with modern updates throughout, this home combines comfort, convenience.

MLS 21451264



NEW LISTING

### 2050 Morris Farm Dr. Riverside, \$347,900

Beautiful one-level brick home in Morris Farms just minutes from Logan Martin Lake! Enjoy a peaceful country feel with city conveniences nearby. This 3BR/2BA home sits on a private corner lot with a spacious wooded yard, stunning inground fiberglass pool, pool house, fenced backyard, and large open deck perfect for entertaining. Inside features a vaulted family room with gas fireplace, separate dining room, and a spacious master suite with double vanities, soaking tub, separate shower, and walk-in closet. Main-level 2-car garage. Conveniently located off I-20 near Pell City, Honda, The Ark Restaurant, and shopping.

MLS 21451264



LOT FOR SALE

### 13 Hickory Lane Odenville, \$39,900

Imagine your dream home situated on this beautiful 4 acre wooded lot in Odenville. Located in the quiet Hickory Ln subdivision, this property is convenient to Moody, Pell City, or Odenville. It is approximately 6 miles from I-20 exit 152, or approximately 8 miles from I-20 Pell City exit 158. Restricted to 1400+ SF site-built homes. This lot would be great for your basement home. Sorry, no mobile homes allowed.

MLS 1357213



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*Lakeside Chats*  
with **CHERITH**

## SEEING HOME WITH NEW EYES

**J**ust a few weeks ago, I attended the Magic of Marble Festival in Sylacauga for the first time. The festival was established in 2008. I'm kind of embarrassed that it was my first time going. That's because as a travel writer, I spend a lot of time attending local festivals and events in other locations. Shame on me for overlooking home.

I had a great time at the festival. So much so that I'm committed to doubling down on seeing the things that make our area so special, even if I've visited them before. Adult eyes see things differently than children's eyes do.

That's what makes local exploration so important.

There's a tendency to take for granted the remarkable things closest to us. We drive past history every day without stopping. We mean to visit that museum, walk that trail, or attend that festival, and somehow, years pass. But our corner of Alabama is genuinely extraordinary, and it deserves a closer look.

Take Sylacauga itself. The Hodges Meteorite, the only meteor ever documented to strike a living person, landed there in 1954. Ann Hodges was simply sitting on her sofa when it blasted through the roof. I have driven through the Marble City multiple times without stopping to appreciate that one of the most remarkable events in recorded history happened right there. And then there's Blue Bell Creameries, where you can watch ice cream being made through a viewing window that overlooks

the production floor, then enjoy a scoop in their on-site parlor.

Consider Talladega College, just down the road. It is Alabama's oldest private historically Black college, founded in the years just after the Civil War by formerly enslaved men who believed education was essential to preserving their freedom. It was the first institution in Alabama to admit qualified persons of any race or ethnic origin. Today, 32 of its campus buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and its library housed the stunning Amistad murals painted by artist Hale Woodruff. This is not a place you read about in a travel magazine from somewhere far away. This is ours.

In Lincoln, the International Motorsports Hall of Fame celebrates the legends of racing near the storied Talladega Superspeedway. In Pell City, Logan Martin Lake draws visitors for boating, fishing, swimming, and lakeside relaxation. And in Childersburg, Majestic Caverns offers underground adventures in a cave that was once home to prehistoric Native Americans and were later used during Prohibition.

The truth is, familiarity can make us blind. But if we look at these places the way a visitor would – with fresh eyes and an open heart – we might just find ourselves falling in love with home all over again.

There's so much wonder right here. Let's go find it.

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*Sharon Thomas*

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