Presenting the Winners



2016 Reader's Choice Awards

Every year since we began our Reader's Choice awards in 2010, it's gotten bigger and better, and this year proved no different. With more than 25,000 submissions, our readers voted for their favorite plumbers, doctors, nurses and of course, where to get the best barbecue. We thank our readers for their continued support of this annual publication, and look forward to seeing it grow even more next year.

You can see a winner's directory in our online edition at www.annistonstar.com/readers_choice

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The Anniston Star would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's Reader's Choice!

PAGE 3 READER'S CHOICE 2016

MOORE PRINTING

1025 Gurnee Ave, Anniston • (256) 236-6713



For Steve Taylor, owner of Anniston's Moore Printing, it's not business — it's personal.

"There's not a customer who walks in that I don't know their first name," said Taylor. "It's imperative that you do that; having that personal slant on it helps relationships to develop."

Taylor has been at the helm of the Reader's Choice Award-winning commercial printing business for almost 16 years, and he's used smart business-building strategies, excellent employees and a hands-on work ethic to make the company one of Calhoun County's most trusted print shops, with a reputation built on solid customer service decisions.

When something goes wrong, Taylor says the shop is sure to fix it and leave their customers satisfied. A pair of mothers once had a problem with the pictures of their kids in a football program printed at the shop. Though the photo selection and layout came directly from the school, Taylor took it upon himself to print replacement programs for each of the mothers. It cost a little money, said Taylor, but that didn't matter. Putting things right was what counted.

Moore Printing makes everything from letterhead and business cards to cookbooks, theater show bills, brochures and forms for commercial paperwork. Everything is printed in the back workshop, where booklets are stitched together and pages are collated. The printing machines are analog, with moving parts that can

be repaired more handily than the circuits of newer, digital machines. One piece of equipment that Taylor is especially proud of dates back to the early 1900s, a cutting machine with wooden parts that shout antiquity. It still works like a charm and is actively used at the shop.

The equipment reflects Taylor's attitude that the best way to do business is the old-fashioned way. He and his business partner both make deliveries directly, rather than cooping up in their offices, and Taylor believes those personal touches make all the difference.

"We're honored to get this award, especially from the folks who like us and come to us," said Taylor. "We're going to continue to do the things we've done that have gotten us to this point."

Thanks for voting us the #1 Insurance The Anniston Star **Agency 2 years in a row!**





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PAGE 5 READER'S CHOICE 2016



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HEALTH

ASSISTED LIVING

- I) NHC Place, Anniston
- 2) Autumn Cove, Anniston
- Jacksonville Health & Rehab, Jacksonville

INDEPENDENT LIVING

- I) Autumn Cove, Anniston
- 2) NHC Place, Anniston
- 3) Home Helpers of Jacksonville

NURSING HOME

- I) NHC Healthcare, Anniston
- 2) Jacksonville Health & Rehab
- 3) Golden Living, Oxford

CHIROPRACTOR

- Paul Ryan, Ryan Chiropractic, Oxford
- 2) Chris Law, Anniston
- 3) David Wade, Oxford

DENTIST

- I) David Cummings, Anniston
- David Gibson, Anniston
- 3) Travis Phillips, Oxford

DOCTOR/PHYSICIAN

- I) Edwin Keel, Oxford
- 2) David Chalk, Anniston
- 3) Natalie Lindell, Oxford

EMERGENCY CARE FACILITY

- I) Dr. Keel & Associates, Oxford
- 2) Stringfellow Memorial Hospital,
- 3) C.A.R.E.S. Anniston

EYE CARE PROFESSIONAL

- I) Robert Ellis, Anniston
- 2) Dawn Wilczek, Anniston
- 3) David Chandler, Jacksonville

FITNESS/HEALTH CLUB

- I) Anniston Aquatic Center
- 2) Club One Fitness, Anniston
- 3) Anniston Family Fitness

HOME HEALTH AGENCY

- I) Gentiva Home Health and Hospice, Anniston
- 2) Alacare Home Health and Hospice, Anniston
- 3) Downey Medical, Anniston

HOSPITAL

- I) RMC Anniston
- 2) Stringfellow Memorial Hospital, Anniston

MASSAGE THERAPIST

- I) Amy Leahey, LMT, Anniston
- 2) Ginger Bunn, Body Kneads, Jacksonville
- 3) Faith Commons, Touch of Faith Massage, Anniston

MEDICAL LABORATORY SERVICE

- 1) Labcorp, Anniston
- 2) Stringfellow Memorial Hospital, Anniston
- 3) RMC Anniston

PEDIATRICIAN

- I) Jose Caballero, Anniston
- 2) Chase Thomas at Pediatrics Plus, Anniston
- 3) Natalie Lindell, Oxford

PARAMEDIC/EMT

- I) Michelle Grippin, Oxford
- 2) Cole Herren, Oxford

Nathan Harper, Anniston Army Depot

PHARMACIST

- Johnnie Ellis, Downey Drug, Anniston
- Donnie Calhoun, Calhoun Compounding Pharmacy, Anniston
- 3) April McNeal, RMC, Anniston

WEIGHT LOSS SERVICE

- I) Oxford Primary Care and Weight Loss
- 2) Anniston Weight Loss
- 3) Stoked Crossfit, Oxford

PHYSICAL THERAPIST

- David Wilhoite, Wilhoite Physical Therapy
- **2)** Ryan Huff, Champions Sports Medicine, Anniston
- Tammy Heard, Wilhoite Physical Therapy

BEAUTY AND FASHION

DAY SPA

- Prestige Medical Spa, Oxford
- 2) Spa Bleu, Oxford
- 3) Spa McClellan, Anniston

BARBER SHOP

- Jack's Barber Shop, Weaver
- **2)** Ford's Barber Shop, Anniston
- 3) Mia's Barber Shop, Anniston

BEAUTY SHOP

- I) To Dye For, Oxford
- 2) eNVy Salon, Jacksonville
- 3) Amy's Design Studio, Alexandria

TATTOO SHOP

- I) Tat2Tyme, Anniston
- **2)** Artistic Addictions, Anniston
- 3) Skin Deep, Oxford

PAGE 7 READER'S CHOICE 2016

TO DYE FOR

5156 US-78, Oxford • (256) 831-8544



Most folks don't expect their hairdressers to double as nurses.

Stylists have a history of filling in as counselors and therapists, having hearts poured out to them as they shape and cut and dye. But they've also got a fair amount of medical training and know how to watch out for certain health problems. It's up to customers to take that advice and use it, and according to To Dye For's Kayla Slick, some would rather take their chances with a heart attack than leave their hair half-finished.

"I had a lady have close to a heart attack one time, and later on, she went to the hospital," said Slick.

"We called an ambulance and the paramedics were saying, 'Please let her go with

us," she continued. "I tried and she said, 'No, my hair ain't done.' She wouldn't have it."

The shop's stylists — Slick, Phyllis Conaway, Ashley Guess and owner Heather Epps — have all seen their share of shakeups over their years together (seven for Slick, about 15 for the others), from seizures to thyroid problems and alopecia, all detailed in a thick textbook every hairdresser has to study before taking their certification exams. Those are the unusual events, though. More often than not, To Dye For is busy like an emergency room but far less dramatic.

The shop sees as many as 60 clients a day between the four stylists, with a short waiting list for new appointments. Current clients set their next appointment as they walk out the door, which makes getting back to the busy salon

simple. That the business runs so smoothly is part of why they've won the Reader's Choice Award this year, said Epps.

"It makes a huge difference having a staff that's amazing," Epps said. "I have a great group of girls I'm surrounded by ever day and I've been blessed with that."

The staff's chemistry, the way that they've bonded and feel as though they're family — literally so, in the case of mother Conaway and daughter Guess — makes them and their business strong. They believe their clients pick up on that bond and find it easy to become a part of it.

"We have a very homey feeling and everybody feels welcome," said Epps. "They're all family and some of the best clients you can have."

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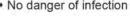
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PAGE 9

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PAGE 10 READER'S CHOICE 2016

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PLACE FOR LIVE

MUSIC

- 1) Cheaha Brewing Company, Anniston
- 2) The Peerless Saloon and Grille, Anniston
- 3) Loco Mex, Jacksonville

LOCAL ARTIST

- I) Keith Wahl
- 2) Angela Sullivan
- 3) Natasha Day

LOCAL MUSICIAN/GROUP

I) Riley Green

- 2) Proclaim of Simple Church
- 3) Rattlesnake Rattlers

LOCAL RADIO/TV **PERSONALITY**

- 1) Steve Stevens, K-98
- 2) Jon Holder, TV24

3) Jock Burgess, K98

RADIO STATION

- I) 97.9 WVOK
- 2) Rock 105.9
- 3) WHMA 95.5

HOME & GARDEN

BUILDING SUPPLY

- I) Jacksonville Ace Home Center
- 2) Oxford Lumber, Oxford
- Webb Concrete, Oxford

CARPET/FLOORING **DEALER**

- 1) Foote Bros Carpet One, Anniston
- Abbey Carpet and Flooring, Anniston
- 3) Oxford Carpet Sales

FURNITURE STORE

- I) Midtown Outlet, Anniston
- 2) Farmers Furniture, Anniston
- Room by Room, Oxford

HOME & GARDEN STORE

- 1) Downing's General Store, Anniston
- 2) B&B, Anniston
- 3) Warren Hardware, Jacksonville

HOME RENTAL AGENCY

1) Century 21 Harris - McKay Realty, Anniston

- 2) | Brittain Associates, Anniston
- 3) ERA King Property Management, Anniston

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING **SERVICE**

- I) Mizzell Heating & Air Conditioning, Oxford
- 2) Dunn's Heating and Cooling, Anniston
- 3) Climate Flow, Anniston

PEST CONTROL

- I) Rice Pest Control, Anniston
- 2) Monday's Pest Control, Anniston
- 3) Ace Pest Control, Alexandria

PLUMBING SERVICE

- I) Perez Plumbing, Oxford
- 2) Barrett Plumbing, Anniston
- 3) Mr. Dan's Plumbing, Oxford

MATTRESS DEALER

- 1) Mattress Max, Oxford
- 2) Midtown Outlet, Anniston
- 3) Bedzzz Express, Oxford

REAL ESTATE COMPANY

- I) Keller Williams, Anniston
- 2) Century 21 Harris McKay Realty, Anniston
- 3) ERA King Real Estate, Anniston

Thank you for voting

REALTOR

- 1) The Butler Team, Keller Williams, Anniston
- 2) Keith Kelley, Century 21 Harris - McKay Realty, Anniston
- 3) Sandra Lackey, Keller Williams, Anniston



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PAGE 11 READER'S CHOICE 2016

B & B PAWN

6050 AL-202, Anniston • (256) 237-4202



B & B Pawn's Anniston location may only be a few years old, but it's part of a 25-year tradition.

The Reader's Choice Award-winner for Best Pawn Shop opened up four years ago, a sister location to the Gadsden B & B Pawn, and has grown into one of the largest pawn shops in Calhoun County, bringing in business from loyal customers throughout northeast Alabama. The two shops are celebrating a 25-year anniversary for the Gadsden location in August.

"Every year you grow when you treat people right," said Alan Mange, manager at the Anniston location.

The Anniston shop carries everything you'd expect from any full-size pawn shop,

like televisions, tools, guitars and drum kits and a wide variety of firearms. Mange estimates that the two locations have a combined stock running between 2,000 and 2,500 firearms, a commanding selection that keeps hobbyists coming back for more.

"Your hobbyists, your weekly guys, they're who keep you going," said Mange.

One of the things that makes B & B's stock varied, says Mange, is that they'll take trade as payment for big-ticket items. That may sound typical at first brush, but the key is that B & B doesn't insist on guns for guns and jewelry for jewelry. Instead, customers can bring in value items and trade for what they want.

"Where else can you trade a guitar for a gun?" said Mange. "That's the biggest thing to me; I consider that customer service." The policy has led to some of the shop's more unique items, like an antique, hand-held signal flare, one of Mange's personal favorites. Other items taken in trade can be rare and useful to the right person, like a short reset trigger for a Sig Sauer taken in trade for another gun. A customer later visited from Birmingham and bought the trigger, in disbelief that he'd found exactly what he was looking for.

To Mange, there's no doubt that treating customers fairly and maintaining good policies makes a business work, but the extra excitement customers get from finding just what they wanted helps put his shop over the top.

"What can I find in there that I can't find somewhere else? That's why I love the business of it, you're not going to find it anywhere else," said Mange. READER'S CHOICE 2016





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PAGE 13 **READER'S CHOICE 2016**

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PEOPLE & PLACES

ATTORNEY

- Tim Mitchell, Stubbs, Sills & Frye, Anniston
- Boice Turner, Turner and Mooneyham, Anniston
- Wendy Ghee Draper, Ghee and Draper, Anniston

CHILD CARE

- Cornerstone Christian Academy, Anniston
- JSU Child Development Center, Jacksonville
- 3) Children's Choice, Anniston

INSURANCE AGENCY

I) Parnell Insurance, Oxford

- 2) Insurance Planning Services
- 3) Harris-McKay Insurance

WAITER/WAITRESS

- Christian Rogers, Mellow Mushroom, Oxford
- 2) Stacy Buchanan, Rocket Drive Inn, Jacksonville
- 3) Meghan Fisher, Peerless Saloon

PUBLIC OFFICIAL

- I) Larry Amerson
- 2) Alice Martin
- 3) Steven Waits

COMMUNITY EVENT

I) Relay For Life

- 2) Noble Street Festival
- 3) Freedom Festival Oxford Lake

NEIGHBORHOOD

- I) Alexandria
- 2) Buckhorn, Weaver AL
- 3) Sherwood Forest Oxford

PUBLIC SCHOOL

- I) Oxford
- 2) Alexandria
- 3) White Plains

PRIVATE SCHOOL

- I) Faith Christian School, Anniston
- 2) The Donoho School, Anniston
- 3) Jacksonville Christian Academy

GOLF COURSE

- 1) Cider Ridge, Oxford
- 2) Cane Creek, Anniston
- 3) Pine Hill, Anniston

PARK

- I) Oxford Lake
- 2) Cheaha State Park
- 3) Germania Springs, Jacksonville

LOCAL TOURIST ATTRACTION

- I) Cheaha State Park
- 2) Anniston Museum of Natural History
- 3) Terrapin Creek





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PAGE 15 READER'S CHOICE 2016

KEITH WAHL

Wahlcrafts • wahlcrafts.storenvy.com/



Of all the ways to paint a picture, using spray paint isn't going to be first choice for many artists.

It runs, it drips, it's hard to mix colors and stencils are a necessity on a small scale. Almost everyone knows how to use watercolors and acrylics from grade school, but rare is the kid with practical spray paint experience. That's what makes Best Artist winner Keith Wahl's natural comfort with the medium so surprising.

"It's definitely not an easy medium," said Wahl. "I've done things with brushes, I've done acrylic work and it's a different kind of thing. Spray paint's easier."

Wahl doesn't come from a formal art background. By day he works at the Anniston Army Depot, and he only stepped into art officially a few years ago. Inspiration took the form of a video game centered on a character that uses graffiti to express himself, which fits Wahl's pop culture-centered work perfectly.

Wahl paints everything from contemporary TV characters from "Game of Thrones" and "The Walking Dead" to classic horror movie icons, like Freddy Krueger and Michael Myers, with video game and anime characters peppered into the mix. Each image is layered one step at a time, until form, lighting and color shapes

Wahl's subject. The technique surprises other artists, including Robert Englund, an artist best known as the actor who portrays Freddy Krueger, and the subject of Wahl's favorite piece of his own work.

"It's my favorite not only because of how well it turned out, but his reaction to seeing it, just staring at it, trying to figure out what kind of paint it was," said Wahl, holding up the canvas with Englund's signature in the corner. "I told him it was spray paint, and he was like, 'Really?'"

Wahl's other work is just as atypical. The most recent examples of his non-spray paint work include body painting and taping sessions photographed by Main Street Media, with his paint and tape applied directly to the models' bodies in patterns and designs.

"I don't like painting in front of somebody, so it was my worst nightmare painting in front of somebody and on them," said Wahl.

The results are striking, and a bit risqué, but Wahl says feedback has been positive. He credits local art initiatives for changing the community's perspective on artwork, making locals more accepting of challenging work and of artistry in general. When he participated with Main Street Art Project's pop-up gallery during the 2016 Noble Street Festival, he met several people who loved his work, and even sold pieces. The reception was fantastic, according to Wahl, which he says wouldn't have been likely only a few years ago when he started. Positive recognition, like his current Reader's Choice win, helps him keep creating.

"I'm really honored," said Wahl. "It shows that people appreciate what I'm doing, and that's the biggest thing: they noticed."





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READER'S CHOICE 2016

SHOPPING

COMMERCIAL PRINTING

- I) Moore's Printing, Anniston
- 2) Freestyle Graphix, Oxford
- Everly's Sign Shop, Anniston

DEPARTMENT STORE

- I) Martin's Family Clothing
- 2) Frey's Boutique, Oxford
- 3) Willow Tree, Jacksonville

DRY CLEANER

- I) Smith Cleaners, Anniston
- 2) Oxford Cleaners
- 3) Mike's Romac Cleaners, Oxford

FLORIST

- 1) Jackie's Floral Gallery, Anniston
- Alexander's Flowers and Gifts, Anniston
- Miller Florist, Oxford

FUNERAL HOME

- I) Miller Funeral Home, Oxford
- Gray Brown-Service Mortuary, Anniston
- 3) KL Brown, Jacksonville

GIFT SHOP

- Alexander's Flowers and Gifts, Anniston
- 2) Rabbit Hutch, Anniston
- Girlfriends, Oxford

PAWN SHOP

- I) B&B Pawn, Anniston
- 2) Main Street Pawn, Oxford
- 3) Mike's Treasure Chest, Anniston

PET/PET GROOMING STORE

- Lylia's Poodle Boutique, Anniston
- 2) Piper's Playhouse, Anniston
- 3) Groomingdales, Jacksonville

PHOTO STUDIO

- Claire Caballero Photography, Anniston
- 2) Bob Crisp Photography, Oxford
- A. Williams Photography, Jacksonville

SPORTING GOODS STORE

- I) Shotgun Sports, Anniston
- 2) Exile Armory, Weaver
- 3) Creedmoor Armory, Anniston

TRAVEL AGENCY

- I) R and R Travel, Oxford
- 2) Magnolia Vacations, Jacksonville
- 3) Amanda Cobb, Alexandria

VETERINARIAN

- Tracy Whitaker, Rolling Hills Anniston
- 2) Bill Brom, Greenbrier Animal Clinic, Anniston
- 3) Wayne Long, Long Animal Clinic, Anniston

CONSIGNMENT/THRIFT SHOP

- I) Center of Hope, Oxford
- 2) Growing Trends, Anniston
- 3) Helping Hands, Alexandria

GUN SHOP

- I) Shotgun Sports, Anniston
- 2) B&B Pawn Shop, Anniston
- 3) Exile Armory, Weaver

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

- I) Martin's Family Clothing
- 2) Growing Trends, Anniston
- 3) That Shop, Jacksonville

JEWELRY STORE

- Stinson Fine Jewelry, Oxford
- 2) Couch's Jeweler, Anniston
- 3) Kay Jewelers, Oxford

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

- 1) Frey's Boutique, Oxford
- 2) Martin's Family Clothing
- 3) Willow Tree, Jacksonville

MEN'S CLOTHING STORE

- I) Martin's Family Clothing
- Over The Top Trading Company Oxford
- 3) On Time Fashion, Oxford

LOCAL BOUTIQUE

- 1) Frey's Boutique, Oxford
- 2) Willow Tree, Jacksonville
- 3) Southern Vintage, Jacksonville



PAGE 19 READER'S CHOICE 2016

THE ROCKET

1508 Pelham Rd S, Jacksonville • (256) 435-6516



There are few Jacksonville institutions like The Rocket.

The restaurant has been around since the 1950s, and in that time it's kept nearly the same menu, stayed in the same building and been run by the same family, with employees who have worked at the restaurant for decades. Their food is nearly always at the top of "best food" lists and contests, like this year's wins for Best Burger and Best Barbecue in the Reader's Choice Awards and an induction into the Alabama Barbecue Hall of Fame. What else hasn't changed? Customers can't stop coming in.

"I've been coming in since the 80s," said

James Wallace, a frequent customer. He and his wife make the trip from Douglasville, Georgia to The Rocket two or three times a month. It's the best barbecue around, says Wallace, and he would know: he's been to some of the best barbecue places in Memphis, Dallas and throughout North Carolina, and nothing compares. Others share the sentiment.

"It's the Cheers of northeast Alabama," said Lamar Sims, a longtime customer who works next door at Cheaha Bank. "I tell customers trying to find us that we're beside The Rocket and they say, 'Okay, I know right where you are.'"

At least one member of the Marbut family — mother Patsy, father Gary and son Justin —

is always at the restaurant every day to greet customers and make sure quality stays high, though Patsy says that the entire staff is on watch to make a trip to the restaurant perfect.

"We have found out being here for so long that we don't have a big turnover in employees, so we've got girls that have been here 20 years back there," said Patsy.

Keeping familiar faces in front of customers and serving quality food has built a loyal following for The Rocket, but according to Gary, the relationship between the restaurant and its customers has grown to more than just business.

"We support our area and appreciate everyone's support of our business," said Gary. "Our customers are our family."



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PAGE 21 READER'S CHOICE 2016

Rocket

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2015 Alabama Barbeque

Hall of Fame

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Best BBQ Hamburger

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for Best Lunch.





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FOOD & DRINK

GROCERY STORE

- Dorsey's Supermarket, Oxford
- 2) Food Outlet
- 3) Buckhorn Marketplace, Weaver

BUTCHER/MEATS

- Christian Corner Meats, Anniston
- 2) Dorsey's Supermarket, Oxford
- 3) Edwards Grocery, Jacksonville

PRODUCE

- I) B&B Produce, Anniston
- The Produce Wagon, Oxford
- 3) Buckhorn Market, Weaver

BAKERY

- Bonnie Ray's Bake Shoppe , Anniston
- 2) Small Cakes, Oxford
- 3) Mad Hatter, Jacksonville

BAR/LOUNGE

- Cheaha Brewing Company, Anniston
- 2) Heroes, Jacksonville
- 3) The Peerless Saloon and Grille, Anniston

BARBECUE

- 1) The Rocket, Jacksonville
- 2) Cooter Brown's Rib Shack, Jacksonville
- 3) Brads BBQ, Oxford

BREAKFAST

- CJ's Family Restaurant, Oxford
- 2) Chef T's, Alexandria
- 3) Classic Too, Anniston

BUFFET

- Classic On Noble, Anniston
- 2) China Luck, Oxford
- M and J's Home Cooking, Oxford

CATERING

- Alexander's The Great Event, Oxford
- 2) Classic on Noble, Anniston
- 3) Smoke-N-Hot BBQ, Anniston

CATFISH

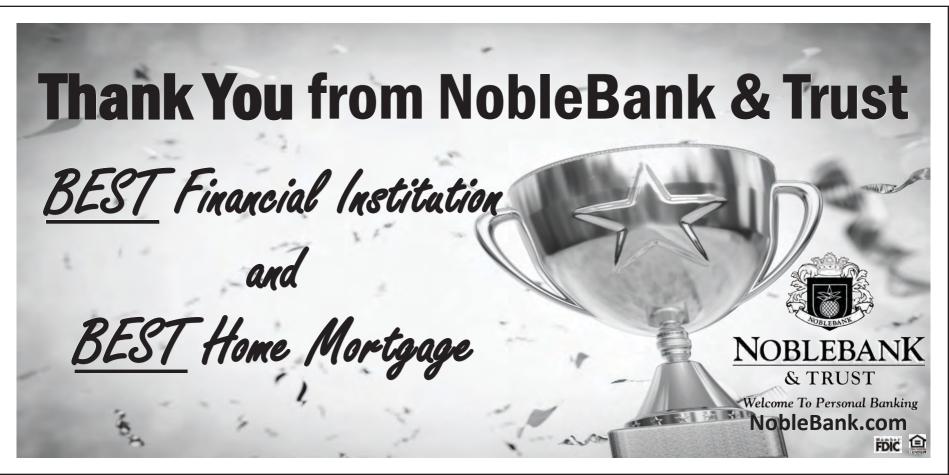
- I) Top O' the River, Anniston
- 2) Brad's BBQ, Oxford
- **3)** Betty's BBQ, Anniston

CHICKEN WINGS

- I) Struts, Oxford
- 2) Coop DeVille, Jacksonville
- 3) Jefferson's, Jacksonville

COFFEE SHOP

- I) Southern Girl Coffee, Oxford
- 2) Java Jolt, Jacksonville
- 3) Classic Too, Anniston



PAGE 23 READER'S CHOICE 2016

CLAIRE CABALLERO

(256) 310-9843







Claire Caballero is a photographer who always goes for the natural look.

There's real temptation to open up Photoshop and start making major changes for many photographers. Slimming down a figure, recoloring eyes or cranking up color saturation can make for an eye-catching photo, but it can be slick and over-processed. For Caballero, winner of this year's Best Photography Studio award, photos should be simple and subtle.

"I want to look at a photo of myself and know that's me, and the people that come to me, that's probably why they come," said Caballero. Her photos are bright and crisp, with a bit of editing work that cleans up blemishes but otherwise leaves her pictures unchanged. Her clients often take their photo shoots outside, with shots of kids playing in grass, brothers horsing around at the park and families posing comfortably together beneath clear skies.

Caballero says her style is focused on providing a "classic" look: bright, soft photos that communicate the energy of her subjects. Her talent may be most apparent in her pictures of children, whom she manages to catch smiling, playing and having a good time, in spite of the resistance to family photo shoots that kids innately share.

"The silly comes out in me, the child in

me," said Caballero. "I'll do anything I can do to make them smile."

After more than a decade of being in business, she's built lasting relationships with her clients. She's shot weddings, senior photos, newborns and boudoir, covering a wide range of events and people. Kids she's photographed have grown up and had children of their own, and she's built personal friendships with some of her clients. In spite of those constantly growing connections, Caballero was surprised about her first Reader's Choice win.

"Did my friends and family just vote for me a million times each?" she asked. "It's super shocking to me, it's a humbling experience."

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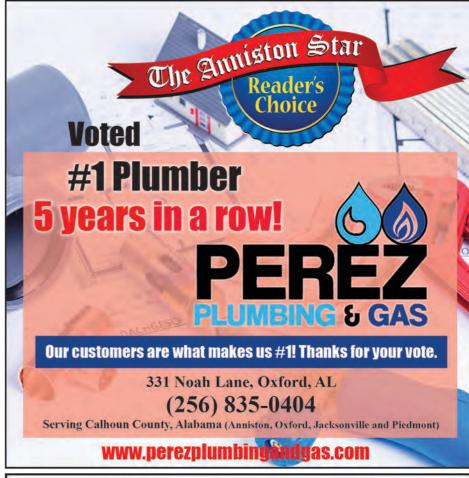


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PAGE 25 READER'S CHOICE 2016









DINNER

- I) Classic on Noble, Anniston
- 2) Effina's, Jacksonville
- 3) The Peerless Saloon and Grille

FINE DINING

- I) Classic on Noble, Anniston
- 2) Effina's, Jacksonville
- 3) Garfrerick's, Oxford

FRIED CHICKEN

- I) Betty's BBQ, Anniston
- CJ's Family Restaurant, Oxford
- 3) Struts, Jacksonville

HAMBURGER

- 1) The Rocket, Jacksonville
- 2) Struts, Oxford
- 3) Cecil's Place, Jacksonville

MILKSHAKE

- 1) Cecil's Place, Jacksonville
- 2) Tasty Dip, Heflin
- 3) Big Chief, Glencoe

PIZZA

- I) Mata's Greek Pizza & Grinders
- 2) Wise Guy's, Alexandria
- 3) Roma's, Jacksonville

LUNCH

- I) Betty's BBQ, Anniston
- 2) The Rocket, Jacksonville
- 3) Struts, Oxford

RIBS

- Cooter Brown's Rib Shack, Jacksonville
- 2) Smoke-N-Hot BBQ, Anniston
- 3) Dad's BBQ Noble Street location, Anniston

STEAKS

- Hubbards Off Main, Oxford
- 2) Classic on Noble, Anniston
- 3) Garfrerick's, Oxford

SANDWICHES

- Rosie's Gourmet-to-Go, Anniston
- 2) Momma Goldberg's, lacksonville
- 3) The Peerless Saloon and Grille

ITALIAN RESTAURANT

- Mata's Greek Pizza & Grinders, Anniston
- **2)** Effina's Downtown, Anniston
- 3) Effina's, Jacksonville

ASIAN RESTAURANT

- I) Fuji, Oxford
- 2) House of Chen, Anniston
- 3) Thai One On, Anniston

MEXICAN RESTAURANT

- I) Mexico Lindo, Oxford
- 2) Los Mexicanos, Oxford
- 3) Loco Mex, Jacksonville

PLACE FOR A ROMANTIC DINNER

- Classic On Noble, Anniston
- **2)** Effina's Downtown, Anniston
- 3) Effina's, Jacksonville



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- Lori Cummings, 7 years

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PAGE 27 READER'S CHOICE 2016

SOUTHERN GIRL COFFEE

31 Choccolocco St, Oxford



Southern Girl Coffee may be one of Calhoun County's fastest-growing businesses.

In the four years since its founding, Southern Girl has grown from a single stall at farmer's markets to a full-fledged coffee roasting business. Southern Girl's coffee can be found in several Calhoun and Etowah County restaurants and bakeries, including Cheaha Brewing Company and Artisanal Baked Goods. The recent addition of a custom-made trailer allows owner Leah Sparks to brew her coffee and sell it directly to customers at Southern Girl's Oxford location, or

take it on the road. It's been a big couple of years, which Sparks says is thanks to the support of family, friends and the community.

"I really couldn't have chosen a better place to start a business, and there's a big local kick catching on right now," said Sparks. "Seeing that come here is really neat."

Next on Sparks' list of improvements is an outdoor venue behind her shop, where local musicians can perform and visitors can get comfortable with a cup of coffee to be entertained. The spot has already hosted a few youth worship nights, and Sparks expect those will continue once the summer heat dies down.

More coffees are incoming, with a focus

on adding new imported beans to the roster. A seasonal menu is in the works, too, with new limited-time flavors supported by Southern Girl's core blends.

If there's one thing to be sure of, it's that the shop will see continued success. This is Southern Girl's first Reader's Choice Award, taking first place in the Coffee Shop category, and it's no coincidence that the community has taken notice. Sparks says that the support is exciting, and the support of the community is going to help her business continue to improve.

"People get so familiar with big chains, so I want to thank everybody for coming out and letting me chase my passion," said Sparks. "It's been a dream come true, really."

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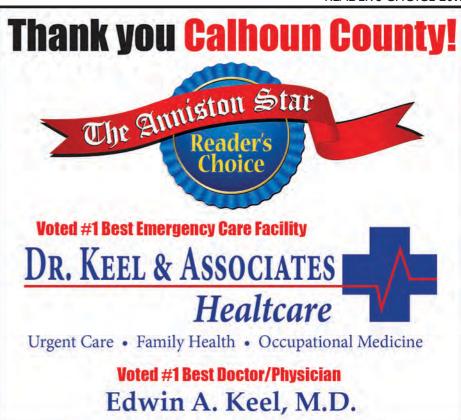
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BUSINESS & FINANCIAL

ACCOUNTANT

- Phyllis Kelley, HR Block, Anniston
- Randy Lovvorn, Lovvorn and Associates, Anniston
- 3) Billy Blount, Jacksonville

BROKERAGE/

INVESTMENTS

- Joseph P Bynum, Raymond James, Anniston
- 2) Ike Brown, Merrill Lynch
- **3)** Gerwin R.Wallace, Silverton Mortgage, Anniston

FINANCIAL

INSTITUTION

- I) NobleBank and Trust,
- **2)** AOD Federal Credit Union
- Alabama Teachers Credit Union

HOME MORTGAGE

- I) NobleBank & Trust
- 2) Cheaha Bank Jacksonville
- 3) Jackson Mortgage, Anniston

AUTOMOTIVE

AUTO SERVICE

- I) Brown Radiator, Anniston
- Mike's Auto and Tire Service, Anniston
- 3) Marc's Auto Repair, Jacksonville

AUTO SALESPERSON

- Carl Wilson, Sunny King Ford, Anniston
- Marty Boyles Jacksonville Auto Sales
- Rob Jones, Sunny King Toyota, Anniston

BODY SHOP

- Turley's Body Shop, Anniston
- **2)** Skinner Body Shop, Oxford
- 3) Mange Body Shop, Alexandria

CAR WASH

- I) Anniston Super Wash
- 2) Xtreme Auto Spa, Anniston
- **3)** Gamecock Auto Spa, Jacksonville

NEW CAR DEALER

I) Sunny King Ford, Anniston

- 2) Sunny King Toyota, Anniston
- 3) Buster Miles, Heflin

OIL CHANGE

- Express Oil Change, Oxford
- Mike's Auto and Tire Service, Anniston
- 3) Marc's Auto Repair, Jacksonville

TRANSMISSION SHOP

- Fred's Transmission Service, Oxford
- Cobb Automotive and Tire, Anniston

AAMCO Auto Repair, Anniston

TIRE STORE

- I) Grover and Sons, Oxford
- Mike's Auto and Tire Service, Anniston
- **3)** Brooks Tire Service, Anniston

USED CAR DEALER

- Mike Lipscomb Auto Sales, Anniston
- Lenn Costner Auto Sales, Alexandria
- 3) Jacksonville Auto Sales



PAGE 3 I READER'S CHOICE 2016

BONNIE RAY'S BAKE SHOPPE

5818 McClellan Blvd # 18, Anniston • (256) 847-7303



Bonnie Ray's Bake Shoppe has a Bonnie behind the counter, but no Bonnie Ray.

The Best Bakery award-winning shop was named for store manager Bonnie Martin and her brother, Ray, the daughter and son of owner Mary Glenn, back when it opened in 1993. More than a few folks have made the honest mistake of assuming there's a real Bonnie Ray, but Martin doesn't mind rolling with it.

"A ton of people think that and call up here asking for Bonnie Ray," said Martin, who has

worked full time at the shop since high school. "I explain it sometimes, but everybody thinks it's cute."

Bonnie Ray's sells a variety of pastries and sweets, including cookies, donuts, cakes, cupcakes, and an unexpected fan favorite for a sweets shop: cheese straws.

"The cheese straws are, shockingly, the biggest seller that we have," deadpanned Martin.

Surprises continue in the store's cake selection book, where customers can choose base designs for custom cakes. Next to beautiful, multi-tiered wedding cakes are examples of the

strange — a cake for an anthropologist made to look like a very convincing horny toad — and the complex — a cake made to look like it was placed in a basket, with chocolate icing weaved to achieve the realistic basket effect.

Bonnie Ray's uses family-created recipes, and Martin says that everything from cookies to cake icing is homemade. Martin's aunt, coowner Karen Bates, said the food's authenticity inspires customer loyalty.

"You have to be confident enough in yourself and your employees to put out a good product," said Bates.



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