



THE PELHAM

PATHWAY

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Pelham's News Magazine

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YEAR IN REVIEW

BY: GRETCHEN DIFANTE, CITY MANAGER

It's good practice to reflect on the accomplishments, and it's just as important to evaluate what can be done to improve. City staff focuses on improvement and accountability during budget preparation, mid-year, and as we complete projects. I was recently interviewed for an article on city management. When asked about what I thought the biggest challenges in local government were, I mentioned an area I don't think is unique to government at any level at any time – the observation that government traditionally sees itself as somehow not worthy or capable of a level of excellence when compared to the private sector. Having spent most of my career in the private sector and working at the federal, state, and local government levels, I believe local government has the best opportunity to achieve excellence in everything it does. Where else but local government can you see ways to improve your community and appeal to the legislative body to change the law and see it done in less than a few months? I would put Pelham up against any other city in the country for the amount we accomplish and the level of excellence we achieve. While the Mayor, City Council, staff, board volunteers, and those in our community are all a part of our success, I'm honored to be the spokesperson to highlight just a few of the accomplishments from the last fiscal year.

As you read through these accomplishments, keep in mind that the City exceeded its revenue expectations, and staff came in under the operations budget. On behalf of our elected officials and city staff team, we appreciate the opportunity to serve Pelham.

Information Management

It's vital to our success to utilize data in management decision-making. Many of you know that we have been implementing an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system over the past two years, and the information in that system is already beginning to contribute to more informed decisions. We completed the finance, accounts receivable, cashiering, capital assets, accounts payable, project accounting, budgeting, human resources, and payroll modules over the past 18 months. In the past couple of months, we began the implementation of revenue and business licensing, utility billing, permitting, and land management. The public can be assured that we are implementing this system according to best practices to maximize the innumerable benefits. The City contracted with Tyler Technologies, arguably the nation's most experienced ERP software provider specializing in local government industry.

As you can imagine, the personnel at Tyler have seen more poorly executed software implementations than well-executed ones. So from the beginning, our goal was to set a benchmark standard in execution, and this past year, one of the Tyler project managers put this statement in an email to us:

"The level of preparation and dedication you all demonstrated is very rare, and it made the kickoff move along smoothly with much more accomplished than we normally see. (We all) commented that we wish we could get more clients like Pelham!"

This kind of success doesn't come about by accident. We have invested our time in clearly defining the current and desired state, carefully managing data transition, and questioning the value of everything we do as an organization.

At the end of the year, we welcomed the City of Tuscaloosa's former Chief Information Officer, Chuck Crocker, to Pelham as our first Director of Information Technology. We are building a technology department that improves asset protection and ensures we remain on top of technological advances. He got right to work evaluating all of our current infrastructure and third-party support services.

"I am honored to lead the effort to support our staff members so that they may serve the citizens of Pelham," said Chuck Crocker. "Technology is woven into our daily lives and serves as a foundational part of the services delivered by local governments. My goal is to ensure our IT Department and its technology services are second to none."

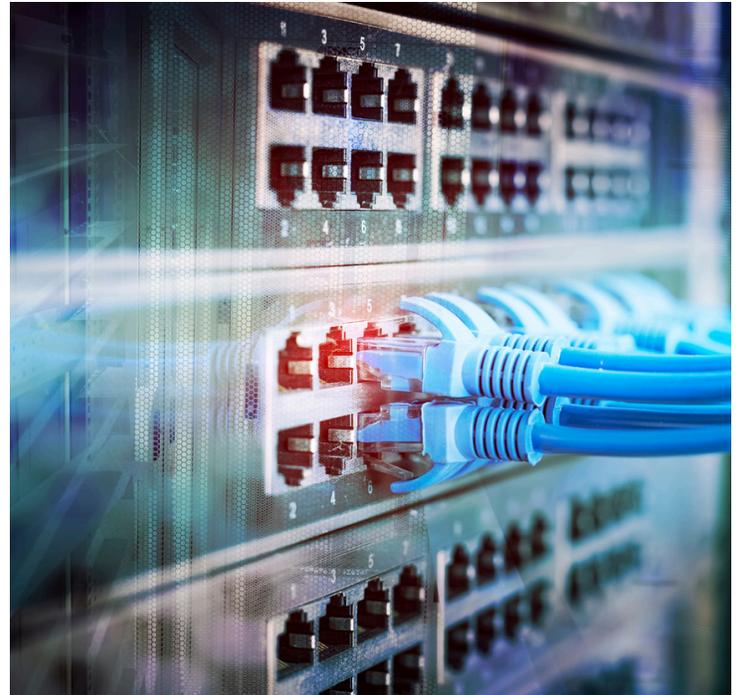
Partnerships

It's good practice to evaluate professional services from time to time to ensure that the City is getting exactly what it needs. In 2022, the City sent out Requests for Proposals for professional services for auditing and insurance brokerage services. After careful evaluation and an extensive interview process, the City contracted with new vendors, Truitt, Tingle, Paramore and Argent, LLC, and Cobbs Allen, respectively.

Citizen Survey

Earlier this year, we engaged in the city's first citizen survey, and it was encouraging to see that the citizens and the city council were in lockstep as to priorities. The citizen's priorities were reflected in the Council's budget for the past two consecutive years. Pelham is a unique city, and being in city management in Pelham is not for the faint of heart. Our budget is significantly larger than what is "normal" for our population.

We manage our water and sewer systems and three non-traditional businesses: Ballantrae Golf Club, Pelham Racquet Club, and the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena. Compared to other cities, we have a relatively small staff size for the number of organizational responsibilities. Therefore, we need to ensure our resources focus on the things that are most important to our community. The City Council plans to survey the community every third year to ensure we keep the public's priorities at the forefront of decision-making in Pelham. The Council will rely heavily on this information as it begins strategic planning in the spring of 2023.





Cleaning up Our City

The citizens of Pelham continue to prioritize the importance of a clean city and emphasize smart development reflected in Plan Pelham, the City's comprehensive plan. Your City Council has supported these changes with the direction to place emphasis on the implementation of Plan Pelham. This past year, we hired the City's first-ever zoning administrator, whose responsibilities are not only ensuring adherence to Pelham's zoning ordinances and making recommendations for continuous improvement but also taking a more proactive approach to ordinance compliance. Last year, more city ordinance violations were initiated in municipal court than ever before in Pelham's history. In addition, the City saw a hotel fraught with safety violations shut down by municipal and county health officials. The message is getting out that Pelham is a city that cares about building safety, and while it will take years to turn around a city built with little to no attention to zoning, we are working diligently toward that end. Citizens can look for more recommendations to Council for changes and updates in the ordinances impacting these areas.



The Commercial Development Authority (CDA) is working alongside city staff to support the improved look of the City's main corridors. For the last year, the CDA and the City have worked to clean up the city-owned property at the corner of Welborn Street and Pelham Parkway. A portion of the land was sold to the industrial company Process Baron for a significant expansion. The remaining property near the highway is currently being prepped for future redevelopment. The prep work will make the property much more attractive to potential developers, saving them time and money.



We certainly want to put our best foot forward as we welcome people into Pelham, especially on our major thoroughfares. The City purchased property at 1904 Montgomery Highway at the northern border with Hoover. It's no secret that the area has been blighted for years and doesn't reflect the City's brand. So now, the City is working to clean it up and make significant landscaping improvements. Plans call for more landscaping, lighting, and signage.

Soliciting Federal Aid

City staff prepared and submitted four applications to federal programs this past year: (1) The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Watershed Protection Program for creek clean up following a major storm; (2) FEMA's home buyout program; (3) The Federal Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program; and, (4) The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program. Pelham was awarded the creek clean-up grant, and that work is underway. In the first few weeks, more than 20 dump truck loads of debris have been removed from just a small section of the 1.3-mile total project area. We expect to receive responses for the other three applications this fiscal year.

City Hall Renovation

The move back to City Hall is currently underway. It will be occupied by Administration employees (Mayor, City Manager, Communications, Economic Development, and City Clerk), Development Services and Public Works (Building, Engineering, and Planning & Zoning), and Finance (Accounts Payable, Accounting, Taxes, and Revenue). Having all of these departments under one roof will make doing business with the City much more efficient.

Fire Station No. 3 Relocation

The completion of Fire Station No. 3 on Highway 11 was a significant accomplishment in 2022. Although operational since April, an open house and ribbon cutting were held in November. The public was invited for a first look at the state-of-the-art facility. The new construction was motivated by the growth of the County Road 11 and County Road 36 corridors.

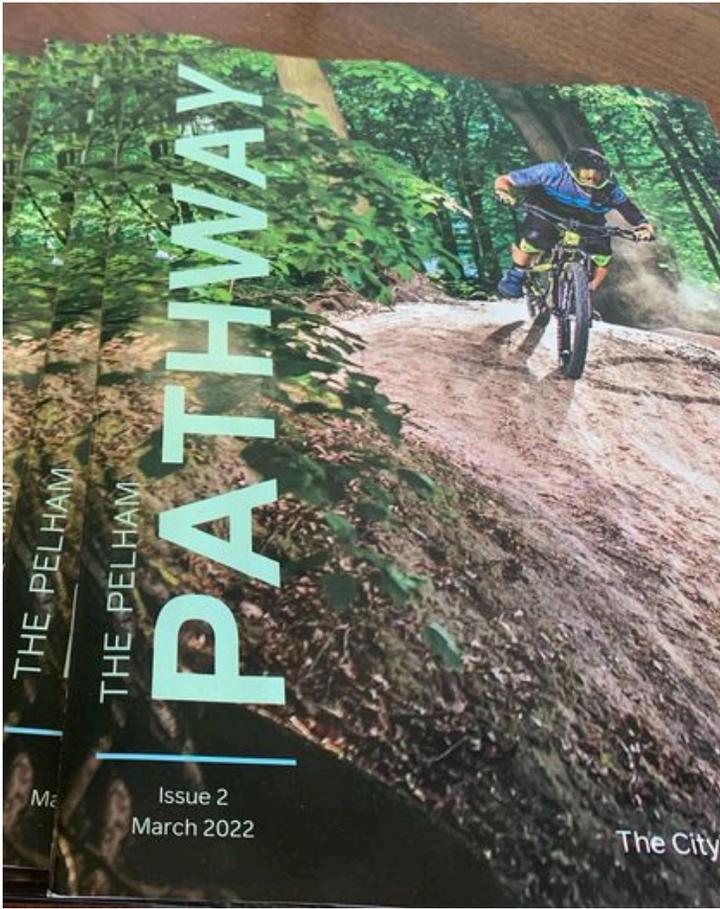
Highway 11 Water Main Replacement

Work is in progress to replace the water infrastructure on County Road 11 from the intersection of CR 11 and CR 52 to just east of Chatham Court. The water mains along Kelly Drive, Deer Springs Road, Ruby Drive, and Chatham Court (east) will also be replaced. The project should be completed in the next nine months.

The World Games

This past summer, Pelham welcomed the World Games to our own Oak Mountain State Park. The local events received a Special Event Assessment Rating of one out of five, with one being the highest-level rating requiring extensive federal interagency support. So, in addition to their regular workload, our fire, police, public works, and communications employees worked alongside several other agencies to effectively manage security, response, and communications for events over the span of seven days. Our team's planning, coordination, and execution ensured a safe and successful outcome for patrons, participating athletes, and support staff.





EXPLORE

A Pelham Hometown Christmas is back, with a bigger parade and more activities.

[Read more to explore Pelham](#)



DISCOVER

More reliable water service is coming for Pelham residents. Read about where and when the work will take place.

[Read more to discover what's happening in Pelham](#)



GROW

A blighted property is made ready for development.

[Read more to see how Pelham is growing](#)

Increased Communication

Traditional news outlets and publications are no longer the only way people consume information. With so many voices on so many platforms, the need for consistent communication has never been more critical. The City has made a concerted effort in the last year to be the loudest voice for accurate and factual information about the day-to-day business of the local government and its services. The City's verified accounts, the ones with the blue check mark, are the only places you will find official communication from the City on social media. Our team realizes that everyone's preferences for communication are different, which is why new communication tools were either created or revived.

This publication, The Pelham Pathway, is one of those communication tools. The magazine was revived and renamed when the new branding rolled out earlier this year. It is produced on a quarterly schedule and includes updates on significant projects and developments, feature articles about people and/or programs making an impact in the community, an activity guide chock-full of fun events and programs put on by city departments, and Panther Pride, which highlights all of the wonderful things happening in Pelham City Schools.

Because it is a quarterly publication, the communications office created a monthly e-newsletter to supplement the magazine. It focuses on three key parts of the City's brand: Explore, Discover, and Grow. Each month, the e-newsletter contains information on things to explore in the community. It allows people to discover the important work the City is doing on their behalf. Pelham is constantly growing, so staff believes it is important that you know what's happening where dirt is moving and what new businesses recently opened in Pelham.

News, calendar notifications, meeting schedules, and emergency alerts are readily available on the City's website. You can subscribe to and receive notifications and alerts via email, text message, or both. Opting in is easy. Click the Notify Me button on the City website's home page and make your selections.

STAY INFORMED

www.pelhamalabama.gov

www.explorepelham.com



BY THE NUMBERS

Parks & Recreation

The City responded in a big way when citizens asked for more recreational, community, and educational opportunities and events. As a result, the Recreation Center expanded its hours and offered 28 special events, including many first-time offerings. Kites and Bites was one of those and proved to be the most popular, with 500 attendees. In addition, several new fitness classes were added, along with Silver Sneakers yoga, pickleball, dance classes for children, youth wrestling, adult volleyball, and added pickup basketball time slots.

The Pelham Public Library provided 435 programs, classes, or events over 5,000 participants attended. That is four times greater than the previous year.

The Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena had 500 registrants in its various hockey leagues and held clinics with 130 in attendance. In figure skating, 678 participated in Learn to Skate classes, and over 400 stayed with the program over multiple sessions. With the peak season for public skating between November and March, last year's winter season alone had 10,000 skaters on the ice for public sessions.

Record-Breaking Year

Ballantrae Golf Club broke its 2012 record for rounds of golf played in a year. In 2012, that number was 39,561. In 2022, 41,451 rounds were played. The club also set a revenue record, earning \$312,000 more than the previous year, and hosted its largest community event, Brews & Burgers, with 150 in attendance.

Team league participation at the Pelham Racquet Club grew from 32 teams to 44. Tennis lesson revenue increased from \$310,145 to \$352,343, and Pro Shop revenue realized an increase from \$15,721 to \$40,350.

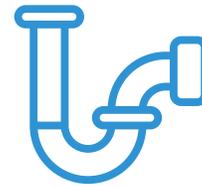


Water & Sewer Systems

100%
REGULATORY
COMPLIANCE



0
SEWER
TREATMENT
PLANT
VIOLATIONS



332
WATER
LEAKS
REPAIRED

PROJECTS COMPLETED

- HWY 52 SEWER RELOCATION
- ELECTRICAL UPGRADES AT INDIAN HILLS WELL
- CHANDALAR DRIVE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REPLACED

5,219
COMPLETED
WORK ORDERS



Development Services & Public Works

3,693
REQUEST TRACKER
TICKETS ADDRESSED
23% increase



902
BUILDING
PERMITS
ISSUED
13% increase



2,903
INSPECTIONS
PERFORMED
19% increase



336
PLAN REVIEWS
PERFORMED
6% increase

Public Safety



4,183
CALLS FOR SERVICE
EMS calls make up more than
60% percent of total calls

23,375
CALLS FOR SERVICE
Emergency & Non-Emergency



Your City is at Work

The major projects tend to get the most attention because they are obvious or take a significant amount of time to complete. For every major project, there are dozens more you may not be aware of. In the first quarter of FY 2023, the Pelham City Council took action on the following:

- Accepted contractor bid for renovations to Fire Station No. 2
- Voted to enter into an agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey to perform required field and analytical work as directed through the City's MS4 Program and Storm Water Ordinance.
- Architect approved to provide design services for interior renovations at the Pelham Racquet Club.
- Improvements to Pelham Tennis Center at Pelham City Park.
- Installation of two new streetlights on Wooddale Lane.
- New landscaping for renovated City Hall.
- Approved engineering design services for the additional parking lot on the west side of the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena.
- Purchase of furniture for the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena Banquet Hall.
- Water main leak repairs on Shelby County Highway 336 and Shelby County Highway 35.
- Replacement of Buck Creek Sewer Lift Station Pump
- Removal of high service pump at Chandalar Well to perform necessary repairs and reinstall the pump.
- Removal of the pump at Campbell Ridge Well to perform necessary repairs, video the existing well, and reinstall the pump.
- Purchase of kitchen equipment for the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena.
- Accepted bid for new PPE for the Fire Department.
- Accepted contractor bid for the Red Fox Drive Storm Sewer Replacement Project, Phase II.
- Approved Ordinance No. 135-253, which amends the zoning for property located at 7 Crosscreek Trail. This will allow a longtime Pelham business to expand.

Our communications team created a capital projects page on the City's website that details every project, how it is funded, and its status. Look under the Community tab.





CITY OF PELHAM

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS & SPECIAL HOURS

City Hall & City Offices

- Friday, December 23: CLOSED
- Monday, December 26: CLOSED
- Monday, January 2: CLOSED

Pelham Public Library

- December 23-26: CLOSED
- December 31-January 2: CLOSED

Ballantrae Golf Club

- December 24-25: CLOSED
- Sunday, January 1: Regular hours

Pelham Recreation Center

- Friday, December 23: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- December 24-25: CLOSED
- Monday, December 26: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Saturday, December 31: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Sunday, January 1: CLOSED
- Monday, January 2: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Pelham Senior Center

- Friday, December 23: CLOSED
- Monday, December 26: CLOSED
- Monday, January 2: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena

- Sunday, December 25: CLOSED
- Sunday, January 1: CLOSED

Pelham Racquet Club

- Saturday, December 24: CLOSED
- Sunday, December 25: CLOSED
- Monday, December 26: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
- Saturday, December 31: 8:00 am - 1:00 pm
- Sunday, January 1: CLOSED
- Monday, January 2: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

CITY EMPLOYEES DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP & EXCELLENCE

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON

When the City of Pelham recruits talent for its workforce, potential candidates are challenged to ask themselves this question: Are you ready to set yourself apart from the rest and work for the best? City employees come to work each day prepared to help and serve others. It is at the very core of who they are as people.

Before becoming a Pelham Police Officer, Matthew Berry worked in production at a local church. Officer Berry said he chose this new career in law enforcement because he loves being able to help people. "I grew up with much respect for the job, and I look forward to serving the City of Pelham with excellence," explained Berry.

He took that mindset to the Northeast Alabama Law Enforcement Academy, where he was a member of the 187th Basic Session and received 560 hours of training over 14 weeks. Students are provided with the entry-level knowledge and skill needed to begin their careers in law enforcement. His peers selected Officer Berry as the Secretary of the class. He maintained the highest GPA among all officers and received the Academic Achievement award at his graduation on December 1st. Back in Pelham, Berry has begun the police department's extensive 13-week field training program.



For Pelham Fire Medic Chris Fenley, the fire service has always been a part of life. His grandfather was the chief of a small volunteer fire department, and he, too, became a volunteer firefighter. "The Fire College took what I already knew and expounded on it tremendously. They set us up for success in the fire service. The Fire College taught me that everyone has a specific role and that teamwork is a necessity in the fire service," he said.

Fenley received the Director's Award for Academic Excellence at his graduation ceremony because he maintained the highest GPA among his class of 24 graduates. Fenley was a full-time paramedic with a local ambulance company before being hired with PFD. "In my many years working on the ambulance, I ran many calls with Pelham. I always had a great relationship with all the guys. Because of this, I always thought the Pelham Fire Department would be a great place to work."



Over the next year, Fenley will work out of all five fire stations, exposing him to all the technical rescue disciplines. He must meet several requirements by the end of his first year.

Pelham Racquet Club Director Chaney Mills was recently appointed as Adult Tournament Competition (NTRP) Committee Vice Chair with USTA Southern for the 2023-2024 term. According to Brett Schwartz, USTA Southern President and CEO, Chaney was selected based on her expertise, skills, and the recommendation of the state association.

"Chaney is a long-time Southern volunteer who brings a wealth of experience to the Adult Competition - Ratings Based Committee. Her ascension to the Vice Chair position will provide a solid foundation for the growth and promotion of ratings-based play throughout the South," said Schwartz.

Schwartz said he believes the organization has a great opportunity, through the dedicated volunteers and staff, to make tennis available to everyone in the Southern section who wants to play and to provide excellent programming and play opportunities to current players. Chaney has worked at the Pelham Racquet Club for 19 years and has been Director since 2020.

Pelham Parks & Recreation Assistant Director Alicia Walters recently received the 2022 Merit In Recreation Award from the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association. The award is given to an individual who has shown outstanding leadership and innovation in recreation, athletics, leisure, or special event programming and/or instruction.

"Alicia demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to her department and the City of Pelham," read her nomination letter. "She mentors all staff and sets the highest standards for programs, events, and sports activities. These standards include safety, customer service, and attention to detail that are second to none."

"This award is well deserved," said Brian Cooper, Director of Pelham Parks & Recreation. "Alicia is a true asset to the citizens of Pelham, and we are fortunate to have her on our team. The City, our staff, and the community all benefit from her expertise, knowledge, and overriding desire to improve her community. I am honored to work beside her each day," Cooper added.

Alicia is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional with the National Recreation and Park Association and a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation.



FIREFIGHTER CHALLENGE

BY: GINA WOMACK



There's no doubt that firefighters have to be prepared for whatever emergency calls each shift might bring. The nature of the job requires rigorous and physically demanding training, plus a high degree of mental clarity to stay focused in a life-or-death situation. While all first responders are expected to stay physically and mentally fit, one Pelham firefighter takes his degree of fitness to the next level. Jake Lanier, who joined the Pelham Fire Department in October 2021, has made a name for himself as an elite athlete in the Firefighter Challenge, a globally-recognized sport that simulates the physical demands of real-life firefighting situations.

The Firefighter Challenge, once known as the Firefighter Combat Challenge, has been around for over thirty years and spotlights the physicality of the profession. The event is televised on ESPN, with participants from around the world competing for the best time. "The Firefighter Challenge is referred to as 'the toughest two minutes in sports,'" explained Lanier. "The course includes climbing a five-story tower, hoisting, chopping, dragging a hose, and rescuing a life-sized mannequin, all while wearing full gear."

The competition includes a team relay race with up to five firefighters, a tandem race with two firefighters dividing up the course, and an individual race.

Lanier said he started competing in 2013 as a member of the Montgomery Fire Department. "I always love to be challenged and to better myself in our field. I saw this as an opportunity to challenge myself and perfect my firefighting skills. It is a great way to hold myself accountable and stay in pristine physical shape so I am ready for anything thrown my way on the job."

From 2013 to 2019, the Montgomery native and former Faulkner University football player set out to achieve one goal at a time. "When 2019 came I knew I wanted to spend that year devoted to working towards the ultimate title of World Champion. After obtaining the 2019 U.S. National Title, I later became the World Champion at the World Championships in Montgomery with my personal best time of 1 minute and 17 seconds. It was such a great feeling to achieve this goal in front of my friends and family in my hometown. It was a moment I will never forget."

Lanier was prepared to defend his title in 2020, but COVID-19 halted the competition. "I couldn't compete again until this year after I started working for Pelham. Starting in 2023, the course will hopefully be back in full swing with all firefighters running in full gear and on oxygen," said Lanier. In May of this year, Lanier competed in Martin County, Florida, where he placed third out of a field of 50 individuals with a time of 1:22.91. His relay team placed second, with a time of 1:32.65.

In October, Lanier traveled to the U.S. Nationals in Fort Pierce, Florida, where he also had a good showing. He placed third out of 90 individuals, with a time of 1:22.17, and first in tandem with his teammate Brian Riebe, with a time of 1:11.43. His hybrid relay team placed first overall.

Lanier regularly works out five or six days a week to stay in top physical form. His regimen involves strength training and CrossFit-style workouts. He also runs a mock course two days a week leading up to a Firefighter Challenge event. "Nutrition plays a heavy part in my training, and it requires a lot of discipline before an event. It can make all the difference in the time I run on the course," said Lanier.

In addition to preparing for Firefighter Challenges, Jake Lanier has a full schedule in both his personal and professional life. He is a firefighter/EMT for the Pelham Fire Department, and he's currently in paramedic school, with an expected graduation date of May 2023. Lanier is a newlywed and, most recently, a new father. Jake and his wife Sarah welcomed their daughter, Kenna, in late October. Lanier and his wife enjoy the lake life in Eclectic, Alabama, when he's not on duty. "I love to bow-hunt, and I love wakeboarding on the lake." He's also a small business owner.

Lanier said working for the Pelham Fire Department has proven to be a good fit. "The atmosphere with the guys and the love for the community that this department has; it's a great environment to work in."



SAY HELLO TO CRICKET

Pelham City Schools Facility Dog

BY: NICOLE KNIGHT

Cricket is a three-year-old labrador retriever who recently joined the Pelham City Schools family as a facility dog. Before coming to Pelham, Cricket took part in three years of extensive training through Service Dogs Alabama. She's specifically trained to work with multiple people and perform certain tasks to engage students, decrease anxieties, improve attention skills, and more. Her confident, social personality enables her to work independently and seek out students who need her, and she makes an immediate, positive impact everywhere she goes.

Cricket is different from a service dog. A service dog is a dog that has been individually trained to perform work or tasks to assist a person with a disability. Seizure-alert dogs, diabetic-alert dogs, and guide dogs that work one-on-one with an individual are examples of service dogs. Cricket is a facility dog. Facility dogs have a more social temperament and can work with a wide variety of people.

Cricket has two handlers. Her primary handler is Anna Nicholson, the mental health coordinator for Pelham City Schools, and her secondary handler is Lauren Bligh, a special education teacher. Cricket lives with Mrs. Nicholson, and she goes to work with her every day.

Mrs. Nicholson stated, "Cricket works a full-time job just like I do! Three days a week, we do classroom visits at all four of our schools. When we're not in classrooms, Cricket is with me during my one-on-one sessions, she attends meetings with me, and occasionally she sneaks in a nap in my office. Studies show that dogs reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, so I knew Cricket would have a huge impact on our students, but I had no idea just how big that impact would be! I truly believe dogs can do something that humans cannot. If a student is overwhelmed or having a bad day, Cricket can come in and change that right around. I wish everyone could hear and see the reactions of students and adults when we walk into the building. All of the squeals and smiles make me so happy!"

When Cricket isn't working in the schools, you can find her taking a nap, hanging out with her dog siblings, or attending events with the Pelham City Schools mental health team. Recently, Cricket attended Pelham Police Department's National Night Out. Cricket and the mental health team, along with the Pelham United Club and the Technology Student Association from Pelham High School, are hosting a "You Matter" Fun Run on February 25, 2023. The event will raise awareness about mental health and encourage students and the community to "run for someone you love." Event proceeds will benefit Vineyard Family Services.





“Cricket has brought so much joy and moments of happiness to the Pelham family. She never fails to make us all smile as she walks around our classrooms, nudging our hands for a pet. The comfort she provides has created an environment that wouldn't be the same without her!”

Laura Orellana

12th grade student
Pelham High School

“We've seen a rise in mental health-related issues in our schools over the last few years, especially related to anxiety. Having a facility dog like Cricket brings a sense of calm and happiness to the building any day she's present. No matter what is going on in your day, you're going to feel a little bit better when Cricket walks into your room.”

Chase Holden

Principal
Pelham Oaks Elementary

“I like having Cricket in the classroom because she's sweet. I enjoy when she walks around the room and is curious and we get to pet her.”

Lilyann Roller

2nd grade student
Pelham Oaks Elementary



“Cricket days are the best days! When students enter my classroom and see Cricket standing nearby, there is a tangible difference in their attitude toward coming to class. She can calm even the most energetic class, and students work harder to complete their work when she is around so they can have time to interact with her. Everyone seems to leave the classroom feeling happier, refreshed and ready to take on the rest of the day!”

Taylor Harris

English Teacher
Pelham Park Middle School

PANTHER PRIDE



Pelham Homecoming

The Panther Prowl Homecoming Parade and Community Pep Rally sponsored by the Pelham City Schools Foundation continues to grow each year. There's nothing better than seeing everyone decked out in Pelham colors and coming together to celebrate our community. It's always a great day to be a panther!



Pelham High School Fall Sports, Cheer & Band Highlights

Pelham City Schools' athletes and band members made a stellar showing throughout the fall competition season and finished strong with several accolades and area and state appearances! Congratulations to all on these fantastic achievements!

Volleyball

The PHS volleyball team finished as Area Champions for the third year in a row and went on to a Final Four appearance in the state tournament.

Football

The PHS football team finished second in the region and advanced to the 2nd round of the state playoffs for the first time in 16 years.

Cross Country

The PHS cross country girls' team took the sectional championship, and the boy's team finished in third, earning both teams the opportunity to advance to the state meet where the girls had a Top 10 finish, and the boys finished in the Top 20.

Band

The PHS band performed in three competitions earning Superior Ratings (Color Guard, Drum Majors, Percussion, Band), several Best in Class honors, and 6A Runner-Up in the Alabama Marching Championship.

Cheerleading

The PHS Cheerleaders earned 7th place in the AHSAA Regional Cheer Competition, landing a bid to the AHSAA State Championship, and they finished 2nd place in the UCA Regionals, earning a bid to Nationals.





Kim Kiel Named District 5 Principal of the Year

Ms. Kim Kiel, principal of Pelham High School, was named the District 5 Alabama High School Principal of the Year, an award presented by the Alabama Association of Secondary School Principals (AASSP). Kiel was nominated for the honor by fellow principals in the district, which includes high schools in Jefferson, Shelby, Tuscaloosa, and Walker Counties. Ms. Kiel has worked at Pelham High School for 26 years in the roles of teacher, coach, and athletic director; and she is in her third year as the school's principal.

Veterans Day Programs

Pelham Oaks Elementary & Pelham Ridge Elementary hosted events to honor veterans from all branches of the military and shared in celebrations of gratitude for the service and sacrifices of veterans.



IN PICTURES



The Pelham Police and Fire Departments hosted the 6th annual National Night Out in October. The number of organizations represented and the large crowd far exceeded our expectations. Our community is made better by each and every one of you! Thank you for your support!



1



2



3



5



4



6

1. & 2. The Pelham Parks & Rec 5k was a big success, with more than 80 people registering to participate. 3. Pelham Parks & Rec is growing its volleyball program for girls. 4. Pelham Racquet Club, Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena, and Palooza in the Park were nominees for the Shelby Chamber's All-Star in Tourism Awards. 5. Pelham Seniors took a three-day trip to Blue Ridge, GA in October. 6. Students at the Arc of Shelby County got to meet some of Pelham's real-life heroes.



1



2



3



4

1. Pelham Ridge's SRO shows his support for the school's youth cheerleaders. 2. The Birmingham Bulls are off to a great start. Catch them in action at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena. 3. Pelham Seniors have lunch around town every month. 4. Pelham Police & Alabaster Police support Special Olympics bowling at Oak Mountain Lanes.

THE ART OF GARDENING



BY: GINA WOMACK

There's just something satisfying about gardening. Whether you're tending a few houseplants, beautifying your lawn, or coaxing summer vegetables from a sunny spot in your backyard, the sense of accomplishment in planting the seed, nourishing the plants as they grow, and enjoying the fruits of your labor with the harvest is a feeling that is very hard to beat. Gardening can ease depression, make us more active, and give us a sense of purpose.

With a growing emphasis on home gardening, members of a newly-formed garden club, which meets monthly at the Pelham Public Library, hope to foster a greater awareness of the hobby. David Smith, a Library Supervisor, and head of adult programming saw an opportunity to bring people together for a common purpose. "I have always wanted to make a lasting contribution to Pelham, and I have always loved gardening and nature in general, so a garden club seemed to be the obvious culmination of the two." Smith turned to Master Gardeners Teresa and Larry Riddle, who have been doing presentations at the library for several years to help get the club off the ground. "Teresa and Larry are the backbones of the club, and this could have never happened without their involvement," stated Smith. He went on to explain the objective of the club is to study aspects of gardening, encourage civic beautification and

conservation, and to enhance the overall quality of life in Pelham. "This club should be of interest to anyone who loves Pelham and gardening in general."

The Pelham Garden Club meets in the Roberts Room upstairs at the Pelham Public Library every second Thursday of the month at 10:00 am. Smith said so far, the average attendance is about 20 people, but there is certainly room for many more. Membership is open to anyone interested in any aspect of gardening. A Pelham residency is not required, and there are no dues. Donations and other projects will generate funds for future projects, speakers, prizes, and other expenses.

Smith explained what you might expect if you attend a meeting. "Each meeting runs a little over an hour. Club business is discussed first, and then an expert guest will speak, followed by a Q and A session. Light refreshments are served and good conversation rounds out each meeting. We also talk about existing community projects and plan future ones."

Smith shared some exciting news about how the club is pitching in to help beautify and bring plant education to the Pelham community.

"Our current project is the removal of invasive plants and trees along the Pelham Greenway Trail and replacing them with native species. We also want to place identification plates with QR codes for native trees and plants to educate trail users. This will be an ongoing project."

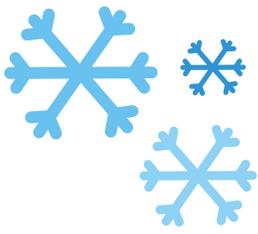
The club got off to an impressive start during its inaugural meeting on October 13, 2022. Dr. Sue Webb, Master Gardener and native plant specialist at Petals From the Past, talked about the area's native plants, invasive plants, and some recommendations for native plants for local gardens. The momentum continued in November with a meeting that featured Master Gardener Dennis Stranek, who talked about the construction and benefits of raised bed and container gardening.

Many may wonder why they should join a garden club in the cold, dreary winter months. Smith's answer is simple: "There is always work to be done in the garden!" He continued, "Winter is the best time to work on borders, weeding out every perennial weed you can spot. You can also cut back herbaceous border plants. This prevents pests and diseases from hiding in the decaying leaves and stems." Smith also suggested repairing fences, climbing plant structures, walls, plant supports, and painted surfaces during this time of year. "They are easier to see and get to when plants are dormant. This is also the time to clean and tidy all tools, workspaces, and greenhouses." While Smith said some pruning can be done during colder months, he has some words of caution. "Make sure you consult with an expert about what to prune and what to leave alone. I heartily recommend calling the Shelby County Extension office at 205.669.6763. They are wonderful folks and are glad to answer any questions. I also recommend covering tender vegetables whenever there is a prediction of heavy frost. You can plant certain fruit trees in the winter." Smith said he highly recommends consulting the Alabama Extension Service website, at www.aces.edu, which has a wealth of information on seasonal gardening for our area.

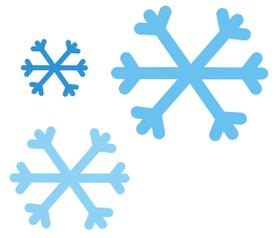
David Smith's love of gardening was shaped by the people who had a big influence on his life. "My mother was an avid gardener, and she instilled in me a passion for all things agricultural and botanical. My father loved the outdoors and he taught me many lessons about nature. My wife, Suzy, is a wonderful florist and she has taught me so much about flowers. I owe everything to them."

Smith considers himself fortunate to live in Pelham. "I am very happy to reside in a city where there are so many opportunities to enjoy nature. My wife and I regularly go to Oak Mountain State Park. We walk and bike the city trails frequently. The climate is perfect for gardening, and the volunteer spirit is very much alive in Pelham. The City is doing great things for the citizens to enjoy. I can only hope that the garden club will continue to grow, helping make Pelham beautiful and welcoming for all."





CITY OF PELHAM SANTA STOPS



Quint 91

- 4:00 High Ridge Dr. @ High Ridge Trce.
- 4:08 High Ridge Dr. @ Highview Cv.
- 4:16 Village Ln. @ 124 Village Ln.
- 4:24 Village Parking Lot
- 4:32 Mid-Ridge @ Cul-de-Sac
- 4:40 Southern Pines Chiropractic
- 4:56 Holland Lakes Dr. North @ Holland Trl.
- 5:04 Holland Lakes Dr. @ Holland Cv.
- 5:12 Holland Lakes Dr. @ Creekside Ln.
- 5:20 Creekside Ln. @ Creekside Cir.
- 5:28 Creekside Ln. @ 253 Creekside Ln.
- 5:36 Stonehaven Trl. @ Walker Way
- 5:44 Stonehaven Way @ Stonehaven Trce.
- 5:52 Walker Rd. @ Stonebrook Ln.
- 6:00 Stonehaven Trl. @ Heather Ln.
- 6:08 Stonehaven Trl. @ Stonehill Cir.
- 6:16 Stonehaven Trl. @ Pebble Cir.
- 6:24 Stonehaven Dr. @ Stonehaven Trl.
- 6:32 Stonehaven Dr. @ Stone Rd.
- 6:40 King Valley Cir. @ King Valley Dr.
- 6:48 Heather Ridge Dr. @ Heather Ln.
- 6:56 Heather Ln. @ Stonebrook Ln.
- 7:04 King Valley Rd. @ King Valley St.
- 7:12 Ivy Brook Dr. @ Ivy Brook Trl.
- 7:30 Ivy Brook Trail @ Juniper Cir.
- 7:45 Yeager Pkwy @ Armory
- 8:10 Camellia Ridge Dr. @ Camellia Ridge Cv.

Engine 92

- 4:00 Brookhollow Dr. @ Entrance
- 4:08 Hidden Creek Pkwy @ Hidden Creek Cir.
- 4:16 Hidden Creek Pkwy @ Hidden Creek Trl.
- 4:24 Coales Branch Dr. @ Coales Branch Ln.
- 4:32 Chase Creek Cir @ Entrance
- 4:40 David Dr. @ Keith Rd.
- 4:48 David Dr. @ Indian Creek Dr.
- 4:56 Cedar Cove Dr. @ Cedar Cove Ln.
- 5:04 Victory Trl. @ Panther Trl.
- 5:12 Creekview Dr. @ Creekview Cir.
- 5:20 Creekview Dr. @ Overhill Dr.
- 5:28 Crosscreek Trl. @ Creekview Dr.
- 5:36 Crosscreek Church
- 5:44 Crosscreek Trl. @ Valleyview Dr.
- 5:52 Wilderness Rd. @ Rycroft Rd.
- 6:00 Wilderness Rd. @ Colesbury Cir.
- 6:08 Frontier Dr. @ Wilderness Rd.
- 6:16 Canyon Park Dr. @ Canyon Trl.
- 6:32 Ridge Dr. @ Crestmont Ln.
- 6:40 Chandalar Court
- 6:48 Southgate MHP
- 6:56 Green Park South MHP
- 7:04 Valleydale MHP
- 7:12 Little Mountain Chateau

Engine 93

- 4:00 Wild Timber Pkwy @ Wild Timber Dr.
- 4:08 Grey Oaks Dr. @ Grey Oaks Way
- 4:16 Grey Oaks Valley @ Grey Oaks Ln.
- 4:25 Woodridge Cir. @ Woodridge Dr.
- 4:33 Dickerson Rd. @ Dickerson Ln.
- 4:41 Oak Forest Way @ Oak Forest Trl.
- 4:49 High Crest @ Gate
- 4:57 Chatham Ct. (W) @ Deer Springs Cir.
- 5:05 Bent Rail Ln. @ Cul-de-sac
- 5:13 Kelly Dr. @ Deer Springs Cir.
- 5:21 Weatherly Way @ Talmadge Dr.
- 5:29 Weatherly Way @ Cheshire Ln.
- 5:37 Weatherly Way @ Clock
- 5:45 Weatherly Way @ Kings Crest Ln. (N)
- 5:53 Kings Crest @ 245 Kings Crest
- 6:03 Simms Landing @ Simms Trl.
- 6:11 Grand Reserve Office
- 6:19 Huntley Office
- 6:28 Publix
- 6:58 Brookshire Ln. @ 141 Brookshire Ln.
- 7:08 Hwy 35 @ Mallard Point Dr.
- 7:18 Hwy 72 @ Pintail Dr.
- 7:26 Silverleaf Dr. @ 181 Silverleaf Dr.
- 7:34 Hunters Trce. @ Red Fox Dr.
- 7:42 Hwy 361 @ Eagle Cove Dr.
- 7:50 Eagle Cove Dr. @ Eagle Cove Ln.
- 7:58 Legacy Parc Dr. @ Legacy Parc Cir.
- 8:06 High Hampton Dr. @ Hampton Lake Dr.
- 8:15 High Hampton Dr. @ Hampton Ln.
- 8:25 Emerald Lake Dr.

Engine 94

- 4:00 Summersby Dr. @ 1st Intersection
- 4:08 Sugar Dr. @ Entrance
- 4:16 Shine Dr. @ Entrance
- 4:24 Cobblestone Ter. @ Entrance
- 4:32 Amanda Pl.
- 4:40 Aaron Rd. @ Aaron Parc Ct.
- 4:48 Aaron Rd. @ Kristen
- 4:56 Royal Ln. @ Royal Chase Dr.
- 5:04 Royal Ln. @ Elizabeth Dr.
- 5:12 Royal Ct. @ Royal Way
- 5:20 Saddle Run Cir.
- 5:28 Beaver Creek Pkwy @ Beaver Trl.
- 5:36 Stratshire Ln. @ Norridge Pl.
- 5:44 Greenway Dr. @ Stratford Cir.
- 5:52 Mitoba Tr. @ Hayesbury Ct.
- 6:00 140 Keeneland Green
- 6:08 Tecumseh Trl. @ Wooddale Ln.
- 6:16 Wooddale Ln. @ Glen View
- 6:22 Trail Ridge Dr. @ Trail Ridge Cir.
- 6:28 Trail Ridge Dr. @ Burning Tree Dr.
- 6:36 Burning Tree Dr. @ Indian Hills Rd.
- 6:42 Indian Hills Rd. @ Blazing Star
- 6:50 Chandawood Dr. @ Blazing Star
- 6:58 Chandawood Dr. @ Chandawood Ln.
- 7:06 Chandawood Dr. @ Dalton Dr.
- 7:14 Dalton Dr. @ Chandalar Ln.
- 7:22 Chandaway Dr. @ Chandagreen Ln.
- 7:30 Chandaway Dr. @ Chandalar Ln.
- 7:38 Chandalar Ln. @ Hamilton Rd.
- 7:46 Hamilton Rd. @ Dalton Dr.
- 7:54 North Chandalar Ln. @ Wellington Dr.
- 8:02 Wildwood Dr. @ Wellington Dr.
- 8:10 North Wildwood Dr. @ North Chandalar Dr.
- 8:18 North Chandalar Dr. @ Windsor Ridge Dr.

Engine 95

- 4:00 Normandy @ Swim Club
- 4:08 Oaklyn Hills Dr. @ Rolling Rock Trl.
- 4:16 Rolling Hills Dr. @ Oaklyn Hills Dr.
- 4:24 Bent Creek Way @ Bent Creek Trce.
- 4:40 Deer Ridge Ln. @ Fawn Dr.
- 4:55 Wysteria Dr. @ Camellia Dr.
- 5:20 Perthshire Rd. @ Perthshire Way
- 5:28 Dunrobin Ln. @ Dunrobin Cv.
- 5:36 Strathaven Rd. @ Strathaven Ln.
- 5:44 Strathaven Ln. @ Eastdale Ln.
- 5:52 Ballantrae Swim Club
- 6:10 Birkdale Ln. @ Ballantrae Club Dr.
- 6:25 Kilkerran Ln. @ Kilberry Way
- 6:35 Kilkerran Ln. @ Glenn Iris Cir.
- 6:43 Glenneagles Ln. @ Cul-de-sac
- 6:53 Ballantrae Pkwy. @ Roundabout
- 7:00 Stoneykirk Rd. @ Calliston Way
- 7:08 Stoneykirk Rd. @ Stoneykirk Ln.
- 7:18 Lauchlin Way @ Lauchlin Ln. (168)
- 7:26 Lauchlin Way @ Lauchlin Ln. (108)
- 7:34 Kinross Ln. @ Kinross Cir.
- 7:44 Cove Ln. @ Cove Cir.
- 7:52 Oxford Way @ 383 Oxford Way
- 8:00 Windsor Ln. @ Windsor Trl.
- 8:08 Windsor Ln. @ Windsor Way
- 8:16 Windsor Ln. @ Windsor Cir.
- 8:24 Windsor Cir. @ Kings Crest Ln.

CHRISTMAS EVE



FITNESS FOCUS

YEAR-ROUND FITNESS AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS AT PELHAM PARKS & REC

Pelham Parks & Recreation offers many ways to stay physically and mentally fit throughout the year, whether it's a weekly exercise class or special activities and program like January's Marathon Month.

Unlimited fitness classes are included with the cost of a Rec Center membership. Non-members pay a small fee for each class attended.



January 2023

Marathon Month Challenge

Work at your own pace, log your own time, and achieve your goal. Participants receive a t-shirt at completion. Registration opens December 26th.

CLASSES

Barre

A low-impact, energizing workout that has proven to create long, lean, powerful muscles and increase flexibility.

Body Sculpt

A low-impact format that defines your entire body with an emphasis on the shoulders, arms, core, and glutes.

Boot Camp

This program is a High Intensity Interval Training also known as HIIT.

In-Trinity Warrior 1

This class is designed to increase dynamic mobility and functional strength by emphasizing larger movements, increased repetitions and slightly faster pacing.

Rev + Flow

A high intensity, low impact workout focusing on strength, balance, flexibility and mobility.

Silver Sneakers/Renew Active Exercise

This class is designed to increase muscle strength, range of movement and improve activities for daily living. (65+)

Silver Sneakers/Renew Active Yoga

Silver Sneakers Yoga will move your whole body through a complete series of seated and standing yoga poses. (65+)

Yoga

This readily accessible vinyasa flow class mixes the power of physical yoga postures (asanas), deep breathing, and mindfulness to take you on a journey to open your heart, quiet your mind, and renew your spirit.

ACTIVITY GUIDE



THURSDAYS IN JANUARY
5:00 PM

Knit-Teen for a Good Cause

Want to start the New Year right? Teens will be knitting scarves and other items to donate to a local shelter during January at the Pelham Public Library. All experience levels are welcome, and supplies will be provided. Grades 6-12 may register online at www.pelhamlibraryal.gov.

SATURDAY | JANUARY 14
11:30 AM

From the Pit to the Plate

Bob Sykes Bar B Q just released a new book. Come hear current owner, Van Sykes, share about the family BBQ tradition and enjoy free sliders! Books will be available for purchase and signing at this book event at the Pelham Public Library.

SECOND THURSDAY | MONTHLY
10:00 AM

Garden Club Meeting

January's program will introduce basic landscaping skills for yards, beds, gardens, and pots of all sizes. In February, learn the month-by-month necessary gardening activities for lawns and shrubs, annuals and perennials, fruit and nut trees, and bulbs, roots, and tubers. The club meets at the Pelham Public Library.

SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 26
12:30 PM

Pickleball Clinics

Come see why pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in America. Beginner to advanced skills will be taught at a series of clinics at the Pelham Recreation Center. Indoor pickleball is offered at various times throughout the week. Learn more at www.pelhamalrecreation.gov.

ACTIVITY GUIDE

JANUARY

Tennis Clinics

At the Pelham Racquet Club, we believe tennis is for everybody. Our tennis pros host several clinics for people of all ages and skill levels. You can learn more at www.pelhamracquetclub.com.

Learn to Play

Looking to learn tennis or pick it back up? Join us. Mondays at 6:00 pm

Beginner Youth Clinics

For children ages 7-14.

Tuesdays/Thursdays at 5:30 pm

Wednesdays at 4:30 pm

Ladies Beginner Clinics

For women of all ages.

Thursdays at 11:00 am

FRIDAY | FEBRUARY 10

6:00 PM

Valentine's Day Doubles Social

We would love for you and your significant other to celebrate Valentine's Day with us. Pelham Racquet Club is hosting a doubles round-robin. If you don't have a partner, we can find you one. Learn more at www.pelhamracquetclub.com.

TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 21 & 22

10:00 AM

Spring League Kickoff Camp

Work with our pros to get ready for the new year! Tennis is a great cardio workout with instructions to improve your tennis game. Any level is welcome! Lunch is included. Learn more at www.pelhamracquetclub.com.

SATURDAY | FEBRUARY 11

2:00 PM

Putting the Movement on the Move: The 1961 Freedom Rides

This presentation at the Pelham Public Library examines the Freedom Rides, a campaign involving 436 black and white men, women, and youth from 35 states who traveled into the Deep South during the summer of 1961, risking their lives and their freedom to try to put a stop to segregated transportation practices. You'll hear stories of heroism and details of leadership failures at the local, state, and federal levels.

SUNDAY | MARCH 12

3:30 PM

Kites & Bites

Fly a kite, enjoy the outdoors, and listen to good music at this free community event. Food trucks will be on-site with dinner available for purchase.

TUESDAY | MARCH 14

10:00 AM

The Great Depression in Alabama

This presentation will examine the Great Depression and how it affected Alabama and its residents. Many photographs made in the state during this era have become national icons of hardship and the federal government's attempt to improve American lives. They were taken by notable photographers, including Walker Evans, Arthur Rothstein, and Dorothea Lange, to win support for New Deal programs and help Americans empathize with people who were suffering. This free program at the Pelham Public Library is made possible by the Alabama Humanities Alliance.

ACTIVITY GUIDE

THURSDAY | JANUARY 5

6:45 PM

Little Toros

Little Toro's Learn to Skate is brought to you by the Birmingham Bulls and Pelham Hockey. This course will offer basic skating skills before entering the Learn to Play Program. Register at www.pelhamhockey.net

MONDAY | JANUARY 9

Learn to Skate Sessions Begin

The Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena offers skating classes for all ages. Each session is eight weeks long. Students receive 15 minutes of off-ice warm up, 30 minutes of instruction, 30 minutes of practice, complimentary rental skates, membership to Learn to Skate USA, and eight complimentary public skate passes. Class days, times, and cost can be found at linktr.ee/PelhamIce.

SUNDAY | JANUARY 15

1:00 PM

Get Out & Skate Day

Get Out and Skate Day welcomes people of all skillsets to learn the basics of skating from professional instructors in a fun-filled environment. Held during National Skating Month, the goal is to increase awareness and participation in US Figure Skating programs and Learn to Skate USA.

MARCH 27-MARCH 31

8:00 AM

Spring Break Learn to Skate Plus STEM Camp

Participate in the coolest spring break camp around. The Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena will host a Skate and STEM camp full of skating lessons, arts and crafts, free skating time, exercise time. Snacks and lunch are included in the cost of the camp. Registration opens soon.





**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
ALABAMA**

SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 21, 2023



**LAW ENFORCEMENT
TORCH RUN®
FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

The Pelham Polar Plunge is an annual Law Enforcement Torch Run event that supports Special Olympics Alabama athletes. It is hosted by the Pelham Police Department and takes place at Oak Mountain State Park.

For over 50 years, Special Olympics has been building a movement to break down barriers - both on and off the field - through the power of sport. For every person with intellectual disabilities (ID) helped, there are 13 others in the U.S. waiting on the sidelines to get in the game. Guardians of the Flame champion acceptance and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities.



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205.620.4653



OAK MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
200 Terrace Dr. Pelham, AL 35124
205.620.2520



PELHAM RACQUET CLUB
100 Racquet Club Pkwy. Pelham, AL 35124
205.621.3380



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