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Issue 10
March 2024

Pelham's News Magazine

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A path apart.

CITY DIRECTORY

ELECTED LEADERS



Mayor Gary W. Waters
mayor@pelhamalabama.gov



Maurice Mercer, City Council President
mm@pelhamalabama.gov



David Coram, City Council Place 1
davidcoram@pelhamalabama.gov



Chad Leverett, City Council Place 2
cleverett@pelhamalabama.gov



Rick Wash, City Council Place 3
rickwash@pelhamalabama.gov

Vacant, City Council Place 5

DEPARTMENTS

Administration

205.620.6400

Building Department

205.620.6495

Pelham Water Works

205.620.6420

Municipal Court

205.620.6407

Police Department

205.620.6550

Fire Department

205.620.6500

Library

205.620.6418

Parks & Recreation

205.620.6426

Senior Center

205.620.6064

Ballantrae Golf Club

205.620.4653

Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena

205.620.6448

Pelham Racquet Club

205.621.3380

PELHAM CITY SCHOOLS

Central Office

205.624.3700

Pelham Ridge Elementary School

205.624.3704

Pelham Oaks Elementary School

205.624.3703

Pelham Park Middle School

205.624.3702

Pelham High School

205.624.3701



Pelham City Hall, 3162 Pelham Parkway

In the Know

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON

The City of Pelham is dedicated to keeping citizens informed of news that affects local families. We have several ways we communicate with the public. Our Communication Office's approach to using various communication channels is strategic and aims to reach different segments of the community effectively. Each platform serves a specific purpose. Here's an overview of why and how we use each communication channel:

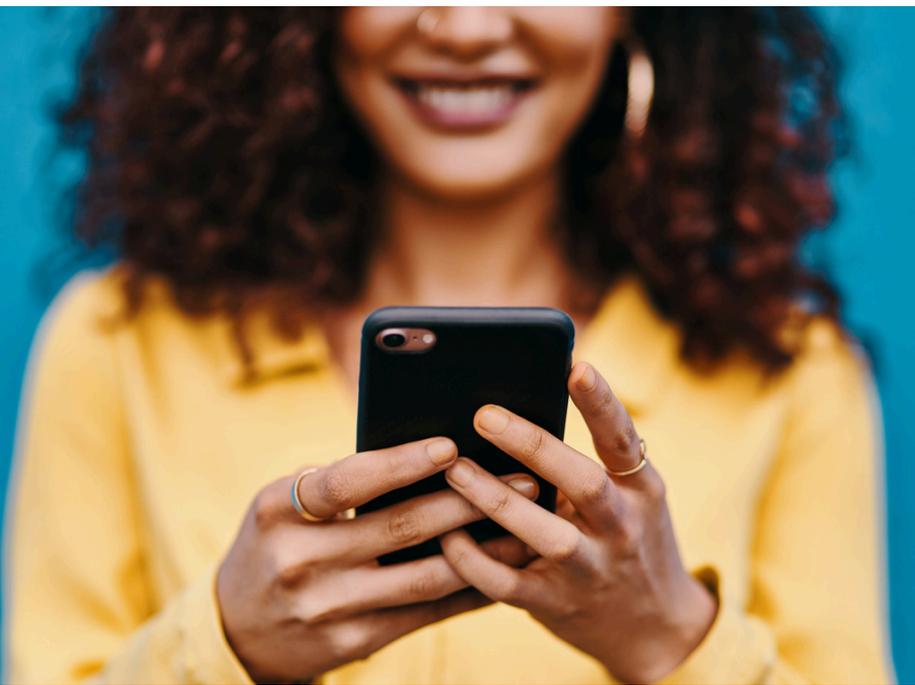
Websites

The city website, www.pelhamalabama.gov, is the central hub for official information, resources, and services. We post all official announcements, legal notices, press releases, and important documents here. You'll also find online forms and applications for various city services. It is a one-stop-shop for doing business with City staff.

The City also maintains several subsites, including dedicated webpages for Pelham Parks & Recreation, the Pelham Public Library, the Pelham Police Department, the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena, the Pelham Racquet Club, and Ballantrae Golf Club. On these sites, you will find information about services offered by these specific departments and entities, program calendars, special events, and online registration/reservations.

For visitors looking to explore Pelham, we took it a step further to create a marketing and tourism website, www.explorepelham.com. Here, you will find stunning photography and videos, information on day trips, virtual tours, and dining and lodging options.





Social Media

The City of Pelham communicates on social media via Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor. These platforms are used for real-time updates, marketing, and community engagement, such as posts about upcoming events, community meetings, and local news. For those unfamiliar with Nextdoor, it is a neighborhood-based app that allows us to narrow our communication to people who live in specific areas when needed. For example, if street work is scheduled for a particular neighborhood or subdivision, we can notify Nextdoor users in that neighborhood's group.

Pelham 311 App

With our new Pelham 311 app, we have tools to send push notifications to deliver timely and crucial information directly to your mobile device, whether it is a utility service disruption, a road closure, or a reminder about an important deadline or event. In some instances, all users may get a notification. In others, we may narrow the notification to users within a polygon if the communication only affects people in a particular area. We want to encourage you to download the Pelham 311 app and enable push notifications, as it will allow for one more way to engage with the City one-on-one and report issues, like a missed trash pickup.

E-Newsletter

The City of Pelham sends a monthly e-newsletter to subscribers. The purpose is to provide frequent, in-depth information, highlights, and updates on various city initiatives, as well as showcase upcoming plans and development projects. It is meant to supplement this publication between issues.

IT'S OFFICIAL
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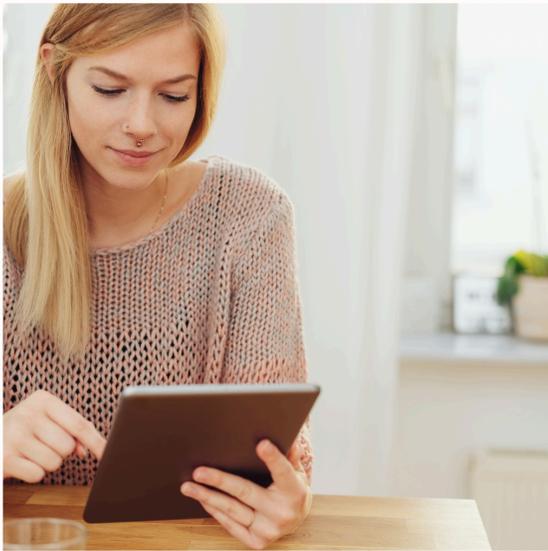


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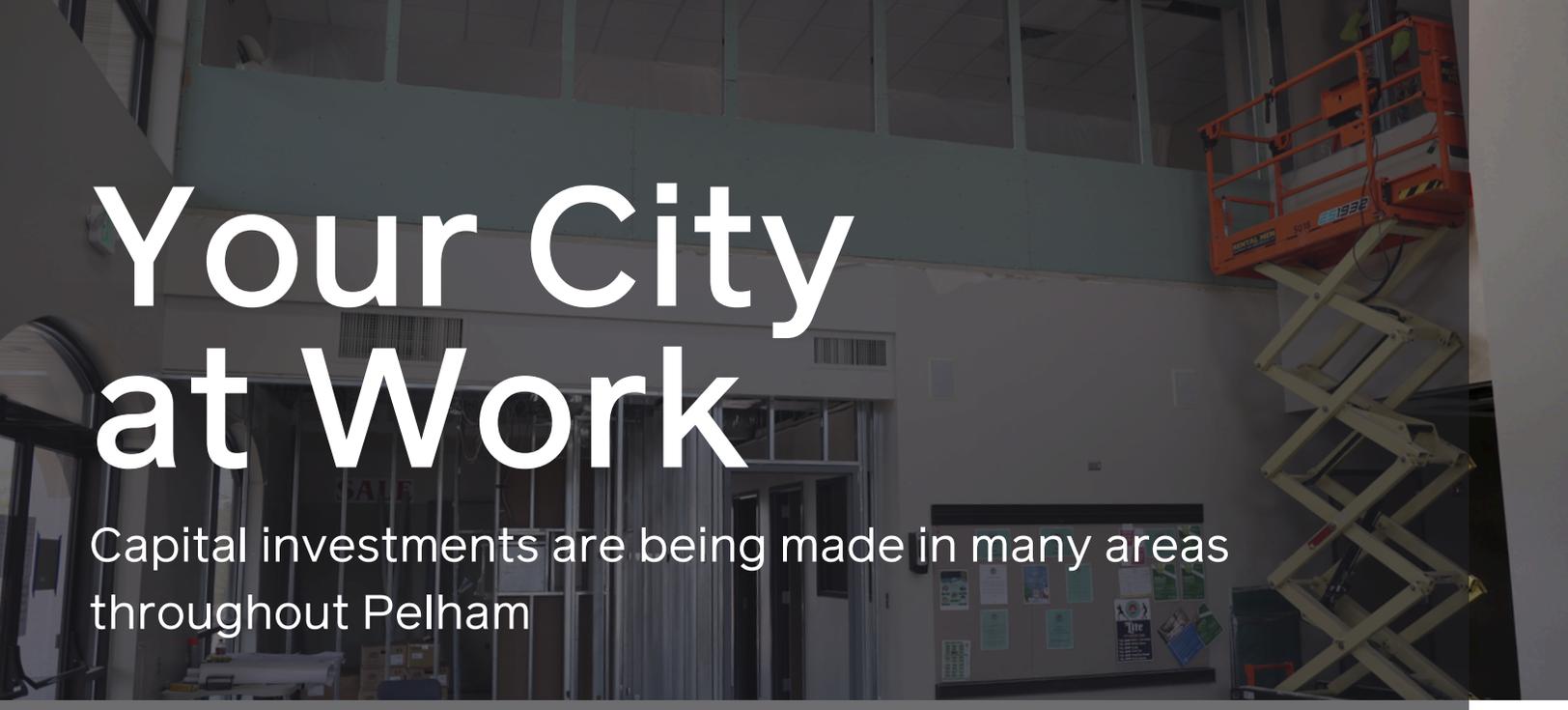
Quarterly Print Magazine

The Pelham Pathway is produced quarterly and is designed to be a more in-depth and visually rich medium to showcase the community and capture the essence of Pelham. Lifestyle articles are featured to help you get to know some of your fellow Pelham residents, and we like to highlight all that our school system is doing to invest in our children. This is all in addition to City updates, initiatives, and community activities.

By tailoring our content to the strengths of each platform, we aim to ensure that residents receive information in a manner that is convenient and engaging for them. This multi-channel approach helps us reach a broad audience and facilitates a more inclusive and informed community. Regularly assessing the effectiveness of each channel allows us to refine our communication strategy and adapt to the evolving needs of the Pelham community.

The Big Five





Your City at Work

Capital investments are being made in many areas throughout Pelham

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON

The City continues to make remarkable strides to enhance the quality of life for our residents, from infrastructure improvements to community spaces. For the following few pages, we continue our commitment to providing you with a comprehensive overview of the ongoing projects set to leave a lasting impact on Pelham.

Pelham Racquet Club Renovation

The Pelham Racquet Club is undergoing a significant renovation to improve operations and the overall visitor experience. According to Director Chaney Mills, anticipation is building for what the completed project will offer. "The renovations will give us so much more, and we're all excited about it." Renovations began in January and are running right on schedule. The estimated timeline for completion is April or May, provided crews do not run into any unforeseen circumstances.

Some upgrades include a dedicated stringing services space, a more centralized and inviting front desk, a dedicated pro shop with organization, extra storage upstairs, a breakroom for employees, and outside temperature-controlled storage for vending services and operational supplies. "The temperature-controlled space will keep the equipment in better condition and allow for easier vending access for players," explained Mills. The second floor of the clubhouse, which includes a kitchen and gathering space, will be closed off to add privacy for meetings and rentals.

The first floor of the clubhouse was gutted. The new framework is up in most of the space, and sheetrock is being installed in some areas.

The club office is currently housed in a trailer while construction is ongoing. As with any renovation, there are some inconveniences. "Right now, there is only one set of restrooms on the second floor that the public can use, in addition to the restrooms at the bottom tier of the facility," said Mills. It's a small price to pay for the improvements to come.

Ballantrae Golf Club Construction

Work to upgrade parts of Ballantrae Golf Club moved from the clubhouse to the golf course in the new year. Staying ahead of the game is essential, and for many courses, bunkers and cart paths often present maintenance challenges, especially when it comes to moisture control and wear and tear.

Capillary Concrete is a state-of-the-art technology designed to address the moisture and drainage issues that have plagued bunkers for years, keeping them in impeccable condition regardless of weather fluctuations.

The first step of the bunker renovations is removing old drainage systems and sand, making way for the installation of the capillary concrete. The material is patented and is a building material that can rapidly drain water while also moving water up, regulating the moisture consistency of sand, soil, and turfgrass.

Some bunkers will undergo a reshaping process to enhance their aesthetic appeal and functionality. As part of the renovation, a new G-angle sand will be added, further elevating the playing experience for golfers. The result is a bunker system that looks pristine and performs at its best, creating a win-win for both golf course management and players.

While bunkers are a critical focus, cart paths are another vital component of any golf course. Several sections need a little TLC. Roots are the culprit of most of the damage and will be removed to ensure the sustainability and longevity of the course infrastructure. Once the old is torn out, new concrete will be poured. This ensures a smooth ride for golfers navigating the path.

Ballantrae Golf Club is setting a new course maintenance standard, ultimately cutting labor and maintenance costs. JTL Golf is the contractor and estimates that the work will be completed within the next three months, depending on the weather. The project budget is \$500,000.

This project comes on the heels of renovations to the clubhouse. The patio outside the Fireside Grill was expanded and enclosed, and it will now be known as the Greenside Terrace. Other improvements include fresh paint throughout the clubhouse and new lighting in the Fireside Grill. The vestibule into the Golf Shop was also expanded and enclosed, and two offices were constructed on the second floor.

City Park Playground

The Parks & Recreation Department is hard at work installing a new playground at Pelham City Park. The new playground, located next to the splash pad and dog park, will provide a safe and engaging space for families to spend quality time together and shows the City's commitment to providing quality recreational spaces for the community.

With a variety of equipment, this new playground will encourage kids to run, climb, swing, and jump, contributing to their overall health and well-being. Playgrounds also encourage social interaction and allow children to make new friends, learn to share and cooperate, and develop important social skills that will benefit them in the long run.

The total project budget is \$900,000. In addition to the playground equipment, shade structures are also part of the project, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to cool off during those hot summer months. Follow Pelham Parks & Recreation on Facebook, where we will announce the grand opening date soon!





Amphitheater Road Improvements

The City's project on Amphitheater Road is nearing completion. Late last year, the road was widened, creating safer travel lanes, a dedicated left turn lane the entire length of the road, and a ten-foot pedestrian and bike lane.

Contractors recently put down the permanent striping on the road, which includes two pedestrian crosswalks. One is at the intersection of Amphitheater Road and Canopy Trail, and the other is closer to US-31. Once materials arrive, signs will be installed to indicate the presence of the crosswalk. Activation lights are also included in the project, which will alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians crossing the road.

Pelham Greenway Trail Extension

Work to complete the final phases of the Pelham Greenway Trail will begin later this year. Last month, city leaders received an update about the realignment of Phases III and IV. Instead of bringing the trail to US-31, it will tie into the existing YMCA trail along Cahaba Valley Creek (AKA Bishop Creek) and connect to the City's new park at Campus 124. From there, the trail will continue along the creek between Campus 124 and Fire Station No. 2. The City purchased the property last year. The project is expected to go out for bid in late spring/early summer, with construction beginning within 60 days of the bid being awarded.



2024 Street Paving Project

The 2024 street paving schedule recently went out for bid. The budget for resurfacing was increased from \$750,000 in FY 2023 to \$1.25 million in FY 2024. The additional funding was made possible by the one-cent sales tax increase. As a result, 29,650 linear feet of road surface have been identified for repaving this year, up from the 19,407 linear feet resurfaced in 2023. The estimated timeline for paving is May - September.

Streets scheduled for resurfacing in 2024 include:

- Heather Ridge Drive/King Valley Circle
- Heather Lane
- Chandabrook Drive/Burning Tree
- Hidden Creek Parkway
- Hidden Creek Circle
- Hidden Creek Drive
- Hidden Creek Trail
- Hidden Creek Cove
- Hidden Cove Circle
- Crosscreek Trail
- Village Lane
- Cummings Street
- Church Street
- Driver's Way



DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON



New Neighborhood

Birmingham-based developer Tower Homes is moving dirt in preparation for a 112-lot subdivision featuring single-family, detached townhomes. The site is located at the corner of Huntley Parkway and Highway 11. Currently, crews are grading the lots and streets and installing drainage systems.

The previous developer of the 28-acre property had plans for a mixed-use development, but it amended that idea when Tower Homes acquired the land. Last September, representatives from Tower Homes approached the Pelham City Council to request a zoning change from mixed-use to residential townhome, which was granted. The planned townhomes will be offered as a "for-sale" product instead of a townhome rental product like the Huntley Park community, also on Huntley Parkway.

City of Pelham Economic Development Director Michael Simon said housing was the biggest attraction of the proposal. "The proposed 112 new housing units could potentially produce 200-plus new residents who will patronize local businesses, especially those in the Huntley Parkway area. More people living in the area make Pelham more attractive to future developments, including retail, restaurants, and office space."

"Architecturally, Tower Homes does good work. The quality of the homes, combined with the land's topography, will create a beautiful neighborhood for home ownership," Simon added.

The City Council is considering Tower Homes's request to rezone another parcel of land on Huntley Parkway between Publix and Grand Reserve Apartments from B-2 to R-T (Residential Townhouse District). The concept for this piece of property would mirror the current Huntley Park townhome rental community just down the street.

Library Property Development

Plan reviews and permitting are underway for the Pelham Central Park development in front of the Pelham Public Library facing Highway 31.

HCI Pelham Central, LLC has inked deals with Edgar's Bakery, Waldos Chicken and Beer, and Ellianos Coffee, which will serve as anchor tenants of the development. Construction on this upscale and mixed-use development is expected to start in the spring. It will also feature a city-maintained green space for residents to gather and enjoy the outdoors.



Restaurant Recruitment

One of the more frequent suggestions we receive from Pelham residents is, "We need more restaurants." Everyone has a favorite place to eat, and there's never a lack of friendly debate about which restaurants should put down roots in Pelham. We wanted to provide some information to residents about the process for recruiting restaurants and retail to Pelham, so we asked Economic Development Director Michael Simon.

"Attracting a new restaurant or retail is not as easy as it might seem. Even though members of the community have a list of restaurants or retailers they want to locate here, the decision makers for these businesses have a much larger list of criteria that the prospective community must meet before investing resources and funding into the expansion," Simon explained. He went on to say that most well-known restaurant and retail entities use the "franchising model" as the sole means of development or expansion. "If a community wants one of these, then there must be an area or territory located within their expansion or servicing area, and most importantly, there must be an individual or corporate entity willing to invest as a 'franchisee.' In the vast number of companies on our community's wish list, one of the items on the franchisee's criteria list is to have between \$800,000 and \$2 million in liquid assets in place and available solely for use in the new franchise location. But finances are only one piece of the puzzle. A franchisee must meet very specific site criteria, franchisee resume of experience and interview, qualifying market demographics, and other financial requirements before the franchisee can begin their development process."

Other factors include whether a restaurant or retailer is in an expansion mode or whether the community's demographics meet their requirements, such as a suitable location and an available workforce to staff their store. Simon continues, "Many developers look at existing businesses. How are they doing in sales? Are they doing well or barely hanging on? Are their competitors opening new locations in the community? If not, why?"

The population of the city plays a significant role in these decisions. "According to Auburn University's Government & Economic Development Institute's Know Your Community tool, the population of Pelham is just under 25,062 people, which some commercial developers consider a small number," said Simon. It's a fact that many residents have said they don't want to see new housing developments because of traffic concerns and overcrowding. The truth is that we need more rooftops in Pelham to make the city attractive to the kinds of restaurants our residents seem to want. "Prospective business owners need an adequate population to service their stores. Small populations generally don't have larger cities' sales volumes because they have fewer shoppers. There's a saying in development, 'Retail follows rooftops.' Traffic counts, new schools, and new residential communities are positive things that attract companies to the community."





City leaders are listening to the community's cry for additional eateries and are getting more competitive to attract restaurants, such as offering economic development incentives to new businesses and commercial investors. "Campus 124 and the Canopy developments are excellent examples of the City's successful use of special economic development incentives to promote growth within Pelham. Such incentives include sales tax revenue sharing agreements, supporting specific land use and zoning changes, and, when city-owned land is involved, selling the property for less than fair market value. These are all strategies to bring developers to Pelham. In certain cases, the City may offer to pay for utility infrastructure and roadway improvements, without which, the project would be too expensive to be successful."

At a December meeting, the Council approved a Letter of Intent from Jack's Family Restaurant, which plans to build a new restaurant east of I-65 at exit 242 near Tractor Supply. The company plans to use its new design prototype, featuring an outdoor patio with seating, rocking chairs, and a stone fireplace. with the potential for this new restaurant, recruitment of of a hotel underway, and construction beginning soon on the Ascension St. Vincent's Freestanding Emergency Room, the City plans to fund a traffic study east of I-65 to ensure good traffic flow as that part of the city grows. Another positive impact on traffic flow is the widening of CR-52 West in the next five years. That work is part of the larger CR-52 Railroad Elimination project that the City received \$41.7 million in federal grant funding to construct.



Business Expanding Operations to Pelham

Specification Rubber Products in Alabaster is expanding its operations by purchasing the 120,000-square-foot warehouse, known to most as the old WalMart building. It sits on more than 16 acres along US-31 in the southern portion of the city and is located less than half a mile from Spec Rubber's manufacturing headquarters. The new location will house finished goods inventory and raw materials. Spec Rubber, which celebrated its 55th anniversary last year, manufactures molded rubber products for the waterworks industry.

"Since our doors opened in 1968, we've had six significant expansions and have outgrown our existing property," said Spec Rubber President Steven Smith. "Purchasing this property ensures our strategic goals for growth are met in the next five to 10 years, and we are able to continue to meet the needs of our customers."

Pelham Mayor Gary W. Waters said, "Specification Rubber has always been just across the road and has been a good neighbor. I expect the excellent relationship we've had with the company to continue as they move into Pelham to expand their operations."

Spec Rubber expects the renovation of the existing warehouse to be complete in six months. The company expects to increase its workforce by about 10% with this expansion. "This is an investment in our facility, operations, and teammates," Smith said.

"We are very excited to have Specification Rubber Products expanding a portion of their operation to the City of Pelham," added Economic Development Director Michael Simon. "Specification Rubber Products' acquisition of these 16 acres, future renovations of the 120,000 square-foot building, and the jobs created marks a significant investment of time and financial resources. We appreciate them choosing Pelham and look forward to fostering a great working relationship."

Specification Rubber is a subsidiary of Birmingham-based AMERICAN Cast Iron Pipe Company, founded in 1905. Spec Rubber was recognized as a Shelby County Small Business of the Year in 2023 and one of Alabama's safest manufacturers by Business Alabama magazine in 2019. For the past three years, the company has been named a Rubber News Best Place to Work.



PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON

Pelham Parks & Recreation's Assistant Director Alicia Walters was honored with the prestigious Alabama Recreation and Parks Association Professional of the Year award for 2024. This recognition is a testament to Alicia's unwavering commitment to fostering community engagement, inclusivity, and innovation within the recreational landscape.

Under Alicia's leadership, Pelham Parks & Rec has experienced a revitalization, with a surge in community-wide events and programs that cater to diverse interests. One of her standout initiatives is the introduction of two new events – "Salsa in the Park" and "Fall Fun Day in the Park." Under her leadership, annual events, such as "A Very Special Easter Egg Hunt," "Paws in The Park," "Kites and Bites," and "Music in the Park" have grown exponentially.

Alicia's impact is wider than community events. She organized three overnight trips for senior adults, a first for the Pelham Senior Center. This reflects her dedication to providing diverse and enriching experiences for residents of all ages.

According to Parks & Rec Director Brian Cooper, Alicia has been a stabilizing force, fostering a sense of teamwork and collaboration among staff. She has also forged valuable partnerships with local organizations and schools. These collaborations have given rise to initiatives that have brought the community together and left a lasting impact.

Through this award, it's clear that Alicia's commitment to inclusivity and diversity within the Recreation Center and the community has not gone unnoticed. She has created an environment where everyone feels welcome and represented, ensuring that Pelham Parks & Rec is a place for all.



Alicia Walters, Parks & Recreation Assistant Director



City Manager Gretchen DiFante and Parks & Rec Director Brian Cooper with Alicia at the ARPA Conference, where she received the award.



Return to the Ice

BY: AINSLEY ALLISON

In the world of hockey, stories of unexpected comebacks and last-minute heroics are not uncommon. However, the recent stint of Pelham's Hockey Director, Josh Harris, with the Birmingham Bulls adds a unique chapter to this narrative. Josh played for the Bulls from the inaugural SPHL season in 2017 until the COVID-19 pandemic halted his professional career in 2020. Fast forward to January 2024. Josh found himself back on the ice as a professional player.

A Journey from California to Pelham

Josh's passion for the sport began at a young age. He grew up playing youth hockey in Los Angeles, California.

Pelham Hockey Director, Josh Harris, rejoins the Birmingham Bulls for remainder of 2023-2024 season at home.

Following a stint as a junior player in Boston, he continued his hockey career at Castleton University. After graduation, Josh continued playing professional hockey for eight years. He played for the Peoria Rivermen, Evansville Thunderbolts, Pensacola Ice Flyers, and Huntsville Havoc before signing with the Bulls. Coincidentally, the Hockey Director position in Pelham became available just as Josh considered his next steps when his professional career abruptly ended. "It was perfect timing for me. I accepted the interim position, which later became a full-time role in 2021," he shared.



"It's been an awesome (and exhausting) feeling to return to the ice."

The team called on Josh again for its home game against Evansville on January 27th. Josh scored the game-winning goal with two minutes to go in the third period. The final was 2-1. When describing the moment of the game-winning goal, Josh recalled the game's intensity and physical demands.

"I was tired, legs cramping, not expecting to play. When my name was called, I got excited. I was just hoping the puck would stay in the offensive zone. When the puck ricocheted to me with a wide-open net, I was thinking, 'Please don't miss. Please don't miss.'"

Josh's return to professional play was so remarkable that the Bulls signed him for the rest of the season. "It's been an awesome (exhausting) feeling to return to the ice. My two goals came down to being in the right place at the right time, for which I am thankful."

Pelham Hockey Director Josh Harris

A Return to the Ice

While serving as the Hockey Director for Pelham, Josh always told the Birmingham Bulls management that he could step in as an emergency player if needed. That opportunity arose when recent injuries and call-ups left the team needing experienced hands on the ice. The team called on Josh the night before the Martin Luther King Day game. His only preparation was an adult league game on the schedule that same evening.

"Mentally, I did not take it seriously. I planned to sit back and let the guys do their thing. I was just happy to be a part of the experience again," he explained.

So much for sitting back. Despite a four-year hiatus from professional play, Josh found himself in the position to score a goal in less than a minute, and score he did. The Bulls went on to beat the Knoxville Ice Bears in overtime. "I had a blast, and I'm glad the team pulled out the win," said Josh.

Josh said his main concern when returning was handling a puck at high speed after a long hiatus, but that faded as the game progressed. "It's funny to be put back in that situation. All of my old routines and knacks came back as if I never missed a beat," he said.



Pelham Hockey Director Josh Harris rejoins the Birmingham Bulls.

Family Responsibilities: Juggling Roles

Josh will only play home games, and even though he knows he'll be suiting up, he has no plans to practice with the team, and for good reason. Josh's dedication to his family is evident in his daily routine.

"I am daddy daycare every day of the week until my wife gets off work, so being able to escape for a morning practice has not been in my cards. Between managing time to accomplish family life, being the Hockey Director, coaching kids two to three days a week, officiating youth and collegiate games, and playing adult league hockey, my plate is at max capacity," he explained.



Pelham Hockey Director Josh Harris with his wife, Elaina, and children Beckett (2), Collins & Mae (9 months)



Impact on Pelham Hockey Community: Inspiring the Next Generation

While Josh balances all his roles, he emphasized his passion remains with coaching. "My passion for hockey is always there, but it's directed towards growing the game in Pelham and sharing my knowledge with future Bulls players."

As word spread about his return to the Birmingham Bulls, the Pelham hockey community responded with excitement.

"Many families in our program had no idea who I was. To hear them reach out with excitement is good to hear," he mentioned. "As for the kids in the hockey community, they think it's awesome Coach Josh is playing for the Bulls. It's fun to see their faces, and the parents are more aware of who is teaching their kids, it seems."

Josh sees this experience as an opportunity to increase interest and participation in hockey locally. He expressed hope that his return to the ice will serve as an icebreaker when speaking to future skaters at schools or events.

When asked if he would consider a return to professional play, Josh responded, "If all the stars align and my body can take it, I would love to see where it goes. But, this experience is not my top priority like it was just a few years back. I have to make sure those responsibilities are taken care of first."

Anyone interested in learning to skate and play hockey should visit the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena website and explore the opportunities. "We have a path for you. See you at the rink," Josh said.

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Landing the Newberry Legacy

BY: GINA WOMACK

In a state where you'll find more football fields than ice rinks, it's hard to imagine how a well-known family in British and international figure skating circles could end up in the deep South. The Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena won gold recently when a dynamic father-son coaching duo decided to make Pelham, Alabama, their new home.

A move to Alabama was not exactly on the Newberry family's bucket list. Christian Newberry, a 55-year-old former competitive figure skater and the 1989 British Men's Champion, was coaching in East London alongside his oldest son Jack, daughter-in-law Harriet, and youngest son Graham. Graham was wrapping up a stellar freestyle figure skating career with four British titles to his credit.

"I am kind of exiting my skating career," said Graham, 25. He and his father, Christian, and mother, Michele, started discussing the next chapter.

Graham looked around and saw a job advertisement for a figure skating coach in Pelham.

Although born and raised in England, the elder Newberry was no stranger to America. During his competitive years, Christian trained in Colorado Springs, where he fell in love with the United States and its culture. After he retired from competition, Christian moved to Pennsylvania and started his coaching career. He married Michele, a Pennsylvania native, and they started their family. "We lived in the United States for 25 years. Jack and Graham were born here. We returned to England in 2014 so the boys could compete for Great Britain. We discussed moving back to America when Graham retired from competition," explained Christian.

"When I told Michele about the opportunity in Pelham, she said, 'Nope, I'm not moving down South,' Christian said with a laugh. "None of us had ever been to Alabama, so we decided to visit since we were contemplating such a big move."



Christian Newberry is Pelham's new Director of Skating.

"I'll be honest. We just fell in love with the area. We're very outdoorsy people, so with Oak Mountain State Park nearby, we realized this was the place we wanted to move to. The people were super nice. We were trying to be realistic and say, 'Let's find the pros and cons.' We added them up, and we couldn't find the cons. I was like, 'Looks like we're going to Pelham!'"

Graham agreed with his father. "We were just blown away by how nice the area is here. The outdoor opportunities were a big selling point for my future."

The Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena hired Christian as the Director of Skating, and he assumed the new role on January 1, 2024. Graham was hired as a coach.

Even Michele, who was hesitant about the move, has fully embraced Pelham. "She loves walking. While I'm teaching, she goes off to the park for a walk and enjoys nature," said Christian.

The family is settling in and dealing with a few logistics associated with the transcontinental move. "Graham didn't have a driver's license. Michele and I had our Pennsylvania license and English license. Our Pennsylvania license had expired, so we all had to take the written and driving tests. It was quite a commotion to get all that sorted out," said Christian with a laugh.

Now that he's had a few weeks on the job, Christian said his goal is to build a competitive program at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena and get more kids on the national stage. He said to do that, it all starts at the bottom, with the Learn to Skate program. "That's where you need to grow to create a bigger program. It's about getting more people involved, letting them know what is available, and helping them realize their potential." He also cites the quality of the facility. "We were attracted by the fact that this is a twin pad facility that's recently been refurbished. There's everything here to make a great program."

Christian pointed out that there are many different things a person can do in figure skating. "You can be a competitive freestyler like Graham and do the big jumps, but then there's ice dance, pairs skating, synchronized skating, and theatre on ice. You can take many different avenues if you're not a great jumper. We offer all these programs at Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena."

When asked if a program such as the one Christian envisions can be achieved in the Deep South, a part of the country not exactly known for ice skating, Newberry is quick to dispel that mindset. "There's been some very high-level skaters come out of Birmingham," he said, citing John Zimmerman as an example. "I always say it doesn't matter where you go; you don't know where the next Olympic champion will be born. You can be from Alabama and still be a great skater. One thing about figure skating is that it's a sport for life. People think of it as seasonal, but it's year-round. Like any sport, it teaches you success and failure. It's also a lesson in discipline for keeping the body in good shape, flexibility, strength, and overall balance and coordination. We do a lot of off-ice training to go with the on-ice training."



Graham Newberry took a coaching position at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena.

Christian started skating a little later in childhood than many competitive figure skaters. He was nine years old when he took his first class. "We were playing soccer, as most English people do. Our soccer season is in the winter, so we played outside in the cold and snow. My mum wanted to try something she liked as a family. We went to Learn to Skate. My dad and uncle took lessons to a certain point, but my brother and I kept on. We'd go once a week, then twice, then three times a week. As I tell people, you don't take lessons to get better; you're taking more lessons because you're getting better. If skating is a good sport for you, keep going. If you're struggling at it, the continued lessons might not be worth it, but it's still a fun sport to do, no matter what."

Christian packed a lot of competitive skating into a few short years. He skated at the senior level at 16 and won the 1989 British Men's Championship at age 20. He competed in the 1989 European Championships, placing 15th. That year, at the World Championships in Paris, he skated in front of 20,000 people and placed 21st.

Christian retired from competitive skating in 1990 at age 22. "Back in those days, people didn't go as long. You did one cycle from one Olympic season and then retired." Rules prevented competitive skaters from earning money. "When you started earning money, you were considered a professional skater and out of competition. Today, you're allowed to teach skating and still compete. You couldn't do that back when I skated, so I had to get a job to support myself. I retired and coached in England for less than a year, and then I got a green card and moved to America. As soon as I came to America, I felt like I was born in the wrong country," Christian said with a laugh. He coached in Hershey and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for the next 23 years.

In Pennsylvania, sons Jack and Graham first started skating, each at 15 months old. "They both walked at nine months old. We'd have them walk on the ice in their shoes to get accustomed to it. We only waited until they were 15 months old because we couldn't find a pair of boots small enough. Even then, they were a little big. We just strapped them on tight, and they just walked on the ice and started from there." After that point, Christian and Michele let the boys show interest in skating instead of pushing them. "I didn't teach them to skate initially. As a tot, my oldest son, Jack, would come with me while I taught Learn to Skate classes. When he was about five, he watched me teach other people and said, 'I want to do what they're doing.' I told him that if he was going to do this, he had to learn properly. When Jack did his first competition, Graham wanted to do it too. Graham's first competition was at age three.



Jack Newberry with his wife and partner Harriet Beatson.



Graham Newberry is a four-time British National Champion.

When the boys said they wanted to do this, we took it to the next level. Other coaches have asked me, 'How do you make your kids skate?' That's the whole point. I didn't make them skate. They did it because they wanted to. In that respect, I could push them harder to be more competitive. After all, it was something they desired. I always told them the minute they wanted to quit, they could be done."

The Newberry boys didn't quit. Christian coached both boys throughout their careers. Jack was the 2012 British junior bronze medalist in men's singles, and he competed internationally in ice dancing and pairs skating. He married his long-time pairs partner, Harriet Beatson, and the two continue to coach in London.

Graham's focus, however, was on freestyle. "I always looked up to my dad. I thought the fact that he was a British Champion was cool. I looked up to my brother as well. I wanted to reach my dad's level, and I was trying to compete with my brother. I know some people talk about trying to keep up with their parents' achievements, but I did it because I enjoy skating," explained Graham.

Graham and the Newberry family moved back to London when he was 16. Although he was born in Pennsylvania, he has dual British and American citizenship. "At the time, most of the competitions were held in Europe. We went to Europe six or seven times a year and self-funding, which was quite expensive. Living in England, I could take less time off for travel and stay healthier."

The move paid off. Graham is a three-time junior-level British Champion and a four-time senior-level British Champion. During the 2016-2017 season, Graham Newberry became the first person to win the British Championship at both the junior and senior levels in the same year. He has competed in both the European and World Championships several times. Graham and his dad share some friendly banter over their accomplishments. "My highest placement at the European Championships was 16th. Dad's highest placement was 15th. But he got 21st at Worlds, and my highest was 20th, so we're a little back and forth. He retired young in his career, so he only won the British Championship once and didn't go much longer after that. I won it four times. Sometimes, when he's being smart about my coaching, I'll remind him, 'I've won it four times!' We have that kind of relationship. We keep it fun."

The Covid 19 shutdown of 2020 was a difficult time for Graham. "I think England was one of the worst places to train during that period. I was off the ice for three months. I did in-line roller skating to keep in shape. After three months, they opened up just one rink in England, four hours away.

I had to drive there and stay in an Airbnb. I joined some other British skaters and trained with them at that rink. Some countries allowed their top athletes to train, but we were at a disadvantage. There was a whole controversy over whether we were technically a sport. It was an interesting time."

Graham has traveled the world, but his favorite destination is Tokyo. "I've always been a fan of Japanese culture. One of my goals was to compete in Japan. Last year, the World Championships were in Tokyo. It was something I wanted to do before I retired. I took some time away to have a little vacation and explore. You want to experience the country, not just compete."

Graham said he feels a sense of freedom when he's on the ice. "When you walk, you take a step, and then you've got to take another step. On the ice, you can glide; you can go fast. As I got older, I became an adrenaline junkie. I enjoyed going fast, jumping big, and doing all the crazy tricks. I started to enjoy just performing for the crowds. I evolved my love for the sport in a way." He said he was always persistent. "I never gave up. I had a lot of ups and downs, but anytime I'd hit a bad competition, I'd go home, work through it, and find a way to get back better. I tried to be consistent by keeping a good schedule and staying disciplined in how I trained. I also had a good coach.



Graham and Christian Newberry.

My dad went through those high-level competitions. He knew what I was going through and was there to offer me support and advice when needed."

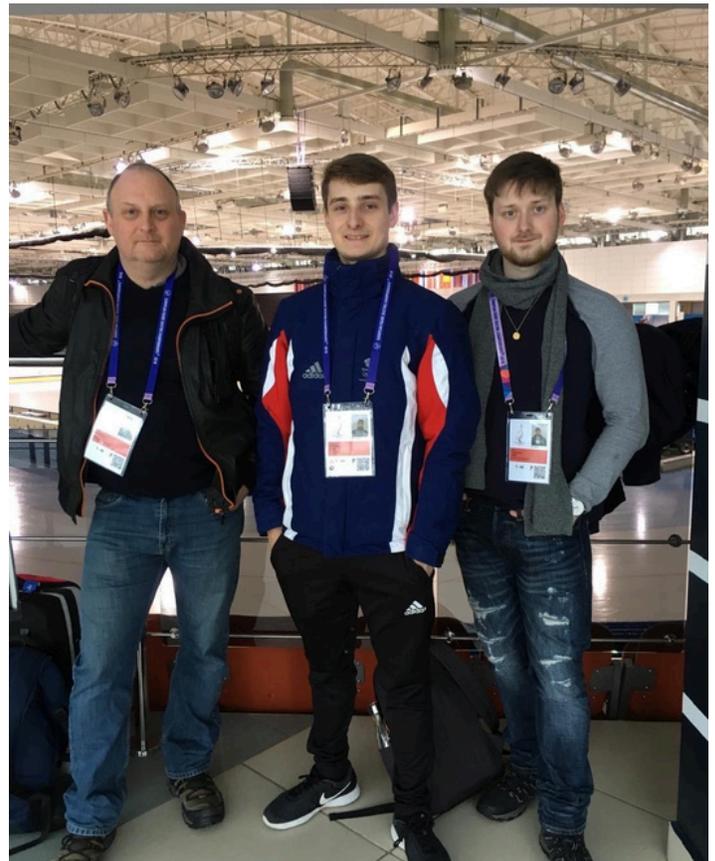
Although he has not officially announced his retirement, Graham said he wants to go out graciously and not try to come back constantly. "I just want to move into the next phase of my life, my coaching career." Graham started coaching in London part-time with his dad five years ago. "It's almost like when you come out of school and you're not studying, but you feel like you should be. I feel like I should be training from time to time.

"My dad has always kept me grounded. You need to know when enough is enough and not to overstay the sport. We see that often, and I never wanted to fall into that trap. Dad got out of the sport when he felt like he had reached his peak, and then he moved on to the next part of his life. I felt like I had achieved everything I wanted to achieve that was within reason. I wanted to leave on a good year, on a good note, and move on to the next chapter – have a coaching career, have a family, and not worry about competing."

As coaches, Christian and Graham get up very early for lessons. "We start at 5:30 each morning. We teach in the mornings, after school, evenings, and Saturdays. The ice is not available on Sundays, which is good because I get a day off," said Christian with a laugh. "But normally, I work seven days a week. If the ice is available, I'm there."

Christian summed up his coaching philosophy by looking through the lens that only experience and wisdom can give. "I have a sense of humor. I want the kids to enjoy their lessons. I'm the opposite of the Russian way. They produce champions, and that's great, but the process is forced and hard. For every champion they produce, there are another 100 kids who have had a bad experience. I want 100 of my kids to have a good experience. I want to teach them to be more like Graham – to do well, but winning is not the be-all to end all. It's about the journey and having fun and enjoying it. I want kids to come in and have a good time. The more you enjoy it, the better you'll get, in my opinion."

The future of ice skating in Pelham is in good hands.



Christian, Graham and Jack Newberry.



Christian and Graham Newberry at the airport, headed to Pelham to train future champions.



MAY 18
10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

SAVE THE DATE!



Pelham Palooza



Rock Wall
Splash Pad
Vendors
Youth Sports Parade

Dunking Booth
Face Painting
Food Trucks
Live Music

SERVANT LEADERS

As we celebrate the achievements and contributions of women throughout history in the month of March, we want to honor the women who served with distinction on the Pelham City Council. These trailblazers have not only shattered glass ceilings but have also played a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of our community.



Beverly Hall **1983-1988**

Beverly was the first female member of the Pelham City Council.



Karyl Rice **1984-2016**

Karyl was the first female President of the Pelham City Council and was the longest-serving female member.



Connie LaBue 1988-1996

"I enjoyed my time serving on the council. The time I served was a time when Pelham experienced tremendous growth with business and new construction housing. Watching Pelham grow and being a part of that growth gives me pride for our City and where we are today." '



Rosemary Metcalf 2000-2008

"As a woman on the City Council, I had the opportunity to bring a unique perspective to the table to help shape the future of our City in a manner that benefitted all of the citizens of Pelham. I was very proud to be elected to serve in that capacity and feel as if we definitely made a difference."



Teresa Riddle 2008-2012

Teresa is one of only two women to serve as President of the Pelham City Council.



Beth McMillan

2012-2020

"Serving on the Pelham City Council was a great honor. I would like to encourage more women to get involved in politics, and local government is a great place to start."



Mildred Lanier-Reed

2016-2024

"I am truly humbled that God would allow me to serve as the first African-American Councilwoman in Pelham. Words cannot fully express my sincere love of the wonderful Pelham community that will always be part of my life story! God Bless!"

INTRODUCING JENNY TEMPLIN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PELHAM CITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

BY: NICOLE KNIGHT

Jenny Templin recently joined the Pelham City Schools Foundation as part-time Executive Director. With a proven track record in making community connections and a passion for fostering collaboration, Jenny is poised to propel the Foundation forward as it continues to champion the mission of enhancing teacher excellence, student preparedness, and community pride.

A native of Birmingham and a long-time resident of Pelham, Jenny brings many assets to the executive director position, including her experience in customer relations, community association management, serving on the Parent-Teacher Organization at Pelham Oaks Elementary, and volunteer involvement in many community projects.

Jenny looks forward to working with the Foundation's Board of Directors to find innovative ways for the Foundation to support Pelham's teachers, administrators, and staff and positively impact Pelham City Schools students and their educational experience. She's committed to maintaining relationships with the Pelham City Schools administrators and Board of Education, along with PTO Board Members, the City of Pelham, and other community partners to collaborate and create synergies to maximize opportunities for Pelham City Schools. She also envisions securing grants and facilitating fundraising initiatives to fund highly impactful initiatives and programs supporting the schools' efforts.

"In an ever-changing world, I hope to help equip our teachers, faculty, and staff with the tools they need to provide our students with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate our world successfully. My goal is for every student to carry The Pelham Way with them beyond the classroom and out into their surroundings," says Jenny.



Jenny Templin, Pelham City Schools Foundation Executive Director

Panther Pride



2023-2024 Teacher & Support Person of the Year Honorees

Pelham City Schools Teacher and Support Person of the Year honorees were recently celebrated at a reception sponsored by the Pelham City Schools Foundation and catered by the Pelham High School Culinary Arts department. Congratulations to Leah Gott and Hope White from Pelham Oaks Elementary, Amanda Toxey and Judy Leipert from Pelham Ridge Elementary, Amy Moore and Wali Zaa from Pelham Park Middle School, and Jason Harchuck and Geoff Gowin from Pelham High School. Mrs. Gott was also named the district's Elementary Teacher of the Year, and Mrs. Moore was named the district's Secondary Teacher of the Year. The district honorees will represent the Pelham City Schools in the Alabama Teacher of the Year program.





Superintendent's Art Show

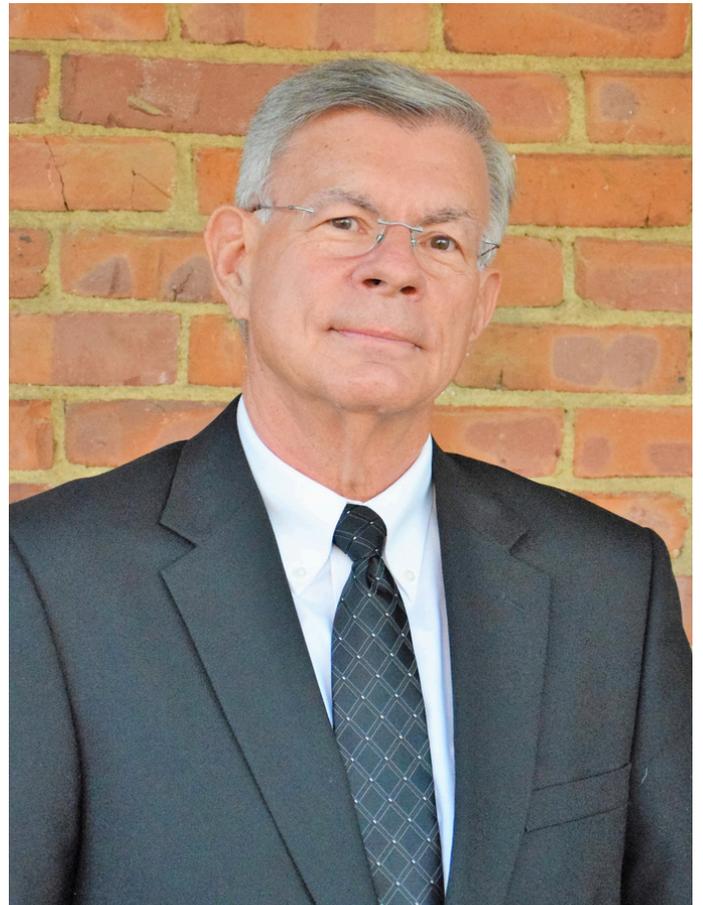
The Pelham City Schools Superintendent's Art Show showcased the outstanding artwork of nearly 50 students from all of our schools. Several pieces on display were also selected to represent the school system at the State Superintendent's Visual Arts Exhibit in Montgomery, where two Pelham Oaks students earned statewide recognition. Congratulations to Hadley Walker, who earned 3rd place recognition, and Santiago Manriquez, who received an honorable mention in Category II of the K-2 division!

Rick Rhoades Named to Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame's Class of 2024

Rick Rhoades, former Pelham High School football coach and past president of the Pelham Board of Education, was recently selected to join the Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame's Class of 2024. A selection committee comprised of coaches, administrators, and media representatives made the selections from a very impressive list of 59 nominations.

After a successful career coaching high school and college football in Montgomery, Mountain Brook, Mobile, and Troy, Coach Rhoades' path led him into pro football and back to high school in his later years. He was head coach at Pelham for five seasons from 1996-2000, compiling a 41-19 record and reaching the state playoffs each year.*

Coach Rhoades holds the distinction of being the only coach in AHSAA history to serve as head coach for an AHSAA state high school championship team and a college championship team. The Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place in Montgomery this spring.



*Source: Ron Ingram / Assistant Director (Communications), Alabama High School Athletic Association

Share the Love

BY: GINA WOMACK

Kindness, joy, and love for others were abundant as the Pelham Oaks Elementary School Ambassadors visited the Pelham Senior Center. On Thursday, February 8th, students representing 3rd through 5th grades bounded off the bus, armed with handmade Valentine cards and goody bags. In all, about twenty enthusiastic boys and girls were on hand to spread cheer to the active adults gathered at the Senior Center for a monthly luncheon.

One group of students stood at the door to greet people as they entered the building, and another group mingled with members as they found seats in the main meeting room. Everywhere you looked, smiles were on each face, and conversations between the students and active adults were in full force.

It's hard to tell who benefited more – the Senior Center members or the students. Ambassador Sadie said, "It was great to see the seniors and talk with them about their lives." Aubree enjoyed the interaction. "Some of the seniors told me they have no family living nearby and enjoyed talking with us." Harper said, "They made us feel welcome and enjoyed the visit. I liked asking how their day was going and seeing them smile when we handed out Valentine cards."

In a post on social media, Senior Center Director Katie Augsburger said, "The homemade valentines and candy bags given by the students were part of what made this visit special, but the smiles and laughter shared by all are what truly touched our hearts!"

Some Senior Center members responded to the post with comments like, "The children impressed me. Such nice young people!" and, "They were precious! I enjoyed their visit."



The students were polite, well-mannered, and good conversationalists. Ginger Aaron-Brush, coordinator of the Pelham Oaks Ambassadors, explained to the audience how the students undergo a very selective process to become part of the group. Out of 130 applicants, only 20 students are chosen to be ambassadors. "The students must have demonstrated their potential to positively impact students, staff, families, and the community." During the school year, the students serve as greeters at school functions and emcees at assemblies. They also lead by example, such as picking up trash or leaving random notes of kindness. Mrs. Aaron-Brush emphasized leadership as a key component of the students' training. "The goal is student empowerment so they can gain practice in building their leadership skills. Our Ambassadors have a focus on service and school."

The students were treated to cookies and juice before boarding the bus to return to school. Mrs. Aaron-Brush asked them what they learned from their conversations. "One student discovered one of the Seniors lives four doors down from her family. Another student enjoyed hearing about the types of jobs the seniors had before retirement. Another told me the people they met weren't as old as they thought they would be. It was fun for me to hear their big takeaways," said Aaron-Brush.

Mrs. Aaron-Brush said planning for the visit came from discussions among the students as they brainstormed ways to help the community. The Senior Center was suggested as a possibility. Mrs. Aaron-Brush contacted Katie Augsberger, who said February would be a good time to deliver hand-crafted Valentine's cards to the Senior Center members. Pelham Oaks art teacher Amanda Knight worked with her fourth graders to create the cards.

The Senior Center members enjoyed a lunch of soup and salad before listening to a presentation on social media safety by Detective Cruz from the Pelham Police Department. They left with smiles on their faces, Valentine's cards made with love, and lots of memories of some exceptional Pelham children.

If you want to join the active adults (55+) at the Pelham Senior Center, call us at 205.620.6064 or stop by Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. The Pelham Senior Center is located at 50 Racquet Club Parkway.



ACTIVITY GUIDE



SATURDAY | MARCH 9
8:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Indoor Community Yard Sale

Come ready to shop at our first-ever indoor community yard sale at the Pelham Recreation Center. There will be 24 booths. Call 205.621.4773 if you have questions.

SUNDAY | MARCH 10
3:30 P.M.

Kites & Bites

Come fly a kite, enjoy Pelham City Park, and grab a bite from one of our food trucks. This free event will feature music from Finding North. Activities for children include face painting, kids crafts, hula hoops, and more. Bring your own kite.

BEGINNING IN MAY

Ballantrae Golf Club PGA Jr. League

Registration is open now through April 15th for the PGA Jr. League. Boys and girls ages must be ages 5 to 13 as of July 31, 2024. The season begins in May.

There are plenty of reasons to love the PGA Jr. League:

- It's fun! Players learn and develop as golfers in a relaxed, team-based scramble format."
- It's for everyone. Our program is designed for players of all skill levels, from true beginners to experienced golfers. PGA Jr. League focuses on challenging each player to play at his or her highest level in a supportive environment.
- It's a chance to build relationships. Children learn the game and sharpen their skills while enjoying the course with their friends.

ACTIVITY GUIDE

TUESDAY | MARCH 19
5:30 P.M.

A Very Special Easter Egg Hunt

This free event at Pelham City Park is family-centered and focuses on active participation for children with various disabilities or limitations. We will have a huge egg hunt for all ages. Advanced registration is required online or at the Recreation Center. Visit www.pelhamalrecreation.gov

THURSDAY | APRIL 4
10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Health & Wellness Expo

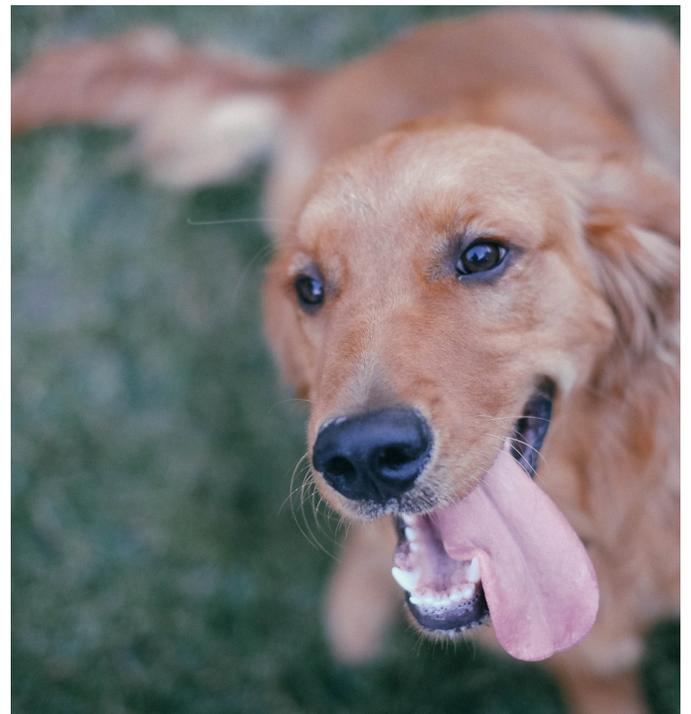
This event for adults 55 and older is at the Pelham Senior Center. Over 20 vendors are participating, including dentists, eye doctors, pharmacy reps, physical therapy, hospice, orthopedics and more. For more information, please contact the Pelham Senior Center at 205.620.6064.



SUNDAY | APRIL 14
2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Paws in the Park

Paws in the Park is a favorite among animal lovers. Bama Air Dogs will perform twice during the day, and the Shelby Humane Society will offer discounted pet vaccinations until 4:00 p.m. Bring a donation of dog food or cat food to support the Alabama Pet Pantry.



FRIDAY | JUNE 7
6:00 P.M.

Family Kickball & Movie Under the Stars

Bring the family to the Recreation Center for a night of kickball. The cost is \$3 per family member. Movies Under the Stars (free) will follow at 8:00 p.m. Registration is required for family kickball. Find details online at www.pelhamalrecreation.gov

ACTIVITY GUIDE

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS

4:30 P.M.

Beginner Junior Clinics

All are welcome. The cost is \$20 per clinic. Racquets are available at Pelham Racquet Club.

TUESDAYS

6:30 P.M.

Beginner Adult Clinics

All are welcome. The cost is \$20 per clinic. Racquets are available at Pelham Racquet Club.

WEDNESDAYS

7:00 P.M.

Beginner Adult Clinics

All are welcome. The cost is \$20 per clinic. Racquets are available at the Pelham Tennis Center at Pelham City Park.



MARCH 20 & MAY 20

Red Cross Blood Drive

Blood donations are needed regularly. Give the gift of life and donate blood at Pelham Public Library.

MARCH & APRIL

STEM Family

The Pelham Public Library is hosting STEM programs in the Makerspace on the following dates:

March 18: 6:00 p.m.

March 25: 1:00 p.m.

April 15: 6:00 p.m.

April 22: 1:00 p.m.

MARCH & APRIL

STEAM TEAM

The Pelham Public Library is hosting STEAM programs for children ages 8-12 in the Makerspace on the following dates:

March 14: 4:00 p.m.

April 4: 1:00 p.m.

April 11: 4:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAYS | 9:15 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

THURSDAYS | 6:30 P.M.

Storytime at the Library

Join Ms. Rebecca and Ms. Ashley for stories, songs, and more, along with a craft and a snack.



THIS JUNE | **ADVENTURE BEGINS AT THE PELHAM LIBRARY!**

Download the Beanstack App, start reading, and visit the library to earn prizes! The program runs through July.

**SUMMER READING
IS FOR KIDS, TEENS,
& ADULTS**

PROGRAMS

ACTIVITIES

PRIZES



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Save the Date!

April 11, 2024

All proceeds from ticket sales
benefit the Pelham Public Library.