

Southern Way

Robbie Calk's Sample Writing Magazine

Featuring:

Miss Auburn's Platform

Alabama 4-H Opportunities

*Students' Spring Break
Stories*

Hummingbirds in Alabama

*Inside the Mell
Classroom Building*



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Dear Reader,

Hello! Welcome to my personal magazine.

This magazine is a compilation of writing samples created throughout the semester.

The stories alternate between Auburn Family and Extension Daily articles, which are scheduled to publish later in the summer.

Each story topic is different, but even in the differences, I had the honor of telling a new story each week.

Please have a look around and get to know my personality as well as my writing style.

With Love,
Robbie Calk

The Inspiration Behind Ashley Moates' Big Dream

By: Robbie Calk

Each year, a new Miss Auburn is elected by the student body after rounds of interviews and a week of campaigning around campus. This year, Ashley Moates can continue sharing her platform, AUsome Dreams.

The Inspiration

Each Miss Auburn has a story behind her platform, and Ashley Moates' inspiration is her younger sister, Anna, who is living with Down syndrome.

"She inspired me to do this platform because she has passions, goals and dreams just like I do, but she doesn't always have the opportunity to make those happen because those opportunities are not always out there for her," Ashley Moates said.

"It was an awesome experience to look over at her dancing beside me on stage and see the biggest smile full of joy on her face because she was in her element."

-Ashley Moates

"I started AUsome dreams so that Anna and others like her can come to Auburn and find out what they are passionate about and make their dream come true at Auburn University," she said.



Photo Courtesy: Ashley Moates

Ashley and Anna Moates

Anna's AUsome Dream

Through AUsome Dreams, two wishes have been granted since the campaign began. One of those was Anna's wish.

"Anna loves to sing and write songs," Ashley Moates said. "Since my sister and I have been in the Auburn University Singers group, Anna's dream is to be in the group."

Anna Moates learned a piece of choreography with the Singers and performed it on stage in front of an audience.

“It was wonderful to get to sing and dance with the AU Singers,” Anna Moates said. “It was the most incredible experience of my life, and I will remember every second of it.”

“It is my dream to be a student at Auburn University. Ashley’s platform means the world to me, and I am so honored to have inspired something so incredible.”
-Anna Moates

She was also named an honorary Auburn University Singer.

“It was an awesome experience to look over at her dancing beside me on stage and see the biggest smile full of joy on her face because she was in her element,” Ashley Moates said. “She loves being on stage and doesn’t get the opportunity to be on stage very often.”

Inclusive Collegiate Program

As Ashley’s Miss Auburn dream came true, she began looking forward to making AUsome Dreams come true for people living with disabilities. Ashley hopes to establish a collegiate program at Auburn University that accomplishes her dream.

“This program will allow people with disabilities to have a tailored curriculum specific to their unique



Photo Courtesy: Ashley Moates

Anna Moates Dancing with AU Singers

abilities and needs,” she said. “They can have the ultimate Auburn experience just like you and me because they deserve to continue their education and interact with people their own age.”

She and her sister dream of an all-inclusive university, and this is the beginning.

“It is my dream to be a student at Auburn University,” Anna Moates said. “Ashley’s platform means the world to me, and I am so honored to have inspired something so incredible.”

Alabama 4-H Opportunities Continue Empowering Youth

By: Robbie Calk

More than 100 years later, Alabama 4-H opportunities continue empowering youth's heads, hearts, hands and health.

"The 4-H program provides youth with opportunities and experiences to build their capacity of becoming college and career ready," said Dr. Molly Gregg, assistant director of the Alabama 4-H Program.

4-H challenges children to be their best and achieve their goals. It also empowers children with a mindset to continue their personal development throughout their life.

"We want and love to see kids grow and try things they have never done before and be successful," said Deborah Stewart, 4-H Foundation regional Extension agent.

"4-H offers clubs in leadership, arts, livestock, shooting sports, gardening, sports fishing and kayaking clubs."

-Dr. Molly Gregg

A Club for Everyone

4-H is a program for everyone, including children and adults, and it provides a variety of opportunities for children to become involved.

"I had a mom say that her little boy is not good at sports. He really didn't have any interests until 4-H came along," said Stewart. "4-H lit his soul. That is what this program is. It's offering opportunities for children to find something they can enjoy."

Through the program, children explore their interests through school clubs and community clubs. All clubs are led by certified adult volunteers who are passionate about certain topics.

Photo Courtesy: National 4-H



Logo



competition. The senior level winners move forward to compete at the state competition, which takes place at the 4-H Center in Columbiana.

“Another great part of 4-H clubs is that an eighth grader and a 12th grader in a shooting sport together teach and learn from each other,” said Stewart.

Along with clubs, students serve as members of the state 4-H council, a youth governing body for Alabama 4-H, or as a state ambassador.

“I love 4-H, and I love seeing kids grow and do their best while finding success in something.”
-Deborah Stewart

“We put our volunteers through a rigorous process of background checks and lots of screening and training just to prove that they are adequate for our children because that’s very important to us,” said Stewart.

Club Opportunities

Children and teens learn life skills through 4-H. All clubs teach and enrich students in something they otherwise do not have any knowledge of from school alone.

“4-H offers clubs in leadership, arts, livestock, shooting sports, gardening, sports fishing and kayaking clubs,” said Dr. Gregg.

While gaining hands-on experience, children have the opportunity to compete at their local county contests. Then, winners compete at a regional

“Alabama 4-H is the largest youth development organization in the nation,” said Dr. Gregg.

“I love 4-H, and I love seeing kids grow and do their best while finding success in something,” said Stewart.

Each county in Alabama has a 4-H program. To apply to volunteer or find more information about your local 4-H club, please visit www.aces.edu.

Three Auburn University Students Who Did Not Want the Typical Spring Break

By: Robbie Calk

Auburn University harbors students who love to give back, whether that is in the Auburn community, another state or another country.

Many students used their spring break to give back and serve people. Each person learned something different.

Abby Crosby, Nicaragua

Abby Crosby is involved with Young Life at Auburn. She and 26 other Young Life leaders and staff members traveled to Nicaragua to work at the local Young Life camp, La Finca.



Photo Courtesy: Abby Crosby

Abby Crosby at Young Life Camp in Nicaragua

“During the week, we worked at the Young Life camp to prepare it for campers that were coming when we left,” Crosby said. “My job was to dig ditches on the side of the mountain and lay water pumps and electricity lines. We then filled the ditches we dug.”

The Nicaraguan Young Life Leaders taught her about a different culture and the rewards of hard labor.

“We got to know Nicaraguan Young Life leaders and that was an incredible experience to see how they are doing the same ministry but in a different culture and country,” she said. “They live so much simpler than we live here in America, yet have so much more joy than we do.”

“I learned what work looks like the way that God intended it to look,” she said. “Work should be life-giving, refreshing, not exhausting and dreadful.”

“I wanted to spend my spring break in a way that was not about myself and my desires.”

-Abby Crosby

Crosby’s advice to someone who wants to make a difference during their spring break is to go and get out of your comfort zone.

“I wanted to spend my spring break in a way that was not about myself and my desires,” Crosby said. “Because of this trip, I have made forever friends in America and Nicaragua. My perspective has changed, and I have learned so much about myself, Jesus and others. I came back to Auburn after spring break feeling refreshed and full of life.”

Liz Phelps, Dominican Republic

Liz Phelps traveled to the Dominican Republic with Campus Crusades, which is known as Cru.

“During the week, we installed water filters into the Dominicans’ buckets to purify the water and make it drinkable,” Phelps said. “We then talked to them about their lives and faith and shared



Liz Phelps in the Dominican Republic

“Put your guard down and give it all you’ve got.”

-Liz Phelps

“In Matthew 24, it talks about our calling to spread the gospel,” she said. “As children of God and followers of Christ, we are called to spread God’s kingdom.”

Phelps responded to the call to carry out practical mission work in the Dominican Republic, and through that, she grew in perspective.



Jimbo Alldredge at Construction Site

“Going on this trip created a new definition of what blessed and being spirit led means to me,” she said. “One night we had worship with the translators who were traveling with us to the villages. They led worship and it went so well. The holy spirit was moving in that room.”

Phelps encourages students to go into a trip wholeheartedly.

“Put your guard down and give it all you’ve got,” she said.

Jimbo Alldredge, Apalachicola

Jimbo Alldredge traveled with the college ministry of First Baptist Church of Opelika on their 10th annual spring break mission trip to Port St. Joe and Apalachicola, Florida.

“I had heard nothing but incredible things about the trip, and I wanted to become closer to my church body while serving others,” he said.

Alldredge was on a construction team in Apalachicola with several other students and built a wheelchair ramp for one of the locals, Ms. Bettie.

“Using our time and energy to do things for others is the very best thing we can do.”

-Jimbo Alldredge

“I learned lots of construction skills,” Alldredge said. “I also gained new perspectives on the daily lives of those in Apalachicola and how different their lives are from my own even though we only live four hours away.”

His experience gave him lasting memories.

“Completing the wheelchair ramp and hearing Ms. Bettie go on and on about how much she would enjoy it is one of my favorite memories,” he said.

Alldredge encourages students to find a way to serve others during their spring break whether it is through a local church or an on-campus organization traveling domestically or internationally.

“Using our time and energy to do things for others is the very best thing we can do,” he said.

Proper Care for Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds and Feeders

By: Robbie Calk

Springtime means the Ruby-throated hummingbirds have migrated back to Alabama from Central America.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds are the eastern species of hummingbirds, which covers the entire state of Alabama. The males have ruby-colored throats and the females have green-tinted throats.

Like all hummingbirds, they are acrobatic and precise in their movements, as any hummingbird observer has seen.

Nesting

They nest and lay eggs as any bird would, but their nest is smaller and consistent with their body size. Usually, they build their nests on the side of trees with lichens, which are fungi that grow on trees.

“Hummingbirds are a lot of fun to feed because if you put out a feeder, they will show up.”

-Dr. Jim Armstrong

“Apple trees tend to be a pretty good place because many apple trees have a lot of lichens on them,” said Dr. Jim Armstrong, an Alabama Extension

wildlife specialist and Auburn University forestry and wildlife sciences professor.

Feeders and Mixtures

The best way to welcome them back is by setting out a hummingbird feeder.

“Hummingbirds are a lot of fun to feed because if you put out a feeder, they will show up,” Dr. Jim Armstrong said. “It does not take them long to find it.”

Local outdoor supply stores sell hummingbird feeders and feed mixtures, but Dr. Armstrong suggests making the feed at home.

“Mix one part table sugar to four parts of warm water,” he said. “Let the water cool before putting in the feeder. Also, there is no need to put red dye in the mixture. The color of the feeder attracts the birds, not the sugar water.”

Diet

Flowers further encourage hummingbirds to visit. Tubular, bright flowers like trumpet vines are easy flowers for hummingbirds to get nectar.

Hummingbirds also eat insects, which provides protein. Feeders only provide them with an additional energy source.

“Because of their wingbeat, they burn a

tremendous amount of energy,” Dr. Armstrong said. “Sugar is direct energy. That is where that sugar intake comes in.”

The additional energy is imperative before and during their migration to South America in the winter.

“They just have to have a tremendous amount of energy,” Dr. Armstrong said. “There are some that will fly the entire Gulf of Mexico without stopping. That is a long flight for a little bird that has stubby wings. They are not like vultures where they can just glide for miles. They pretty much flap their wings, or they fall. Once they start, they pump away.”

Keep Feeders Clean

To ensure that hummingbirds will regularly visit a feeder during the warmer months, it is important to keep the feeder clean.

During the summer months, Dr. Armstrong suggests cleaning and refilling the feeder every four to five days depending on the environment the feeder is in and how quickly the hummingbirds feed on the sugar water. He warns of letting the water get cloudy since sugar, water and heat cause fermentation. Putting the feeder in shade can help prevent this.

“I always say it is better to clean them too often than not enough,” he said. “If you have access to a bottle brush, that’s great. Put soapy water in the feeder and shake it up to clean it. Then pour vinegar to help cut the soap film. Let it dry, and



Photo Courtesy: Michael Chapman

Ruby-Throated Hummingbird

start all over again.”

Sugar water attracts ants to the feeders. Buying or making an ant guard helps prevent ants from invading feeders. The guards, like saucers, rest on top of the feeder and should be filled with water.

“It’s a lot of fun to feed hummingbirds,” he said. “It’s a great way to interact with nature because as they use the feeder and become familiar with human activity, they fly near the house and buzz by your head.”

For more information about the Ruby-throated hummingbird, Dr. Armstrong suggests reading Cornell University’s bird guide.

For more information regarding Alabama Extension, please visit www.aces.edu.

5 Reasons Why Students Should Be Excited for the Mell Classroom Building

By: Robbie Calk

The construction on our beloved Ralph Brown Draughon Library, RBD for short, is near the finish line, and the “look for RBD under the big red crane” signs will soon be history. Students have been studying around construction since the beginning of 2016, and finally this fall, current and incoming students will utilize the new resources this building addition will offer.

Photo Courtesy: Auburn University



Mell Classroom Design

Here are five reasons why students and future students should be excited for the Mell Classroom Building.

1. Food Options

Food is a priority for a college student.

“There will be a Panera Bread as well as places for food trucks,” said Jacqueline

Keck, SGA President of Auburn University.

Panera Bread will include a walk-up window, which will allow students to order quickly in order to immediately go to class or study for tests.

“There will be a Panera Bread as well as places for food trucks.”
-Jacqueline Keck

2. New Plaza

Auburn University Board of Trustees recently approved the Mell Corridor project, which will be a vehicle-free pedestrian corridor or concourse. The corridor will be in front of the new building to provide for safe and efficient walking and biking for pedestrians and cyclists. The corridor will be completed by the opening of the Mell Classroom Building. Along with the corridor, a plaza will also be built in front of the building to encourage students and faculty to utilize the outdoor space by walking, socializing or eating outside. This project will start next month and is expected to be finished by December 2017, four months after the new building opens.



Old Facade

3. Study Space

Another priority of students is studying, or at least it should be. The building will provide more study areas for students seeking another place instead of their dorm, apartment or house. The top floor contains classrooms and quiet study areas for all students. At night, all classrooms convert into study spaces. These new areas will be especially helpful during finals week when seemingly everyone on campus is studying at the same time.

4. Original Facade

For students who would miss the old front of the library, there is no need to worry. The original facade can still be seen as soon as you walk in the new addition of the building as if nothing has changed.

5. Interactive Learning

The new building houses 29 classrooms, 50 group study areas and two lecture halls.

“The new classrooms are designed for interactive learning,” said Keck.

This new classroom method is called Engaged Active Student Learning (EASL), which is the newest style of learning and teaching. Instead of a typical lecture, professors and students will be able to move desks around and use various digital monitors to engage with peers and professors.

Overall, this building will be a benefit to the university and the students. You can watch a live stream video of the construction on Auburn University’s website, but it may be more interesting to watch the time lapse of the construction also posted on their website.

Raised Bed Gardening in the South

By: Robbie Calk

Raised bed gardens are different from regular gardens. They are an activity for the entire family, and they are a great way to spend time outdoors.

“Raised beds have taken gardening to a new level for many people,” said Tim Crow, a home grounds regional Extension agent located in Cullman County. “It’s a chance to have success in the garden for people who enjoy home-grown vegetables and who do not want to commit to large-scale gardens.”

What Can Grow

Most plants can grow in raised bed gardens. All vegetable and small fruit plants can grow as well, but of course, what can grow depends on the size of the garden.

“In the summer months, the gardener could grow tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers, eggplants and corn,” he said.

“Gardeners can grow any vegetable in a raised bed. In the cool season months, we grow more of our leafy vegetables like cabbages, lettuce, kale, broccoli and cauliflower plants,” Crow added.

Plant Spacing

Plant spacing in a raised bed garden has the same importance as plant spacing in regular ground plantings.

“To maximize production of plants, proper spacing gives them the best chance to produce and not compete with too many root systems trying to do the same thing,” added Crow.

Bed Placement

Raised bed gardens thrive anywhere. However, strategic placing in one’s yard depends on what a gardener plans to grow.

“Any area receiving six to eight hours of



Raised Bed Garden

Photo Courtesy: Alabama Extension



Raised Bed Garden

direct sunlight suits vegetable plants,” he said. “Make sure there is a water source nearby for watering. Shady areas are beneficial for ornamental plants that require certain hours of shade per day.”

Bed Size and Material

Sizes of beds vary, but the average bed size is four by eight feet and 12 inches deep.

“Raised beds can be constructed from numerous products,” said Crow. “Wood, stones and metal products easily construct the beds.”

Types of Soil Used

Another difference of raised bed gardens is the type of soil used. Since the growing medium is easily controlled, it creates ideal growing conditions.

“Vermiculite, perlite, peat moss and mini pine bark nuggets make for a good soil mix,” he said. “There are commercially produced products containing these mixtures, and local stores sell these mixtures.”

“It’s a chance to have success in the garden for people who enjoy home-grown vegetables and who do not want to commit to large-scale gardens.”

-Tim Crow

Proper Care

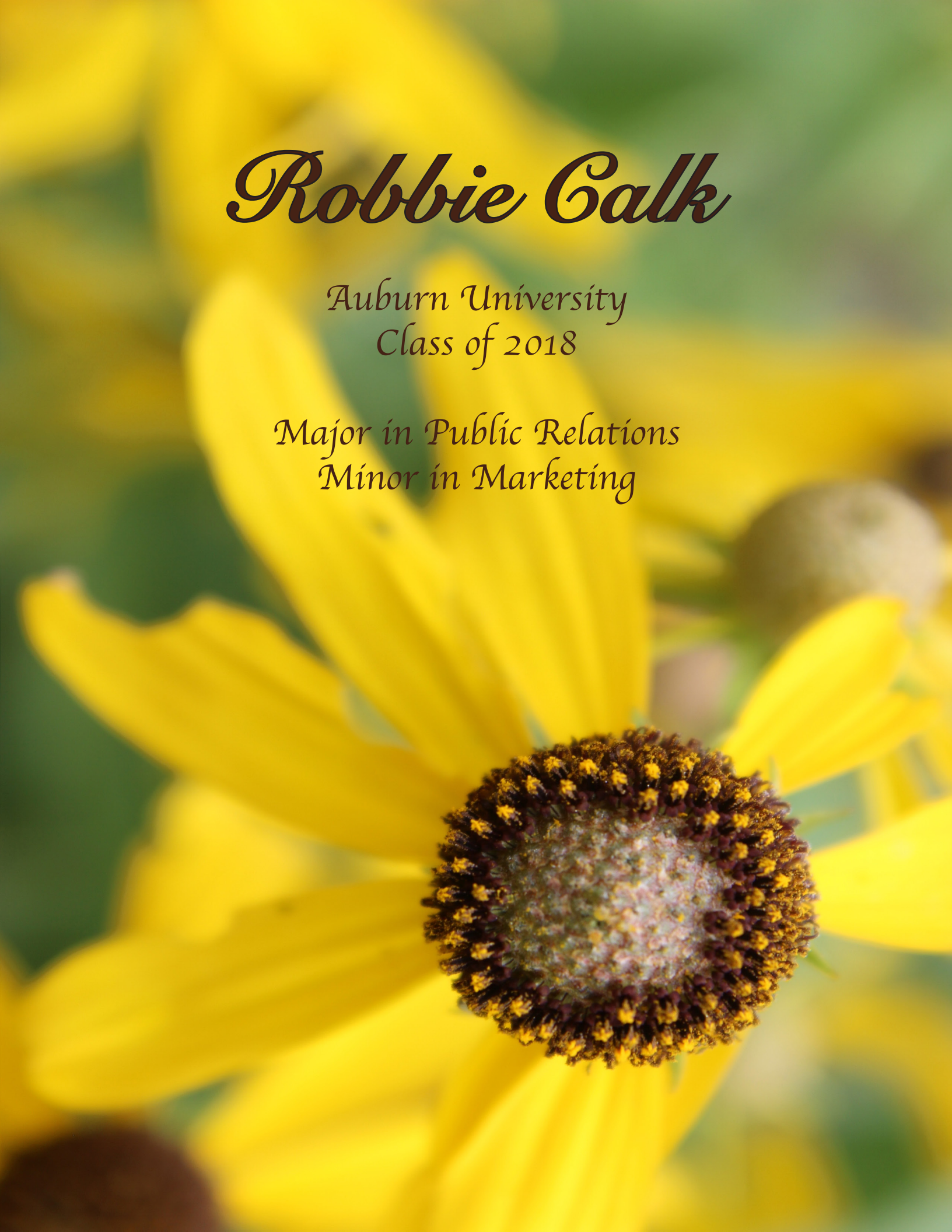
Proper care of raised gardens is imperative to ensure a long-lasting gardening experience.

“Make sure materials are staying together,” Crow said. “Wood products can begin to rot over time. When using stones, make sure they are stable and secure the structure, and replace pieces over time that need repair.”

All in all, container gardening is reasonably inexpensive and can produce a lot of produce for a small family.

“My children love to plant and keep it up,” he said. “It can give children a garden that is more proportionate to their scale, and they enjoy spending time in it.”

For more information about raised bed gardens, please visit www.aces.edu to read the Alabama Cooperative Extension System article.



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