

NEA'S PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

January
2021

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Both Then and Now

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"Then" - Courtesy of the Historic Collins Theatre
"Now" - Andrew Brown Photography



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The '2020 is Finally Over' package:

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Introducing our newest team member, Catherine Smith! Catherine is a graduate of Arkansas Academy of Hair Design in Jonesboro. She grew up in Monette, Arkansas, and has always had a love for skin care. Her primary goal is to help everyone beautify and better their skin, because as we all know, great skin is the key to confidence. Catherine recently married Taylor Smith and has two fur babies: her golden retriever, Loretta, and black lab, Waylon. She is now accepting appointments for facials, dermaplaning, body waxing, eyebrow and eyelash tinting, lash lifts, and spray tans!



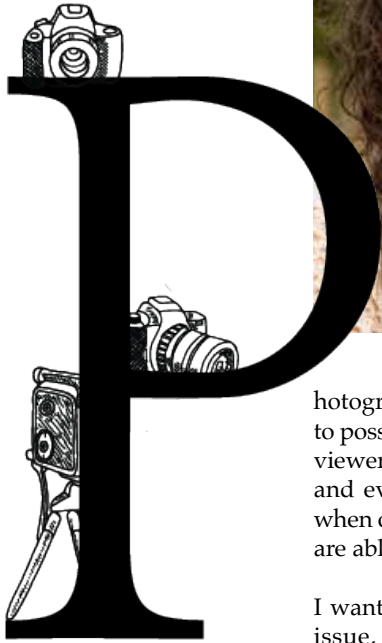
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From the Manager



Photography is a wondrous thing. Photos seem to possess a sense of magic that can transport a viewer to a different place, through memories, and even back in time. If only for a second, when our eyes settle on an image, some photos are able to take us somewhere else.

I wanted to kick off 2021 with a very special issue, so this edition of NEA's Premiere Magazine features a culmination of photos printed with the intention of sparking some magic. I hope, when seen, they elicit a memory. Or perhaps they will stir the desire to dig further into the stories they are but merely a piece of.

The photos included within are found in old books, newspaper articles, and yearbooks. Some were received from the original owners. We did our very best to attribute all photos correctly.

Of course, there is so much more to the "Then and Now" of Northeast Arkansas. There are many more stories to be told both past and

present. May this be but a tipping point for everyone interested in diving deeper into our history, and these photos and stories reminders of all the treasure here worth preserving.

Though we cannot pump the brakes on time – and therefore cannot help but move at an ever-quicker pace into the future – I hope we can at the very least preserve what we can. As we move into the future, may we also hold onto the past.

If you have old photos that can help preserve history, please get in contact with the Greene County Historical Society (Page 36), the Craighead Historical Society (Page 44) or the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library (Page 40). We are also interested in seeing your old photos for potential use in a future "Then and Now" issue. Email photos to lindsey@mormediainc.com

Lindsey Spencer
Manager of Creative Content

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PERSON *of the* YEAR

NEA'S **PREMIERE**

MAGAZINE



**All Medical Professionals
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GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



When it was decided this month's theme was conducive to running a feature on my obvious love of old photographs -- and the joy I get from sharing them with others on social media -- it was also decided I might as well write the story myself rather than sit for an interview. Lindsey Spencer, the Manager of Creative Content for this magazine, said I knew the story better than anyone else and might as well just write it.

I was fine with that directive but realized later on, while I admit I often talk to myself, I have never interviewed me. I wasn't even certain how to go about it:

Me: Okay, Me, tell me about this photo thing.

Also Me: Well, Me, as I already know, I just love old pictures and sharing them with others.

Me: Obviously, I remember it well; I was there alongside me the day I decided to do that, you know. Or is it, I know?

Also Me: Yes, this is quite confusing, isn't it? I mean, I was there when I made the decision to publish the photos, so it's no surprise to me. Or to us. Or to we. Or as John Lennon would say, I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together.

Me: Well, thank me for trying anyway.

Also Me: I'm welcome.

It is probably simpler to just try to explain the happiness I get from searching through piles of discarded negatives, discovering along the way images that touch my heart, make me smile and sometimes puzzle me.

In recent weeks I have come across images of my wife and her brother water skiing, and I remember taking the photos from the back of the boat but had totally forgotten they existed. But there they were, as were shots of my

daughters -- some taken by me, some by fellow photographers and being seen by me for the first time. I think discovering family photos has to rank as some of my favorite finds; things like my mother's teacher retirement party or my great-grandmother Etta Higgins, sitting on her porch while giving an interview. I was present at each of those events but had seen only the photos that appeared in print. Finding about a dozen more of each woman was an emotional experience.

The same goes for my girls. Co-workers obviously snapped off pictures of them in the newsroom without my knowing it, and until scanning negatives recently I never knew the images existed. It is very pleasing to pull images up on the computer screen and see your child milling around your office, or playing a sport, or hanging out with friends, all photos I never knew were taken and it helps me understand why people respond so happily when I post a photo of them or a loved one they've never seen.

Back in my newspaper days we shot lots and lots of film and instead of taking a partially-used roll from our cameras, we finished it off by pointing the lens at anyone unfortunate enough to be in the way.

Often that meant fellow reporters in the newsroom, looking up from their desks to smile for the camera or making silly faces, knowing the pictures would never be seen. I think I treasure those shots almost as much as I do the family pictures because it takes me back to a time when we published one of the best small newspapers in America.

I have seen the candid photos with people I hadn't thought about in years, some who are no longer with us; I've seen pictures of myself

that I did not know existed, some of me hard at work but even more of me trying to dodge the camera because I'm much more comfortable behind it than in front of it; images from company Christmas parties, staffers decked in Halloween costumes, and plenty of us with questionable hair styles and clothing choices ... all a part of our history and part of what binds us together to this day.

The same goes when I find old buildings I had almost forgotten about -- schools, gymnasiums, businesses, houses. It warms my heart when I recall them and remember events connected to them.

I think that is why so many people enjoy the pictures I post on social media: They are reminded of times gone by, of people and places that made them happy and helped turn them into the people they are today. Coaches, athletes, cheerleaders, doctors, lawyers, judges, teachers, business leaders, good friends, even old enemies ... seeing any or all of them for the first time in decades certainly brings back memories good and bad.

Many times when my wife and I enter a restaurant, someone says, "There's the old picture man" before they even say hello. I don't know if they are saying the "old picture" man or the "old" picture man but I don't care. I know they are enjoying my daily Blast From The Past just as much as I am and that makes the many hours spent looking at negatives with a magnifying glass, running them through a scanner and pulling them up on the computer screen all worth it. It's gratifying to know something so simple makes people so happy.

See Richard's regular "Blast from the Past" posts by finding him on Facebook





LIVING A Better Story

BY JARED PICKNEY

For those who have been reading my columns over the past three years you know I am all about helping people live a better story.

That is why I am so excited about launching my new podcast, which is all about celebrating and sharing the stories of people who live in Paragould.

The name of the podcast is, "The Paragould Podcast." I know. Super creative title, right?

The reason I launched the podcast is because Paragould is filled with many incredible people who we can learn from and be inspired by.

These people, who you see in Walmart, live next door to, and work beside, have amazing stories to share. When these stories are heard they not only pull us closer together, but also add value to our lives by encouraging and challenging us to be the best version of ourselves we can be.

This is what I love about the Paragould Podcast.

It's a space where we can laugh, cry, celebrate, learn and grow together as a community. It's a place where people can be heard, relationships forged, and hope sparked.

With that said, if this interests you at all, I want to encourage you to check us out on our website, www.paragouldpodcast.com or any of our social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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2020. What a year! As we left 2019 and entered 2020, an oft heard conversation about the upcoming year was that it would be a year of clear vision. As with any new year there were thoughts of promise, excitement and new adventures.

And then March came along and the year ground to a halt. Shutdowns, quarantines and isolation became the norm instead of time with family and friends. Sporting events were canceled, school was halted, and life changed to something none of us had ever seen or even imagined could happen.

The term “historic” does not even seem to touch the year 2020. Many other words come to mind in the description of the year but, with all the bad things that have transpired, there were some glimmers of positive changes throughout the year, especially related to the use of the outdoors.

As cancellations began to emerge to try to quell the spread of the virus, Americans found they had time on their hands. The weekends often spent at baseball or softball fields were suddenly open. School children were home attempting the world of virtual education. Many employees were relegated to a home office, or, lost their jobs due to changes and folks had to figure out just where to spend their time. And all of a sudden the great outdoors became the best option.

The first indicators of a move to outdoor activities were noticed by simple observation. Gardening and home improvement supplies ran out at an alarming rate. Parks and other outdoor recreational areas reported full parking

areas and large crowds. Fishing tackle aisles were soon devoid of merchandise.

As the pandemic continued, hard evidence began to emerge of the move to outdoor activities. Fishing license sales in Arkansas increased by almost 20 percent. Other states saw similar increases. Many of our neighboring states reported increases in the 15 – 20 percent range while Louisiana saw one of the greatest increases in the nation as its fishing license sales increased by over 50 percent. This move back to the hook and line was also seen by retailers as they tried to keep a stock of fishing supplies. A trip for a prospective fisherman to most sporting goods stores revealed empty shelves on the fishing aisles. Bait dealers saw the same thing as demand on bait, especially live bait, reached levels higher than any time in recent memory.

Many other outdoor activities saw the same increase in participation. In August the Outdoor Industry Association issued a press release that said, “Americans took up new activities in significant numbers in April, May and June of 2020. Among the biggest gainers were running, cycling and hiking. Walking, running and hiking were widely considered the safest activities in which to participate.”

Another area that saw a drastic increase was the sale of campers and camping equipment. Lots that were usually chock full of campers emptied quickly as the consumers looked to camping as a way to “social distance.” Low gas prices also helped push the demand for campers.

For those who chose to stay at home, many looked at avenues to rejuvenate the ways of producing food and becoming more self-sufficient. Gardens popped up in many back yards, vacant spaces were converted to hold chickens, cows or other stock and jars and other canning supplies disappeared from store shelves just like toilet paper and Lysol.

As we exit 2020 and launch our boat into 2021, there are many unanswered questions left on the table. Yet one question has been answered loud and clear by the actions of 2020. Do Americans still feel the draw to the outdoors?

Yes they do.



CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

The outdoors meet the need of a pandemic world in many ways. We have all grown weary of the words “social distance” but that practice comes naturally to an outdoors person.

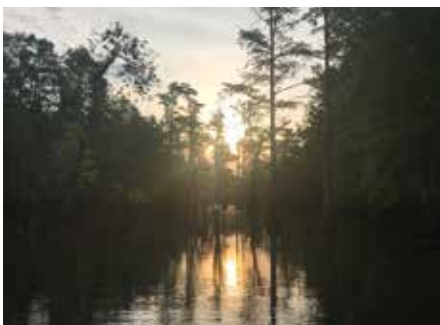
Exercise, fresh air and sunlight are three commonly espoused components to battle Covid-19. But they are also vital to an overall healthy lifestyle both inside and outside a pandemic. At least a few steps outside each day will offer the opportunity to soak in some of those healing benefits.

2020 showed us that life can digress into a chaos rather quickly. But that gives us all the more reason to prepare for 2021 and have an opportunistic but realistic approach.

As we enter 2021, take some time to plan for a garden and prepare to use the bounty from it. Plan a vacation with an outdoor component that will allow family to gather and hike a trail, spend time on the lake or get up in the mountains. There are many options for hiking, boating, and outdoor enjoyment all over the Natural State and beyond our borders.

Take a little time and watch some informational fishing videos, read up on some fishing skills and map out some fishing holes. Stop by agfc.com and pick up a fishing license and be ready to hit the water.

2021 is here and I am ready to make it a great year. A big part of that for me will be spending some great time outdoors with family and friends. And I hope to see you out there!



PET *of the* MONTH

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BY MICHELE CARTER



Max Carter came into our lives May 2017. Our son got him as a Mother's Day gift for me.

He was 8 weeks old and from a litter of feral kittens. He is a character. He gets into everything. He loves to get clothes out of the dryer and then get in them to keep warm. He loves laundry baskets and boxes. He loves women and kids. If he could say anything it would be that he loves his mom and dad, but he loves Memaw more. Our lives would not be the same without him.





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Sounds Like...

New Beginnings!



A playlist for January

BY SARA BROWN

It's a new year and a time for new beginnings, so enjoy this collection of songs all about the new to ring in the new year right!

1. Next Year - Foo Fighters

This song just has that new beginning feel to it, and it's such a beautiful rock ballad. It's a nice, calm way to ring in the new year that'll leave you feeling hopeful for everything the new year has to bring!

2. New Sensation - INXS

This tune is just fun; it rocks and it gets your heart pumping! It feels like a celebration of the new, and with the year we've had, a (socially distant!) celebration is exactly what we need.

3. New Year's Prayer - Jeff Buckley

This track does feel like a prayer of sorts for the new year, and it's really cool. I think the song is about accepting yourself and growing in the new year, and I think that's a perfect message for everyone going into the year 2021!

4. The Beginning of Things - Charlie Worsham

This song is a bit of a sad one, but if 2020 has taught us anything, it's that a year can be full of emotion, and sadness is part of that. This song allows you to feel the sadness that can come with letting go of the old and ringing in the new, but with any luck, you'll feel a little bit hopeful about the new year too!

5. Funky New Year - The Eagles

How many New Year's carols do you know? Probably not many, but this one is a fun one. Like the title says, it's funky as can be, and it's a perfect way to ring in the new year with these weird times we find ourselves in. Turn this one up loud!

6. Intro - Shawn Mendes

This might seem like an odd choice, but this song just has that "new" vibe, like something big and exciting is beginning. Isn't that what we're all hoping for in the year 2021? The song feels hopeful, and it's absolutely beautiful!

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INTRODUCING

HEALTH & THE CITY

WITH DR. BETHANY DAVIS



I am all for making changes to better our mental, physical and emotional health, but who says this change has to occur in January?

Time is a construct that has been programmed into us since we were born. It allows us to keep track of when things happen and reminds us what time we need to be somewhere in the future. However, there is nothing particularly special about January 1st. In fact, all days are just a period in time in which we make choices. On January 1st, there is no planetary pause that will happen, no energetic shift in the universe that makes resolutions easier to follow; our resolutions come 100 percent from within. January 1st is just something our society has trained us to think of as a day of “reset”. If anything, January 1st should serve as a reminder that we, as human beings, have the power to change our own lives.

I recently read in a Forbes article in 2019 that 80 percent of New Year’s resolutions fail. This wasn’t surprising, as the hype and pressure of changing habits on a certain day rarely works. Habits take

a very long time to form and deciding to change bad habits is a great decision, but attempting to change a chronic habit on one particular day of the year isn’t the way to make actual change. And when we fail to change, we repeat the idea in our heads that we are a failure or that we have no willpower, which only further deteriorates our self-worth and emotional health.

Instead of getting wrapped up in the gravity of New Year’s resolutions and the pressure to make big changes, try out the following tactics as 2021 rolls in.

Shift your approach of New Year’s resolutions to a time of reflection on your previous calendar year. Assess this period of time in your life and ask yourself, “What are the things that I would like to change in my life?” and focus less on a particular start date, because this is a question anyone can ask themselves on any day, at any given moment.

Change the word resolution to intention. Instead of the firmness of doing or not doing something

that comes along with the word resolution, feel the easiness of setting an intention and allow yourself to be present for every single high and low of pursuing that intention, and know that changing a habit is a very slow, nonlinear process.

Let your intention be followed by action. These are two separate things. An intention is just a mental goal; you set an intention, and then you take action with that certain intention in mind. The key to successful action is breaking your intention down into goals so small they have no choice but to be met. Honestly, the smaller the better. For example, if you want to lose weight but haven’t exercised in a very long time, set an intention to exercise five minutes a day. Yes, just five minutes. This is a goal so easy you know you can achieve it, and then you build from there. You then work your way to ten minutes, fifteen, etc. This is a healthy way to make change, a realistic way in our chaotic and busy lives. It’s all about little repetitions of action, not one big and glamorous change.

Have peace in the setbacks. This is the most important tactic for your mental health. You will not always succeed in taking action, so how are you going to react to that? Do not show yourself hate, be too disappointed, or dismiss your intentions completely. Simply recognize that changing a habit is a process that will ebb and flow. Life is not a continuum of successes, but a series of highs and lows. How do you react to your lows? If it’s poorly, find grace for yourself in these moments, or a very encouraging friend.

New Year’s Resolutions are not a bad thing to pursue, just keep in mind that you can set an intention on any day. You can make a shift in your life at any moment in time. Remember that changing your habits takes time and a plan, and the best way to honor your mental health is to be present and love yourself for every step of the journey: the highs and the lows.

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**Going into the New Year
with plenty of personality.**



College Tips by a *College Student*



BY SARA BROWN

Happy New Year! And congratulations on making it through one of the weirdest semesters in history. It was certainly a confusing semester, and it took a lot of work to make it through to the end, but you did it! I hope Christmas break has been an opportunity for you to relax and recharge. Make sure you've been taking some time for yourself because the next semester is starting very soon, and you're going to want to be ready for it. It likely will be just as crazy as the fall, so here's some tips to help you get through it all again with ease.

Tip number one: Take advantage of the break you have right now. Try your hardest to actually take some time for yourself during this break and relax. There's a lot to worry about, I know, but if you don't take advantage of the breaks you're given as much as is possible for you, the sooner you're going to find yourself getting tired and burned out once the semester starts. Trust me, I speak from experience on this one; take advantage of the remainder of Christmas break!

Tip number two: Make sure you know how your courses are being delivered. When you signed up for courses last year, your course schedule may have listed some of your courses as "TBA," so be sure to go back and check on those to see how that course is meeting. Also, it's never a bad idea to go ahead and check on all of your courses, just to make sure nothing's changed. You'll be glad you did when you log in and find that a course you thought you had to go to campus for has been changed to online, or vice versa!

Tip number three: Make a schedule. I've said this before, but I can't emphasize it enough. The best thing you can do for yourself is to block off specific times during which you'll be working on school and only school. Have a specific spot in which you do your work, keep your phone away from yourself while working – do whatever helps you. This is especially helpful for those doing online classes that are more self-motivated, that is, you're given assignments and/or video lectures to work through independently as opposed to doing live Zoom lectures, but making a working schedule can be beneficial for everyone!

Tip number four: Set aside time for yourself. To a lot of people, this seems silly, but making sure you have time to do the things you like to do or that help you relax is a great way to, like I said in tip number one, avoid burnout. If you're like me, the spring semester is when you start to experience the most burnout, and with the crazy semester we just finished, you may very well start experiencing that earlier if you aren't already. Set aside time to do the things you enjoy doing and give yourself a break from everything you have going on. This combined with tip three will work wonders for you.

Tip number five: Know you aren't alone. Remember, if you're struggling, chances are someone else is too. Reach out to friends, classmates, or professors if you find yourself struggling with coursework and get help if you need it. If you find yourself struggling in other ways, you can always visit the Counseling Center, even virtually! Take advantages of the resources out there and take care of yourself. It's going to be another crazy semester, but you can do this!

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Happy & Healthy PETS

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

Happy New Year! 2021 is here and I hope it brings fewer challenges than what 2020 served. Most people make a New Year's Resolution -- what if this year you made one for your pets? A New Year's Resolution to do your best to keep your furry babies happy and healthy. The happy part is easy -- all of you I'm sure already do that by providing them with a loving, comforting home and a full belly every day. The healthy part is unfortunately not always as easy, but it can be made easier with routine check-ups and preventative medicine.

The healthy part is where your veterinarian steps in. As with people, many diseases and disease processes are detected early with routine wellness checks. For dogs and cats, wellness checks are recommended twice per calendar year, or every 6 months. I understand this is not always easily feasible, especially with anxious or fractious feline friends that, in being so, make their owners also very anxious about the visit due to worry about their furbaby. Regular veterinary visits for your furbaby have also been complicated by COVID-19. Even with these constraints, veterinary offices are just a phone call away!

Curbside appointments are being utilized regularly by most veterinary offices these days; even telemedicine can be offered at this time through many veterinary practices when there is quarantine in effect or if it is not possible to bring your pet into the hospital or clinic. That being said, telemedicine (specifically phone calls made from home to the veterinarian) is not recommended for any severe or debilitating illness, but can be a form of communication in which you can discuss any non-threatening illnesses or home-care options for mild illnesses. If your pet is anxious or fear-aggressive, there are options (some medicinal) to help decrease their fear and anxiety, which will also make the visit easier and more worry-free for you. Another common issue in coming in for regular check-ups is the difficulty in actually getting them to the hospital or clinic. This can be due to the size of the pet, their inability to get around, or just difficulty getting them in the car. Again, there are options -- always contact your vet or vet's office for advice. There are even

some travel vets that will come to your place to check out your pets.

Next up is preventative medicine. Preventative medicine is just that -- it is a medication or treatment given regularly to prevent disease or illness. In this area one of the most important forms of preventative medicine is parasite preventative, specifically for heartworms, intestinal parasites, fleas, and ticks. There are several options for preventatives; always best to discuss with your veterinarian the best one for your pet(s). I cannot emphasize enough how important parasite preventatives, specifically heartworm, are for this area.

Arkansas, especially the Mississippi Delta, experiences some of the highest rates of heartworm disease than almost anywhere else in the country. Preventative medicine also comes in the form of blood screens -- routinely checking blood tests allows the veterinarian to monitor the values and can easily detect values out of the norm for early disease or organ dysfunction diagnosis -- this, in turn, allows for earlier treatment and/or management. When a disease process is caught early, the management process is implemented sooner and can oftentimes lead to a longer life with improved quality.

For any questions you have on how best to keep or to get your fur baby in the best health it can be, please call your vet. Communication is key! They cannot talk, so you must be their voice.

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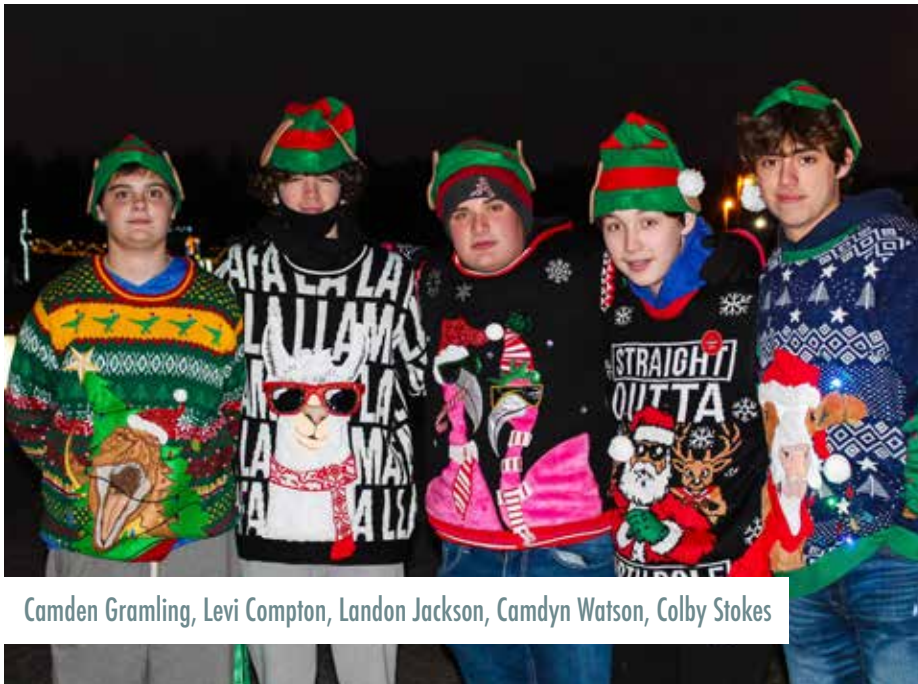
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Hyde's Termite and Pest Control Display took home Best of Show



Camden Gramling, Levi Compton, Landon Jackson, Camdyn Watson, Colby Stokes





From December 7 through December 12 NEA residents were invited to enjoy Lights of Paragould at the Greene County Fairgrounds. Due to current guidelines the city, like most, decided not to host its annual Christmas Parade. But thanks to the Paragould A & P Commission, Southern Soil Outfitters, Live Oak Real Estate, 1st National Bank, Caps Plus Inc., and MOR Media Inc., a new kind of Christmas tradition took place.

Featuring a mix of community and commercial displays, Lights of Paragould was a drive through light show that allowed community members to remain in their own vehicles while taking in the Christmas scenes. Visitors were able to vote for their favorite displays and Hyde's Termite and Pest Control took home Best of Show. Other winners, by category, include: Legacy Equipment (business), East Side Baptist Church (church), Cub Scout Pack 66, BSA Troop 66 & BSA Troop 99 (club), Crowley's Ridge Christian Home School (School), and the Archibalds (family).

More than 1,000 cars visited the display over the course of the week. All proceeds from the event benefited the Greene County Foster Parents Association.



More photos from this event can be found on Premiere's Facebook page.



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Jonesboro Christmas Parade



A Musical Tradition

The 2020 Jonesboro Christmas Parade, much like other things in 2020, looked a bit different. The Jonesboro Jaycees presented a “reverse parade” to allow attendees to safely view floats from inside their car. Visitors drove through Joe Mack Campbell Park to view the Christmas floats and lights.

MOR Media Inc. took home the first-place trophy for its “musical tradition” themed display featuring an old school radio and rocking chair on one side of a fireplace, and an Alexa and more modern display on the other side.

More photos from this event can be found on Premiere’s Facebook page.

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Enchanting Evenings



Downtown Paragould did things a little bit differently in order to keep a tradition going, make it bigger, and yet also make sure residents were safer.

Enchanting Evenings took place over the course of three Thursdays in December and included horse drawn carriages, an Elf Hunt where participants could redeem their sheets for cupcakes at Something Sweet, Santa Claus and his sleigh at the Vintage Rental Depot, stories on stage at the Collins Theatre, and lights around the area.



Jessica Hutson, Kallie and Keagan



The Paragould Pride Band performs



Judy & Tom McCracken and Caden and Cohn enjoy a carriage ride



More photos from this event can be found on Premiere's Facebook page.



Kids redeem their Elf Hunt worksheet at Something Sweet



The Holland family ready to embark on Elf Hunt



Amy and Elise Anderson with Santa Claus

JoyFest

Downtown Jonesboro hosted its second annual Joy Fest throughout the month of December. The kickoff event on December 5th welcomed The Link Theatre to the stage and the company presented its first ever Christmas-themed, Broadway style musical. Other performances included Cory Jackson and Foundation of Arts members and students.

The event also included a Ferris wheel, a “snowy village” where shopping and hot chocolate from Shadrachs could be found.

More photos from this event can be found on Premiere’s Facebook page.



Hayden Plummer and Tori Woods



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GRAND CHAMPION: MATTHEW EXUM



BY LINDSEY SPENCER

Matthew Exum has put in many, many hours of hard work and in November of 2020 it paid off. Making it through the previous tiers – the County Fair, District Fair, the Arkansas Youth Expo, and the State Fair – Matthew took his prized hog all the way to the top by earning the title Grand Champion in the Junior Market Hog category at the North American International Livestock Exhibition.

There are levels, Matthew explained, at these shows to do well in before moving on to the next. “You’ve got to win the class, win the division, and then you go on to Grand Drive,” Matthew elaborated.

At the County Fair, Matthew’s hog took home Third Place Overall Market Hog, at District he secured Reserve Overall Market Hog. He went on to earn 5th Overall Crossbred and 7th Overall at the State Fair before moving on and taking home the biggest win yet at the national level when he won Grand Champion. The grand title did not come without dedication and effort.

“It’s a huge accomplishment, but it’s not something that just happens,” said Matthew’s father, Derek Exum. “He puts in hours and hours every week washing, feeding, exercising. It takes a lot of hours of hard work.”

Derek Exum, Wil Exum, Matthew Exum & Lisa Exum



Jordan Leatherman, Matthew, & Allen Davis



Far Right:
Cullen Leatherman, Jordan Leatherman, Elliott Leatherman, Katie Leatherman, Matthew Exum and Allen Davis





Eighteen years old and in his fifth year of showing, Matthew's hard work paid off big time: On November 9th in Louisville, Matthew received his title and a great big check for \$12,000. But that's not all Matthew gained from the experience. Over the years it took him to arrive at the title "Grand Champion," Matthew has also earned skills and knowledge that will serve him the rest of his life.

"I've learned a lot of responsibility from this that I can take into my future," Matthew, who plans to keep using what he's learned and showing until he ages out, shared. "I have a passion for agriculture and raising livestock. Watching them grow and succeed is just amazing to me."

Matthew is very involved with both Greene County 4H and Greene County Tech FFA,



but his time at home before and after school is also a huge part of what led to his success. He also recognizes the support he had around him and the people who helped propel him toward his goal.

"I want to thank everyone that helped make this happen, the crew behind this," Matthew said. "Jordan and Katie Leatherman, Mr. Allen Davis and my family."

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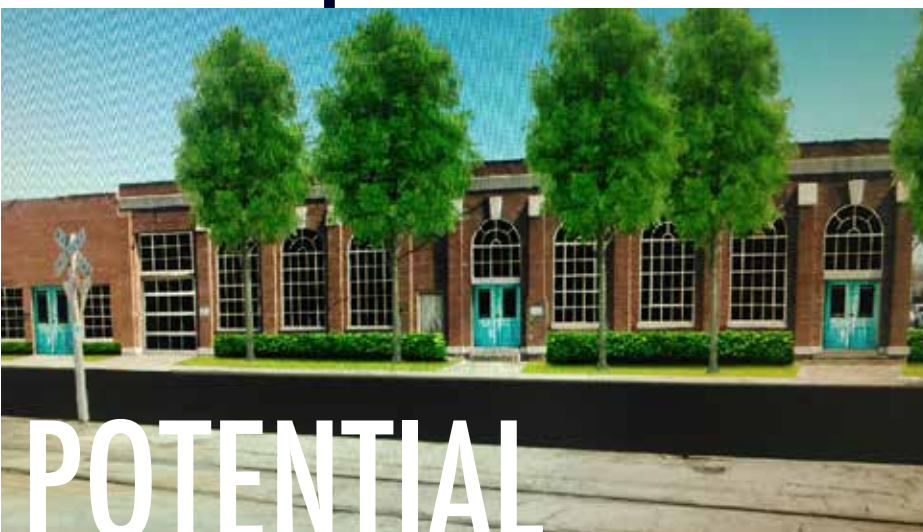
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Happy New Year!

Photo Courtesy of Gina Jarrett
Late 1990s



2019



Save the Power Plant

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

A prominent building once handed a “death sentence” is getting new life pumped into it by a group of concerned and supportive Paragould citizens.

Known as the Power Plant building, the two-story, 10,000-square-foot brick structure sits just west of the Union Pacific railroad tracks along North Second Avenue. Four turbines were once housed inside, generating power for the city. When Paragould built a new facility in 1990, the old building fell into disuse and onto hard times.

It was sold to at least three individuals over the succeeding years but any plans they had for it never materialized. It was eventually repurchased by the city but sat empty, falling victim to vandalism as well as to vacancy.



Photo courtesy of Richard Brummett

A fire in 2013 only added to its demise and the city-owned utility revealed plans to bulldoze the building if someone didn't step up to buy and restore it. Paragould Light, Water and Cable gave those hoping to save it six months to locate a buyer.

A group calling itself "Help Us Save the Power Plant" went to work and managed to get a stay of execution for the facility, then reached out in all directions for financial help, which it found. The Paragould Advertising and Promotions Commission pledged \$250,000 toward the power plant project over a five-year period. The money will be allotted to Greene County Future Fund over the course of five years. Each year, it will receive \$50,000.

Plans now sprout in several directions, most depending upon additional sources of revenue for the project. Gina Jarrett, Executive Director of Main Street Paragould, said the group is looking into grants for any number of possibilities for the historic building. "The grant process is under way," she said. "There could be so much done right there in that section, from a walking trail to a Farmers Market to so many things. Lots of different entities could be approached for grant money."

When the A&P funded the costs involved in obtaining professional engineering and architectural plans for the proposed project it opened the doors for seeking other financial backers. The Greene County Future Fund is using those plans to apply for grants to fund the development of the property, Jarrett said, and added that other considerations include the Arkansas Historic Preservation Department, USDA funds, and the Blue and You Foundation.

The building was constructed in 1938 after voters approved a bond issue in 1933 to build it. Workers installed the first electric generators in May 1938, and in January 1939 two of the four turbines went into service, powering the city's water pumping station and its street lights.

Ideas tossed around for its resurrection include the old plant's potential as a restaurant, hotel, brewery, museum, an event venue for weddings and parties, an outside amphitheater or even a bowling alley. "The building is the integral part of the whole project," Jarrett said. "Thanks to the A&P funds we are able to move forward. They saw our vision of the project."




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Lovely THEN & NOW

BY LINDSEY SPENCER

The old yellow house on Pruet Street in Paragould is more than simply walls and a roof to its owners Lloyd Turner and Ross Tittle. It's more than that to their friends, too, and more even to those simply passing by; especially during the Christmas season.

The old home has stood where it is today since 1910. When they bought it, the house was painted a chocolate brown that made it mostly unnoticeable. The first thing Lloyd did was decide to lighten the color outside. Then, painting took place on the inside.

Though some windows had to be replaced, the front windows on the house are original and hand-blown. The medallion mount for the chandelier – a light fixture from the 1800s that Ross inherited – in the dining room is from a plantation home.

The home holds a charm all its own throughout the year, but during the holidays it really shines. Literally.

The house is hard to miss with its twinkle lights encircling the grand pillars, covering the bushes, and draped over windows. The inside glows with warmth because it, too, is filled with lights including a total of eight handmade garlands, classic holiday decorations and two Christmas trees. One Christmas tree, 12 feet tall and strung with 1,300 lights, can be seen through the front window.

Each year the grandeur and also cozy home plays host to a holiday party fit for a Christmas movie. Although the party looked a bit different in 2020 in order to follow safety guidelines, the cheer and delight were not lacking as guests enjoyed the carefully curated decorations meant to evoke the Christmas spirit.

Like many other old homes, this one has the character and the sturdy bones to withstand the test of time. It is as lovely now as it was "then".





Lloyd Turner and Ross Tittle



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The Collins Theatre
7:00 p.m.



July 23
Big Grass Blue Grass
The Collins Theatre
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

A complete listing of all Downtown events can be found under "Events" at downtownparagould.com or facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events.



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THEN & Downtown Paragould **NOW**

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



It's not as if Downtown Paragould *was* a hot shopping place; it still *is* a thriving, important part of daily life for many living in Northeast Arkansas.

There was a time when large groups of people in a community generally congregated in three major areas: the local high school for Friday night ballgames, downtown for shopping on Saturdays and church on Sundays. As cities like Paragould experienced rapid growth and expanded boundaries, lots of those habits changed; and downtown shopping gave way to malls, strip malls and shopping centers away from the main streets of town.

It wasn't always that way and it has not stayed that way as Downtown Paragould today is an active center for shopping, dining and entertainment.



Photo courtesy of Richard Brummett

"Even into the '70s, downtown was active," said Gina Jarrett, Executive Director of Main Street Paragould, Inc. "Communities fortunate enough to have downtowns survived into the early '70s. Then the whole community started to change, not just the downtowns. So many larger than we are lost downtown altogether. Those that hung on are making progress. It becomes more vital as people make it happen. The architecture, the history of it ... we make our own communities our communities. There's no other town just like Paragould or like Helena or like anywhere else."

The Paragould Downtown Commercial Historic District encompasses the historic central business district. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003, recognizing the city that was organized in 1882 around the intersection of two railroad lines. According to the history books, Paragould was incorporated March 3, 1883, while it was still an uncultivated timber covered tract. Willie Pruett, a settler from Tennessee, owned most of the area, part of a 281-acre farm he purchased in 1869. The main downtown street carries his name and hosts most of the business fronts, just as it did in earlier times when the timber industry helped the new town form.

In the early days of Downtown Paragould the appearance changed. Great white way lights were installed and several buildings erected. One of the first elegant department stores with rugs, elevators and special departments, even a grocery department, was built in 1900 by the Bertig brothers. The Vandervoort Hotel and its special design drew guests from throughout the state and by 1896 Paragould had six miles of gravel streets; it was 1912 before the downtown streets were paved but that's when the young city flourished.

Merchants first located on Front Street behind the present buildings facing west on Pruett Street. First to open were a tent saloon, a fish business, a tent hotel, a bakery, a blacksmith shop, and a fruit stand. A hardware store and a general store opened on Main at the Pruett Street intersection. The new county courthouse was completed in 1888; the Paragould City Hall and adjacent fire house were completed in 1890. An electric light plant went into operation in 1891, telephone service appeared in 1896, and a municipally owned water works opened in 1898. By 1890, there were fourteen lumber mills in Paragould with the Wrape Stave and Heading Mill shipping more whiskey barrels than any other plant in the world.

Former Paragould resident Dale Foresythe penned an article recounting his days as a youngster (the story was featured in the October 2019 issue of Premiere Magazine) and remembered Downtown Paragould as one of the central hot spots for teens in his day. "On Saturdays, you could not walk down Pruett Street," he recalled. "Especially in September, November and December ... everyone came to town. It was like Times Square in New York. It was something really remarkable."



Photo courtesy of Gina Jarrett

Foresythe remembers the names of restaurants, businesses and teen hangouts long removed from the current face of the city. The railroad depot, Majestic Theater and Vandervoort Hotel are known to today's generation only through photos and stories. Trips to the Corner Cafe, or Trailblazers, or Ogles Restaurant were commonplace in his day. "This generation of shoppers don't know about stores that aren't here anymore," Jarrett said. "... Graber's, Joseph's, Clyde Mack ... they're all lost, but that's the nature of the beast.

"Jonesboro has the eateries and the franchises now but Paragould is wonderful for small business ownership. MJ's, Something Sweet, Chow ... they are locally-owned businesses. Those people buy houses here, live here, and make long-term investments in our downtown. When you live here, you create jobs here. We're in a good location."

Today, Downtown hosts a variety of businesses and eateries and merchants band together to present activities that draw shoppers to the sidewalks. In December, Enchanting Nights -- held on three consecutive Thursdays from 4-8 p.m. -- featured a Christmas Tree Lighting at Centennial Park, horse drawn carriage rides, visits by Santa Claus, extended shopping hours, dining opportunities and music each night. Enchanting Nights was made possible through the efforts of the Paragould Advertising and Promotion Commission and the Downtown Merchants.

"It (shopping) moved out in the late '70s and '80s," Jarrett added. "It started revitalizing in 1998 with Main Street Incorporated, and now we're back to making shopping in our Downtown an event. Downtown is a good place to be."

The Historic Collins Theatre

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

'Then' Photos Courtesy of the Collins Theatre

'Now' Photos by Andrew Brown Photography

It was October 25, 1925, and the feature film of the evening was "The Coast of Folly" at the grand opening of the Capitol Theatre. Since then, what is now the Collins Theatre has been filled with rich history as everything from vaudeville acts, musical shows and concerts have graced its stage.

Built by Bertig Realty Co., the Capitol Theatre served as a special place to go for the citizens of Paragould, especially during the years of The Depression. There were only three theatres in Northeast Arkansas at that time equipped with a stage and orchestra pit, according to the Collins website: the Empire Theatre in Jonesboro, the Home Theatre in Blytheville, and the Capitol.

The Collins family purchased the Capitol in 1936 and became the sole owners-operators.



THEN & NOW

Admissions for night showings of movies were 25 cents and matinees were only 15 cents. The theatre received its first popcorn machine in 1934, for 5 cents a bag. But movies weren't the only events held at the theatre. Bond rallies during World War II, Sunday School classes and even the Belles and Beaus show put on by the hospital auxiliary all spent time inside the Capitol.

Paragould citizens have their own special memories of time spent in the theatre. Ginger Bales recalled seeing her first movie there in the early 1980s, "The Muppets Take Manhattan," and Andrea Kellim remembered watching "Superman" as a young child.

And of course, the Collins history wouldn't be complete without its ghost stories. In 1997 Gabe Cook led a Paragould Daily Press reporter on a tour of the theatre and described his "experiences" with the supposed ghost.

"All imagination, of course," Cook added. "To add to the ambiance, we sat in the balcony with only those lights on."

After a two page story in the paper the next day, the then-manager Ray Crutchfield began receiving phone calls from newspapers and magazines in four other states. Crutchfield told Cook patrons were now afraid to sit in the balcony, and that he should never mention the word "ghost" in the theatre again. "So I started using the word 'specter' instead," Cook said.



Over the years, from its change from the Capitol to the Collins, the theatre has evolved to keep up with the times.

"The changes are constant so it's hard to pinpoint them all. You wouldn't think of ways a now-95-year-old building can change much, but it can and it has," manager Joy Robinson said. "If you flip through photos of the theatre you can see it stays in a constant state of change."

Robinson, who has held the manager position since July 2020 but has been involved for the last 25 years, said aspects ranging from remodeling to a variety of shows is what keeps the Collins changing in good ways rather than bad.

"We didn't even accept debit cards until last year," she said, adding, "With the current pandemic we've had to evolve again. But the main thing to remember is that we have evolved, and will continue to evolve."

Currently, the Collins is livestreaming shows, which usually comes with zero income.

"We've been operating strictly on donations from our amazing community members and businesses during this time," Robinson said. "Communities like ours don't realize that every small town doesn't have a Collins. But theatres like ours are rare and priceless jewels."



Greene County Historical & Genealogical Society

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

A hidden treasure in Downtown Paragould is the Greene County Historical and Genealogical Society, open Tuesday through Friday until the Covid-19 virus hit. Once the doors are again fully open to the public, walking down the aisles of history is recommended.

Located at 212 West Court St., the building houses just about anything anyone could ask for when it comes to researching family histories or tales related to Greene County's illustrious history. Run solely by volunteers, the Society members are more than happy to lend a hand to anyone having an inquiry ... whether they ask via the telephone, the Internet or show up in person.

Jim Burgess, President of the Society, said the pandemic has forced the staff to be extra selective when considering allowing visitors into the building but that doesn't mean no one can enter.

"The best thing is to call and let us figure it out," he said. "If we know you real well, we'll probably let you in but if it is someone coming through from Texas or somewhere we will probably have to say no. If that's unkind, well, it's just what it is and what the times dictate. With all that's going on and the age we are, we all agreed that is what makes us feel safer."

In 1964, the Greene County Historical and Genealogical Society was founded by locals with a passion for history, sort of as a spin-off of the Crowley's Ridge Historical Society. Mrs. W.L. "Dot" Skaggs, Mrs. R.P. Calvert and Mrs. Pearl Morrow -- all natives of Greene County-- played a pivotal roles in the organization of the society.

According to Society records, the first officers were: Raymond Frey, president;

Alfred Holland, vice-president; Mrs. W.L. Skaggs, secretary; and J.W. Thompson, treasurer. The membership committee included Mrs. Pearl Morrow and J. Sam Thompson. Over time however, lack of interest and dwindling membership forced the Society to disband. The rise of the nonprofit organization was reestablished in September of 1987 under the new title of The Greene County Historical and Genealogical Society. Officers were: Dr. Bennie Mitchell, president; Dr. Omer E. Bradsher, vice-president; Mary Esther Herget, second vice-president; Dawn Linden, secretary; and Barbara Hazzard, treasurer.

In 2005 the Society was granted non-profit status by the IRS and so all donations are tax deductible. "People have been very generous with their donations," Burgess said. "There's an awful lot of history down there. We have no paid staff, just volunteers. In fact, First National Bank even furnishes the building for us."

The walls are lined with school yearbooks, newspaper microfilm, old photos, bound copies of newspapers, newspaper clippings ... "And recently we ended up with over 200,000 negatives," Burgess said, proud to have inherited the stock from noted local photographer Bill Hunter and others who followed after him at Child Art Studio. "We probably couldn't go through them in a lifetime, but they hold a lot of Paragould history."

Burgess said those seeking help tracing their ancestry will find lots of resources. "We have a direct line to Salt Lake City, Utah. The Mormons, when the United States were being formed, went all over the country documenting family histories.

They have something like two billion or six billion histories and we can tie in with them. We have ties to Ancestry.com and places you can find grave sites. If you know the state, it can often give you the very name of the cemetery. We've got marriage and divorce records, births and deaths ...

"I've been the president for about three years, but Kaye Holmes and Judy Routon are probably the two most knowledgeable people we have as to what can be done to help you. I am interested in history to some extent and this is an enthusiastic group of people. But the younger generations are not interested. Still, it's a real walk through history for those who are into that."

Currently officers and boards members in addition to Burgess are: Pauletta Tobey, vice president programs; Judy Routon, vice president membership; Cynthia Starling, recording secretary; Carol Tomlinson, corresponding secretary, Kaye Holmes, treasurer; Louise Richardson, advisory board member and Routon, Holmes, Starling and Donna Ishmael, volunteers.

The Society may be reached by phone at (870) 240-8944; by emailing gchgs@sbcglobal.net; or on the web at gcahgs.org. The mailing address is Post Office Box 121, Paragould AR 72450.

Individual memberships are \$25 annually while corporate dues are \$40 and for those outside the United States, \$50. Queries are free to members and cost \$2 for non-members. All contributions and donations are tax deductible. Members receive four quarterly magazines and nine issues of the Society newsletter.

Alvin Taylor's

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



This month Alvin Taylor's Flowers in Paragould will celebrate quite a remarkable birthday: 50 years of business in Paragould. It's no wonder the flower shop is thriving "now" as it did "then" because Judith Taylor-Wheelis runs the business as her dad did: with people at the center of it.



"Dad knew that it's not just enough to own a business to make money," Judith said. "You have to use your job to serve and take care of people. I hope I can continue this business in a way that he would be proud of, because a fifty-year legacy isn't something I can or should take lightly."


First located at 207, the business moved into 209 N Pruet Street, where it is now, which was formerly a Belk's warehouse.

Judith is grateful and humbled to reach such a birthday for the business that opened its doors in January of 1971.


"Paragould is a wonderful and giving community that has supported us in good times and bad," Judith shared. "It was always important to my dad to be community minded, and because he gave so much to this community, this community gave back to him in return. I think that's the biggest reason we're still here. He was loved by a lot of people and appreciated by a lot of people because they knew he really cared about them and he cared about their families too ... their kids and their grandkids. Maybe that's why so many generations of families continue to do business with us. I had a really good teacher to carry on what dad started."

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Greene County Museum

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

In January 2009 the Greene County Museum opened its doors to the public after five years of dreams from county residents. Closing in on 12 years later, the museum has been filled with artifacts and welcomes visitors from a number of counties.

Doris Hagen, president of the Board of Directors, recalled how in 2004 a group of Greene County citizens recognized the need for a museum so the county could preserve its history. She added with people like Bettye Busby in the lead, the dilapidated home of former Arkansas Governor J. Marion Futrell became available.

"The Greene County Museum is now a landmark, a source of pride and a center of activity for Northeast Arkansas and the surrounding areas," Hagen said. "It is also included on the Arkansas Register of Historic Places."

The museum is made up of 14 rooms, all filled with treasured and irreplaceable artifacts and heirlooms. At its opening in 2009, the rooms were well stocked and ready for viewing.

"That was really quite amazing considering the short period of time the founders had to gather the items," Hagen said.

Each room is dedicated to a certain aspect of Greene County history, such as the railroad, timber and industry, military, sewing and kitchen of the past.

"Today, our goal is to stage the various rooms to tell their own stories," Hagen said. "For example, the sewing room contains only items of 50 to 100 plus years ago that are associated with sewing."

Items are never replaced or phased out because they are all a part of Greene County's history. Instead, they are on rotation since the museum does not have enough space to display them all at once. Hagen said that today there is also criteria for donations: If there is space for the item or if it fills a gap in history, the museum schedules to meet with the donor.

Over the years the museum has hosted a variety of events including book signings for local authors who have written about Greene County, art shows, antique car shows and even military days with reenactors and military gear.

“We also do traveling presentations to civic organizations, church groups, school classrooms, and special events such as Garlock’s 125th anniversary picnic,” Hagen said. “In the future we plan to have a Pioneer Day for children, black and white photography competition featuring Greene County sights, a quilt show and definitely the antique car show.”

Hagen said when the pandemic is over she encourages everyone to take a stroll down memory lane in the museum with the artifacts from his or her parents’ and grandparents’ homes.

“Bring the children and grandchildren and share the ‘back when’ stories of your family,” Hagen said.

Because as one guest said of the museum, “This represents life.”



Photo courtesy of the Greene County Museum

Education Room “Then”
Pictured: Ken Swan & Anita Phillips (room sponsor)



Education Room “Now”



Kitchen “Then”



Medical Room “Then”

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Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library

THE NOW



BY LINDSEY SPENCER

'Then' Photos Courtesy of the CCJPL

'Now' Photos by Andrew Brown Photography and MOR Media

The Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library (CCJPL) has called multiple locations home since its establishment in 1917. Originally called "The Rest Room" the location occupied 108 W. Huntington Ave.

"The story goes it was a place for the spouses and the children of the men that were bringing in logs, like for the Stuck Lumber Yard there on Union when they were doing their business, it was a place for their spouses and children to hang out while they were waiting," said Nathan Whitmire, the Manager of Technical Services and Special Collections at CCJPL. "And so, the Civic League was created, because they wanted to purchase more materials. The facility they were in, The Rest Room, couldn't hold all the materials that they were accumulating over time. So, they had to get a new location for all the materials they acquired."

In 1924 the collection of books moved to 302 W. Washington and was established as the Public Library. In 1950 the library moved to 1120 S. Main Street and was renamed the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library.

The building the library calls home today was built in 1964 and is arguably one of the most beautiful structures in all of Jonesboro. With a modern flair, great big windows that allow for natural light, and different areas for special collections, kids, research material and even an event space (the Round Room), the library today, located at 315 W. Oak Avenue in Jonesboro, is a space that welcomes community members to enjoy its resources, treasures, and history.

The library is also host to an extensive Arkansas History and Genealogy Collection which includes books, documents and regional publications that can help individuals dive into family history, business history, building history, etc. There are books about Arkansas as well as other states, and also books specifically about Jonesboro and Craighead County.

“You can come to the library and we have a genealogy section and, normally, you’d be able to sit back here and pull books off the shelf,” said Brandi Hodges, Public Relations for the CCJPL. “We have tables and you can peruse them at your leisure.” Because times are different, the special collections area of the library is not currently open to the public, but they are still allowing access to the materials where community members can find information on the history of the area and its residents. “We are still allowing access,” Brandi shared, “but have to know what you want and we will pull it for you. Then we have tables where you can sit two at a table and go through that book. If you need help figuring out what book you need, there are people here who can help you with that.”



Nathan Whitmire looks at microfilm from an old Jonesboro Sun at the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library.

“These books are special,” Brandi said. “These are books that were a limited run, or they were made by a family, or made by a community. We can’t get copies of these books. So, we are being very protective of them right now. But it is something we do want people to use.”

And one day, hopefully soon, times will change again and residents will once again be able to use everything the library offers to its full extent.

Diving into the history of an area is extensive work. Where does one even start?

The library offers a number of starting lines, depending on the knowledge or information the researcher has and is wanting to follow through to connect the dots. The library has marriage records, divorce records, census indexes, and microfilm of the Jonesboro Sun dating back to the mid 1880s.

“In addition to genealogy materials,” Nathan shared, “we also have vertical files on subjects either about local history, or within the state. We have files on historic homes and some of the businesses downtown. We have them arranged by street and then street number.”

Though these files aren’t complete, made up simply of what has been collected and donated over time, the files are an excellent place to find old photos, articles, and other references to homes, businesses, and areas of Northeast Arkansas.

Another great place to get started, or even contribute information to, is the CCJPL’s TIMELINE Project. The project is a collection of old photos on the library’s website anyone can view – and anyone can support by allowing the library to borrow photos for scanning, after which they are returned to the owner.

“I love our TIMELINE Project because people can look and see prominent members of the community or, some of my favorites – in December – I like to look at the old Christmas parade. Because those are fabulous to see what kind of businesses were downtown and the kinds of things that people wore,” Brandi shared.

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Photo courtesy of Kent Arnold

THEN & NOW

Downtown Jonesboro

BY TAYLOR DICKINSON

Originally called Jonesborough and later shortened to Jonesboro, the town was established in 1815. Downtown Jonesboro houses multiple buildings, along with six historic homes in the West Washington Avenue Historic District.

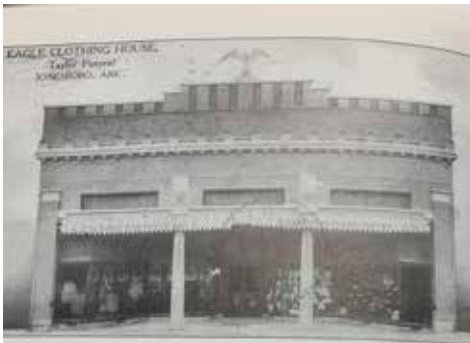


Photo from Jonesboro and Arkansas' Historic Northeast Corner by Ray Hanley



Eagle House Clothing-Gearhead Outfitters: Now picture Gearhead Outfitters; what used to be Eagle House Clothing in 1898 was remade into yet another clothing store, Gearhead Outfitters, which started in one of Ted Herget's friend's living room back in 1997. Ted moved to Main Street in 2002 and later bought the old Eagle House Clothing in 2011. He revitalized the old building and kept the same storefront, keeping as much history and character as he could.



Photo courtesy of Kent Arnold

Old Citizen's Bank started as a three-story building, later adding more levels.

In 1940, as WWII was coming to an end and the nation was coming back from The Great Depression, the intersection of Main Street and Washington Avenue became heavily trafficked with very successful businesses. Off this intersection used to sit Court Square. This is now where the Courthouse sits on the left-hand side of the street. Mooney Law Firm was on the line of the Northern point of Jonesboro. The railroad then came to town and expanded the area.



Photo from Jonesboro and Arkansas' Historic Northeast Corner by Ray Hanley

Courthouse: The Craighead County Courthouse has always been something that Jonesboro has really admired, but it had a series of unfortunate events before it became what it is today. The first fire took place in 1869, and burned again later that year. Years later in 1878 Marion Sanders was imprisoned for setting yet another fire to the courthouse.



The replacement was rebuilt on the same site, but again burned in 1878. After a couple more transitions, we now see what was built in 1930 and serves as the current courthouse. In addition to fires wiping out the courthouses, the Great Fire of 1889 that started in Marcus Berger's Saloon wiped out many frame buildings in Downtown Jonesboro.



Come 1968, it was a 7-story building with a restaurant on the top. When year 2000 hit it sold, and has been vacant for the past 19 years. An investor has currently bought part of the property, and another investor has a lien on the building.



Where the new student micro lofts now sit at 215 Union used to be a lumber company, Stuck Lumber Yard. This lumber yard started as Jonesboro Brick Company back in 1899. Stuck created architecture all around the city of Jonesboro, from Arkansas State University to the jail, to the library, to the courthouse.

Stuck Lumber was bought by another local material firm, Barton's Lumber, in the 1950s.

Top photo courtesy of the Craighead County Historical Society

Craighead County Historical Society

BY LINDSEY SPENCER



Danny Honnoll with his grandchildren Will and Emily, courtesy of the Craighead County Historical Society

The Craighead County Historical Society, established in 1962, is made up of a group of like-minded individuals passionate about preserving history. Made up of anyone who wants to be a part of it, the organization meets quarterly – when things are normal – on the first Monday of January, April, July, and October.

With an expanse of knowledge between its more than three hundred official members (the Facebook page is open to all), special perks like receiving a printed quarterly and attending meetings are allotted to paying members.

President Danny Honnoll, a historian, genealogist and researcher, has served the organization for a total of 25 years – twenty as Vice President and the past five as President. Danny can spew details and information about the city of Jonesboro that will no doubt have the listener’s mind traveling back in time.

“Jonesboro is worth preserving,” Danny said.

And indeed, it is. The City of Jonesboro is named after William A. Jones, who was also the Senator responsible for the creation of Craighead County. Established in 1859, Craighead County was championed by Senator Jones and opposed by Thomas B. Craighead. Formed from parts of Greene, Mississippi and Poinsett counties, the creation of the new lines took part of the lands Craighead represented himself.

Not long after Craighead County was established, the city of Jonesboro was created in 1860. Since then, the areas have changed and evolved much to become what see today.

Danny reminds us that we must acknowledge history, and do so accurately, in order to learn from it and move forward.



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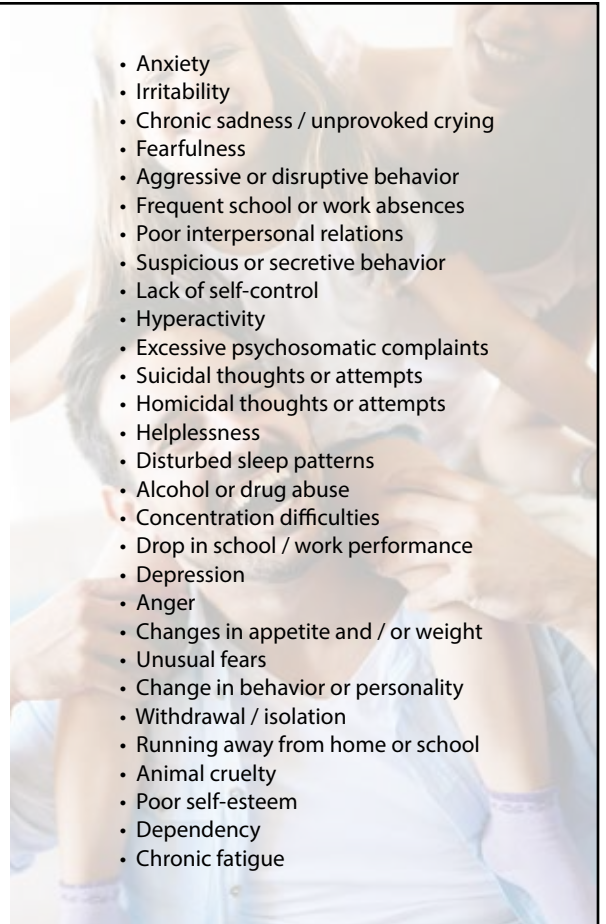
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- Poor self-esteem
- Dependency
- Chronic fatigue



Lessons learned should be recorded, photos should be reprinted, and when possible, buildings themselves should be preserved.

“You can re-write history,” Danny mentioned in reference to accurately preserving and writing about historic moments, places, and people. “But you can’t change what happened.”

It is imperative to the Craighead County Historical Society to hold on to what happened so that we can remember our past while embracing our future.

If you’d like to learn more about the Craighead County Historical Society, visit them on Facebook. To become a member for \$20 a year (or pay a one-time lifetime membership fee) contact Danny Honnoll by emailing danny@honnoll.com or calling him at (870)926-2985.

Sources:

The History of Craighead County, Arkansas
by Harry Lee Williams

Jonesboro and Arkansas’ Historic Northeast Corner
by Ray Hanley



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Photo taken from top of Forrest Office Supplies, courtesy of the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce

Gee Street

Ripe for Revitalization?

BY LINDSEY SPENCER

Those who remember what it was like to drive along Gee Street in the 1950s would find a very different and yet also quite familiar scene were they to take the same drive today. Once a major thoroughfare through the city and home to many established businesses, the street is still lined with many architecturally significant buildings.

Gee Street is a strip of structures that invokes a few thoughts for those traveling it: What is its past? And, what is its future?

According to Danny Honnoll, President of the Craighead County Historical Society, Gee Street is named because “Gee” means to go to the right. The strip of road stretching from Nettleton to Johnson Avenue curves to the right as it comes into view.



Photo taken from the parking lot of Forrest Office Supplies, 2020



Forrest Office Supplies

Forrest Office Supplies has been located in its current location, 1005 S. Gee Street, for about 30 years. Established in 1965, in previous years the business was located on Southwest Drive. The business moved, according to Barry Forrest, when his dad decided to find a building to buy and is one of the still-thriving businesses on Gee Street. Before it was theirs, the building was originally home to Craft Propane, followed by a motorcycle dealership.

Native Restaurant

One building on Gee Street is certain of its future: It is to become the first micro-brewery in Jonesboro. Due to recent legislation that allows for a micro-brewery in a dry county, as long as the business abides by the same rules as other restaurants/private clubs, and some additional ones, a small group of individuals decided to invest in their community by giving it something it doesn't have.

Schisler Building

The Schisler Building sits on the corner of Gee Street and Matthews and has been in the Schisler family for many years until recently.

Remembered as Jerry Schisler's auto world, the building has a stone front that doesn't continue to its other side – only because many years ago a car crashed through one side of the building and owners were unable to match the original stone.

The new owners said they adore the character of the building and they have big plans for restoring it. They say the plan is to put in a new business in order to be a part of an area worth revitalizing.



When searching for a building for their business, owners Jackson Spencer, Dustin Hundley, Ellen Hundley, and Heath Gammill knew they wanted a location that would have room to provide a comfortable outdoor space for guests. Room outside for this means a place to enjoy craft brews when the weather is nice, a spot that is pet friendly, and a relaxed atmosphere for a business whose main goal is to cultivate community. The building, previously Norman and Rose and before that likely an auto shop, is currently undergoing renovations.

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Our Brick House

THEN & NOW

BY LINDSEY SPENCER



This brick house is home to me now. When I wake in the morning the soft light filtering through the abundant windows fills me with gratitude. My husband and I spend many hours maneuvering around one another in the kitchen to whip up dinner or scrape together something for breakfast. The brick in this room is what I first fell in love with and so I insisted it stay exposed where possible.

In the living room the fireplace is still intact – rebuilt with brick from the dilapidated garage that had to come down. The mantel is custom made by our dear friend, Dustin Hundley. Great big, solid wood doors with window panes allow light to slip through one side of the house all the way to the other from late morning into the afternoon. In the master bath is a clawfoot tub I enjoy looking at nearly as much as actually bathing in it.

But the best part about this house is the porch. We spent most of our summer evenings reclining on the front porch chatting with our neighbors next door, watching our dogs frolic in the yard between us, and once even hosting an outdoor concert for the neighborhood where the porch served as the stage and the yard the audience. Porches encourage spending time with one another and getting to know neighbors. They foster true community.

I could only imagine what it was like before it was ours because when I first laid eyes on it, it was already gutted, just bare bones. Still, I knew it held its own stories. That's part of the wonder in older structures: What unfolded here? How much of it was good? How much of it not? Whatever their past and whatever their problems, can't old buildings still have a bright future ahead of them, if only we put in the work to salvage them?

I love this house. But its past was elusive to me until one day someone showed up on our doorstep: Angelia Harbison Vinson.

Angelia grew up in this brick house.

I was not home the day she walked the path up to a door she must have walked thousands of times before. But I've heard the story through both my husband's and Angelia's points of view. Angelia and I struck up a social media friendship and exchanged many messages before I had the pleasure of meeting her in person. While back in town under unfortunate circumstances, she wanted to create a special memory and show the house to her kids.

Angelia is a more enthusiastic storyteller than my husband and the way she tells the story involves her and her husband pulling up to the house, knocking on the door, and by the time Jackson answered it, she was in tears. She says his kind eyes – and when she pauses to tell me he has incredible eyes, I chuckle – were wide and he asked if she was okay. In her story, her emotions boiled over so much it must have bewildered Jackson Spencer.

When she was able to explain that she grew up in this house, Jackson invited her and her husband in.

And this is where our stories blend: Angelia's past and our future. Under this same roof many memories were made through generations of one family. Now it is host to just the beginning of Jackson's and my life together. Angelia sent me family photos and the one that really got me was when I looked up and realized her family had gathered right there. Where our bed now sits, her family gathered around the Christmas tree.

This house is so different now than it was then. But it is also so very similar. As we walked through the house during her visit, Angelia told me which room belonged to who and of how her mom loved to sit on the porch, too.

She also came bearing gifts: an ornament for our tree, treats for our "fur babies", and the words that string a story of how this house looked then and what it means to her to see what it is now.



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1915; Photo from "The ASU Story"



Arkansas State University

BY BETHANY GALLIMORE

"Dear Marilyn," the note begins. "This has been a good year at A.S.C. – remember the good time that we had at Marie's home. You are a sweet girl and kind; love, Myrtle Dunn."

This note and dozens more line the pages of the Dean B. Ellis Library copy of the 1956 Arkansas State University yearbook, known then as the Indian. The book belonged to Marilyn Griffin, then a freshman music major from Otwell, Arkansas. When Marilyn's classmates signed her yearbook, A-State was still known as "ASC," Arkansas State College.

Now, 65 years later, A-State no longer publishes a physical yearbook, and first-year students are more likely to exchange Snapchat user names than sign hard-copy mementos. It's a new world, but one that allows the members of the university to continue creating a community founded on education and human connection.

A-State began as an agricultural high school endorsed by the Arkansas General Assembly in 1909. Dirt roads, farmland, and cows lined the "Aggie" campus which grew with the establishment of administration buildings, dormitories, and silos during the 1910s.

By the time Marilyn arrived on campus, the school had moved through high school and junior college statuses to rank as a full four-year college. In the '50s, students in the business and economics department were taught how to use shorthand and adding machines; students in agriculture maintained a dairy and achieved national status in livestock judging. Social life had adapted to reflect students' diverse interests as well: Greek life, women's advocacy groups, and marksmanship clubs thrived on campus, and student organizations included a juggling team and square dance club.



Photo from 1967 Yearbook



Photo courtesy of the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce



Yearbook photos and Dr. Lee Dew's 1968 historical account in *The ASU Story* show the period of transition through the '50s and '60s. With the advent of Carl R. Reng's leadership as the college president in the 1950s, A-State advocated for and eventually attained full university status, officially marking the transition to "ASU" in 1967. In the 1960s, the newly-built student union (named for the university's president) offered a cafeteria, bookstore, and barbershop, and the pool tables in the Reng Center were so well-used they had to be re-carpeted twice a year.

Today, A-State enjoys R2 research status as a doctoral-granting university. Pool tables may no longer be the game of choice, yet student organizations and clubs are as strong and vibrant as ever. While instruction on mechanical typewriters has come to an end, students and faculty alike continue to explore the boundaries of hybrid and fully-online classes. From the original 200 acres allotted for Aggie school, the Arkansas State University system now includes the flagship Jonesboro campus along with campuses in Beebe, Newport, Mountain Home, Malvern, West Memphis, and Queretaro, Mexico. Each ASU student creates a story and a lasting impact on their campus, much as Marilyn did with her experience in the 1950s.

Marilyn went on to graduate from ASC, earning her bachelor's in music in 1959. Later, as recorded in alumni directories, she became Marilyn Morton and continued her love of music through serving as a church organist. Her senior yearbook, also held by the Dean B. Ellis Library, features fewer signatures from classmates but shows her with the same genuine smile, this time surrounded by her fellow university singers, the people who created her A-State community.

References: *The ASU Story* by Lee Dew



Sarah & Hunter Caples

The summer of 2014 will always hold a special place in my heart. I had just graduated college and landed an internship at an awesome place where I would hopefully soon have a lifelong career. I was walking/scouting rice fields when this cute curly headed, blue eyed guy caught my attention. We worked in different departments but every time I caught a glimpse of him, it instantly brightened my day – literally the high school butterfly feeling.

Months passed and we would occasionally speak but nothing major until one super-hot day in June. I was making my way out to a field – boots on, hair up, sweat dripping down my face – when he pulled up and asked if I wanted a ride. “Umm, yeah, it’s like 100°; duh, why wouldn’t I?” was my first thought. “Well, I look like a hot mess and this is the first time I’ve really had a chance to have a conversation with this guy I’ve been eyeballing for what seems like forever” was my second. But I hopped in anyway.

I remember “Carolina” by Eric Church was playing on his radio and it smelled so good (plus the A/C was on full blast) so I didn’t want to get out!

A couple of weeks later we had an event at RiceTec and we finally got the chance to hang out and get to know each other a little. Fast forward a couple more weeks and we are on our first “date” at a Chase Rice concert with some co-workers and friends. It was so easy, casual, and just felt right. After that night we truly were inseparable. I had found my person and it was the best feeling ever!

Since then, we have both left the place where it all started to begin our new journey together. We’ve opened new businesses, bought our first home, been on MANY trips together (he’s seriously the best travel buddy) and grown tremendously. If you know us, you know we are complete opposites and I think that’s what keeps things fun!

Hunter is quiet and calm, which really counteracts my loud, outgoing self.

In April of 2019 he FINALLY proposed! It was a complete surprise during the prettiest sunset in his hometown of Marion, Arkansas. We had an engagement party with our family and friends and started planning a wedding.

A year and a half later I walked down the aisle at The Silos to my new husband with the biggest smile on both of our faces. It was honestly the most perfect day of my life, surrounded by all of our closest family and friends. We had a beautiful ceremony and a heck of a time at the reception. We marked another destination off our bucket list and spent our honeymoon in Playa Del Carmen, México, and had the BEST time.

We have many more plans and dreams ahead of us and I’m so excited we get to live them out side by side. Life truly is so much fun when you’re married to your best friend.



Happenings



Arkansas Methodist Medical Center has been awarded the Honorable Mention Award during the 2020 UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation (IDHI) Stroke Program Conference (formally known as the AR SAVES Conference) for going “above and beyond” in the care of stroke patients.



Stan Carmack, Pharm.D. of Paragould, was presented the 2020 Pharmacy Manager of the Year Award by the Arkansas Association of Health-System Pharmacists (AAHP) during a live-streamed online awards show. The awards recognized the exceptional work of pharmacists during the last 12 to 18 months.



Stan Carmack, Pharm.D., Angie Halverson, Dr. Frank Schefano and Rev. Dane Womack have recently been elected to serve as members of the Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (AMMC) Foundation Board of Directors.

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The Arkansas State University Foundation recently received a donation in the amount of \$10,000 from the Arvest Foundation. The gift was to be used by the A-State Student Philanthropy Council as a 1:1 match on #GivingTuesday to raise necessary funding for the Student Emergency Fund. The Student Emergency Fund was established to help students in financial crisis stay enrolled at Arkansas State University.



NEA Baptist was the first health system in the region to begin administering the COVID-19 vaccine to employees. Dr. Steven Stroud, Infectious Disease Specialist, was the first to receive the vaccine.



Arkansas Methodist Medical Center in Paragould received the Diamond Award for the Annual Report Division, 100-249 beds for the 2020 Diamond Awards. The competition, which is co-sponsored by the Arkansas Society for Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations, is designed to recognize excellence in hospital public relations and marketing.

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Based on the Victorian tradition of making dolls from household objects, each kit contains two old-fashioned clothespins, fabric scraps, and yarn.

Where: Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library

Info: libraryinjonesboro.org

Stay Tuned

As events continue to be rescheduled, canceled, and altered, please check Premiere's Facebook page for updates as we do our best to keep you informed!

Andie Claire Webb was ready to get the show started while taking in Downtown Paragould's Enchanting Nights. Andie, 2, is the daughter of Kim and Hunter Webb of Paragould.





BIRTHS

Raegan Marie Jones

Proud parents Dustin and Shelby Jones of Paragould welcomed newborn, Raegan Marie Jones, into the world on November 1, 2020.

Raegan was delivered at NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital, weighed 7 pounds, 8 ounces and measured 20 inches long.

Raegan is also welcomed by Julie and Lesley Jones and Craig and Lori Hunt.

Photo by Shelby Jones Photography

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Coming Up
**New Year's
Classic**



Landowners, duck clubs, groups of buddies, anyone:

- Five Man Teams; \$1000 per team

- Prizes:

1st Place – 5 Trophies and \$1000 DNW Gift Card Per Team Member

2nd Place –\$500 DNW Gift Card Per Team Member

3rd Place – \$250 DNW Gift Card Per Team Member

Details:

- Teams will be composed of 5-man teams

- Teams will be allowed to compete on their own land, private leases, or public lands

- All AGFC rules will be in play and teams must check their harvest in no later than 12:00 p.m. on January 9. No call-ins accepted

*Ducks will be counted and dice rolled at 1:00 p.m. for points for each duck species. Drakes and hens will be a separate dice roll. Highest point tally based on dice rolls are the winners. Tie breaker will be another dice roll.

Meet at DNW Outdoors in Jonesboro

January 9, 2021

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Next Month

Love and the Community



People who are loving their community well by giving and serving.

Valentine's Day



Ideas for treating your someone special to something special.

Wedding Special Section



It's that time of year! Our wedding special section will include tips from the pros and resources for helping brides and grooms-to-be put together their perfect day.



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