

PREMIERE

AUGUST 2013

Premiere's Outstanding Teacher

**KIMBER
McMILLON**

**THE GREAT RACE
DOWNTOWN
BLOCK PARTY
BIG BANG
BLOWOUT
BACK TO SCHOOL**

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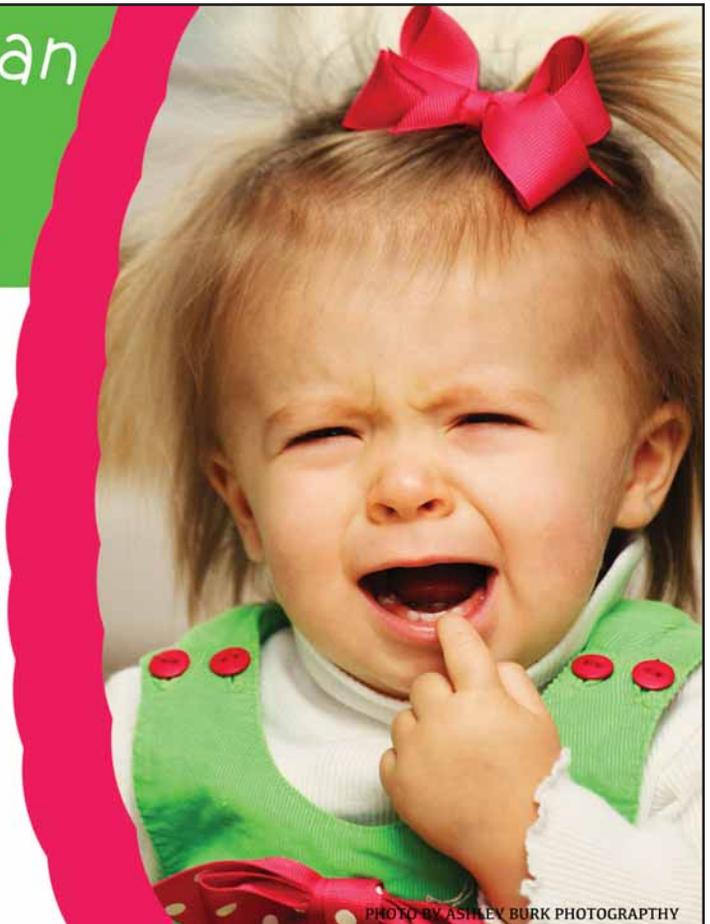


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On the cover: Kimber McMillon
Photo by Tim Rand Photography



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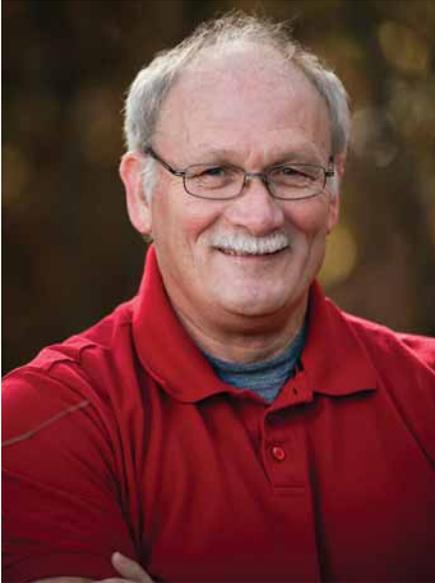
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From the Managing Editor...



Richard Brummett, Managing Editor

The great thing about this month's issue is that it is full of Greene County people taking part in Greene County activities.

Downtown Paragould was jumping on two

separate occasions recently when residents came out in full force to support The Great Race and the South End Block Party.

The Block Party was just a fun-filled midday event featuring an "Old School Water Park," better known as an open water hydrant for kids to run through.

There was also a Cupcake Eating Contest sponsored by Something Sweet, and spectators flocked to the sidewalk in front of the store to see more than a dozen people down as many cupcakes as possible in a five-minute timespan. Rob Schorer crammed in 14 to take the top prize, a \$50 gift certificate to any of the Downtown merchants participating in the party.

Plenty of laughs and plenty of photo opportunities were provided by the competition, and readers can find a photo wrapup on page 23.

Hundreds of cameras were also snapping away during The Great Race, a time and endurance contest for vintage automobile owners. The cross-country trip made a lunchtime stopover in Paragould, and our city was well-represented.

Pruett Street was lined with everything from car enthusiasts to people who were just curious about the race, and Paragould proved a good host city, according to race organizers. Photos of that event begin on page 12.

There's still more. MOR Media and the Paragould Jaycees headed up the efforts to provide the annual free fireworks show -- the Big Bang Blowout -- at the Rotary Park softball complex and this year's effort was bigger and better than ever.

Local sponsors helped provide a "bounce house" for kids, live musical entertainment, food vendors and more for the large crowd that started filling the parking lot area around 5 p.m. By the time the 9:30 fireworks display began they were pumped up, and it did not disappoint.

A two-page spread of photos can be found on pages 32 and 33.

All of that, plus this year's Outstanding Teacher Kimber McMillon, back to school news and much more in the August Premiere Magazine. ♦

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Paragould Country Club plays host to ASU tournament

The Paragould Country Club hosted the 27th annual Arkansas State University Golf Classic in June.

Members of the ASU athletic staff teamed with local business groups and individuals to raise money for the Red Wolves' sports programs.

Tournament sponsors this year were Liberty Bank, R&W Flying Service, First National Bank, Hog Air Aviation, Community Title and Escrow and Mr. T's Riverside. ♦



Representatives of the Arkansas State University athletic department teamed with other golfers, above, to take part in the tournament at the Paragould Country Club. At right is the team of Matt McGowan, ASU's Brad Bobo, and Jason and Carla Weatherford.





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Greene County's Senior B.E.E.S. threw a party in July to give themselves a well-deserved pat on the back.

B.E.E.S. reach necessary numbers to earn funding

By Richard Brummett

B.E.E.S. Senior Citizens Executive Director Carol Fleszar said her organization is “performance-based” and in order to reach maximum funding, group members must show up.

“If we say we need funding to serve 200 meals a day,” she explained, “then we have to serve 200 meals a day in order to get that funding. For our fiscal year (July 1-June 30), we met our budget and got all of the funds projected. I wanted to thank all of them who participated in eating, activities, using our transportation and also for home delivery meals ... so we had a party.”

Fleszar estimated there were 140 people in attendance, and they enjoyed lemonade, cupcakes and other treats, as well as the winning of B.E.E.S.-related door prizes. “They loved it,” Fleszar said. “We had a ‘thank you’ balloon and even gave it away.

“Without them, we can’t make the numbers. I can project them, but they have to make it happen.” ♦

Premiere story helps add to Sing-A-Long participation

Director Carol Fleszar said a Premiere Magazine story about the B.E.E.S. Sing-A-Long group led to its numbers almost doubling.

“We were having 20-30,” she said, “and after your story, we shot up to about 45. I think when people read the story they thought it would be fun to be a part of and you wouldn’t believe how many more people were aware of it.

“I just wanted to say, ‘Thank you.’”

The B.E.E.S. have also been running regular radio spots with MOR Media to increase awareness of their efforts. ♦

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Community Center hosts Senior Olympics

Paragould's Community Center was filled with Senior Olympians in July, hosting more than 200 nursing home athletes.

The Nursing Home Olympics started in 1987 as a celebration of Nursing Home Week and expanded from there. Entrants compete in six different events: Horseshoes, bean bag toss, discus (a regulation frisbee), shot put (a regulation softball), wheel chair races and a

dance contest.

The Olympics allow nursing home residents to participate in physical activity and to socialize, as well as getting to have a day away from the facilities in which they live. A picnic lunch is provided, as are trophies and medals to competitors and winners.

Mostly, it is a day full of fun and friendly competition, with plenty of smiles and hugs all around. ♦



Evelyn Faulk of Greene Acres Nursing Home, above, competes in one of the many events at the Olympic Games in Paragould. At right, Cathy Thomas, representing Belle Meade Healthcare in Paragould, finishes the wheelchair race.



We salute all our teachers.



Special Congratulations to the
Premiere Teacher of the Year, Kimber McMillon



After the grand entrance at the Nursing Home Olympics, with displays like that of Greene Acres Nursing Home above, people settled in to either watch the competition or take part in the various events. The Community Center floor was filled with athletes, sponsors and volunteers as the games got under way.



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Pruett Street was the place to be when automobiles entered in The Great Race made a Paragould stopover. Plenty of local volunteers decked out in yellow shirts aided in the production, from helping with the prerace setup to dishing out information to visitors, spectators and contestants.



Paragould hosts stopover for The Great Race

Known as the world's premier time, speed, and endurance rally for vintage cars, The Hemmings Motor News Great Race, presented by Hagerty, has remained an extremely popular event for more than 30 years.

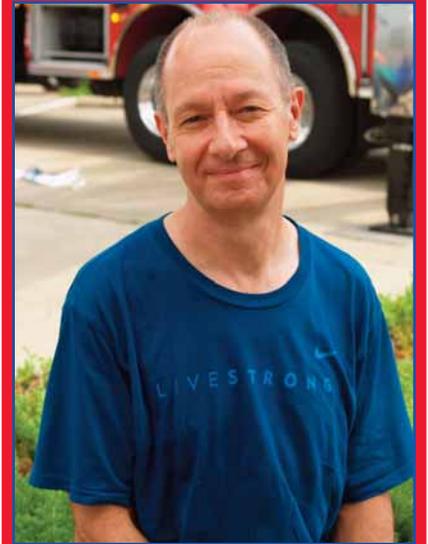
This year's race covered 2,100 miles, hitting 10 states in nine days. It originated in St. Paul, Minnesota, and ended in Mobile, Alabama, with a stop in Paragould featured along the way. Spectators were allowed to inspect and photograph the cars and visit with drivers while they took a lunch break.

This year's winners of the controlled-speed endurance race were Irene and Barry Jason, driving a 1935 Ford 5 Window Coupe, with a time of 0:47.03. ♡





The car that actor Tony Curtis occupied in the 1965 movie "The Great Race" was one of the first to hit Pruett Street, above, much to the delight of onlookers. Below, race owner/organizer Corky Coker greeted the crowd before cars began to arrive. The first car in, No. 16, was a 1916 Hudson Speedster. Soon thereafter it was joined by others, like the 1929 Ford Model A (No. 24) and a 1932 Ford Boattailed Speedster (No. 58).



Paul Brown, an admitted "car person," came to Paragould with camera in hand.

The Great Race brings Little Rock resident to Paragould for 1st time

By Richard Brummett

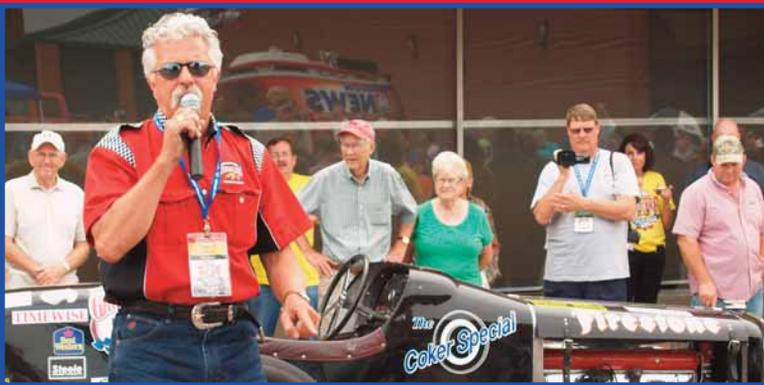
Paul Brown said he was reading his copy of Hemmings Motor News when he came across an advertisement for The Great Race.

"When I saw it was going to be in Paragould," Brown said, "I said, 'I've got to go. That's too close to pass up.' So, here I am."

Calling himself "a car person," Brown said he used to follow his father as he raced "all over Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and some in Texas. I worked as a mechanic in high school and college ... Mercedes, Porsche. I got to drive a lot of cars people just dream to touch or see."

Brown said he'd never been to Paragould before, but liked what he was seeing.

"The closest I had been was Walnut Ridge on the way to Chicago," he said, "but I love it. I love small towns and the downtown area here is beautiful. You've done a lot with it." ♦





While Pruet Street was crowded with spectators awaiting the arrival of Great Race participants, just around the block several local and area antique automobiles were on display. Visitors took a look at cars and trucks of all ages before making their way to see Great Race entries.



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Happy 90th

Friends and family gathered at the home of Mary Ann Kingston in July to celebrate the 90th birthday of her aunt, Naomi "Red" Henkel.

Those attending enjoyed gospel singing with Billie Rowland at the piano.

A home cooked meal complete with cake and ice cream was served.

Those attending were, front from left, Joy Holcomb, Naomi "Red" Henkel, and Hildred Gilmore; second row, Emma Brasher, Ruth Thun Horst, Barbara Carr, Bonnie Walls and Sharon Gray; third row, Mary Ann Kingston, Betty Breckenridge, Ollie Winn and Ida Lenderman; and back, Shelia Breckenridge, Billie Rowland, Wanda Roy and Doris Wells. Janet Burkheart also attended but is not pictured.



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Country singer Michelle Murray felt compelled to write a song for injured driver Sam Schmidt.

Michelle Murray: "My number one passion is people"

By Richard Brummett

Singer Michelle Murray was more than happy to participate in the "My Finish Line" movie premier and music tour, since she wrote the song that became the film's soundtrack.

Based on the story of former Indy Car racer Sam Schmidt, who became quadriplegic after a racing accident in 2000, the movie features Murray's song, "It Won't Be If But When (Sam's Song)."

"I met him five years ago in Chicago," Murray said of the former race car driver. "I grew up an Indy car fan. Dad always went to the Indy 500, and I watched on TV. But I was into music in Nashville and traveling and had no idea he was so involved in the racing community. I met him when I was performing at an Indy racing event in 2009. We built a relationship and I ended up writing a song about him.

"I got to know him and was overwhelmed by his faith and perseverance," Murray said. "His daughter was 2 at the time of his accident. Now she's 15, and he wants to dance at her wedding. I was really inspired by him and his spirit. If anyone can do it, he'll do it."

Murray said her parents are Special Education teachers, so "I grew up with a soft spot in my heart for anyone with special needs. To be able to include in my music all these people ... special needs people, veterans ... well, my number one passion is people. Whether it's meeting them through songs or on stage, it's very rewarding."

She said it took her about two hours to write the song, but felt it was something she needed to do. "I had an investor who wanted me to do another album but I was into this whole project ... the film, 'My Finish Line;' I thought it would be selfish to try and further my career in Nashville when I could do this," she said. ♦

Presidential Conversions hosts movie, music tour

Presidential Conversions, the oldest supplier of services and equipment for the physically challenged in Arkansas and surrounding areas, served as a regional sponsor in the "My Finish Line" Premier Movie and Music Tour, sponsored by BraunAbility.

Both Presidential Conversions locations -- Jonesboro and Fayetteville-- were part of the tour, which included 120 stops in all 50 states. They included stops by the "My Finish Line" tour bus and information on the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation.

Select locations also featured acoustic performances by Michelle Murray. Copies of the "My Finish Line" DVD were available.

The "My Finish Line" Premier Movie and Music Tour is based on the story of former INDYCAR racer and current car owner, Sam Schmidt, who became quadriplegic following a racing accident.

The tour celebrates Schmidt's story, as well as providing awareness and hope for the stories and struggles of handicapped individuals across the United States.



Former INDYCAR racer Sam Schmidt, the subject of the movie "My Finish Line."

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Advance practice nurses see very few “typical” days while on the job

By Caitlin Lafarlette

A typical day does not exist for a nurse practitioner. Cathy Young, a practitioner at CR Doc in Paragould, is never sure of what she will see walk through the door. Every day brings something new to the table.

Young identifies herself as a nurse practitioner, but the career falls under the term APN: advanced practice nurse. APNs also include clinical nurse specialists, nurse anesthetists, or nurse midwives, according to www.nursingworld.org.

The APN role began in 1965 at the University of Colorado due to a lack of physicians in the area. Pediatric nurses began increasing their training to become APNs and support the doctors. Young became a nurse practitioner in 1995, “Which makes me a really old one,” she stated.

She taught at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and began her practice at the student health center at Southeast Missouri State University. Young provided healthcare for college students for seven years. In addition to teaching and working in health centers, she also traveled to Cape Girardeau, Mo., to begin a nurse practitioner program. At the time, there was only one other practitioner in town.

When Young started her job there were about 40,000 nurse practitioners. This year there are more than 159,000 practicing.

Her work day consists of using diagnostic skills to the best of her ability and to know when she doesn't know something so a patient can be referred to a specialty group. “I do a lot of referrals,” she explained. “I refer for GI workups and cardiac workups.” Young also deals with education, reinforcement and a lot of talking throughout each day.

A practitioner also sees a patient throughout



Cathy Young, a nurse practitioner at CR Doc, examines Luke Barlow in the office. Her daily duties mainly consist of putting her diagnostic skills to work.

their life, anywhere from two weeks old until death. They take care of issues such as chronic conditions, hypertension (high blood pressure) and cardiac problems. Young said studies have shown that when nurse practitioners are involved in congestive heart failure cases, the outcomes are generally better and less hospitalization occurs.

“We monitor their outcome and we know when to send them to their cardiologist,” she said. In fact, more nurse practitioners are headed toward a specialized field such as cardiology.

The most rewarding part of Young's job is when she can make a difference. “I have two different roles. When I'm in my teacher mode, I love seeing a successful student,” she said. “In the clinic my goal is to meet the needs of a patient in a

realistic way, but also not to just bow down and give them what they want.”

Additionally, Young works with children who have been sexually abused. She enjoys helping them begin recovery from sexual assault or abuse, whether physical or mental.

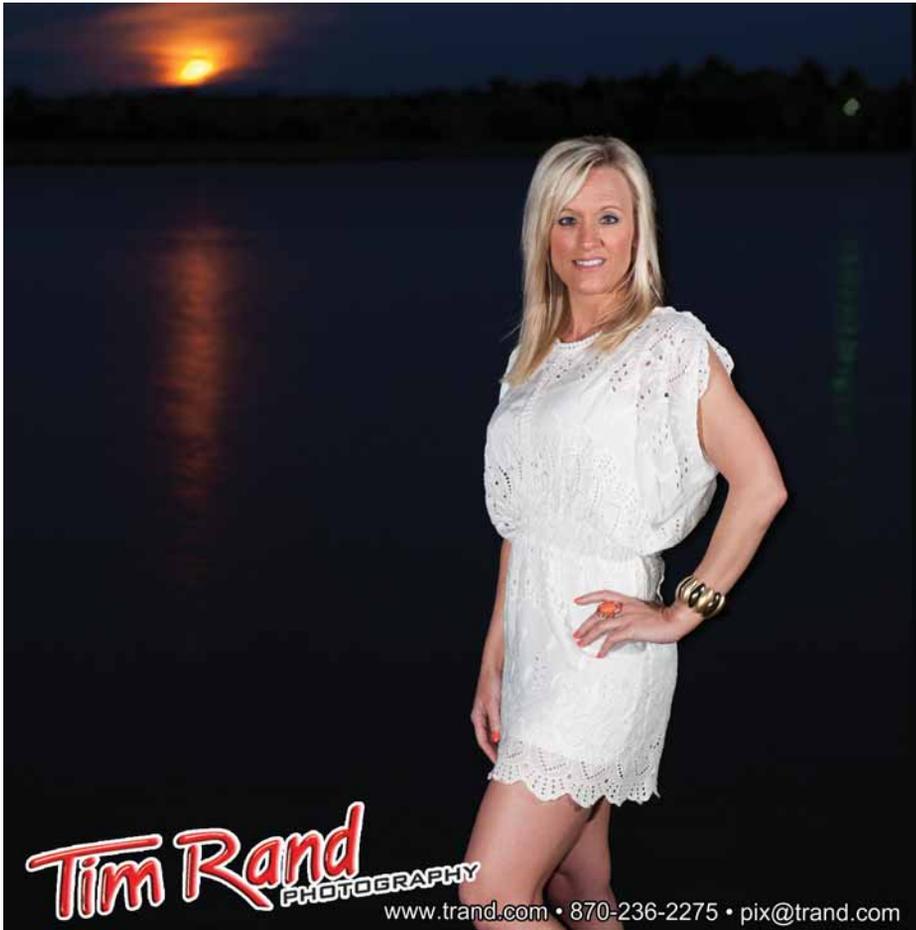
While working as a clinical nurse specialist with a cardiac transplant team looking for early signs of transplant rejection, Young realized her love was not with acute care. She also knew she wanted to be in a rural area.

“I wanted to make a difference and hopefully offer healthcare to people who wouldn't get it otherwise,” she said.

That is normally what nurse practitioners and other APNs are known for. They assist in medically underserved areas or places with health professional shortages. “I call them frontline warriors,” Young said. “They're making daily decisions that can be really difficult.”

This June, Young was inducted as a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners in Las Vegas. There are 406 in the nation selected by their peers for induction, and Young is the fifth from Arkansas. ♦

“I wanted to make a difference and hopefully offer healthcare to people who wouldn't get it otherwise,” Young said.



Brian Osborn and Leisa Rae accept a plaque from Ken Sibley, ABA President, center.

MOR MEDIA wins pair of awards

Representatives of MOR Media and JACK FM came away from the annual Arkansas Broadcasters' Association Convention in Little Rock with a pair of prestigious awards.

MOR Media was the winner of the Community Service Medium Market award for its participation in the 2013 Arkansas Children's Hospital Circle of Friends Radiothon in April.

The Radiothon is a 12-hour fundraiser sponsored by the Greene County Chapter of

The Circle of Friends and MOR Media. The 2013 version raised more \$31,000 for the charity.



Sibley hands Dina Mason an award for Community Service by MOR Media.

Southern Bank in Paragould hosted the event, which combined efforts of the Paragould Fire Department, Turner Dairy, The Circle of

Friends, MOR Media and countless other volunteers.

The MOR Media crew also picked up the Outstanding Station Promotion Award for the Downtown Paragould Zombie Walk.

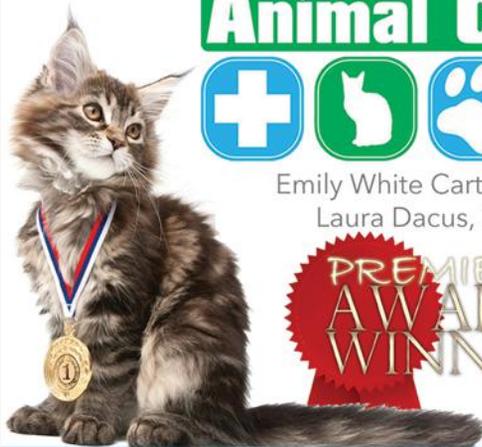
Leisa Rae compiled the information examined by judges, including both photographic displays and a recap of the event. More than 500 zombies gathered in Downtown Paragould, backed by many more spectators. Zombies came from all over Arkansas and from other states as well. The Zombie Walk was a success thanks in large part to Rae and the MOR Media staff, as well as the valuable efforts of the Main Street Paragould crew. The date for this year's event has been set for Saturday, October 26. ♦

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August 2013

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Colt Reddick, 6, and a St. Louis Cardinal fan, is ready for the hot August days ahead. Colt is the son of Tiffany Reddick of Hooker.

Happenings!



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Happenings!

1. Volunteer Of The Year

Lily Hoggard has been selected “National Hospital Volunteer of the Year” by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary. Hoggard is a member of the VFW Auxiliary Unit 4517 in Piggott and volunteers at the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff, as well as the community-based outpatient clinic in Paragould. She has served 21 years as a volunteer, devotedly caring for hospitalized and elderly veterans.

Medical Center Director Marj Hedstrom congratulated Hoggard on the award: “The extraordinary contributions of our volunteers play a critical role in enhancing VA health care delivery, by helping to make each day a little brighter for our veterans. At the medical center, we take a great deal of pride in serving our veterans but we know our volunteers add a special touch, and we are delighted Lily has been honored in this way.”

Pictured from left are Acting Chief of Voluntary Service Donna Reynolds, Hoggard, and Medical Center Director Hedstrom. Individuals interested in volunteering or donating to the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center may contact the Voluntary Service office at 573-778-4276.

2. Marmaduke Celebrity

Ms. Mattie Wright was honored to be chosen as 2013 Marmaduke Independence Day Celebration Grand Marshal. She was also the oldest person attending the festivities at the age of 99 years. Escorting her in the annual parade was Steve Dixon, Mayor of Marmaduke.

3. 40-year Reunion for GCT Class

The Greene County Tech Class of 1973 held its 40-year reunion July 5-6. Pictured are, front from left: Ted Schug, Randy Jumper, Fred Shannon, David May, Hal Baugh, Emily Wilson Lounge, Alva Rains Shankles, Virgie Stevens Pilarski, Jane White Phelps, Glenda Hicks Blasini, Donna Elliott Hunter, Freda White Dodd, Judy Specking Brasher, Jean Carr Russom, Vicky Easton Tennison, Linda Brown Lalman, Sue Reeves McGowan and Larry Griggs.

Back row from left: Gary Richey, Merle Mitchell, David Lin Howard, Bill Keasler, Dennis Baker, Paul Gifford, Jerry Rodgers, Tony Matheney, Terry Schug, Michael Jones, Robin Reeves, Jimmy Eason, Stan Smith, Lanz Loyd, Stan Foster, Robin Boyd, Tom Newberry and Bob Wells

Attending but not pictured: Tom Haynes and Jim Howington.

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Rookies offers sports theme, new approach to local dining

By Gabriel A. Cook

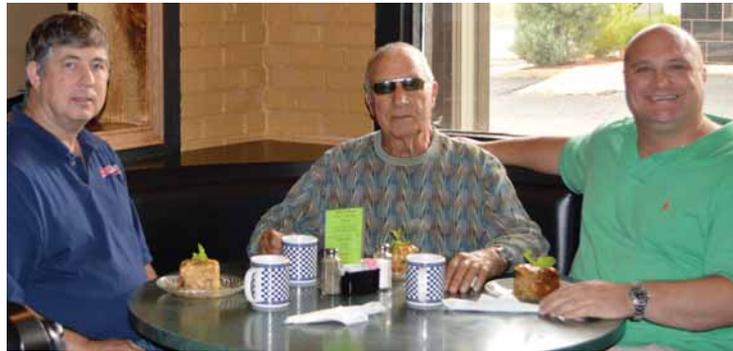
Starting a business with a partner entails long hours, discussions both heated and calm, and a dash of risk. Complete trust between partners is most important of all, and such trust usually takes years to build. For Terry Williams and Neil Vaccari, co-owners of Rookies, that trust happened practically overnight.

"We didn't know each other until the night we became business partners," Neil explains. "I was in the military. Terry knew my father — he'd installed an air conditioner for him. Through that working relationship Terry came to respect my father's integrity."

Soon after, Terry wanted to go into the restaurant business. He initially contacted Neil's father, but Mr. Vaccari cited his age — 84 — as being a bit advanced for such a venture. He introduced his son to Terry instead, and it wasn't long before the pair knew they could do business together.

"Terry had the initial idea; he had the location. When I came on board, we knew we wanted a restaurant/bar, and we decided that a sports theme was the leading contender. That's how Rookies came to be named," he said.

Rookies is a family-friendly establishment.



Terry Williams, Papa Nicolino Vaccari and Neil Vaccari of Rookies are proud to offer everything from Italian dishes to Southwestern style items to their customers.

"Our food is not typical of a sports bar. One of our chefs is from El Paso and grew up in New Orleans, so his food has a Southwestern and Cajun influence. Another of our chefs graduated from a culinary institute and studied under an Italian chef. Her specialties are Italian food, bread puddings, and desserts," Neil said.

"My father is full-blooded Italian," Neil continues. "He came over from Italy, so when this opportunity presented itself, we decided to put some of his favorite dishes on the menu."

When asked his favorite menu item, Neil has to think a bit before recommending the ribeye steak: "Also, our lasagna is to die for. Best in Northeast Arkansas, if not the state. Our best-sellers, though, are probably the burgers and sliders."

Neil is quick to explain what sets Rookies apart from other establishments. "We're locally-owned, a new business with a fresh set of eyes in the industry. We do things differently than what's come before. In Paragould, you're either a restaurant or a night club. We're an upscale, family-friendly restaurant that's different from anything else out there. Once the sun goes down, the lights dim, and the whole atmosphere changes. We have live music on the weekends. Bands from all over play here. It's unusual to have a place for Mom and Dad and the kids ... but Terry and I have it all here."

Rookies is located at 1606 West Kingshighway, down from Walgreens. For more information — or if you are a band looking for a gig venue — call 870-215-0400. ♦

A colorful promotional poster for the 2013 Greene County Fair. The background is a golden-yellow sunburst pattern. At the top, it says "2013 Greene County Fair" in a decorative font. Below that, "OLDEST in the STATE" is written in large, bold letters. A banner across the middle reads "126TH EDITION!". At the bottom, it says "Sept 2nd - 7th". On the right side, there are illustrations of a hot dog, a soft-serve ice cream cone, a red and white soft drink with a straw, and a red and white striped popcorn bucket. The website "greenecofair.com" is written at the bottom right.

Fun at the South End Block Party

Downtown Paragould businesses Something Sweet, Bladez, Larry's Pizza, Mosaic Boutique, Percy's Pool Parlor, goYWP, Lipstix & Lollipops, 310 South, Mosaic Salon, and Uptown Interiors -- along with JACK FM -- hosted an old-fashioned block party.



While kids frolicked in the water, far right, Rob Schorer, below, put away all other contestants -- like Tyler Sims and Caleb Liddell -- in the Cupcake Eating Contest.



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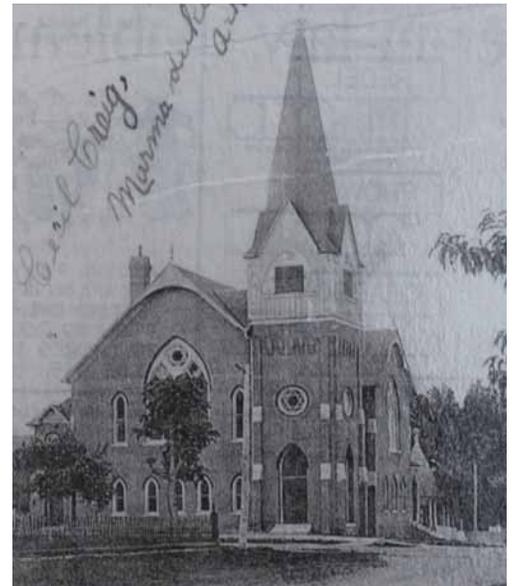


Giving new meaning to
"Friends with Benefits"

FUMC marks 130 years of service



Paragould's First United Methodist Church today, at left, and in the past, right, the second building occupied by the church. It was located on the corner of Third and Emerson streets. The local church is celebrating its 130th birthday this month.



As we come to 130 years of existence, First United Methodist Church, the first church begun in Paragould, reflects.

First United Methodist Church's origins were not in a church. One might say they began with a circuit-riding Methodist preacher by the name of Riley Diggs, great-grandfather of Bob Branch, a present member. Diggs (1823-1890) rode horseback to his appointments in Clay, Greene and Craighead counties and held the first revival in Craighead County, according to *History of Methodism in Arkansas and Greene County*, written by Branch. The beginning of methodism in Paragould sprang with another circuit rider, the Rev. F. E. Taylor, pastor of the Greensboro Circuit, who came to Paragould in February 1883 and preached in an unfinished store building on



Rev. John Fleming, pastor of FUMC.

the south side of West Main Street. "The building was cleared of materials and seats were improvised from plank," Branch wrote. "The minister continued his visits to the new

and growing town of Paragould and conducted his services in a small building belonging to John F. Dover, located on West Emerson Street in the downtown section." That summer he held an extended meeting, in which he organized the First United Methodist Church with 13 members.

On August 18th of that year, W.S. Pruett decided the church lot at the corner of Second and Emerson streets, where a building was erected and occupied immediately, the History records. This was the only church in Paragould at the time. "The building was made available for use by all denominations," Branch wrote.

In 1893 the congregation had outgrown its original frame structure and a brick church was built at the corner of Third and Emerson streets.

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FUMC's third and present church building was begun under J.B. Evans, 1923-26. The new church was described as a "noble structure of rare beauty," with a total cost of \$125,000, including a \$10,000 pipe organ. "This building was first occupied by the congregation on Sunday, Nov. 21, 1926. In October, 1933, the 50th anniversary of methodism in Paragould was celebrated. The membership had grown from 13 members to more than 800."

Even the name of the church has changed and evolved over the years. It started as Methodist Episcopal Church, then Methodist Episcopal Church South, to The Methodist Church, to The United Methodist Church, and finally to the First United Methodist Church.



The stained glass windows on the exterior doors were at one time in the First Christian Church.

Church South, to The Methodist Church, to The United Methodist Church, and finally to the First United Methodist Church.

Margaret Stricklin, long-time member, recalls stories told by her husband, Paul, and his family about the church. Her father-in-law, Robert E. Lee Stricklin, as a

young man helped build the old church building and years later helped build the new one as well, working in the sanctuary. "He helped put up trim," Stricklin said. "The family tells me he did all the work that required scaffolding in the sanctuary because many men were afraid of the scaffolding and he was not." She went on to say she believes Robert helped with the original painting of the building and said her husband probably helped paint in more recent years.

Margaret, who just turned 91, said she was young when she married Paul and became part of his and FUMC's family. "I grew up in First United Methodist Church," she said. Because of her health, she is not able to attend church as she once did. "Church is dear to me," Margaret said. "My heart's still there."

The stained glass windows on the exterior doors were at one time in the First Christian Church. When the church ceased operation, the building was sold to Bob Bland, a member at FUMC, who then razed the building and stored the windows in a barn for several years. When the exterior doors needed to be



First United Methodist Church in Paragould started in 1883 with 13 members. The old photo above shows how the congregation continued to grow.

replaced, Bob's widow, Ann, donated them to be used.

In the 1970s the church added a chapel and Fellowship Hall; in the 2010s it added a Welcome Center (which is now where the contemporary service meets). Today, more than 400 people come to any one of three services held each Sunday morning.

Rev. John Fleming, pastor of FUMC since June, said, "Birthday celebrations are always fun, filled with smiles, laughs, singing, and birthday cake. Can you imagine celebrating a 'birth' date one hundred and thirty times? That is what our church is doing this August. As we like to say in our church, we have a great past, but we also believe that we have a

bright future. The prophet Jeremiah talked about a future with hope. We have come to claim that verse as a congregation. First United Methodist Church is a wonderful place to learn and fellowship. We trust that it will be so for many years."

He will oversee special activities to mark the occasion, when the church will have only one service. Here are the plans for Sunday, August 18th:

8:30 Brunch

9:15 Church-wide group photograph in sanctuary

9:30 Sunday School

10:30 Church service in the Sanctuary ♦

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Kimber McMillon wins Teacher of the Year honors

Premiere Magazine readers choose
Greene County's top educator

By Richard Brummett

Kimber McMillon was surprised to be named Premiere Magazine's Outstanding Teacher of the Month for January. You can imagine her reaction upon learning she is now the Teacher of Year, according to magazine readers.

"The Teacher of the Month really surprised me," said McMillon, a first grade teacher in the Greene County Tech system. "I saw all the different ones each month and saw what great teachers they are ... well, I was just really, really surprised when you called."

Premiere readers nominate teachers each month for special recognition, then at the end of the school year vote again for their choice as the top teacher from among the individual honorees.

McMillon, who is starting her 11th year as a teacher -- all at Greene County Tech -- said she's not certain why so many people voted for her but hopes it's because "I really care about the kids and maybe people see that. I try to make the parents feel like they're welcomed and that we're a team, working together for the kids' sake. I try to make myself available; I think that's very important. If everybody who can help a child is on board, that makes it that much more successful."

Admitting it was difficult to answer some of our questions "because I'll be the first to admit that I do not think that I am anyone special," McMillon said she thinks one of the things that makes her a better teacher is the fact that she knows she still has much to learn.

"Each and every day I pray that God will help me in all that I do," she said. "He is my constant source of strength. The Bible says to 'trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.' I pray throughout my day and ask for His guidance and I am so thankful for Him."

She said she is also not above "stealing" ideas from other teachers.

"Oh, all the time," she said with a laugh. "I listen and I'm always watching people to see what I can use. One of the best places to learn is from someone with good classroom management. I observed at the Primary School and watched others do their reading group or math. There's always something you can learn, especially with math. I like to give the kids a problem and see how they do it; sometimes it's easier



Greene County Tech first grade teacher Kimber McMillon is Premiere's Teacher of the Year.

for them to explain it to their neighbor because they speak their language."

Teaching is a very different game from year to year because of the rapid technological advancements, McMillon said. "It's already a lot different from when I first started teaching 10 years ago," she offered. "Keyboarding comes to mind, because eventually standardized tests will go to it. I was probably in Jr. High before I had it; but the kids today certainly know it, and it's a much bigger part of their lives than it was mine. It's amazing what they know. There are so many things coming at kids today ... entertainment, video games, TV, phones, iPads. You have to work hard to hold their attention; it takes new methods to keep them engaged and interested."

She credits Danny and Linda Davis, who recently retired from Tech, as being big influences "because they encouraged me when I was in school. They poured a lot of themselves into what they did and you felt like they loved you and you were important to them. I have a lot of respect for them."

Now, she tries to do the same. "I think kids realize I love them and care about them," she said. "I hope so, anyway." ♦

Back To School ... things you need to know

Parents of first-time students have lots of work to do before school starts

By Gabriel A. Cook

Starting kindergarten is an exciting — and sometimes fearful — event for most children, but it can also be a confusing time for parents. In our modern world, schools require a phalanx of information concerning each student before they allow enrollment. What is the first-time parent of school-age children to do?

Long before the first day of class, parents should contact their school district to learn what they'll need to register their child. Setting up a meeting with a principal or teacher is also encouraged, as is taking the child to see their classroom. Accompanying the new student can help alleviate fears and tension concerning the newness of his or her surroundings, and introducing them to their teacher will help instill the notion that the instructor is not a "stranger," and thus some-

one to go to if a problem arises.

Each child will need ample documentation upon registration. Though it varies from school to school, basic requirements include a well visit screening, immunization records, Social Security number, birth certificate, health insurance card, and a home address. Other factors may be considered, and — again — a call to administration is suggested before any action is taken.

Preparing the child for a drastic change in routine is paramount for his or her wellbeing. Talk openly and frankly about what they can expect ... and what you expect from them. Let them know that fun and hard work can go hand-in-hand, and that they'll be surrounded by other children, some of whom will become their friends. Explain the various projects they'll work on (asking a teacher beforehand will help), recess, lunchtime, and other

aspects of classroom activities. A serious discussion concerning behavior will benefit any child, and a gentle warning against breaking rules — and making the principal's acquaintance — should be included.

Building chains of communication with other parents will also help insure ease of transition for the student. Attend the initial (if not all) parent/teacher meeting, and meet the parents of other children. It can be surprising to note the difference engaged, cooperative parents can make on a student's well-being in class.

For more information, call the administrative office of the school in which your child is/will be registered. For the Paragould District, call (870)236-8064. For Greene County Tech, call (870)215-4420. For Marmaduke, call (870)597-2711. For Crowley's Ridge Academy, call (870)236-6909. And for St. Mary's, call (870)236-3681. ♦

Teens, pre-teens need to be involved in activities

By Jennifer Thompson

Going back to school can be overwhelming for students and parents alike. High school teacher Amie Cole has some professional tips and tricks to help get your pre-teen, or teen, ready for his/her next year at school.

Cole, who teaches 10th through 12th grade agriculture science at Greene County Tech, is also a mother of four (two 16-year-old boys and two girls, ages 11 and 7).

When asked, "What are some of the challenges you face when getting your teens and pre-teen ready to go back to school, generally?" Cole said, "Getting back into a routine and trying to get all of our schedules together so that we are able to attend as many activities as possible for each kid."

For various reasons, typically social or academic, some teens and pre-teens are apprehensive about returning to school for another year. To these students, Cole said she would encourage them, "(To) take the

opportunity in school to do something outside your comfort zone. Join a club, be on a team, do community service. There is so much to learn in school, outside the classroom walls, and most of the time, that's where you find the best of friends as well."

Parents and students who will experience the student's driving to school for the first time also get advice from Cole. "Leave early for school! The safest way to get to school is to be there before the traffic," she said. "If everyone is rushing to get there at the last minute, there is a greater chance of an accident. And take your time leaving school. Lots of accidents happen in the parking lot because kids are in too big of a hurry."

Teens' school schedules are often not the only major factor coming into play when trying to plan your family's activities for the new school year. Some teens work, but one of the biggest scheduling issues for families comes with extra-curricular activities and how to balance those along with school schedules,

and family time as well. When it comes to these scheduling issues Cole says, "My husband is also a coach and teacher. Both boys are athletes, one at Tech, one at Paragould. My girls dance at a local studio and I have several after school responsibilities. We have to keep our schedules in a family planner so we know where everyone is. Fortunately, I have great parents and some girls at school who help get the girls to their activities. And Sundays are dedicated to family time."

Additionally, Cole stated, "The biggest concern I hear is that some kids are scared to move from junior high to high school. It's so easy to get lost in a big school with so many students. Encourage your child to get involved in an activity they are interested in. Having something in common with a smaller group of kids makes high school so much easier. And support them in whatever that activity or club is, even if it isn't what we as parents would have chosen for them. Finding their niche will make the biggest difference in having a successful high school experience." ♦

College freshmen face challenges when living away from home for the first time

By Caitlin Lafarlette

As I prepare for my final year of college this fall, memories of moving to the honors dorm at ASU and realizing what freedom I had are more vivid than ever. I was full of the endless optimism that every 18-year-old probably has once he or she begins college. In my mind, I would attend classes with mature 20-somethings and hang out in the student union with new friends (Starbucks in hand, of course).

In reality, I was faced with struggles nobody warned me I would face when entering the real world. My enthusiasm never wavered, but I learned how to pick through my difficulties. I began warning my younger friends of what they could face after high school. College can be the best years of a student's life, but incoming freshmen should take note of these common trials.

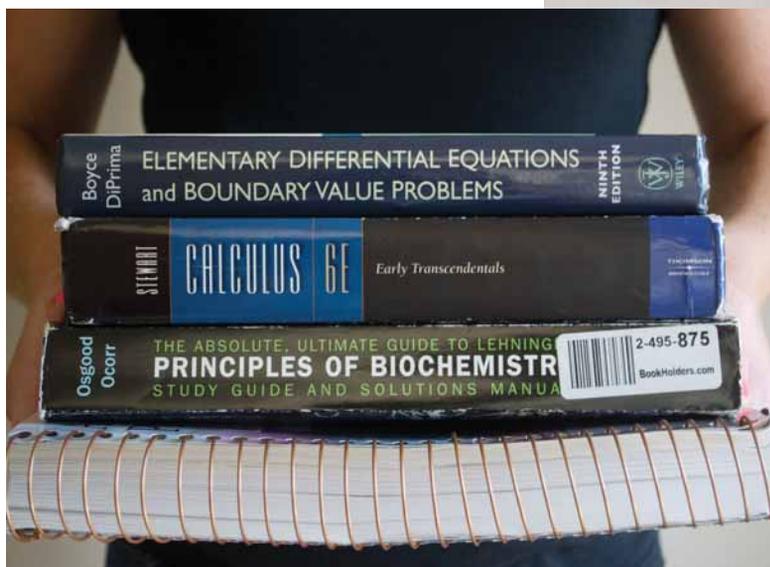
Moving out means your parents won't be around to make you go to school. No matter how comfortable that bed is, go to class. If I could go back to my freshman year, I would demand a do-over of the days I skipped just because I wanted to sit in front of the computer. It's okay to miss a day or two, but if sickness isn't an issue, the place to be is in the classroom taking notes. Your grades and future depend on it.

Rooming with a stranger sounds daunting. In the long run, however, it can be a wonderful decision. Roommate assignments aren't a random process. Colleges provide forms to fill out with questions such as interests, dislikes, and what type of person you would like to room with. Many freshmen end up becoming best friends with someone they were formerly afraid of living with.

Each year, before moving back on campus, I

completely clean my room and throw away or donate unnecessary things to make the move easier. During my freshman year, I traveled home several times to return what I didn't need. College dorms usually aren't large, and having to share space with another person means downsizing. Take the essentials such as clothes, computer equipment, and bath products. Leave that giant stereo system and drum set at home.

"There's no such thing as a dumb question" is a good mantra to repeat during your college years. If you are unsure of something, it is always best to ask your professor



Moving out into the real world can be a bit of a shock, but staying on top of things as you begin your college career will make for a smooth transition.

When the end of the course comes and you are a fraction of a point away from an A, your professor could allow extra credit work simply because they valued your involvement. My first year of school, I tried to blend in and remain unnoticed. Once I learned to connect with my teachers, I realized they are there to mentor and link me to career

opportunities.

College is an exciting process. It's a time to find new interests and friends and to start planning. Go toward it with an open and level mind to have the best experience possible. Even as a senior, I am still making mistakes, but my first year taught me the basics on how to get through the next four years of my life. Have fun while staying aware of new challenges that might arise and learn from those obstacles. ♦

Marmaduke offering concurrent credit classes for first time

By Richard Brummett

Students who meet the academic qualifications at Marmaduke High School this year will have an opportunity to complete work toward college credits, as well.

The Marmaduke district will be offering concurrent credits in English, History and Math thanks to an agreement with Arkansas State University. Concurrent classes are university courses taught face-to-face in area high schools. Enrolled high school students receive university general education credit while simultaneously receiving high school credit.

High School Principal Bill Muse said the cooperative effort will help students interested in obtaining a college degree get headed in that direction at a faster -- and less expensive -- pace.

Muse said Marmaduke students who have the required grade point average and test scores will be allowed to earn three hours of

college credit per semester at about one-sixth the cost, or "around \$120."

His own daughter Hannah, for example, plans to take advantage of the program to complete requirements in Composition I and Composition II through the AP English course. "She can take it through the concurrent credit program," Muse said, "for about \$240. If she took it her freshman year at ASU, it would run me \$1,000 to \$1,200. The savings are enormous and it does not interfere with scholarships or the chance for scholarships."

Muse said college tuition costs are increasing at a rate of about 7% each year and the new program should help alleviate some of the students' college expenses. "The amazing thing about it," he said, "is that they get the same credit while saving thousands of dollars."

Muse said students can "walk out their junior year with an opportunity to gain 12 college hours."

High school math instructor Kelly Clayton agreed the program means savings for the students in both time and money.

"The grades and the hours go right onto their college transcripts," she said. "If you take the necessary high school class and then enroll at ASU, you get credit for the course. It is essentially going to high school and college at the same time, only you're getting the college courses at a discounted price."

Students who attend a participating high school must meet the following requirements: A minimum ACT score of 19 on the following sections: composite, reading and content area of the enrolled course; a minimum high school GPA of 2.50.

Muse said letters were sent by the school district to the parents of students who have met the academic criteria needed to participate, but those seeking information may call the school at 870-597-2723. ♦

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First time “school mom” is understandably apprehensive

While some parents are counting the days until their children return to school, I’m debating a good cry as I drop my first born off for his first day.

I can suddenly relate to the analogies older people share about time and the tendency it has to fly. I wish I could make the hours before my baby has the option to catch a yellow bus stand still. Instead, I hope that everything I’ve taught him, the way I’ve nurtured him thus far will be enough to contribute to what he will learn as a kindergartner.

“Teachers understand. We know because we have our own children. Our job is to ease the nervousness parents or children might have,” assures parent and Greene County Tech kindergarten teacher Kersten Herget.

“My first priority is to take care of the children, and my second is to teach them,” she says.



By Tiffany Napier

My husband and I attended Kindergarten Day at Crowley’s Ridge Academy recently. I was so surprised to find children at this level who could recite the capital of a state or read so precisely. It was impressive and a bit intimidating, as I wondered if my child was prepared. Herget confirms this is not uncommon for students who have been previously exposed to educational environments.

“I would say close to 80 percent of my kids at GCT come from preschool. Preschool helps tremendously, not just with academics, but with social skills and getting in a routine of what school is all about,” she says. “It helps for a child to be able to recognize their name,

letters in their name or even writing it. It’s a plus if they are familiar with some letters or numbers. Counting is important. I encourage reading to your child every night and laying a foundation for the importance of reading as well.”

While preschool is a head start for a number of children, Herget says parents can play an integral part in preparing their kids while at home.

“Simply talking to your children about what to expect, taking them to Open House for a preview or to meet their teacher and possibly some of their classmates helps ease anxiety or any pressure that comes with the first day of school. Make learning a game. For example, share flashcards, count at bath time, review rhyming words while cooking supper, count vehicles you pass while in the car. Exposing kids to colors and shapes, the difference between letters and numbers, explaining capitals and lower case letters is all extremely important. At this age, little minds absorb so much,” she says.

Most importantly, Herget makes it clear the love I feel for my child is reciprocated. She speaks of the importance of a student/teacher relationship. Establishing that often makes it easier to gain a child’s respect for learning. Like life, there is a certain amount of discipline required in education but compassion, particularly at this age, breeds success.

“This is their introduction to interacting with others, learning how to share, take turns and cooperate. There are so many social skills they pick up those first few years that are so crucial,” Herget says. “You’re giving us your best, your children, and our job is to take care of them. I think teachers do a good job of that.”

While most schools send out mailers about important information or supplies needed on the first day, Wal-Mart also provides a list of supplies for various schools in our area. Herget suggests parents contact the school their child will attend for names of service organizations geared to providing for any child in need of assistance. ♦

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Spectators enjoy local fireworks display

Several local sponsors teamed up to bring fireworks to town on the Fourth of July, giving spectators a memorable show at Paragould's Rotary Park Softball complex.

The Paragould Jaycees and MOR Media, which consists of 107.1 Jack FM, 1490 KDRS AM and the new 103.9 Jill FM as well as Paragould Premiere Magazine, spearheaded the efforts of several businesses and organizations, particularly major sponsors First National Bank, Forbs Tire Service and Stadium Auto Body.

Live music was provided by Brad Messer and The Refuge while kids were treated to a free bounce house. There were also food and merchandise vendors on hand. ♦



Musical entertainment was provided by the local band Brad Messer and The Refuge, above, while below from left, Kylie Allen, Treasurer of the Paragould Jaycees, displays one of the Big Bang T-shirts being sold; Amy and Genesis Southard and their dog Grace were among the first to arrive and secure a choice viewing spot on the parking lot; and the bounce house provided good photo opportunities for parents whose children took advantage of the free event.



BIG BANG BLOWOUT



MOR Media at the Big Bang Blowout

Representatives of MOR Media were easy to find at Paragould's fireworks show, whether in the company's booth or just meeting and greeting the public



At left, Loretta June Adams models her JACK FM sticker, picked up at the MOR Media booth. Above, MOR Media's Dina Mason, Megan Koller and Leisa Rae chat with visitors to the booth; below right, Leisa and Brian Osborn meet a listener.



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Tracy Singleton

Temporary bachelor unnerved by house's mysterious sounds

My wife (in pursuit of her Master's Degree) packed a bag and bundled our son into his car seat to attend orientation in Conway. She planned to stay the weekend with family, thus leaving me to myself. She pontificated on eating healthily and avoiding scary movies that would impede my sleep; sighing impatiently, I assured her I would be fine, and waved as wife and son departed.

My first act as a temporary bachelor was to buy a dozen frozen dinners and two bottles of soda. I dragged comforter and pillows to the couch in the hopes of catching some late night chiller movies. I'm an adult, I reasoned, and free to do as I like. Perhaps I would stay up all night! Who was to stop me?

My enthusiasm dampened when darkness fell. My house — small and cozy with family around — became dark and sinister without them. Turning on every light didn't help. When the tapping began I told myself it was the house settling. An hour later, it became apparent that something other than the house was responsible for the noise. I hummed nonchalantly to put myself at ease. The tapping continued. My ease decided it had business elsewhere.

Cursing myself for a coward, I tracked the noise to our laundry room — the dark cell at the end of the kitchen. Tap, tap, tap. I stood there, weighing my options. I weighed them for an hour. Drying shirts hung from the doorframe, obscuring my view into the room; I would have to reach through them blindly to flip the light switch. My hand argued against this plan. I suppose fight or flight kicked in, because I eventually turned on the light and forced myself inside.

Several unoccupied hangers, suspended from a tension bar and stirred by the air conditioning, tapped the cabinets. Laughing at my foolishness, I turned ... and came face-to-face with a diaphanous white form. It enshrouded me, and I screamed for my life, fighting the specter as fiercely as I would an attacking grizzly bear

After a few moments, I realized I was being haunted by one of my wife's underthings. I



threw the slip onto the floor, double-checked the locks, and — disgusted by the whole affair — went to bed.

The next day dawned dull and stormy. I ate a late lunch with my mom and declined the invitation to stay. Night fell again, but — this time — I strengthened my resolve with several comedies pulled from the DVD shelf. Late that evening, my wife texted to say her family had rented a zombie movie, and she spent the next hour messaging each gruesome detail.

The various night noises the house made sounded not so much as if it were settling, but

being invaded by clammy hands in search of human flesh. I barricaded myself in my office and suggested a different topic. My wife announced she was off to bed and wished me a good night. I sat there, visions of the living dead shambling through my imagination. I grabbed our aluminum baseball bat, raced for the couch, and pulled the comforter over my head.

Dawn found me wide awake, bat in hand. My wife called to say they were returning early. Trying to disguise my relief, I told her to take her time. I threw the comforter and pillows back on the bed, buried the soda bottles in the trash, and pushed the remaining frozen dinners as far back into the freezer as possible.

My family arrived, and my wife asked how I'd managed. I waved the question off as rhetorical and helped her unpack.

I didn't know how to respond when she asked why the baseball bat was on the couch. ♦

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ELVIS WEEK ... AUGUST 10-17



Sisters had plans to see Elvis Presley in Memphis, still have tickets today

Theresa Justice and Connie Tolbert say their concert tickets “aren’t going anywhere” for any price: “It’s something special we share.”

By Gabriel A. Cook

Though he’s been gone 36 years, Elvis Presley’s reputation as “The King” has not diminished — especially among his diehard fans. While many folks claim they saw Elvis live, sisters Theresa Justice and Connie Tolbert have a tangible connection to the performer.

“We saw him in 1975, in Memphis,” Theresa says. “I believe that was his big return to the Mid-South. I ordered tickets in ‘77 for myself, Mom, and Connie. We were going to see him on a Saturday; he died the Thursday before.”

Theresa remembers being in her car when she heard the news of the entertainer’s passing. She thought it a mistake — possibly a cruel joke — but, upon returning home, radio and television coverage confirmed the news.

Connie, on the other hand, was vacuuming, her television turned up so she could hear. “I was in shock,” she says. “It was so sudden. I didn’t even think about the concert until later.”

The ticket outlet advised buyers to return the tickets for a full refund, but the sisters gave the matter some thought. “For him to die so close to home, within days of the concert, we decided to keep our tickets. They were \$15, believe it or not. And we still have them to this day.”

Though Elvis passed away, Theresa was still determined to see him. “They had a public viewing. I went to Connie’s to see if she wanted

to go, but she couldn’t get a babysitter. Driving to Memphis by myself — I was 23 or 24 — was not the wisest thing to do, but I went. It was bumper to bumper off the Interstate. I almost turned to go back home, but I stayed with it.

“There was no parking,” she adds, laughing, “so I parked in a No Parking zone. Then there was the crowd ... I just went to watch the people with no hope of getting in. They would open the gate and let 25 people in, and when I got there, they opened the gate, and I didn’t even feel my feet running. There were people all around me. We just pushed through.



The tickets give all the information regarding Elvis Presley’s planned concert in Memphis. At \$15 each, they seem quite a bargain today.

As soon as I was inside, they shut the gate. I walked up the driveway and saw the casket. You were allowed to pause and look, then you moved on. It was so hot that day. You wanted to pause longer because they had very cold air on him. I suppose it’s as close to Elvis as I ever got. That’s why when people say, ‘He’s still alive,’ I laugh, because I saw him.”

Thinking back on Elvis’ legacy, Connie says, “He was truly the King. It was mass hysteria.

People would fall and faint at his concerts. The noise level was incredible, whether he was singing, talking, or just standing there.” She, too, had a close encounter with The King. The week before Elvis’ death, Connie, her husband, and another couple visited Graceland. They were driven around the premises and were pointed to an air-conditioned window on the second story. “That was Elvis’ room, and he was there, at the time.

“I still consider him the King,” Connie continues. “We’re big fans, and always will be. My grandson, Jonas, when he was little, would ‘be’ Elvis. When he found out that Elvis had been dead for years, his mouth quivered. We talked of him as if he was still living, and it upset Jonas when he found out the truth.”

“I don’t think it mattered what he sang,” adds Theresa. “He was a performer in the truest sense. Even when we saw him during his heavy phase, he was professional. He gave his all. Still had that voice. It is an era that has passed.

But I still listen to him, and I go to Graceland. We take the grandkids. It’s a rite of passage.”

Then there’s the matter of the unused tickets. Would they ever consider selling them?

“Not on your life,” comes the immediate reply. “We’ll always have these tickets. Our mom (who passed away last year) still had hers. It’s something special we share. The tickets aren’t going anywhere.” ♦

ELVIS ... with a twist

By Richard Brummett

Elrod the Magician presents Elvis to his audience with a different twist ... several of them, in fact.

Elrod creates a number of characters through his talent as a balloon artist, one of them being Elvis Presley. He admits a recent venture into producing a "Fat Elvis" has taken some time but has proven a fun experience.

"I saw an Elvis somewhere one time and thought, 'Okay, I can do that.' So I made an Elvis for TaMolly's in Jonesboro," he said. "Since then, I've made a lot of Elvises and they're real popular."

Elrod credits Californian Don Caldwell, considered one of the greatest among balloon artists, with helping him refine his craft.

"This Elvis is pretty much one of his designs with my touch added," he said. "I was in a class of his seven or eight years ago. I plan to take another class in St. Louis in September. On Fat Elvis, you just copy somebody's idea, play around with it for a while, and get your own Elvis. If I ever get the face pretty close, I can do the body, no problem."

Elrod became interested in balloon art while attending an IBM magic show in Little Rock.

"I was approached by a salesman who wanted to know what kind of magic I did, and asked if I made balloon animals," he said. "I told him I wasn't interested but he said it's an easy way to make extra money. He said he'd sell me the kit for \$15 and it included the pump and instructions ... I bought it and spent the whole afternoon in the hotel playing with it, and then I was hooked. It's a very fun way to make money, but it's not for you if you don't like kids."

Elrod said he has been performing at the Jonesboro TaMolly's "probably seven or eight years and the ones who started out watching me there as kids have grown up now. It makes me say, 'How old am I?' But, I've made tons of friends."

As for producing an Elvis character he says, "Oh, it's not hard. Once you learn the basic twists, you just go from there." ♦



Elrod the Magician brings "Fat Elvis" to life with a series of twists and turns while completing his balloon art.



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Get Rich

By Richard Brummett



My friend James is going to be missed

People come into our lives for any number of reasons. Some are so ornery they make us appreciate the good people; some *are* the good people.

For me, James Branch fell into the latter category. He lived at The Chateau On The Ridge and was the self-appointed greeter. My mother lives there now as well, and almost every time I made one of my daily visits, Mr. Branch sought me out and shared something with me ... a story, an adventure, a trip to his garden.

I should back up here -- he insisted I call him James, even though at age 90 he was very much my elder. He died unexpectedly in July and his passing leaves a void in many of our lives.

James was the guy who would hop up and hold the chair for the ladies at the dinner table. He was the one who volunteered to say a blessing over the food before each meal, the one who wanted to see each and every Chateau resident and visitor happy and comfortable.

He brought fresh produce from his garden to the table or dropped vegetables off at neighbors' apartments, always with the promise of more to come.

His home was next to the door where I enter the building, and many times he insisted I step inside to see an email he had gotten from a family member or friend, or sometimes to help him figure out how to send an email himself when his computer wouldn't cooperate.

James didn't say, "Hello" and then quit; he said, "Hello" and followed up with a story, one designed to help him spend more time with you. He obviously loved people and we loved him back, and entering the door now is certainly different. I think it's safe to say we miss him, and will for some time to come. ♦

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Dr. Richard Gard

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center adds Gard as OB/GYN

Dr. Richard Gard is the newest member of the medical staff at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center.

He joined the team in June of 2013. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from Indiana University in Bloomington and his Medical Degree from Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis. He completed his internship and residency at Blodgett Medical Center and St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Gard came to AMMC from Kokomo, Indiana, where he has been in solo practice for 24 years. He offers services to a varied population including low and high risk obstetrics, infertility, menopause, surgical and non-surgical gynecology and office gynecology.

He is Board Certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. He is also a member of the American Society of Reproductive Medicine.

He and his wife, Cindy, have three adult children each and three grandchildren.

AMMC Women's Clinic, located at 1000 West Kingshighway, Suite 4, is now accepting patients. To schedule your appointment, call 870-239-8307. ♦

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Time to start planning Christmas Parade

Even though there is no immediate chance of snow in the forecast, it's time to start planning Paragould's 2013 Christmas Parade.

This year's theme is "Christmas Dreams on Parade," scheduled for Saturday, December 7. The starting time has not yet been determined.

Gina W. Jarrett, Executive Director of Main Street Paragould, said organizers hope the parade will complement Downtown's Holiday Tradition event

and are looking at a "late afternoon /early evening time. We'd like the parade to benefit the Downtown businesses and think with the parade being the conclusion of Holiday Traditions this could be accomplished. And secondly, we think it would be easier for more to participate and attend on an evening that is not a work day and a school night. "

Those willing to offer ideas, serve on a committee or help in any way can contact Jarrett at 870-240-0544. ♦

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Students take part in AMMC's M*A*S*H program

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center hosted the M*A*S*H Program for high school students in July.

The program took place at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center in Paragould and various other locations throughout a two-week period.

M*A*S*H, or Medical Application of Science for Health, is a two-week program for high school juniors and seniors interested in a career in the medical field. Fifteen students from Greene County Tech, Marmaduke, Paragould and Rector high schools, Crowley's Ridge Academy, and one home school student participated in the program this year. Two medical students assisted.

Students were involved in several different events including a heart dissection, suturing and casting labs, an injection lab, a fatal vision goggles experiment and were allowed to shadow professionals such as nurses, doctors, pharmacists, radiologists, phlebotomists, dentists and veterinarians.



Arkansas Methodist Medical Center's M*A*S*H (Medical Application of Science for Health) Program graduated fifteen students at a ceremony held in the auditorium at AMMC. The juniors and seniors participated in different activities all related to the medical field during the two-week session. Pictured front row, left to right, are students Destiny Watkins, Anna Schefano, Erica Hall, Spenser Sullivan, Kelsey Cates and UAMS Medical Student Parth Shah; second row, left to right are, AMMC Education Director Shannon Gomer; students Ben Kueter, Madison Janski, Kailee Rowland, Lindi Miller, Sierra Vangilder and volunteer Brooke Peebles; and third row, left to right, UAMS Medical Student Ryan Harris and students Hannah James, Lenae Haley, Chance Causey, Jacob Mitchell, Colton Batten and Brian Williams.

For more information on the program, call the Education Department at 239-7016.

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ACH to benefit as local softball group, Circle Of Friends team up to stage tournament

The Greene County Circle Of Friends is partnering with the Paragould Youth Softball Association to host a Back to School Bash Softball Tournament.

Part of the proceeds from the tournament will be used to benefit Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock.

The tournament will be held Friday through Sunday, August 23-25. The youth softball organization has agreed to give all the proceeds from the gate to the Circle Of Friends.

Circle Of Friends members will be at the Rotary Park softball complex, taking gate money and donations, as well as signing up new members.

Anyone seeking further information should contact Brian Coleman at 870-931-2708 or Denise Middleton at 870-476-0754, or via email at denisemidd@hotmail.com.

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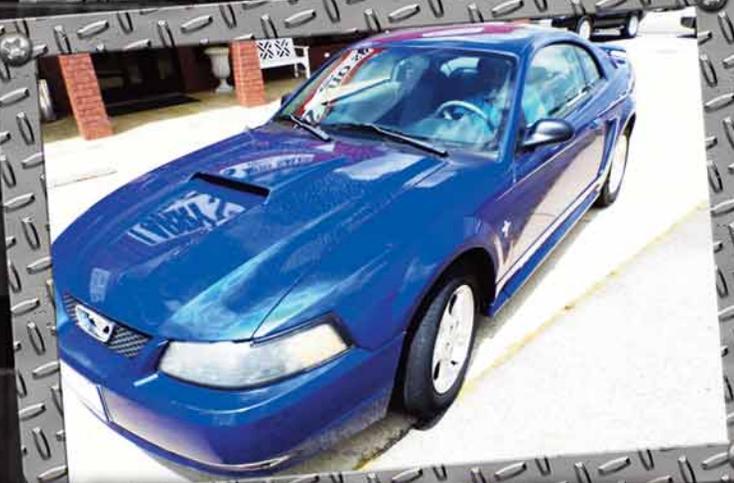
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St. Bernards named one of best work places

St. Bernards has been named as one of the 2013 Best Places to Work in Arkansas in the first year of an annual program created by Arkansas Business and Best Companies Group.

The survey and awards program was designed to identify, recognize and honor the best employers in Arkansas, benefiting the state's economy, workforce and businesses. The list is made up of 12 companies.

"We are more than pleased to have been selected as one of the businesses included in the Best Places to Work in Arkansas program," said St. Bernards Vice President of Human Resources Jacque Hurd.

"The prestigious award confirms what we have known for a long time – that St. Bernards is an exceptional place to work.

"The selection process was rigorous and included an in-depth review of our culture, benefits, pay – and most importantly – responses through a random confidential survey process conducted by Best Companies Group," Hurd continues.

"Our dedicated employees are committed to providing the highest quality comprehensive healthcare to our patients, and we think this recognition is as much about exceptional, satisfied employees as it is about the employer.

"We take pride in the care we deliver every day, and we know we are in good company with the other 11 businesses who are being honored in this first year of Arkansas Business's Best Places To Work in Arkansas program," Hurd stresses. "We appreciate the recognition afforded by this statewide honor."

Companies from across the state entered the two-part survey process to determine the Best Places to Work in Arkansas. The first part consisted of evaluating each nominated company's workplace policies, practices, philosophy, systems and demographics. The second part consisted of an employee survey to measure the employee experience. ♦

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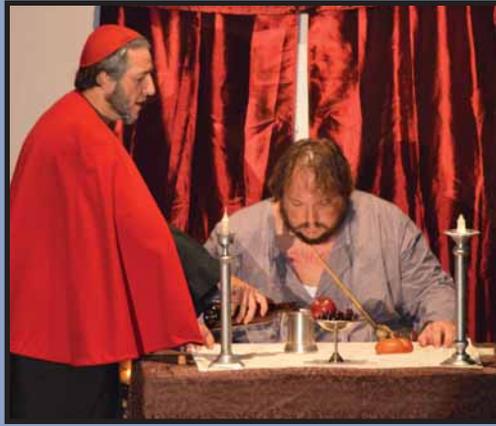
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“Les Miserables” is staged at Paragould’s Collins Theatre

The Collins Theatre presented “Les Miserables” over the course of four sold-out nights in July. Fifty-seven cast members and a dozen crew members - including six musicians -- worked for three months to bring the production to life.

“Les Miserables” was produced by Rick Lane, directed by Lane and son, Tommy, and vocally directed by Vicki Bishop-Nigro. Ken Wadley served as orchestra leader.

“Les Miserables” was the biggest production ever mounted at the Collins. It tells the story of a convict, Jean Valjean, chased through the decades by Inspector Javert. It is told against the backdrop of the French Revolution.



Allen Rose and Derek Phelps, left, and Marcia Brown, right, performed for onlookers at the Collins Theatre. Below is a scene from the female work factory while at bottom, the entire cast takes part in the finale.



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Natalie Sigsby & Joseph Rogers
November 2

Juli Summitt & Cody Waits
November 2

Anna Rogers & Ryan Blankenship
November 16

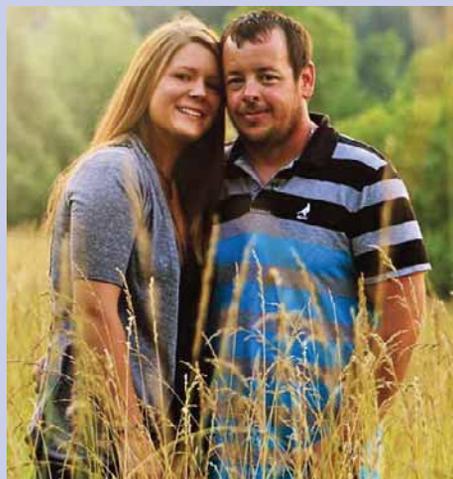
Laura Pollard & Kyle Thompson
December 14

Sarah Gillmore & Mark Hawkins
December 14



Brittany & Jake Murray
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Melia Fender and James "Blue" Blankenship

Fender-Blankenship

Melia Fender and James "Blue" Blankenship announce their plans to be married in August.

The bride-to-be is the daughter of David Fender of Lafe and Lynda Wallen of Blytheville.

The prospective groom's parents are Eddie and the late Debbie Blankenship of Stanford.

The wedding is set for August 31, 2013, at the Paragould Community Center. ♦



Mikka Felty and Alex McDaniel

Felty-McDaniel

Mikka Felty, the daughter of Gary and Vicky Felty of Paragould, and Alex McDaniel, son of Barry and Rita McDaniel of Union City, Tennessee, will be married October 26, 2013.

The ceremony will take place at the Stan Jones Mallard Lodge in Clover Bend. ♦



Photo by Melissa Donner

Jeremy Poindexter and Holly Pugh

Pugh-Poindexter

Holly Pugh and Jeremy Poindexter have announced their plans for a wedding in August.

Holly is the daughter of Kevin and Paula Pugh of Paragould. Jeremy's parents are Keith and Cheryl Brown, and Fred and Shari Poindexter, also of Paragould.

The wedding is planned for August 31, 2013, at Paragould Missionary Baptist Church. ♦



Clinton Duane Mitchell and Lindsey Newman

Newman-Mitchell

Lindsey Nicole Newman and Clinton Duane Mitchell will exchange wedding vows Saturday, September 14, 2013, at Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro.

Lindsey is the daughter of Fred and Patricia Newman of Dyersburg, Tennessee. The prospective groom's parents are David and Debbie Williams, and C.D. Mitchell of Paragould. ♦

Birth Announcements



Wolf Ryder Smith

Hadlee Jo Reynolds

David and Ashley Reynolds of Paragould announce the birth of their daughter, Hadlee Jo Reynolds.

Hadlee Jo was born at NEA Baptist hospital in Jonesboro on May 10, 2013.

She weighed 8 pounds and was 20 3/4

inches long.

Grandparents are Rocky and Lurene Ricker and the late Laura Jones.

Great-grandparents are Berta Lou Sims and the late Thomas Sims.

Hadlee has two siblings, Zoie and Charley. ♦

Randy and Michelle Smith of Paragould announce the birth of their child, Wolf Ryder Smith.

Born at NEA Baptist Hospital, Wolf weighed 8 pounds, 3 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Siblings are sisters Natasha, Claudia and Rose.

Grandparents are Melvin Eudy, Pat Tucker, and Connie Smith. ♦



Kolt James Blake

Jeffery and Kayci Blake of Paragould announce the birth of their son, Kolt James Blake.

The baby, born at St. Bernards Medical Center, weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and was 20.25 inches long.

Grandparents are Kevin and Dana Felts, and Allen and Kellie Blake.

Kolt has one sibling, Jace Allen Blake, 4. ♦

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August

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3

AMMC HOSTS CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION CLASSES, Session one of two. Held in the auditorium in the Professional Office Building at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center. Free to those delivering at AMMC, otherwise it is \$50. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Participants will have a break for lunch. For more information or to register, call AMMC Lactation Services at (870) 239-7467.

4th ANNUAL BIKERS LOVE BOOBIES POKER RUN, held by the Bosom Buddies Arkansas Race for the Cure Team at The Office Lounge in Downtown Paragould. Registration starts at 10:00 am.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

AMMC HOSTS BLOOD DRIVE WITH THE AMERICAN RED CROSS, held in the Auditorium of the Professional Office Building at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center. Each person who successfully donates blood at the August blood drive will receive three (3) \$5 coupons to be used at the Auxiliary Gift Shop, Beacon's Deli, Cafeteria, or The Foundation Station. Held from 4:30 pm - 8:30 pm.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

AMMC HOSTS CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION CLASSES, Session two of two and is a feeding class. Held in the auditorium in the Professional Office Building at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center. Free to those delivering at AMMC, otherwise

it is \$50. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. For more information or to register, call AMMC Lactation Services at (870) 239-7467.

RUMMAGE AT THE RAILS

beginning at 7:00am. Too much stuff but don't have a good spot for a garage sale? Join us Downtown. Main Street Paragould will rent you a spot or if you don't want to sell your treasures yourself, donate them to MSP and we'll sell it for you. It's time to clean out the garage, those storage units, basements and attics. MSP will be accepting furniture, decorative items, kitchen goodies, linens, almost everything except clothes beginning August 1st. This is a fundraiser for Main Street Paragould. Main Street is a non-profit organization; your donation is good for Main Street and good for you at tax time. For more info, please call 870-240-0544.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16

ULTIMATE OLDIES SHOW at the Collins Theatre in Paragould. We have put together another great show of your favorite oldies from the 50's and 60's. There will be 35 songs, 29 of them we will be doing for the first time. The other 6 are songs that we have only done once from one of our previous 15 shows.

MONDAY, AUGUST 19

AMMC HOSTS MOMMY AND ME BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP MEETING, for new and expectant mothers. Offers a chance to meet other moms and share experiences. Held in the Second Floor conference

room in the Professional Office Building at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center. 6:00pm - 7:30pm. For more information, call AMMC Lactation Services at (870) 239-7467 or the Greene County Health Unit at (870) 236-7782.

MONDAY, AUGUST 19

PAINT THE TOWN RED, join the Chamber and ASU and decorate your business by painting windows/doors, etc. There will be a contest for the best decorations. Judges will look for most spirited, originality, and best design. Decorations should be in place by Monday, August 19. Judging will take place that week and winners will be announced on Tuesday, August 27. The Order of the Pack Pep Rally will be held on Thursday, August 29, at 7:00pm at the Liberty Bank Football Stadium.

MONDAY, AUGUST 26

KASU'S BLUEGRASS MONDAY, brought to you by KASU. The music starts at 7:00pm, at The Collins Theatre, 120 W. Emerson Street.



RECURRING EVENTS

First Monday of every month: Paragould Young Professionals First Monday Lunch, noon.

Every Wednesday: Perking on Pruett, 8:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m. At Something Sweet. Find out what is happening in the One and Only downtown Paragould. Your input is welcome.

Second Tuesday of every month: The Greene County Wildlife Club meets at the Paragould Community Center beginning at 6:00 pm.

Second Thursday of every month: The Compassionate Friends, 7:00 p.m. Southside Community Church Conference Room, 2211 Jones Road. For parents grieving the loss of a child. tcfofnortheastarkansas@yahoo.com.

Second Wednesday of every month: St. Mary's Spaghetti Dinner, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 for all you can eat spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, dessert and drink. At St. Mary's Catholic Church in Paragould.

T.O.P.S. (Taking Off Pounds Sensibly) Wednesday mornings at the Paragould Community Center in Room E. Private Weigh in at 8:00 a.m.; support meeting at 8:30 a.m. May attend one meeting as a guest. Membership fees are \$26 a year and \$1 dues per meeting.

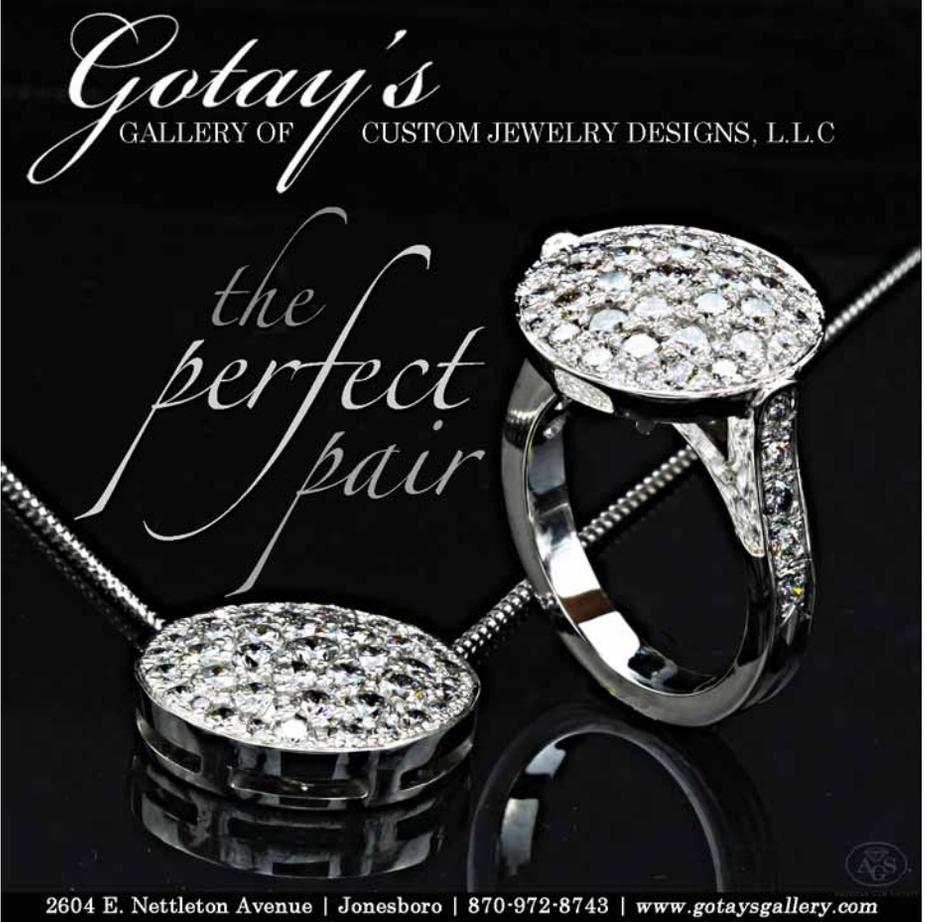
COMING UP IN *—september—*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 Fall Into Arts Festival, Downtown Kennett, MO. Call (573) 344-4223 or visit www.kafta.org for more information.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 The Fold hosting benefit concert, BC Lloyd Building (GC Fairgrounds), 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 KASU's Blues Monday, 7:00 pm, The Collins Theater.

Please send all information for upcoming events to editor@paragouldpremiere.com



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Who is Greene County?

I AM
GREENE COUNTY

Joseph Taylor Age: 35

What I do: I run the hatchery at Coldstream Fisheries.

What I like the most about Greene County: I've been all over this country and six or seven others, and as far as I can tell, this is the center of the world. Somebody knows about Paragould or Greene County or knows someone from here just about anywhere you go.

My family: My wife, Leia, and my dog, a beagle named Rue.

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, golf. I like to build things. I tell everybody, give me five hours and a charge card and I can put a screen door on a submarine.

My future plans: Staying right here. I don't ever plan to leave.

One of my most interesting experiences: Being at my cabin by myself ... just to shut down and hide from everybody for a while. It's peaceful.

Next Month

On The Cover

BUY LOCAL.

In the September issue we will take a look at locally-owned and family-owned businesses, and examine the importance of shopping in your home town. When money stays in our community, local tax dollars support schools, neighborhoods, roads, police and fire departments and local groups and organizations. Look for a copy of Premiere and support locally-owned businesses. ♦

Out and About



Pick up a copy of Premiere Magazine each month. Magazine staffers and members of the MOR Media group frequent numerous activities in and around the Paragould and Jonesboro communities. You are almost certain to see someone you know inside the pages of Premiere Magazine. ♦

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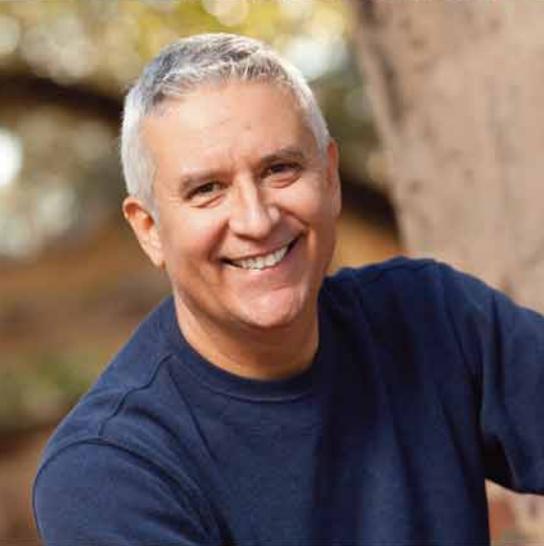


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Building



health
care



around

you.

NEA Baptist will soon open one of the most advanced health care facilities in our region – a fully integrated medical campus combining NEA Baptist Memorial Hospital and the specialists of the NEA Baptist Clinic. And along with this new facility comes a new way of practicing medicine that continues to focus on an outstanding patient experience. From adding new doctors and specialties to acquiring the latest technology, NEA Baptist is busy building healthcare around you.

NEA BAPTIST. 

The Future
of Health Care is Here