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On The Cover: Steve Southard  
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# From The PUBLISHER... DINA MASON

The Spirit of Giving is something we hear this time of year, a lot. And we certainly see more of it than any other time of year, with all the Christmas gift giving and such. But a post on Facebook made me think about my own spirit of giving.

The post asked if anyone had ever been disappointed when they discovered a lack of appreciation from the recipient of their giving. I am sure most have experienced this and I wondered why I really couldn't remember feeling this way.

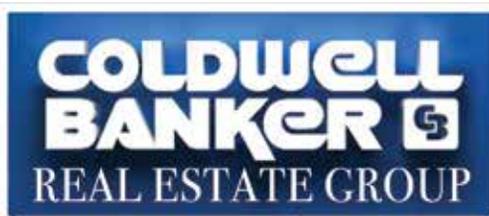
After thinking about it I determined that I "give" more for me than for them. No matter their response, "giving" makes me feel happy. I am thankful that I have the means to help and that I see opportunities to do so. I have received many "thanks" from recipients but while I appreciate them, they never feel as good as the act of giving feels.

I have lived in giving communities; military families, for one, are the most giving community by far. I had two small

children and I do not ever remember having an issue finding help with babysitting while our husbands were deployed, and we all traded watching kids as needed. Toward the end of a month when there were more days than paycheck, we traded a surplus of diapers for baby food, or milk for peanut butter. We were like family getting through.

Then the Northeast Arkansas communities I have lived in have certainly been a close runner-up! Both Greene and Craighead counties have some of the most giving people. Giving of their time, labor and money -- you give them a good cause and they will not disappoint.

I'm not sure if they experience the disappointment the Facebook comment mentioned but I believe most are like me and they give because they can and it feels good. I am not naive; I know not everyone I have given to deserves the help but I cannot worry about that. I will keep giving when I can and let God sort out the rest.



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# LOCAL AUTHOR

## AMANDA HOPKINS

By Richard Brummett

Amanda Hopkins credits her mother with convincing her to become an author, and now she has four books to show for it. She was at the Greene County Library in Paragould on a November Saturday morning to sign copies of her book series.

The Trumann kindergarten teacher said her mom “always said I needed to write and I finally listened to her. My husband and I adopted Daisy and I just took it from there.”

Hopkins’ dog, Daisy, is the inspiration behind the four books so far:

- \* Daisy Dog, I Love My Family;
- \* Daisy Dog, My Rabbit Buddies;
- \* Daisy Dog, Goes To School; and
- \* Daisy Dog, The Rescue Dog.

Hopkins, originally from Jonesboro but now a resident of Trumann, said she has been teaching for 18 years, always working with younger children.



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The advertisement features a festive background of colorful bokeh lights. In the foreground, a dog and a cat are wrapped in a red and white plaid blanket. The dog is on the left, and the cat is on the right. The text is arranged in a clear, readable layout, with the clinic's name and logo at the top left, the holiday greeting in the center, and contact information at the bottom.

# JONESBORO JAYCEES CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS & GOODFELLOWS

## THE TRADITION CONTINUES

By Lauren S. Isbell



You might not know it, but there is a connection between that hamburger you had at the fair back in September and a smile on a child's face on Christmas morning. For years, the Jonesboro Jaycees have run the Snack Shack at the Northeast Arkansas District Fair. All week, they serve up all kinds of fair food, all with a special project in mind.

The Jonesboro Jaycees are a group of young professionals, all under age 40, who take time from their busy schedules to plan many service projects throughout the year. One of the biggest undertakings the group manages is the Christmas for Kids Program. Christmas for Kids has run in conjunction with the Goodfellows Program for generations.

Starting the 1950s, the Goodfellows program began as initiative of the Jonesboro Sun (then the Evening Sun). When the Jonesboro Jaycees were chartered in 1952, they became involved with the project. The Jonesboro Sun continues to collect donations for the program and publishes the names of donors on a regular basis. The Jonesboro Jaycees are responsible for the administration of the program from application day to distribution day. The donations made to the Goodfellows program provide a week's worth of food for underprivileged families during the holidays. In recent years, the Jaycees have incorporated a toy drive to provide gifts for the families

as well. New gifts for children of all ages are being collected for the distribution day.

Upcoming Toy Drives are as follows:

- Highland Drive Walmart in Jonesboro from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. on December 1st and 8th
- Parker Road Walmart in Jonesboro from 12:00-3:00 p.m. on December 2nd and 9th.

Additionally, toys are being collected at every Centennial Bank location in Jonesboro and the new Five Below location on South Caraway Road. Monetary contributions can also be made at any Centennial Bank in the Jaycees Christmas for Kids account.

The Jonesboro Jaycees hope you'll take time from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season to pause and remember the magic of Christmas morning and help ensure that every child in Northeast Arkansas can experience the wonder and excitement of the season.

For more information about the Jonesboro Jaycees, check out their website, [jonesborojaycees.org](http://jonesborojaycees.org) or find them on Facebook.

# ARKANSAS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION: GREENE COUNTY'S PARTNER IN SMART CHARITABLE GIVING

Greene County Community Foundation is an affiliate of Arkansas Community Foundation, a statewide nonprofit organization that promotes smart giving to improve our communities.

Community foundations are a special kind of public charity created by and for the people of a specific geographic area. There are almost 800 community foundations across the U.S.

While funding for many foundations comes from a single source (for example, the "Smith Family Foundation" would be funded by members of the "Smith" family), funding for a community foundation comes from the entire community - hundreds of donors who care about a particular place and want to invest in its future.

Greene County Community Foundation was built by and for the people of our community in 1999. In the past 19 years, it's granted nearly \$6 million to local nonprofits doing important work to meet local needs. The Community Foundation provides an opportunity to come together with others who care about Greene County and leave a charitable legacy that forms a connection with our future.

We know that the people of our county have a heart for giving and the Community Foundation is here to help. By ensuring charitable gifts have the most impact, the Community Foundation shares knowledge and information about local needs and works to ensure charitable gifts grow for the long term. It provides financial tools so that you can have an immediate impact with your giving or a long-term approach to support ongoing needs.

## *Smart Giving at Year-End*

The end of the year is an ideal time to make charitable giving a priority for most individuals and families. Here are four considerations for giving as the end of 2018 approaches:

1. Give an asset that provides you with the maximum tax benefit. The old saying "cash is king" isn't always the case! Sometimes it makes more sense to give a non-cash gift to charity. Doing so can help you reduce capital gains, avoid estate taxes, or minimize taxable income, thereby supporting your overall financial goals. Talk with your professional advisor about what makes the most sense for you and your family. The Community Foundation is equipped to accept complicated



gifts and distribute the proceeds to your charity of choice.

2. Utilize a giving tool that best fits your income level, your tax-savings goals, and your philanthropic priorities. How you give to charity may differ from your neighbor or depending on your stage of life. Whether you give modest annual gifts to causes you care about, want to continue supporting an organization close to your heart forever, or have the means to make a larger impact, the Community Foundation has flexible tools for smart giving. Check out our Giving Toolkit to find just the right tool for you.

3. Make a gift to support general operations for the organizations you believe in. At year-end, most nonprofits are striving to meet their budget. Gifts in support of general operating expenses are incredibly beneficial because these "unrestricted" gifts empower the organization to determine where and how the money will be used—whether for creating an important program, hiring additional staff or simply maintaining their facility. Unrestricted donations also provide the nonprofit flexibility and security to advance its mission by planning programs for the following calendar year. Similarly, a gift to your community's Giving Tree Endowment enables the Community Foundation to plan for and respond to the ever-changing needs in your community.

4. Give where you live! By all means, give to support medical research, fund projects that provide clean water, or sponsor a global mission. But remember to give where you live,

too! At the Community Foundation, we aspire to improve the quality of life for all Arkansans and we start at the local level.

As the end of the year approaches, remember your friends at Greene County Community Foundation are ready to help you make the most of your charitable dollars, where it matters most.

## Contact Information:

Kerri Watson, Executive Director  
Greene County Community Foundation  
870-236-7718  
greenecounty@arcf.org  
arcf.org/greenecounty



# ODIN

## PREMIERE PET OF THE MONTH

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By Amanda Whitt

Odin is a 4-year-old White German Shepherd. We've had him for three years. I had been looking for a German Shepherd puppy for my husband for Christmas and a friend came across his photo on a Facebook pet sale page. She sent us the photo at 8 p.m. and we contacted the woman and he was home with us later that evening! From the moment I laid eyes on him I knew he would be a perfect fit for our family. We named him Odin after my husband's love for Norse Mythology. Odin has two sisters, Ruby and Lucy, both Shih Tzu's. He is super smart and has been trained very easily. He knows commands such as sit, stay, lay down, roll over, play dead, and to guard. He's the epitome of a good boy. He loves when friends and family come to visit. He also enjoys when his fellow GSD (German Shepherd dog) friends come over for play dates. He dislikes loud noises such as thunder and fireworks. He is also obsessed with deer meat, car rides, and swimming in the summer!





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# EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS *Clydesdales Fundraiser*

Express Employment Professionals hosted the Express Clydesdales in various events in Jonesboro and Paragould in September, taking the opportunity to raise money for Children's Miracle Network. For a donation to the charity you could take a ride in the wagon and have your picture made, all of the money going to Arkansas Children's Hospital. The events raised over \$3,200 for the fundraiser, which will go directly to the newly expanded Jonesboro location.

"I look forward to providing this unique opportunity to the community and also taking advantage of this exciting time to benefit Children's Miracle Network," said Scott Holden, Express franchise owner.

Pictured (left to right):  
 Scott Holden - Franchise Owner, Express Employment Professionals  
 Jill Hudson - Business Development Manager, Express Employment Professionals  
 Kait Ross - Director, CMN Hospitals, Arkansas Children's Foundation



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# Award Winning Students

## ASTATE MEDIA DEPARTMENT

**R**ed Wolf Radio, the student-operated online radio station, won CBI's "Best Documentary/Public Affairs Radio" at its meeting in Seattle, Wash., and ACP/CMA's "Best Special Event Coverage" at the National College Media Convention in Louisville, Ky., for the documentary "Bi Bi Bi," produced in conjunction with associate professor Sandra Combs' "Race, Gender and Media" course. The piece also earned second place in SPJ's "Radio/Podcasts Documentary/Investigative Reporting" in Little Rock.

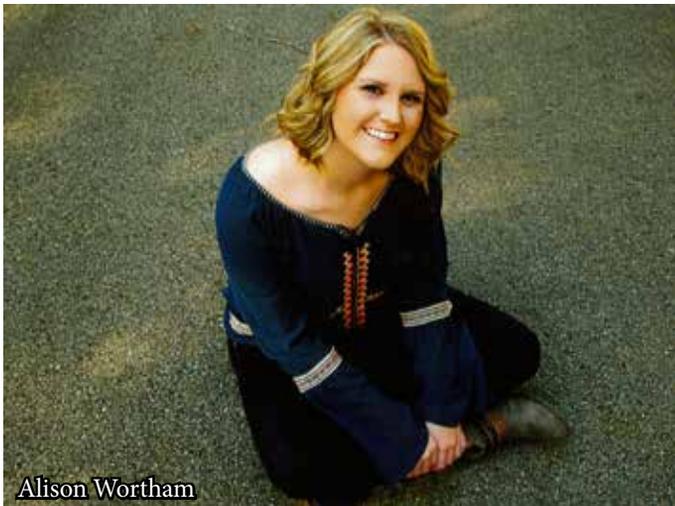
Overall, student publications and KASU's Ann Kenda won two first-place, two second-place and three third-place Diamond Journalism Awards at the SPJ-Arkansas Pro chapter's annual awards banquet.

A-State students working on the project included DDNS editor-in-chief Kimberely Blackburn, Tucker Crain, Miranda Reynolds, Katie Woodall, Christopher Lee, Seth Cleveland and Ammar Taqi. Students worked in KASU news director Johnathan Reaves' advanced reporting class, Roberts' reporting for electronic media class, and assistant professor Gabriel Tait's advanced photography class before submitting to the news service.



A-State senior Miranda Reynolds of McCrory and Delta Digital News Service adviser Ronald Sitton hold SPJ Diamond Journalism Awards won by students and staff at Arkansas State University. The annual SPJ-Arkansas Pro chapter awards banquet was held at Little Rock's Flying Saucer in the River Market district. (Photo by Caran Swanson Pitts).

## BRTC PARAGOULD STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Alison Wortham



Nicholas Brannan



Bobby Manuel

## NYITCOM AT ASTATE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

**S**hane Speights, D.O., dean, NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine at Arkansas State (NYITCOM at A-State), is proud to announce the formation of a new fellowship program in coordination with NYITCOM at A-State and the office of Representative Rick Crawford.

"We are excited to partner with Congressman Crawford's office on this exciting endeavor," Speights said. "This fellowship represents another step forward in bringing quality healthcare to those who need it in this region by impacting policy and ensuring federal funds are making the impact they were intended to. This is an amazing opportunity for our medical students to be on the front lines of health policy and learn firsthand how to best advocate for patients."

Each year, a third-year medical student at NYITCOM at A-State will apply and be selected to enter into a longitudinal program that runs concurrently with their medical school curriculum. The program will begin in January of their third year and conclude in March of the following year.

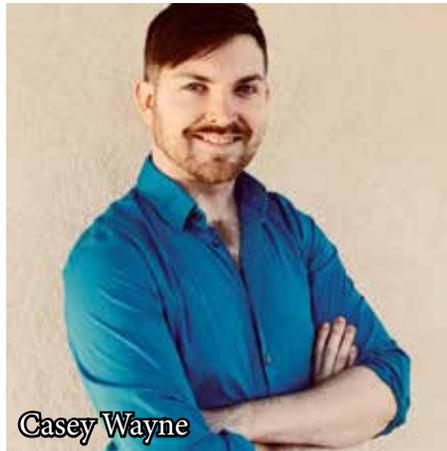
During the first 12 months of the program, the student will identify an area of research and work with Representative Crawford's local office in Arkansas to obtain data and perform on-site visits for a granular look into the different funding streams provided by the multiple federal agencies that grant funding to the Mississippi Delta Region. The goal of the study is to better the health outcomes of those communities. The Center for Disease Control (CDC), National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) are a few of the agencies that are dedicated to improving health care outcomes in the delta region through federal funding.

At the conclusion of the fellowship program, in January/February of the students' fourth year, the student will spend time in Washington D.C. and work with Representative Crawford's office to craft potential legislation, analyze policy proposals and leverage the resources of the office to help ensure that federal funding is targeting needed areas, being disbursed to successful programs and preventing duplication.

# NEA ARTS

## LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS ARTISTS CASEY WAYNE AND JOSHUA HUDSON

By Joy Robinson



Casey Wayne

Artists Casey Wayne and Joshua Hudson put their creativity to the test when a local theater production was in need of a very specific item.

The puppet needed was for the October production of "Little Shop of Horrors," presented by the Greene County Fine Arts Council. "Little Shop of Horrors," a comedy-horror made famous by the 1986 film directed by Frank Oz and starring Rick Moranis and Ellen Greene, and a very unique plant from outer space, the "Audrey II."

"A local production was in a crunch looking for affordable puppets so I happily volunteered

Joshua Hudson and myself to create the plants," co-creator, Casey Wayne said. "I (later) asked if Joshua was up for making them and when he said, 'Ehh, I'm not too sure,' I said, 'Well, we already signed up for it!' Luckily, he was on board."

A few years ago, Hudson created an Audrey II hand puppet for a Halloween costume. So, the pair knew the smaller puppets wouldn't be too difficult – but the larger sizes is where the challenge began. Taking inspiration from the film, custom blueprints were drawn and creative sessions to plan the construction took place. "Most of what we worked with was the image referenced in the movies," Wayne said. "There are several different versions of the Audrey plant, but we felt the film version delivered a stronger statement with the audience."

Over a span of five months, the pair made eight baby plants, and four puppets – varying in size from small to very large. Pods #1 and #2 weighed less than five pounds, while the largest weighed nearly 200 pounds and required 5-7 people to maneuver onstage. The baby plants were all stationary, meaning they didn't have to move. As the puppets got larger in scale, each one had components that required the movement of a puppeteer. Hudson also served



Joshua Hudson

as the puppeteer for the local production. "This was the first time that we have ever attempted something on this grand of scale," Wayne said, "and through a lot of trial and error, luckily they turned out better than we could have hoped for."

Although this was a daunting task, Wayne said hearing the audience reaction to the plants made it all worth it: "So worth it, we decided to put the largest plant on the front porch for Halloween and the kids went crazy over it! After posting the Halloween video online, we almost reached 60k views in a week!"

Wayne works with an array of mediums and

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materials, many being found objects. Self-taught, he has discovered his eccentric style through experimentation and diverse techniques. With a flair for pop art and a parade of color palettes, his unconventional works are truly unique. Casey describes himself as “creatively driven by creating a world of his own and inspired by the beauty found in the imperfections.” His creations can be found at [caseywaynestudio.com](http://caseywaynestudio.com).

Hudson has been a designer for 17 years. “I started when I was 18 and have been designing ever since. I worked part-time at a small advertising company while I got my BFA with an emphasis in graphic design from Arkansas State University. I have always loved anything creative but while taking classes my passion for fine art was confirmed.”

Aside from being a full-time designer, he also paints and sculpts, and has aspirations of opening a local gallery. “I would love to develop a creative space where others could come to take painting classes/parties and where artists in our area could display and sell their work.”

His personal art is influenced by distorted figures, faces, picturesque landscapes, and textural compositions. “I never know where a painting will end up,” Hudson says. “The backgrounds and moods emerge and change as the work progresses.” His goal is to create paintings that are bold and provocative. “My hope is that people who see my work are inspired and invoked to share a memory or experience the painting leads them to.” Hudson’s work can be seen at [JoshuaHudsonStudio.com](http://JoshuaHudsonStudio.com)”



Faith Funeral Service would like to thank each and every one of the families we have served since we began our funeral service in May of 2006. It is truly an honor to be able to assist families on one of the worst days of their lives. We hope everyone has a healthy and joyous holiday season.

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# Steve Southard

## SANTA "CAUSE"

By Richard Brummett

Steve Southard, 62, retired from Nucor-Yamato Steel in Blytheville as a shipping manager overseeing a crew of 180 people. Even in work attire he certainly looks the part of Santa: He's big, he's loud, he's jolly, and the white hair and beard were not purchased at a novelty shop; they are as real as he is. He's been performing as Santa for about nine years, very seriously for the last four or five. Once he decided the role was actually a calling, he went all out and took every measure available to learn the craft of thrilling the audience -- including graduating Susan Messco Santa School and Charles W. Howard Santa School, which teach ethics and some of the tricks of the trade. He has become known and widely respected for his habit of donating almost all his earnings from events back to the organizers, recently with City Youth of Jonesboro.

"You've never seen love until you look from Santa's eyes into the kids' eyes," said Southard, a Jonesboro resident and an award-winning member of the International Brotherhood of Real Bearded Santas (IBRBS). "Sometimes after a really long day at work I'm driving home knowing I have to get ready for a performance and I might think, 'Why go through this?' But once I put that suit on, I reach a different energy level. I'm a whole new person. I become Santa Steve then and it's all good."

He said his venture into the world of Santas is, "To be honest, a little bit of a sad story. Christmas was always real big at the Southard house. Christmas Eve, Dad would get a call about a family that had no gifts and he'd gather up stuff to take to them. He was a regular dad, a barber with a good heart. I saw early on how important it was to be willing to do good for others.



"But then my own son at the age of 22 tragically passed away. To help fill that void I started dabbling with Santa a little. To help fill this hole in my heart, I got pretty serious about Santa. After I first got out in public it became more of a ministry to me. It's a gift God has given me, I believe with all my heart. I use it to spread the word whenever possible

... you know, the reason for the season. Six years ago on Christmas night I got married. My wife Suzanne joins me as Mrs. Claus when she can." When she can't, Glenda Neff of Brookland expertly fills that role.

For his efforts, he was named the IBRBS International Charitable Santa of the Year for 2016. "I sort of changed my moniker to Santa Cause, because God has given me a cause," Southard said. "There are roughly 1,600 Santas across the world, so to win the top award is something else. They select the most charitable Santa. I won a trophy and a certificate and a Santa suit, but I auctioned the suit off and contributed the money."

While the role he plays is obviously geared toward making children happy at a joyous time of year, it is also designed to help him receive happiness at the same time he's doling it out. "It's all about the heart," he said. "When little ones see me and they run and jump into my arms, and that's a thrill. I take a lot of pride in making families have a good experience."

Santa Cause is making many appearances and truly looking forward to an appearance at the Junior Auxiliary of Paragould's presentation for special needs kids.

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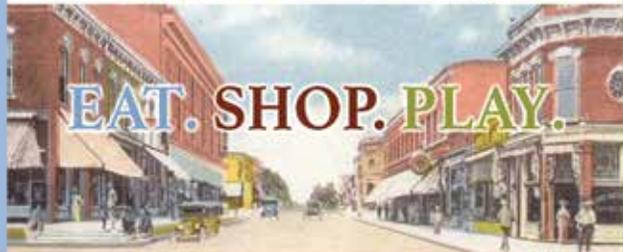
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# Paragould Animal Clinic

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# ARKANSAS PURPLE CIRCLE CLUB INDUCTEES



Arkansas Farm Bureau President Randy Veach presented awards to inductees into the Arkansas Purple Circle Club.

The Purple Circle Club is an awards program recognizing junior livestock exhibitors who earned championship honors at the Arkansas State Fair. It is sponsored by Arkansas Farm Bureau a nonprofit, private farm and rural advocacy organization of more than 190,000 families throughout the state working to improve farm and rural life.

Information provided includes:

1) Baylee Mangrum of Marmaduke was recently inducted into the Arkansas Purple Circle Club. Mangrum had the Grand Champion AOB - Exotic Heifer and Senior Exotic Breeding Beef Showmanship at the Arkansas State Fair and Livestock Show.

2) Jessica Griffin of Paragould was recently inducted into the Arkansas Purple Circle Club. Griffin had the Grand Champion Meat Pen and Grand Champion Commercial Gilt at the Arkansas State Fair and Livestock Show.

3) Will Exum of Paragould was recently inducted into the Arkansas Purple Circle Club. Exum had the Division Champion Market Hog at the Arkansas State Fair and Livestock Show.

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# FOOD NETWORK PRESENTS

## Chad Stone

By Caitlin LaFarlette



Chad Stone always had a goal of being a good enough baker to end up on the Food Network, but never thought it would happen. This year, he met that goal.

Stone owns Sweet Mayhem Unique Cakes and Pastries in Kennett, MO, now in its third year of operation. At just 8 years old he began cooking in his grandmother's kitchen after school, making messes he would later get in trouble for. Eventually he realized he had a talent for art but after deciding against art school, he contemplated being a pastry chef.

"Growing up in such a small town I was very intimidated by the thought of moving 12 hours away at 18 years old," Stone said. "We then found Sullivan University in Louisville, Kentucky, which was still close enough for my parents to come rescue me if anything were to happen."

Stone graduated with a degree in pastry arts and business management and soon became the pastry chef at the Cutting Board Cafe.

"That place and the people there became my family and showed me the true colors of being a chef, and the lifestyle within the industry," he said.

After four years he moved on to the Brown Hotel in Louisville and, thanks to its being a famous spot for Kentucky Derby winners, learned the atmosphere of fine dining. Stone then relocated to Orlando for a small break from the industry, but eventually decided it was time to return to Kennett, where everything began.

"This community has always been 100 percent behind me and it was time to open my own restaurant and bakery," he said.

When a friend in Florida sent him an email about a Food Network show, Stone filled out a lengthy application and within eight hours received a call back. This began a process of Skype videos and emails, all six months prior to even being selected for the Holiday Gingerbread Showdown. While on a vacation



A large advertisement for a Ford SUV. The top left features the "Glen Sain" logo in a cursive font and the Ford logo in a blue oval. The top right says "BEST PRICE BEST SERVICE" in a stylized font. The main image shows a blue Ford SUV driving on a city street. At the bottom, the contact information "870.236.8546 | 1301 US 49 | GLENSAINFORD.NET" is displayed in white text on a dark background.

in New York City, Stone received an email as he boarded the subway. He said he opened an email that began "Congr-" just as his phone died.

"I looked like one of the crazy people you hear about on the subway in NYC at 2 a.m., from the excitement and the thought of not knowing for sure," he added. After eventually charging his phone back up he learned he would be on the holiday show for the upcoming season.

The filming crew traveled to the Kennett bakery for 15 hour days while the staff had to keep the entire operation under wraps.

"In a small town that just doesn't happen," Stone said. He was questioned about filming a commercial for the bakery and even if a celebrity was making a pit stop. After the hometown filming, he finally traveled to Los Angeles for two days of filming.

"Everything was incredible. The production company, the crew, even the catering was amazing," he said. "They literally were there to make us succeed by any means necessary."

The gingerbread competition gave Stone a theme that focused around Santa's naughty and nice list. Competitors raced to create

the ultimate gingerbread showpiece for a panel of judges that penalize the naughty and praise the nice. Stone always joked that people would one day see him on the Food Network and he can now cross that item off his bucket list.

"I'm not one for certain types of attention so it's been a bit strange for me for people to say, 'We saw you on T.V.,'" he said.

Stone makes a point, however, to personally speak to everyone he can so customers feel welcome in his bakery. His favorite aspect of his career is seeing customers' faces when they walk in and enjoy the atmosphere and food.

"Sweets make people happy, so handing someone who is having a bad day a cupcake or a cookie, you can see it change their whole day," he said.

Through the restaurant industry he has also learned to live by the motto "if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life."

"This is me at this moment in my life," he said. "I work seven days a week, usually 12-15 hours a day and I am happy to come back and do it every single day."



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# THE INAUGURAL CATTLE BARON'S BALL OF NORTHEAST ARKANSAS

## Stomp Out Cancer

Dressed in their favorite boots and denim, over 200 guests saddled up for the inaugural Cattle Baron's Ball of Northeast Arkansas on Friday November 9, at the Silos in Bono. The American Cancer Society signature event honored loved ones, celebrated local survivors and raised over \$50,000 for the fight against cancer in Northeast Arkansas. The funds raised benefit the American Cancer Society, the country's leading organization that is committed to finding a cure for cancer, as well as offering support for families battling the disease. A portion of those funds will be utilized for a new transportation grant to help local cancer patients across Northeast Arkansas.



From survivors receiving special ribbon pins when they walked in, to Mason jars of hope lighting up the night – this night was about local cancer survivors and their caregivers. A live performance from the Arkansas Brothers provided guests with interactive-western entertainment. The cowboy's cuisine for the night was provided by JTown's Grill, courtesy of Jeffrey Higgins and Lisa Godsey. The event also featured unique event experiences with local "wranglers" and a wide variety of silent auction items. Susan and Fred Cathcart were honored as the first Legacy Award recipients for their contributions to St. Jude. Honorary Survivor, Kimberly Scutero, shared her brave story of her battle against cancer.

"Through the generosity of our sponsors, attendees, and volunteers the inaugural Cattle Baron's Ball was an enormous success," said Leslie Conner, who was the Event Chair for 2018 and will be for 2019. Joining her in 2019 to Co-Chair will be Heather Isbell Johnson, who has stated that, "Words cannot express how much this means to me... I lost my grandmother and best friend to pancreatic cancer as a child."

Lauren Bassie, the Community Development Manager for the ACS of NEA says she is, "Very proud of the committee's commitment to a successful debut of this event." She looks forward to being an ongoing support for these leaders as they continue to make their mark on cancer in NEA.

The 2019 Cattle Baron's Ball of Northeast Arkansas event date will be announced in early Spring of 2019. For more information, call the American Cancer Society at (870)-316-2031 or visit the website [www.cbbofnea.com](http://www.cbbofnea.com) or their Facebook page, [facebook.com/cbbofnea](https://facebook.com/cbbofnea).

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# WHAT'S COOKIN'?

## CHRISTMAS CANDY RECIPES

### GRANDMA'S CHRISTMAS BUCKEYES

#### Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar

#### Directions:

1. You'll need wax paper, a double boiler,

a cookie pan, and a medium bowl. In the medium size bowl, mix peanut butter, butter, vanilla, and confectioners' sugar (mixture will be stiff).

2. Shape into balls and place on a pan covered with wax paper. Place into the refrigerator.
3. In double boiler, melt chocolate and shortening. Pour into bowl and dip balls with chocolate. Refrigerate for thirty minutes until chocolate is firm.

*Recipe courtesy of allrecipes.com.*



### FUNFETTI POPCORN

#### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup popping popcorn kernels, or 2 bags tender white popcorn
- 1 (12 oz) bag Vanilla Candy Melts (such as Wilton Candy Melts)
- 1 1/3 cups broken pretzel pieces
- 1 (12 oz) bag green and red Milk Chocolate or Mint M&Ms
- Red, green and white Sprinkles

#### Directions:

1. Pop the popcorn according to manufacturers' directions. Remove any unpopped popcorn kernels.

2. Toss in broken pretzel pieces and M&Ms.
3. Melt Vanilla Candy Melts in a microwave safe bowl on 50% power in 30 second intervals, stirring after each interval until melted and smooth.
4. Drizzle half of melted chips over popcorn mixture, then stir, tossing gently a few times with a rubber spatula.
5. Then drizzle remaining half of melted chips over popcorn, and gently stir mixture until evenly coated (don't over stir, though, or your sprinkles won't stick if the white chips begin to set and harden).
6. Pour mixture into a single layer onto wax paper. Sprinkle entire mixture evenly with



sprinkles (as many as you'd like) before vanilla chips set. Allow to cool and harden, then gently break into pieces and store in an airtight container.

*Recipe courtesy of cookingclassy.com.*

### VEGAN CANDY CANE MERINGUE KISSES

#### Ingredients:

- The liquid from one 14oz can of chickpeas
- 1 1/4 cups icing confectioner's sugar
- 1 tsp peppermint extract
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Vegan-friendly red food dye
- You will need an icing bag with a large nozzle

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 210°F and line three baking trays with greaseproof paper.
2. Drain the liquid from the can of chickpeas into a large clean bowl. You can keep the chickpeas for another recipe. Just add them to a container with some clean water and keep for up to 3 days in the fridge.
3. Using an electric or stand mixer, whisk the liquid on a high speed until it forms soft peaks.
4. At this stage, start slowly adding the icing

sugar. Keep whisking until it reaches stiff peak stage (the mixture stands upright on the whisk).

5. Mix the vanilla and peppermint in at the last minute.
6. Meanwhile, open out your icing bag and carefully use the red dye and a teaspoon or a clean paint brush to paint red lines onto the inside of the icing bag. Starting from the bottom, stopping about 1/3 way from the top.
7. Transfer the mixture to the icing bag and start piping your meringue shapes. Squeeze the meringue near the surface of the baking sheet and then pull up to peaks.
8. Add the trays to the oven and bake for two hours.
9. After two hours, turn the oven off and let them remain in the oven for another hour to cool.



They should be crunchy on the outside and soft and mallow-y on the inside. It's important to keep them in an air-tight tin as they will start to soften if left out too long. Enjoy!

*Recipe courtesy of wallflowerkitchen.com*

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# SERVING THE COMMUNITY

## Sandie Harper

By Richard Brummett

It should come as no surprise that members of a local church are trying to serve their surrounding community. But at Griffin Memorial United Methodist Church in Paragould they are literally serving their neighbors ... actually putting the food on the plates in the form of more than 100 free meals every Tuesday.

Thanks to the church's weekly free Community Meal, families and individuals know they can come inside at the designated time each week and get a balanced meal at no charge, and they can also find some food for their spiritual hunger if they so desire. Each Tuesday, about a half-hour before the 11:30 mealtime, people begin congregating outside the building, waiting for the doors to open. Upon entering they first line up at the kitchen window and are served the main course, then they make their way to the tables holding vegetables, desserts and drinks, with each stop being manned by volunteer church workers.

"We've been doing this for about six years, I think," said Pastor Kenny Lee. "I've only been here since March of 2016, so I'm not exactly sure, but I think that's correct." He motioned for Sandie Harper to join the conversation, saying, "Here's someone who knows all about it."

According to Lee, Harper serves as Community Meal Co-coordinator along with Bonnie Summerfield, although when quizzed about her title Harper said, "I prefer queen, but that probably won't work." She mans her station in the kitchen with the same jovial approach, chatting with and teasing many of the regulars who make their way through the food line.

"We saw a need and thought this was a good way to help," she said of the food program. "A lot of them are really in need of food and a lot of the older adults come because they just want company. They come for lots of different reasons. I think it's great."

Lee said the need was apparent and the congregation set things in motion. "They

were looking to serve some local area need," he said, "and we just knew this was it. Some are homeless, there's endemic poverty, generational poverty, for a couple of long-term connections it's bad luck or health. They come for any number of reasons and we offer a safe space. For those right here in the community, in the neighborhood, it's easier to get here. A lot of the older ones walk."

The pastor said the regular attendees know the routine: Eat, visit, devotion. "They get an entree, vegetables, salad, dessert, cold drink. The desserts are usually homemade. Bonnie comes in on Mondays to do desserts, and Sandie prepares Monday for the big day to follow. They go through the line and get served, and when everyone is kind of seated and I see the first one go out the door who doesn't want to hear a devotional, then I know it's time and I speak," he said.

He offers words of encouragement through a mini-sermon, since the meal session lasts only an hour. On this particular day, he began by reminding guests to "say no words you wouldn't say in Sunday School ... and no conflict. Let's have no conflict."

"I always tell these people I'm their pastor, even if they never come to church here," he said. "I pray with them and talk to them. I encourage our people to go out and sit with them and be with other people and develop relationships."

Harper said they average feeding "about a hundred every week. The last few weeks our numbers have inched up a lot" and when students are out of school for the summer the numbers sometimes approach 200. "I think we did 275 last year," she recalled.

Lee said much of the food is purchased at the Food Bank of NEA "at a reduced price and some is purchased locally thanks to a very generous donation by an individual. We get around \$9,000 to

\$12,000 a year, solely for this program." The meal is scheduled at a time when the Griffin Food Pantry is open (from 10 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesdays; it also opens 12-4 p.m. Thursdays) so people who need to make use of that program can also get a meal while there on the first day it is available. Guests are allowed to access food bank resources once monthly, with the amount of food based on the number of people in the household. The Griffin Food Pantry served more than 4,500 families last year.

Those attending the meal can also go home with a free toboggan for cold weather use, thanks to the contributions of church member Aletta Wicker. Wicker makes hundreds of the head covers for giveaway, and they are situated on a table near the door at mealtime. (See a separate feature on Mrs. Wicker in the NEA Seniors section of this month's magazine on page 44.)

"Aletta is such a messenger for herself and for us," Lee said. "She helped here when we began, but she's been in and out of the hospital four or five times since and can't often be here. But she faces it with determination. She told me, 'God ain't through with me yet.' And I think she's right. She's a blessing to us, just as this program is a blessing to all."

Griffin Memorial is located at 524 East Court Street and Lee said anyone wishing to participate or to know more about the meal program can contact him at [pastorkrlee@gmail.com](mailto:pastorkrlee@gmail.com) or [griffinumc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:griffinumc@sbcglobal.net); or by calling the church office at (870) 236-2060.





# Veterans Day

## PARAGOULD CELEBRATIONS

By Richard Brummett

Numerous schools and organizations staged ceremonies in honor of the Veterans Day celebration in and around Paragould during November. Crowley's Ridge Academy, Greene County Tech and Paragould high schools hosted speakers and provided accompanying programs in recognition of all veterans and their contributions to our freedom.

On November 9, spectators lined both sides of Pruet Street to witness the Veterans Day Parade sponsored by Main Street Paragould in the downtown area. Local law enforcement agencies teamed with area veterans' organizations, the Paragould Fire Department, Paragould High School's band, flag line and Army JROTC members, the Greene County Republican Committee, St. Mary's Catholic School, MOR Media and others to present an impressive march from one end of the street to the other.

Spectators young and old waved flags, cheered and showed their appreciation for the efforts of the participants.

The following day, which had been recognized as Sgt. Wesley Foster Day through a proclamation by Paragould Mayor Mike Gaskill, a new headstone was unveiled at the fallen soldier's grave site in Linwood Cemetery.

Foster's great-nephew, Ed Hudson of Sierra Vista, Arizona, spearheaded the drive to honor the service and sacrifice of his family member and all of Greene County's "40 Fallen" listed on the war memorial at the historic Greene County Courthouse. Hudson had promised his grandmother more than 40 years ago that he would research Foster's World War I exploits, correct some erroneous military records regarding the local soldier who was killed in action shortly before the end of the war, and show the proper "honor and respect" to his great-uncle, including the unveiling of a beautiful new headstone.

An account of Foster's days in the Army can be found in the archived editions of Paragould Premiere. The story appeared in the September 2018 magazine and is on pages 14 and 15. Hudson has a book detailing Foster's career scheduled for release this month.



# GLEN SAIN'S ANNUAL VETERAN'S DAY LUNCH



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Kerri Watson, Executive Director

## SMART GIVING IN 2019



Fiscal year 2019 board members (some not pictured): Chandra McGowan, (Chair) Kelly Roswell, Kimberly Dale, Back: Joe Wessell, Mary Ann Allen, Jason Noel, Dan Turner. Not Pictured: Tracy Brengard, Bill Fisher, Pam Jumper, Bob Thompson.

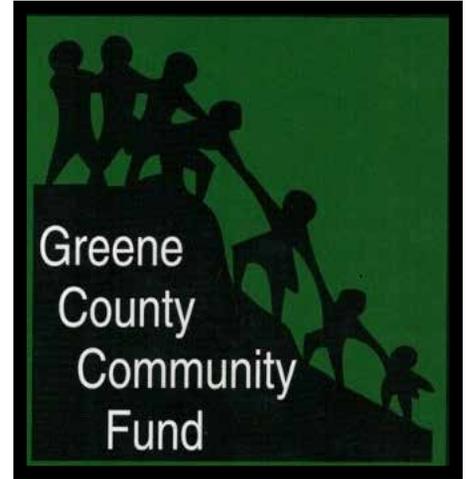
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# GIVING TO GREENE COUNTY

## Lauria Ann Baker



Lauria Ann Baker has accepted the position of Executive Director of the Greene County Community Fund. She was born in Poplar Bluff, MO, and raised in Neelyville Mo. She was involved with community/social clubs and athletics at Neelyville High School, where she graduated in 1986. Shortly after graduation she relocated to Paragould to attend Crowley's Ridge College. During college she served on the student government and various different organizations associated with life at CRC and graduated with an AA degree in '88. The following fall she attended ASU Jonesboro, to earn a BA of Social Work in 1991. While at ASU, Lauria was an active member of the Social Work Club and the Churches of Christ Student Center, and is a Licensed Social Worker with the



Arkansas State Board of Social work. Her degree opened up doors for working with groups of all ages, ethnicities, social/work classes, and faiths. Being well diversified in many areas is what inspires Lauria for the job ahead. The love of Greene County is seen in her daily life as she and her husband have raised their family here in Paragould.

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Lauria has been married to Perry Baker (a native of Corning) for 30 years. Perry has worked with Childrens Homes Inc. for 17 years and has held the title of Maintenance Supervisor for 12 years. They have three children, all who attended and graduated high school from GCT: Curtis M. Baker of Texarkana, who is Director of Operations of CMB Solutions; Zachary C. Baker of Conway, earning a Masters in Business Entrepreneurship with a minor in Music Composition from UCA in 2020; and Abigail R. Baker of Paragould, attending ASU while pursuing a doctorate in Dentistry.

Lauria and Perry also have many children that they have raised as their own while houseparents at CHI for 11 years. There are currently 15 extended family members that make up the Baker family! Staying involved and being a constant family structure in their adult lives is a blessing for the Baker family as a whole.

Being active members at Southwest Church of Christ in Jonesboro for the past 33 years is where Lauria was able to develop her love for mission work, involved in local and foreign missions to provide humanitarian efforts to those in need. Her greatest fulfillments have been conducting

educational class and providing funds to the orphanages of Romania for over 10 years. Lauria believes in making our community better for our families, friends, neighbors and natural resources. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Greene County Fine Arts Council, where she assists in bringing families of Northeast Arkansas opportunities to experience first-hand the pleasures and benefits of performing arts right here in Paragould.

Lauria is kicking off this fund drive excited about the opportunity to serve the citizens of Greene County for years to come, starting by rallying community awareness and about the need for support to our charitable causes. Her main purpose is to assist the residents of Greene County to imagine the impact they can have by pooling their charitable dollars with other people who care about the community where they live and understanding that large non-profit organizational giving is good but knowing that the monies raised by the GCCF stay right here to support our family, friends, neighbors and natural resources is priceless!

The Greene County Community Fund is a non-profit organization which solicits funds to support Greene County agencies with as

much financial assistance as possible from community donations. Donations from businesses, industries, and individuals allow sponsored agencies to focus on what they do best ... helping people.

The GCCF helps the Greene County 4-H Program, Boys & Girls Club, Habitat for Humanity, Rescue Squad, D.A.R.E., as well as offering four scholarships to graduating high school seniors each spring!

One hundred percent of all donations assist Greene County organizations. To donate, you may use payroll deduction through your employer, one-time donations mailed in, or billing options are also available.

You can learn more at:  
Greene County Community Fund  
401 South 3rd Street  
P.O. Box 252  
Paragould, AR 72451

Phone: (870) 239-8435  
Fax: (870) 236-3528  
Email: gccfund@outlook.com

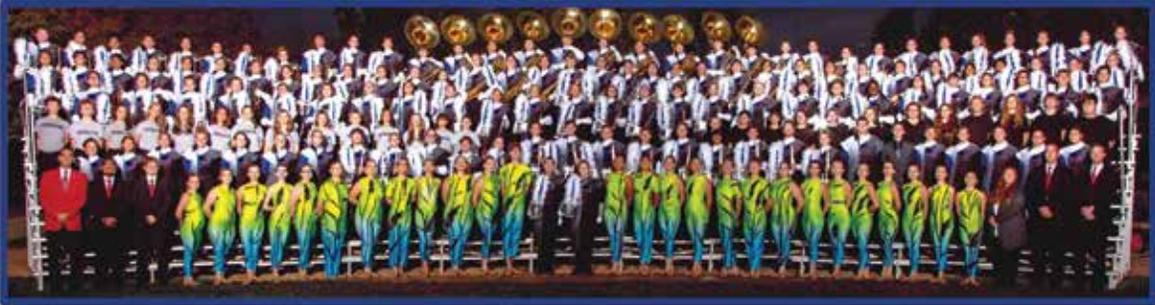
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# GREENE COUNTY TECH

# Veterans Day Celebration

By Joy Robinson



Members of the GCT JROTC presenting the colors; flag folding ceremony.



Guest Speaker Colonel (Ret) Nate Todd.

“A huge celebration, steeped in pride and tradition.”

This is what Lori Dial, director of the Greene County Tech High School Veterans Day Celebration, says when asked what it means to her. “We strive to connect the sacrifices of our veterans to our students and honor those who so valiantly served our country.”

November 8, 2018, marked the 47th year of the program at GCT, which is attended by the entire high school student body as well as around 300 guests from the community. School organizations involved in performing or participating are band, choir, JROTC, Tech TV, Art, Young Politicians, Student Council, FCCLA, the football team, EAST, FBLA, Theatre, and English departments.

The Greene County Museum presents a display of memorabilia in the lobby, while guests arriving each receive a flag from members of the Exchange Club. This year, GCT also hosted the Department of Veterans Affairs as guests to the event.

This year’s event featured guest speaker Colonel (Ret) Nate Todd, who spoke of the importance of our youth and the role they will play in the future of our country. Also speaking was Mr. Mark Frank, of the Arkansas Dept of Veterans Affairs. Mr. David Freligh presented this year’s Freligh Scholarship to GCT student Deric Bateman. A GCT JROTC student receives a scholarship from the Freligh family at each year’s event.

In addition, each year members of the military are inducted into the Greene County Veteran’s Hall of Fame. This year, inductees included Barney Kiestler, Larry Jones, and Peggy Scoville. Each received a plaque, a special gift from the FCCLA, and video recognition of their service played during the event. A link to nominate potential inductees is available through the GCTHS website.

An advertisement for Gracefully Southern accessories & gifts. It features three women wearing winter hats and scarves, holding small dogs. The background is decorated with Christmas lights and a tree. Text includes: "Stylish & Cozy Winter Accessories", "JEWELRY ACCESSORIES GIFTS APPAREL & MORE!", "870.335.5274", "203 N. Pruet St.", "Downtown Paragould", "gracefullysoutherngift.com", and social media icons for Instagram and Facebook.

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Dial definitely has a special place in her heart for the program. She begins planning the following year's program as soon as the current ends. "I love this," she says. "I love everything about it. It is an honor to be able to meet these men and women who have given so much – to hear their stories – to get to know them – there just aren't words to do it justice."

Following the ceremony, guests are invited to enjoy a luncheon in their honor. Dial recalls a story from a luncheon from her first year.

"My first year that I directed the ceremony, a WWII veteran approached me and began telling me his stories. With tears in his eyes he expressed to me how he'd never shared that before, but after the day's events, he felt compelled. I must have spent over 30 minutes standing there with him as the luncheon wrapped up. We cried and hugged. I thanked him over and over. What a humbling and emotional day that was for us both, and I am blessed for having gotten to know him in that time. He has since passed away, but his story lives on."



Artwork displayed in the lobby by GCT High School art students.



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# The Foundation of Arts

## THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

By Susan Johnson

Recently, downtown Jonesboro had the privilege to experience one of the most beautiful stories ever told, a story of love and a story of loss. On October 20th-26th, The Foundation of Arts brought *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* to stage and to life, through the artful eyes of director Amanda Fahlberg. Songs from the Disney film help fill this musical, based on the novel by Victor Hugo, with emotion that helps pull in the audience.

Their story is centered around a church in Notre Dame, where Quasimodo (Bryan Roberts), a bell-ringer who was given his name due to his being "half-formed," lives. While living in the bell tower, being hidden away from the world, Quasimodo creates his own little world with gargoyles and statues that become his friends. The plot thickens as the Gypsies plan to have their celebration, which brings the beautiful Esmeralda (Anna Ganong) into the story. Esmeralda, who has exquisite dance moves and a beautiful voice, gains the attention of several, including Quasimodo. This leads to many issues with not only the community around Notre Dame, but it leads to a lot of trouble for Quasimodo as well.

The chemistry on stage between all the characters was simply amazing; there was not one instance that was unbelievable or

left lacking. A beautiful choir came in and out during the production to help move the story along, and with grace and beauty their voices added so much dimension to an already worthy plot. From the moment he entered on stage, Bryan Roberts, as Quasimodo, grabbed the audience by the heartstrings and held on tight for the whole night. He transformed himself into Quasimodo, complete with hauntingly beautiful vocals and dialog that did not leave many dry eyes in the house.

Anna Ganong (Esmeralda), drew the audience in with her beauty and the love that she had shown to Quasimodo, a chemistry that made many people quickly become fans of the pair on stage. Russ Pierce (Dom Claude Frollo), Brandon Bishop (Clopin Trouillefou) and Andy Shatley (Phoebus De Martin) all gave outstanding performances, proving that they were cast to perfection. With a large cast, it is easy to get lost in the shuffle, but every single cast member did a phenomenal job.

A massive construction of multiple levels



and stairways made up the set, which was designed by JR Lawrence, and stayed stationary throughout. Scenes were created around the set using various pieces of furniture and props, another aspect that was perfectly executed. There were no lighting or mic issues the night I attended, just adding to the smooth overall experience at The Forum.

Overall, this performance is one of the best ones I have had the privilege of viewing at The Foundation of Arts. From the costumes, the music, the set, the actors, the performances, the plots and the set, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* definitely sent the audience, as well as myself, home with a warm and grateful heart. Please support your local community theatres!

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## 2018 Kids' Events

# December

5

### Family Story Time

**When:** Wednesday at 10:30 AM-11:30 AM

**Where:** Children's Book Room at  
Greene County Public Library  
120 North 12th Street, Paragould

**Info:** mylibrarynow.org

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### Christmas Crafts

**When:** Monday at 3:30 PM

**Where:** Marked Tree Public Library  
102 Locust, Marked Tree

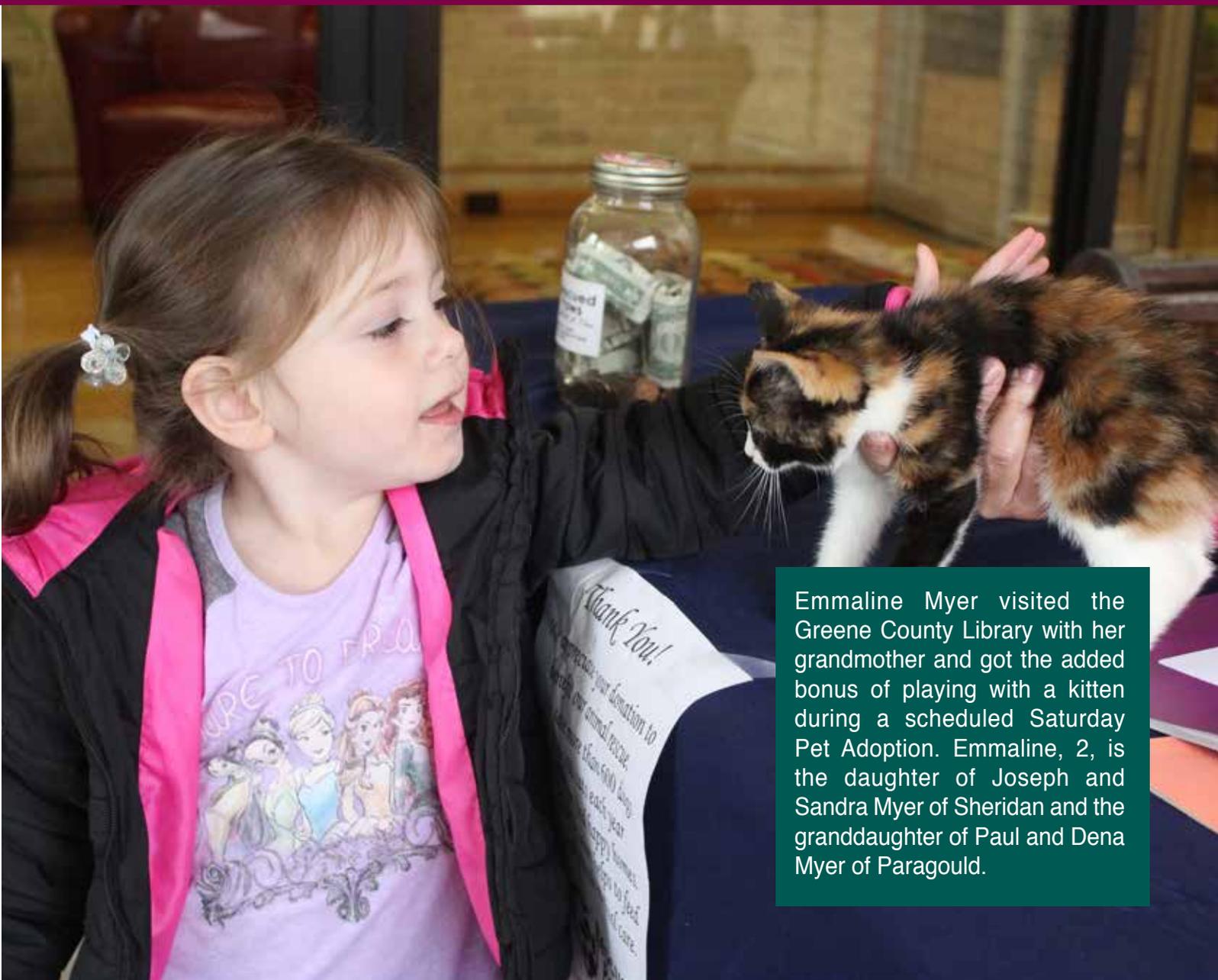
**Info:** libraryinjonesboro.org

### Now 'Til 24th Visits With Santa

**When:** Monday-Saturday 10 AM-8PM  
Sunday 12:30 PM-6 PM

**Where:** Mall at Turtle Creek  
3000 East Highland Dr., Jonesboro

**Info:** mallatturtlecreek.com



Emmaline Myer visited the Greene County Library with her grandmother and got the added bonus of playing with a kitten during a scheduled Saturday Pet Adoption. Emmaline, 2, is the daughter of Joseph and Sandra Myer of Sheridan and the granddaughter of Paul and Dena Myer of Paragould.

# Incredible Kids

By Jennifer Delong

Shel-Twon Warren of Jonesboro High School could be the next Stephen Hawking, or at least that's his goal. This amazing kid has high expectations of running on the worldwide court, or at least driving his self-designed robot to the top of the platform and claiming his prize.

Shel-Twon is part of Jonesboro's Robotics team and so far he has swept the field. Started as something to occupy his time, Shel-Twon stumbled into a new type of family. "My favorite part of robotics has to be the amount of networking that goes on. Most people think we just build robots and go compete against people we don't know. However, most of the teams we compete with are great friends of mine. Going to world competitions, we already know some of the teams. There is a huge network behind the scenes. A world that no one really experiences unless you're in the robotics community."

With all the crazy role models in the world, Shel-Twon looks up to different hero. "I look up to Stephen Hawking because he is

painting a new picture of what a science is supposed to look like. You take one look at him and think he's a handicap, he can't be a scientist. Yet he's one of the most brilliant minds of all time."

In the robotics competitions, points are made by the robot achieving skill sets such as throwing balls, pushing flags, and flipping "caps." The most challenging part is designing robots to meet exact space constraints. Your robot has to fit within an 18-inch cube, while still being able to complete all the tasks needed. The challenge is just trying to get things to fit. The senior has designed many robots the last three years. Some launch balls, stretch to wondrous heights and even launch heavy objects. His favorite robot targets flags and launches balls at flags from 12 feet away.

"If you've ever seen one of those pitching machines, it works like that," he said. He lights up when he describes his robot. "Imagine one of those wheels turn vertically. Once a ball touches a wheel, it'll launch the



ball. I am currently in the process of designing a new system that'll launch two of these balls at once. This one will be a catapult and help get the job done twice as fast."

Shel-Twon's designs have allowed him to be invited to compete regionally, and he's already qualified for state competition. If he wins state, he's off to the world match. "My goal for the future is to win state and become a world finalist at the end of this season. You get to really see the many types of ideas that are out there. When you compete regionally you only see local ideas. You all come from the same place. At a world level, you see what the Chinese thought up, the Australian, the Europeans and such. You see great ideas and compete against only the best. This puts things in perspective. At the world level, at any given time, there are tens of thousands of people watching you compete. That feeling is like no other."

The young genius inspires his teammates and friends by encouraging them to compete and learn. He hopes to become a mechanical engineer with a researching team and teach at a university someday. When asked how to get started Shel-Twon states, "I'd say, start early and get exposed to what you do and don't like. There are so many things you could do in engineering but finding what's the wrong path is just as important as finding the correct path."

To help sponsor Shel-Twon and his quest for engineering greatness at worlds, reach out to the S.T.E.M. board and Robotics teacher Beth Avery at [beth.avery@jonesboroschools.net](mailto:beth.avery@jonesboroschools.net).

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# RESCUE PAWS OF PARAGOULD FIRST PET ADOPTION DAY

By Richard Brummett

The Greene County Library teamed up with Rescued Paws of Paragould to hold its first Pet Adoption Day in November.

Janet Manchester, representing the Rescued Paws organization, brought along with her puppies Cinnamon and Spice, sisters that were discovered abandoned along the roadside in a plastic tub. The group was hoping someone would take one or both home to a loving family, just as they wish the same for the many other pets in their care awaiting adoption.

Manchester was situated in a choice location near the library's front door, making it difficult for anyone approaching the building to resist petting the friendly pups.

Anyone wishing to adopt a pet or gain more information about the process may call 870-212-1800. Rescued Paws of Paragould was founded by Catrina Bateman and has a mailing address of P.O. Box 641, Paragould, AR 72451.



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*Aletta Wicker*

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**ALETTA  
WICKER**

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**SENIOR  
EXPO**

**SANTA TO  
A SENIOR**

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# Made With Love

## KNITTING WITH ALETTA WICKER

By Richard Brummett



Aletta Wicker says she can't get out as often as she used to but there is certainly evidence all around town that she's out there somewhere.

Before moving to one of the new cottages at Belle Meade, a rehabilitation and senior living community in Paragould, Wicker was an active member of Griffin Memorial United Methodist Church -- in particular with its Tuesday Free Luncheon program and the clothes closet. "Once I got to where I couldn't work any more," said Wicker, now 83, "I still wanted to do something for the church. I noticed that the clothes closet didn't have hardly any toboggans, so I started making them, and I'm still making them. I think this is the sixth winter I've done it. I always did about 450 to 500 a year; right now, I'm at 778 made this year."

That's right ... almost 800 toboggans of various colors and sizes, all for giveaway to any person in need of one. There are several available each Tuesday on a table at the church luncheon, and hundreds more at Belle Meade where Wicker churns them out daily. "I can't get around like I used to, but I

can still knit. I can make an adult one in, oh, probably two hours," Wicker said. "A baby one takes about 40 minutes. I make them here for the ones who are smokers and have to go outside when it's cold, and for the staff." In fact, one of the staffers said Wicker is "like a factory" while admiring a large display of her finished work spread out on a table.

Frequent visitors -- young and old -- to Griffin Memorial's lunch program can be seen sporting Wicker's colorful toboggans, and she has donated several baby-sized hats to Arkansas Methodist Medical Center's nursery for newborns to wear home. School teachers have been known to take several to share with children in need, and complete strangers can be seen around town serving as walking advertisements for Wicker's products.

"I love it," she said with a big smile. "It gives me something to do to pass my time here. The doctor told me to color or to knit to help the arthritis in my fingers. The doctor said keep doing it as long as I can. That's keeping your hands working. It helps me, and it helps others. It gives me something to do. It's not

just me; people get out and give me the stuff. It's all of us. I'm blessed to have a place like this. I thank the good Lord; I couldn't do anything if it wasn't for Him. He's given me something I can do."

She looks at the practice as a community project. People who know what she's doing will donate yarn to her, sometimes purchasing it at the store and just as often picking up supplies at yard sales and bringing them to her. "When some people come in from a garage sale they hand it to me and say, 'You make it, we'll buy the thread.' It's relaxing to me. I feel like I'm doing something for someone else," she explained. "That's what makes you feel the best about it. It's a wonderful job. It helps people. It's even more wonderful for me that it gives me something to do, and others enjoy helping me."

More than once, visitors to Belle Meade have discovered Wicker's labor of love and have wanted to get involved. Some have tried to buy toboggans from her, some have simply gone home and made arrangements to have yarn delivered to her.

"People give me yarn all the time," Wicker said. "Someone from Nashville sent me yarn. When I was at home I would buy one skein at a time; then I got here and people see me doing it and they bring yarn to me. I've

dollars on my refrigerator. I bought thread with it. I've never sold one for myself."

She said one day the UPS truck pulled up out front and the driver "came in with big boxes full of yarn. It came from a company in Virginia somewhere and I thought, 'What in the world?' I asked everyone around here if they knew anything about it and it turned out a lady in Texas had visited here for two weeks with her aunt and when she got home she told her husband what I was doing and he said, 'Get on the phone and order her some yarn.' So that's where that came from."

Now, the process is just part of her daily routine. Every day after leaving the breakfast table she said she will "just go until I don't have anything else to do. I can do it while I'm watching my TV shows. I hear some, see some. And I don't waste a thread. If I have just a little bit left I'll tie it on the end of a toboggan."

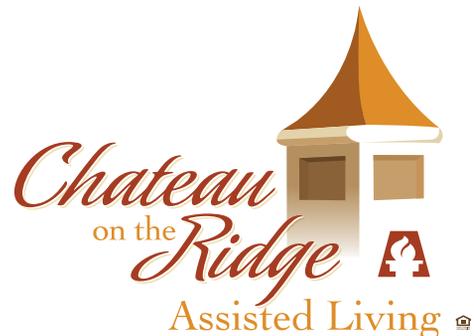
bought one skein since I've been here, and I bartered for it. A man from Texas came to visit family and he picked one up and said, 'I want this, will you sell it?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'No? You won't sell it?' And I said, 'No, I'll give it to you, though.' He took it, and then when I went back to my room there was five

"It just makes me feel good inside to know I'm doing something that people like, and something that helps someone else. We're all supposed to help each other, I believe, and that's all I'm trying to do."



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# MEDICARE COVERAGE

## ARKANSAS SENIORS HAVE A DECISION TO MAKE

Medicare's open-enrollment period for 2019 coverage runs through Dec. 7, and those who qualify must choose either a Medicare Advantage plan or a Part D drug plan, or remain with traditional Medicare. Comments from Gaye Humphrey, health insurance specialist with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, explain.

"This enrollment is for people to choose either a Medicare Advantage plan or a Medicare prescription-drug plan. To participate in this open enrollment, they already need to have Medicare A and/or B in order to choose one of these plans," she says.

Most Medicare beneficiaries are enrolled in basic plans that cover hospital care, called Part A, and doctor care, called Part B, which are managed by the federal government. However, Humphrey says they can opt for one of the numerous Advantage Plans, managed by private insurance companies, that may provide lower co-pays and deductibles.

Humphrey says it is up to each Medicare participant to study the various options and determine which plan is best for them.

Most Advantage plans are specific to certain geographic areas such as counties or ZIP codes, and unlike Parts A and B, may limit participants to a specific set of providers. Humphrey adds that each Part D plan has a formulary for which drugs it covers and limits what pharmacies can be used.

"The most important thing to understand about these plans is the fact that they have a network of doctors and hospitals and providers who contract with this plan to provide the service."

She says most Advantage plans will not pay for out-of-network care. If this all sounds confusing, there is a great deal of help available at the website Medicare.gov, where there is information on both advantage plans and Part D drug plans. It shows plans based on where you live and has an 800 number with agents to help. Also, Arkansas maintains a Senior Health Insurance Information Program that can guide individuals in making a decision.

1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4223)

### Medicare can help you find the right health care providers

By Bob Moos/Southwest regional public affairs officer for the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

How many times do we rely on the Internet to answer life's little questions, such as which movies to see or where to go for dinner? So, why not use it to help settle some of the bigger questions, like which nursing homes, hospitals and doctors to turn to for our care?

Four in five Internet users already search the web for information about diseases or medical problems. Taking that one step further and using the Internet to compare health care providers seems perfectly reasonable, as long as you can trust the websites you're visiting.

Medicare's "Compare" website fills the bill. It's a good place to begin your research when looking for a nursing home, hospital, home health agency or other health care provider.

Nursing Home Compare ([medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare](http://medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare)) gives you detailed information on 17,000 nursing homes nationwide. You can find out about a facility's recent health and safety inspections, its staffing levels and the quality of its care, such as whether residents have gotten their flu shots, are in pain or are losing weight. The website uses a star-rating system to point out the differences between nursing homes. The best homes score five stars; the worst receive one.

Hospital Compare ([medicare.gov/hospitalcompare](http://medicare.gov/hospitalcompare)) puts 4,700 hospitals under the magnifying glass, allowing you to see how facilities fare on many indicators of quality care. You can learn, for example, how often patients who were admitted to a particular hospital because of heart attacks return within a month of discharge. An unusually low, or high, percentage could say something about how well, or poorly, the hospital treated the problem during the first stay.

In an emergency, you need to go to the nearest hospital. But when you do have time, it's worth discussing with your doctor which hospital best meets your needs. If you're considering one facility, you may want to know what recent patients thought of their care. Hospital Compare measures customer satisfaction by using survey responses from patients. You can find out, for instance, how well a hospital's patients thought the doctors and nurses keep them informed or managed their pain.



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Home Health Compare ([medicare.gov/homehealthcompare](http://medicare.gov/homehealthcompare)) lets you locate home health care agencies in your area and check on the types of services they offer and the quality of their care. Your doctor, hospital discharge planner or social worker can make some recommendations. But the statistics on Home Health Compare will help you follow up and confirm how well an agency's patients recover from illnesses or injuries and resume their everyday activities.

Hospice Compare ([medicare.gov/hospicecompare](http://medicare.gov/hospicecompare)) displays information on almost 3,900 hospices nationwide. It lets patients and their caregivers see how the hospice services they are considering stack up against the national average when it comes to such quality measures as managing pain, treating symptoms and respecting patients' beliefs and values. The website also has a list of questions to ask when choosing a hospice program.

Physician Compare ([medicare.gov/physiciancompare](http://medicare.gov/physiciancompare)) allows you to search for doctors who provide Medicare-covered services. You can find basic facts about individuals and group practices, such as their business addresses, medical specialties, clinical training and hospital affiliations. And you can check how well certain group practices perform specific tasks, like controlling blood sugar in patients with diabetes. Also available are patient survey scores that cover issues such as how well clinicians communicate.

Medicare's Compare website contains information on several other types of health care providers, such as dialysis facilities, long-term care hospitals and inpatient rehabilitation facilities. Convenience is important, so look at facilities near your home. But also pay close attention to the quality-of-care measures.

In the case of long-term care hospitals and inpatient rehabilitation facilities, for example, you'll want to look at how often patients get infections or pressure ulcers.

As helpful as the Compare website is, it isn't meant to be the final word on a nursing home or a hospital or a physician's quality of care. It's simply a screening tool that lets you focus on a few providers that interest you, so that you can make an informed decision about your care.



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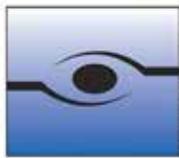
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# Holiday Traditions

## THAT OUTLAST FOOD

By Karan Summitt

**M**y family has them, and yours does too — delicious treats that show up only for the holidays. Part of the temptation to overeat is wrapped up in knowing they are here for a short time. Thankfully, that works to our benefit. Sometime in early January, the frenzy of cooking stops, and we return to more typical eating.

Christmas would not be the same without our food traditions. They are a part of the continuity that ties generations together. I learned to make some of the treats from my husband's heritage, and I added a few from my side of the family. We even have a few more that are our own contributions, and when we celebrate the holidays with our children, those treats are there.

Traditions should not be limited to foods. Here are 15 holiday traditions for family members of all ages that balance the overeating. Repeating them year after year can build memories and strengthen family ties. I hope you find one or two to try this year.

1. Get a handful of folks together and go caroling. You'll be surprised by how well-received your singing group is, even if you sing out of tune!
2. Grab some grandchildren and check out holiday lights in your area.

3. If you find joy in holiday cooking, walk door to door delivering small gift sacks of treats to the neighbors or shut-ins. Include your littles and let them experience the joy of generosity.

4. Do something that gets you out of the house on Christmas Day after the meal and gifts. Our family tradition is to attend a movie together.

5. Start the "Elf on a Shelf" tradition, but tweak it to be about more than just good behavior. Have the elf leave "kindness" assignments for the whole family to enjoy.

6. Take turns reading classic Christmas stories or make it a tradition that the same person reads the same story each year.

7. Set aside one night each week and watch a favorite Christmas classic movie with family or friends. Partner it with a menu plan for each movie that becomes part of the tradition every year.

8. Create a holiday playlist that your family listens to in the car or at home. Set a date for when the holiday music can begin playing.

9. Use an advent calendar to count down to Christmas. Emphasize the true meaning behind so many of the traditions we celebrate.

10. Start an "I Am Thankful" list with the grandchildren. Have them add one thing they are thankful for each day. Turn this into a decoration by having it written on a paper Christmas tree or snowflake that is hung

across the fireplace or some other area.

11. Volunteer your time as a family at a soup kitchen or a food bank that hands out food to families in need, or find a giving tree that allows you to sponsor a family or purchase toys for children in need. Go shopping for the items together and donate them.

12. Start a gag gift tradition. Give a funny gift to a family member. Each year, pass the gift on to another unsuspecting family member.

13. As a family, write a holiday letter. Have each member contribute one memorable moment from the past year to be shared with friends and family.

14. Start a canned food drive in your neighborhood, among co-workers or at your child's school. Ask others to donate canned and non-perishable foods to donate at a food bank.

15. Begin a scrapbook just for holiday memories. Each year add photos, ticket stubs, the holiday letter and any other items from that year's events. Just for fun, be sure to take a picture of all those tasty goodies on display!

People look forward to the holiday foods, but it is our traditions that provide the memories and help us connect to the loved ones we miss. Blessings for a safe and happy holiday season.

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# UAMS CENTER ON AGING PRESENTS *Second Annual Senior Expo*



The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Center on Aging-Northeast and UAMS Schmieding Home Caregiver Training program in Jonesboro offered the second annual Senior Expo on Nov. 9 at Nettleton Baptist Church in Jonesboro.

Seniors, their families and caregivers learned from vendors and demonstrations about the valuable resources available to them in the region. Several community partners co-sponsored the event including the presenting sponsors, St. Bernard's Healthcare and Chad Oldham Law Firm.

"Many seniors want to live healthier lives and make sure they are not a burden on their families. Therefore, preparing for their golden years is important," said Senior Expo co-chair Valerie Fielder, a certified dementia practitioner and program coordinator at UAMS Center on Aging-Northeast and Schmieding.

More than 80 vendor booths were set up representing about two dozen services and products geared to senior adults — from banking service to mental health services, Palliative care, estate and trust planning, and travel.

"This event, held in conjunction with National Family Caregiver Month, is in our second year," said Senior Expo co-chair Samantha Hollis, B.S.N., R.N. Site Leader for the Center on Aging-NE. "We strive every day to help our senior adults live longer, healthier lives and this expo is just another way we can reach out. We all have grandparents, parents, friends or others in our lives that could benefit from the invaluable resources we will showcase all in one day."





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# THE B.E.E.S. SENIOR CITIZENS TO MACKINAC ISLAND

By Carol Flezsar

The B.E.E.S. Senior Citizens recently traveled to Mackinac Island. Forty-five of us enjoyed taking an exciting cruise through the Soo Locks and then spending free time browsing the unique shops and boutiques in Sault Sainte Marie. Later that day we visited the Fort de Buade Museum and enjoyed the quaint lakeside village of St. Ignace.

The next day we took a ferryboat ride to the peaceful Mackinac Island, where the only mode of transportation is by horse and carriage. Our carriage ride tour of the island

included the Arch Rock and Lilac Lane. We had a wonderful buffet lunch in the Grand Hotel, where the famous movie, *Somewhere in Time*, was filmed. Several climbed the steps to the top of the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. Later we visited the Colonial Michilimackinac, a 1700's era village.

And last but not least, we spent time at "Michigan's Little Bavaria" located in Frankenmuth, Michigan. We all loved shopping at the World's Largest Christmas Store, Bronner's Christmas Wonderland. Our Mackinac Island trip is always a favorite!

Five of our travelers have been twice with us and one, Effie Hale, has been with us five times. Our next trip will be this spring April 8-13 to Savannah, GA, and Beaufort, SC. Our trips are very interesting and educational and we have lots of fun.

On the Spring trip we will be going to Savannah and Jekyll Island and Beaufort, SC. This would be a GREAT Christmas present to a senior citizen in your family. Reservations and deposits are now being accepted. Call Carol at 239-4093 for more information.



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# Seniors and the Holidays

By Richard Brummett

While most of us greet the holiday season with great enthusiasm, this time of year can sometimes prove a difficult one for the elderly of our communities. Many people feel increasingly isolated and unhappy during this season of good times and goodwill, and elders can have an especially hard time.

The longer one lives, the more his or her world changes. Those changes will include the inevitable losses that even the healthiest seniors face. Loved ones and friends fall ill and pass away, and energy and mobility levels often decrease, resulting in feelings of lost independence and opportunities. Neighborhoods change over time, leaving even those well enough to remain in their own

homes feeling lonely. The focus on family, friends and togetherness during this time of year can actually bring melancholy feelings to the forefront. If you have given up the keys to your automobile, how do you go visit loved ones? If you have outlived most of your dearest friends and your family members reside far away, who do you expect to spend the holidays with?



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Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), also termed winter depression, winter blues, summer depression, summer blues, or seasonal depression, is a very real thing. According to mental health experts, it was originally considered a mood disorder among those with normal mental health throughout most of the year who experience depressive symptoms at a certain time of year. SAD is no longer classified as a unique mood disorder, rather as a recurrent major depressive disorder that occurs only during a specific time of year and fully remits thereafter.

Depression can be caused by a minor or serious medical problem; chronic pain or complications of an illness; memory loss; poor diet; loss of a spouse, close friend or companion; a move to a care facility; lack of exercise; change in routine; and general frustrations with aging.

So the question becomes, what can we do to help? Janet Siebert, LMSW with Families, Inc., suggests simple but effective contributions. "During the holiday season our elderly that live alone, or in nursing facilities, are usually the loneliest," Siebert said, "especially when many of them have little family or visitors to stop by.

"The holidays also bring back memories from the past seasons. I think if you have a loved one -- family or friend -- just stopping by and spending some quality time with them helps so much. Most also love getting cards ... just something that lets them know someone does care."

Spending time with a loved one does seem to be the easiest solution and is all many seniors really desire. Make a visit to remind them how important they are to your life. Help add decorative touches to their residences, and try to have them help cook and share an intimate holiday meal. See if you can arrange an informal get-together for them with people whose company they enjoy, and be the "taxi service" if necessary.

The most important thing you can do with a senior to make them feel loved and included this season is to spend time with them. Look at family photos, watch home videos or holiday movies, listen to seasonal music, or do crafts together. Regardless of what you decide to do together, your time is the most precious gift you can give.



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# HOME INSTEAD SENIOR CARE

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Home Instead Senior Care partners with local non-profit and community organizations to identify seniors who might not otherwise receive gifts this holiday season. The company then works with local businesses and retail stores to help facilitate the purchase and distribution of gifts by placing trees and ornaments within their various locations. Each senior's gift requests are written on a Be a Santa to a Senior bulb. We will have a tree at Walmart on Parker Road in Jonesboro. We will have two trees at Kroger in Jonesboro. Those interested in getting a bulb can call or come by Home Instead in Jonesboro as well. Last year Santa for Seniors provided Christmas gifts to 400 seniors across Northeast Arkansas. The program began with Home Instead nationally in 2003 and Jonesboro's Home Instead began participating in 2006. Go to the website for more information: [beasantatoasenior.com](http://beasantatoasenior.com)



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## By Abby Williams

Jonathan and I had our first date on Labor Day in 2017. We met on an online dating website and after two days of messaging, Jonathan, with a little nudging from his sister, asked me to meet him for coffee. The next day I drove to Memphis, without telling my family, and had BBQ with a stranger I met online. Thankfully, I didn't end up on the news that night but I did end up having a wonderful date! Though we both knew it wasn't love at first sight we did know that this was something worth the time. After our second date, the date Jonathan doesn't like to talk about because it went so badly and left us both ready to end it immediately, we decided to give it one more shot. We did the river walk in Memphis, ate Middle Eastern food, went to a movie and finished with Muddy's cupcakes. By the end of the night, neither of us was ready for the date to end. Jonathan was so eager to extend the date that he even took me to meet his parents, something I will always tease him about!

Our first few dates had some ups and downs and I'm sure both families had some reservations about our meeting online but after date three we were confident and never looked back.

Just a little after our one year anniversary, we said our "I dos" in the front yard of my parents' house on a beautiful, crisp fall evening. It was the wedding I had always dreamed of and a reminder of God's faithfulness and blessings. Jonathan and I are the perfect examples of "opposites attract" and our strengths balance out our weaknesses. It may not have been love at first sight but we know our story is unique and our love is strong.

Abby is the daughter of Doug and Dana Williams of Paragould. Jonathan is the son of David and Cindy Knox of Germantown, Tennessee.

Photography by  
Chris Lott Photo & Design





# December

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### Northeast Arkansas Christmas Parades

1

**Where:** Harrisburg  
**When:** 5:00 P.M.

4

**Where:** Walnut Ridge  
**When:** 6:00 P.M.

6

**Where:** Pocahontas  
**When:** 6:00 P.M.

8

**Where:** Monette  
**When:** 6:00 P.M.

1

**Where:** Lake City  
**When:** 6:00 P.M.

4

**Where:** Trumann  
**When:** 6:00 P.M.

6

**Where:** Jonesboro  
**When:** 7:00 P.M.

8

**Where:** Bono  
**When:** 6:30 P.M.

2

**Where:** Brookland  
**When:** 2:00 P.M.

4

**Where:** Paragould  
**When:** 7:00 P.M.

8

**Where:** Swifton  
**When:** 5:00 P.M.

13

**Where:** Rector  
**When:** 6:00 P.M.

## 6

**What:** Duck Classic Banquet - A Fundraiser for NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation  
**When:** Thursday, December 6th at 5:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

**Where:** First National Bank Arena (217 Olympic Drive, Jonesboro, AR)

**Info:** Join us for Duck Classic! The banquet will be held at the First National Bank Arena on the Arkansas State University campus on December 6th. Doors Open at 5 with dinner served beginning at 5:30. This is a fun event for the whole family! Live and Silent auctions, raffles for men and women, great food and a great time! Tickets (\$50) are available online at [duckclassic.com](http://duckclassic.com) or you may purchase at DNW Outdoors. We look forward to seeing you at the Classic! The Charitable Foundation has a mission to help change lives through the programs and services it supports in Northeast Arkansas.

## 8

**What:** Relay For Life of Greene County presents: A Disney Christmas Meet & Greet  
**When:** Saturday, December 8th at 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m.

**Where:** Paragould Community Center and Water Park (3404 Linwood Drive, Paragould, AR)

**Info:** Come see Mickey, Minnie, Elsa, Belle, Moana and more of your favorite Disney characters and the jolly man himself: Santa!

Take pictures with your favorite characters for only:

\$5 person

\$20 family of 4 or more

We will be accepting cash, cards, or checks at the door. Relay For Life is a year-round fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. Donation can be made on our website. Contact us for more details & get involved

## 13

**What:** Winter Art Walk

**When:** Thursday, December 13th at 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

**Where:** Downtown Jonesboro

**Info:** NEA Artist Collective proudly presents Winter Art Walk! Join us for a multi location art experience! Over 30 artists will be showing and selling unique works at the following locations:

-Black Arrow Tattoo (415 Union St.)

-Emeralds Triangle LLC (221 S. Main St.)

-Cregeens Irish Pub (201 S. Main St.)

-The Garage (219 S. Church St.)

Not only will we be offering a one of a kind art experience but we also have snacks and prizes! Save the date! Support the arts! Take an Elfie with Pippi Peppermint! See Mr. And Mrs. Claus!

To have your calendar items included in *Premiere Magazine*, email information to:

[graphics@mormediainc.com](mailto:graphics@mormediainc.com)

## 15

**What:** Santa Paws for a Cause 5K

**When:** Saturday, December 15th at 7:30 a.m.

**Where:** Cheers Unlimited (3406 Willow Road, Jonesboro, AR)

**Info:** Join us at our inaugural Santa Paws for a Cause benefiting A Love for Animals Rescue. Sign up to walk or run with a rescue or bring your own furry friend! Wear your favorite tacky Christmas sweater, awards will be given to the top 3 best dressed! For a \$10 donation of dog food or toys you can even have your picture taken with Santa! 100% of proceeds will go to ALFA. \$20 registration fee, \$10 for children 10 and under. Register at [StearnsRaceTiming.com](http://StearnsRaceTiming.com) or contact Natalie. [Gulley@gmail.com](mailto:Gulley@gmail.com) for more information.

## 28 & 29

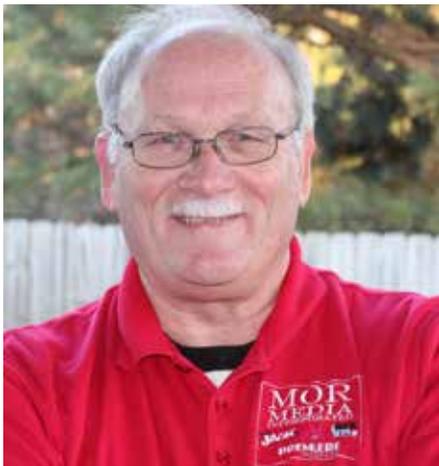
**What:** The Ultimate Oldies Show

**When:** Friday, December 28th & Saturday, December 29th at 7:00 p.m.

**Where:** Collins Theatre (120 West Emerson Street, Paragould, AR)

**Info:** Featuring a journey back to the golden age of the '50s, '60s, '70s, and '80s performed by local musicians. Admission \$20 for Main Floor, \$15 for balcony. Call 870-215-2253 for tickets.

# GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



Every morning when I walk past my bathroom mirror, I look at the image looking back at me and think, "That can't be right." I think it's because underneath all that old age stuff the mirror guy presents there is still a kid hidden down deep.

That's why I always get a good feeling inside when December rolls around and my thoughts turn to the Christmas season. Christmas time has always been a "fun" time spent with family and friends. For one, when I was young, it meant no school for several days. It meant

getting to stay up late for no other reason than staying up late, and it meant finding containers filled with candy at various points around the house on a daily basis.

My cousins Ken and Malinda Burton would be arriving from Alabama and Ken and I would be almost inseparable for the next two weeks, playing basketball if we could find an outdoor site or playing games in the house otherwise. At night, the two of us would join Malinda and my sister Kathy for all-night card games or board games or TV watching, greeting the next day with plans to do the same all over again.

The part of Christmas that sticks in my mind today, however, is the practice of gift giving because when my children and grandchildren gather at our house for the annual event, my heart is filled with joy. I love seeing them open something that is a total surprise, or even opening something they picked out specifically for the themselves -- and possibly even wrapped themselves -- and feigning "surprise" upon tearing the paper away.

Only in my grownup years have I come to understand the sacrifices my parents made in order to give Kathy and me quality Christmases when we were young. We were a family of simple means, never living in a big fancy house

or riding in the most expensive top-of-the-line automobiles, but we didn't lack for any of the necessities. Because of our humble upbringing, I never recall either of us asking for any ultra-expensive presents to open on Christmas day. I don't remember all of Kathy's wish list but I'm pretty sure it included a bunch of "smart people" stuff like books while I was hoping for a BB gun, a table-top basketball game or a new ball glove, even though I knew there would be the obligatory box containing clothes mixed in there somewhere. That was just the price a kid had to pay before getting to the good stuff.

It is only within the last year or so that I have come to understand how difficult it was for my parents to find the extra dollars needed to put presents under the tree. Even though my mom has been gone for a few years now, I am still making my way through containers of her belongings, things we had put in storage when she left her home for a much smaller residence. During one of the recent "keep it or throw it away" sessions, I came across some bank documents from the late 1960s -- Mom kept everything; and I do mean everything -- and I could do little more than stare down at them. I knew times were tough right after Dad changed jobs and went out on his own, traveling the highways of several states as a manufacturer's representative; just about the time he got started he had a massive heart attack and couldn't work for months.

But in among Mom's papers were documents showing that once Dad got back on his feet he would go to the local bank on a Monday and take out a loan, giving him enough money to travel for a couple of weeks in order to pay it back. His job was one of "commission only," meaning if he sold a little he made only a little, and if he sold a lot he made a lot. Unfortunately, if he sold nothing he made nothing, so paying the bank back and still having something to show for it put quite a strain on the family's finances. The discovery humbled me all these years later, to think that we had so little yet always had something under the tree ... it made me appreciate my parents even more because I know how many stress lines their faces inherited in order to put smiles on mine and Kathy's.

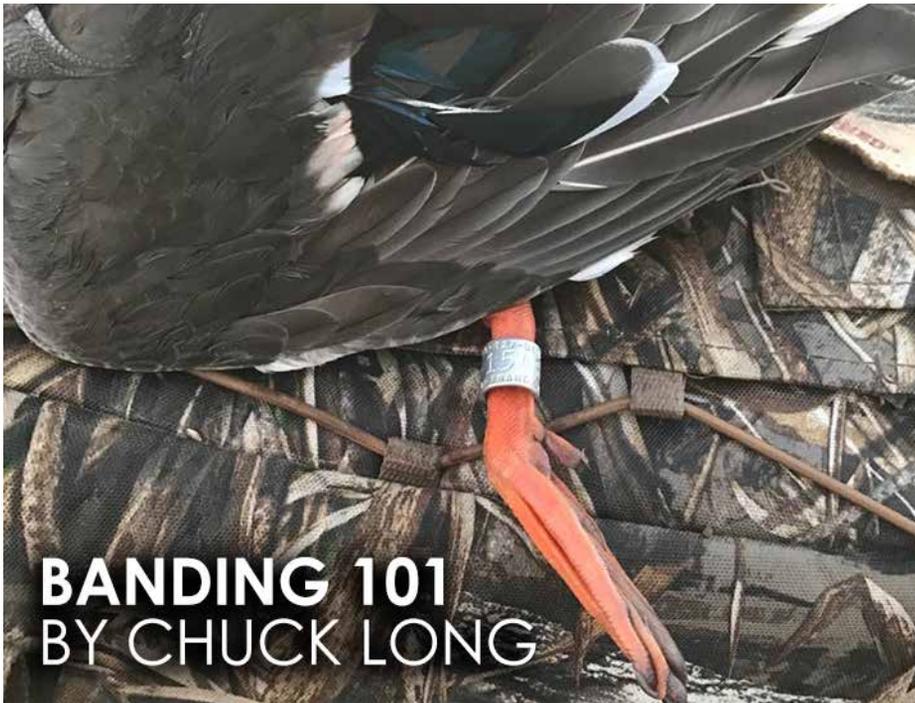
Giving, and giving solely to see the happiness your act brings is what the Christmas present season means to me. I know I feel just like my parents did when they made my sister and me happy. They didn't care if they had much of anything to open or not because they had already opened their hearts all the way to make their kids' Christmas a joyful one. I sit in my chair on Christmas day and feel full of love as my kids and grandkids destroy wrapping paper in order to get down to the prizes. I honestly wouldn't be upset if I didn't have anything to open because my joy comes from watching, just as I'm certain it did for my parents.

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AGS



## CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education  
Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission



The group of ducks were working the waters of the St. Francis River cautiously when one of the drake mallards liked what he saw and decided to settle in the decoys. Camden Farmer is a young hunter but he knows the routine and knew to get his gun on that duck and if he lifted off the water, it was time to shoot. The rest of the mallards continued their cautious approach but finally left and Camden was given the go ahead to fire. The .410 rang out and his shot took out the drake. His dad, Bobby, went to retrieve the duck and the celebration began when he saw the drake was adorned with a band, making the hunt even more memorable.

Duck bands have been around since the late 1800s when a Danish schoolteacher named Hans Mortensen first banded European starlings he captured in nest boxes. He also banded waterfowl, gulls, herons and other bird species with rings he cut out of aluminum. These bands were affixed to the legs of the birds and the inscribed numbers were recorded and he was able to record their return visits through recaptures or from birds taken by hunters.

In North America, Jack Miner was one of the first people to band ducks. Miner began in the early 1900s at a waterfowl sanctuary near his home in Ontario. He banded ducks with aluminum bands printed with a number and contact information. A Bible verse was also inscribed on each band. Recovery of the bands became important in early waterfowl studies and influenced

the growth of banding as a population and migration assessment tool. Miner banded almost 100,000 birds in his lifetime before his death in 1944 but his family continues the tradition today with bands inscribed with a Bible verse still being attached to a limited number of birds each year.



In the early 1920s, banding efforts began on a national level to try to determine flight patterns, migration routes, and important habitats for wintering waterfowl. The early efforts of banding proved to be very successful and the program continued and helped produce very important data for biologists as they tried to gather information on migrations. Early banding efforts and band recovery by hunters helped establish the maps for the four flyways as we know them, with Arkansas sitting as a very important part of the Lower Mississippi Flyway.

Banding of waterfowl continues today, with most efforts being concentrated in the duck nesting areas of the northern United States or Canada. Approximately 200,000 waterfowl are banded each year and each band has a unique number and contact info inscribed into the aluminum that gives the person that takes the band a source of contact. Early bands may have only had an address while more recent bands have a phone number and some bands today will simply have a web address. A quick call or entry of the number will give information regarding the bird with the band.

The mallard drake Camden took was banded in Glaslyn, Saskatchewan, thus making a trip of around 1,500 miles as he migrated south. Other birds have been recovered in Arkansas that traveled much greater distances from the northern parts of Canada or Alaska. Age can also be determined through banding and the oldest bird recovered with a band was a Canada goose that was over 30 years old.

Banding is not just for waterfowl as many other game species like doves, quail, grouse and pheasants have also been banded to gather biological data. Many other species of birds are banded as well to assess their population status including many songbirds, shorebirds and raptors. Many of these bird species are not hunted so it often comes down to recaptures or sightings to record their travels.

# HAPPENINGS



## PARAGOULD PRIDE CHAMPIONS

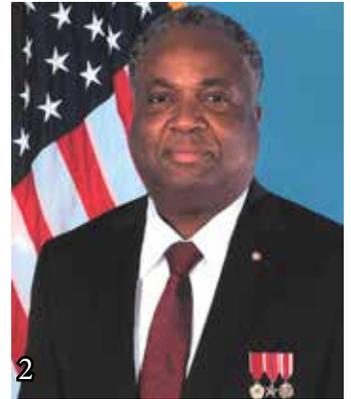
Paragould High School's "Paragould Pride" marching band won its third consecutive 5A division state championship recently, topping 31 other schools at War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock. Arkansas started holding state championship competitions for band units three years ago, and Paragould -- under the leadership of Richie Williams -- has won them all in its division.



## MISSION OUTREACH FUNDRAISER BANQUET

Governor Asa Hutchinson spoke at the fundraiser banquet for Mission Outreach, which is celebrating 36 years in 2018. Mission Outreach is the largest homeless shelter in Northeast Arkansas with a 58-bed emergency shelter, a soup kitchen that serves three meals a day 365 days a year, and an on-site food pantry. Over \$10,000 was raised for the shelter.

## HALL OF HEROES TO WELCOME FOUR DISTINGUISHED INDUCTEES



Four ROTC alumni joined the distinguished list of members in the Hall of Heroes in a special induction ceremony Saturday, Nov. 17. The inductees included Rev. Ken Stallings (photo 1), Lt. Col. Malcolm Reese. (photo 2), Lt. Col. Presley O'Neal Orsburn (photo 3), and Col. Robert English III (photo 4). The Hall of Heroes provides an opportunity for Arkansas State University to pay tribute to ROTC alumni who have distinguished themselves through heroic service, government service and outstanding representation of the university.



## DR. MICHAEL MACKEY, MD, FACP RECEIVES ROBERT S ABERNATHY AWARD

NEA Baptist is pleased to announce that Dr. Michael Mackey MD, FACP, was named the Robert S. Abernathy Laureate of the Arkansas Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP). The Laureate Award is a local chapter's highest honor. Over the past four decades, Dr. Mackey has been actively involved in medical education, serving as Director of AHEC Northeast for 25 years and is presently the Director of NEA Baptist's new Internal Medicine Residency program.

# BIRTHS



## *Kayleigh James Miller*

Proud parents Drew and Molly Miller of Marmaduke welcomed their daughter, Kayleigh James Miller, into the world on October 11, 2018. She is also welcomed by grandparents William and Tina Shaw, and Brent Miller and great-grandparents Harlan and Kay Greenway.

Kayleigh was delivered at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces and measured 20 inches long.



## *Evelyn Mae Griese*

Tristen and Madelyn Griese of Paragould announce the birth of their daughter, Evelyn Mae Griese. She is welcomed by grandparents Brian and Angela Gray, Tabitha Craft, and Kristopher Griese.

Born October 24th, 2018, at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, Evelyn weighed 6 pounds, 8 ounces and was 19 inches long.

# ENGAGEMENT



## *Beverly Ann DePew & Ivey Herren, Jr.*

Engaged couple Beverly Ann DePew and Ivey Herren, Jr., of Paragould, have announced their engagement and plans to be married.

The bride's parents are (the late) Randy and Pamela Myatt. The groom's parents are Ivey Sr. and Cindy Herren.

Photography by Ezekiel DePew (8-year-old son).



# Joanna Renee Miles

New parents Alex and Jessica Miles of Paragould announce the birth of their daughter, Joanna Renee Miles. She is the granddaughter of Deborah Carter, as well as the late Kenneth and Trina Miles.

Joanna was born November 6th, 2018, at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center. She weighed 10 pounds, 10 ounces and was 21 inches long.



# Izaiah Doss Page

Excited parents Dre and Madisen Page of Paragould announce the birth of their second child, Izaiah Doss Page. Izaiah is welcomed by brother Dreytin Tyler Page, and grandparents Kendra Ellington, Aaron Page, and Cortney Page.

Izaiah was born October 27th, 2018, at St. Bernards. He weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and was 20.5 inches long.

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# LIVING A BETTER STORY

By Jared Pickney

Some people wake up happy, and some people wake up sad. For some, the glass is half full. While for others, the glass is half empty. For some, the sun is always shining and the birds are always singing. While for others, it's always raining, and the only birds you see are ravens and owls. Your imagination has grown dark. You feel hopeless, nervous and uptight, possibly even to the point that even the most ordinary of tasks feel like an overwhelming burden.

If this is where you are, please know that you are not alone.

According to the IMS Health Report, anti-depressants have become the second highest grossing volume drug in the U.S, next only to cholesterol medications in annual expense.

In fact, in 2017, Americans spent \$12 billion alone on anti-depressants. Despite all the money spent on anti-depressant drugs, there were 45 thousand suicides in 2017. A 25 percent increase in the last decade.

Also, according to the ADAA, anxiety disorders are now the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults, and costing the U.S. \$42 billion a year in medication or health care services.

Again. You are not alone.

And though Christmas is supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year, studies show that during this season anxiety and depression tend to trend up and not down. From spending money we don't have to being confronted with the pain of not having

a loved one with us this year, Christmas, for different reasons, can actually create a greater sense of despair for many people.

This is why we need to be reminded of the true meaning of Christmas. That God became flesh. That He came to this earth and walked through his own sorrow, fear and suffering, so that you can now, with Him, learn to walk through yours.

The truth is, if you are hurting this Christmas season, you are not alone. You have a God who can not only sympathize with your pain, but also bring healing to your wounds.

Therefore, if you you are in a season of anxiety and depression, look to Jesus, trusting that on the other side of what may feel like a death, that there is actually a resurrection.



# Stay Tuned

What's in store next month?  
Special Section:  
Wedding Planning



Fitness:  
Physical & Financial



Christmas Parade  
Coverage



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