

NEA'S

PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

June
2021

**FOR THE LOVE
OF CATS**

Tracy Mothershed

SOMETHING PAWSITIVE

Cat Lounge Acting as Foster Home

K9 UNITS

The Four-Legged Officers
Serving Our Community

NEA SENIORS

Special Section

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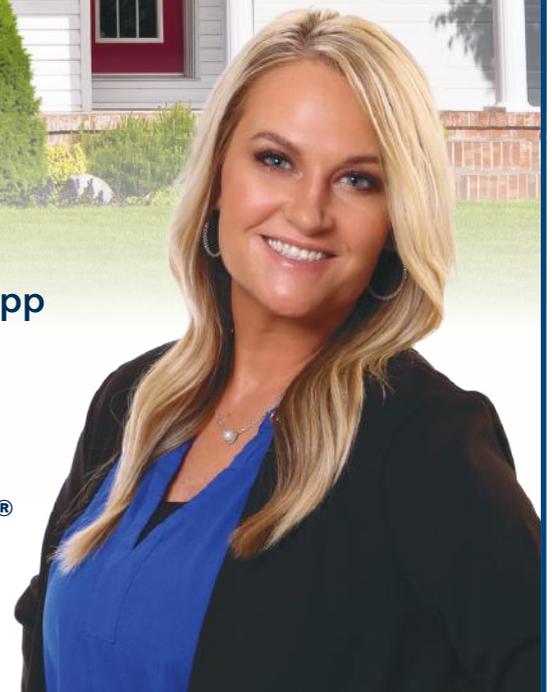
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From the Manager



ets are amazing, aren't they? No matter how many times we might get frustrated with their mistakes or angry with their antics, their soft eyes and innocent faces draw us in time and time again.

A few weeks ago, after a celebration at my house, I had left some boxed up cupcakes and brownies on the tallest counter. The next day my husband and I returned home after an evening with friends and as he entered the kitchen I heard him say, "Well that's not good."

Apparently the younger of our two dogs had leapt ALL FOURS onto the counter in order to consume all three boxes of the remaining treats from Something Sweet.

I stomped off to find the culprit (already knowing who was to blame) and she made it all the more obvious: in the closet, behind my clothes, ears pinned back and eyes that said, "Mom, I'm so SO sorry."

I melted on the spot, trying to hide my smile while scolding her.

Later, she would ease herself onto the bed, gently lie down beside me and place her head in my lap – ears still pinned back to her head. I would avoid eye contact.

This is not the first of her misbehavior and it won't be the last – but something about her still screams innocence.

Pets, it's easy to tell by looking at them, want desperately to please us. They look at us like we've hung the moon and no matter what kind of anger or frustration they might sense from us, they still ooze love and affection. No matter who we are or what we do, they are willing to show us unconditional love (though not, perhaps, perfect behavior).

Pets have a sense of adventure, a loyalty to their pack, and they know nothing of hate – only of love.

Here's to our pets; may we try to be more like them.

Lindsey Spencer

Manager of Creative Content

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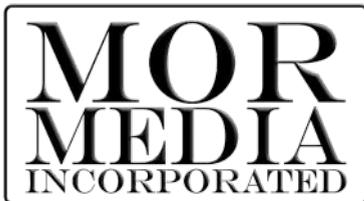
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Breaking Grass

GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



It had been years since I took in a T-Ball game and now I'm wondering why I waited so long. One night recently I waltzed into Bland Park with my camera to photograph a little player for my neighbors and smiled just about the entire time I was there. There's something about baseball -- and kids -- that just gets to me.

A lot of changes have occurred since the days of my youth, a time when a kid had to wait until the age of 9 to be old enough to compete in the local Little League program. These kids were about 5, all decked out in classy uniforms and most clambering around with a giant backpack in tow, a bag carrying bats and gloves and who knows what else ... snacks? Pup tents? Blankies? I remember my very first trip to Labor Park for my debut and all I had to bring along was my glove, and not much of a glove at that. It was a hand-me-down from my uncle Terry Burton, one of the heroes of my youth, and I treasured it because he gave it to me, even if he gave it away because he had bought a brand new Wilson A2000 and the one he

gave me had a nice worn split in the pocket right between the first two finger slots. Didn't matter: It was his, now it was mine, and my career was off and running.

Back in my day when a kid would bring his own bat to a game we all thought he must have rich parents. We used wooden bats back then (they went for \$8 apiece; \$8!) and each team was issued a big green Army bag that held about 10 bats and the catching equipment and a litter of baseballs.

If a kid was lucky enough to have his own bat he usually took a permanent marker and put his initials on the small end -- the one that told you how long the bat was -- and then issued the statement, "My dad said not to let anyone use my bat, so don't," and we knew the one with the initials was off-limits, even if it was shiny and new and seemed to be calling our names from the row of older, pock-marked ones the team had had for years. If a kid broke one -- unless, Lord help you, it belonged to someone else -- the team manager could take it down to Jimmy Grooms' Western Auto Store and exchange it for a similar one.

That's why almost every team had a Jackie Robinson model that seemed to have been manufactured from wood on Noah's Ark and had been in the bag since the beginning of baseball time; their handles were almost as thick as the barrels and they were heavy and you couldn't have broken one if you'd run over to the block building concession stand and hammered away on a corner. I also never knew anyone who could hit with one. My first team was Earl Kirk Equipment, coached by Ed Miles and Russell Willie. Mr. Miles' son, Dickie, was our catcher and Allan Yearry, a classmate of mine, was our best player and third baseman.

I remember before games Mr. Miles would hit ground balls to the infielders but instead of hitting fly balls to the outfielders, Mr. Willie would whirl his right arm around rapidly and throw balls sky high underhanded. I learned from my dad that he had been a top-notch pitcher in his fast-pitch softball days, and his mighty right arm served him well as high fly thrower for all of us dressed in green and white. I wore number 7 and played center field, just like Mickey Mantle of the New York Yankees -- my favorite player -- until about the third game of the season when the coaches asked if I could play infield. Seems that other than Allan we didn't have anyone who could catch a ground ball and they wondered if I could, and I said "heck, yeah" because what I did all day long was throw a tennis ball against the back of the house and catch grounders.

If my mother were alive she could attest to that, and my sister in Washington state will confirm it if you want to call her: Almost every day, from early morning until evening, they had to contend with the constant thump of a tennis ball on the concrete block foundation. I think they both nurtured their love of music because of that, turning up their radios to block the sound.

So even though today's tiny players have it better than we did as far as equipment and playing fields are concerned, there wasn't that much difference between what made the game great then and makes it great now ... kids having fun, chasing down fly balls and ground balls and trying to figure out what to do once they find one, often doing exactly what they heard Mom shout: Throw it! And they did the other night, proudly, sometimes having no particular target in mind. Mom said throw it, and they did and in their minds they were darn good players. And that's really all that matters.

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LIVING A *Better Story*

BY JARED PICKNEY

There is a trauma wound affecting more people than drugs and alcohol combined. It cuts deeper than flesh and bone, and works its way to the soul. It is the father wound, and it leaves a wake of destruction in its path.

What is the father wound? Every person has a deep longing in their heart to hear from their father the same words Christ heard from His Father, "This is my beloved Son (or daughter), in whom I am well-pleased" (Matt 3:17). It is a deep longing to know we have pleased our father.

The father wound is the deficiency or absence of love from your birth father, whether intentional or unintentional.

The effect of the father wound is farther reaching than what many would suspect. It touches everything from marriage to addiction, from education to behavior, and new evidence even suggests it affects us genetically.

According to the Fathers Unite Campaign, children from fatherless homes are: 5 times more likely to commit suicide, 20 times more likely to have behavioral/emotional disorders, 9 times more likely to drop out of high school, and 20 times more likely to end up in prison.

So where do we go from here? Healing from a deep wound is never easy, especially when it is as deep as a father wound.

The first step to healing is to share your hurt with God and others, to be honest about your pain.

The next step is to forgive your father. The longer you hold on to bitterness, the longer your pain will control you.

The third step is to tell yourself a new narrative about who you are. If you are a Christian, you are a child of God, loved, forgiven, accepted, redeemed and secured.

Taking these steps in the context of a faith community is the way forward. It is how we can experience the true healing we long for as we are re-parented in the only family with a perfect Father.

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I sat in the audience at Crowley's Ridge Academy and watched as each student's name was called as they were handed their diplomas. My family and I were there to watch my nephew, Kayden Trout, graduate and close out his time as a high school student. The commencement was marked by great speeches from students and administrators and the event caused lots of memories to flow for me as well.

I graduated from Crowley's Ridge in 1983 and, though most of that time is now very cloudy in my memory, I can remember how it felt like a portion of my life had been completed. There was great apprehension about what was ahead, however, as I had to choose a college and career.

Anyone who recalls me from my school days will tell you my thoughts were very rarely centered in the classroom. My mind was always outside, thinking about the great opportunities the outdoors had to offer. My mind needed to be on geometry and algebra, but I figured the only math I needed to know was how to add up the number of fish on a stringer or rabbits in the game pouch. I had great teachers who inspired us to read the classics, but I felt like the best English lessons came from *Outdoor Life*, *Field and Stream*, and *Fur, Fish and Game*. Authors like Ed Zern, Patrick McManus, Robert Ruark and Jack O'Connor transformed literature into a travel machine that took me to places I only hoped to go.

I did like history and talk of men like Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Theodore Roosevelt, Lewis and Clark and Alvin York only furthered the outdoor thoughts that ran through my head. These examples were men who had taken the outdoors, made it their passion and not only made history, but wrote history.

My mind did tend to wander outside the classroom but, being a competitive person, I did

pay attention to my grades and fared pretty well coming out of high school. College was next and I was unsure of the next step. I finally decided to pursue my higher education at Crowley's Ridge College and, fortunately, the outdoors followed along. The campus was conducive to outdoor activities and several of the classes fell right in line. David Goff led us on survival trips and canoe trips and those were the highlights of each semester.

After two years at CRC, it was off to ASU and the pursuit of a degree in accounting, with the intention of following my dad, Charles Long, in his practice. Soon I was on a path that included all kinds of accounting classes. My grades were good as I had a knack for numbers, but something was just not there. I completed Intermediate Accounting in the summer, a tough task to say the least, and even though I fared well, that was it. I felt my accounting career was over, but what next? I remember going home and telling my parents I was done with accounting, that I did not want to follow in my dad's footsteps and I wanted to make a change. Their response was complete support and to this day that is one of the greatest gifts Mom and Dad ever gave me.

With the next semester I jumped into Wildlife Management with both feet. Instead of accounting classes, I was taking herpetology (the study of reptiles), ornithology (the study of birds) and fisheries biology. Instead of thinking about debits and credits, I was out chasing salamanders, darters and banding birds. Even though the classes were tough, I felt a sense of calmness and thrill that I had not felt prior to that time. Due to my change in major, the only stumbling block was the last semester, as I had to pile on 21 credit hours to graduate when I wanted, but that worked as well.

Soon after graduation I went to work with Kueter's Fish Company just east of Paragould where I spent two great years with some great people. A job opened up for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission at the Donham Hatchery in Corning and I was able to get on there in 1991. Then in 1997 I transitioned to Education and here I sit now with 30 years under my belt.

I know this column is a little out of the ordinary for an outdoor column, but I felt like I needed to share my story; not because of anything I have done, but because I want our youth to know their dreams can come to fruition. As these kids graduate and head out into this tough world, I want them to know they have a bright future and can attain the goals they have set.



CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

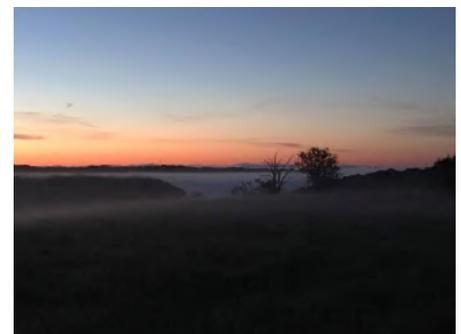
I also realize very few kids will read this column. The printed media is out of style for much of our youth so I implore you as you read this to support your kids, your grandkids, your nieces, your nephews and all the other kids you might come in contact with as they pursue their dreams.

Regardless of what is written or said about the kids of today, they are our future. We often tend to see the bad and lump many of our kids into the same basket, but as I watched those kids excitedly and confidently receive their diplomas, I saw kids looking forward to the future. The youth that graduate might be doctors, lawyers, steel workers, farmers, electricians, biologists, accountants, preachers or elected officials. They hold the future in their hands and they deserve our full support.

I have to include a little outdoor news and June holds great opportunities for outdoor activities.

Want to take your kids fishing? Free Fishing Weekend starts on June 11 at noon and continues until midnight, June 13. Anglers can fish and will not need a fishing license or trout permit during that time period. For unique fishing opportunities, check out agfc.com to find some great information. The warm temperatures will also get folks thinking about boating and there will be several Boater Education classes during June. Anyone born on or after January 1, 1986, is required to have the class and the list of classes can be found at agfc.com.

Again, I know this has been a little different from my usual columns, but I see such value in our youth, especially in the outdoor realm. Spend some time with children and I hope you will get them outdoors. I hope to see you out there!!



PET *of the* MONTH

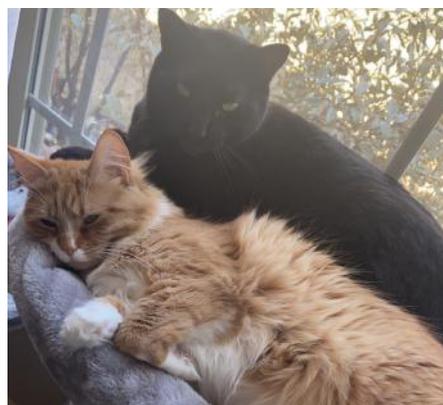
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BY KELLYE FRAZIER

I got Rizzo (black cat) in 2017. He was a stray kitten at my mom's house. He is laid back, loves to cuddle and tolerates the other animals.

We got Lily (orange cat) the following year. I saw her on the West Memphis Animal Shelter page -- she was a kitten found inside a wall in West Memphis. We picked her up the next day. She is very playful, independent, and really only loves to cuddle with Rizzo.



Ollie (golden retriever) we got in 2020 during the pandemic. He is very shy since he is a quarantine dog, but has branched out since we started putting him in doggy daycare. He is gentle, protective of his new sister, and thinks he is a lap dog!

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Sounds Like...

A playlist for June

BY SARA BROWN

Adventure!



The start of summer is approaching, and so is a new adventure, at least it is for me. I've accepted an offer from Purdue University's Ph.D. program in Human Development & Family Studies, so this summer I'm leaving Northeast Arkansas. That means this is the last playlist I'm giving you, and it's filled with songs that scream adventure!

The New Day - Greta Van Fleet

This song has such a hopeful energy to it. "Let the new day shine its light on me." It's a perfect track to queue up as you're driving out of town on the way to your new life. It'll put a smile on your face and leave you feeling optimistic about what's yet to come!

Waiting for Life to Begin - The Shelters

Here's one that always hits me hard. It's a perfect reminder that you can't simply wait for life to come to you - you have to take control and make things happen for yourself. Turn this one up loud and do that thing you've been hesitating on!

Freedom - Larkin Poe

Some of us seek a new adventure to gain a sense of freedom from where we're coming from, and this song is perfect for those people. It's rock 'n' roll, it's empowering, and it'll leave you longing for your own taste of freedom if you aren't careful.

Wild Blue - Hunter Hayes

This isn't the typical "new adventure" tune, but it always makes me feel confident about the future. "No storm that you can't fly through, no place that you can't fly to up here in the wild blue." I look at it this way: As you take the first step into something new, you're stepping into the wild blue, and there's absolutely nothing you can't do.

Train Leaves Here This Morning - Dillard & Clark

This track is perfect for the road and everything adventurous and new. It just has a happy feel to it, and it's a great one to turn up if you find yourself feeling blue on your journey because you can't help but feel happy listening to it!

Wreckless Abandon - The Dirty Knobs

This is the song to play as you start your journey toward your new adventure. This track blends all the elements of adventure you could ever want (hope, freedom, happiness) with just the right amount of rock 'n' roll and bounce that'll have you chomping at the bit to get this whole thing started!

More playlists can be found at neapremiere.com/archives. If you want to keep up with me and my next adventure (and hear the songs I'm listening to along the way), you can find me on Instagram at [@_downtown_sarabrown_](https://www.instagram.com/_downtown_sarabrown_).

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HEALTH & THE CITY

WITH DR. BETHANY DAVIS

When I got married and moved out of my parents' house, I quickly fell in love with preparing meals for myself and my husband. A trip to the grocery store was an escape from the gravity of graduate school, and I found an innate joy in exploring varieties of produce, trying fresh recipes, and fueling my body. Without trying, I ran faster, lost fat, and resolved several of my health issues just by eating more whole foods and less processed foods.

In addition, cooking with my husband nurtured our relationship. Because of this shift in my mental energy and change in my body, I recognized that food, like movement, is one of the best medicines.

Although I treat patients through safe movement patterns, I am just as observant about what people put in their bodies as I am attentive to how people move their bodies. Just like you need to put the optimal fuel in your car, you need premium fuel in your digestive system in order to feel your best, have the most energy, and increase the clarity you have during your daily tasks. Summer is the best time of year to dive into better quality nutrition and explore all of the wonderful whole foods that can genuinely change the way you feel. Not only are foods more diverse this time of year, but spending time outside with friends while you prepare meals is also therapeutic. It increases your social connections, time in the sun, and moments in gratitude. Here are a few things you can do this summer to enhance your food choices, as well as enhance your mental and physical health.

Go for foods that don't have a label and stay away from the processed foods. Processed foods are loaded with salt, sugar, and additives that can bloat you, decrease your energy, and

increase gut dysbiosis and discomfort. As it becomes uncomfortably hot in temperature outside, the last thing you want is to feel discomfort on the inside, too! Whole foods will fuel you and satiate you for longer periods of time, keeping you energized through your summer activities.

Try to go for fruits and vegetables that are in season. Fruits and vegetables in June are more fresh, crisp, juicy, and tasty than any other time of the year. There is so much produce in season in June it is actually designated National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month. Particular produce items to look out for are blackberries, plums, raspberries, apricots, tomatoes, strawberries, beets, bell peppers, spinach, zucchini, squash, corn, and green beans. With just a few of these ingredients you can add a bit of goat cheese, pecans, and balsamic, and you have a delicious, fresh summer salad for a very low cost.

Go to your local farmer's market! Not only is it a way to shop locally, but shopping from farmers in the surrounding area truly connects you with the people who grew your food. You can personally thank them for supplying your body with nutrients, and you can also gain a deeper understanding of how your local fruits and vegetables are grown and meet the families they directly support. Talk about gratitude!

While shopping locally is important, it is also extremely important to choose organic produce when you can. The pesticides and herbicides sprayed on our produce can have dangerous inflammatory and long-term damages to our bodies. The buildup of toxins and contaminants in your body can disrupt your hormones and cause chronic damage to your nervous system, reproductive system, kidneys, liver, lungs, and other body organs.

Yes, organic is more expensive, but your health is worth it! If you have to pick just a few foods to buy organic, check out the EWG's Dirty Dozen and start buying those organic. It's also important to look for the green USDA organic produce seal on your organic products, as many use the word "organic" on their packaging, but a majority of products would not qualify to the set standards.

Experiment with new recipes. A diverse range of foods is the best way to feed your gut microbiome, and a diverse gut microbiome will enhance your health. Find a recipe using the food you bought that is in season and make it a friend night, date night, or a night to treat yourself by fueling your body with what the earth produced this time of year. I love experimenting with smoothies and baking, but there are a plethora of recipes using whole foods on the internet and social media.

Food logging is one of the cheapest interventions you can perform. Whether this be a note on your phone or in a journal, simply write down how you physically feel one time per day. You can write down things such as: bloated, lacking energy and focus, brain fog, etc. After a few weeks of following the tips above, notice if any of these symptoms have changed or improved. Your gut epithelial layer is regenerated every 3-5 days, so it often doesn't take long to see effects of a changed diet.

Food fuels our bodies, but it also fuels our connections. Try using cooking as a way to reach out to friends you haven't seen in a long time. Preparing a meal with someone is a special celebration, so turn off your television and chop, sauté, and grill together. Allow yourself to be present with the people you are with, the people you love. You never know when you'll get those moments again, and you don't want to spend them distracted. When you prepare a healthy meal with someone, you fuel your microbiome, your cells, and your heart.

I am a Doctor of Physical Therapy and only a Master's student of clinical nutrition, so the recommendations above are merely suggestions, not guidelines, based on my beneficial experiences of whole food eating. Always see a functional nutritionist before large changes in your diet if you have health issues.



College Tips by a *College Student*



BY SARA BROWN

We did it. We got through another semester, hopefully unscathed! Regardless of how your final grades turned out, you did your best in a very challenging time, so keep that in mind! Some of us have made it through another academic year, some of us have graduated, and some of us graduates are going on to graduate school. I'm one of them, and I regret to inform you this is the final edition of College Tips with a College Student. I'm pleased to share with you I've accepted an offer from Purdue University's Ph.D. program in Human Development & Family Studies, and I'll be moving to Indiana over the summer. That said, I'd like to leave you with my top five, all-time, most important college tips for you.

Tip number one: Stay organized. Keeping organized will help you stay on track, manage your time, and get things done. I've found I can get by with just a note on my phone that details everything I have to get done in a week, organized by course/club/organization. As I completed things, I marked them off the list. For you, this may be sufficient, or you may need something else. You can use a planner or a marker board, you can set alarms and alerts, you could just stick a bunch of sticky notes up, too – whatever helps you keep up with things the easiest.

Tip number two: Talk to your professors. One of the best things I did as an undergraduate student was talk to my professors. They offered me guidance on courses to take, research to conduct, graduate programs to apply to, and even personal life guidance. My thesis advisor has become one of my favorite people, and I'm so glad I'll be able to stay in contact with him as I move on to the next place. Don't be afraid to reach out. Professors can be invaluable resources to you, and they may end up even becoming some of the best friends you've ever had.

Tip number three: Take initiative. Don't wait for reminders to get coursework done or to come to class for an exam. Some professors will send reminders of due dates and exams, and others won't. Take the initiative and work on things without having to be told they're coming due soon. Read your syllabus, and if you're confused, ask questions, either to a classmate or the professor.

Tip number four: Balance your time. You're not going to be able to do everything. It sounds counter intuitive, but taking time for yourself is the number one thing you can do to get yourself back in focus. You need to balance the responsibilities you take on with your coursework and your own self-care. Make sure there's enough space for everything you're wanting to do before you commit. Don't worry, you're not going to miss out on anything – you'll be glad you have the personal time you need.

And finally, tip number five: Always be kind to yourself. College is hard; there will be good days and there may be days where you're so overwhelmed you can't even think straight. The last thing you need is to make any of that more difficult by beating yourself up over something. Reward yourself for a job well done, take breaks and relax your mind, and never forget there's nothing college can throw at you that you aren't equipped to handle. You're doing amazing, never forget that.

If you want to read more college tips, you can find them all at neapremiere.com/archives. If you want to keep up with me and my next adventure, you can find me on Instagram at [@_downtown_sarabrown_](https://www.instagram.com/_downtown_sarabrown_).

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Pet Appreciation

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

The first week of June is recognized as Pet Appreciation Week. As you can probably imagine, I love this week! Pet Appreciation Week is all about recognizing the value of the human-pet bond, which is invaluable, if you ask me. Pet Appreciation Week, also known as PAW, was created by the American Veterinary Medical Association in order to create awareness of the importance of our pets and focus on how they enrich and brighten our lives.

Pets provide so much and expect so little in return. They provide us with unconditional love, loads of entertainment and, of course, emotional and health support (like lowered stress and decreased blood pressure). Some are trained to help detect seizures in people before they occur, signal unsafe drops in blood sugar, provide relief with severe anxiety and panic disorders, lead the blind safely, and so much more. Of course, some of the pets I just mentioned are working pets. However, the next statement still holds true. In return, they only expect to be loved and cared for.

Pets brighten my life every day. I am so blessed to get to meet wonderful pets every single day. I meet clients who tell me their stories and I get to witness firsthand the beautiful bond between that pet and the owner. Every pet I meet is different, but there is one thing that is always the same: the love the owner and pet have for each other. It is incredible to witness. Whether it is the new kitten someone just saved from the side of the road or the dog that has been a part of the family for 13 years, the love each family has for its pet and the trust the pet has with the owner is always amazing.

I could go on for days and discuss some of the most beautiful and touching stories of how pets have made all of our lives better, but for the sake of the length of this article, and with appreciation of the value of the

reader's time, I will simply focus on one main truth, the steadfast loyalty of a pet for its owner.

Pets show their loyalty in a number of ways, and not just our loyal dogs. Cats show their hard work and dedication to the family by hunting -- typically by leaving their proud hunting trophies on a Welcome mat near a back door, rubbing and bumping their heads on you, and by kneading their paws on their loved ones (endearingly enough referred to as "making biscuits").

This is how they communicate to you they love you and are comforted by your presence.

Dogs are the epitome of loyalty. They have your back. You don't feel well and need to stay in bed -- they're with you, snuggling right by you and trying to take that fever away. You're sad and have had a rough go of it lately, they're there -- offering what they can to support you. Dogs are intuitive -- they know what emotions are and this often plays into their energy. It's truly amazing.

Our pets are an important part of our lives, but we are the whole world to them. This Pet Appreciation Week I hope you all can join in celebrating the love for your pets and what joy they bring to your homes!



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MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE

Father's Day has been established as the third Sunday in June, but how did this tradition originate? Many historians attribute Father's Day to Sonora Smart Dodd. It was in 1909, while listening to a Mother's Day sermon, that Mrs. Dodd thought about honoring her father. Mrs. Dodd's father, William Smart, was a Civil War veteran who raised six children after his wife died.

If you are honoring your father this Father's Day with a gift, you may want to take into consideration what he would like. Be creative when thinking about that Father's Day treat. Here are a few things to consider:

Is he the outdoor type? What does he enjoy?

Is he a gourmet chef or a back yard cook?

Are sports and/or fitness gifts of interest to him?

Does he enjoy reading? What would he like?

Does travel interest him? What would make travel easier for business or pleasure?

What does he need or what would he like in terms of clothing? Don't forget that gift certificates often make size, color and style easier for both the buyer and the receiver.

Does he love technology? Finding out if he is low-tech or high-tech is the key to finding the right gift.

What are his tastes in music or movies? Does he like the classics, the standards or the newest, latest cutting edge releases?

Would he enjoy dinner with family and loved ones? What is his favorite meal?

Would he simply like to hear from you?

A Dad's Take On How To Diaper A Baby:

"Spread the diaper in the position of the diamond with you at bat. Then fold second base down to home and set the baby on the pitcher's mound. Put first base and third base together, bring up home plate and pin the three together. Of course, in case of rain, you gotta call the game and start all over again."

-Jimmy Piersall, Boston Red Sox, Baseball Author

Linda Lou Moore is a certified etiquette consultant. She offers business professionalism and dining seminars for adults, and etiquette and dining programs for children and teens. Contact via Post Office Box 726, Paragould 72451 or at manners@paragould.net.



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Cast for Kids

PHOTOS BY KAROLINE RISKER

Cast for Kids, a special needs fishing derby that takes place all over the country, came to Reynolds Park on May 15, according to Mindy Tritch, coordinator. It was the 30th anniversary of the event country-wide, but the first time it has come to Paragould. It was dedicated to the memory of Anna Marie Pillow, Mindy's cousin. "It was a perfect day," said Mindy, "God was good."

Forty participants registered, and there were close to 100 volunteers. The morning started with the national anthem, pledge of allegiance, and prayer, and a free pancake breakfast sponsored by the Greene County 4H. The Crowley's Ridge Christian Homeschoolers hosted a painting station and a fish for books game, while Harvest Baptist Church provided lunch.

Organizers hope to do the event next year, as well. Sponsors making the event possible were Pillow's Bait Shop, First National Bank, NAPA Auto Parts, Coldstream Fisheries, Crowley's Ridge Classic, Focus Bank, Riggs, Finns and Feathers, Craighead Electric, Harvest Baptist Church, Lew's, the Agee family, Sign Tech, Farm Bureau, Keuter's Catfish, and the Pillow family.



Eli McLain, Jonah Bunch and Chris Bunch



Erin Potter



Charles Brietz, Betty Brietz, Taylor Price, Jennie Fleeman





Zack Fincher, Dayli Culbreath, Marisol Delatorne



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



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Oasis Arts & Eats Fest



Liz Jeffries, Molly Doty, Daisy Doty

The Oasis Arts and Eats Fest took place on May 1st in Downtown Jonesboro. Food and art vendors filled Church Street and the FOA Plaza for a beautiful day in the sunshine.

Live music took place throughout the area and throughout the day and shops kept their doors open.



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Downtown After Hours

PHOTOS BY KNIGHT PRODUCTIONS

Downtown Paragould hosted its first After Hours Event on May 14th featuring Everyday Life. Downtown After Hours will take place second Fridays during the summer with live music at the corner of Pruet and Court streets.

May special guests also included balloon artist Trick-E and Carlos' Street Tacos.

June will feature the Happy Campers on stage and July will see Shotgunbilly's take the stage.



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Baths for Barkers

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



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



In order to reach out and touch someone, volunteers with Harvest Baptist Church in Paragould first reached out and touched some dogs.

By hosting Baths For Barkers -- a free wash, dry and treat-giving experience for pets at Paragould's Harmon Park -- church workers like Stephanie Lizarraga and Amanda Thomas performed a community outreach effort they found both fun and rewarding. They got to play with pets and share the good news about their church and their Lord with others.

"It's just a ministry to help get involved in the community," Stephanie said. "I've always cared for dogs more than anything else since I was introduced to rescue and I just wondered who else would be into doing this. Everyone out here helping ... they're all dog lovers."

By setting up shop adjacent to Harmon's Bark Park, the church group encouraged dog owners to first let their pets run free inside the fenced-in play area then stop by their site for a free soaping, rinse and treat. A beautifully sunny Saturday didn't hurt any, allowing for lots of interaction as pet owners strolled through the area.

Volunteer Beth Miller even met up with a former student of hers, Anna Phillips, who now lives out of state but stopped by with her rescue dog, Friday, who managed to repeatedly find the only mudhole in the Bark Park.

The number of workers needed to complete each bath depended upon the size and willingness of the dog. Some were simple, with eager clients; some required holding on tightly as owners joined in to help see the job finished.

"We see it as a community outreach," Amanda said. "It's something we can do and share our love of God."

Even if some of the dogs immediately rolled around in the dirt right after the free bath, both women said it just added to the feelings of fun and accomplishment. "I just wanted to give it a try," Stephanie said, "and the church let me. You can see we're not working too hard."

"We just can't do horses," Amanda said with a laugh.



A-STATE PIC(K)S

The A-State Committee with the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce is hosting a monthly photo contest in which participants are invited to [pick] their favorite [pic] within a given category and submit via the post found on the Chamber's Facebook page.

May's theme – "A-State Campus" – yielded these winning photos submitted by Katy Buckley Provence.

June's theme will be Father's Repping A-State. Submit your photo by commenting on the post found on the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page. The winner will be given a prize sponsored by a local business and will have the photo run in the July edition of Premiere.

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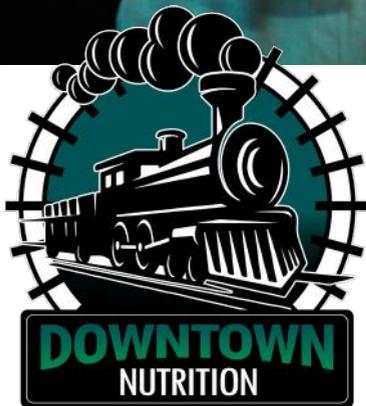
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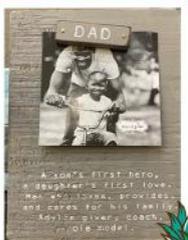


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DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD EVENTS



June 11
Downtown After Hours
The Happy Campers
Corner of Pruet and Court
6:30 p.m.



June 11, 12 & 13
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The Collins Theatre
7:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m.



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



Something (PAW)sitive

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

There's something positive about Something Pawsitive and the importance of it is shared by many. Located on Pruet Street in Downtown Paragould next door to Something Sweet, Something Pawsitive is Arkansas' only cat lounge, offering visitors the opportunity to just stress or even to take a new pet home.

Tracy Mothershed, who owns both the cat lounge and Something Sweet, visited a similar enterprise while on a trip to South Carolina and brought the idea home with her. In addition to giving patrons a chance to sit, pet and interact with the cats provided, an additional goal is to help with cat overpopulation: Getting them off the streets and into homes.

"It has gone over better than I ever dreamed," Tracy said of Something Pawsitive. "I didn't know if Paragould would be ready for something like this. The reaction has been incredibly positive."

The cats are provided and adopted through Ozzie's Legacy Rescue. Director Nikki Parrish says the effort is definitely worth the time and energy needed to make it work. "It's a stress reliever, for one thing," she said. "You lose track of time when a cat is nuzzling with you. We've had 43 adopted (at the time of this interview), plus the 12 that reside there. And Tracy's cat, Lily. She has the run of the place and makes it a baker's dozen on site. When one is adopted out of Something Pawsitive, that cat's space is filled with another."

Since Paragould does not have an animal shelter, housing of cats is left up to nonprofits and rescues. Ozzie's Legacy places the cats in various foster homes around the Paragould area but a way for potential owners to meet them was needed. That's where Something Pawsitive fits in. Visitors are asked to stop in at Something Sweet and pay an admission fee. If there is room in the cat area they may go right in; if it is at maximum capacity they will be asked to remain seated at Something Sweet until space opens up. There are "do's and don'ts" in place at the facility, all easily explained upon one's initial visit. The rules are all established to accommodate the cats -- the stars of the show.

"We want to make sure the cats are treated well," Tracy said. "That's their place over there; it's for them first." Cats are not to be picked up, loud noises are not allowed, children must be supervised ... for the relaxation of the cats and kittens, as well as for guests. Visitors may partake of food and drink purchased at Something Sweet while enjoying the playful interaction with the cats. Some choose to read, some do computer work, some just observe the animals. Mary Miller said she likes to visit "because I have four cats, and I come here really because of my granddaughter. She can't have a cat where she lives and ever

since I discovered this place we've been coming here."

"The best cat place on Earth!" said granddaughter Kinley.

Fees for the cat lounge are: 15 minutes, \$4; 30 minutes, which includes a 10% discount on food and drink, \$6; 1 hour, with a 20% discount to food/drink purchase, \$10.

"Tracy messaged us with her idea for the cat cafe and gave us her ideas," Nikki said. "We were absolutely game. She was wanting to find a rescue to partner with and help. She honestly did all the hard work with the building and the cafe. Ours is just making sure the cats are healthy and vetted."

Ozzie's Legacy sees that cats are spayed/neutered, have all their shots and dewormer, and have had a flea treatment before coming to Something Pawsitive. The foster agency relies solely on donations and fundraisers. Those interested in helping may learn more on Ozzie's Facebook page or by texting Nikki at (870) 565-8957. Donations can be dropped off at Ruff Cuts Grooming, Ozzie's Legacy or Something Sweet. There is also a cash donation jar inside Something Pawsitive, along with a list of helpful items needed.

"It's only been amazing!" Nikki said of the venture alongside Tracy. "I actually thought it would be easier but the paperwork keeping up with making cats' profiles and getting pictures ... that's the hard part. But if she wants to open a second one I would be all for it."

Tracy said an additional cat haven would "be a challenge because I'm a control freak and can't be everywhere at the same time. Right now I can just walk over there and enjoy. That's why it works so great; people can come in and get some pet therapy even if they live somewhere that won't allow them to have a pet of their own. But a second one ... let me get back to you."



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ARC

Angels 4 Animals

BY LINDSEY SPENCER

“Helping you help them” is the motto for Angie Heringer. Angie loves animals – she loves her own, she loves helping rescue them, and she loves making sure they find good homes. Her passion to help animals helped lead her, along with a few others, to found the Animal Rescue Connection (ARC) Angels 4 Animals.

Originally from California, Angie moved to Jonesboro when Arkansas State University recruited her to help start a women’s track program. “I run and I rescue,” said Angie with a laugh.

She met her husband who is from Arkansas and the two decided to remain in NEA. It was the early 1990s when Angie walked into the Humane Society, at the time a trailer on Strawfloor Road. She spent five years as director, during which time she assisted in starting membership levels and adoption forms – essentially running it like a rescue.

“I loved it, but I resigned in order to go finish my masters,” Angie said, adding she’s been involved with rescuing ever since. ARC, which began as Arkansas Angels 4 Animals, was officially established in 2015 when it became a 501c3. Recently the organization changed its name to ARC and removed Arkansas from its title because it saw a need for a rescue center, or some connection, in the wider area.

“We go to so many different cities, shelters, and towns to help,” Angie explained. “We connect. We get so many calls every day and it’s from another city or state, we see who is in the area. We provide names and numbers. If we’re close enough, we can help in the meantime. So, we help network.”

Angie believes the area desperately needs a rescue center – not another shelter, which is beneficial -- but a center.



"If you build, it will come, sadly," Angie explained of her reasoning for believing more shelters are not the answer. "What we need is some kind of connection so that we can continue to help all these different groups and connect each other and help each other."

The AEIOU of rescuing, according to Angie: "Awareness, Inspiration, Education, Outreach, and the Understanding what rescue IS and what we can do for them because sometimes when we say we're a rescue, [people] get offended like, 'Oh I'm not hurting my dogs' or, 'Oh I'm not a bad person and they don't need rescued!' But when people are trying to give their dogs away, we try to educate them why Craigslist and 'Free to good home' are not a good thing, and if you are going to do it, here's what you need to ask – because there are so many flippers, so many scammers, so many dog-fighters and people just are not aware of that. So again, that's part of awareness and education."

Some cities have a 711 number, like a 911, where you can call and get help, information, or connection when it comes to animals in need, and Angie believes this would greatly benefit the area. A place where people could call to get information, a place to volunteer and where training is offered to those who want to help could help greatly reduce the pet overpopulation.

"Another thing a rescue center can do, that this town needs, is trap and release program for cats," Angie said. "You can't just spay one here and trap one here and there, it just doesn't really make a dent. That's what my partner, Ruth, does. She does so many cats and colonies. She helps so many."

When they notice a colony of cats, ARC will contact the property owner and get permission to be on the property, then spay/neuter and release. Angie said many don't understand the concept of why they release, but if they don't more will come. It's better to have a controlled colony of animals that has been spayed/neutered and has had shots.

"People want to know more, and people want to help," Angie said, adding that a rescue center could help greatly with education to train the community on a variety of subjects regarding pets.

Some things ARC Angels wants community members to understand:

If you don't have the vet records for the shots, do not trust they have been given. Too many animals are getting sick because someone received the animal for free and was told it had its shots. Without the vet record, this cannot be assumed.

Think before you shop. Consider a breed's temperament and physical requirements before committing – what activities would you like to do with your dog? How much time will you be able to dedicate to it? Will you be able to take it to get groomed regularly? Or would a short-haired dog be better for you? If you go to a breeder, visit the place personally first and ask lots of questions – of them and of local shelters, rescues, and breed clubs. Consider the fact that more than 25% of dogs in shelters are purebred, and that thousands of purebred rescue organizations serve all over the country. Purebred certifications do NOT guarantee a healthy puppy. And before committing to a puppy, know it's a common misconception that puppies will be easier to train. Adult dogs tend to catch on to new names, commands, and potty training. All dogs, young or old, usually need an adjustment period when moving to a new home.

Think before you breed. Remember breeding is not cloning – your dog's puppies are unlikely to be just like your dog. Breeding is also very expensive: shots, genetic testing to help ensure puppies won't suffer, etc. To do it right, you will spend more money than you could possibly earn. Reputable breeders do not breed for profits; they breed for the love of dogs.

Spay/neuter your dog – it's the smart thing to do. While spaying and neutering tends to stave off habits such as marking and humping, it is unfounded that it will make a dog fat, lazy, less loving or less playful. Not only do the procedures prevent unwanted pregnancies, but can help significantly reduce the risk of illnesses.

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SERVING OUR CITIES

BY LINDSEY SPENCER

in Jonesboro

The Jonesboro Police Department has many officers working on the daily to serve the city, but six of them have four paws and a tail. The K9 Unit currently consists of six teams, four of which are Belgian Malinois and two of which, the most recent additions, are German Shepherds. All of them are considered dual-purpose dogs used for patrols and for drug searches.

“The K9 unit was established to augment police services to the community,” said Sergeant Karen Oldham, the K9 supervisor. “They are primarily used as support for the patrol division, but because of manpower issues, the K9s are responding to calls for service as any other patrol officer would. One K9 team is assigned to the Street Crimes unit. They do a lot of probation/parole searches, drug detection, and warrant services.”

K9s are frequently used during traffic stops for drug detection and sometimes help locate drugs, drug paraphernalia, or other related items in residences, motel rooms, lockers at schools, and even cars in parking lots. Dogs can help locate and apprehend suspects and even sometimes aid in protecting their handlers. The four-legged officers can prove invaluable when assisting officers in the field when other

measures don’t produce results.

“One of our K9 teams was instrumental in finding a homicide victim’s phone in a large field and subsequently the victim’s location,” Karen shared. “This was done when drone footage and ground searches were not proving successful.”

The dogs are not shy to the spotlight, often participating in demonstrations at schools and civic events, but the spotlight is well deserved. The unit trains routinely so as to be ready for any occasion to serve the community.

“In 2020 our K9 teams recorded 1,132 training hours,” Karen said. “They do much more than this that is not recorded; 521 hours were recorded on detection and 636 were done on patrol scenarios. Some of this training may begin with one purpose such as drug detection, and then the teams are required to transition to apprehension which would be considered a patrol scenario.”

The average K9 costs over \$12,000 – money the unit relies heavily on donations for, and then further training. Most extended training opportunities are not in Arkansas – often the handlers seek out training and then pay for the expenses out of pocket.

“Travel for the officer is costly as well as the additional expenses of traveling with their K9 partner and lodging for their dogs,” Karen explained

Before assignment in the field, each Police Service Dog team is trained by a department-approved trainer and certified through nationally recognized organizations to meet current standards. The teams are then recertified on an annual basis.

“They are required to have a minimum of 16 hours per month documented training,” Karen added. “We practice bi-monthly and we often have 20-plus more K9 teams from the surrounding areas practice with us.”

In 2020 K9 handlers reported 1,102 deployments. Of these, 783 were drug detection and 319 were regular patrol.

“All of our K9s live with their handlers,” Karen shared, going on to explain that each is part of the family even though they are working dogs and not pets. The K9s typically retire between seven and nine years old when they often begin to show signs of arthritis or other age-related problems by then. Once they retire, their handlers usually opt to keep them as they have a strong bond together.



in Paragould

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

The Paragould Police Department recently welcomed two new employees who have been described as highly driven, but stubborn when it comes time to give up their tennis balls.

K9s Koda, a Belgian Malinois, and Ralfik, a German Shepherd, have joined the ranks with the K9 program at the PPD and have already assisted in several arrests in the last few months. Corporal Aaron Schenk said Koda, Ralfik and his K9 Zyk work as hard as they can every time they get out of the car. And all three bring different personalities to the team.

"Koda is a laid back, happy go lucky type of dog," Schenk said. "Ralfik is very playful and goofy, and goes buck wild over his tennis ball."

Before joining police departments, K9s are trained at a young age overseas.

Schenk said the dogs learn obedience, drug and people detection, and apprehension.

"Once they get to the U.S. they continue their training with a trainer here," he added. "Departments will work with a trainer to purchase a dog and then send their officer through handler school with the dog, where the officer learns how to use them at work."

Handlers log a minimum of 16 hours a month in continued training.

"Police dogs are just like anything else, if you don't use it, you lose it," Schenk said.

He added the current goal of the PPD is to have one dog assigned to each patrol shift so there is always one on duty.

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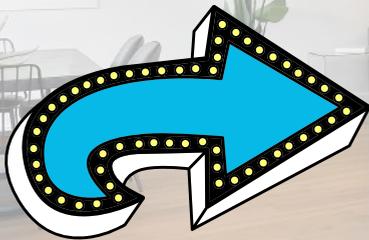
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MAYOR'S OUTLOOK

BY LINDSEY SPENCER

We elect leaders in the hopes they will serve our best interests, and the best interests of the community at large. We choose our leaders, usually, by how closely they align with our own values.

Though there are certainly many reasons one might run for public office, it is likely safe to assume, especially on the local level, those running for and earning their roles want to DO what is best for their communities. They want to make a difference, and they want to represent and serve the community which elected them.

Once they've won their spots, what comes next? Though many keep their eyes and ears on politicians, many also turn away once the election cycle has passed. We hope for the best from those who earned their seats and we go on about our business – guilty.

But our leaders can only serve the community if they understand what the community wants – not just what they want to hear during an elections cycle, but what they actually want to see happen during the years of service. Our leaders can only be as good as we encourage them

to be, as we push them to be.

In January of 2021 two new mayors entered office in Northeast Arkansas: Josh Agee was elected Mayor of Paragould and Harold Copenhaver was elected Mayor of Jonesboro.

As we enter June, at the end of which will mark halfway through 2021, we wanted to ask each of these men what their outlook is in this moment: looking back at their first few months and looking forward to the coming ones.

We invite you to read these questions and answers and try to understand where each leader is standing now as well as where they are trying to get. And then, we encourage you to continue to ask questions of them, to encourage them, to make your voice known so they can know what their community desires and where their community wants to go.

Our leaders are only as good as their support – after we choose them, we must hold them accountable by first holding ourselves accountable. If we all want what is best for our community, then we must continually talk about what that looks like to each of us.

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MAYOR'S OUTLOOK

Paragould Mayor

*Josh
Agee*

When Mayor Josh Agee took office as Paragould's new mayor, he had plenty of ideas about how to improve systems and keep Paragould moving forward. When asked about some of the changes made, Mayor Agee was willing to talk about each question, but he also had us consult the experts in each department.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Another officer has been added to the code enforcement office, and their own secretary, D'Ann Pemberton, helps keep things moving.

"With the old system, every time someone would go out in the field they would take pictures, come back, then they would print them and give them to me. I'd grab folders and manually put everything in there and type letters and all that. We also kept an Excel spreadsheet with it. With the old system alone, from the beginning of the year until now, we have 129 files. That's just property cleanups, condemnations, and junk vehicles. Then we got the new system, which is really pretty awesome because now when the guys go out and they have their iPads, they can pin a location themselves. So when they're out driving around and they see a location that needs to be cleaned up, they type the address in and it will pull up a location. They can put a star on it and I will get notification of it. All I have to do is click on it and it will tell me who owns it, their mailing address and which field inspector did it. The photo is already attached as well. So, all I have to do is print the letter from here to complete the file. It saves a lot of time and is more efficient," D'Ann explained.

Property cleanups have seven days from the day they receive the letter. Junk vehicles have fourteen days to be taken care of – vehicle must be licensed, insured, and operable. Condemnations have thirty days from receipt of the first letter before code enforcement will do a title search and start the process with the City Council.

"Since the new system, we've done 128 letters for property cleanup. We've done 17 on junk vehicles. And we've started six condemnations," D'Ann said.

MOBILE PATROL AND NEW WEBSITE

"A few years ago, we considered this kind of technology but as we got to looking, the cost of them was just, for us at the time, not reasonable. So, when Josh became mayor, he asked me if I could try to build one. So, I went and got everything and did it all in house for about one-third of the price," said Shane Stovall, the city's IT Director.

The Mobile Patrol is located at the corner of 601 E. Main Street, near Labor Park. The unit can record a month at a time and footage is uploaded to the Cloud.

The city plans to build five or six more.

The city is also hoping to implement a new website within the year.

"It will be more efficient," Shane said of the new site. "It will be able to take payments online for parks and other things."

Part of improving technology in the city included hiring another IT guy to help Shane in his role and allow him to focus on other things. The IT department helps with everything from Mobile Patrols and websites, to managing all the computers on the admin side of the mayor's office, the police department, the fire department, and parks.

Q&A WITH MAYOR JOSH AGEE

Police officers can help deal with problems if and when they arise. Perhaps having them in certain areas deters problems and helps people feel safer, but in your opinion, what else can lead to a safer city and make residents feel safer?

You know, there's so much more out there that we're working on, but we've tried to do little things, we've done things to help morale like, someone came and said, "Hey, you know, casual Fridays are kind of a thing," and I said, "What do you guys want to do?" They said they wanted to wear khaki pants, black shirts. They have to wear their fatigues, but they wanted to dress down on Fridays – still look professional, but have a more relaxed day. It makes it easier to interact with kids, makes them less of a uniform-presence. I thought, "What does it cost? Nothing. Does it make their job better? Yes. What does it hurt? Nothing." It helps morale. It

helps them enjoy Friday. So why would we not do that? There's plenty of examples like that. Any little thing we can do to help make their jobs better, we're going to do.

Quality of Life is somewhat of a "buzz phrase" - probably everyone wants quality in their life, but it can mean something different to everyone. With so many visions for what is most important to improve the quality of one's life, how do you think your vision aligns with the residents of Paragould?

My vision is the vision of our residents, it mirrors theirs. I have an example. A couple years ago the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) set up a sub-committee known as the Innovation Committee. The EDC members had been on there for a while. We hope they don't all leave, but as they drop off, we need to have people who have been brought up to speed on what the EDC does, and be familiar with the way it operates. So, they started a sub-committee and decided to let it have a few projects to see how those who make it up think. They wanted to know how we think, they know how they think, and decided they could mesh these ideas together and move forward. We were brought in as the ones that would take over. The first thing they did was say, "Go out in our community, and see what needs to be addressed." We went out in the community and we started looking at things. The three things identified were coding, schools, and quality of life. We had a committee that took on schools and met with them to see what we could do to help them. Kimberly Dale and I were the co-chairs for addressing Quality of Life. We created our own sub-committee, and the first thing we said was,

"Quality of life means different things to different people." So, we went out and we recruited different kinds of people – a twenty-year-old female recently engaged, a young family man, a pastor, the acting park director who was seventy, single and had no kids, a young professional male married but no kids, someone who works in the school, a judge, a doctor, a retired school teacher – I could keep going. As you can see, we had a diverse group. We looked for where people's wants aligned. We started clicking these things off. It was like a six-month study.

They went to all of our parks, drove around our city, and they all had their own ideas of what to do. Then we sent out a survey to retail businesses in town and the schools. We got 615 survey responses. If you start looking at some of the things that they request, we're working on them. The things that we can, the things that we all have in common – the top things were a dog park, which we've checked that box, a trail, we're checking that box, and making downtown a destination, we're in the process of checking that box. Just because you're twenty and single or retired with grandkids doesn't mean you don't have things in common. We're trying to find those commonalities, things that, for our tax payers' dollars, are the lowest hanging fruit and check the biggest boxes. We can't do everything, but we can start somewhere.

Josh acknowledged many of these projects have been in the works, will take time, and he is eager and excited to continue working with and for Paragould.



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MAYOR'S OUTLOOK

Q&A with Jonesboro Mayor

*Harold
Copenhaver*

I'm of the mind small businesses are what make our communities unique - they help differentiate one town from the next and give a city its character. I am trying to open a small, local business and it's tough work. Anything worth doing is tough, but rather than watch small businesses flounder, I believe we can help them and cheer them on. I'm curious what you and your team will/can do to help small businesses establish themselves in Jonesboro and therefore contribute to Jonesboro's character?

Well I think, honestly, having lived here since 1970, I'm very familiar with small businesses in our community. It's very difficult to thrive as a small business, but as a city, I see that's our potential growth. I want to thrive from small businesses and provide them the technology they need - to provide them the opportunity in our community in different areas - provide them the ability to connect with one another - have the opportunity for our Downtown area and what I'd call the West side of Jonesboro and the East side of Jonesboro to become one and that's by involving ourselves. We have to be relatable. We have to understand the

needs of the small businesses. And it's about communication. The [Downtown Jonesboro Alliance] I'm working with now very diligently about what we can do to improve the local businesses Downtown and in the surrounding part of Downtown. By doing so, we're listening. Then we're going to bring color, bring beautification to our community. That all envelops and develops our small businesses. Every weekend I try to get out and meet new business owners in our community.

I want to know their difficulties. I want to know if they're able to have enough employees. Our workforce is key to our small businesses - getting people involved. But the excitement that I see for what Jonesboro is, is just advancing it to the next level. That's done by incorporating our youth in the community and engaging our small businesses in the process of what city government is doing. By doing so, their ideas are coming forth. It's a win-win for both of us. So, it's about partnerships.

So, if someone is trying to open a small business, and they came to you and said, "Mayor, I need help" what would you say? There is, of course, a lot that goes into establishing a small business and

obviously you can't have a sit-down conversation with every single person considering a business, but since we're speaking to a group with this, to those who don't know where to start or where to get help, what would you say?

What they can do is contact the city here and then we can develop their needs. Arkansas State University, with their workforce development, they can provide a workforce program for them, so in other words "this is what they need to follow." There's so much going into a small business. People want their product out, but they've got to survive and make it through the business side of things. Whether it's banking needs and all that type of stuff, we can help. I think location is also really key. But developing that, you know, we have the resources that we can assist. I formed a coalition with Arkansas State University. So, we're coming together, it's a collaborative effort. When business owners come in, or if they need an incubator - they want to start, they have a great idea, but they don't have a facility in order to incorporate it - we are looking at how we can improve on our incubator projects moving the city forward as well. We want people to invest here. We want

people to have their businesses here, and we're willing to do whatever we can.

Is there a specific place people should go or person they should contact if they have questions about starting a business?

Absolutely. I provided a new role – Chief Administrative Officer, Brian Richardson. What Brian does, if individuals contact Brian, then he will provide them the connections through our city planner. Then, we have a guided resource with the initial plans that you would need to follow according to what you're wanting to lay. But I can't express enough, the transparency of the City of Jonesboro by sitting down with these planners and the city engineer – that answers your questions ahead of time. That way they provide you the needs that they're going to have to require and can also provide the resources in order to get that.

You've said you want to work more with A-State and help figure out ways to make students want to call Jonesboro home after graduation – specifically, what kind of projects does that include? How are you and your administration making plans to bring them to fruition?

Well number one, I've been fortunate and all three of my children have attended Arkansas State, and they've remained in this community. It's about engagement. Not only am I looking at Arkansas State University, but I'm looking at youth in this community. We just announced a youth council and they are incoming sophomores, juniors and seniors from all of our area schools – public, private and homeschooled. By engaging them, we're

going to use their ideas. Same thing with Arkansas State University. It's about engagement. That's where Dr. Damphousse and I are going to be working together on workforce development. We have been taking initial visits to our industries to find out what their needs are. I'm not [just] listening to them, I'm going out to them and saying, "What do you need?" There is a lapse in a workforce development plan for our youth in this community. We've got to make them aware of the opportunities that are here.

The exciting thing is, I've gone out to the university and I've gone to their development side of things, and [seen] where we can grow. Technology is going to be key for this community moving forward. So how do we move that and how do we incorporate the youth? What can we do as a city – whether it's work with the university on a facility that provides the opportunity for young people to start their careers, whether they want to be an individual that takes their product and builds it up, and us provide the work station for them, and the accounting for them, so they can continue to work on what they want to work on. So, the partnership is endless with what we can do with Arkansas State. We've never really grasped, I feel as a city, the full potential of what the university has to offer this community. So again, it's about partnerships. And in doing so, we're engaging our industrial partnerships that we haven't engaged at the full capacity that we should be. Through conversation, I think, more than anything else. That's what this administration is doing is being transparent. As we build trust with the community, more and more people are going to want to be involved and that's

what I see happening.

You mentioned engagement with young people to figure out what they want. Have you already seen some answers about what they're looking for? Other than, of course, a good job – everybody needs a good job – what else are they asking for? What is going to keep them here?

It's bar none quality of life. But it's what is the priority? And where do we go from there? When I've engaged the youth, and I've done so multiple times, and they're just excited to be heard – empowering them with their ideas – so, our trail way system is going to be a phenomenal project should we be able to complete that. Our grants department is working very diligently right now. Hopefully with our Washington legislation, our state legislators, coming together to do a trail way system throughout our community that is over 45 miles – it's a phenomenal product. The connectability of Downtown and Arkansas State University [and beyond]. Those are things, getting them engaged in outdoor activities, that's what they want. Another thing I'm looking in doing, and I have to get all the patrons in Downtown Jonesboro on board, is the opportunity for Downtown to be more involved. We had an arts festival and it was a great day for that. We've got to do more of that, whether that means looking at an experimental shutting down of Main Street on weekends where people can walk freely on the weekends. Those are things we're looking at. Safety is another key thing for this community. I want everyone to have a safe feeling whether they're downtown or in our city parks. Additional lighting, additional patrols, additional sky cops – it



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provides a good safety feeling. Cleaning our city up and bringing beautification to our city as well. It's a process. But I've got to engage the youth. The [Downtown Jonesboro Alliance] and the FOA, the city is going to provide them garbage cans so they can paint them in the alleyways so it's making things colorful! We're doing that, and we're doing it together.

I'm going to backtrack a little bit, since you mentioned quality of life. That's kind of a buzz phrase, especially lately it seems. For a city our size, we are significantly lacking in green spaces and greenways that can help improve our quality of life. Our current "greenway" is not green for much of its beginning, it's more of a wide sidewalk. Where does the City of Jonesboro collect information for making plans on these kinds of projects? What is your team's plan for more green spaces in Jonesboro?

You know I think people's impression is just what you said, it's just another sidewalk, but in reality the true plan that we are setting forth and will hopefully break ground on soon, is not that. It is a sidewalk that is much expanded upon, that tells the story of our community. It provides accessibility for families to walk on, for senior citizens to walk on. It's going to be beautified. It's going to have different color lighting. It's something we can all be proud of. That to me is what this is about. I think for a simplistic approach, initially the green trail system like you said was just kind of a sidewalk corridor. And we have to use those to facilitate it 'til we get this project done. It's going to take a long time to get this facility done. But what the city is doing, we are looking at every avenue for funding for this.

Funding occurs either by a federal grant, what they call earmarks, and at the time we don't have earmarks available. We're in discussion with our congressman and our senator about that. Then we have to look at build grants. We also have to look at the possibility of funds from within our community. When our community buys in to our project, then additional resources and opportunities might come from other areas of the state or the federal level by us having skin in the game. That's what we have to incorporate.

We're working hard to do that. I'm really excited about that because we're not just looking at one area, we're looking at absolutely any way we can make this happen. The key development for this though is for all of us to be on the same page. In order to do things right. I also, as



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the mayor, have to look at sustainability of our city. So what are the issues our city is going to be facing? We only receive a 1% sales tax, and that's very difficult to sustain a city of 80-plus thousand people.

Thirty percent of our ability to provide back to our community comes from grants – a lot of it is coming from grants. So we've got to engage our community more so that they feel, "Okay, I want to be a part of this." That's what we're trying to do. We have to prioritize. We've all got to be on the same page. Then we can have the trickle-down effect and move on to other possibilities. How are we going to get there? Can we afford it after it opens up? These are questions we need to answer before we go there. Again, I have to make sure our city is sustainable as well. We have many fees the city has never charged, where other cities do.

Get involved. The only way city leaders can know what the community wants is if we talk to them. Follow the city's social media pages and take every opportunity to participate in surveys. Attend city council meetings. Know what issues you care most about and find which groups and committees you should be a part of.



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Since June 6th is National Survivor's Day, Melissa Alonso of The Basic Bee Spa decided it was time to revive a survivor's spa day she had organized in the past with good friend Jessica Cossey.

"It is such an honor to serve survivors and just offer an opportunity for them to connect and bond with each other. This program also allows me to honor my grandmother that I lost in 2020 due to cancer," Melissa shared.

The Bee Pampered Beat Cancer Spa Day will be celebrated each month for the rest of 2021 on the first Wednesday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The first event will be June 2nd.

"We are all women from the beauty industry coming together to celebrate survivors. I couldn't do this without these ladies," said Melissa.

Melissa has cosmetologists Jessica Cossey - Blond Ambition; Amber Bond - Reflections Salon; Carrie Schoolfield - Handle with Care and her sister, Kyraa Lara - Nails by Kyraa at The Basic Bee Spa, all working together to provide each participant with a morning to Bee Pampered with a Mini-Gentle Touch massage; Mani/pedi; Mini Facial and make up.

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How Coaches Made Me, Me

BY JOEL PHILHOURS



Like most, the COVID-19 rodeo had an effect on me. The effects were not all bad. It slowed my life down quite a bit, giving me time to pause and do some deep thinking; I began reconstructing the steps of “How did I get here?” and “How can I finish strong?”

Last summer, I started my 41st year of what I would consider a successful life and career in the corporate world. Since graduating from Arkansas State University with a bachelor’s degree in Accounting in 1980, I’ve had the opportunity to grow from being a Staff Accountant at my first “grownup job” -- First Tennessee Bank -- to the ranks of Supervisor, Manager, Director, Controller, and CFO. I met my beautiful wife, Marci. We had two gorgeous daughters, Erica and Mallory, and together they blessed us with five adorable granddaughters. I became a CPA and graduated with an MBA from the University of Memphis. Looking back at my personal and professional life, I was happy with what I saw.

Then I started thinking about how I accomplished those things. How did I go from being the guy who did just enough to remain eligible to play sports to having a great career serving in leadership roles? Who taught me the skills that propelled me into adulthood and business situations requiring me to travel the world? There is no doubt I was blessed with a great mom and dad. Mom taught me how to love, set goals, and about Jesus. Dad taught me about hard work and behaving – which means he excelled at disciplining me. I had a great big brother, Randy, who supported me, beat me at every game we ever played, and did his part in keeping me in line. There were countless teachers who taught me to “think.” Without these Saints of Patience I would have surely failed at any and every endeavor of my choosing.

But I also gotta tell ya – coaches have a special place in my heart. Many of them played a tremendously important role in making me, me. I would like to share some examples of what I see as my strengths – strengths I learned through sports that have helped me to be a better parent, friend, business leader and boss.

Look for Potential, Be Patient with People, Push for Efficiency and Effectiveness, Teach Them “WHY,” and THINK!

Freshman year football, Troy High School, Coach Beauchamp: Coach was showing us a new offensive play. I was the tailback and he instructed me to run parallel to the line of scrimmage for 6-7 feet and make a hard cut off the tackle’s hip, as the quarterback handed me the ball. No, not me! Why go the “longer way” when a straight line to the tackle’s hip was quicker? Whistle blows. “Run it again.” Second time, I go straight off the tackle’s hip. Whistle blows! “Run it again!” Whistle, whistle, WHISTLE!!! – Again! AGAIN!! AGAIN!!!!

Finally, Coach calls me over to him and places his hands on my shoulders, gets his face in my face and calmly asks, “Joel, do your ears work?” “Yes, sir,” I answered. “Then why aren’t you running parallel to the line of scrimmage before you cut off of the tackle’s butt?” I answered, “I get there faster if I go straight to his hip.” There’s a long pause. “Joel, we are trying to fool the linebackers. We need you to cut back behind the linebackers’ pursuit. We are doing this because they think you’re going to run wide and down the sideline!! Get it?” The conversation was over. “I got it now, Coach!” We won the League Championship, and I was the Conference Running Back of the Year.

Work Longer, Work Harder, Do More Than Expected, Understand the Organization From End to End

11-12-year-old Little League, Yorba Linda, CA, Coach Franklin Philhours: My dad was the assistant coach for my Little League team, the Phillies. He brought the equipment to the practices and games. Why? So, we could arrive early and stay late. He and I practiced on days when the team didn’t have a game or official practice. Even though I was the catcher, Dad hit me ground balls and fly balls. He threw me thousands of balls in batting practice. Why? To TEACH ME THE GAME – to give me options.

Ask for It, Be Curious, Be Ready, Be Confident, Take Calculated Risks, Be Capable, and Have High Expectations

Summer before sophomore year, Troy High School, Coaches Garland and Orman: Sophomore football coach Garland tells me three sophomores have been invited to try out for the varsity team. I wasn’t one of them. I asked why and he answered, “Ron, Doug, and Pete are 6’ 3” or bigger. Varsity Coach Orman doesn’t think you’re big enough.” I responded, “I think I am.” Coach Garland said, “If you think you can do it, man up and go talk to Coach Orman -- you got nothing to lose.” I was the only starting sophomore that year at Troy High School.

Consider All Options, Be Open to Others' Ideas, Invest in People and Help Them Improve, and Be a Team Player

Summer of 1976, Paragould American Legion Baseball, Coach Gary Washington (my third coach in three years): One of the first "conversations" we had involved his plan to move me from behind the plate to center field. I wasn't very happy about it, but I bought a new glove and ran out to that huge piece of real estate. If you've ever seen a catcher play any other position on the field – especially the outfield – you know it's a scary situation. Coach Washington provided me excellent support -- Coach Richard Brummett. Coach Richard worked hard to provide me the knowledge and develop the skills to man that 34,000 square foot patch of grass. He did a good job. We went to the State Tournament, I made All-State and received a scholarship to ASU.

Last fall I made the decision to retire from the corporate world. To "finish strong" I became a coach – a business coach. I invested in my own company, FocalPoint Business Coaching of the Mid-South. I don't wear a ball cap or a whistle. I don't wear shorts that are too tight or make people run laps. But I do work to make people and businesses more successful by teaching them how to set a series of small, visible personal and business goals and then by holding them accountable against their goals. They begin to get it into their heads that they can succeed. They break the habit of "underperforming" and begin to get into the habit of winning! My clients are "coached" to choose encouragement over criticism; but when you must criticize, give feedback as soon after the event as possible. Be honest but compassionate, then move on. Set high expectations with everyone in the organization and believe in their team. Make progress tangible and set clear goals and celebrate when you hit them. Don't ignore underperformers. Instead, help them perform.

That's exactly what coaches did for me and it is what I can do for you.



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BY LINDSEY SPENCER

Kiki's Dance Studio

Building confidence, having fun, improving health, and getting fit all at the same time are the pillars Kiki King has built her business on. The dance studio located at 721 Gee Street offers group classes, private lessons, private studio parties and more.

There might be a misconception about pole dancing, but like any fitness activity, the pole is simply an accessory to movement. The same way the fabrics used in the studio and on the aerial rig to propel one's body up into the air, the pole is used to lift one's body off the ground and to bend and move – to exercise.

"We encourage all to build confidence, improve their health, get fit and have fun all at the same time," Kiki explained. For Kiki, the main goal in her business is to build a sisterhood among women from different backgrounds and with different body sizes.

With a background as a mental health paraprofessional and her own dance and gymnastic experience going back to her early childhood, Kiki is very familiar with the therapeutic effect pole and aerial fitness can have, and her goal is to teach others how this movement can be a positive outlet for stress. Kiki used pole and aerial fitness to conquer goals for herself, and now she hopes to help others do the same.



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KDS Circus Group

There's another side to Kiki's business, too – the KDS Circus Group. Kiki and her friends Ashley Keane and Alhassan Fofanah are more than happy to come to YOU. Consisting of dance, juggling, and an aerialist, the KDS Circus Group is a performance that is mesmerizing to watch and fun entertainment for all.

"We have entertainment for any occasion," Kiki said. "I was once a kid who enjoyed looking at circus acts and aerial arts on television and it seemed as this type of art wasn't accessible to me so I decided to give back to the community by showing children and adults that anything is possible. This type of art is finally here and you, too, can learn!"

Kiki, who first opened her classes in her home and then moved them to her own studio on Gee Street, is a talented dancer and terrific instructor; perhaps this is why she won the Premiere Award for Best Dance Studio. Her business is a fun place for anyone to come and enjoy trying something new, but is especially fun for a girls night out.



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a silver lining

CASA Volunteer: Mary Murphy

BY LINDSEY SPENCER

For Mary Murphy, a love for kids extends into her day-to-day job as a teacher, as well as in how she gives back to the community. Mary is a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) – in other words, she volunteers her time to get to know a child in foster care and then reports back to others on what she learns and believes is in its best interest.

“My role as an advocate is kind of just a supportive role,” Mary explained. “I make sure that the kids on my cases are okay, that their needs are being met. I make sure they’re doing okay in school. If they have any concerns, I’m able to let the judge know that. If there is anything I’m concerned about, I can talk to their case worker.”

There are more than 600 children in Northeast Arkansas who were victims of abuse and neglect in the last year. Through no fault of their own, these children were placed into foster care. During a time where a child is facing so much uncertainty, the consistent face of someone who is there solely to represent and fight for their interests is a welcome sight. Enter CASA.

CASA recruits, trains and supports volunteers so they can work one on one with children and families. Volunteers gather medical, therapeutic, and educational records to ensure all the child’s needs are met. They work closely with attorneys and child welfare to provide the best opportunities for children to prosper.

Case workers have many cases and aren’t able to make contact as often as an advocate can. Advocates can help make

sure a child is getting more attention and communication.

“[Case workers] do an excellent job, they’re a God-send,” Mary said, “So we’re just the added person.”

On Mary’s first case, though many things changed throughout the situation, she remained the one constant for the child. Once assigned to a case, the advocate remains with the child until it reaches permanency – either reunification with the family or through adoption.

“They may get a new case worker. They may get a new attorney. They may move foster homes. But their CASA advocate stays with them,” Mary said. She felt pulled to CASA because of her love for children, and is especially drawn to serving kids in the foster care system. As far back as her teenage years, Mary felt led around Christmastime to select a Christmas angel to adopt a foster kid for Christmas.

“Really it started there,” Mary shared. “I was probably sixteen or seventeen and had my first job at a grocery store. I told my mom I wanted to adopt a kid for Christmas. So, we looked in the newspaper and there was someone my age and one thing they wanted for Christmas was socks because

theirs had holes.”

It’s since been a tradition every year to adopt kids for Christmas. But her giving heart didn’t stop there – Mary had seen a billboard for CASA years ago but never felt it was the right time to take the leap and volunteer. Two years ago, she decided she was ready, went through the training, and became an advocate. Two of Mary’s cases are still active, and one has ended in a successful adoption.

“One thing that held me back for so long was thinking I didn’t have time or maybe I wasn’t qualified enough. Time-wise, once you go through training, it’s only about ten hours a month,” Mary said. “Most of what I do is by phone or by text or by Zoom, especially right now. You do have to go to court – which you normally know court date three months in advance. There are things that come up that you have to be there for, but most of it is pretty flexible. You can check on your kids or visit your kids when you’re available to do it. Anyone who has a heart to give back can do it.”

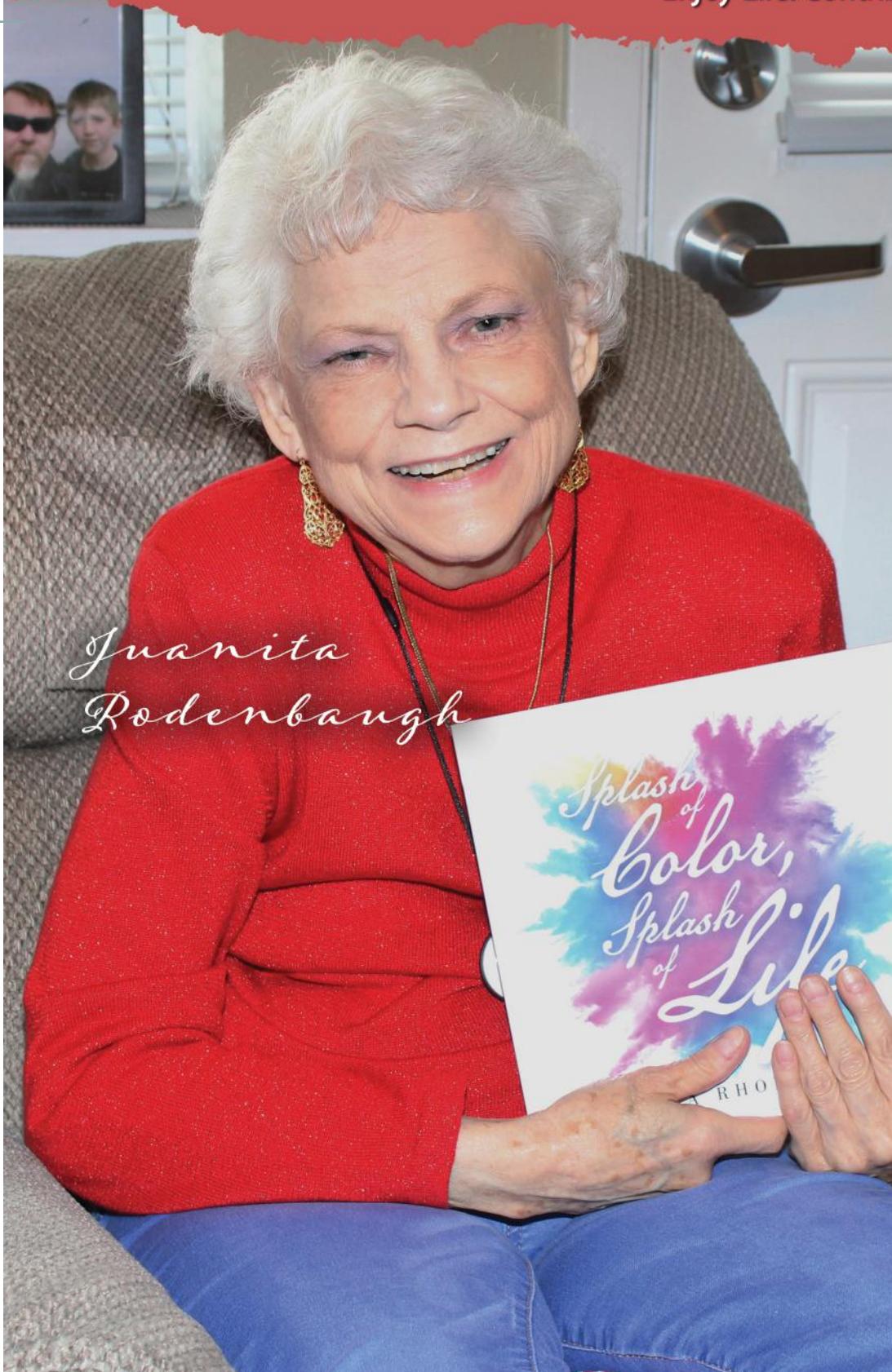
Interested in being the silver lining in a child’s story? Learn more about CASA and how to become a volunteer by visiting neacasa.org or call (870) 333-5039.

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Summer 2021



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Keeping the Brain

young

BY KARAN SUMMITT

Alzheimer's, dementia and related diseases are now the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Researchers estimate the number of lives lost each year to these debilitating conditions may be far more than thought, rivaling heart disease and cancer as the top killers of Americans. This assumption recognizes the diseases are often under-reported on death certificates. The immediate cause of death, such as pneumonia, is listed without noting that pneumonia was a consequence of the breathing problems associated with serious cognitive impairment.

While death rates from heart disease and cancer are dropping, there is no cure for Alzheimer's or dementia. There is, however, good research indicating certain lifestyle behaviors can lower our risk or delay their onset.

Here are six ways you can keep your mind sharp:

1) EXERCISE

Research has shown exercise improves brain health, and it's never too late to begin. Even moderate exercise has been shown to increase memory, mental processing speed and the size of the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for forming new memories. Simply walking three times a week has been shown to produce significant gains in memory and mental processing speed, even in previously sedentary adults.

2) EAT RIGHT

Neurologists agree a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes will help keep the brain healthy. They also advocate eating fish, walnuts, flax seed or other sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Conversely, a high-fat diet and obesity raise the risk for dementia. So do high cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure if left untreated.



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3) RESPECT THE HEART-HEAD CONNECTION

Across all demographic groups, people who have higher scores on the American Heart Association's Life's Simple 7 measures for cardiovascular health do better on mental tests than those who scored low. Researchers concluded it's likely the same things that damage blood vessels in the body also damage tiny little micro-vessels that are in the brain, and that can have an impact on cognitive function. It even has a name—Vascular Dementia.

4) EASE STRESS

Lowering the amount of stress in your life lowers the risk for dementia. Laughter and meditation are especially considered beneficial. A Harvard Medical School study showed 30 minutes of meditation a day for eight weeks even increased the size of the hippocampus. Studies at Loma Linda University have shown laughter reduces the stress hormone cortisol, which is toxic to the hippocampus.

5) STAY SOCIAL

Maintaining an active social life provides mental stimulation and lowers stress. It also lowers the risk for dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The more social activities, the better, and people who choose mentally challenging leisure pursuits such as playing cards with friends or joining a community organization do better in general than those whose activities are primarily physical or social. Living alone or avoiding social ties raises the risk of dementia.

6) LEARN

More formal education is associated with lower rates of dementia and Alzheimer's, but "use it or lose it" applies at any age — and more with the brain than the muscles, neurologists say. To keep the brain sharp, experts recommend learning new and fun mental activities. Crossword puzzles or Sudoku, once mastered after a month or so, may not stimulate the brain the way learning a new language, picking up a musical instrument or joining a book club might.

Because the brain is always changing, we have an ongoing opportunity to reshape our neural connections. A healthy diet, exercise, stress management, good social connections and lifelong learning are ways to protect memory and stave off dementia. It is never too late to make a change that will impact the quality of our years.



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They are standardized, which means the same plan from another company may charge a lower rate and still give you the exact same benefits you enjoy now.

For example, just last month I was able to save a new client right at \$1,200 a year for the same plan but with another company.

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57% of Medicare Recipients Make This Potentially Costly Mistake...

BY ADAM COOPER

Once you are on Medicare (those 65 and older, under 65 due to certain disabilities, or diagnosed with End-Stage Renal Disease) you will have several decisions to make on how to receive your benefits. This task is time-consuming and can be confusing. For this reason, more than half of Medicare beneficiaries make this potentially costly mistake.

Unfortunately, your Medicare choice is not a "set it and forget it" kind of a health plan for most people. You're also not stuck with your same plan forever. In fact, if you're a Medicare member with a Medicare Advantage Plan (PFFS, PPO, or HMO) or Medicare Prescription Drug plan you can change plans every fall during the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period (October 15th through December 7th) commonly referred to as Open Enrollment.

If you have a Medigap plan also known as a Medicare Supplement (Plan F, G, N, etc.), you're allowed to change plans all year long assuming you can medically qualify. These plans are standardized, which means the same plan from a different company can save you hundreds if not thousands of dollars each year and still give you the exact same benefits you enjoy now. Medicare has many enrollment periods like the Initial Enrollment Period when you first become eligible for Medicare, Special Enrollment Periods that allow you to make adjustments to your plan under certain special circumstances, and of course, the Annual Enrollment Period mentioned earlier.

Now for the potentially costly mistake that 57% of Medicare beneficiaries make... the Kaiser Family Foundation (kff.org/medicare) is a non-profit organization that studies and reviews national healthcare issues and how those issues impact Medicare members as well as others. It is one of the very best independent informational resources I trust and review regularly. Their studies have concluded that 57% of all the people on Medicare do not review their plans each and every year.

That can be a very costly mistake considering Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plans have an annual contract with Medicare. The one constant I've noticed over the years working with Medicare members is that plans do change. It's also not just the plans that change but your healthcare needs most likely will change over time as well.

Annual rate increases on Medicare

Supplement plans, covered medications, co-payments, physician networks, and increased or lowered "extra" benefits are all examples of different types of changes that can potentially cost you.

Here are a few things you need to know:

1) Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug plans are required to send you an Annual Notice of Change each year by October. These aren't always easy to decipher and probably make good reading material if you're having trouble sleeping.

2) Even if you've been happy with your plan, it's still a great idea to review it because what may have worked fantastic for you this year may not the next. Use a local, independent professional agent/broker that focuses on Medicare who knows the local landscape of the plans offered where you live. Using a part-time agent or someone that "dabbles" in Medicare may not make the most sense because they may not be there for you in years to come. Best of all, it costs you nothing to work with a local professional.

3) Be aware ... Nationally run TV ads and incoming phone calls may not be the right way to enroll in a plan. They are trying to sell you something, it may not be the right thing, but it's something. Usually, they are in some other part of the country and may not offer all plans available to you and definitely don't know the local landscape of your area.

4) Not all agents working in the Medicare space will offer what's available but instead what they know or feel comfortable with. If the only tool they have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Some may only offer Medicare Advantage or only Medigap plans. They may only offer one company's plans, not be exactly what you need.

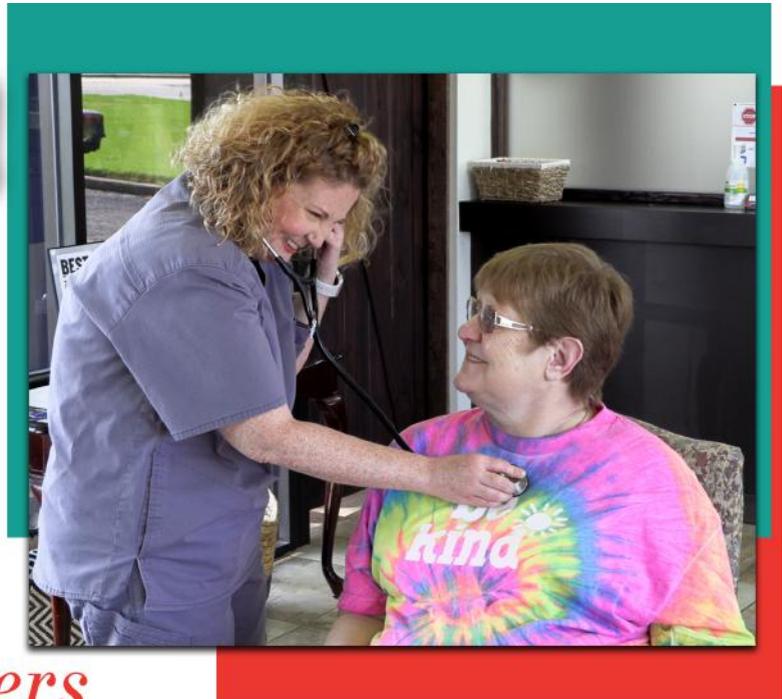
As a local agent servicing Northeast Arkansas, Medicare insurance is my main focus. I strive not to sell for the sake of selling something, but to educate, inform, and recommend plans that fit your needs most. Medicare recommends you review your plan annually and if you'd like, I'm more than happy to do that for you now or in the future. Call or text (870) 215-3136 or you can visit:

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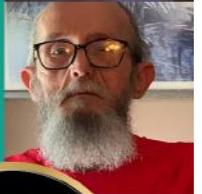
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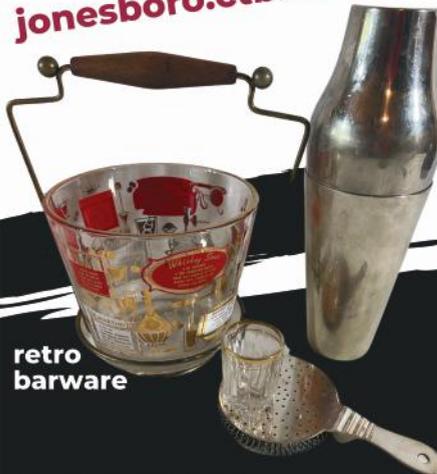


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SPLASH

of

color

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Even though she can hold a copy of her book in her hands, Juanita Rodenbaugh doesn't consider herself an author. As she says in the forward to her publication, *Splash of Color, Splash of Life*, "I know that the Lord is the author and that I am the scribe."

Now 74, the Jonesboro resident said she decided to compile a number of her personal journal entries and artwork into a book, hoping to "reach out to everyone who has pain. The kind of pain doesn't matter, pain is pain. I am reaching out my hand to as many as I can. I believe this is what the Lord wants me to do, not just for myself but for all those who are suffering. What you are reading are pages out of my journals. Come take this journey with me as they are a splash of color and splash of life!"

A polio survivor herself, Juanita said she began to dabble with painting when she found herself living alone and looking for something to pass the time. "Honestly, the painting came about when my kids were gone, on their own," she recalled, "and I said, 'Okay, what's the next step?' Art sort of runs in my family. My dad worked with wood and my mom could turn a dress into anything. I sort of knew it was in my blood and I just picked it up and started.

"Writing, actually ..." she said, pausing to gather her thoughts, "... well, my body is now in post-polio and I have a lot of pain, so I started journaling. I had no idea how to get out of me what was in me. As I said, I feel like I'm just the scribe; the Lord is the author. I give the Lord the praise for anything I am able to do."

And she's done plenty over the years, holding down a job and raising two children. "I never considered myself handicapped," Juanita said. "I was, for two months, unconscious in the Children's Hospital and they told my mother I would never walk without braces or crutches. But one time when I said, 'I can't' she shook me and said, 'You can, and you will, and I never want to hear those words again.' So from then on I just 'did.' I would try whatever and just go for it. I chose to be a nurse's aide for six years; I raised two kids by myself."

Completing her book, which she received in March of last year, represented more of a sense of accomplishment than she had expected. "It feels good to hold it; it's something my kids and my grandson are real proud of," she said. "In fact, I couldn't have done it without my grandson (Haden Rodenbaugh). He knew what they wanted at the publisher's when they said, 'We need this now.' I was lost as a goose. I did it on a tablet and when they said, 'Now!' I just said, 'You'll just have to wait.' Haden was the one who knew how to do what they wanted."

As expected, there were minor difficulties and roadblocks to getting published for the first time, and when her son said to take it as a learning experience for her next book, Juanita said, "Next book!? I haven't even thought about a next book. I started that one in the '90s. But you know, I thank the Lord for every year I've got. I told my son I plan on living past 100, so maybe there will be time to do another one.

"My grandson wanted to know how many I've sold. Not enough to get royalty, I told him. But my goal has been to even reach just one person; that's enough, even just one, if it helps them. I told him it's not mine, it's God's anyway."



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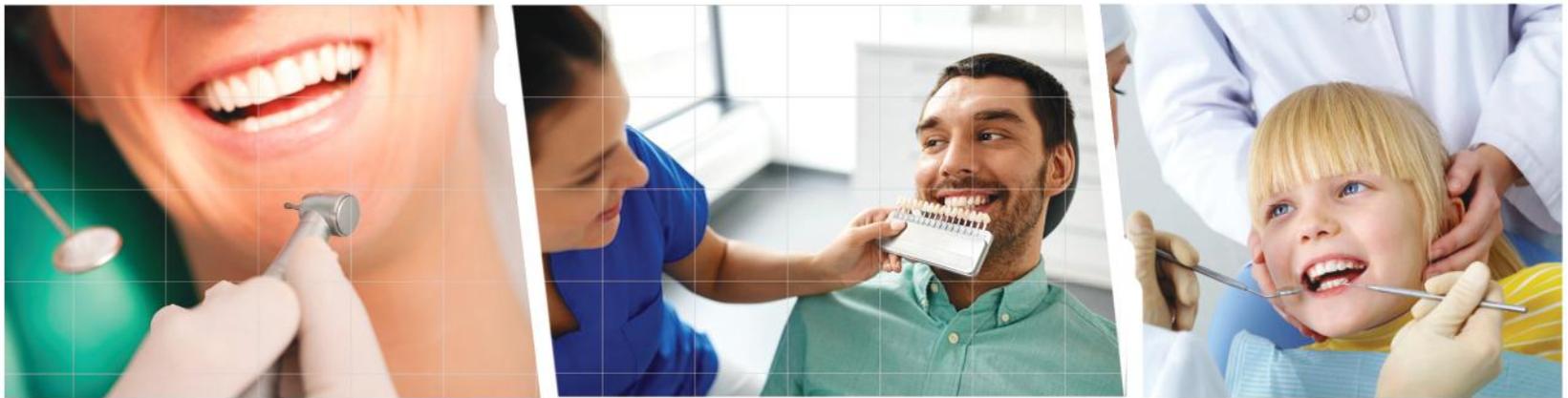
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church and you can always count on her to offer prayers when they're needed," Carol said with fondness. "I'm glad that she went back to get her LPN. It was an excellent route for a female, especially during those years." She added that it was a terrific way to utilize her talents – using them to care for others.

Both Sides of the Field

BY LINDSEY SPENCER

Louetta Crafton knows health care from both sides of the field – as a patient and as a caregiver. Currently receiving care at home from 1st Choice Home Care, Louetta is 82 years young and just six years out of retirement.

A Navy veteran who worked in a Naval hospital for four years after entering the service just out of high school, Louetta went on to get her LPN in her 50s, proving that mid-life is not too late to continue education and continue service.

Going into the Navy was just “something I wanted to do,” Louetta shared, adding she learned a lot and met a lot of good people. She shared that working in the Navy hospital and caring for patients looked much like working in any other hospital, but her service certainly makes her family and her home town proud.

Louetta returned to Paragould to live in the house her father built in 1956 and her sister, Carol Eaton, said she lived with their parents to care for them in their later years of life. Carol, very young when her sister went into the Navy, admires her sister’s career and service, both to the country and her community.

“She’s always been very involved in her

These days, Louetta is happy to be living in her home town where she “knows her way around.”

“I enjoy life,” she said.

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Seeking Foster Grandparents

The East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging is looking for volunteers for its Foster Grandparents program.

Volunteers help out in the local daycares, head starts, and elementary schools by being mentors and immediate tutors. Remember when you were in school and how the teacher had to try to keep all the kids on the same level and address any issues that arose? The FGP would be an extra set of eyes in the classroom and is an immediate resource to help Jimmy write his name, to help Susie study for her spelling test, and to help Bailey to make friends.

This next school year will be extra special transitioning back to the classroom from virtual learning. And this program benefits everyone it touches. The kids have someone extra to help them out, or just for a hug or a pat on the back.

The teachers have an extra set of eyes in the classroom and have someone who can focus on the ones struggling academically or have issues focusing, or needing lots of encouragement and direction. It benefits the grandparents by providing them a way of helping out the community and there is a small stipend (if they meet income guidelines) and mileage reimbursement.

If you have any questions or if you know someone who might be interested please call 870-930-2240 or email wadams@eaaaa.org.



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FIBROMYALGIA

What is fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a chronic health condition that causes pain and tenderness in your soft tissue and muscles. It can also lead to generalized exhaustion and mental distress, like depression and anxiety.

Fibromyalgia is often misdiagnosed as an arthritic condition, but it doesn't cause the same joint damage or inflammation as arthritis.

Researchers theorize that people with fibromyalgia are more sensitive to pain because of the way their brains and spinal cords amplify pain signals.

What are the symptoms of fibromyalgia?

Each person reacts differently to fibromyalgia. Though it's similar to arthritis, fibromyalgia affects soft tissue, not the joints. Often, a pain signal misinterpretation in the brain causes pain. The most common symptoms include:

- Memory loss*
- Chronic fatigue syndrome*
- Chronic inflammatory response syndrome*
- Morning stiffness*
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)*
- Insomnia*
- Tenderness throughout your body*
- Muscle pain, twitching, burning, or tightness*
- Anxiety and depression*
- Bladder issues*

You can develop fibromyalgia at any age, but it's most often diagnosed during middle age. You may be at greater risk of developing fibromyalgia if you have lupus or rheumatoid arthritis.

There's also some evidence of a genetic link to the chronic pain condition, which means your risk of fibromyalgia may be greater if it runs in your family.

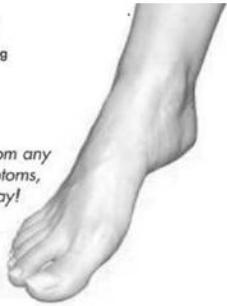
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LIKE A

Family Reunion

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Even if a number of senior citizens in Northeast Arkansas managed to dodge the Covid virus they were still affected negatively by it in many ways. Take, for instance, Wilma Orr of Paragould.

An active member of the Greene County Senior B.E.E.S. group, Wilma said one of the things she misses the most is interaction with others. Since the B.E.E.S. center has been shut down for safety precautions, Wilma and her fellow seniors have been unable to assemble and go through their normal routines.

“What I miss the most is seeing people,” she said. “I miss going to the center to exercise and watch my sister play the Bean Bag Baseball. And even hearing some good stories; gossip, some would say. I really miss not getting to go back.”

Knowing Wilma and others like her



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felt that way, B.E.E.S. Executive Director Carol Fleszar teamed up with others to find a temporary solution. With the help of Melissa Prater, the Director of Purchased Services at East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging, and the benevolence of Terry's Cafe owner Farrell Gibson, B.E.E.S. members can now meet twice a week for free breakfasts at the Paragould restaurant.

Since home delivery of meals was waning the administrators figured a way to still provide for the B.E.E.S. through the breakfast menu at Terry's. "After my meeting with Melissa," Carol said, "I went straight to the cafe the next morning. Because I know Farrell so well I was pretty sure he would be willing to do it and figured out what he would have to charge us, and it was workable. The only reason it's granted is because of Covid and the program will end once we get back to normal.

"But Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 a.m. until 2:00, B.E.E.S. can eat breakfast at no charge at Terry's. They have to be signed up with us but if they aren't, we can throw out an application and get them registered right there. It started out just being Tuesdays but our biggest crowd so far was 54 people, so now it's two days a week."

The importance of the gesture is not lost on seniors like Wilma. "It was about two weeks ago, I think, that Carol said she had arranged for the Senior B.E.E.S. to have breakfast at Terry's," she recalled. "It is wonderful. My three sisters and some other seniors starting eating there, and my brother has started to come, who I hardly ever get to see. I enjoy the company and I am so glad they arranged the breakfasts for us."

Carol said one of the most often heard statements from her B.E.E.S. is "that they miss people and family ... they miss just being able to hug someone."

And Wilma agreed, saying the food is excellent and the menu more than appropriate, but the most important part is again interacting with friends and loved ones. "It is absolutely like a family reunion," she said. "We get a real good breakfast, and several other B.E.E.S. attend. We go in early and just love getting to be together again. This has been wonderful for people like me."



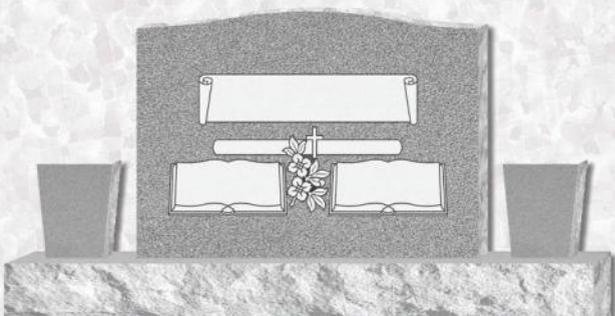


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NEA Baptist Offers First-of-Its-Kind Treatment for Heart Disease

NEA Baptist has announced a new treatment option for patients with severely calcified coronary artery disease living in Northeast Arkansas. The new technology is a novel application of lithotripsy, an approach that uses sonic pressure waves to safely break up kidney stones. It's now available to treat problematic calcium in the coronary arteries that can reduce blood flow in the heart.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women. Each year, more than 600,000 people in the United States die of heart disease. As people with heart disease, specifically coronary artery disease, grow older and their disease progresses, plaque in the arteries evolves into calcium deposits, which can narrow the artery. Physicians often use stents to open an artery, and of the approximately one million patients that undergo a stent

procedure each year, 30 percent have problematic calcium that increases their risk for adverse events.

Calcium makes the artery rigid and more difficult to reopen with conventional treatments, including balloons, which attempt to crack the calcium when inflated to high pressure, and atherectomy, which drills through the calcium to open the artery. While atherectomy has been available for several decades, its use remains low, as it can result in complications for patients who are undergoing stent procedures. The new shockwave technology, also known as intravascular lithotripsy or IVL, allows physicians to fracture the problematic calcium - using sonic pressure waves - so that the artery can be safely expanded, and blood flow is restored with the placement of a stent and without unnecessary complications.



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VA – The Best Care for Veterans; Even During COVID

It's been more than 15 months since our nation began its fight against COVID-19. We've prevented infections, cared for the sick, saved lives and mourned those we've lost. We've provided so much more than medicine during this time. The burdens and responsibilities of the pandemic have strained organizations, families, and each of us in very personal ways. Now, as more than 2.3 million veterans across the nation have been fully vaccinated (nearly 4,000 through our medical center), trust and confidence in VA health care is at an all-time high.

began implementing safety measures over a year ago to protect veterans and our staff from getting sick. As part of prioritizing safety, for each appointment we've had to weigh the options and risks with our patients. When clinical urgency rose above the risk of COVID-19, we provided in person care. When it did not and the risk of COVID-19 infection took priority, we offered alternatives. This was the right decision. In many cases, veterans told us they preferred postponing routine care because they did not want to risk being exposed to the virus, and we worked with them to identify next steps.

Our health care teams at John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff and our community clinics have earned that trust, working on the front lines to provide care to those most in need. We

successfully moved many appointments to video and telephone when that was appropriate and helped meet the needs of the patient. This

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has even offered unexpected benefits of convenience for veterans or additional engagement options for family and caregivers. Unlike with in person care, virtual options give a veteran's support network the ability to join visits and engage with VA providers much more easily. We anticipate continuing to offer virtual visits even as we return to more in-person care.

As we move forward, we are welcoming veterans back in record numbers. We are encouraging veterans to call first and talk to their health care team about coming in for routine and preventative care. These appointments, from cancer screenings to eye exams, are essential to staying healthy and ultimately save lives.

Here at John J. Pershing VA Medical Center, we have reached out to patients to be sure they are getting the care they need and working with them to reschedule appointments. As our community spread of COVID-19 has decreased over the past few months, many have already resumed their care, while others have begun scheduling appointments for the weeks ahead, either within the VA or when eligible, in the community.

In working to coordinate care, we have found that many community providers outside of VA are also needing to reschedule previously canceled appointments or are managing abbreviated schedules, creating longer wait times than usual and often longer than within VA. We have provided more than 2.3 million veterans care in the community since the MISSION Act was implemented almost two years ago, and we are proud that so many veterans continue to choose VA, allowing us to coordinate timely, quality and patient-focused care inside or outside our walls.

I want our communities to know that John J. Pershing VAMC is completely committed to caring for veterans, not just in this time of national emergency, but continuing now and into the future. While we are part of the national healthcare system, first and foremost, we are members of these vibrant communities. Our 700-plus employees are here day and night for those who have served our nation and call Southern Missouri and Northeastern Arkansas home.

Recent legislation has enabled us to open our vaccination clinics to any veteran along with their spouse or caregiver,

and we are pleased to be meeting new members of this community for the first time, or welcoming back those who we haven't seen in a while. We would encourage every veteran to consider coming in and receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and enrolling in care with us. If you or a veteran in your life haven't come in for care in a while, please check in with your provider team and consider scheduling an appointment. If you know a veteran who isn't enrolled in VA health care and is interested in learning more, please have them call us at 573-778-4680.

I hope veterans and all members of the community will take the time to work with their medical provider teams to get their appointments rescheduled, even if they haven't been vaccinated yet. Our doors are open, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

**-Drew A. DeWitt,
John J. Pershing VA
Medical Center Director**



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Happenings



The city of Wilson, Arkansas, held a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the construction of The Hotel Louis. The building, located at One Park Avenue which initially housed retail stores and apartments, will be converted into a 16-room luxury boutique hotel scheduled to open in December 2021.



The Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library announced a nearly \$740,000 expansion project. A 2,089 square foot addition will be added to the Children's Library. This area will provide room for the children's collection and programming space. The project will also include renovations to the existing Children's Library to provide the staff with improved work space.



The NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief welcomes Anna Paige Umhoefer as Clinical Manager. Umhoefer has been at the center since 2017 as a Grief Counselor and Bereavement Specialist. She will continue to serve clients as she steps into administrative duties such as fundraising, facility management, and outreach.



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2021 Kids' Events

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June 1-9

Library in the Park Bookmobile Tour

When: Afternoons June 1-9

Where: Varying locations; please see
Craighead County Jonesboro
Public Library for full schedule

Info: @ccjpl on Facebook

June 11

Downtown After Hours

When: June 11 at 6:30 p.m.

Where: Downtown Paragould

Info: Downtown Paragould's
Facebook Page

June 19th

KDS Circus Group Community Fest

When: June 19th from 5pm -7pm
Where: 721 S Gee Street, Jonesboro

Info:
[exploremornea.com/
community-calendar](http://exploremornea.com/community-calendar)

Spring and summer mean kids at the ballparks, displaying their own unique styles on the fields. Games can be found most weeknights at any of the local baseball and softball complexes around Northeast Arkansas.



Next Month

Community Role Model



While collecting votes for the Paragould Premiere Awards, we asked readers to nominate a community role model for the July cover.

Veterans



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Paragould Premiere Awards



They're coming! The Paragould Premiere Award Winners will be published in the July edition.

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