

NEA'S PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

August
2021

**NATIONALLY
RECOGNIZED**

Kyla Roberts

BACK TO SCHOOL

Tips for Tackling
the School Year

SPORTS

870 Cornhole,
Baseball, & More

PARAGOULD PROGRESS

Projects on the
Horizon

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JELENA VETETO

NMLS# 629680

VP | REGIONAL MANAGER

jelena.veteto@firstcommunity.net

KATIE INGRAM

NMLS# 882845

VP | MORTGAGE ORIGINATOR

katie.ingram@firstcommunity.net

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From the Manager



he only reason I know it's back to school season is because I had to put together this magazine. That might be because I've been out of school for a little while and I don't have any kids of my own making me keep up with that timeline, or it might be because in the world of publication I never really know what season it actually is. I often find myself in this state:

"You mean Christmas hasn't happened yet? I've been working on Christmas content for three months, it just feels like Christmas season is over somehow ..."

"Valentine's Day still hasn't passed? Really?"

"What month is it, July? Oh, it's May? Huh."

This month – last month? – I was reminded that each year there comes a day for new lunchboxes and, apparently, headphones – ear buds? Those weren't on the school supplies list when I was in school.

In this edition we take a look at what back to school means for different ages and highlight some helpful tips for tackling the school year. There's also a feature on progress taking place in Paragould – the jumpstart to a series and to be followed by a Jonesboro counterpart – and a few sports stories ranging from barrel racing to baseball to cornhole.

If you use Premiere to help you tell the seasons apart, it's back to school season, and we hope it's a successful one!

Lindsey Spencer

Manager of Creative Content



Glen Sain

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870.236.8546 | 1301 US 49
GLENSAINFORD.NET

publisher/advertising sales

Dina Mason |
dina@mormediainc.com

contributing writers

Richard Brummett |
brummettr34@gmail.com
Caitlin LaFarlette |
caitlin_lafarlette@hotmail.com
Chuck Long |
Charles.Long@agfc.ar.gov
Jared Pickney |
jared@fellowshipparagould.com
Linda Lou Moore |
manners@paragould.net
Bethany Davis |
bethanyfdavis@gmail.com
Jenny Brown |
jbrown@paragouldschools.net

content manager/designer

Lindsey Spencer |
lindsey@mormediainc.com

advertising sales team

Dina Mason | dina@mormediainc.com
Perry Mason | perry@mormediainc.com
Brian Osborn | brian@mormediainc.com
Justin Hetler | justin@mormediainc.com
Natalie Harrell | natalie@mormediainc.com



PREMIERE is a publication of MOR Media, Incorporated. Editorial, advertising and general business information can be obtained by calling (870) 236-7627, faxing to (870) 239-4583 or e-mailing to dina@mormediainc.com. Mailing address: 400 Tower Drive, Paragould, AR 72450.

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Correction: In the July edition of Premiere we ran the name "Shaelyn Nunn Tullos". Correct spelling is "Shaelynn". I appologize for my mistake. - Lindsey Spencer

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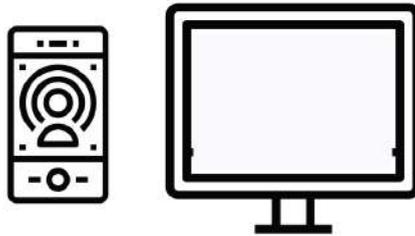
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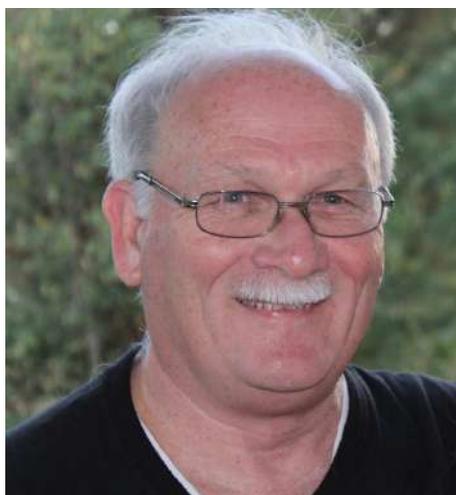
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GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



It hadn't happened in a long time. The other day I approached the door to the grocery store at the same time a couple did, and I slowed down to let them enter first. The man pulled out a cart and then turned to acknowledge my polite gesture, smiling suddenly with a look of recognition.

"Well, Stan," he said, "how are you doing?"

"I'm great," I said. "Feeling really good," and we went our separate ways.

Stan.

I'm not Stan. Stan is my cousin, as is his brother, Steve, and I spent many, many years being called one or the other but rarely by my name, which is Richard. I'm not offended, mind you, because I love them both and they have my admiration because they were super athletes; in fact, if anyone needs to be upset it's them, because they were much more famous than I. But I am me and they are they and we are we, and you would think by now everyone would know the difference.

When I was younger it bothered me. When you're a teenager and trying to earn your own stripes, being called by someone else's name bugs you. I know why it happened so often back then.

They both were multi-sport lettermen at Paragould High School and starred on basketball teams that competed for the state championship. Back in our time, in days of yore, the only way a kid could be named to the All-State team was if his school actually made it to the state tournament and then he performed accordingly. They both did it, leading the Bulldogs to excellent records, so when someone saw a Brummett, their names were the first to come to mind.

I was an incredibly mediocre basketball player but a fairly good baseball player, which was my sport of choice. Problem was, Paragould was the only school in the county at that time that refused to field a baseball team. So while I was making great strides and turning into a power hitter on the baseball field in the summertime, most PHS backers knew little of my accomplishments. I learned to let it go and I understand it much better today, because I see people all the time whose names escape me and if I can come up with something close, I'm happy, even if I call them by their dad's name.

The only time I've felt I should correct someone is when they say they remember what a good basketball player I was. I usually just say "thanks" and move on, but setting the record straight goes something like this: Steve was a physical presence on the court, one of those guys who could tie up a rebound with you and with just a slight twist of the wrist send you flying while he corralled the ball. He was a high-scoring forward who could dominate a game. Stan was a lithe, incredible leaper who had a knack for putting the ball in the basket from a number of angles. Even though only slightly over six feet tall, he won every jump ball as the Bulldog center his senior year. And back then there was one to begin every quarter. The two of them were guys the defense had to stop in order to win, often scoring 20-to-30 points or more in a game.

Me? One night during my sophomore year we had a flu epidemic and so many players were sick that some of us underclassmen got to dress out with the varsity. We got a big lead, I got in and found myself wide open at about the free throw line. I let go with a nice jump shot, swished it home and finished that year with a perfect one-for-one shooting effort from the field, dressing out with the JV team only for the rest of the season.

My junior year, I actually started the first three games at point guard alongside Stan and three other seniors. I had taken exactly no shots from the field entering game number three when I again found myself open at the same spot as the year before so I shot the ball ... and missed. I was taken out of the game, didn't get back in that night and the following Friday when I exited the bus for a road game, the JV coach said, "Brummett, dress out with the B team tonight." I said, "Yessir" and that was the entire conversation concerning my demotion from varsity starter to B team part-timer.

My senior year I was an average player on a really bad team, so my apologies go to Steve and Stan when someone thinks I'm them. I started to correct the guy in the store the other day because I said I was feeling really good and I would hate to learn that Stan was pretty sick while this guy was going around saying, "No, I saw him yesterday and he told me he's fine" so that people wouldn't know if they needed to send Stan a get well card or invite him to play ball.

I had my own moments in the spotlight as an All-State American Legion player, earned a college scholarship and eventually turned into an All-American softball player. I just hope I don't find out someone has been congratulating Stan for that.



LIVING A Better Story

BY JARED PICKNEY

We send our kids to school because we want to set them up to have happy, successful lives. We want them to learn the skills needed to not only survive, but thrive in the real world. Undoubtedly, having an education can certainly enhance your child's chance of having a good life in the future. But did you know that according to 30 years of research, emotional intelligence is more important to your kid's well being than intellectual intelligence? In fact, according to Daniel Coleman in his book, *EQ*, children who are emotionally intelligent grow up to be much more successful and happy participants in the world in which they live.

To help our kids grow into the men and women they were created to be we need to put the same level of intentionality into developing their emotional health as schools

put into developing their intellect.

Here are a few ideas to help you in your child's journey toward emotional maturity. Keep in mind the following steps are impossible to take if you find yourself overly busy or distracted. To raise emotionally healthy children we must learn how to be present to them.

1. Encourage feelings with rules. Children need to have the freedom to feel -- whether we as parents like what they're feeling or not. Good parents show their children how to identify and then express their feelings in a healthy way.

2. Don't always try to fix your child's feelings. Many times children need to be given the freedom to feel emotions without being encouraged to change them. Sometimes we

are so uncomfortable with our kids' feelings we communicate to them they shouldn't feel what they're feeling. It's incredibly important not to do that as a parent.

3. Remember what it is like to be their age. Nothing frustrates a child more than when they feel like nobody understands them. Some of you may have memories of your parents telling you why you shouldn't be so upset over _____, or how it's stupid to be bothered about _____. The experience your child is having might not be a big deal to you, but it is to them. Try to remember what it's like to be that age. Empathize with your children before trying to change them. Over time they will mature in their feelings and learn to regulate their reactions.



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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.

July's theme was "RED, White and Blue."

August's theme is "Back With the Pack."

Submit your back to school 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 their photo run in the September edition of Premiere.

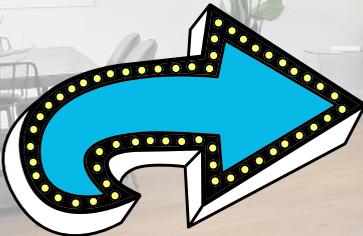
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PET *of the* MONTH

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BY ALLYSON STEVENS

I am an avid walker and my son and I were going on our daily walk when we saw this pup hanging out on the side of the road with some little girls, and when she turned and looked at us she caught my attention with her sky-blue eyes. I told the little girls she was the prettiest dog I had ever seen. One little girl said, "You can have her if you want her" and I did NOT want a dog.

However, she obviously wanted us because she followed us home (over a mile). I was trying to run her off but my son was behind me getting her to follow us. She went home with us so I took her in, put her in a kennel and posted her on Facebook, trying to find her owner because she had to be someone's baby. By the next day I had fallen in love with her and so had the rest of my family, so I told them if no one claimed her, we would keep her. That was seven years ago. Lilly is the best dog ever and our best friend.

She is a very happy girl, always ready to go. Her favorite thing to do is go for a walk – I have to spell the word "walk" in casual conversation because she knows that word and will not leave me alone if she hears me say it. If Lilly could talk, she would definitely say she wants to go for a walk. Her favorite treat is cheese. We have taught her all of her tricks with cheese. She will give you a high five and shake with both paws on command for cheese.





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Just like their larger counterparts, these small streams such as Martin Creek, Janes Creek, Rock Creek and many others can offer great wading opportunities.

As far as fish that inhabit these waters, the smallmouth bass is the king and apex predator in most of these flowing fisheries. The smallmouth share the stream with rock bass (a general name for several species of sunfish), longear sunfish (often called pumpkinseed), and green sunfish. Largemouth and spotted bass can inhabit the warmer stretches while the deeper pockets can also hold walleye, sauger or even catfish. Due to the limited storage of a couple of pockets while wading, lures for this type of fishing need to remain simple. A beetle spin type lure, small paddletail grub or twist tail soft plastic will draw attention from most all the aforementioned species. Another set of lures that consistently catches fish in these bodies of water is the inline spinners like the Mepps or Roostertail. In the deeper stretches, small topwaters and small crankbaits can often provide action. As far as lure colors go, it's hard to beat something in a brown or black tone. The predominant food for these fish will be crayfish or insects and those colors represent that type of prey very well. Minnow colors can also produce.

Rod and reel choice for this type of fishing should also remain very basic. Leave the heavy fishing gear at home and think along the lines of panfish size tackle. A spincast rod and reel combo like a Zebco 33 will work, but I like a light spinning rod for this type of fishing. A small spinning reel spooled with six-to-eight-pound line and a six-and-a-half-foot light action rod provides great fun on these small bodies of water.

A great option for a day with the kids is a simple hook and sinker rig. Baits like worms or minnows can be purchased beforehand, but a fun activity to involve the youth is to go on a bait seeking mission and gather likely fish enticing morsels at the fishing site. Cody Walker, an educator at the Forrest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center, makes it a point to try and gather live bait at the fishing site for his smallmouth trips. According to Cody, a cast net for minnows or flipping rocks for crayfish can yield some of the best baits to target trophy smallmouth. Other aquatic baits like hellgrammites can be found, while terrestrial baits like grasshoppers and crickets can also be effective.



CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education
Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

A great side benefit to this type of fishing is that much of it occurs in some of the most naturally wonderful places of The Natural State. Very often, within a short distance of any likely fishing hole, will be wonderful vistas and trails to explore. Unique rock formations are often forged by the flowing waters and there could also be opportunities to view plants, wildflowers and animals that call these places home.

How do you find these places? Look at a map and try to find those small creeks that meander through the valleys. Online maps like Google Earth or some of the pay map services like OnX can be very beneficial in identifying possible destinations. Though printed maps are not as widely available as they once were, they can be a great tool. County maps are especially useful in identifying possible access points. Many of the named places can be found by a quick look at Google and some of the more prominent access points can be found at agfc.com.

One note: Please be mindful of the need to get permission to access private property. Many of these wonderful areas do fall within public lands; however, be sure and check land ownership before taking a chance on a possible trespass.

We are truly blessed in Arkansas with a wide range of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Though our large lakes and rivers are great, there is something special about those small streams that wander through the valleys of our great state. I truly enjoy getting knee deep in these waters and chasing the wide variety of fish that inhabit the flowing rivers and streams. Late summer and early fall are a great time to enjoy them, so get out the light tackle and a handful of lures and hit the water. I hope to see you out there!

The coolness of the water was a welcome relief from the sweltering heat. Even though I was only shin-deep, the flowing waters of the Ozark stream provided great comfort and an escape from another hot summer day. The sound of the flowing creek bouncing around the rocks and logs that tried to block its path proved relaxing, but the slick, shifting stones that lay beneath the surface called for attention to each step.

I eased further into the water and made a short cast to a shaded boulder that lay just beneath the surface and, as if on cue, a flash of olive brown attacked the spinner and the fight was on. On light tackle the twelve-inch smallmouth provided a good tussle but I soon had him in hand, carefully unhooked him and lowered him back into the waters of Martin Creek so he could return to his ambush point.

Wade fishing was a staple in my fishing diet as a young fisherman. I spent many days on the creeks, streams and rivers of the Ozarks in pursuit of whatever fish each body of water might offer. As I have gotten older, I tend to spend more time in the boat, but I still enjoy a few days each year knee deep in those bodies of water in hopes of a tug on the line.

Ranging in size from small streams that can be leaped in a single bound to rivers that can only be waded in certain areas, each of these waterways can offer wonderful and unique fishing opportunities.

When mention is made of wade fishing streams, many folks think of well-known bodies of water like Crooked Creek near Yellville, the Strawberry River near Evening Shade, South Fork near Cherokee Village or Spring River near Hardy. These are all great choices, but there are many other very small creeks that meander through the Ozarks and are less known or so small they are unnamed.





HEALTH & THE CITY

WITH DR. BETHANY DAVIS

Why Trying Something New Is Good for Your Health

When considering your health, you probably consider the typical components: Moving your body for physical exercise, taking care of your mental/emotional health, drinking plenty of water, eating a well-balanced diet, and getting plenty of sleep. In reality, health is just a general term for functioning optimally in the world in a way that is best for you.

All the aforementioned activities are definitely critical to the way we function and interact in the world, but another aspect of health you might not have considered is expanding your mindset. Without new experiences, our outlook -- and lives -- often become stagnant.

“You’ve changed” is an aphorism that very frequently has a negative connotation associated with it. Let’s say you bump into someone you have not seen in a while and they voice this phrase to you; depending on the tone of their voice, it implies you are no longer the person you once were, and even that you might have been “better” before. Despite what a particular person may mean by this, I am here to tell you to take this as a compliment! Change is not only a good thing, but inevitable, as well as an important element to our

overall health.

We are continuously changing throughout adolescence and childhood. Our youthful eyes are relentlessly absorbing our surroundings, how people react to situations, and how others walk, talk, and function in our society. We learn languages, discover what we like and don’t like, and eventually choose careers, families and cities to live in based on this information. We encourage our children to change, grow and discover who they are.

However, this process of change is something that doesn’t cease when we become adults but continues throughout our lives. As we interact with people around us, we learn through the trial and error of jobs, friendships and opportunities what aligns with us and what doesn’t, and we continually discover new aspects of ourselves we weren’t previously aware of. As adults, we are still figuring out what truly matters to us. Our brains are now developed enough to distinguish between what society has taught us to want, and what we actually want.

Change signals you are growing, learning, and becoming the person you want to be. Imagine if you were the same in personality and cognitive development as you were at 18 – yikes.

In order to evolve and change, we must step out of our comfort zones and try new things. Trying new things allows us to see the world from a different perspective. It gives us feedback on what we like and what we don’t like, leading us to better know ourselves. It often enables us to see and feel what someone else is going through. It humbles us and demands we put in the work of learning a new task, which keeps our minds sharp. It introduces us to new people and deepens our connection with others. Trying new things stimulates creativity. As well, it makes us uncomfortable – which is always followed by personal growth as we overcome obstacles and conquer fears. Trying something new contributes to the expansion of our mindset. I would argue that mindset growth is the most important element of health, since it nurtures us into the person we were meant to be. Other components of health do not matter if we don’t know who we are or what makes us happy.

Trying something new does not mean you need to go sky diving tomorrow morning – although, you should go for it if that’s your thing! If you’re an introvert, trying something new could simply be introducing yourself to the person next to you at the coffee shop. If you feel stuck in a routine, it could be doing something out of your routine, such as waking up earlier, trying a new type of workout, or cooking a new dish. Other ways to try something new include traveling solo, reading a book you might not usually pick up, rearranging furniture in your home, listening to a new podcast, or going to different social events. Along the way, you’ll recognize the things you like or don’t like, and then you learn from them. New habits develop, new hobbies are discovered, new friends are made, and your self-connection deepens. There is no need to say yes to everything, but if you’re feeling stagnant, trying something new might be just what you need.



MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE

Summer vacation is almost over. Before we know, it will be time to get back into the routine of school. Often the transition from summer vacation to the new school year can be an adjustment for the whole family. Teachers suggest that planning for the school year can make the transition from summer vacation to back-to-school easier for parents as well as children. Keep in mind the following when beginning the school year.

ROUTINE

Establishing an earlier bedtime schedule will help in getting up earlier.

Also, giving children time to prepare for the next school day such as picking out clothes, organizing books, and learning to get up early can make hectic school mornings go smoother. Practicing these routines a few weeks before actually going back to school can get everyone off on the right foot.

SCHEDULES

Making a schedule of the school day along with after school activities helps to let everyone know what needs to be done. Don't forget to factor in not only the school schedule, but also homework, chores, dinner, play time, etc.

STUDY TIME

Introducing children to a study schedule can assist in preparing children for homework and school projects. Playing games that incorporate reading and math skills help children get ready for school.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Buying school supplies ahead of time is one less worry for both the student and parent.

ACTIVITIES

Planning back-to-school activities or parties gets everyone ready for the new school year and helps make the transition more comfortable.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Children feel more comfortable if they know where they will be and who they will be with. Knowing the location of their classroom and meeting the teacher can help lessen the "butterflies in the stomach" feeling.

COMMON COURTESIES

Take time, before school starts, to talk to your child about being courteous to others. Good manners are common courtesies that make life easier. Beginning a new school routine can be hard, but a little preparation, along with treating others as you would like to be treated, can help smooth out some of the rough spots of the school day.

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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Creatures of Habit

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

Back to school. This is one of my favorite times of the year! Reminds me of that line from *You've Got Mail*: "If I knew your address, I would send you a bouquet of freshly sharpened pencils." When I was younger, and even now, I looked forward to seeing all the parents out buying school supplies for their kids and getting them prepared for the new year. I do this now for my daughter.

It was always my favorite -- I have a somewhat embarrassing love for office supplies and all things organizational. This time of year it is all about

prepping for a great school year. So, how does this relate to animals? Easy! Our pets are creatures of habit. I'm sure your pet lets you know when it is treat time, dinner time, outside time, and play time. This is because they also grow quite accustomed to schedule and routine. Their routine can get thrown off this time of year as they readjust to family, especially the kiddos, not being home as much. Maybe when the kids were home, your pet got to play outside more, got a special snack for being a good boy or girl, or just got more snuggle time on the couch.

Either way, they have probably grown more accustomed to the new summer schedule. Some pets readjust easily and roll with the punches, but some others do not. I will talk about some ways you can help them best cope with a new schedule and updated routine.

The first way to help is by starting the new schedule and routine before it is actually time to do so. This can be done by waking up at the times you will need to, walking the pet or other activity at the times you plan to, and going to bed at the time you plan to. Another good tip is to get plenty of exercise. This may seem off topic, but hear me out. Pets that get plenty of exercise, especially before school, tend to rest better when you are gone.

Pets that do not get enough activity tend to become more destructive when left to their own resources.

Their excess energy stores can come out in a negative way -- like chewing up the rug or carpet, digging a hole in the drywall of your house, and chewing on furniture or other items like shoes. Another way to help prevent pet boredom is with interactive toys.

There are so many options in this area, from auto-fetch toys to cameras with auto-treat feeders. Quality time is the most important! Don't forget, they still crave that attention and quality time with you -- whether it is brushing their hair or playing a quick game of tug-of-war with a toy, they need you. Fifteen minutes of activity and attention before and after school is easy and will go a long way for your pet.

One other option is distraction -- especially for those pets that have separation anxiety. Playing music or some other white noise for them while you are away will not only help by distracting them and deterring their own anxiety, but will help to break up outside noises that might usually scare them.

With this school year, I hope we begin getting back to some normalcy, especially for the kids, but I hope maybe some of these pointers will make the adjustment seamless for your pets as well. Hope everyone has a great school year!

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INTRODUCING
Lessons
LEARNED IN
Motherhood

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

My daughter was barely 12 hours old when I found myself stuck in a hospital bed, pain radiating through my body, all while my husband snored peacefully on a couch a few feet away. Each time I fed Eva, he was supposed to be taking notes on a nifty little chart the nurse had left for us.

His alarm, and my annoyed shouts, did absolutely nothing to rouse him.

“Oh well,” I thought, turning back to my squishy little newborn. It wasn’t the end of the world. I would take charge, take control, the way I always had for the last 28 years.

I downloaded a baby tracker app on my phone and for the remainder of the night dutifully logged each nursing session, spit up and dirty diaper. I had it under control.

Naturally, in the coming days and weeks I would find that I in no way, shape or form had it under control. It didn’t matter how long I breastfed Eva, how gently I rocked and swayed, how dark her room was -- she cried and cried. And so did I. Every day for over two months. I was doing my best to figure out who this new little human was, but who was I?

Where was the woman who shoved 18 course hours into her last semester of college while defending a thesis? The woman who, before COVID, worked four jobs and managed it well? I became unraveled by a 6 pound, 8 ounce ball of fury who only wanted to spend her days in my arms. My house fell apart around me. I missed deadlines. The hope of returning to full-time work slowly disappeared. I lost myself in pages and pages of Google searches telling me to sleep train, to respond to Eva’s cues, to feed on demand but also every two hours. It was clear I would not regain control of my life anytime soon.

And now, a year later, I have tossed the idea of control completely out the window. I let this little toddler run my life. She dictates when I sleep (rarely), when I nurse her (often) and how much I carry her (all the time).

Cheerios go stale underneath my couch and my husband and I pull clean clothes not from the closet, but laundry baskets. My friends have become masters at making or breaking plans with me last minute due to our baby-led schedule.

Before Eva’s grand entrance into this world, I allowed a planner to rule my days. I meal prepped, made sure to get two or three days of exercise each week. Sometimes I miss that old life, the nice structure I had.

But if I’m completely honest, flying by the seat of my pants with a miniature version of myself giggling happily is worth so much more than having any kind of control.



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Paragould Fireworks Show



Zach Mitchell, Jordan Mitchell, Sebastian Barger, Scott Mitchell and Spencer Garner

On July 4, 2021, MOR Media Inc. presented the Paragould Fireworks Show at Rotary Softball Park in Paragould. Before the show 870 Cornhole hosted a tournament for beginners and pros alike, and the Paragould Police Department and the Paragould Fire Department squared off in a tug of war “Battle of the Badge” competition. Congratulations to the Paragould Fire Department for taking home the trophy.

Free hotdogs, chips, sodas and other refreshments were offered to VIP sponsors before the show and a drawing for a cooler from Gearhead Outfitters, a Shadrachs gift card, a Smoothie King gift card and free movie passes produced the winner, Tawney Moore.

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



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Tawney Moore



Yana Dyess

Project Paragould Block Party



Project Paragould hosted a Block Party in Downtown Paragould on Saturday, July 10th. The event featured free games, a color run, bounce houses, popcorn, cotton candy, snow cones and face painting.

Local food trucks gathered downtown to offer more refreshment options and vendors presented additional shopping options.



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Downtown After Hours



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Downtown Paragould continues to host Downtown After Hours on the second Thursday of each month. Shotgunbillys performed on July 9th and Spencer Herren is taking the stage on August 13th.

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



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Big Grass Bluegrass



Jennifer and Curtis Huggins



Molly Linam and Joseph Williams



The first ever Big Grass Bluegrass Festival will take place at the Collins Theatre in Downtown Paragould on Friday, July 23, and Saturday, July 24. The music festival featured primary acts High Fidelity, The Tennessee Mafia Jug Band, The Cleverlys, Breaking Grass, Russell Morre and IIIrd Tyme Out, and Rhonda Vincent and the Rage at the Collins, while other acts also performed at Centennial Park and The Crossing.



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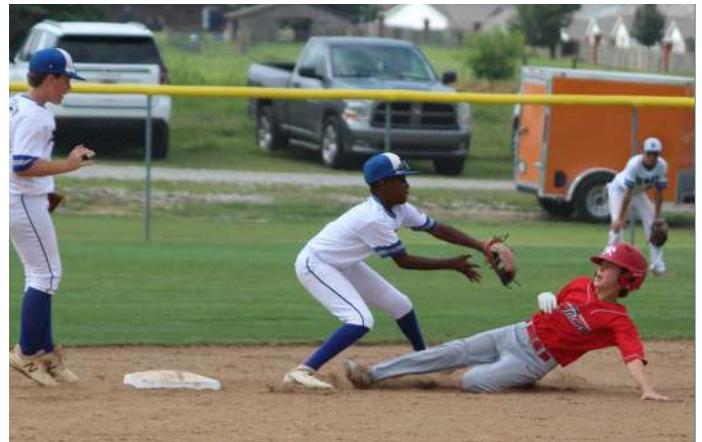
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BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

After starting the weekend with a banquet featuring a former big leaguer, about the only way to top it would be to bring home a championship. And that's what one local team did in July.

Paragould played host to the Cal Ripken Baseball Southwest Regional Tournament at Francis Bland Park, welcoming six teams in the 11-and-under age division and nine in the 9-and-under bracket, and the older group's Lumberjacks outlasted the field to emerge as champions. Teams came from elsewhere in Arkansas as well as from Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

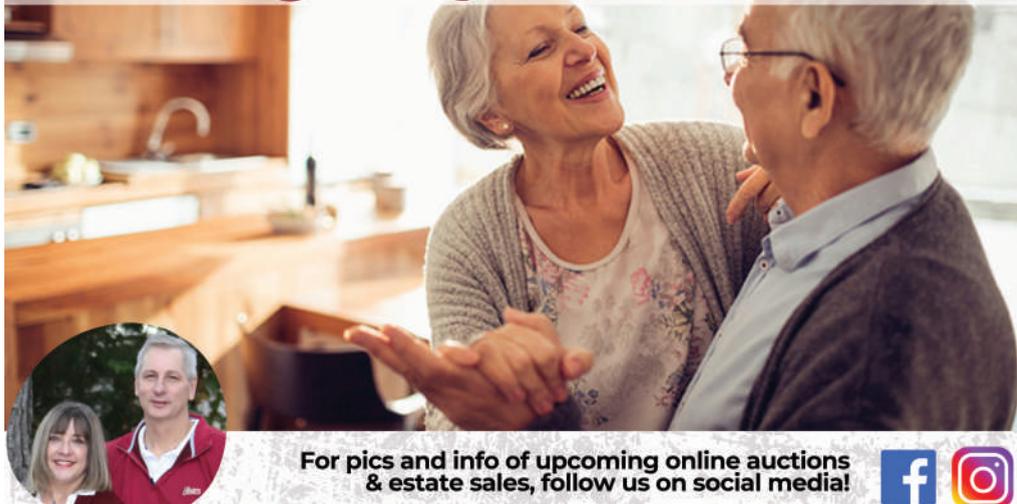
Activities started on a Thursday night with all teams and their families invited to a banquet at the Paragould Community Center. Brian Jordan, a former Major League Baseball player and a National Football League performer, was the star attraction, signing autographs, posing for photos and sitting for a chat with Northeast Arkansas sports talk show host Brad Bobo. A small selection of vendors provided players the opportunity to buy and swap sports cards if they so desired.

The following day started pool play with the actual tournament action taking place on Saturday and Sunday. Paragould had two teams -- the Lumberjacks and the Spikes -- in the 9-and-under group, joined by clubs from Bryant, Arkansas; Florence and Sylacauga, Alabama; Meridian and Vanclave, Mississippi; and Ponchatoula and St. Charles Parish, Louisiana. The Spikes went 1-1 in pool play, then fell to their local counterparts the Lumberjacks 11-1 in the tournament. The Lumberjacks, also 1-1 in pool play, followed their win over the Spikes with a 6-3 loss to Florence on Sunday.

The 11-and-under division featured six teams, with Paragould's Lumberjacks and Bryant representing Arkansas; Alexander City, Florence and Mobile Westside coming from Alabama; and Meridian showing up for Mississippi. The Lumberjacks emerged from pool play as the #2 seed and knocked off longtime rival Bryant 3-2, shut out Florence 2-0 and claimed the championship trophy with a 3-1 victory over Mobile Westside.

Paragould's Regional champions are coached by Ryan Carpenter, Andy Runyan, Pete Cancilla and Ty Sims. Their tournament win here earned a berth into the Cal Ripken Major/70 World Series in 2022.

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Time to Get

MOTIVATED

BY JOEL PHILHOURS

Mercy! Where did summer go? Can you believe it's time to go back to school already? "But I'm not ready! Why, I haven't finished working on my tan. I didn't lose those 25 pounds I was supposed to lose." I didn't, I didn't, I didn't ...

It happens every year – year after year. It has become a habit. Do you want to kick this behavior trend? Parents, teachers, principals, coaches, and all concerned – do you want to help your student(s) break this behavior and excel in school, sports, and life? I was 7 years old when I learned how to become motivated.

My story begins in the early 1960s, when I was a second grader at Hornersville Elementary School.

In the fall of 1964, my dad, Franklin, and my mom, Ava Lee, decided we were going to move to Southern California – the modern day "Land of Milk and Honey" – to start a new life. Dad was a farmer and worked with my Paw-Paw Carl, Mom was a newly licensed nurse, my brother, Randy, was in the fourth grade.

After the cotton was picked and the soybeans were cut -- Dad loaded up the car and headed west, 1,798.1 miles. His goals were to find a job, a place to live, and start a new life for himself and his family. Mom, Randy, and I waited in Hornersville for those goals to be attained.

I know Dad was a little bit scared. It's human to be scared when you're doing something new and different – especially something this BIG. Dad was going to a new place to find a new career in a new industry, and his family's comfort and safety were tied up in the outcome.

But I never saw "scared" in his face. He never said anything about it before he left, while we lived there, or later. He just did it. How? He was committed, confident, brave, and pumped full of adrenaline. He was motivated to make these goals real!

A couple of weeks before that 1964 Christmas, Mom, Randy, and I boarded a plane in Memphis and flew to Los Angeles. We were leaving the only "universe" we had ever known – an 84-mile radius of the places we had been, with the people we knew, and most of our experiences.

Being on a jet plane for the first time was pretty cool. My ears popped causing me to not hear well. Mom kept telling me to "stop yelling, please." I was given a set of plastic wings by the pilot to pin on my shirt. And ... WE GOT TO MEET COLONEL SANDERS! Yes, THE "finger licking good" Colonel Sanders. My first celebrity. Bucket List = CHECK!

Then ... reality hit. Two-three days after landing, I started school.

A typical start turned into a nightmare:

The principal walked me to my class (a campus bigger than the whole town of Hornersville) and handed me off to my teacher, Mrs. Molina. She asked me to introduce myself and tell the kids a few things about me. In a strong Southern accent I said, "Munayym is JO-WUUL. I'm from HORN-urs-ville, MU-zur-ee. I was born in LEACH-ville, AR-kin-saw. My daddy was a farmer, my momma's a nurse, and my brother's in the fourth grade. We moved here so we could quit farm'n."

I thought I had nailed it.

The whole class burst out laughing. I had never experienced being laughed at before. It made me feel small and insignificant. I was scared and I was not one bit happy. I sure wished I had a friend.

I don't think I had ever experienced life without a friend. That became my goal. I looked for the opportunity to meet and talk to someone – anyone. But it didn't look like it was going to be the boys. They grouped up and called me "Jethro Bodine." The girls, on the other hand, treated me better. But there was one particular coed, Laura, who reached out to me. On the second or third day, Laura came up to me and asked me if I wanted to be friends. "Heck yeah!"

So, we talked at lunch and recess and she introduced me to her friends.

The next few days rolled along. But the boys were still giving me a hard time about the way I talked. One day at lunch, Laura went over to a particular group from our class. You should have seen her: She got all up in their faces for “being mean” and “not welcoming the new boy!” (Note to self – “Do not make a girl mad.”)

Her warning/order was honored. Biff, Dirk, Bentley, and Brad (no one went by double-names like Paul-Wayne or Jenna-Marie) started being nice to me. They taught me how to play Tether-Ball, 4-Square, and Kickball. They became my friends and I became theirs.

The simple definition of motivated is, “The desire to DO or ACHIEVE something.” This “something” can be big or small. It’s anything you want to achieve, like good grades, perfect attendance, making the team/band, or making friends. Becoming truly motivated requires 4 things:

A GOAL – Your desired accomplishment might be as simple as “Make Friends.”

A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT – Laura made this possible for me by setting expectations.

Find “WINS” and CELEBRATE them – Every day I told my mom about my newest friend.

Surround yourself with POSITIVE PEOPLE – The boys liked me and taught me new games.

Set your goals and march forward. The only person in the world who can motivate you, is YOU. Don’t wait for someone else. Other people can help you, but they cannot make you motivated.

Parents, teachers, principals, coaches and all concerned – you cannot make someone motivated, but you can TEACH others how to motivate themselves.

To do this you must have CREDIBILITY – you must be motivated and you must have real stories as examples. This gives you the “credentials” to share and teach. You provide that positive environment. You take the time to help set goals by asking and talking about them. You make the effort to identify the wins and help celebrate them.

What can a motivated person expect to get out of life?

The reality is, being motivated changes behavior and mind-set. It’s not a guarantee you’ll reach every goal but it gives you a better shot at “success” (defined any way you want) and it makes you happy/happier (also defined any way you want). At the end of the day, you still have to work and work hard at it, make good decisions, and be a positive and productive human.

It’s a new school year – a new start. It’s a great opportunity to create new habits that can lead to new behaviors that will take you to places you never thought possible.



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Sep. 24 | 5pm - 7pm



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Tournament
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Sep. 25 | 9:30am



Movie in the Street

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Sandlot on Pruett St.
Sep. 24 | 7pm



Cornhole Tournament

by 870 Cornhole Nation
Blind Draw, Doubles & Kids Rounds
Sep. 25. 10:30am



Get Downtown Races

Start & Finish Line on Pruett St.
Sep. 25
10k & 5K, 8am Start
Kids Run & Dog Walk, 9:30am Start



Fun on Pruett

Food Trucks
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Sep. 25. | 11am- 6pm



11am: Arkansas Brothers

12am: The Band TRIPPP

1pm: Black River Rising

2pm: Cory Jackson &

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3pm: Eli Adams

4pm: Trevor Johnson

5pm: Vikki McGee

6pm: The Milwaukee Tool Shed Band

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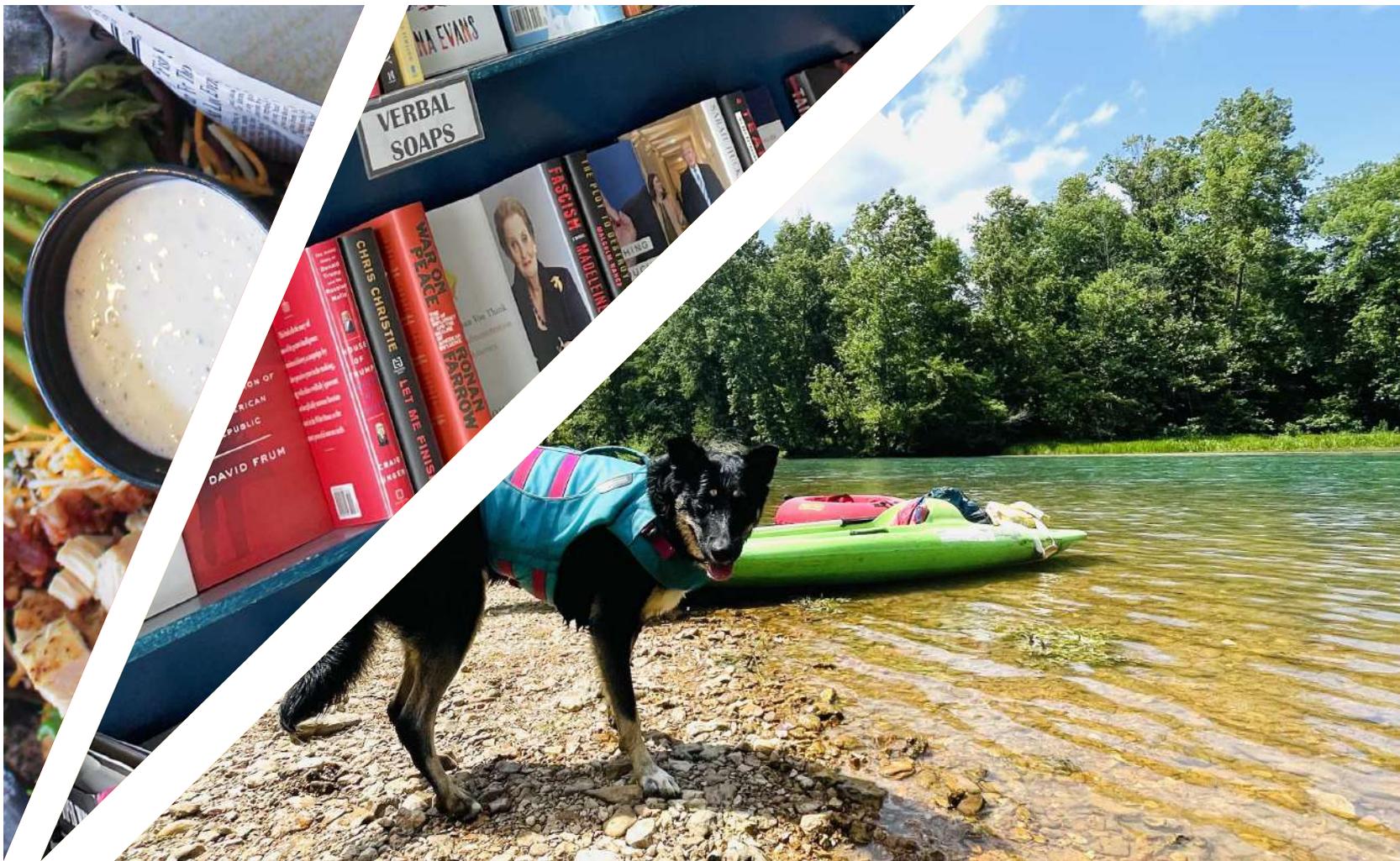
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KYLA ROBERTS

- Teen Barrell Racer Succeeds on National Level -

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

When Kyla Roberts received her first pony, she brushed, fed and put it up in the stable. Except, that first horse was a stone one; the stable, a nativity scene.

That was over six years ago. Now, at 15 years old, Kyla has six real horses in her barn and spends her weekends at barrel racing competitions around the country. In June she competed at the national level at the All American Youth race, where she put two horses in the top five out of 1,000 competitors. And in April, Kyla placed 11th out of more than 2,000 riders at the Better Barrel Races World Finals.

"I started riding at nine but I've always liked horses," she explained.

Kyla would watch *Heartland* and soak up anything and everything related to horses.

"We thought it was a phase," her father, Mike, said, adding that while he could have a horse run away from him, Kyla would easily make friends with the animal. She began riding lessons in Jonesboro with Diane Morgan, and at 9 got her first pony, Fancy, with the instructions from her parents that the horse wasn't a toy or a game. She treated it as anything but. As the years passed, Kyla took full responsibility for Fancy and the eventual six horses she would come to own. She wakes up around six or seven each morning to feed the horses and cleans their stalls. For barrel races, she loads up the trailer herself.

Mike noted how people don't realize the amount of hard work that goes into owning horses and racing. After missing too much school in the seventh grade, Kyla made the decision to switch to homeschooling in the eighth grade in order to focus more on her training and races. And this journey has also taught her financial responsibility.



"I pay my entry fees and vet bills," Kyla said.

"We let her keep all of her winnings," Mike added. He said racing for money has made Kyla more competitive.

Aside from entry fees and vet bills, Kyla buys whatever equipment she needs, including Louis Vuitton and Gucci tack sets. During races, however, Kyla keeps it modest with plain jeans and t-shirts. Even her movements on her horse, Little Sass, are laid back. Many barrel racers may move the reins around a lot but Kyla remains still and calm, which Mike thinks aids in her fast times during competition.

"This is simply you and your horse against the time clock," Mike said. He explained while other sports make players competitive against one another, barrel racing is more of a community with everybody cheering each other on.

Kyla's friends and family support her every step of the way, too, whether by driving her to races, allowing her to race their horses and even participating in races with her. Kyla has plenty of races remaining this year. Looking even further ahead, she plans to continue riding in some shape or form.

"I love doing it," she said. "I would love to make a career out of it."



870 Cornhole Nation

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Two nights a week Campground United Methodist Church hosts people who give a flip ... and a flop ... and an airmail, and an assortment of other shots related to the growing sport of cornhole.

Opening the church gym to people of all ages, shapes and sizes, the 870 Cornhole Nation invites anyone interested to come out and take part in the popular game. "It's more for fun than anything," said Scott Mitchell, not only a promoter of the sport but one who has reached Pro status. "It's for anyone from beginner to advanced. It's Monday and Friday nights, open play, blind draw; just come out and have some fun."

Like other sports in recent years, cornhole has experienced a nationwide boom. Popular for years at tailgate parties and back yard outings, players began to reach such a level of expertise that money-making tournaments crept onto the scene. The American Cornhole Organization (ACO) is the governing body for the sport. Established in 2005 and headquartered in Milford, Ohio, the ACO offers official cornhole rules, sanctioned products, tournament listings, and comprehensive information about cornhole events. The top competitors can often be found on televised tournaments, vying for impressive first-place payoffs through the American Cornhole League (ACL), the top level of action.



Scott said cornhole tournaments are much like those staged by area softball organizations, with invitational, state, regional and eventually national meets held. To reach Pro status and continue on the championship path, players must compete in and advance through the various stages to have a chance at the top prize. "Tennessee, Mississippi, Missouri, here," Mitchell explained, "... you can play about any weekend you want to. The more points you score, the higher you are seeded."

Cornhole is much like the old-time games of pitching washers or horse shoes, only here cornhole boards are positioned 27 feet from the front edge to front edge of the board. A designated pitcher's box is a 4' x 3' area at each end of the court and on both sides of each board, with the front edge of the cornhole board representing the foul line.

Games are played by tossing bags at the holes on the boards, with a score of 21 earning a win. A bag that has been pitched and remains on the cornhole board playing surface at the conclusion of the frame earns one point; a bag that has been pitched and passes through the hole is worth three points.

Skill enters the scenario when players intentionally knock competitors' shots off the board or sink a shot to negate one made by the other side. Games may be played as singles or doubles teams.

"We have probably eight players out here that I would go to a tournament with at any time and think we could win," Scott said. "A lot of people just do it as a hobby and then there are guys whose goal is to get in the Top 20."

Scott, 62, was ranked 15th in the world at the Senior level, and keeps it in the family by teaming with Zach Mitchell to sit at Number 33 in the doubles competition. They were keeping their games sharp with hopes of winning money at the Nationals in Bradenton, Florida, later in the season in a field of about 300 teams.

Zach, 31, also a Pro and ranked 80th in the world, said he loves "the challenge. I always want to be on top. I try to play and practice at least four times a week. I won the state championship in singles at Bentonville over about 60 others. I just want to keep getting better."

Continued on Page 38



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A talented athlete throughout his teenage years, Zach said what he likes about cornhole is that “just about anyone can do it -- old or young -- and it doesn’t take much to get started. You can practice right in your back yard and if you want to get in a tournament there’s one somewhere every week. You get hooked; you always want to play one more, and that’s how you get better. And you don’t get injured” as one does in Zach’s other sports of choice.

Two of the younger stars in the local group have made names for themselves in a hurry. Teenagers Spencer Garner and Sebastian Barger are both ranked highly in their respective divisions. Spencer is 44th in the world while Sebastian recently qualified in Branson, Missouri, to compete in the Pro Series show by finishing third.

Spencer said he got started just playing in the street with his dad, then realized he had a knack for it and upped practice sessions to “basically every other day. I might work on flop shots one day and air mails another. I think God blessed me with a talent to do this so I try to make the most of it.”

He has been a football player in the past but said he also sees cornhole as a competitive sport. “Yes, sir,” he said. “You can make friends, you can make a lot of money. I’ve been known to talk some trash and try to get in their heads a little bit, get them aggravated. Right now I’m 44th out of about 4,000, and 2nd in Juniors in the world. I just want to get better.”

Sebastian said he puts in eight to twelve hours a week working on specific shots and said his particular strength is “probably sliding around shots. A lot of your success is knowing what shots you can and cannot make. I have confidence in myself.”

He also has football and soccer in his sports background but said cornhole is no less competitive than those games. “I am super competitive,” he said, “I always try to win and I get even more competitive sometimes, depending on who I lost to. I remember when I first started, I thought, ‘I could be good at this.’ And then I started playing here and at the river and at other places and I loved all the personalities of other people you meet. I try to stay quiet and then just beat you, unless I’m goofing around. Then I might talk at you a little.”

Scott said anyone interested in finding out what the sport is all about should just show up at the church at 7 p.m. on a Monday or Friday. “It’s relaxing and it’s fun and just about anyone can do it,” he said. “But not just anyone can do it as well as some of these guys. They got hooked and kept on going and, who knows, maybe someone else out there will too.”

The church is located at 1976 Greene 628 Road in Paragould.



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Home Run Hitter Home for a Bit

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Sitting in the dugout next to Braxton Burnside, she presents anything but an imposing figure. Compared to most Division I college athletes she looks rather petite, resembling more the beauty every guy would love to take to prom instead of one of the most prolific home run hitters the state of Arkansas has ever known.

But put a softball bat in her hands and she transforms into a ferocious hitter and, now, one of Paragould's most decorated athletes ever. Braxton just finished her senior season as the shortstop for the Arkansas Lady Razorbacks and she is one of the main reasons the team recorded a number of "firsts" in an extremely successful campaign.

Arkansas climbed to No. 6 in the national rankings and wound up with a 43-11 record, and the best winning percentage (.796) in program history. The Lady Razorbacks captured the program's first Southeastern Conference regular season title and then hosted Regional and Super Regional postseason playoffs. Braxton was pivotal to that success, finishing with a .357 batting average, 54 runs batted in and a school record 25 home runs on her way to becoming one of the most feared hitters in the nation's toughest conference. She was named first-team All-SEC and selected to the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) All-American first team, also gathering along the way a nod as a USA Softball Player of the Year Top 10 Finalist as well as being a two-time SEC Player of the Week.

And she takes it all in stride. "I did not," she says when asked if she saw such stardom coming, even though it took a while after sitting out a year following her transfer from Missouri and losing a year to Covid measures. "If you'd told me I would be in college for five years, playing softball, I would have said, 'No way.' I'm glad I did it and played for four years, but I'm also glad I'm done. I'm ready to move on to the next thing."

"I started young. Much of my success goes back to my parents. They raised me to be self-driven, self-motivated. Now, I know I have some God-given athletic ability but I found a work ethic and determination and a will to be a Division I player. I knew probably from about age 12 that if I kept putting in the work, I could play."

She pretty much removed any doubt of that before she graduated from Paragould High School. When she left after the 2016 season she ranked as the state of Arkansas' all-time career softball home run leader with 44, but even the assault on that record escaped her; she just showed up every day ready to play.

"I had no idea," she said, recalling the moment she was informed her home run total had reached a point where her next would put her into the record books. "The record was in front of me, but I hadn't paid much attention to that. I don't think it really made a difference in high school because that's not where my mindset was. I just looked for the next game and the next at-bat."

She says that maturity level came from what could have been a devastating event during her childhood, but one she instead turned into both motivation and positivity. "There were lots of lessons learned along the way," Braxton explained. "I tell my parents all the time, when they got divorced when I was 7 they did me a favor. That made me grow up a little. I'm thankful they decided to go their separate ways ... because they're better separate. It helped me learn a lot of life lessons away from softball. Now at 23, I think back and see I had to grow up a little early. And while I was growing up my parents always, always harped about the need to show character on and off the field."

She said she was probably 10 when she really starting watching softball on television, admiring the abilities of players from schools like Tennessee and Arizona State because they "were really good and powerful. And an eye-opener was going to a Jennie Finch camp. I ate that up; I got to meet her and have my picture made with her and it was awesome. Going to the camp and being around her, I began to think, 'I can be this one day.'"

"There was never a moment when I thought I wasn't good enough. I knew I was capable of anything. The only thing, I thought, that might hold me back was my lack of exposure. Just being from the state of Arkansas was harder. People might think, 'Well, she's pretty decent but she's not playing in California or Florida or Texas.' I thought I might get overlooked. My fear was that being from here might limit me."

Those fears proved baseless as she succeeded in travel ball during the summers and benefited from the knowledge passed on to her by her father, Harold. "I have probably taken two hitting lessons in my life other than working with my dad," Braxton said. "I've had the same swing since I was in the 10th grade. He coached my older sister in travel ball; he knows more about the game than just about anybody."

She hopes her success story will inspire girls of all ages -- and sizes -- to follow their dreams. "I think more than anything, growing up I was never very big. I was a beanpole, scrawny," she recalled. "I started filling out with my body in about 10th grade but I always focused on mechanics, not how big I was. If you're strong within yourself you can put it all together. I started lifting in sixth grade but instead of size, it was more mechanics, knowing how to swing with the body you have. From the beginning I knew I had talent but I also know I am blessed every single day with all that has happened for me."

At present she is doing what she loves, holding clinics, giving lessons, talking softball with young women from the surrounding area. Her older sister and brother-in-law are constructing an indoor facility in Bono where she hopes to continue passing along things she has learned along the way. "I want to bring the younger generation in," Braxton said, "Arkansas kids in general. It's important they have knowledgeable people to give instruction. Fastpitch is on the rise and taking its place, finally. Our TV numbers were way more than the men's World Series this year. I hope we're headed in the right direction now."



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Back to School

The first day back to school for most area schools is August 16th. Per the Public School Choice Act of 2015, Arkansas residents can opt to send their children to schools outside of the district they live in, though there are factors that influence whether or not the student can in fact be enrolled at the school of their choice. Parents should consult arkansased.gov for more information regarding Arkansas Public Schools and school choice opportunities.

For enrollment deadlines, school choice forms, calendars of upcoming events and more, please consult the school district's website or reach out to administration.

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Tips for Tackling the School Year

BY JENNY BROWN

As the scent of sunscreen and heat from the summer sun wanes, our minds transition to football games and school supplies. For most, August brings new classrooms, new teachers, and reunions with friends. Being a successful student in any grade involves several important factors, including a specific school routine. The last thing any family wants in the morning is for their child to haphazardly grab flying objects as the school bus approaches, leaving a feeling of having forgotten something or being unprepared. Having a school routine for mornings and evenings is equally important and can help prevent that scenario from happening.

Evening routines are a way to prepare for the next day. Packing and refrigerating lunches for tomorrow, laying out clothes for the morning, and going through backpacks to make sure all papers have been reviewed and signed are all ways to prepare for a great morning the night before. Sunday evenings are the best time to review the family calendar and see what the week ahead holds for everyone. Morning routines are beneficial for all family members. Some common morning routines involve a specific, daily wake up time. This can be pre-decided so there is plenty of time to wake up, have breakfast, and complete morning hygiene such as showering, dressing and brushing teeth. The time is specifically important, and it is helpful for children to know a specific time to be ready to leave the house. A countdown or timer can be helpful for children who tend to move slowly in the morning.

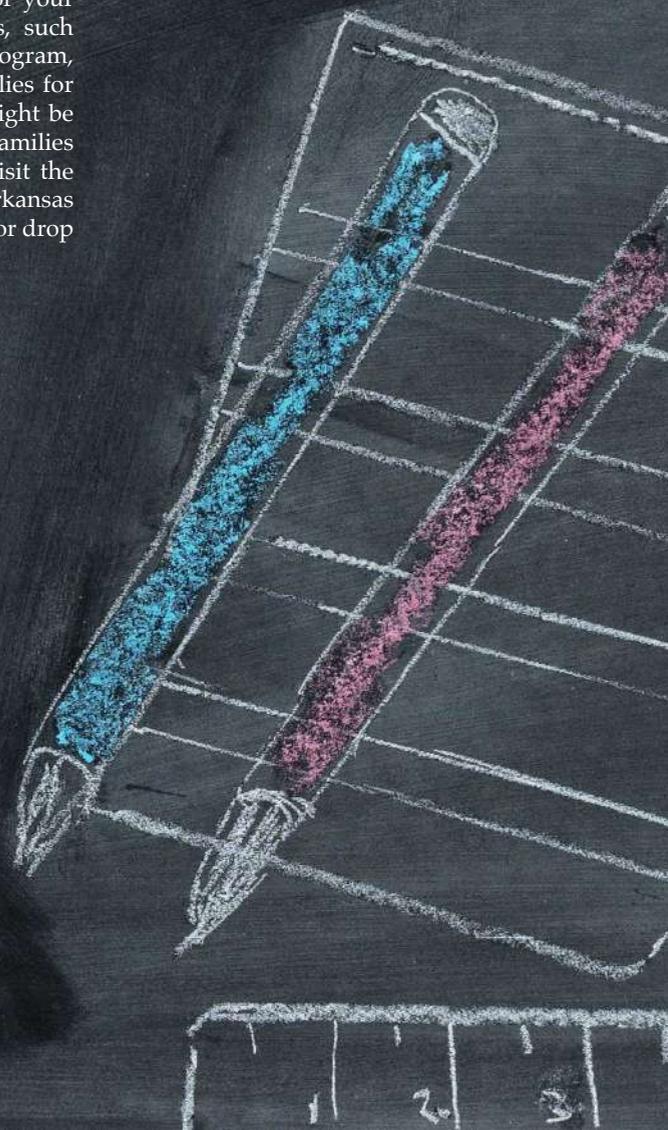
Another way to have a successful start to the school year is to be sure all beginning-of-school paperwork is reviewed, signed, and returned. Every school sends home important information at the start of the school year. Some of this information includes ways to access your child's grades, teacher contact information and conference time, and emergency information for the school your child attends.

It is worth sitting down with your child and reviewing the paperwork together. Make sure you have everything returned on time because this is how your school will contact you in the event of an emergency with your child – this information needs to be accurate and up to date.

In addition, school preparation means having all of the proper school supplies. School supply lists are usually at local stores and can also be accessed on most school websites. When a student has all of the proper supplies, he/she can be successful in the classroom. If your family is worried about finances at this time of year, many schools have a way to help! Contact the school counselor in your child's school building and request some help obtaining school supplies for your child. Certain community efforts, such as the United Way's annual program, Stuff the Bus, collect school supplies for this very cause. If your family might be interested in donating to help families in need through Stuff the Bus, visit the United Way for Northeast Arkansas online to find your local location for drop off as well as the date and time.

These donated supplies are divided equally and sent to schools in each county. The local school counselors help distribute them to families in need.

Lastly, try to keep the same positive attitude and regular routines all year long. Sometimes as we dip into the school year and things start to get busy, it is easy to get off the routine or get stressed about a struggle your child is having in the classroom. Remember to be proactive and keep in contact with your child's teacher about behaviors and grades. Revisit the initial routines you established with your child and try to get back on track. With a little consistency, these tips can help your child get started on the right track for a successful school year and maintain that success all year long!





BRTC Offers Academic and Technical Degrees to Cover Any Career Path

As the Fall 2021 semester quickly approaches, Black River Technical College has been working to give students more degree options. The BRTC Paragould campus offers academic degrees, technical certifications, and Corporate & Community Education. Over the last two years, the campus has added new technical programs and expanded academic offerings to students.

Career and Technical jobs are becoming more relevant in today's society. Positions in industries such as welding, machine tool, electricity, and industrial maintenance are in high demand. BRTC has offered certificates of proficiency and technical certificates in these programs on the Pocahontas campus for years, but now they are expanding these programs to the Paragould campus. Over the last year and a half, the campus has added traditional welding, machine tool, and electricity classrooms and shops so students can complete their entire degree at Paragould.

BRTC is not only expanding programs in the Career and Technical field. Last year, the Paragould campus added a traditional Phlebotomy program, and proudly partnered with Arkansas Methodist Medical Center to offer a traditional RN program. Classes for the RN program are held in the hospital so nursing students get hands-on experience in a clinical setting. The agriculture program also expanded to offer more courses on the Paragould campus.

Classes for the Fall 2021 semester begin Monday, August 16th. BRTC plans to have a successful year preparing students for the workforce. For more information visit www.blackrivertech.edu.

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BACK TO SCHOOL THROUGH THEIR EYES

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

The phrase “Back To School” means different things to different people. Teachers and administrators aren’t going to look at the return to the school day routine the same way students will, nor will bus drivers, counselors and cafeteria workers share the same opinions.

With that in mind we grabbed a student from three different educational levels and posed the question to them: What do the words Back To School mean to you?



► Kynli Lamb, Fourth Grade

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

During early elementary school, children begin to develop confidence in taking the initiative and to understand the use of language skills and imagination to engage with peers. Children may experience a loss of positive self-image as they move from the care of a loving parent to the school environment where others judge how well they fit, but it’s still a world of classes, recess and budding friendships.

For Kynli Lamb, 9, and heading into the fourth grade, Back To School means: “I think I will be excited but I will miss all the family time from the summer. I don’t really like class that much (she’s an A and B student) but I really like recess and lunch. This summer we went to Six Flags and traveled. We’re going to a family reunion and they have a pool and a diving board and there’s a playground and mini-golf. I guess it means to me the summer’s over. But that’s okay.”



MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH

Middle School is a transformative time in students' academic journey where they will gain independence, learn new things, and grow into their own unique selves. School sports come more into play and clubs and organizations offer invitations for students to join and expand their horizons, and the need to start planning educational courses with the future in mind comes to the surface. But it's still a collection of teens and pre-teens, with books and studying often on the back burner as interaction with peers is at the forefront.

Gavyn Trammell, 14, enters his freshman year with football on his mind. Another A and B student, Gavyn said Back To School means an end to sleeping in and finding time for workouts: "I dread going back to class. In the summertime you can sleep later and then I've been getting up and practicing football (he's a fullback at Paragould). It's a pain to have to start getting up early again but it's okay, really. At least we get to look forward to playing games before too long. And seeing everybody. It's not all bad."



► Gavyn Trammell,
Ninth Grade











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▶ Ashton Rodrigues, Senior

HIGH SCHOOL

High school students have more academic flexibility. They can choose to take courses based on interest or challenge themselves in areas of strength, allowing them to experience their own successes. Students have to study more difficult concepts, complete more homework, and may experience greater academic pressure. To succeed, they will have to exercise good study habits like they never have before.

Ashton Rodrigues, 17, has a positive outlook entering his final year of high school. For him, Back To School means: "It's my senior year. Obviously, I'm excited about everything that's about to happen. At the same time, I'm not really ready for summer to be over; I haven't quite processed that yet. I plan on going to college and majoring in Biology and Pre-Med. I do my best (academically) and I'm okay with getting to come back here and see all my friends. I'm the drum major and I've been in band for four years in marching band and six years altogether. Back To School means nothing negative to me. This is a year I'm looking forward to."

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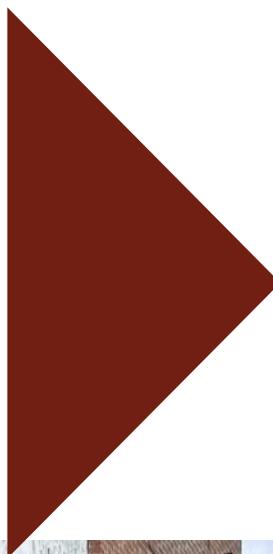
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PARAGOULD PROGRESS



BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE



It's no secret Paragould has grown over the years; from 2010-2019 the population expanded by more than 2,000 residents, and business is booming as well. From tasty food joints to multi-use centers, a little bit of everything is coming to The Friendly City. Be on the lookout in future issues, too: The following businesses are just the beginning of a new series featuring growth in the community, and further introductions for local establishments.



Allison Hestand with the Paragould Chamber of Commerce gestures to the buildings where the G.I.N. will be located.



Set to open next spring is the new 13,000 square foot innovation space in downtown Paragould. G.I.N., the Generating Innovative Network, will offer a co-working space with 1-gig speed internet from Paragould Light Water and Cable, a food incubator, makerspace and a workforce development center.

“The G.I.N. will host day camps for entrepreneurs of all ages, robotics camps and small business bootcamps,” director of economic development, Allison Hestand, said in a press release.

And Farmers Market visitors and booth renters alike can rejoice: Also set to open next spring is a new multi-use building for not only the market, but corporate and private gatherings, festivals, concerts and more. Constructed in the south parking lot of the old power plant, this facility will be used as a gathering place for the community.

“We expect the multi-use building and The G.I.N. will both not only encourage small business growth but also to bolster a sense of community and provide a large gathering space in Downtown Paragould,” Hestand said.

Paragould Mayor Josh Agee said that after years of gathering in the streets for Farmers Markets and festivals, the multi-use building will become the foundation for gathering in downtown Paragould.

“With the innovation center hopefully set to open around the same time, we believe both projects will provide the platform for future growth of small businesses and entrepreneurs, workforce development and even festivals that bring visitors to our community, and so much more,” Agee said.

Continued on Page 54

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This year, Haag Brown Commercial Real Estate and Development will also bring a handful of new properties to Paragould, along with others that have recently placed their roots here.

Central Baptist Church, with its main campus in Jonesboro, realized over 1,000 of its visitors were driving from Paragould in 2017. Dr. Blake Ligon, teaching pastor, said plans began in 2018 for a new location to launch in Paragould. In August of that year the group had its first service with over 1,100 people in attendance.

"We launched in the high school of Greene County Tech but when Covid hit, we had to get creative," Ligon said. "We were online only for nearly six months."

Now, the group meets at the Greene County Fairgrounds. But Ligon said the group wants to continue its calling of blessing the city with a new property at the corner of highways 49 and 69.

"With buying the property, building a building upon it and placing a 3.1 mile

race track around the whole property, we want to bless this region," he said. "We are a regional church and have people coming from the bootheel of Missouri to Manila and from Jonesboro to Pochahontas. We want the church building, the recreational track, and the entire property to be a hub for all people from the entire region."

ARKids Pediatric Day Centers is another organization that has a goal of staying ahead of the growth of the Paragould community.

"The ARKids Pediatric Day Centers side of the company started in Paragould in 2013," program administrator Chassidy Parker said. "We were already in the pediatric therapy business and we saw a need for a higher quality pediatric day center."

Parker added the newest addition of the business, coming in 2022, will be an additional ARKids Pediatric Day Center in Paragould that includes a separate outpatient facility so the team can continue developing its greatest natural resource.

And for the foodies, Haag Brown announced in January Steak 'n Shake would open a Paragould location, anticipated for this fall. The local franchise owners have restaurant experience going back to the 1950s, and stated their goals to hire local employees and managers, as well as using local vendors.

The spurt of new developments in the area is setting the stage for those desiring to have their own local business, ensuring that Paragould's progress will continue in an upward direction.

Know of a new business coming to town? Send your lead in to neapremiere.com to be featured in upcoming pieces about local development.

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Coming Up

►► Monette Fall Festival



► **M**onette's Annual Fall Festival and National Junior Duck Calling Contest is scheduled for October 9th. This special event will take place in the center of the community and will boast a wide variety of local vendors, including local craftsmen, local businesses, and delicious local food vendors. There will be giveaways, games for children, inflatables, horse and carriage rides, and a large number of fantastic performances and exhibitions. The local library will also have activities for children, and a local gymnastics/cheer team will be performing an exhibition.

Headliners, Faith's Journey, is a "Traditional Southern Gospel Trio" from Branson. Faith's Journey, comprised of Jonathan Edwards, his wife Deana Edwards, and Scott Roberts, has performed on stages both big and small, from local churches to One of America's Best Theme parks, Silver Dollar City in Branson, where the group has been a featured performer for years in a show whose byline is "Absolutely Country, Definitely Gospel." The National Junior Duck Calling Competition is expected to be a fantastic new addition to the Fall Festival. It is being sponsored by Cabela's and Bass Pro Shop with large monetary prizes. For more information about the event, please visit www.callingducks.com or contact them via adultpremiercustomcalls@gmail.com.

📍 Monette

🕒 October 8, 2021

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“ A huge shout out to Tracy and her Something Sweet team! Thank you for a beautiful and delicious wedding cake! She offered many flavors of cake concealed under white icing. We had strawberry, almond raspberry, and lemon! I could not have asked for a more beautiful or great tasting cake!



- Sara Culbreath, Client



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Catherine & Ryan

Ryan and I met in high school – I was 15 and he was 16. We both attended Greene County Tech. We grew closer through mutual friends and had an instant connection over marching band. It only took us a couple of months before deciding to become an item.

Our first date consisted of eating at Cheddar’s in Jonesboro, and later we attended a faculty trombone recital at Arkansas State University. I was so nervous; I had never been on a “real” date before. Seeing Ryan in his element made me like him even more. After our first couple of dates, we became inseparable. We have both grown so much since that first date in 2015. It would have been impossible without constant support and encouragement from each other.

Our favorite thing to do is travel. Every year, one of us plans an anniversary trip to celebrate another year together. For our five-year dating anniversary, we went on a trip to Eureka Springs. It was a wonderful trip filled with lots of exciting adventures. On one of the days, Ryan planned a surprise trip for us to go to Fayetteville to visit a chapel called St. Catherine’s at Belle Gable. To tell you the truth, I had known for a while that I wanted to marry Ryan.

I thought this chapel would be a beautiful place for a wedding, and I had always wanted to see it in person. He knew that, so that is why he wanted to surprise me with a private tour of the chapel. I was so excited. As I admired all the beautiful glasswork, I was talking about how we could get married there.

I thought of where our family could sit, what it would feel like, how perfect the place was. I mentioned that we could do our wedding outside the church. I went to open the big wooden door, and when I turned back, Ryan was on one knee! I began to cry, and of course I said yes!

Ryan and I decided to get married on the beach in Destin, Florida. The date was May 15th, 2021. We shared that day with our closest family and friends. The wedding was simple and beautiful.

The day could not have been done without the help of our wonderful families. The memories from that perfect day constantly appear in my mind. Our love story is continuing to grow every day, and I am so happy to be Mrs. Baldwin.

Photos by Dee & Bo Photography





We want to celebrate
National Radio Day –
August 20th.

Email your voice memos
about why you love
listening to one of our
stations, Jack, Jill or
iRock, and we'll play it on
the air during August!

Each submission will
receive a **FREE** t-shirt
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\$99.30 courtesy of our
girl Jill @ 99.3!

To enter, email your voice
memos to
traffic@mormediainc.com

Deadline is August 15th.

Happenings



Black River Technical College is excited to announce that CaSandra Duran of Pocahontas and Shelby Gosha of Jonesboro are the first women to complete the CDL program. Both received their Class A license.



Paragould utility provider, PLWC, announced the completion of its 1 GIG fiber-optic network to the city of Paragould for its more than 11,154 residential and business customers. Launched in 2017, U+ (U Plus) delivers next-generation fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) gigabit broadband Internet access and Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) to the Paragould community, ensuring high speeds, low latency, fair pricing, and superior local customer service. PLWC's employees across all departments banded together to complete the four-year, 10-million-dollar project in-house.

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2021 Kids' Events

August

August 7

First Friday at the Forum with Don Howard

When: August 7 at 7 p.m.

Where: Rotary Centennial Park in front of
the Forum Theatre in Downtown
Jonesboro

Info: The Foundation of Arts
Facebook Page

August 7

Back to School Bash

When: August 7, 12:00 p.m.- 2:00 p.m.

Where: Allen Park Community Center

Info:

therockjonesboro.com/bash

August 21

Artist on the Rise

When: August 21 as part of Art & Stroll

Where: Station Park in
Downtown Paragould

Info: Project Paragould's
Facebook Page

Talks from the coach will soon give way to instruction from the teacher as the local youth baseball season winds down. Ross Adams gave his team, The Spikes, a pep talk before one of its games in the Cal Ripken Southwest Regional Tournament held in Paragould.



Next Month

Agriculture



Showcasing local farms and gardens and discussing the value they bring to Northeast Arkansas.

Musicians



We want to shine a light on local musicians and talk about the value they add to the culture of our community.

NEA Seniors Special Section



Highlighting good news and valuable resources for NEA Seniors and their families.

An advertisement for 'Gracefully Southern accessories & gifts'. It features a woman with long braids wearing a white t-shirt with state outlines and the word 'arkansas'. The background is a brick wall with a sign that says 'PARK'. Text on the ad includes 'JEWELRY, ACCESSORIES, GIFTS, APPAREL & MORE.', 'SHOP LOCAL on-line or in store.', '870.335.5274', '203 N. Pruett St. Downtown Paragould', and 'gracefullysoutherngift.com'. There are also social media icons for Facebook and Instagram.

An advertisement for 'Elysian Counseling Services'. It features a woman with blonde hair and glasses looking at a tablet, with a stack of books in the foreground. The text includes 'Elysian COUNSELING SERVICES', 'Don't let back to school stress you out.', 'CONTACT US TODAY!', and 'elysiancounselingservices.com • 5301 Linwood Drive Unit C Paragould, AR • 870.919.3871'. There is also a butterfly logo.

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