

NEA'S

# PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

December  
2022

## CHRISTMAS CHEER

MR. & MRS. SANTA CAUSE

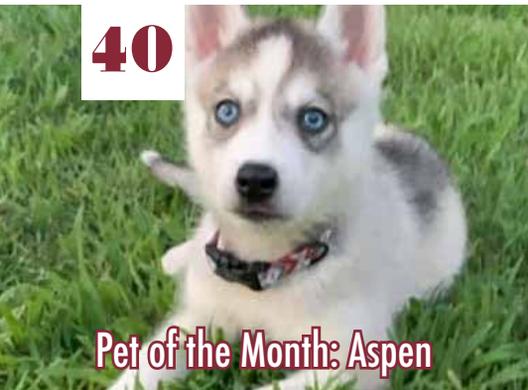
CROW'S NEST FARMS

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

NEA SENIORS

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Cover Photo & Snow Magic by Lizzy Stoddard Media

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## From the Publisher



Ask any adult what their favorite Christmas or holiday memory is and I'd bet it is almost never about a toy. Likely, not even a gift; usually it is about a "feeling" or a person that made them "feel" like, well, like "Christmas."

Many families have traditions, and we love to tell our readers about them each year. We hope it encourages parents and grandparents to start experiences now that will be both traditions and fond memories for the young growing up today.

I have seen where people are asking that the words "From Santa" not be on the big expensive gifts so that the kids who do not get those do not think Santa loves them less. While I'm not sure what I think about that, I am sure if the child is

surrounded by love and attention and lots of holiday cheer it is less likely it would feel "slighted" by Santa.

We want to thank Santa "Cause" and Mrs. "Cause" for gracing our cover again and for sharing the story behind the "Santa Cause." If you are looking for a new Christmas tradition to start, we suggest taking the family to The Crow's Nest Farms and walking through the pines, roasting marshmallows around the fire and enjoying petting the baby goats!

Don't miss all the information and stories in our NEA Seniors section. There are so many ways to enhance the life of NEA Seniors and we do not want you to miss any of them.

As we wrap up 2022, we want to thank all our readers and feature story participants and our advertisers for helping us bring you the "Good News and the People Making it Happen" in NE Arkansas! We look forward to continuing this tradition in 2023.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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# GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



An article I read recently said at the end of each year we should take stock of our lives and look at our yearly goals to see how we've done, both personally and professionally.

It is time, the author said, to reevaluate our Purpose of Life, to take charge of the year ahead, to welcome a positive change. "Make changes that result in more positive outcomes," one paragraph said, and that is one thing I have been considering for a while. I have decided I will no longer try to spring nice surprises on my wife, because they just don't work out.

Cindy and I have different likes and dislikes at times. She is a water/beach person while I'm a ballpark guy. We can be driving down the interstate and I'll see a lake up ahead and all I say is, "Water" and she comes to attention and pictures herself swimming, skiing or sunbathing, I guess. I just keep driving. But at the

same time I can look on the other side of the road and see a baseball or softball complex and what I really want to do is pull into the parking lot and take a walk around one of the infields.

Or maybe all of them.

With this water stuff in mind, one year I decided to take Cindy on a surprise visit to a waterfall. I know she loves them and I saw photos of one in a state park, and the accompanying information said it was easy to get to. So I told Cindy to pack some walking shoes for an overnight trip, and the next morning we headed out for the beautiful and easy-to-get-to waterfall.

It was easy to get to ... if you're a mountain goat. And apparently there is a waterfall season of which I was unaware. I think we were there in August, and I recall a park employee encouraging us to take plenty of water with us as we went down the side of a mountain in order to see the water. About halfway down we stopped for a rest and my wife, all sweaty and red-faced, looked at me with a frown and said, "I've seen this movie. If one of your old girlfriends is waiting for us at the bottom, I know I'm not making it out of this alive."

There was no old flame there when we

finally hit the canyon and saw a drizzle of water spilling over the mountaintop. It is better to go in the springtime, I learned, and even though it wasn't this roaring rush of water it was still pretty and soon we started the trip back up the mountain on the "easy steps" at our disposal. The steps were fine -- for a giant, requiring me to climb up first and then pull Cindy up behind me ... all the way up, in the August heat. We survived but looked like two people rescued from a burning building.

Once back in civilization, we entered a shop that sold soft drinks and pastries and when I prepared to pay, I found I had sweated all the way through my billfold. I handed the person behind the counter a pair of slimy wet bills and he looked at me as if he might say, "Nah, that's okay. These are on the house," but instead he took them from me using only his thumb and index finger, and placed them on the counter beside the register.

I considered that outing pretty much a failure but made mental notes in case I ever wanted to try being nice again.

It happened on a trip to New Mexico for Cindy to look at some alien stuff. I read up on the area and learned there was a waterfall nearby, so after we examined

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alien aircraft and the like I headed out to the countryside. We followed a highway which soon turned into more or less a goat path, arriving at a sign that said, "Waterfall Closed For Repairs." Repairs? How do you break a waterfall?

Undeterred, I kept driving. I figured even if the waterfall was broken, there would still be some water. Maybe it would be going skyward instead of falling to the ground, but there would be water. There wasn't. No way to get close enough to even see where the water was supposed to be, much less get a photo of my wife with the cascade in the background. So we just wound our way back out of the isolated site, hoping not to be abducted by aliens on our return.

Last month I had a function to attend in Ranger, Texas, the home of my old college ballplaying days. Cindy said since we were in Texas, why not just drive on down to Galveston and let her get some beach time, since we hadn't done that in a while. I agreed but when we left home

the temperature was in the high 60s, and as soon as we crossed over into Texas it was 48. Then it got worse, much colder, and the Galveston forecast for the next several days showed a 100 percent chance of rain with temperatures in the 30s. Thank goodness Cindy made a grownup decision and suggested we head back home instead of spending a lot of money just to sit in a room and watch it rain.

So, as I look back on the year and even years past, I realize I'm not very good at being nice and I can say with great confidence you don't want my help when planning a surprise for a loved one.



Just for you, Cindy

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# Meet the Rouge Professionals!

**Brittany Murray:**  
Esthetician / Owner of Rouge



"I have been an Esthetician for 12 years here in Paragould and have currently taken on a new role as Regional Educator of Eminence Organics. I love teaching others the importance of skincare and Eminence products while also seeing my long-term clients here at Rouge!"

**Shawnda Weaver:**  
Master Massage Therapist /  
Owner of Rouge



"I'm a master massage therapist and have been voted the best in Paragould the last 9 years. I specialize in medical deep tissue massage therapy."

**Catherine Smith:**  
Esthetician / Spa Manager



"I have been in the Esthetics industry for 2 years now! I specialize in facial skincare, lash lifting, and waxing (facial, Brazilian, and under arm)."

**Candace Berry:**  
Cosmetologist



"I have been doing hair for 21 years! My favorite services that I offer are haircuts and colors, hair extensions, lash extensions."

**Tish Whitley Lemmons:**  
Cosmetologist/Manicurist



"I have been a cosmetologist for 18 years and loved every second! I love helping others feel and look their best!"

**Amanda Whitt:**  
Cosmetologist



"I've been in the beauty industry for 19 years! My favorite services that I offer would have to be creating custom colors and lash extensions."

**Traci Anderson:**  
Massage Therapist



"I am new to the massage industry and absolutely love it! My most favored techniques are hips, legs, and feet. I love to perform deep tissue and myofascial release."

**Atley Robertson:**  
Cosmetologist



"I have loved being in the beauty industry and being able to meet all of my amazing clients! My services include: blondes, hair coloring, glam makeup, formal hairstyling, & hand tied extensions. I will soon be adding Permanent Cosmetics to my services!"

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# NEA BAPTIST CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

NEA Baptist Hospital hosted its 10th annual Christmas Tree Lighting in front of the hospital entrance, featuring Arkansas State University Chancellor Todd Shields delivering the reading of *"The Night Before Christmas."*

Pastor Jared Pickney from The Crossing church provided the nativity story, the Family Crisis Center made a presentation, and there were also pictures made with Santa.

Maggie Frakes led in singing Christmas carols, and everyone enjoyed Christmas themed refreshments.

Attendees were encouraged to bring diapers, pull-ups, white bath towels, or small throw blankets which will benefit the Family Crisis Center.

NEA Baptist thanks all participants and those who attended.

For more information about NEA Baptist, call 870-936-1000 or visit [www.neabaptist.com](http://www.neabaptist.com).



Photos by Nicole Frakes



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# SOUPER SUNDAY PASTARIA 49 WINS COMPETITION!



Habitat for Humanity of Greater Jonesboro’s annual Souper Sunday fundraiser was back in person this year, offering the community twenty soups to enjoy and vote on. First-time competitor Pastaria 49, with its Italian Tomato with Rosemary, Croutons, and Pecorino Cheese Soup, earned the most votes, making it the winner.

“Habitat for Humanity’s mission is to build homes, community and hope,” said, Micheal Sullivan, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Jonesboro. “For the past 12 years Habitat has brought the community together to enjoy a delicious soup lunch, all while supporting affordable housing needs in Jonesboro. This event would not be possible without the support of the local restaurants, volunteers, and the community.”

Souper Sunday gives participants the opportunity to sample unlimited soup and then vote for their favorites with the winning

restaurant being awarded the coveted Ladle Trophy. Along with soup, many restaurants donated bread and the Craighead County Extension Homemakers Club donated homemade desserts.

The coveted ladle trophy was presented to Pastaria 49 co-owner and executive chef, Dana Lamal. The traveling trophy will call Pastaria 49 home until the next Souper Sunday, scheduled for the first Sunday in November 2023. Pastaria 49 is located at 1320 Red Wolf Boulevard, Unit A in Jonesboro.

The \$22,000 raised will help support five homeowner repair projects in the new year. Applications are currently available for homeowners in Jonesboro who have a need for work to be done.

For more information on Habitat for Humanity of Greater Jonesboro, Souper Sunday, or the Repair Program, visit its website at [www.JonesboroHabitat.com](http://www.JonesboroHabitat.com).



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Sarah Akin and Linda Lunde, representing Altrusa, serving up the soup.



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# EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS CROW'S NEST FARMS

Richard Brummett



Kimberly Dale had a tract of land she wasn't certain what to do with but is glad today she listened to the suggestion made by an acquaintance. It was a friend in Memphis who brought up the possibility of starting a Christmas tree farm and then it was Kimberly who said, "A Christmas tree farm?" But now, some six years later, here she is with a growing investment.

The Crow's Nest Farms, located at 3607 Greene 628 Road in Paragould just north of Fairview Baptist Church, offers trees to cut on your own, or for pick up. "We've got saws to hand out or little chainsaws they can use if they want to cut their own," Kimberly said, "or we'll cut it."

Just as important as what it offers, though, is what The Crow's Nest represents. Kimberly's brother, Chris Walker, died of cancer at 27 when she was 23 and still in law school. A nature lover, Chris' nickname among friends and loved ones was Crow and it somehow seemed fitting to work that into the business.

"I was kind of looking for some fun little name," Kimberly said, "and he was always into



nature and the outdoors ... a nature lover. So it became The Crow's Nest. It's not a sad story; it is what it is. Now we're in the second year of selling at the farm. The first, in 2020, we had a commercial tent and worked out of that. We had no pines, just firs bought from North Carolina. That was also the first year of Covid, so everything was different then.

"Now we have 100-120 pines ready for cutting. Some others are one-and-a-half, some a half-year old. We plant them as seedlings. It takes usually about 5-7 years for them to be ready to cut down. We got lucky last year and probably were able to sell 50 that were only four years old."

Kimberly said in addition to the homegrown pines the farm also has a limited supply of the Fraser firs and a

few others to choose from, but she is quick to point out "it takes a village out here for sure, because I do not have a green thumb. I can't even keep lettuce in my refrigerator. If anything, it's glory to someone else's intervention, to what they can do. Seth Dearing is out here all year and he's a blessing, and I have friends who unfortunately answer their phones and hear me ask if they can come out here and help with something ... and they do.

"But if God can keep a Christmas tree alive out here, it's not me, it's Him. He also knows the right amount of sunshine, the right amount of rain."

The setting is beautiful and relaxing, enhanced by a fire pit that encourages gathering and conversing, and there are a number of Nigerian Dwarf goats that will often be available and seeking petting. "It's fun out here," Kimberly said. "You can come out and listen to Christmas music, sit around a campfire. And it smells wonderful! You can see a lot of people, come to pet the goats ... and there's FREE hot chocolate.

We'll even have a VRBO coming in January. It's an experience."

The gift shop is home to ornaments, sweet treats, candles, wreaths and table top decor, just to mention a few of the items available. A list of all The Crow's Nest Farms has to offer, including photo opportunities and gift shop merchandise, can be found at its website, [www.crowsnestfarms.com](http://www.crowsnestfarms.com). One can also find there the days and times of operation in order to look for that special tree.

"I think Chris definitely would be very proud that it's a homage to nature," Kimberly said. "The Crow's Nest ... since he was such a lover of nature. It's a really nice place to be."



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# IT'S SHOPPING SEASON - GIFTS FOR THE HUNTER AND FISHERMAN

BY CHUCK LONG



**CHUCK LONG**  
Avid Outdoorsman  
Retired Outdoor Educator

As a youngster I always looked forward to Christmas. Much like other children in the '70s, I would sit down with numerous catalogs and dog ear pages and make lists. Unlike most children, my lists did not come from the Sears catalog, but from the pages of various vendors of outdoor products. Cabela's, Wing Supply and Bass Pro catalogs were favorites, as well as the classified ads in the back of magazines like *Field and Stream*, *Outdoor Life* and *Fur, Fish and Game*. I would also drop hints about gear that could be found at the local stores like Gibson's, Walmart or Homestead. The lists were way too long but I hoped the shoppers would use those lists for at least a couple of items to fill a stocking or take a place under the tree.

Nowadays, my holiday lists are much shorter and most material items have been replaced with hopes of good meals, time with family and friends and a relaxing holiday experience. And most outdoorsmen in my age class are like myself. Christmas is more about family time, outdoors time and overall blessings of another year than about material things.

This attitude does often put those looking to purchase gifts for their outdoorsman into a quandary of what to buy to fill their needs. There might not be a list like we had as children, so for those who might be looking for ideas, here are a few things that might fit the needs of the hunter or fisherman in your life.

Let's start small with some ideas for the

stocking. One thing I have grown to like very much is air activated handwarmers. These little packages of warmth help me stay on the deer stand longer and are great to have in the duck blind or fishing boat as well. Another great option would be batteries for the various electronics that fill the sportsmen's backpack. Much of the electronics run on AA or AAA, but there are exceptions so a little research here would insure the proper purchase. There is nothing wrong with the obligatory apple or orange in the stocking, but chocolate, jerky and snack cakes will truly warm a hunter's heart. Other great stocking ideas might be trail marking tape, rope and waterproof matches or a waterproof lighter.

A step above the stocking gifts would be some basic essential items for a day in the outdoors. Most outdoorsmen always enjoy a new flashlight or headlamp. Check out the lumen rating and look for something around 200 or more to help light up the path when tracking a deer or finding that duck hole. Though it is a very common holiday gift, good socks are of vital importance. Personally, I have become a huge fan of merino wool socks. They are a little more pricey but good brands are very durable and provide good warmth. Knives are always a great gift as well. A knife with an interchangeable blade is a great idea for any outdoorsman.

Clothing items are always a hit, especially when they fill a specific need. Baselayers have come a long from the waffle cotton designs of yesteryear and are an essential part of staying warm. Baselayers can be

somewhat expensive, but they are one item that fits the bill "you get what you pay for." Much like the socks, I like merino wool for this use. Some folks have an issue with wool on the skin but wool does provide a variety of benefits. Warmth to bulk ratio as well as warmth when wet are two great benefits, as well as the ability of wool to naturally inhibit body odor.

Outer clothing layers can also fill the bill of an excellent gift. Most of those who enjoy the outdoors are looking for something that is windproof, will shed some water and is not overly bulky. There is a vast amount of options in this category, so do a little research and cross that with possible uses to find likely products. One note in the clothing department: Be sure to check for a preferred camo pattern! This could make or break the item's being the perfect gift.

Electronics have become an important part of the outdoors endeavors of many, and there are loads of gifts in this area that would make for a happy Christmas morning. Game cameras are one such item and there is a wide array of cameras on the market. There are basic cameras that must be checked to see the images but there are also cellular game cameras that send images directly to a linked phone. This is a great option if there is good wireless service in the area of use, but usually requires a small monthly data fee. Other electronic options could be a handheld GPS or, for those hunters who stray far from the road, a handheld satellite messenger.



# MCDANIEL WOLFF

— PLLC —

Other gift items might be ammunition (check for proper caliber or gauge), game calls and fishing tackle. Another idea, especially for those who seem to have all the gear, would be a subscription to some type of online service that would be a tool to use during outdoor endeavors. There are a couple of good mapping subscriptions that help with boundaries, public/private ground, and mapping that can be of great benefit. There are also several trip planning services available by subscription that can help with planning that hunt of a lifetime.

If you are shopping for a gift, maybe a few of these ideas will help. If the struggle continues there are always gift cards and cash; it's hard to go wrong with those.

Good luck with the shopping season and I want to wish each of you and yours a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May God bless you and your family during the most wonderful time of the year. Be sure and take a little time this Christmas season and enjoy the outdoors, and I hope to see you out there!



## WELCOMING OUR NEWEST ASSOCIATES!

Northeast Arkansas natives **Trenton Mullins** and **Brittany Webb** have joined our growing team after graduating from two of America's top law schools.

**Trenton Mullins\***, of Trumann, graduated from Arkansas State University and William and Mary Law School, both with high honors. He will complete his LL.M. in Tax Law from The University of Florida next month. Trenton's practice focuses on tax, estate planning and real estate.

**Brittany Webb\*\***, of Jonesboro, graduated from Hendrix College and the American University of Washington College of Law with high honors. Brittany's practice focuses on litigation and administrative law.

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# GREENBRIER HONORS VETERANS

BY MICHELLE SAWYER



**G**reenbrier Facilities is honored to have on the team those who have served in all branches of the Armed Forces.

In celebration of Veterans Day, GBX local plants honored the 70-plus veterans with a number of activities, including a Flag Ceremony conducted by the Paragould High School JROTC along with honors/awards and breakfast.

Three employees were presented with a special honor, RC Gates, Selvie Brumble and Michael Turpin. GBX thanks every person in the community who has sacrificed their time for our country and freedom, and for the ones who continue to serve.



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# MAGICAL CHRISTMAS TINSEL IN THE TREES



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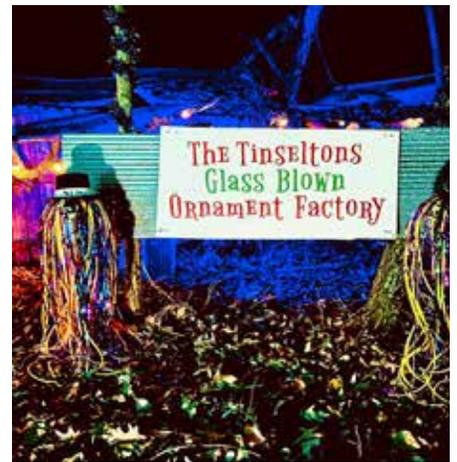
Enjoy an immersive nighttime walk through the woods featuring dynamic, holiday-inspired lighting displays and creative art installations, bringing the spirit of the forest to life with lights, sounds of the holidays, and sensory effects in a captivating, family-friendly experience.

Tinsel in the Trees will be open in the evening hours when the lights are shining at their brightest.

And here's a fun fact ... this special festive event is created with NO RUNNING ELECTRICITY! This allows the forest to be left as we found it when the season is complete.

Follow Tinsel in the Trees on Facebook. Since this is an outdoor event, weather can cause delays and closings which will be posted. Gates open at 6:45 p.m. starting December 2nd and from 7-8 every Friday and Saturday in December, and open Christmas night!

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# BARE BONES CHRISTMAS SENATH SKELLIES FOR ST. JUDE

A Halloween theme has spilled over into the Christmas season with the Senath Skellies in Southeast Missouri.

Yenifer Sanchez of Senath is running a fundraiser in support of St. Jude Research Hospital, inviting guests to drop by her house that she says has been "a huge hit in town. We have visitors every night, families that come by to check out the decorations. The skeletons are repositioned every few days to do goofy things ... you can find us on Facebook by searching my name: Yenifer Sanchez."

Yenifer posted on Facebook her invitation to the community to stop by to see the skeletons featured in a Christmas lights display for the first time in November, and for children to grab a treat. After the post, a local family donated all the Christmas hats for the skeletons and a local business provided hot chocolate and donuts during the fundraising event. The kids, she said, loved seeing the display light up and taking pictures with the skeletons.

So far, between the Halloween and Christmas drives, organizers have raised \$865 to donate to St. Jude.



*Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year!*



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# Lessons LEARNED IN Motherhood

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

**M**y kid loves to shop. “I want that” and “I need that” are two phrases I hear every time we go into a store. Sometimes she doesn’t even speak, she just picks up an item and throws it into the shopping cart.

But on a recent girls’ day with my grandmother, Eva did something new. She zeroed in on a Caboodle and asked what it was. My grandma explained it was for makeup, which Eva certainly did not need. Eva still picked it up, turned around to the shopping cart and stated, “We get it for Mama. Mama needs it.”

My daughter was insistent on picking something out for me. And later in

that same shopping trip, when we told her that Grandma needed a new purse, she strutted down the aisles and picked one out.

We took her to the toy aisle and spent goodness knows how long touching every one. What did she pick out to take home? A coloring book. She not only wanted to give special things to her family but chose the simplest item for herself. It was such an ooey-goey moment that my heart nearly burst.

While I’m usually not this sappy of a person, I couldn’t help but think how fitting it was that this close to the holidays, my daughter was focused on giving to others. She knew I had makeup and knew it needed a place to go. And she wanted

to help solve that problem. I couldn’t help but be proud. I have always hoped to raise my children to be kind and giving in a world that needs it so much.

Seeing the way Eva was ready to help someone, I can’t wait to show her how we can bring some holiday joy to other families. I’ve adopted two kids from angel trees and originally planned on shopping alone, but something tells me taking my daughter will be a good life lesson. And who knows, she may even surprise me and truly understand what it is we are doing.

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*





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# PARAGOULD HIGH SCHOOL BAND LUCKY NUMBER 7

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE



On October 31, the Paragould Pride Band hit the field at War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock and walked away with its seventh state championship.

“We were the Class 5A state champions for the seventh year in a row,” director Richie Williams said. “We are the undefeated state champs.”

The competition is held through the Arkansas School Band and Orchestra Association and this year’s win adds to a long list for Williams and his students.

“Since 2008, my first year at Paragould, the Paragould Pride Marching Band has now won 50 grand championships at various marching contests throughout Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri, Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Indiana, and New York,” Williams said.

Aside from 15 years of teaching, Williams has been part of the PHS family for over 30 years as either a student, staff member, or director. He said winning the state championship for the seventh time feels “simply amazing.”

“To have your name called out as the overall state champions is a very special feeling that never gets old,” he added.

Williams and his students put in just as much hard work as they always do, but this year was even more special due to 80 percent of the band being made up of ninth and tenth graders. Williams said the students and staff refused to let that be an excuse or roadblock. “Extra sectionals and rehearsals were had to ensure the band was ready for contests. The staff put in extra planning sessions to maximize our rehearsal time,” he said.

Aside from the youth of the members, total numbers of students remain down due to Covid. This year’s band featured 110 performers and 10 additional runners, but pre-Covid numbers usually ran in the 150-170 range. That didn’t cause a setback, however, and numbers are bouncing back with seventh and eighth grade members.

The 2022 production, “DELTA,” followed the exploration of Greek gods Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades. The delta triangle was used throughout the show in drill formations, backdrops, and a large stage prop that enclosed the front ensemble in the middle of the field. The uniforms featured yellow, blue, and red capes and even Greek headpieces resembling leaves. Williams said the show was some of the students’ favorite production yet, and they are all “super proud and excited to have put together such a worthwhile and meaningful show.”

Even though the 2022 marching season has just wound down, Williams already has his eye on the prize for next year. “Once



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that bar has been set it becomes the gold standard," he said. "The road never gets easier, and each year brings its own set of challenges, but the students and staff are always up to the challenge. After a year that many thought our youth would make us vulnerable and thought the Pride was down, these students worked their tails off to prove to everyone why we are 'Arkansas' Best in Sight and Sound.'"

Williams said his long-term goals over the next five years include returning the program to membership record numbers from before Covid and returning to the Bands of America Grand National Championships in Indianapolis, IN, and making the semifinals. He also has plans to march in the Rose Bowl or an inauguration parade and wants to continue traveling

throughout the country to compete and make finals at various Bands of America Regional Championships.



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## HOW TO SURVIVE THE HOLIDAY BUSINESS RECEPTION

The holiday season is here and many people will be attending a holiday business reception or a holiday office party. If you are planning to go to a holiday business reception, or to a holiday office party do you:

- A. Find this is the perfect time to complain about work?
- B. Over eat and drink. Why not, it's free?
- C. Amaze others with your keen fashion sense. You look "ma - ve - los" wearing a lampshade on your head.
- D. Conduct yourself in a professional manner.

If you answered (D.) "Conduct yourself in a professional manner," you win the door prize.

During the holiday season many businesses host a holiday get together or a holiday office party.

An office party is generally planned to foster good will, visit with colleagues, and mix business with pleasure. It is very different from a social event with your nearest and dearest friends. Your actions at an office party may greatly influence your future with the company.

To make a positive impression at your holiday office party, here are some quick tips from the experts.

- **DO** make certain you understand the invitation. For example: Is the party to be casual or dressy? Is the party limited to just the employees, or can you bring a guest or your spouse? Is the party an adult event, or are children invited?
- **DO** remember your manners.
- **DO** greet your host upon arriving.
- **DO** try to talk about things other than business.
- **DO** remember to thank your host when you leave the party.

- **DON'T** underestimate the importance of the holiday office party. If you are supposed to be there, then by all means show up! Your boss expects you to attend the party.

(Remember the part about fostering good will, visiting with colleagues, and mixing business with pleasure.) If you are unable to attend, then let your host or boss know in plenty of time.

- **DON'T** eat or drink too much.
- **DON'T** complain about work.
- **DON'T** try to kiss everyone under the mistletoe.
- **DON'T** stay with just your group of friends. Visit with others and introduce yourself to those you don't know.
- **DON'T** forget to dress professionally or in an appropriate manner. Inappropriate clothing, at the office party, can result in your feeling or looking out of place. Ask about the dress code if you are unsure as to what to wear.
- **DON'T** forget that your boss may be observing your behavior.

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Remember, your boss may be your Santa Claus. Your Christmas present might be: A Raise, A Promotion, A Great Assignment, or A Welcoming Work Environment. Don't let a lampshade get in your way!

### QUOTE OF THE DAY:

*"CHRISTMAS BEGINS ABOUT THE FIRST OF DECEMBER WITH AN OFFICE PARTY AND ENDS WHEN YOU FINALLY REALIZE WHAT YOU SPENT, AROUND APRIL FIFTEENTH OF THE NEXT YEAR."*  
- P.J. O'ROURKE



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](mailto:manners@paragould.net).

An advertisement for the Arkansas Children's Hospital Jonesboro Clinic. The top left shows a photograph of the clinic building with the hospital's logo and name. The top right features a large '10 YEARS' graphic with a sunburst effect. Below the building photo is a list of specialty care clinics. The bottom right contains the slogan 'KIDS GROW UP FAST. SO DID WE.' and 'CELEBRATING 10 YEARS IN JONESBORO'. At the bottom, there is a yellow bar with the phone number 870-568-8618 and the website archildrens.org/Jonesboro.

**Arkansas Children's Hospital | Jonesboro Clinic**

**10 YEARS**

**Arkansas Children's Hospital | Jonesboro Clinic**

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# WE ALL SHOULD HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

BY AMANDA YATES



When my kids were little, their letters to Santa could run two full pages. Every time they saw a TV ad, it got added to the wish list. The “wants” quickly got out of control. I had to find a way to stop the cycle before I went broke, my house was too full, and my kids were too spoiled. I know I am not alone in this.

It seems so easy in this rich nation of ours to prioritize material things and have an attitude of entitlement even when we aren’t aware of it. The holidays can sometimes make this worse, especially for our children.

All those years ago, I made it a priority to instill in my children an ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE. I wanted them to be thankful and happy for what they had, and I wanted them to be able to recognize the sacrifice needed to provide those things. We had many conversations through the years, and we found many hands-on ways to practice gratitude and generosity. If you are looking for some ideas to increase the awareness of thankfulness, here are some that worked great for us.

**THANKSGIVING CHAIN.** On Thanksgiving night, gather around the table to talk about the meaning of thankfulness. Have construction paper, scissors, a marker, and a stapler handy. Cut the paper into even strips and count out the number of strips to equal

the days until Christmas. Go around the table and have everyone list what they are thankful for until all links are used. Staple the links together and hang in a prominent location. Every morning have your child pull off the bottom link and have a short discussion about what it says and why we are thankful for it. You start their day with gratitude. This also gives them a visual for the Christmas countdown as the links disappear.

**ANGEL TREE GIFTS.** As children get older, have them help you pick out an angel tree child needing help with Christmas. Let them go shopping with you and talk about how excited the recipient will be to get the gifts. In some cases, you may even know a friend or classmate in need and can make it more personal. Letting children generously give opens their hearts up to gratitude and brings more joy than getting ever could.

**SOUP KITCHENS AND SHELTERS.** Volunteering at a shelter is the ultimate gift of humility, giving up a holiday free day to donate your time completely to those in need. Most kids don’t realize such a need exists. Being able to serve in a hands-on manner benefits both the kids and those being served.

**RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS.** Sometimes our giving spirit gives out shortly after the holidays. This is a way to keep it in focus all year. On a notebook paper, start a column with the letters of the alphabet. Continue the column until you have 52 lines for each week of the year (there will be duplicate letters). Have the family work together to fill in the lines with something you are thankful for that starts with each letter and an action plan for each week. For example, “A” might be aunt, so everyone would text or send nice messages to your aunt on the first week. “B” might be bread. So, on the second week make homemade bread to give away. “C” might be coffee. So, on the third week, you buy someone coffee. Continue this throughout the year to keep the grateful and generous attitudes forefront.

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# POLLY HYDE HAPPY NUMBER 90



Family and friends gathered in November at the Paragould Community Center for the 90th birthday celebration for Polly Hyde. The event included live music, refreshments, and lots of stories. Over 150 people attended, including some from as far away as Texas and Idaho.





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# SPREADING MORE THAN CHRISTMAS CHEER SANTA CAUSE

Photo by Jessica Rosa, Holiday Photo Magic



Steve Southard says when he pulls on his red Santa suit, "I turn into a different person ... I hope for the better," he added with a laugh, referring to his highly respected work as Santa Claus for the holidays.

However, for him and his wife Suzanne, the satisfying part of the holiday interaction with others is actually the Santa Cause, what he terms as a God-given calling to spread love. "The cause," he

explained, "is a gift God has given us to share Jesus Christ and God's love -- and to help charity."

The Southards can be seen all over the Northeast Arkansas area at this time of year, decked out as Mr. and Mrs. Claus and bringing joy to young and old alike. They've made appearances at Christmas Tree Lightings for both NEA Baptist and St. Bernards hospitals, they've done parades and photo shoots, been the stars at Santa's North Pole in Jonesboro and even booked home visits.

A triple bypass earlier in the year slowed Steve down some, but he still has a soft spot for the family house calls. "I enjoy the personal touch," he said. "On the home visits with families, she goes in first as Mrs. Claus and warms the kids up. She sings some songs, reads a book and doesn't tell them Santa's outside. When they're all settled, Santa comes in and I tell them stories about Christmas characters and tell some jokes -- mine are pretty corny -- and get photos made with them. They ask Christmas questions, pretty routine stuff. I end



the party with the story of Jesus' birth. I always ask the parents first if that's okay to do that and I've never been turned down."

While working at Nucor-Yamato Steel in Blytheville, Steve got involved with the Ignite program "where they handed out toys and food to the needy. Nucor was real supportive and the Santa thing just sort of grew from that. That's how I got started. I used to give almost every dime I made to charity; now I have to keep some back because it's become so expensive to do it, but we can still give most of it back to charity. I'm real proud of that. My job enables me to do it. Now I'm booked up a year in advance."

The reward for Steve comes from two directions. First, dealing with the loss of his 22-year-old son who died in 2010 "left a real hole in my heart. Doing Santa helped me get back to that, to helping others" and provides a source for personal healing. And another surfaces "when a child looks Santa in the eyes and believes. It will melt your heart. It's amazing. It's looking at innocence and love."

Steve called the Santa Cause "a very emotional job. Some of the kids you meet are happy, happy and some are really sad. Kids ask tough questions sometimes about family matters that I can't have an answer to. You get them to the best spot you can; you try to move that needle. Then there's the happy side to it. It's an emotional adventure. Lots of times when I'm at one of the homes, when I'm done adults will say, 'Did that really just happen?' And with all the video today, you're a performer the whole time. That's a little more challenging. You've got to be real careful. I pride myself in not putting Santa in a bad light."

Steve said he couldn't manage the operation without his sidekick, Suzanne. As Mrs. Claus she is often the pacesetter, calming down a crying child in order to set up a photo op or comforting those who are uncertain about climbing into Santa's lap. "I try to stay with it until we get at least one good picture," he said. "My wife and I enjoy it and she helps so much and gives so much support. In fact, she is the one who said, 'Do it' when I was thinking about this whole thing. I could not do it at the level I do without her. Mrs. Claus adds so much to it. If a little one is crying it might go to Mrs. Claus first and she works her magic, and then she can hand it over to me."

It's not only the little ones who get joy out of a Mr. and Mrs. Claus appearance. The Southards' faces are painted with smiles just as often as are those of the guests. "It cheers me up, for sure," Steve said. "This time of year is pretty special for us. It's a time to remember Jesus, and the birth of Jesus, and to share what Christmas is all about."



# 2022 DOWNTOWN JONESBORO VETERANS DAY PARADE



Downtown Jonesboro hosted its annual Veterans Day parade in November, with American flags waving in the breeze in tribute to our American heroes and their families.

Parade participants marched down Main Street to the delight of veterans and their family members -- as well as interested onlookers -- with the crowd lining the street and waving in support to the parade entries.

Following the procession a ceremony with noted guest speakers was held. Jonesboro Mayor Harold Copenhaver, Craighead County Judge Marvin Day, U.S. Representative Rick Crawford and State Representative Johnny Rye all addressed the crowd with words of thanks and support.

The keynote address was given by VFW Department Commander Jeffrey Byrd, and some of the veterans in attendance indicated the parade organizers' efforts do not go unnoticed. "It's great. Every year we celebrate our Veterans Day, and it means a lot to me and a lot of other people," one former serviceman commented.

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Photography by Brandon Carter of City of Jonesboro

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# LIVING A Better Story

BY JARED PICKNEY

Christians around the world are celebrating the Advent season. Advent is a time of waiting. And all of us, no matter who you are or where you come from, are waiting. Some of us are waiting for peace. Others are waiting for healing. Some are waiting for a job. Others are waiting for a romantic relationship to begin. We are all, in the words of John Mayer, waiting for the world to change. And oftentimes, it feels like we are waiting in the dark.

But this is where Advent begins. The season of Advent always begins in the dark, but it does not end there. In the words of the prophet Isaiah in reference to the birth of Jesus, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." Or in the words of John in his Gospel, when Jesus became flesh, light shined into the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

This is the good news of Advent, that God works in the dark. And if God works in the dark, life is possible when it is dark.

Life is filled with problems and pain, difficulties and disappointments, and therefore, some of you feel like you are sitting in darkness right now. If this is where you find yourself, be encouraged! The darkness you feel today will

not have the last word. The anxiety you feel today will not have the last word. The uncertainty you feel today will not have the last word. Why? Because the light has shined into the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

In the words of Wendell Berry in reference to the Advent season, "It gets darker and darker and darker and then Jesus is born." Some of you think because it is so dark God must be so far. When we celebrate Advent we remember that the darker it gets the closer God's coming is. So don't lose heart. Place your hope in Jesus, even if darkness is all you can see.

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# HAPPY HECTIC HOLIDAYS

BY KATIE COLLINS



a whole thing about why you're still single. Go ahead and wow them (and any potential future spouse!) with this quick and easy Chocolate Chess Pie.

Simple ingredients, easy prep, and best of all, it's delicious. Your snarky sister-in-law will

It's the holiday season, as the song says, and we're all running around trying to shop, wrap gifts, organize parties, bake ... oh - did you forget that you were supposed to bake something to take to the family get-together?

You know you'd better actually bake it yourself or that one aunt or cousin will never let you hear the end of it and then it's

pick on this year, because you're going to win the holidays with this pie. Whether you decide to share the recipe with them is up to you!

Here's wishing you a happy holiday season, with visions of Chocolate Chess Pie dancing in your heads.

## Chocolate Chess Pie

### Directions:

- 1) Heat oven to 350 degrees.
- 2) If using a frozen pie crust, let it thaw for about 10 minutes while the oven is preheating. If using a refrigerated or homemade pie crust, place it in your pie pan, no need to thaw.
- 3) Bake the pie crust for 10 minutes, take it out of the oven and let it cool for 10 minutes.
- 4) Combine the sugar, butter, and eggs and mix with an electric mixer until fully combined.
- 5) Add cocoa powder, evaporated milk, vanilla extract, and salt and mix again until ingredients are fully incorporated and the mixture is smooth.
- 6) Pour pie filling into crust and bake for 30 minutes or until the top is set.
- 7) Let cool completely on the counter, then store in the refrigerator. Slice and serve plain or with whipped cream.

Makes 1 Pie  
Serves 8 people

### Ingredients:

- 1 uncooked pie crust (refrigerated or frozen pre-made or homemade)
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 Tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 4 Tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2/3 cup evaporated milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Whipped cream (optional)



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# MERRY CHRISTMAS 2022!

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A KID GROWING UP IN THE 1960S



BY JOEL PHILHOURS

**B**efore we get into the “why, when I was a kid” cost comparisons, let’s dive into a few categories of Christmas Spending.

### 2022 American Christmas Spending

We will spend \$1,000 this year.  
65% of this spending will be on gifts.  
We will spend \$350 on decorations, food, and drink.

When we look at the percentages of Americans buying gifts for family, friends, and coworkers over the last 15 years or so, the proportion of Americans purchasing gifts for family has remained largely unchanged. However, the number of people purchasing holiday gifts for friends is down 12%, while purchasing for coworkers has dropped from 39% in 2004 to 30% in 2021. Family members continue to get stuff but friends and coworkers are missing out at a higher rate.

### How Do Americans Compare to Other Countries in the World in Gift Spending?

Country	Average Spend
Lebanon	\$1,800
Canada	\$1,700
France	\$1,500
America	\$1,000
Mexico	\$960
United Kingdom	\$780
Philippines	\$740
India	\$100

Men spend 10% more than women on holiday purchases.  
The highest spenders are aged 45-54.  
Gift cards are the most popular present to receive.  
45% of us begin shopping in October.  
60% of us now shop online.

### Breakdown of Average Christmas Spending by Gift Recipient

Year	Family	Friends	Coworkers
2004	\$405	\$71	\$22
2007	\$434	\$83	\$21
2010	\$411	\$75	\$19
2013	\$432	\$75	\$25
2016	\$486	\$81	\$26
2019	\$501	\$84	\$35
2021	\$514	\$79	\$25

Yes, America loves buying, giving, and receiving gifts at Christmas time, and annual Christmas spending budgets appear to support this statement. But this increase isn’t all based on the rise of the “spirit of giving.” Let’s take a look at the history of the continuous increase in the “cost of living” indices from 1960 through today. Why this time period? Because this time period represents 95% of my time on Earth, and I remember most of it.

One dollar in 1960 is equivalent in purchasing power to about \$10.07 today, an increase of \$9.07 over 62 years. The dollar had an average inflation rate of 3.80% per year between 1960 and today, producing a cumulative price increase of 906.80%. This means that today’s prices are 10.07 times higher than average prices since 1960,



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according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer price index. A dollar today only buys 9.930% of what it could buy back then. In other words, a \$1 bill, 62 years later, is worth a dime.

Enough of the gloom and doom of economics. Let's look at the toys kids wanted 60+ years ago and the toys that created the fights in the aisles of Walmart on Black Friday 2022.

1960's – Top 10

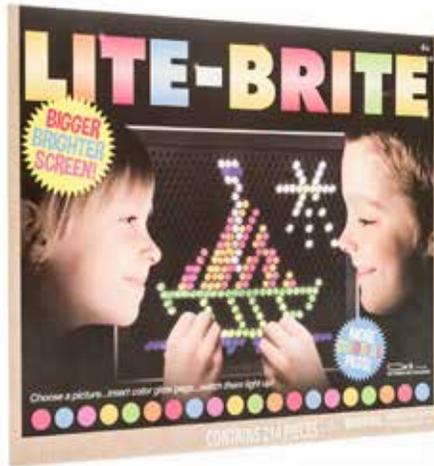
- Chatty Cathy
- Ken Doll
- Barbie's Dream House
- Easy-Bake Oven
- G.I. Joe Doll (IT WAS NOT A DOLL!!!)
- Wham-O Super Ball
- Suzy Homemaker
- Lite-Brite
- Hot Wheels
- Flatsy Dolls

2000's – Top 10

- Razor Scooter (2000)
- iPod (2001)
- Fidget Spinners (2005)
- Nintendo DS (2004)
- Yu-Gi-Oh! Cards (2002)
- Star Wars Force Fx Lightsaber (2004)
- Heelys – built-in skate shoes (2000)
- Bratz Dolls (2001)
- Harry Potter Nimbus 2000 (2001)
- Bionicle by Lego (2000)

I hope you enjoyed this stroll through multiple views of Christmas gifting – backward and forward, who's in and who's out, and what was hot "back then" '60's and '20's. But let's all remember the greatest gift of all – the gift of God with us. Jesus left his kingdom in Heaven and the glory he had there to take on human flesh (though many on Earth still saw his glory by his grace – John 1:14). This alone would have been enough to make him the most generous person to ever walk on Earth. The first chapter of the book of John tells us that Jesus came to be God with us. He was with God in the beginning. He was God from the beginning (John 1:1). Everything was created through Him, and life and light belong to Him. He came to Earth to give that light to us (John 1:9).

Merry Christmas, Northeast Arkansas.



A large advertisement for HealthWear Inc. featuring a festive background with string lights. The text reads "healthWear inc. Scrubs with Style". It includes a "Family Owned SHOP LOCAL &amp; Operated" seal, a "Jonesboro PREMIERE AWARD WINNER 2022" star, and a photo of five healthcare workers in scrubs and Santa hats. At the bottom, it provides the address "1320 Red Wolf Blvd. | Jonesboro, AR", phone number "870.336.3016", and website "healthwearinc.com".

# GREATER VISION CHURCH A GREATER VISION CHRISTMAS



BY KAROLINE RISKER

Greater Vision Church is helping make Christmas happen this year, giving out 500 toys -- 300 of which are handmade wooden toys -- to children who would like them. Children can choose between a C130 bomber, a Hum Vee with machine gun, a baby cradle with hearts on the side and end, a jeep, a tractor, or an old-style red truck. There will even be wooden walking penguins set aside for toddlers. The event will take place on Saturday, December 17, from 9-11 a.m. at the church, located at 529 East Court Street.

They will have toys for the first 500 children to arrive; children must be

present to get the toy. The effort is a community event, to be sure "kids are taken care of at Christmas," according to Greater Vision pastor Justin Ethridge. "It's something the church loves to do to give back to the community," he said. "A lot of times during Christmas some kids don't get anything so we want to provide for as much as we can." In addition to the toy, children and their parents can go to the clothing closet, which will be open, as well. The closet has clothes and coats to choose from.

The church will also be giving out hot chocolate to everyone who would like some and there will be a place for taking pictures.

The wooden toys were created by church member Earl Pannel. He made toys last year and has been prepping for several months in anticipation of the event this year. He goes around to construction sites to gather leftover materials and turns them into what he calls imagination toys. "If these are the only toys they get, I hope it's something they really enjoy," he said.

The idea came from a sermon by Pastor Ethridge when he said we are always asking God to do things and it was time to say to God, "What can we do?" Earl said he sat down and prayed. "God said, 'I gave you this, now give it away,'" said Earl. This isn't the first time Earl has given

away the wooden toys. "We took 250 toys to Le Bohner (hospital) and my grandson who has Spina Bifida passed them out in a wheelchair." He works with the help of wife Nancy who stains, does detail work, gives color suggestions, and paints them. "I couldn't do it without her," he said. "She's my right hand."

Earl has always loved woodworking, and while others were making simple projects in a high school shop class, he was constructing tables. He said he has always tinkered with wood and takes his creations to area craft shows. "I've always liked creating," he said. "And we've always had children in our hearts."





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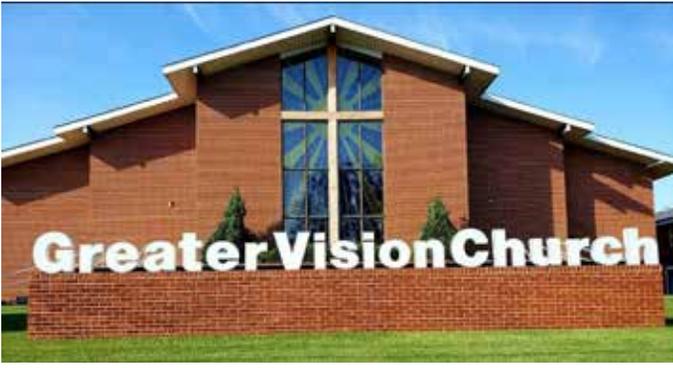


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## Holiday Safety Tips

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

The holidays can be a hectic time. Lots of parties, family visits, and trips. It can be easy to forget certain things, such as, "Did we schedule for boarding?" or "Did you give them their medicine?" Planning ahead for the holiday season is a great way to have one less thing to stress about during such a busy time!

When planning ahead for the holidays, especially if you will need to be overnight traveling without your pets, reserving their boarding will need to come first. Do this early! Boarding facilities fill up fast around the holiday season everywhere. When scheduling boarding, they will need to ensure that your pet's vaccinations are up to date. Note: If you are scheduling the boarding at your vet hospital, then they can usually update their vaccines during their stay – this will save you a trip! However, if they are not boarding at a clinic or hospital – make sure to get the vaccines updated prior to dropping them off to avoid any hiccups to your travel plans. Be sure to get a copy

of the vaccine certificate and their rabies certificate, just so you have everything you need for their boarding stay. Not sure if they are up to date on vaccines? Well, if it's been over a year since they have been to a vet, then they are definitely due for a visit! If it's been less than a year, contact your vet's office to check in.

Now, some do not board, but instead have a pet sitter come to check on their fur babies. I find that having a list prepared for the pet sitter is helpful: A checklist of how often and how much to feed, when to do medications and what medications to give, when they need to potty and how long they like to stay outside or go for a walk (pending weather conditions, of course), and a contact list for how to get in touch with their veterinarian or pet care provider should an emergency arise. It may be a bit nerdy, but it always makes me feel a bit more organized to have a day-by-day checklist -- what to do in the mornings, feedings, medications, walk time; then the same for the evening. If you have multiple pet sitters who are splitting the shifts, this too will make sure they stay on the same page. They check off what they have done so that there is no confusion for the next sitter.

On the other hand, some travel with their pets during the holiday season. This brings us to the section where we discuss how to pack their suitcase. First things first, have their vaccine record and rabies certificate with you. Traveling out of state or by plane/train? You will need to get a health certificate from your veterinarian. This can be scheduled with your veterinarian just before you leave for your trip, but book early to avoid any scheduling issues.

Next, packing for them. I always measure out my pet's food and put it in a plastic baggie for travel so that I have exactly what I need and no more. It's tough to travel with

a huge bag of dog food! Don't forget the medications if applicable – I use a Sunday through Saturday pill sorter and place the meds that I will need for the length of their stay. This, too, will help to get rid of any confusion on whether or not they received their medications! The holidays are busy and I have received countless emergency phone calls because the owner accidentally dosed their pet twice. And by counting them out, you are also ensuring that you have an adequate amount to last for your trip.

I have received numerous calls from panicked owners who ran out of medications and needed it called to their nearest pharmacy. Next, do they need their kennel/bed/blankets or toys? Have those ready to go! Taking a cat? All of the same applies of course, but you might look into disposable litter pans and travel containers for fresh litter. Lastly, do your pets need any anti-stress medications filled for travel? Always try to take care of this in advance to avoid that "Oh no! I forgot to get their anxiety/travel meds" panic button. Many pets stress during travel; always best to be prepared and contact your vet early, especially if they have a prescription. However, if this is their first time to travel, it is definitely a good idea to reach out to your veterinary clinic and find out what can be done if you find your pet does stress with travel or becomes car/motion sick. By doing this, you have a plan of action should a problem arise and you avoid any unnecessary stress during an already very busy time!

I hope this article helps you out with your pets during this holiday season and allows you to avoid any unnecessary complications! I hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a wonderful holiday season! P.S. Don't feed your dogs the turkey or ham bones!

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# COMMUNITY OUTREACH BLACK RIVER TECH

**B**lack River Technical College held a dedication ceremony November 14th at The Armory at BRTC in Piggott. The site will house career and technical certification opportunities for students in Piggott, Corning, Rector and the surrounding communities. Classes will begin in Fall 2023, specifically welding and robotics automation: distribution and logistics.

BRTC President Martin Eggensperger, BRTC Director of Career, Technical, and Concurrent Education Darenda Kersey, Arkansas Office of Skills Development Associate Director Stephanie Issacs, Piggott School District Superintendent Freddie Bowen, and Governor Asa Hutchinson gave commanding speeches about BRTC's presence in Piggott. The Armory at BRTC will give the students in Clay County an upper hand when transitioning to the job market from school.

"We transform lives and enhance the community we serve and we are thrilled to now be able to serve Clay County better than ever," Kersey said about BRTC.

Governor Hutchinson said, "This is a wonderful opportunity for the people of Clay County." He added that one of his main concerns during his time as governor has been growing the scope of educational access across the state. The growth BRTC will bring to Piggott will be exponential for years to come.

The dedication of the armory would not be possible without the donations and legwork of community leaders. The Arkansas Department of Education, represented at the dedication by Secretary Johnny Key and Dr. Ivy Pfeffer, provided a \$350,000 grant to construct a welding lab classroom, as well as buying equipment. The Arkansas Office of Skills Development, represented by Stephanie Issacs, donated \$127,000 for renovations of the armory and robotic/conveyor equipment. The City of Piggott donated labor and materials to install a three-phase transformer.

BRTC has partnered with Fidus Global, Greenbrier, and Hytrol to provide the highest quality training for students in electricity, robotics, industrial automation, controls, and welding. Fidus Global utilized its business partnerships to help BRTC obtain top of the line, current robotics and automation equipment at a discounted rate. Hytrol has provided insight and resources developing and implementing a sophisticated conveyor system, so students can reap the benefits



of cutting-edge training. Greenbrier has committed to providing human resources in the form of welding teachers and industry knowledge to help BRTC curriculum stay at the top.

"BRTC is grateful for all of these outstanding business partners and their commitment to training tomorrow's workforce," said BRTC Vice President Brad Baine.

For more information about the CTC program at The Armory at BRTC, contact Darenda Kersey at (870)248-4185 or by email at [darenda.kersey@blackrivertech.edu](mailto:darenda.kersey@blackrivertech.edu).

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# PET *of the* MONTH

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BY COLBY GEORGE

In June of 2020, my Siberian Husky, Aspen, entered my life when she was only 10 weeks old. Aspen will be 3 years old this coming April. She enjoys her time playing outside. She especially enjoys it when it snows, playing with her older adopted brother, Oakley (an eight-year-old Alaskan Husky), and interacting with our neighbor's dogs.

Aspen is a very vocal dog that loves to sass mouth us and really tell us how it is! She's the type of dog that at 5 o'clock you better have her food in her bowl or you can expect some long, mean stares.

In her spare time, Aspen enjoys thinking she is a cat, sleeping on the back of the couch, making and hiding under a couch pillow fort to sleep in, and cuddling with us anytime she is seeking attention. Aspen really is the best dog and I love her very much.





Want to see your pet featured in Premiere? Submit your pet via our Facebook post each month! Follow NEA Premiere Magazine to stay in the know.

A festive Christmas scene featuring Santa Claus in a red and white suit, Mrs. Claus in a red dress with white fur trim, and several nutcrackers. Santa is holding a scroll with names: Brian, Danny, Devin, Kalle, Wes, and Lizz. The background is a wooden door decorated with holly leaves and red berries.

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NEA'S **PREMIERE** MAGAZINE

*Merry Christmas*  
from our team at MOR Media and  
NEA's Premiere Magazine!

# Christmas TRADITIONS

BY KAROLINE RISKER

Even though I grew up in a big family (I have five sisters) we were small on tradition. When I had my daughter, Hannah, I saw the need not just for tradition, but doing something meaningful that reached back to the generations before us. How did our Norwegian ancestors celebrate Christmas? And, maybe more than that, what can we do to keep the line going and ensure the descendants participate in the things that tie us all together?

Out of that came the now-annual tradition of my sisters, daughter, nephews and niece coming to my home to make lefse, a Norwegian dessert made from potatoes (of course). It's a two-day process and I do one part the Friday before and the rest of the group comes over to do the rest. One person rolls out the dough into a thin, round patty while the next person heats it on the grill. While those two are at work that leaves everyone else free to make sugar cookies and decorate them while they wait for their turn rolling out the lefse and putting it on the pan. When we are all finished, we eat the lefse, pronounce it just like Grandma Newell's (the highest compliment), then grab a candy cane and head out the door to the car which has been lighted up with colored lights,



where we will play Christmas Bingo and we look at the decorated houses and listen to Christmas music.

The tradition of making lefse is a memory from my childhood and every time I get a piece, put butter and sugar on it, roll it up and eat it, I remember my grandmother, an excellent cook and proud Norwegian, and I think of the holidays at her pretty house all lit up and decorated. It makes me remember my aunts and uncles sitting at the table laughing and me and my sisters and cousins sitting at the kid table, hurrying to eat so we could have dessert and then go outside and play in the snow (we lived in Missouri and it

always snowed). It makes me remember a more innocent time in life when we were all together: a happy memory. I hope my nephews and niece look back when they are adults and make lefse in their own homes. I hope when they put the butter and sugar on it and roll it up, they remember me and innocent times and family and love and connection. And I hope their kids do the same.

Some children in families grow up tradition-rich and others just grow up. We reached out to Premiere readers in the hopes they will pass on their tradition ideas to you and you can pick up the mantle and begin what can become sweet



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memories for your family. Every tradition starts somewhere, after all.

Ryan Fisher shared this: "My family does our Christmas on Christmas Eve out in our little cabin in the woods. My dad reads us the Christmas story from the Bible while mom plays 'What Child is This?' on the piano. We share our gifts and each tell something we remember from Christmas past. We then celebrate Jesus' birthday with cake on Christmas day."

Robert Thompson added: "Every year at Christmas the kids in my extended family perform in a short play re-enacting the Christmas story. Different children play the parts of Joseph, Mary, wise men, shepherds, and angels. One of the older kids reads passages from Matthew and Luke. This tradition in my family is over 40 years old. My grandmother used to supply costumes and direct the production, and now my mother (Charlotte Thompson) does it. We do this at my parents' (Bob and Charlotte Thompson) house."

From Abby Baker: "My family does something every Christmas called the 'ball of glory.' Every year we draw a name to

see who gets to design the ball that next year. From there, if your name is drawn you get a year to put together a saran wrap ball of goodies. This can be anything from a pack of pens to \$10 gift cards. Dollar Tree and thrift shops are your best friend. The crazier the better, in our book. Once Christmas has arrived, you bring the ball for everyone to take their turn unwrapping. Sitting in a circle, someone rolls the dice 'til they get a double, while your neighbor is unwrapping the ball as quickly as possible. As you unroll the ball, trinkets and goodies start to fall out. Once your neighbor rolls a double, you must then stop unrolling the ball and collect



your goodies you have won! The trick is you cannot drop the ball on the ground or your turn is over. This game is one of the best; it's not about the five cent pin you get but about the laughter it brings to watch someone struggle to unwrap this ball!

"P.S. - Our family makes sure the ball is big and not so easy to unwrap."

Candace Clouse does this each year: "My sisters and I exchange special ornaments every year with the date on it and we have ornaments from years past to fill an entire tree, which we call our sister trees."

Angela Newby shares what her family does: "My mom's side of the family has a huge Christmas Eve get together. Whoever is the host family for the year writes a poem as their invitation to the event. It's always funny but also gives a nod to our loved ones that have passed away. Everyone waits eagerly until they receive their poem in the mail! We also have a pretty fierce game of Dirty Santa. Family members create alliances to get the gifts they want! Then my family ends the day by attending the 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at First United Methodist Church. I love Christmas Eve!"

A promotional graphic for Ridge Kids Dental. The top half features a group photo of ten staff members (nine women and one man) standing in front of a brick wall. They are wearing green and pink t-shirts with the clinic's logo. Behind them is a large sign that reads "Ridge Kids Dental" in a stylized font, with "General Dentistry &amp; Orthodontics" and "From Toddlers to Teens" written below it. The bottom half of the graphic has a red background. On the left, there is a yellow speech bubble containing the clinic's name and logo, along with the names "John H. Puckett, D.D.S." and "Hayley B. Richardson, D.D.S.". On the right, there is a white holiday message: "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!" flanked by two white laurel wreath icons. At the very bottom, in white text on the red background, it says "SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!" followed by the phone number "870.236.5888" and the address "624 W. Court St., Suite A | Paragould, AR 72450".

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# Wedding Announcement



## Lindsey Massey and Julius Jarosz

Lindsey Massey of Pocahontas and Julius Jarosz of Calico Rock are happy to announce their marriage. Lindsey and Julius held their wedding October 8th, 2022, at Woodland Weddings in Paragould.

The bride's mother is Betty Massey. The groom's parents are Will and Sue Jarosz.

Photography by Kayla Krippendorf-McDaniel

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Centennial Park Lighting	December 1
Holiday Traditions & Market	December 3
Christmas Parade	December 6
Enchanting Night	December 8
Cocoa Crawl	December 10







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# SAVE THE DATE DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD EVENTS



*Dec 1st*

Christmas Tree Lighting  
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6pm-8pm



*Dec 3rd-4th*

The Nutcracker  
Elite Performing Arts  
Collins Theatre  
6:30pm (Dec 3rd)  
2:30pm (Dec 4th)



*Dec 6th*

Christmas Parade  
All of Downtown Paragould  
7pm



*Dec 8th*

Enchanting Night  
Horse Carriage Rides  
Station Park  
4pm-8pm



*Dec 10th*

Cocoa Crawl  
All of Downtown Paragould  
2pm-6pm



*Dec 20th*

A Rhapsody of Christmas  
Collins Community Choir  
Collins Theatre  
7pm

A complete listing of all Downtown events can be found under "Events" at [downtownparagould.com](http://downtownparagould.com) or [facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events](https://facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events).

December at the

# COLLINS

- 12/3 and 12/4 The Nutcracker
- 12/9 A Time to Dance Christmas Recital
- 12/10 Sand Creek
- 12/16 GCFAC "White Christmas"
- 12/20 Collins Community Choir "A Rhapsody of Christmas"

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# THE 32ND ANNUAL YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION



The Delta Symphony Orchestra presents the 32nd Annual Young Artist Competition for Piano, Strings, Woodwinds, Brass/Percussion, and Voice.

Entrants must be no more than 26 years of age as of March 11, 2023, and former Grand Prize winners of the Young Artist Competition are not eligible to audition.

Grand prize winners will be featured as guest soloists with the Delta Symphony Orchestra on Sunday, April 23, 2023.

Deadline for application is January 21, 2023. A non-refundable entry fee of \$75 must accompany the entrant's application.

For questions, contact Neale Bartee at neabartee@att.net or call 870-243-0273.

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**56**

**Declutter**  
Be Happy

**60**

**Jorene Harrell**  
Quilt Artist

**71**

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## VISITING AT SENIOR B.E.E.S. GRANDS & GREATS

By Carol Fleszar



**G**inger's Home DayCare came and visited with our Senior Citizens and gave them all a picture they had colored. Our very own BEE, Jerry Carlile, was a very proud great-grandpa because six of his great-grandchildren were a part of this visit! A great day was had by all.

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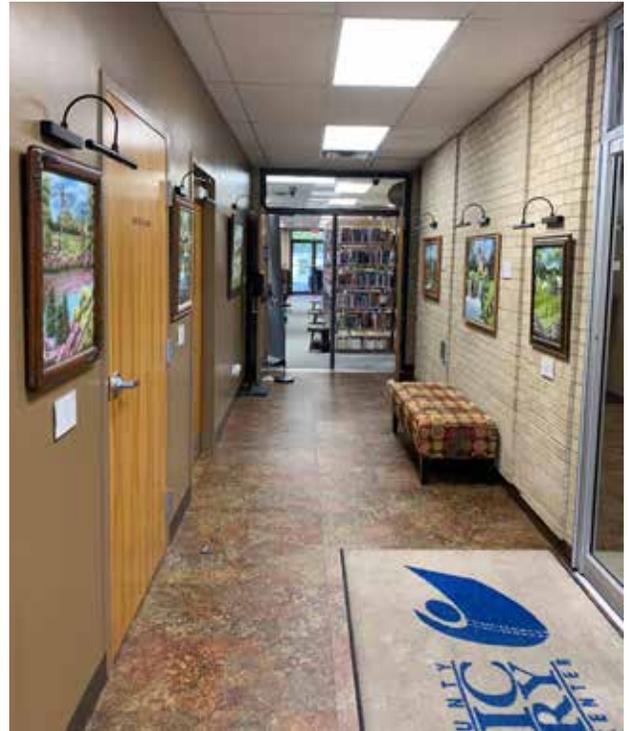
# CELEBRATING LOCAL ARTISTS THE GALLERY AT 120

The Greene County Public Library is making an impact on the community by celebrating and supporting local artists. The library has been exhibiting a Local Artist of the Month for several years now, but wanted to take it a step further by creating The Gallery at 120.

The Gallery at 120 highlights local artists for a longer period, and gives them the opportunity to show more pieces in a larger area of the library. Artists are changed quarterly to keep the exhibit fresh. Exhibiting their work for an extended time allows patrons to get to know the artists, view their work, and purchase something that might appeal to them. All sales are between the artist and buyer, with all proceeds going directly to the artist.

Since the gallery started, local artists who have exhibited include Michael R. Hart, Paragould; Stephen O. Gillespie, Brookland; Garcia Casey, Paragould; and currently Theresa Shands, Cardwell. We have so much talent in Northeast Arkansas, and it's wonderful to be able to share that with our community.

If you are an artist and would like to exhibit your artwork too, please give the library a call at 870-236-8611 or email Connie Whitman at [conniew@mylibrarynow.org](mailto:conniew@mylibrarynow.org).



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# DECLUTTER BE HAPPY

BY TARA PIATT



The decorations are up and the holidays are full on ... the countdown to Christmas and the New Year has commenced. And through all the preparing, planning and merriment, I have found I have way too much stuff. I needed to really think about if I wanted to pack it away for next year, or begin to declutter. Plus, over the last half of 2022, I've had foot and ankle surgeries that have limited my movement around my home. My husband and I spent time moving furniture, removing hazards like scatter rugs, and generally weeding out items that just got in the way of my crutches and walker. This exercise in frugality made

me research downsizing for comfort and safety in my own home. Here are a few of the tips I found that made a difference in my mobility, as well as my sanity.

Decluttering and cleaning out can relieve stress.

Having excess clutter has been studied and proven to cause stress, anxiety and even depression. Sometimes just noticing that your surroundings seem to be closing in on you can make your heart race or blood pressure rise. By strategically choosing items that don't bring a particular

happiness, and donating or selling them, you can free up space for the things that really matter, like priceless momentos, that actually have wonderful memories attached to them. Creative ideas for donating the "just stuff" items are endless ... think schools and programs that need costumes, props or other production items to put on plays. There are many other outlets that can turn your unwanted stuff into blessings for someone else in our community. The tax benefits for such donations can be substantial. If you have an adult child or children who might be available to help you decide the real importance of your stuff, elicit their help in the process. Just remember you are the one who'll "keep the best, but let go of the rest" and try to do this with your end-result in mind ... the peace of feeling lighter and more in control of your home. Just remember this process can be hard so be empathetic with yourself.

Take the time to process the process.

Start small and choose an important area to begin with. This should be an area you use often, such as a drawer, counter space, or tabletop. Make sure you start by having garbage bags, labels, tape, etc. to separate items into keep, trash, and donate/sell.

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Set a time limit for each area of, say, 20 minute blocks of time so you don't feel overwhelmed. Clean out and declutter first before organizing the items that will stay. If you need help but do not have a family member who you think could help, consider seeking help from a professional. There are many types of professional organizers who are experts on cleaning out with the ability to be respectful of your belongings and the memories attached to them.

Decluttering early has its benefits.

Starting the process before you have a hard deadline gives you the ability to research the lifestyle you deserve in the future. This means you have the time to decide where you want certain items to go. First, jot down the items you will definitely want and need in the future. Then, you can mindfully choose the items that won't be part of that future to give to family members, charities, and other entities. Take the time to go room-to-room to pull items you really don't need or want anymore. Get them out of your peaceful space and boxed up to go on to their next homes.

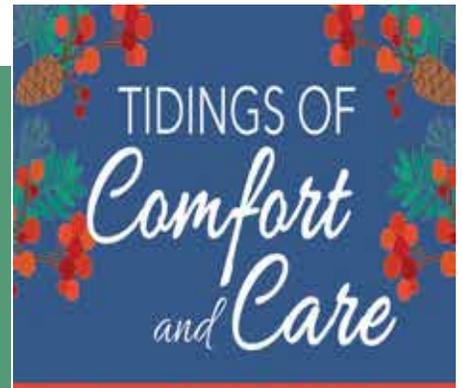
The goal is to make home navigation easier and life a lot less stressful.

Fall prevention specialists suggest removing hazards that impair safe mobility around the home. I found this out firsthand since I had many scatter rugs, extension cords, and extra stuff that kept me from being as mobile as I needed to be with crutches and walkers while I was recuperating. Deciding what I actually needed for day-to-day life helped me see I

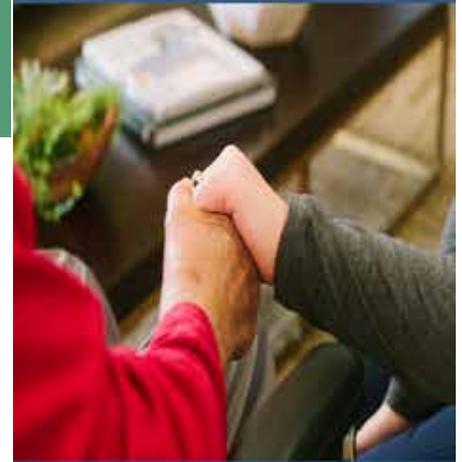


Tara Piatt is a graphic designer and social media manager, as well as a foodie and antique lover. She is part owner and Chief Marketing Officer of Caring Transitions in Jonesboro.

could easily do without many of the items I thought I couldn't part with before my surgeries. It was freeing to have extra space to move around in, and less stuff to catch my attention when I looked around my home. The simple act of decluttering simplified and greatly improved my daily life.



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# JORENE HARRELL SENIOR QUILTER

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



Life was tough from coast to coast when Jorene Harrell was born, just a few short years before the Great Depression devastated America. But a determination forged out of necessity that shaped both families and individuals -- like the 96-year-old Jorene -- also sired a notion of independence that sticks with her to this day.

"I've worked on a farm and in a factory," the Jonesboro resident said, "I've sawed logs and picked cotton and pulled the bolls. When I was growing up that's what

we done. I've lived all over the United States, from Arkansas to California to Mississippi and Alabama. I just grew up wherever I was at."

Part of her growing up included learning to quilt, an art she picked up at an early age and continues to practice even now. Almost every day she can be found sitting at her sewing machine or piecing together a quilt in the bedroom, doing something she once undertook out of urgency and now performs out of love. "I've been quilting all my life," Jorene said. "My

grandmother taught me. She said, 'You gotta learn how to take care of yourself.' I had quit school and was pruning grapes in California when I was 15. My momma had 12 kids, and then I had 13.

"I made quilts for my kids' beds. By the time I was starting to have to support my kids, I had no money. There was no fourteen or fifteen dollars an hour; you were lucky if you made \$2.35, so I had to earn my way."

Yet even in the hard times of old, the joy brought on by quilting surfaced and remains today. "I love to quilt. I do enjoy doing it," Jorene said. "I work on it every day. I enjoy fooling with making the tops and putting them together. I can't quilt them anymore, my hands won't let me. I can tack them ... square blocks, just sew them together and there you are. I used to have frames hanging from hooks in the ceiling up there and I did the whole business, but I gave them away. I'm stuck in this wheelchair and I couldn't get all around the frames to do it all. Now, I don't do anything fancy. Like I said, it's not my first go-around. I've done it since I was a little girl and it's something that's never left me. I guess I will carry it to my grave."

Her creations today are mostly light-weight, consisting mainly of bed sheets, backing and batting, and are at the same time eye-catching. Her bed is covered with a giant American Flag she pieced together, and her room contains other designs that add a definite beauty to their surroundings. The final versions come from inspiration. "Whatever comes up here," she said, pointing to her head, "is



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where I get my patterns from. I stay with the basics, what I know how to do."

As for the time involved to complete a lovely quilt, Jorene said, "I can put it all together in one day. The flag one there, I've had people tell me they've never seen a flag so pretty until this one, and it only took a day. And I can do the one with the butterflies in it in two days. I double stitched ... go around the butterflies twice.

"I give some away, sell one once in a while but I've never done it for any money. I've got quilts from Alabama to North Carolina and Arkansas ... people took them and then they left and the quilts went wherever with them."

Jorene said getting to go to the fabric store with her grandson and purchase supplies, then returning home and getting to work "keeps me busy. I can't sit here and do nothing. You know, this may be silly to say, but I like just the plain old block quilts. One in there now is just nine blocks, I spread them out. I'm just what I am, old fashioned as I can be. If times could go back to the old fashioned ways we'd be better off than we are now, if you ask me."

While some might call her tradition a hobby, Jorene said it is more than that. "When I was coming up and my mother or my grandmother would put up a quilt, I would be right there beside them," she recalled. "I had the love of it even then. It's

something I like to do; it just grew up with me, even though my hands won't let me do all I want to do today. I could spend all day long on the machine, then tack them out on the bed, a half at a time. I just plain enjoy it. It's just what I do."



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# MEDICAID ASSET PROTECTION TRUSTS THE PROS AND CONS

BY CHAD OLDHAM

**W**ith the costs of Long-Term Care continuing to escalate, more and more seniors are looking to take proactive steps to protect hard earned assets.

A Medicaid Asset Protection Trust (MAPT) is one option a person may consider to protect their assets from Medicaid and nursing homes or long-term care. A MAPT is an irrevocable trust created during your lifetime. The primary goal of a MAPT is to transfer assets to it so that Medicaid will not count these assets toward your resource limit when determining whether you qualify for Medicaid benefits.

However, creating an irrevocable trust comes with a certain lack of control over the assets you transfer to it. Before making such a significant decision, consider some pros and cons to see if this long-term

care strategy is right for you.

## Benefits of a MAPT

### 1. You Can Still Benefit From the Assets of a MAPT

Although transfers of assets to a MAPT cause you to relinquish your ownership and control of them, the finality of the arrangement is not as harsh as it sounds. In creating a MAPT, you select a person (trustee) who manages the trust assets for your benefit. So, if you transfer investment accounts to the MAPT, you can still receive the income generated from these investments. If you transfer your home, you can still live there. In exchange for giving up control of your assets to a MAPT, your assets no longer count against you for Medicaid eligibility purposes.

### 2. Your Assets Are Safe From Medicaid and Other Long-Term Care Creditors



Once your assets are in a MAPT and other criteria are met, Medicaid can't seize them or ask you to spend them down to pay for your nursing home or long-term care costs. These assets also are not subject to Medicaid's estate recovery program. As a result, your heirs can benefit from the assets without the interference of Medicaid or liens it could otherwise file against your estate after you pass.

### 3. You Can Choose Your Beneficiaries

A MAPT also functions as an estate planning tool. This is because you can designate who receives what re-

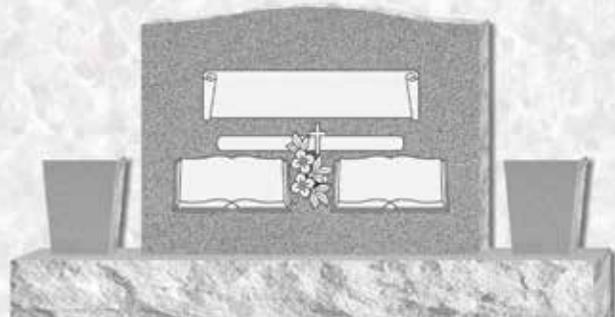


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mains of the trust upon your passing. The beneficiaries you choose will receive the assets per the terms of the trust agreement, and the chances of a probate court getting involved are diminished.

In addition, you may be able to retain what is called a “limited power of appointment.” This allows you to change who the beneficiaries of the MAPT will be, should your wishes or family circumstances change.

#### 4. Assets Are Protected From Your Beneficiaries’ Creditors

Even though you can designate a MAPT’s beneficiaries now, those beneficiaries do not have full access to the trust’s assets because of how it is structured. This also means their creditors do not have access to it. And, if your child is a beneficiary and is going through a messy divorce, neither does their spouse. You can also designate how bequests to beneficiaries can be used.

#### 5. Protection From Capital Gains Taxes

A properly drafted MAPT preserves the full capital gains tax ex-

clusion on the primary residence (currently \$250,000 per spouse). Later, when a person’s beneficiaries sell the home, it would be valued at the market price at the date of gifting and not at the original purchase price. This can avoid or significantly minimize the capital gains tax that your heirs may owe.

#### Drawbacks of MAPTS

##### 1. Timing Is Everything

For a MAPT to function as intended, it needs to be created in advance to avoid the Medicaid lookback period. In most states, this is five years for nursing home or institutional care. In some states, there may also be a lookback period for community Medicaid care (home aides, local programs, etc.). If less than five years have elapsed since you created your MAPT, you may still be responsible for some or all of your long-term care costs until sufficient time has passed.

##### 2. Income From MAPT Is Countable by Medicaid

Although assets in a MAPT may not be “countable” by Medicaid toward your resource limit, these

assets may still generate income. If this income is payable to you, it may cause you to exceed the income limit permitted in your state. If this happens to you, you may have other options, such as utilizing a pooled income trust, or may decide you will contribute partially toward your care.

##### 3. Giving Up Control Is Non-Negotiable

A trust will not qualify as a MAPT if you retain control other than the limited power of appointment that may be permitted in your situation. You must accept that a person you select to act as trustee will manage the trust, distribute funds and income from the trust, and also be the effective owner of the assets. In addition, creating a MAPT but not transferring assets to it is ineffective. You need to fully commit to the concept for it to benefit you.

##### 4. Setting Up a MAPT Can Be Costly

Creating and implementing a MAPT is a complex legal task requiring many hours of work and expenditures made on your behalf. In

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addition, because MAPTs are tied to individual state and federal laws, the expertise of a qualified Medicaid attorney is essential. You should expect that this expertise comes at the cost of several thousand dollars or more. However, your potential savings could be exponentially greater for you and your family. For this reason, the price is often well worth it.

#### 5. Potential Effects on Care

It's important to realize that while the MAPT strategy is designed to

preserve assets and wealth, it assumes a person will rely on Medicaid to pay for a portion of their care. However, Medicaid does not cover all facilities. For example, many assisted living facilities are not licensed as assisted living programs and only accept private pay residents. Thus, relying on Medicaid could affect the choice and quality of care a person may receive.

The pros and cons discussed above are not exhaustive, and there may be other ones that apply to your

situation. Investing in a MAPT is a highly fact-specific process, and MAPTs are not suitable for everyone.

You should speak with an elder law attorney in your area to discuss how a MAPT may affect other benefits you receive, your overall estate plan, its tax consequences, and whether it is right for you.

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# B.E.E.S. TRAVEL NOAH'S ARK

BY CAROL FLESZAR



In September, over 50 B.E.E.S. Senior Citizens traveled to Kentucky to see Noah's Ark and the Creation Museum. We spent our first day at the Creation Museum, home to over 140 Biblical exhibits. We walked through Biblical history as we examined the Garden of Eden, encountered an animatronic Noah, and explored flood dioramas. We also met Ebenezer, the museum's full-size Allosaurus. We enjoyed lunch at Noah's Café, sitting outside the

café, and enjoying the beautiful view and ice cream. Our second day was spent at Noah's Ark, where each person enjoyed a self-guided tour. The Ark has three levels of world-class exhibits and is 510 feet long. The experience of seeing this full-sized ark is amazing. We also enjoyed a wonderful lunch at Emzara's Kitchen during the day and ended our night eating at Texas Roadhouse. Our last day was spent in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the Cincinnati

Museum Center where we experienced an OMNIMAX show. After the show we had lunch in the museum and toured the Museum of Natural History and Science. We ended our day enjoying a cruise on the BB Riverboats. We enjoyed an amazing dinner at the Hofbrauhaus restaurant - a wonderful German meal and experience. Our B.E.E.S. trips are always so much fun, educational, and new friendships are made. Our Spring Trip will be announced soon!



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Clinical Study - 18 people over 6 Cryoskin 4.0 sessions

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Average loss of pounds

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Overall BMI decrease



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-Bridget Smith

# COMBAT HOLIDAY STRESSORS

## WITH A FEW SIMPLE SUPPLEMENTS



BY AMANDA YATES

The holiday season is full of so many joyful things -- family, food, gifts, shopping. But the holiday season is also full of so many stressful things -- family, food, gifts, shopping. This time of year can be TOO MUCH!

Too much food, too much to do, and too much stress. Here are a few simple things that can help you manage that holiday stress:

**DIGESTIVE SUPPORT.** Did you know most inflammation in your body starts in the colon? And did you know that up to 30% of your total energy supply can be used up by the digestive system? The holidays are full of food -- lots of food. When we eat more than normal, we pull energy supplies to deal with it. Although Tryptophan gets all the credit for that sleepy, post-meal slump, it's really just the redistribution of energy to the GI tract. And it's not just about how much we eat, it's also what we eat.

Over-indulgence in gluten, sugar, dairy, and alcohol

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can lead to higher inflammatory responses and fluid retention. The good news is there is one very simple way to prevent or buffer these effects ...

**DIGESTIVE ENZYMES.** Digestive enzymes aid your pancreas in breaking down that excessive food. Taking one before each meal reduces bloating and stiffness and can increase energy by 15%. You can choose an all-inclusive version for the over-eating as a whole or a category specific like dairy or gluten depending on your needs.

If your TOO MUCH is family drama or a to-do list, I'm afraid I can't fix that. However, I do have suggestions to help you deal with it better. These three supplements are my go-to when stress levels start overwhelming me.

**L-THEANINE OR SUNTHEANINE.** Theanine is an amino acid found in green tea. I call theanine the anti-road rage vitamin. It helps you let things roll off instead of every little thing getting under your skin. It blocks the over-production of cortisol -- your primary stress hormone -- as well. This is safe for all ages and has no known contradictions. It will take a week

or so to kick in so don't wait till the crazy relative shows up to start taking it!

**L-TYROSINE.** Tyrosine is also an amino acid. It has two major functions: metabolism via thyroid support and dopamine production. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that helps with positive thinking, multi-tasking, and motivation. Many find it helps with sugar cravings as well. A steady supply of dopamine can help the holidays not seem so overwhelming. 500mg a day is the normal dose but ask the Doctor/Pharmacist if you are on a prescription for mood support.

**ASHWAGANDHA.** Ashwagandha is an herbal adaptogen. Adaptogens help to balance hormones throughout the body. Studies have found it is beneficial for adrenals, thyroid, testosterone and sleep. Most people find ashwagandha has a calming effect. It's safe for everyone but like all herbs will take a couple of weeks to work.

Using one or two of these natural supplements can help make your holidays more memorable and enjoyable this year. For more information contact us at Jonesboro Health Food.



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### What is a Dental Bridge?

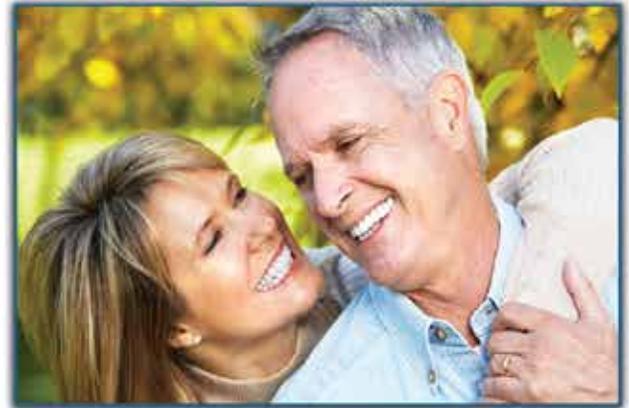
A dental bridge is a long-term solution for replacing a missing tooth or teeth. It's made up of numerous components that are fused together to fill the gap left by your missing tooth or teeth. Bridges consist of 2 abutment teeth that are on either side of the pontic or artificial tooth.

**Abutment:** These two teeth can either be two dental crowns placed on natural teeth or artificial teeth that are attached to dental implants. Abutment teeth are made from porcelain.

**Pontic:** The pontic tooth or teeth are the teeth in the middle of the bridge that replace the missing teeth. Pontic teeth are made out of porcelain and customized to fit your smile naturally.

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Biofunctional Prosthetic System Lower Suction Dentures allows you to wear lower dentures without the traditionally required implant and were developed in Japan by Dr. Jiro Abe.

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Traditionally, dentures are made to replace an entire smile, but we can also use them to replace only one arch of teeth, top or bottom. Although similar to a denture, we refer to a single row of artificial teeth and gums secured by implants as a retained implant bridge. Implant bridges are entirely custom-made to fit your mouth perfectly.

They provide our patients with beautiful teeth restorations that can withstand the pressures of eating and speaking. Each artificial tooth is made of porcelain, giving you the same pearly shine as your natural teeth. Porcelain also provides strength – with proper care, your implant bridge can last a lifetime.



Dental Bridge



BPS Lower Suction Dentures



Permanent Retained Implant Bridges

# LIBERTY PARK SENIOR LIVING RUTH THE DOG



BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

When residents at the Liberty Park Senior Living Facility in Jonesboro got a visit from some therapy dogs recently, they let the staff know that wasn't enough.

"We had a couple here, therapy dogs that visited," said Laura Courtois, Executive Director for Liberty Park, "and the

residents loved them so much. A couple of residents said we needed to have a permanent dog of our own and we said, 'We'll do our best.' Myself and Christa Floyd got on it, and now we have Ruth."

Ruth is a three-year-old Great Dane rescued from Jonesboro Animal Control and she has fit right in from Day One.

She walks the hallways looking to both give and receive affection, and follows the seniors on their daily routines. "Having Ruth here is so therapeutic to our residents," Laura said. "She's typically real calm. She will sit and stay when you tell her to. She obviously belonged to someone before.

"Today, she's been 'playing the drums' with residents in the Activity Room but she'll go in and play with them when they play Bingo and the other day it was manicures. She eats breakfast about the same time they do and they'll take her for walks. She makes herself at home. She's like a child."

The facility is very pet friendly, Laura said, with a dog park and courtyard and Ruth has been a great addition. Staff members recognize that bringing Ruth in has been beneficial for her, as well as for the residents. "Absolutely," Laura said. "We took her back for a visit to Jonesboro Animal Control and you could tell she has a different personality. When she was there, they said she had trouble eating; not now. She's so happy here. She will go up to residents hoping to get toys and treats, and if she doesn't, they'll go looking for her. She walks the halls with them ... she's a good companion for them."

Laura said she hopes Ruth stays around for a long time and feels the adoption of her is a "win/win situation. Life is better with her here. For her, and for us."



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# MENTAL HEALTH INVESTMENTS

BY SARAH SUMPTER, LMSW, CLINICAL DIRECTOR FOR ST. BERNARDS BEHAVIORAL

## PAY DIVIDENDS



Good investments often yield the most unexpected rewards. I awoke one morning and thought, “I want to see a movie today.” Now, we usually think of theaters as a gathering place with family and friends, but nobody around me wanted to go.

Undeterred, I said, “I’ll go by myself.” I had an amazing time. A nearly empty theater greeted me. I picked my ideal seat and shut off my thoughts to enjoy the movie. Afterward, I realized I had invested in something important — my mental health.

Every person has mental health, just as every person has physical health. We might be mentally well, or we might struggle, possibly stemming from a mental illness or mental health issue. All too often, we stay busy and ignore our self-care. The longer we avoid it, however, the greater our mental health deficit builds.

Thankfully, we can invest in good mental health. The following recommendations can help foster those unexpected rewards:

1. Normalize mental health. The more we talk about it, the more others feel comfortable reciprocating.
2. Surround ourselves with supportive people. Our circles should lift us up, not drag us down.

3. Practice positive self-talk. We say things to ourselves we would never say to others.
4. We should talk to ourselves as we would our children or friends.
5. Fuel our bodies. Nutritious foods and plenty of water improve physical and mental health.
6. Get regular sleep. Establishing an evening routine promotes quality sleep.
7. Take walks outside. Fresh air, sunlight and movement improve moods and decrease stress.
8. Turn off our phones. Have uninterrupted time.
9. Set healthy boundaries. We say “No!” sometimes so we can say “Yes!” to others.
10. Practice positive thinking. We must train our brains to reframe our situations and circumstances.
11. Do something enjoyable at least once a week. Self-care is not selfish. It cultivates our health.

For more information on St. Bernards’ comprehensive mental health services, call the 24/7 Behavioral Health Call Center at (870) 207-0440, or visit [www.stbernards.info/services/behavioral-health](http://www.stbernards.info/services/behavioral-health).



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- **Personal care** (Daily activities like bathing, errands, shopping, meal prep, light housekeeping)
- **Attendant care** (Plans based on disability or injury)
- **Respite Care** (Relief from the daily challenges of caring for your loved one)
- **Personal Caregivers** (Assistance with day to day living)

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# YOUR SKIN & AGING



BY KARAN SUMMITT

The next time you need a trivia question, see if you can stump the crowd with this one: What is the body's largest organ? The correct answer is our skin. That's right, all eight pounds and 22 square feet of it.

The skin acts as a waterproof, insulating shield that guards your body against extremes of temperature, damaging sunlight, and harmful chemicals. It prevents infection and manufactures vitamin D for converting calcium into healthy bones. Additionally, skin is a huge sensor packed with nerves for keeping the

brain in touch with the outside world, all the while allowing us free movement. On top of all that, skin can repair itself when harmed. It is continually healing scratches, scrapes and bruises.

Ironically, the size and familiarity of our skin makes it easy to take for granted. Although everyone starts life with taut, smooth baby skin, we all wind up looking a bit like raisins. No matter how careful we might be, the effects of aging take an inevitable toll, manifested in sags, wrinkles, discoloration and other blemishes we wish would never appear. Here are five primary ways the skin changes as we get older, listed in no particular order.

## 1. SKIN BECOMES DRIER

This dryness happens because as skin ages, it produces fewer natural moisturizing oils. The good news is that although this is a very common problem for older adults, there are numerous ways to combat dryness. A good-quality moisturizer goes a long way toward relieving dryness, and by applying a healthy layer of lotion right after a bath, you'll seal in moisture.

The best lotions and moisturizers won't help if you abuse your skin during your shower or bath. Very hot water and harsh soaps tends to strip more oils from your skin than milder warm water. Using a gentler cleanser can greatly reduce

overall dryness. In some cases, skin becomes so dry it cracks visibly. If your skin experiences this extreme level of dryness, be sure to visit a dermatologist for professional care.

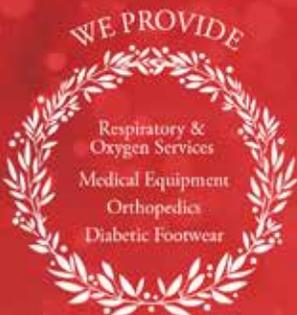
## 2. SKIN THINS

You may have noticed that some older people have skin so thin it almost appears translucent. It's not just your imagination. As you age, your skin really does become thinner, revealing more blood vessels and other internal structures that younger, thicker skin conceals. Thinning occurs partly because your skin loses some of the fatty layer that lies below the epidermis, which is the outermost layer of skin. Less fat means less cushioning, and thus, your skin breaks and bruises more easily. Genetics and sun exposure can accelerate this process. Routinely using a sunscreen with an SPF rating of at least 15 will help maintain overall skin health. Applying skin moisturizer regularly will also help keep your skin healthy and may help reduce thinning.

## 3. SKIN BEGINS SAGGING

Bit by bit, the law of gravity takes hold, perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the way our skin begins to sag, creating hanging jowls and drooping noses. This sagging is partly due to the thinning of the skin that takes place during the aging process. Other causes for sagging skin include significant weight changes during

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your life, smoking, and for women, the decrease in estrogen production during menopause. The best way to slow the saggy face effect is simply to take good care of your skin when you're younger. If you're really concerned about sagging facial skin, you can visit a cosmetic surgeon, who may inject an inert filler that rounds out some of your features, or perform a facelift. These kinds of treatments can be very expensive, however, and may not be covered by your health insurance.

#### 4. YOU GET AGE SPOTS

As you enter your 40s and 50s, there's a good chance you'll see new patches of pigmentation appear on your skin. These masses of pigmentation appear on skin that gets the most exposure to sunlight. Age spots are actually a defensive reaction from your skin as it attempts to protect deeper layers of flesh. Tanning beds often accelerate the development of age spots. Age spots are harmless. However, they are somewhat similar in appearance to the beginning stages of some skin cancers. If you see a very dark age spot (or one mottled with several colors) with an irregular border or that is getting bigger at a noticeable rate, see a doctor. Some people have genetic predisposition to age spots. If you have fair or light skin, or a history of sun burns, you're at a greater risk of developing a lot of noticeable age spots. Once age spots appear, there are a few ways you can treat them. Bleaching creams can reduce the darkness of the spots, as can laser therapy, chemical peels, dermabrasion or cryotherapy.



#### 5. YOUR SKIN DEVELOPS WRINKLES

Each decade of aging brings new changes to your skin. All of us will develop the most telling evidence of age -- wrinkles. Until your 20s, your face is mostly free of wrinkles. As you enter your 30s, you'll notice deeper wrinkles around your eyes. In your 40s, lines will begin to appear around your upper lip. In your 50s and later decades, wrinkles become more prominent as your skin begins to sag. This is where you'll see the benefits of having used good sunscreen and moisturizers at a younger age. Using moisturizers

that get progressively thicker and richer will help keep your skin hydrated and slow wrinkling as you age. You can apply retinol-based creams to increase the rate at which your skin cells regenerate, and increase collagen, too. Some people avoid all of the fuss associated with skin aging. They say these changes add character to your physical appearance, and that it's better to simply grow old gracefully. Regardless of your take on that philosophy, skin condition is a good indicator of overall physical health. A little tender loving care for this important body organ will go a long way toward keeping us healthy in our later years.





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# Happenings

LITTLE ROCK NATIVE, TAYLOR QUICK, WILL LEAD THE LINK THEATRE'S "SHE LOVES ME!"



Little Rock native Taylor Quick will star as Amalia Balash in The Link Theatre's December production of SHE LOVES ME.

SHE LOVES ME is an award-winning musical comedy featuring a score by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick and a book by Joe Masteroff.

The Link Theatre's production will take place December 15-18 at the Simpson Theatre located in the Fowler Center at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. Evening performances on Friday, Saturday and Sunday are at 7:30 p.m. with matinee performances on Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. Tickets can be purchased by visiting [www.thelinktheatre.org](http://www.thelinktheatre.org) or by calling the A-State Box Office at 870-972-2781.

GIRLS ENRICHMENT JUNIOR HIGH PROGRAM: ENRICHING AND EMPOWERING YOUNG GIRLS



Girls Enrichment Junior High is an empowering and encouraging program. Mentors from Jonesboro's Junior Auxiliary partner with Centro Hispano en Jonesboro to offer guidance and friendship for the young ladies, all the while encouraging them toward a path of success.

They have monthly meetings, educational events, and fun activities. Each monthly meeting focuses on a core value (such as accountability, perseverance, gratitude or service) or other important topics (such as social media awareness, anti-bullying, or women's health).

Each event is paired with a dinner provided by JA. The girls get to experience talking face to face, deepening relationships with their mentors and with each other.

BRTC GUNSMITHING PROGRAM ENTERS PARTNERSHIP WITH VIPER INTERNATIONAL



BRTC Gunsmithing Instructor Chuck Coe, President Martin Eggensperger, and BRTC Dean of Business and Technical Programs Phillip Dickson met with Rod Weber, president of Viper International, and Hope Thompson, vice president of Viper International to discuss arrangements for a research and development process that would include BRTC gunsmithing students and its program.

As Viper designs new items for the distance shooter, BRTC gunsmithing students will have the opportunity to test the new products and provide feedback on the product design. In return, students will have access to significant discounts on Viper products, including receiving products with BRTC's logo on them.



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# explore MOR

Eat, shop, play;  
the local's guide to NEA.

The holiday season offers all sorts of opportunities to do things with the young people in the family, as witnessed by Blayke Rigdon's afternoon petting the goats at The Crow's Nest Farms. Blayke, 4, is the daughter of Marcus and Tatum Rigdon of Kennett.

Looking for things to do in NEA with your kids?  
Explore MOR NEA makes the search easy. We include kid-friendly events  
and highlight eat, shop, and play options.

[exploremornea.com/kids](https://exploremornea.com/kids)

# Next Month

## Holiday Happenings



Wave to MOR MEDIA at the parades and tree lightings! We will have a wrap up of holiday activities.

## NEA Progress



Read about NEA's 2022 accomplishments and what to expect for 2023.

## Special Section



Healthy Beautiful! Start 2023 with all the resources from local businesses to have a Happy and Healthy New You in the New Year

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