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PREMIERE

MAGAZINE  
November 2023

VETERAN HONORS

LOCAL FESTIVALS

SPECIAL SECTION: KIDS PLAY

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

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# From the Publisher

I have several pet peeves and one of them is that I do not like to read something that refers to a picture and the picture is not there to see. Richard referred to a picture in his column last month and I thought he was using a brilliant marketing ploy to get me to look at his “Blast from the Past” posts he does on Facebook. I went to Facebook but was not able to find said picture. So, once I asked him about it, he sent it to me — and now you get to see it as well. Here is my marketing ploy: If you

did not read the column last month you can go to [neapremiere.com](http://neapremiere.com) and click on Archives to see the October 2023 edition.

You’re welcome.

November is so many things we had a hard time concentrating on any one topic. Our cover story and several other feature stories are celebrating locally owned franchisees that do more than open their franchise and sit back

to reap the benefits. They get involved in their community and encourage their employees to do so with the intent of making NEA a better place to live, work and raise a family.

Shopping locally is important and supporting small locally owned businesses is always our champion of causes, but these Locally Owned Nationally Known businesses are also important to our economic development. The mix of quaint locals and national franchises is something those looking to bring major economic projects like manufacturing to our area pay attention to. It may also influence the local hospital’s ability to land physicians willing to move here as they must be satisfied with the amenities available in the area. Let’s celebrate all the local businesses and support each other at every opportunity.

Of course, we couldn’t let November pass without a salute to local veterans. Get to know a couple of them through their stories and read of the local activities you can participate in to honor all the NEA veterans.

Thank you for reading and supporting NEA Premiere; you help us showcase “The Good News and the People Making it Happen.”

*Dina Mason*  
Publisher



*Glen Sain*  
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# VETERAN

## *Anthony Taylor*

BY KAROLE RISKER

Even as a kid, Anthony, or Tony Taylor, wanted to be in the service. When he was little, he used to tell his grandmother, Virginia Lyle, "I'm going to join the Army." At age 17 he joined the Arkansas Army National Guard and is today Sergeant First Class. That means he is in the Guard full-time supporting local

communities working national emergencies. So, when Pocahontas floods or there is a tornado in Marmaduke, people like Tony are working with chainsaws and buckets 16 hours a day. Tony says he is always amazed at how the community turns out during a disaster. "Everybody is helping each other," he said, adding that the Guard gets a lot of support, even though it is a self-sufficient entity and doesn't necessarily need the help. "There are no better people than in Northeast Arkansas," he said. "The local population makes our job easy." Most people in the National Guard are part-time, but Tony is full-time and is the Readiness NCO (Non Commissioned Officer) over the 137th Engineer Company.

In addition to serving locally, Tony has done two tours in Iraq and two in Afghanistan. He did route clearance to give freedom of movement, meaning he drove up and down roads actively looking for IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices). When he found a bomb his job was to blow it up, a position that took special training and guts. Tony loves what he does and will quit only "when they tell me to go home." In fact, when asked about the harder parts of the job, he couldn't come up with any, saying instead if he could do it over he would "absolutely." Tony says that, even though he was wounded in June 2006 from an enemy IED and was later awarded the Purple Heart for it.

Tony has the full support of his wife, Dr. Morgan Taylor, and daughter, 6-year-old Ivy Kate, a first grader at Paragould Primary. Morgan worked to get her Ed.S degree, one of the benefits of Tony's being in the service. She used scholarships available to her to pursue her degree and is now the assistant principal at Oak Grove Middle School. "She is super happy for the opportunities," Tony said. "The benefits for family are immeasurable." It's an avenue Tony plans to pursue for himself one day. He used his tuition waiver to finish a bachelor's degree in Political Science and is interested in Pre Law, hoping to take the LSAT and possibly to go law school. Tony also served as a law enforcement officer in Mississippi at one point. "My wife pushed me into law enforcement and I studied case law" in college, two fields he found complementary to each other, and each of interest to him. Tony will leave active duty in six years, at which time he





would consider a civilian job.

Tony said if he could give advice to people contemplating military service it would be to consider what jobs they would want to do that would advance their civilian careers and to take advantage of the opportunity to go to college.

He is from a military background, having a grandfather who served in World War II, and great uncles who served in Vietnam, among others. "A lot of my family served," he said. Is he on board with his daughter's serving one day? "Whatever she wants to do I'll support it," he said.

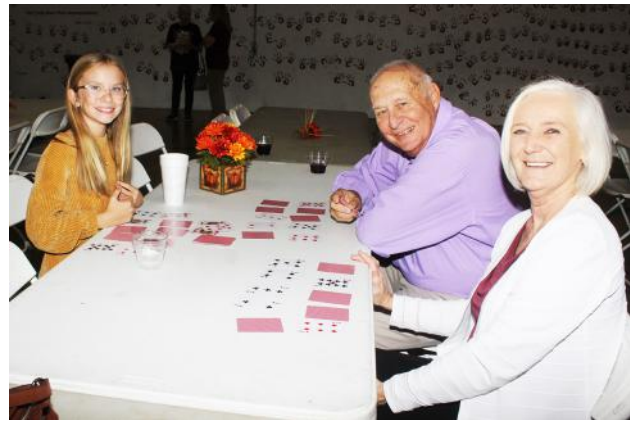


# CROWLEY'S RIDGE ACADEMY GRANDPARENTS DAY

Old people invaded the campus of Crowley's Ridge Academy in October when the school hosted its annual Grandparents Day.

The event promotes family time on campus and gives grandparents a chance to visit their grandchildren's classrooms, share lunch, play games, view students' completed projects and have pictures taken.

Judging by the smiles on both sides of the age gap, it's difficult to tell who enjoys the day and its accompanying activities more.



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# GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT

November is a month that toys with my emotions. I have so many memories, good and bad, connected to the eleventh month of the year that I sometimes find myself sad, other times happy.

Most prominent among the thoughts from days gone by is the morning my father passed away in 2006. I held his hand as life escaped him and now when I think of that day I also recall many of the wonderful moments we shared. One November, in particular, stands out.

The year I turned 13 Dad bought me a shotgun for Christmas. I didn't hunt -- at all -- and I hope my face didn't resemble the one I made when I thought I was getting some cool present but instead opened a pair of underwear or a "church-wearing" shirt. I know I said "thanks" but my brain shouted out a hearty, "Why?!" I wasn't a woodsman, I was a ballplayer and almost every free minute of wintertime was spent playing basketball with friends. So, why get me a gun?

I think we squirrel hunted once in the coming weeks and I plastered one to a tree, then put my gun away and didn't touch it again -- except once -- until I was in my early 30s. It just wasn't my thing but one November weekend most of the Butler boys, my grownup cousins from different states, were in town for Thanksgiving and it was decided we would all go rabbit hunting at my uncle John Conrad's farm. Apparently, I missed out on the voting process and just heard Dad say, "We're all going hunting" and I soon realized I was part of the "all."

It was pretty obvious he had shared with the other guys my disinterest in hunting because as soon as we arrived it was clear one of the main goals was to "get Richard a rabbit." I was told to stand on the railroad tracks and wait for Conrad's dog, old what's-his-name, to jump a rabbit up out of the brush and "as soon as he crosses the tracks, shoot him. Just don't shoot the dog." So there I was, decked out in high top tennis shoes, blue jeans, a sweatshirt and a baseball cap, looking like a homeless person with a gun while everyone else walked around in camo and hunting jackets. And sure enough, old what's-his-name started barking and I could hear a commotion in the brush and then Mr. Rabbit came sprinting out of the briars and brambles.

He sprinted due north, alongside the rails as I drew a bead on him and waited for him to make that mistake of turning left across the tracks. But he was a smart one; he didn't cross over but, instead, kept sprinting

almost out of sight and I thought, "That's why he's lived this long. He knows not to cross over and get shot, and when he gets home he's going to have a great story to tell all his rabbit friends about the close call with a homeless guy and a basset hound."

About that time a shot rang out; Dad stopped old Mr. Rabbit in his tracks and almost immediately several voices shouted out, "Did Richard get him?" As they all climbed up to the tracks, Dad had to inform them that I didn't even shoot and they wanted to know why. "You said wait until he crossed the tracks," I explained matter-of-factly, "and he never crossed. He just kept running."

All but one of us broke out in gut-busting laughter. I didn't find it so funny and really felt if they'd handed me a Rabbit Shooting Rulebook I would have known there's no such thing as "out of bounds" when it comes to shooting a sprinting mammal. They said wait until he crossed the tracks, and he didn't so I assumed both of us had to play by the rules. I never much liked being the butt of anyone's joke so that day I put the gun away and actually didn't even take it with me when my wife and I moved to Benton.

Upon our return to Northeast Arkansas I stopped by Dad's one day and found him looking sort of down and out. When I asked what was wrong he said it was opening day of squirrel season and since his hunting buddy, John Conrad, had passed away recently he didn't have anyone to go with and guessed he would just forego one of his favorite pastimes. I don't know where the words came from but I heard myself say, "Well, I'll go with you," and you would have thought I'd just told him he'd won the lottery. "Really? You'll go?" he asked excitedly and I assured him I would, and it only took me a few minutes into

the hunt to realize what I'd missed all those years. We walked through the woods looking for signs, listening for sounds, and whispering stories to each other as we strode side by side down the path of love ... father and son sharing an experience, which is all Dad wanted when he bought me that gun some twenty years before.

We remained hunting buddies until his health just wouldn't let him go any longer and I still sometimes think of the great hunts we had once I came to my senses. Anyone who happened to tag along with us had no choice but to laugh at some of Dad's stories and antics, and they remember those hunts as well as I do. This is the month in which he left me, but it's also the month in which he left me a lot and I am thankful for that.



# PET *of the* MONTH

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Welcome the ARPets Hospital November "Pet of the Month," Miss Ellie Mae. Owners Chuck and Dalana Bolster just can't get enough of Ellie Mae's sweet eyes. Dalana says Ellie Mae is spoiled, loving, and rambunctious; but these are just the characteristics that make her so lovable. When the house was feeling lonely like an empty nest, she has grown to be like another child to cure the feeling.



Ellie Mae loves animal cookies and just about any other treat. She knows how to give kisses and shake with both paws. Weighing 55 pounds, this basset hound is full of sweetness and personality to share with anyone and everyone!

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.



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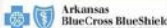
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Saturday brought even more hit names. Some performances from the day included Aaron Headley, Jameson Rodgers, Zach Childers, Tristan Tritt, and more. We're already excited for next year for more community fun, tasty BBQ, and great music! To keep up to date with the latest Downtown Jonesboro Alliance events, visit its Facebook page or visit the website at [downtownjonesboro.com](http://downtownjonesboro.com)!



Photographs by Hannah Risker



**Lindsey Hagood**  
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# VETERAN

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

## Stephen Barrett

With his retirement date from the military rapidly approaching, Stephen Barrett knew he needed more, needed something to keep his mind and spirit pointed toward a goal. "I was coming to retirement after years of service and I said, 'I can't just retire. I need a paycheck. These kids keep eating food.' I needed to feel useful to someone, not just my family," he recalled.

Today, the highly decorated former Navy SEAL seems to have found his calling as Director of Training for Proventus, a Jonesboro-based operation that provides actionable safety and security assessments, emergency action planning, security training,

and leadership coaching and consulting. Proventus also provides tactical active-shooter response training for individuals and teams, all driven by data and proven best practices from around the globe.

Barrett's credentials compiled over 23 years in the Navy -- 21 as a SEAL -- confirm two things about him: He's familiar with leadership and service. He spent the last several years of his military career as Command Master Chief, the highest enlisted rank and highest unit enlisted leadership position. His operational assignments include SEAL Team Eight from 2001 to 2007, including multiple deployments to South America, Iraq, Europe, and Africa.

He served in the Naval Special Warfare training command from 2007-10 as lead Breacher Instructor, and was selected as the 2009 Sailor of the Year for Naval Special Warfare Center. There are numerous other command positions with additional SEAL teams on his resume, as well as the completion of multiple deployments to Afghanistan and Africa.

His personal military awards include the Bronze Star with "Valor" for Heroism, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation, Joint Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with "Valor," Three Navy Commendation Medals, the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal, four Navy Achievement Medals, and two Combat Action ribbons.

"I had the skills to lead in

the military and they're applicable, but they don't apply too much to the training I offer now," Barrett said of his current position. "The classes have everything to do with leading people. The course of instruction has four modules, universally applicable but also pinpointed to each client. What's going on with *you*? It's tailored to *you*. For certain groups, maybe we discuss a breakdown of responsibility, how to get results.

"We talk about leadership; what are you here to do? Self reflection, self awareness. The origin of who you are, and what is your leadership style going to be? Trust and communication I hit on really hard. There are so many avoidable issues, so many self-inflicted wounds in organizations. Nobody is explaining anything; 'Because I said so' is not a very good answer."

Barrett said Proventus spawned from a national tragedy and "has morphed into what it is now from what we thought it would be in the beginning. My buddy Marty approached me with an idea, the concept for a security company. The initial idea was based off the Uvalde School shooting. We looked at police response and the lack of leadership. That was the genesis of the company, that event."

While he says at first he felt he "had no business trying to be a speaker" he knows very well how to lead people and what encompasses success in that role. "You're dealing with personalities, with egos, with differences," he said. "The most difficult part of any job is leading people. It takes a lot of discipline and sacrifice."

To date he has done tactical/operational training with law enforcement agencies and taught K-12 administrators and teachers regarding what to do in a crisis, along with others. "There's a new market for it because there's a learned helplessness going on," Barrett said. "We engage with folks in the area to get a better understanding of what is needed. The budget of state-run local professions is not there, so it's difficult to put on the right kind of training with no funds.



We had to kind of pivot and look at what kind of grants were available.

“Once we can get started, we talk about threat vulnerable risk assessments, professional development and academic training ... frontline leadership. We partnered with Black River Technical College and offered classes dealing with leadership. Communication and leadership are two of the most important, and most lacking, aspects needed. The common denominator, regardless of the group, is human impact. The more engagement we have in a class, the more successful it will be. If there’s an awkward silence, if I made you a little uncomfortable ... that’s good. The goal is to discuss at the deepest level possible issues pertinent to the client, not to get them through four modules.”

Response to the company has been encouraging, as has the acceptance of others while Barrett and his family adjust to a new setting in Northeast Arkansas. “There were no family connections in the area for me, nor my wife,” he said of moving to a new state. He was raised in Massachusetts, his wife Hannah in Virginia. “I had been to Arkansas a couple of times to Fort Chaffee in the Fort Smith area when a business connection in the tech industry happened to be in Jonesboro. I came



out here on a whim, made some connections, and it snowballed into this. It was very much happenstance. I checked it out, met some folks, thought we had something going. The people we were surrounded by prior to that time were very, very much just military. I showed up here, and made more connections in Jonesboro and Paragould in the space of a couple of months, more than I had in years in Virginia. I just liked everyone I met.

“There’s something to be said about Southern Hospitality,” he added. “This one is true. Harold Perrin, Mayor (Harold) Copenhaver, the people at Black River College ... people

here are very down to earth. They have been hospitable and supportive, and they didn’t have to be.”

He said making the journey to Arkansas, where he and Hannah purchased a home on 40 acres perfect for country living, has been a good thing. “It was a big decision for the wife and me to move here,” Barrett said. “But we picked up six kids and the dog, and now we have exactly what we were looking for. We pinch ourselves sometimes that this is really ours.”

Hannah is a part-time gymnastics instructor in Jonesboro while the Barretts’ kids range in age from 1 to 13. There’s plenty to keep both parents occupied, with ballgames, cheerleading, gymnastics and school events, but Stephen says he wouldn’t have it any other way. Sitting on top of a hill on his newfound property, looking out over woods and pasture, he said, “After being gone through deployments for so long it’s an adjustment to be ‘just dad’ in this setting. But this ... this is what you fight two wars for.”

Proventus is located at 920 South Main Street, Suite 1A, in Jonesboro and can be reached by phone at (573) 316-7475. More information about services offered may be found at [proventus.life](http://proventus.life) or on its Facebook page.

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## CHUCK LONG

Avid Outdoorsman

Retired Outdoor Educator

Throughout my career with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission I was very involved with Hunter Education classes, and I continue to serve as a volunteer instructor. In my class introductions I liked to question the audience and get an idea what they might know about the outdoors, hunting in general, as well as the safety and ethics a responsible hunter should follow.

I did not have a set list of questions, but here are a few I would ask and then discuss. As you might imagine, these questions tossed out to a class of mixed ages from 10-65 generated a broad range of answers. As you read, what your answers would be?

In 2021 there were approximately three million people in the state of Arkansas, what percent of that population participates in hunting? Typical answers ranged from 25 percent to upwards of 80 percent, but it is much less. In 2021, for example, AGFC statistics show 248,333 resident licenses were sold. This will not include hunters under sixteen who are not required to buy a license or some lifetime license holders. But, some quick math reveals that around ten percent of Arkansans participate in hunting each year. Most classes were shocked by this low percentage.

A fun question – How many white-tailed deer live in Arkansas? In the early 1900s the population dwindled to around 400 animals, but right now estimates say there are almost 1,000,000 deer in the Natural State.

There were many more questions related to funding, ethics, etc. but for the rest of the body of this article, I want to focus on one other question. How safe is hunting? Think about it. How many incidents happened while outdoorsmen pursued the art of hunting in Arkansas over the course of the last year? Have you thought about your answer? It is kind of like the High/Low game played on radio stations years ago. 1,000? Lower! 100? Lower! 50????? Lower! In Arkansas in the 2022-2023 hunting season there were sixteen; yes, you read that right, 16 incidents of

reported injury while hunting.

Each year the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission publishes the “Hunter Incident Report” which details each incident that occurred across the state. The report for ‘22-’23 was recently released, and the sixteen reported incidents are the lowest since 2010, when there were only twelve reported incidents.

The most common type of incident that causes injury has remained the same for many years; a hunter falls from a tree stand. Ten of the sixteen incidents from ‘22-’23 were falls, with one of them being fatal. The average distance of the fall was sixteen feet.

The remaining six incidents involved firearms, with four of those being self-inflicted. There was only one incident where one hunter misidentified his target and shot another person. It resulted in a fatality.

What age group is the most likely to cause an incident while hunting? Most tend to think it is younger or inexperienced hunters, but the statistics do not point in that direction. The average age of a hunter involved in an incident last year was 53.

The relatively low number of incidents might look like good news for hunters, but one accident is too many. Here are some steps to take to ensure safety while hunting.

Firearms safety should be at the top of the list, and it begins at home. There are more people injured with firearms and accidental discharges in the home than are injured or killed while actively hunting. The National Safety Council reported there were 486 accidental firearm deaths in 2017 while there were about 100 firearms death related to the sport of hunting.

A great way to learn some basic firearm safety tips is to take a Hunter Education class. These classes provide the basics for firearm safety both in the home and while hunting. Often thought of as a “youth class,” Hunter

# Hunting Season is Here ARE YOU PREPARED?





Education classes also serve as a good reminder for adults. A list of classes can be found at [agfc.com](http://agfc.com) and the class can also be taken online for a small fee.

As a reminder, here are a few basic tips for firearm safety.

- » Always keep a firearm pointed in a safe direction.
- » Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
- » Keep your gun on safe until ready to fire. A safety is a mechanical device that could fail.
- » Properly identify the target before pointing the gun in that direction.
- » Make sure there is an appropriate backstop before firing.
- » Wear ear and eye protection.
- » Always check to make sure the ammunition matches the firearm.

Hunter orange is also a big component in safe hunting. Implemented in the mid '70s, the rules requiring orange while big game hunting in Arkansas have played a big role in making the woods a safer place. I like to go above that and wear an orange hat while pursuing small game like squirrel,

rabbit and quail. I also like to wear an orange hat while moving around chasing turkeys on public ground.

Please prepare for safety if hunting from a tree stand. Wear a properly fitting harness and do not leave the ground without having it affixed to the tree. Also always use a haul line of some type to pull a firearm (unloaded!) into the stand.

Other safety tips to consider include telling someone where you are going and when you will return. Also, go to the woods prepared with some basic safety equipment like a compass, matches and knife and learn to use maps or some type of mapping device.

With many of the hunting seasons in full swing, this is my favorite time of the year! I hope many others get to spend some days out there enjoying the Natural State and the hunting opportunities it offers. Each day in the outdoors is a blessing and one way to ensure more of the days is to practice safety. Please be safe this year, and I hope to see you out there.





Dr. Calixto Cazano



Abbey Taber, APRN



Dr. Justin Yancey  
Pediatrician



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# MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE

## Thanksgiving -- Is it a failure to communicate?

### Question:

What do Thanksgiving and this classic movie line have in common? "What we have here is a failure to communicate."

### Answer:

Thanksgiving means different things to different people. So what does this holiday mean to you? Is it the traditional Norman Rockwell Thanksgiving Dinner, or does it mean something else? Consider the following:

- ◇ For those who prepare the meal, it can mean long hours in the kitchen.
- ◇ For the relatives attending, it may mean catching up on family news.
- ◇ For the guests who are invited, it may mean visiting with close friends.
- ◇ And, for sports fans it may mean The Big Game!

Since Thanksgiving may mean different things to different people, asking the right questions can open the lines of communication and help to make the day enjoyable. For that, we can all be thankful.

### Question:

Last year I prepared Thanksgiving dinner. It took days to plan. Some of the guests were late. How should I let my guests know that arriving on time is important? Stragglers and late comers can ruin the meal.

### Answer:

The host or hostess sets the ground rules. When you invite your guests tell them the time you plan to serve Thanksgiving dinner. You may say something like:

" I would like to invite you to Thanksgiving dinner. We will gather around noon so that we have time to visit. Then, we'll serve dinner at one o'clock. Everyone should have enough time to arrive and see others, that way we can begin eating on time. If we wait any later than one o'clock the food will get cold."

After you've discussed the schedule then you

are under no obligation to wait on serving the meal if someone is late.

### Question:

I've been invited to Thanksgiving dinner at a friend's house. What should I wear?

### Answer:

When invited to Thanksgiving dinner and you are unsure about what to wear, it is a good idea to ask about "the dress." Asking about what to wear eliminates the problem of showing up in a pair of jeans and a sweat shirt when everyone else is dressed up, or arriving in a suit or dressy outfit when the others are dressed in casual attire.

### Question:

When invited to someone's house for Thanksgiving dinner, what is the best way to let the hostess know you want to watch The Big Game?

### Answer:

Usually the best way is to be direct, yet tactful. Often, the hostess has spent days preparing the meal and inviting guests for dinner. Her idea of Thanksgiving and yours may be totally different. She says, "Please join us for Thanksgiving dinner." You think, "Great! Food and Football, what could be better!" She may want to enjoy a leisurely meal and visit. You may want to get the meal over with as quickly as possible so that you can get to the big screen TV. Understanding both points of view is important. Let the hostess know you want to watch, or that you plan to watch the game. If the hostess indicates watching the game is going to interfere with the plans for the day you may want to consider one of the following:

- ◇ Accept the invitation knowing there will be -- no game!
- ◇ Accept the invitation, but let her know you had planned to watch the game. You can then ask if she would mind if you quietly slipped out after the meal so you can watch the game elsewhere.
- ◇ Thank her for the invitation, but graciously decline. That way you can watch the big game elsewhere and not interfere with her plans.

Host and guest communication skills can help make Thanksgiving dinner go more smoothly.

### Quote of the day:

"What we have here is a failure to communicate."  
~ Film classic, Cool Hand Luke

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.

# Lessons LEARNED IN Motherhood

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Thanksgiving used to be a big event in my family; at least, it felt that way as a kid. We would fill my Granny's house, packing into the small dining room and living room, adults in and out of the kitchen while we kids ran everywhere. The smell of Granny's yeast rolls is what I remember the most. When it was finally time to eat, we would share what we were thankful for and the end of dinner was marked with two lucky kids getting to pull the turkey wishbone apart.

Over the years this gathering slowly fell apart, I imagine due to all our different families getting caught up in everyday life. Thanksgiving eventually moved to my grandmother's house but there weren't as many of us. The kids had grown up, moved off, had their own families, or were in school. It was just the normal dispersal that occurs as the little ones move into their own lives.

It's still nice coming together for a day of eating, cooking, some football, and Christmas planning. But I would be lying if I said it's what it used to be. Granny was the matriarch. There was just something special about holidays at her house, something almost magical. As I've gotten older and started a family of my own, I've begun dreaming of recreating that specialness for everyone. I want to be the one to

host large gatherings, my kitchen counters filled with food, kids running in and out the doors. I want it to be an unspoken rule that everyone shows up for the holidays, no rotating houses or everybody going off somewhere for their own small dinners.

For now, our extended family is still a little too widespread. But as my husband and I slowly let our roots settle down here (although maybe not forever, and that's okay), I hope to grow the family tree and maybe get things closer to how they used to be. It won't be the same as Granny's but I can strive for that. As Eva gets older, I dream more and more of the days where she may bring her own family to us and we can restart these traditions. And I think that's what I'm most thankful for this season.



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# HEALTH Matters

**KARAN SUMMITT**  
Retired Health Educator  
25 years educating people of all ages on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. She teaches and writes with a passion for sharing simple, doable strategies that make better health possible for almost everyone.



## Diabetes: The Quiet Epidemic

You probably know that October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. The Susan G. Komen Foundation has done a marvelous job spreading the message and generating national support for breast cancer. In Northeast Arkansas, a number of organizations raise money for local needs, giving those without insurance access to routine breast cancer screenings.

However, are you aware that November is National Diabetes Awareness month? This quiet killer is at epidemic proportions in our nation. Consider the following statistics from the 2022 CDC National Diabetes Fact sheet:

- 37.3 million people in the United States are living with diabetes, about 10 percent of the adult population. Around 20 percent of those with diabetes are unaware they have the disease.
- 1.4 million new cases of diabetes are diagnosed each year, and over 80,000 annual deaths are attributed to diabetic complications. Compare this to 281,550 new cases of breast cancer, with 42,000 deaths each year. There are over five times as many people affected by diabetes as by breast cancer.
- An estimated 33 percent of seniors aged 65 and older have diabetes.
- 96 million people are diagnosed as pre-diabetic. 80 percent of them are unaware they are prediabetic.

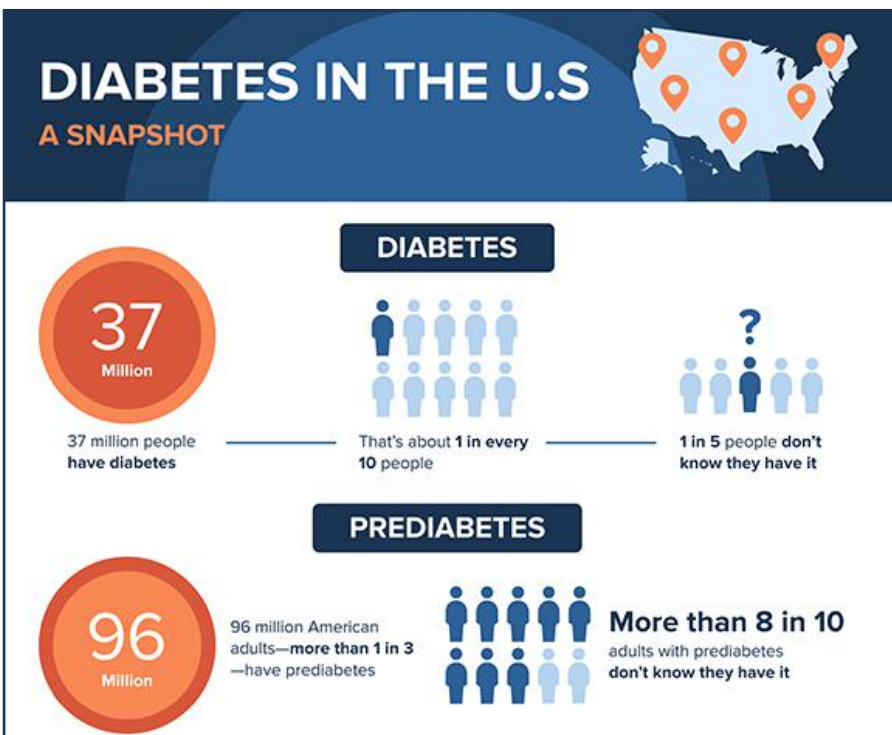
Costs related to the disease are in excess of \$327 billion each year. The healthcare costs of a diabetic are two to three times the costs of

a non-diabetic, with one out of every \$10 spent in healthcare going toward its treatment. According to a Consumer Health Report, annual out-of-pocket expenses for diabetes to the individual are upwards of \$4,800.

Newer medications have made great strides in helping patients self-manage blood sugar levels, but many of these treatments come at a high cost. In addition to the supplies and medications diabetics need, the diagnosis can result in serious complications. The risk for a heart attack or stroke is two to four times higher for a diabetic. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic amputations and new cases of blindness in adults aged 20-74 years. About 60 to 70 percent of diabetics have mild to severe nervous system damage. Overall, the risk for death in a patient with diabetes is 60% higher than for those without diabetes.

If the above numbers are not alarming enough, researchers speculate that by the year 2050 one in three Americans will be diabetic. Why so many cases? Although new medications have shown success in keeping blood sugar levels stable, current lifestyle habits lay a perfect foundation for Type 2 diabetes, the most common type of diabetes. The major risk factors for Type 2 diabetes are physical inactivity, excess weight, a family history of diabetes and being 45 years of age or older.

Diabetics can see a tremendous impact when routine medical care is combined with a positive change in health habits. Medications are often stabilized, reduced or even eliminated. Pre-diabetics can see a complete turn-around in blood sugar readings, meaning millions more can avoid the diagnosis all together.



Prevention and treatment for diabetes have much in common. Maintain a healthy weight. Eat a diet that incorporates a wide variety of lean proteins, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Plan meals with smaller portions eaten at regular intervals rather than large evening meals. Establish a regular exercise routine and look for ways to be active the rest of the day. Limit sweets, refined grains and what is commonly known as “junk food.” Follow your physician’s care plan, taking medications as directed. Most pharmaceutical companies offer financial assistance if you are unable to afford your medications.

Diabetes is having a tremendous impact on our nation’s health and healthcare costs, something that impacts all of us. It doesn’t have to be at the epidemic proportions it is today, nor does a diagnosis have to be a death sentence. Type 2 diabetes is preventable. Type 2 diabetes is manageable. If you are diagnosed as a diabetic, take it seriously, and learn how to manage the disease. Make the choices that make a difference.



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# LOCALLY OWNED, NATIONALLY KNOWN

## Chick-fil-A

BY HANNAH RISKER

Having a principal slogan like “my pleasure,” it’s no surprise Jonesboro’s Chick-fil-A brings involvement for the community, advancements for employees, and its famous courteous service. With nearly 3,000 locations across North America, Chick-fil-A is nationally known while also being a locally-owned business. It is a franchise owned and operated by Tyler and Taylor Mitchell, a married couple who both wore the famous cow mascot suit at some point early in their careers.

Working for Chick-fil-A since the age of 15, Tyler progressed from a cashier in high school to working for corporate establishing

locations across the United States, to owning a franchise. “It’s been a great experience for me,” he said. “We didn’t just come in and buy a franchise and try to run it; we run this knowing what’s it’s like at each level of leadership.” Tyler continued: “We both have that background from early on in our careers of working our way through the company and it allows us to keep things in perspective.”

Taylor adds, “Our heart is so invested in the culture of Chick-fil-A that we ... don’t just live the Chick-fil-A life while we’re working, it’s something we’ve embedded within ourselves.”

“What’s neat is we get to choose to run the business how we want to run it. We’ve been able to adapt some things here locally that are not necessarily done chain-wide.” Tyler gives the example of an emphasis on leadership development: “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” Leadership advancement even goes as far as developing educational opportunities for their employees. They are trying to change the culture from being a fast food job where “people come, they work for a little bit, they get a check, and then leave,” Tyler said. “We want this to be a stepping stone to our teams’ success, but we also want to make careers out of this.”

“One thing that’s very important to us is education,” Tyler remarked. As of 2022, Chick-fil-A Turtle Creek has partnered with a virtually-based college that allows current employees to get an associate’s, bachelor’s, or master’s degree for free. “That’s something that Taylor and I are very proud of and something we’ve worked for a while to get to. What we want is for our team to have access to education and be able to graduate college debt free while gaining real world experience.” Taylor added: “We actually have quite a few employees enrolled in the university and it’s been a huge success. We have some working on their master’s right now and elevating in the business and others that are working on their bachelor’s. It’s exciting. They see that we’re truly invested not only in their professional life, but in their personal life as well, and at the end of the day that’s what it’s all about; their success and their growth as a leader, as a person, as a son, daughter, father, husband, whatever their title is.”





Red Couch, from a national commercial campaign.



September 1, 2019. First official day of ownership.



Franchise signing day.

Chick-fil-A Turtle Creek employs about 140 people, with 30 being on shift at any given time. Some employees like the job so much they have been there 15 years, with the average being three to four years. Tyler remarks that his favorite days of the year are Promotion Days. "Seeing our team flourish in their God-given capacities excites me, it shows that they are invested in the business but also in serving our community."

But it's not just the employees who hold their focus. Taylor expressed, "We are involved throughout the community. One of the non-profits we enjoy being involved with is City Youth Ministries. We are board members for the non-profit and enjoy seeing the change it has in our community. We even have an exciting 5k to come this spring benefiting CYM. Along with CYM we have a great partnership with Central Baptist Church and our local Fellowship of Christian Athletes." Tyler and Taylor's three pillars of giving include education, hunger and homelessness. while also supporting first responders.

Tyler remarked, "We love Northeast Arkansas and we are grateful that this is our home. We enjoy supporting local businesses, and we are grateful for those that support our local business."

Tyler states: "Chick-fil-A's mission is to be the world's most caring company by winning the hearts of our guests and our team every single day."



At the Annual local Back to School BASH.



Speakers at Dr. Shane Hunt's ASU Marketing class.



2011 Tyler as a team member in North Carolina.



2013 Taylor as team member in Kentucky. Taylor's brother, Luke as Cow



2018 Catering Tim Tebowski Night to Shine Prom.

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11/10-11 - Friday & Saturday at 7pm, Ultimate Oldies  
11/16-19 - Thursday-Saturday at 7pm & Sunday at 2pm  
Chicago presented by Greene County Fine Arts Council  
[www.gcfac.org](http://www.gcfac.org)

11/25 - Saturday at 2pm & 7pm  
Missed Directions Lawrence County Musical Showcase  
11/27 - Bluegrass Monday at 7pm  
12/1 - Friday at 7pm, Sand Creek  
12/2 - Saturday at 7pm, Collins Community Choir

  For more info, go to [collinstheatre.com](http://collinstheatre.com)



# SAVE THE DATE

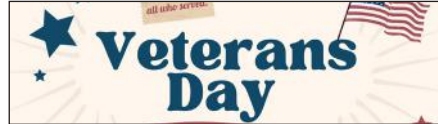
## DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD EVENTS



*Nov. 10th-11th*

7:00 p.m.

The Ultimate Oldies  
www.collinstheatre.com  
DT Collins Theatre



*Nov. 11th*

8:00 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Veterans Day  
Appreciation Breakfast  
The Crossing



*Nov. 16th-19th*

7:00 p.m.

Sun. 2:00 p.m.  
Chicago-GCFAC  
DT Collins Theatre



*Nov. 18th*

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Holiday Open House  
Main Street Paragould Event  
Downtown Paragould



*Nov. 25th*

2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Presented by Jenna Boling &  
the Lawrence Musical Showcase  
DT Collins Theatre



*Dec. 1st*

6:00 p.m.

Community Christmas Tree  
Lighting  
Centennial Park  
Downtown Paragould

*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).*

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# That Pumpkin Stuff

BY KATIE COLLINS



I guess I just couldn't help myself from going back to a pumpkin recipe this month. The only problem is figuring out what this one is called. I've heard it called different things – Pumpkin Pie Cake, Pumpkin Crunch Cake, Pumpkin Dump Cake. Dump cake is the worst – does that sound appetizing to anyone? It's not even a cake, I guess. It's sort of pumpkin pie on the bottom with a cake mix and nut topping on top. For the longest time, we just called it "that pumpkin stuff that Joan made" because I first tried it and got the recipe from my daughter's step-grandma, Joan. Whether it's for Turkey Day or just because you're a pumpkin fan, enjoy "that pumpkin stuff" this month!

## The Pumpkin Stuff



**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.


In a large bowl, combine the pumpkin, eggs, sugar, brown sugar, pumpkin pie spice, and evaporated milk. Mix well. You can use an electric mixer or just whisk together. Pour into an ungreased 9x13 baking pan.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 15-ounce can pumpkin puree
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 12-ounce can evaporated milk
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 cup chopped pecans (optional)


Sprinkle the dry cake mix evenly over the pumpkin mixture, then drizzle the melted butter evenly over the top. Sprinkle with pecans, if using.

Bake for about an hour, then check for doneness. The original recipe said to bake for an hour and fifteen minutes and that would have definitely been too long for mine, but my oven has a mind of its own. You want the top to be set and a nice golden brown color, with no peeling from the pumpkin mixture. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Serve with whipped cream.



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Join family and friends on Main Street, Downtown Jonesboro, for the annual Veterans Day Parade on Saturday, November 11. The parade will start at 10 a.m. with a program in front of the courthouse immediately after. Memorial Bricks that have been purchased since last Memorial Day will be acknowledged at this time.

Come support our nation's heroes and their families for their service and sacrifice. For best viewing, attendees are urged to watch from either side of Main Street or between Jefferson Street and Huntington Avenue.

If you or your organization would like to register for the parade, visit [craigheadcountyveterans.org](http://craigheadcountyveterans.org) or call Marvin at 870-761-2735.



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the Ridge 20 & 50 miler. And what better reward for finishing your race than a delicious cinnamon roll?! Throughout the day, visitors meandered through Downtown Paragould and enjoyed countless vendors, a petting zoo, painting sites, and more.

To view photos and more information from this year's festival, visit the Get Downtown Festival Facebook page. We hope to see you all downtown throughout the year!



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# LOCALLY OWNED, NATIONALLY KNOWN

## State Farm

BY KARAN SUMMITT

In December, Virginia Walls will celebrate 30 years as a State Farm agent in Paragould. Although the years have passed quickly, during that span of time Virginia witnessed a broad scope of changes, many of them making the insurance industry more challenging today than it was when she first opened her office.

The challenges have not taken away Virginia's love for the industry. "I like helping people," she said, "and making sure they get proper coverage and the appropriate discounts for the best personal rates." State Farm's wide scope of coverage gives Virginia's office opportunities to offer insurance for auto, home, renters, farm, business, pets, life insurance and annuities, as well as disability, Medicare supplements and group life policies.

Just like other sectors of the economy, the insurance industry is experiencing the effects of inflation. Recent rate increases reflect higher prices for home construction and home repair costs. The increase in property rates is also due to above normal wind and hail damage in Arkansas over the last few years. In a similar manner, higher vehicle prices and increases in the cost of vehicle repairs have contributed to higher rates for car insurance, as well as an increase in accidents due to heavier traffic and distracted driver collisions.

There are ways to offset the rate increases. Virginia recommends customers sit down with an agent to make sure they are getting all the discounts that apply and are familiar with options for lowering premiums. For instance, State Farm offers a Drive Safe and Save discount that helps most customers, especially those who put

limited mileage on their vehicles. The savings can be substantial.

Virginia's partnership with State Farm brings many benefits. A financially sound entity, State Farm is 101 years old and is the largest insurance company in the United States. The parent company provides local agencies with one-on-one support, policy software and training tools for agents. National name brand recognition is a by-product of State Farm's commitment to consistent advertising over a wide base of different medias.

As an agency owner, Virginia is responsible for recruiting, hiring and training new agents. She also assists with claims, services policy holders and makes marketing decisions. Her commitment to the Paragould community includes membership with the Rotary Club and support for the Chamber of Commerce, Mission Outreach, Together We Foster, Special Olympics and local school activities.

In today's world, Virginia is keenly aware that insurance coverage is a necessity. Her personal goal is to make sure policy sales and outstanding service go hand-in-hand. Virginia is married to Alan Walls and the couple raised three children in Paragould and now have three grandchildren. They are members at Harvest Baptist Church. Virginia had this to say about living and owning a business in the Paragould community:

"Paragould is a great place to live, and we want to make sure we do our part to keep it that way. I'd love for people to think of Virginia Walls State Farm when they are in the market for an insurance need, but our main goal is taking care of our customers and being a strong support for our local community."



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Join Southern Bank and The Craighead County Public Library for a "Lunch and Learn" December 6 at the library in Jonesboro beginning at noon.

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# LOCALLY OWNED, NATIONALLY KNOWN

## Coldwell Banker

BY KAROLE RISKER

Being a part of a nationally-known brand has its benefits, as Carolyn Hurley Block can tell you. Carolyn, principal broker and owner of Coldwell Banker Real Estate Group in Paragould, likes being linked to a company with nationwide and even world-wide roots. “A lot of licensees want to avoid a franchise and its fees,” said Carolyn, “A franchise offers more toward your career than it costs. There are training webinars and seminars in the Coldwell Banker University for both new and seasoned agents, they offer each agent an individual website and CRM (Customer Relationship Management) technology, ActivePipe which is an email marketing platform that feeds from your CRM and much, much more. These resources would be unaffordable with a solely-owned real estate office.” She also likes that you can connect to any Coldwell Banker office in the world. “I had a couple here from California looking at the area and viewed a couple homes. On their trip back home, they stopped to visit relatives in Kansas and decided they wanted to purchase one of the homes. So, even before smart phones and Internet, we were able to complete the contract with the help of a Coldwell Banker office in Kansas.” She also mentioned getting a referral for a listing from Texas and providing service to someone in California all because of the Coldwell Banker franchise. “There is a camaraderie among

the Coldwell Banker network,” she said. Carolyn went specifically to Coldwell Banker to establish her business because it is “one of the largest and most recognized franchises in the real estate industry, and it consistently ranks #1 in agent satisfaction. That combination of assets provides any franchise with the ability to do well.” The local branch does well in sales in that it typically does between \$6-\$12 million annually, depending on outside interferences like interest rates, and COVID lockdowns, etc. Carolyn said people contact her office because they know Coldwell Banker is a reputable, dependable company. She likens it to a food franchise, saying when you go there, you know the quality of food and service you will experience. In the same way, people know what kind of care and service they will experience with Coldwell Banker.

“To be a part of Coldwell Banker, you purchase the franchise, and then the parent company has guidelines in signage and advertising, but you own the business. They supply the logo and a wealth of other things as mentioned before, but do require that you carry liability and E&O insurance, which you should do anyway,” Carolyn said.

The Paragould Coldwell Banker company has six self-employed agents and handles residential, commercial, farms and vacant

land and relocation sales; they also handle property management. They are involved civically in the Chamber of Commerce and are encouraged to be a part of the community. Carolyn has been a member of the Paragould Rotary Club for 25 years.

Carolyn has sold real estate for 32 years. Before that, she worked in the banking industry, was office manager for a car dealership, and worked for a publishing company. She has remained in real estate because “you can set your own schedule which allows time for family and interests,” she added. Her favorite part is interacting with people. “It’s encouraging to see someone purchase their first home and how excited they get,” she said. “I had a lady text me this morning asking when she could see a house five times before I could answer. She was so excited.”

Carolyn is married to Jeff Block, who recently retired as president of M. F. Block Insurance, a career he worked at for 37 years.

Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC was founded in San Francisco after a devastating fire and earthquake, based on the principles of honesty, integrity and service. Today it has grown to over 3,000 offices in 49 countries and territories. Its slogan is “Fulfilling the Dream of Home Since 1906.”







# THE ADVENTURES OF

BY VICKI McMILLAN

# Lester

**H**ello, Lester here again on a beautiful fall day! Like I said last month, fall is my favorite time of the year. The leaves, the colors, the sweaters ... they all just make you want to sit on the porch and drink a warm beverage, be it adult or not. I especially like fall because I function at a slower pace. Naps become more enjoyable in front of the fireplace. Vicki says November is the perfect time to reflect on our blessings. She said this in kind of a “get off that blanket and adopt an attitude of gratitude” tone of voice. She’s not as smart as I thought she was if she thinks I am not a thankful soul!! Scrappy pound dog .... duh??

Things I am thankful for:

◇ After years of running the streets of Jonesboro and being held captive in the Jonesboro Dog Jail, I was adopted by a really good family. I’m on my second generation of this motley crew, but wouldn’t trade it a bit. Except when Vicki put me on that healthy diet. That I could have skipped. I am thankful I have a king-sized Sealy Posturepedic

to sleep on with a blanket that is totally mine. I love going to the Big Bed at night and watching a little TV. I love going on errands with the folks. I must say, local banks are slacking off on their treat-giving. I am thankful my food and water bowls stay filled, even if it is with Hill’s Science Diet and not hot dogs from Sonic.

◇ I have been able to travel all over the United States, and I am thankful for seeing the beauty of it all. I am proud to say I have now peed in 47 states -- a record I would put up against any other adoptee. I even peed at Wounded Knee, which honestly may have been a bad decision on my part. Vicki, Mac and several Indians (oops, indigenous peoples) were all pretty pissed -- no pun intended!

◇ I’ve seen beautiful art works and statues and beautiful churches. I saw a replica of Michelangelo’s Pieta in a cathedral in S. Paul, MN. I’ll tell you, folks, it was so beautiful I cried. I’m not ashamed to admit it. Vicki had seen the original in Rome and I think I felt jealousy (or early stage hunger -- hard to tell sometimes). We saw a lot of art in The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Montana, and it was all cool. I was expecting more blood-letting paintings, but oh, well. And as you know, I have seen several

Presidential Libraries, and I am thankful for those experiences. I am also thankful to feel sand on my paws. I love rolling in the sand, especially when signs are posted that no dogs are allowed. I just thumb my nose at authority! Of, course, Vicki or Mac will always scoop me up and take me away. Really though, I have been evicted from some great beaches: Tybee Island, Hilton Head, Biloxi, and a couple in the Northeast. The best beach in the whole world, though, is Flagler Beach. They love doggies and me in particular. I may consider changing my will.

◇ I am thankful that now so many of my buddies get adopted. Social media has certainly helped us with that. We pound dogs make great pets because we are seasoned to all the good and bad in the world. We’ve got street smarts. And we know a good thing when it takes us home. So remember, adopt don’t shop.

In closing, I just want to say get off that blanket and work on your attitude of gratitude. You’ll be surprised at how many people and things you are grateful for — you’ll be a Big Dog.

Happy November!  
~ A Grateful Lester

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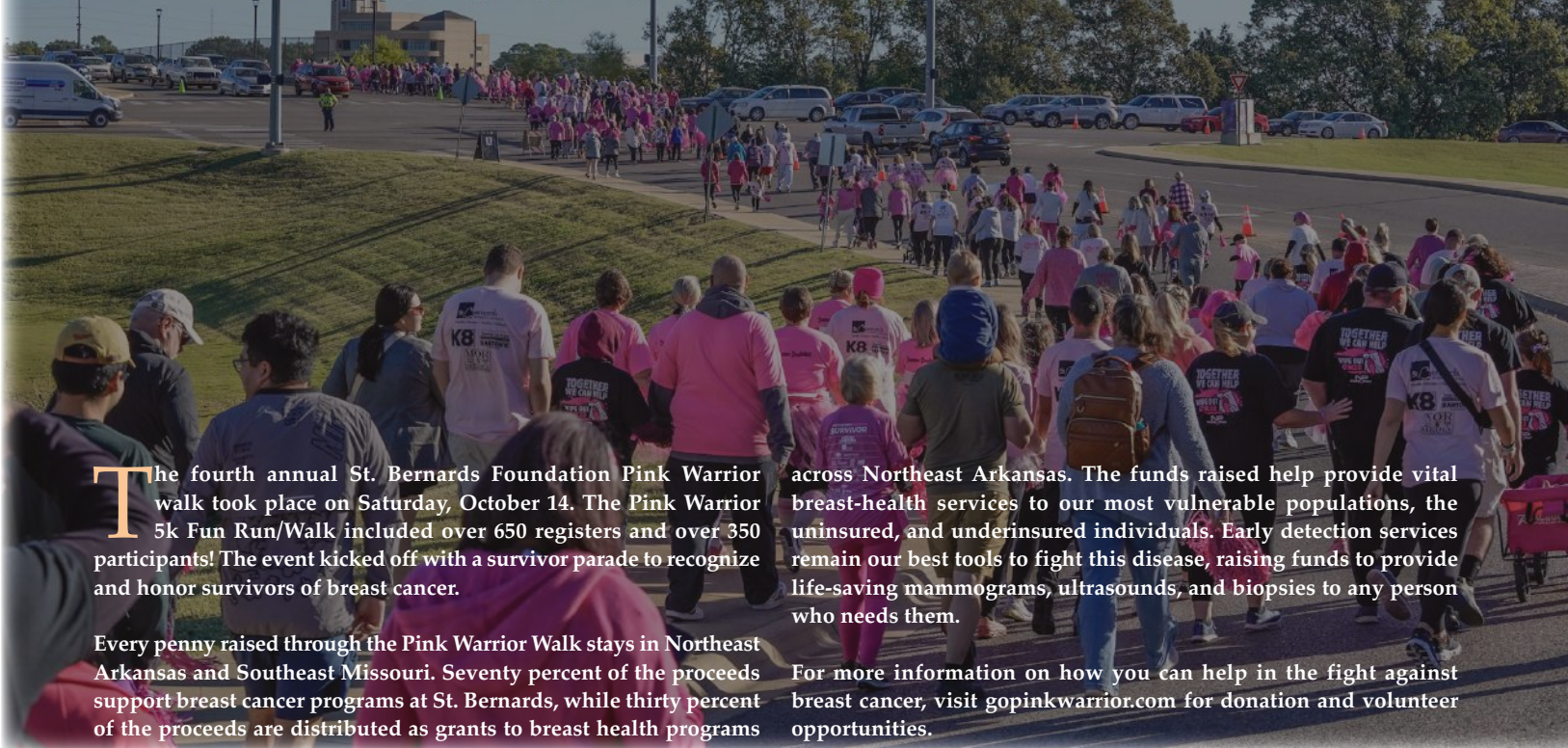


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# ST. BERNARDS FOURTH ANNUAL PINK WARRIOR WALK



The fourth annual St. Bernards Foundation Pink Warrior walk took place on Saturday, October 14. The Pink Warrior 5k Fun Run/Walk included over 650 registers and over 350 participants! The event kicked off with a survivor parade to recognize and honor survivors of breast cancer.

Every penny raised through the Pink Warrior Walk stays in Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri. Seventy percent of the proceeds support breast cancer programs at St. Bernards, while thirty percent of the proceeds are distributed as grants to breast health programs

across Northeast Arkansas. The funds raised help provide vital breast-health services to our most vulnerable populations, the uninsured, and underinsured individuals. Early detection services remain our best tools to fight this disease, raising funds to provide life-saving mammograms, ultrasounds, and biopsies to any person who needs them.

For more information on how you can help in the fight against breast cancer, visit [gopinkwarrior.com](http://gopinkwarrior.com) for donation and volunteer opportunities.

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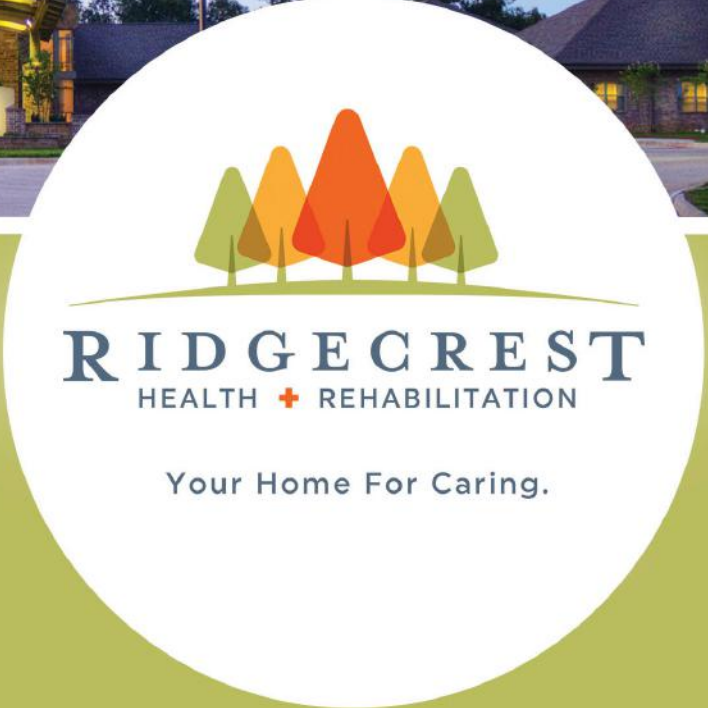
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# LOCALLY OWNED, NATIONALLY KNOWN

## Great Clips

BY KARAN SUMMITT

In 2013, Kristy Beliew had two young boys and a busy family schedule. She saw a need for somewhere to get the boys a haircut that didn't require an appointment, a salon that would be available when the family had a few minutes of free time. That need led to the Beliew's first Great Clips franchise in Jonesboro. Ten years later, the couple now has three salons in Jonesboro, one in Paragould and one in Oxford, Mississippi.

Great Clips is the largest haircut franchise in the U.S. and Canada. The company found its market niche in rethinking the standard, get-an-appointment approach to haircuts. Convenience for the customer led to salons that are open seven days a week, provide cuts for men, women and children and even have an app for easy check-ins.

The Beliew's partnership with corporate Great Clips brings many benefits that help their local franchises succeed. The company provides software support, marketing materials, ongoing training and management training to keep stylists and salon managers up-to-date on the latest trends.

Great Clips also provides national advertising through sponsorship for sporting events such as NASCAR, March Madness and Monster Jam. At the local level, the Beliew's get involved in the community through participating in events like BBQ festivals, Halloween events and Christmas parades.



On a day-to-day basis, Kristy is in charge of working with their general manager and individual salon managers, as well as being responsible for the accounting, recruiting, marketing and daily operations. She says, "Our management team and stylists are the face of our business, and I feel like we have the best around. The way they take care of our customers makes this business a success."

Zach and Kristy own two other businesses, NEA Quicklube in Paragould and Dryzone Water Restoration. They have two children, Drew and Jake Veach. Drew is a freshman at the University of Kansas and Jake is a sophomore at Valley View.

# Great Clips®



# LOCALLY OWNED, NATIONALLY KNOWN

## Post Net

BY KARAN SUMMITT

In 2007, Becky Murphy-Hatosy was ready for a change. Her dog grooming business had Becky wishing for more interaction with people, and about that same time her sister in Arizona suggested a PostNet franchise. When Becky learned that the local UPS store had closed, the timing seemed right.

Those instincts were spot-on. Sixteen years later, Paragould's PostNet offers customers a full-service menu. Located in the Paragould Plaza, the business is a drop off site for UPS, Fed Ex, DHL International and the US Postal Service. What started out as a site for dropping off packages quickly grew into a shipping/printing business. By the second year, printing orders comprised 50% of sales. Today, printing is the bulk of sales.

That growth brought jobs. PostNet provides work for six full-time employees and one part-time employee, as well as seasonal employees during the holiday rush. The office prints business cards, flyers and all sizes of signage, posters and decals and offers personalized designs, logos and customized themed party decorations.

Becky's partnership with PostNet gives her the ability to create unique products for customers. The company's software support is magnified by a network of mentorship and sharing from other franchises. Becky said this expanded knowledge base has been invaluable in meeting customer needs. Other franchise owners are always ready to suggest resources, ideas and to cooperate with each other.

Becky loves this "best of both worlds" partnership. Local ownership









gives Becky the freedom to make decisions regarding products and opportunities that help neighborhood programs, especially non-profit entities. She can offer discounts to schools, churches and sports teams that do bulk orders. Her promotional products include logoed items such as pens, sanitizers, lip balm, mugs, cups, even Frisbees and footballs! PostNet's company contracts with major shippers help customers get preferred pricing.

Becky talked about the personal satisfaction that comes with individualized orders. Her office can create products that help local businesses grow and bring a party idea to life. Even in difficult times like the death of a loved one, Becky has the opportunity to create memorial boards and obituary pamphlets that show respect to the deceased and give comfort to the bereaved family.

That desire to help led Becky to mention some services that may be a surprise to the public. PostNet is also able to notarize, fax and do printing from one to 100,000 copies. Her office can print and bind multi-page documents on a wide variety of paper weights and styles. PostNet is also able to print, scan and shred confidential documents as well as do personalized cards.

PostNet customers give Becky and her employees multiple opportunities to interact with people from every walk of community life -- industry, farmers, schools and churches, small businesses, sports teams and individuals. Things can get hectic and stressed at times, especially if a piece of equipment goes on the blink, but Becky hangs on to the core of what brought her back into the public sector -- "I just like helping people!"

# POSTNET

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# LOCALLY OWNED, NATIONALLY KNOWN

## Weichert Realtors

BY KARAN SUMMITT

When her son was born, Sandra Kelley faced the same dilemma many other moms experience -- the cost of daycare coupled by the desire to stay home with her new baby. That desire met the stark reality of needing two incomes to help with family expenses. The flexibility of real estate sales was a perfect fit.

Fast forward 23 years and Sandra's initial need for a job with flexible hours has turned into a passionate love for her career. For Sandra, helping clients find the right home at the right price for their current season of life has allowed her to share in their dreams and goals, something she truly enjoys. It is a very personal and hands-on way she can contribute to a better quality of life for the customer.

As the local Broker/Owner of Weichert Realtors, Sandra stepped from agent into a management role. She trains new agents, manages properties, oversees all contracts and still continues to work one-on-one with clients. Sandra partnered with Weichert Realtors, a company with over 500 national franchises and 60-plus company owned offices, in 2018. Weichert Realtors has been family owned since its inception in 1969.

It's been a good marriage. Sandra brings her 23 years of real estate experience and a knowledge of the community to the table. Weichert provides resources that include agent training materials, professional advertising templates, dollar-for-dollar match on local advertising, technology software and a national referral system for clients that move into and out of Northeast Arkansas.

Sandra's initial draw to real estate sales is backed by Weichert policies. They are focused on growing good agents and good customer relations, all within the priority of helping agents find a healthy balance between work and personal time with family, a goal Sandra still holds as a high priority.

Weichert's help with advertising allows local franchises to put more money into their communities, something the company heartily endorses. Sandra mentioned her office's support for organizations such as the Arkansas Special Olympics Association, Main Street events, Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Paragould. Located conveniently near the corner of Reynolds Road and Kingshighway, Weichert has hosted events such as pet adoptions from the local animal pound.

The highlight of Sandra's real estate career came when she was elected for a term last year as President of the Arkansas Realtors Association, only the second agent from Paragould to serve in this capacity. She had high praise for the local real estate community and Paragould itself with these words:

"As a whole, Paragould is one of the most welcoming communities I've found. We have good schools, good industry opportunities and a great real estate community. We are competitors, but also comrades in helping our clients. Our goal is to work together for the best interests of the customer."







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# NEA BAPTIST SHAREHOPE WALK OF REMEMBRANCE

NEA ShareHope, a program of NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation, recently hosted the 2023 ShareHope Walk of Remembrance and Hope. The morning included family time remembering their lost child and a short memorial service before the walk. ShareHope Program Coordinator, June Copenhaver, began the morning with a special thank you to each family in attendance. Anthony Baker shared the story of his son, Anthony Roger Paul Baker, as part of the memorial service. Rebekah Powell read the names in remembrance to the lost, and Maggie Frakes followed with the singing of "Go Rest High on That Mountain" for the concluding bubble release.

Following the service, attendees circled the NEA Baptist Hospital campus following the 2023 banner with personal messages written to their angels. Spaced throughout the trail were signs with angel names submitted by families.

As National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month has just ended, this event serves to provide community and comfort to those who have experienced this loss. Follow the NEA ShareHope Facebook page for more information on events like this and to find opportunities volunteer.



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# LOCALLY OWNED, NATIONALLY KNOWN

## Shadrachs Coffee

BY GABBY POWELL



You may be asking, “Why is Shadrachs in a nationally known section? That’s our NEA coffee shop!” Well, my answer to you is, “You’re correct.” Shadrachs isn’t nationally known, yet! This diamond hidden in Northeast Arkansas is rapidly expanding, but where was the first franchise? Right here in Paragould, Arkansas.

Gabe and Tifani Black started their Shadrachs journey while working their way through college at a Jonesboro location. From the early days, the couple realized the potential to grow this company. The Blacks are now franchise owners of two locations in Paragould. They were the first to open a franchise location. “We love the values of this company,” Tifani said. The mission of all Shadrachs Coffee locations is to, “offer exceptional coffee while reflecting God’s goodness to the communities we serve.” This mission and the ability to connect to community and Christ is what drew the Blacks to investing in the local business.

The resources from partnering with corporate brand have been instrumental to the success of the two franchise locations. Advice, critiques, and brand awareness strategies come steadily from corporate, but always with the intention of growth. Since the Blacks’ locations are so close in proximity to headquarters, it makes connecting with the community even easier. Social media and community events are ways these Shadrachs’ owners bring more of a hometown feel to Paragould. Tifani also serves the company as a part-time marketing manager for Shadrachs Corporate.

With specialty coffee shops trending in today’s society, the everyday cup of joe has evolved into so much more. “It is a busy mom’s sanity, a bright spot in the day of a hardworking businessman or woman. It is a moment to connect with another human over a cup of your favorite drink,” the Blacks say. The couple understands that connection is a beautiful thing, so they are striving to bring this through the smiles and service at their franchise locations.

Next time you see this coffee shop, remember what I told you. Shadrachs Coffee will be a nationally known brand someday. Their brand of creating memories and creating connections is something special; the Blacks knew it years ago.



# Shadrachs Coffee

BY GABBY POWELL

## LOCALLY OWNED

## Franchisor



The man, the myth, the legend. The one who created quite possibly the best coffee shop to serve Northeast Arkansas and beyond. Larry Billing and his wife, Risa, planted their family in the area years ago with hopes of opening a coffee company in the delta. At that time, there were not coffee shops on every corner. Specialty coffee in general was not the hot commodity it is today. But the Billings had a vision, and we are all thankful they brought their bold flavors and rich espresso to the natural state.

With the first Shadrachs Coffee location opening in 2004, the company has only grown. In nearly 20 years of business, the couple has grown their coffee empire dramatically. When asked why they made the move to franchising, Larry replied, "It allows others to jump on board and be part of something that is fun, encouraging, and supportive to the community." He wanted his business to expand, but it was important to keep the hometown feel of the coffee shop. "Local owners are able to connect on a different level than compared to a corporate run store," Billings said.

If you have ever been to a Shadrachs location, whether in Conway, Jonesboro, or Oxford, Tennessee, you know each cup is prepared with precision and compassion. This was a critical component of the Shadrachs Corporate values and ethics. "Smiles and kindness have the power to make great days out of a potential gloomy day," Larry emphasized. The franchisees are local community members who can connect in ways that corporate leaders cannot. They know the needs and prayers from the regulars; they know which non-profit organizations are in need and deserve awareness. It is the work of both the Billings' vision and the franchisees' loyalty to the mission that brings positivity to the community. You know that the atmosphere is one full of love and family when lifelong relationships and even a few marriages come from within!

Larry understands his franchise partners need support and resources from his corporate headquarters to keep up to par with the Shadrachs brand. This is why corporate Shadrachs offers several months of comprehensive training to learn the coffee business. As a franchise owner, you have access to tech support, a full travel team to jump start success, and the ability to service the most important piece to any coffee shop's success – the espresso machine.

This local coffee shop is growing in ways that excite me, and I'm sure it excites the Billings. Their dream is now a reality, and their willingness to franchise this business allows even more communities to share that dream. With shops throughout Arkansas and Tennessee, where do you think the next Shadrachs Coffee location will be?



# ARKANSAS CAPITAL CORPORATION'S COMMITMENT TO SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURS



Small businesses, entrepreneurs, and startups are vital for the economic growth and development of any region. However, they often face challenges in accessing capital, financing, and technical assistance to launch, grow, and succeed. That's where Arkansas Capital Corporation (ACC), a private, non-profit lending corporation, comes in. As a CDFI, ACC is committed to empowering entrepreneurs who seek to change the world.

ACC's mission is to empower entrepreneurs and stimulate economic

growth within the community and beyond. It partners with commercial banks, small businesses, and others from the private and public sectors to create and preserve employment opportunities and catalyze economic growth in Arkansas and its bordering states. ACC is certified by the U.S. Department of Treasury as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), and this certification affirms ACC's commitment to serving all communities, including unserved and underserved areas.

ACC offers flexible lending solutions

I'm La'Twan Cheatham, a SBA Lender with over 20 years of experience in the banking industry. I started my career in 2003 and have worked in various roles that have shaped my expertise and passion for finance. I love helping clients achieve their financial goals and providing them with excellent service.

As a SBA Lender, I work with banks across Arkansas to help businesses and individuals access financing solutions for different industries. I enjoy analyzing financial structures, finding opportunities and offering strategic solutions. It is very rewarding to be part of their journey, support their growth and witness their success.

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to small business owners who need capital to start or expand their businesses. ACC's lending options include:

- SBA 7(a) loans: These loans provide general-purpose financing for working capital, inventory, equipment, debt refinancing, purchasing a franchise, business acquisition and more.
- Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 loans: These loans provide long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land, buildings, machinery, and equipment. ACC partners with banks and other lenders to provide up to 90% financing for eligible projects.

One of the main goals of Arkansas Capital is to help new and existing businesses prepare themselves for financing. Here are some tips that Arkansas Capital recommends:

- Have a clear and realistic business plan that outlines your goals, strategies, market analysis, financial projections, and risk assessment.
- Maintain good financial records. Financial records include documents such as invoices, receipts, bank statements, tax returns, and financial statements. These records help to track income and expenses, monitor cash flow, prepare budgets, plan for taxes, and measure performance. and credit history that demonstrates



- your ability to repay the loan and manage your cash flow.
- Maintain a good credit history and score by paying your bills on time, avoiding excessive debt, and disputing any errors on your credit report.
- Seek professional advice from accountants, lawyers, bankers, and mentors who can guide you through the financing process and help you avoid common pitfalls.
- Be prepared to provide personal guarantees, or equity contributions to secure the loan.

ACC has a proven track record of success in helping small businesses grow and thrive in Arkansas. Since its creation, ACC and its partners have deployed more than \$2.34 billion to small businesses and economic development projects. In 2022 alone, ACC created or retained 520 jobs, loaned \$78.9 million to small business throughout Arkansas, which \$53.2 million was loans made to rural communities.

ACC is always looking for new ways to serve its clients and partners better. It invites anyone who is interested in learning more about its services or applying for a loan to visit its website at <https://arcapital.com/> or call La'Twan Cheatham (501) 374-9247.

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# Thanksgiving Dinner

## FOODS THAT ARE YAY AND FOODS THAT ARE NAY!

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

**T**hanksgiving dinner -- most of us enjoy a celebration of the fall's harvest

with close family and friends, and, of course, our fur babies, too. All Thanksgiving dinners vary from home to home, but there are some traditional menu items found on most of our tables on Thanksgiving. These items include a roasted turkey, cranberry sauce, green bean casserole, sweet potatoes, macaroni and cheese, deviled eggs, mashed potatoes, dressing (or "stuffing" if you aren't from around here), and pumpkin pie. Now, my doctor's inner voice is yelling at me, and I cannot ignore it, so here goes: Don't feed your pet from the table. There, I said it, it had to be done. However, if your pet "accidentally" gets a hold of a "puppy turkey-day plate," the following are some general guidelines.

Heavily seasoned or flavorful foods should be avoided altogether, as this may not agree with them and can all too often lead to a bout of pancreatitis. That means one delicious piece of smoked ham may lead to a three- or four-day stay at the vet in intensive care on IV fluids. Bones from the meat -- please, no. Nothing ensures job security for me like a good ol' intestinal obstruction from a bone. Worse than an obstruction, though, intestinal tears -- those can be fatal fast and are very often associated with bone ingestion from the bone shards. The skin from the roasted turkey is where a majority of the fat is, and definitely where most of the seasonings are found; this, too, should be avoided for that very reason.

Now, some of you may be thinking, "Good grief, Doc, is there anything we can give them?!" Technically, yes. However, I cannot help myself but to ease into this part of the article and give just one more glimpse into my daily dealings. I see more pancreatitis after Thanksgiving and Christmas than any other time during the year. Ok, I promise, I won't bring that up again.

Finally, to get to the true Thanksgiving YAY or NAY foods. I'll start with the turkey. The meat without the skin is much more gentle on their stomach, as this part is lean and not as flavor packed as the skin. Cranberry sauce is not a good idea, however, cranberries are a healthy choice. (It's raisins that you must always avoid!) Green bean casserole? No, but plain green beans with no butter or other seasonings? Absolutely! Sweet potatoes are another healthy food... as long as it is only the sweet potato and not the way that I like mine, with butter and brown sugar. Can they have the macaroni and cheese? Leave the cheese, take the macaroni. (Couldn't help myself but to add in a little Godfather reference). The plain macaroni noodle is safe, but avoid the cheese as it is high in fat. Deviled eggs are generally to be avoided as the yolk is normally heavily seasoned, however the hard boiled egg white is safe. Mashed potatoes typically are made with milk or cream and other various seasonings which can sometimes include garlic and needs to be avoided. Dressing generally is made up of cornbread and biscuits with other various ingredients including broth and sage. This should be avoided as it is quite flavorful.

Finally, pumpkin pie -- the pumpkin is safe, you may even offer a small bit from the can, but avoid offering any pie as it has nutmeg, cloves, and various other seasonings and ingredients which may not be safe for pets.

We typically have family Thanksgiving at my home and I tell my whole family if they feed my pups and give them an upset tummy, then they will have to take them home until their diarrhea clears. Of course, I'm kidding (mostly), but that normally prevents any under the table feeding for the pets. How do my pets celebrate? They are part of the family and enjoy being with my family -- they love extra snuggles from my parents, sisters, and brothers-in-law. They enjoy playing outside with my kids and nieces and nephews; playing fetch, chasing the kids, and of course just following them around on their backyard excursions. But in order to best prevent my pets from begging, I make sure they had their breakfast and have a full tummy so they are less inclined to beg. If they are still putting on the best sad puppy dog face, then they can go out in our fenced yard to play or relax in their "bedrooms" while we eat dinner. By doing this, I eliminate anyone's feeling sorry for them and offering them a bite to eat, which prevents my pets from getting sick.

All of our Thanksgiving dinners are different, and for any dishes I left out please contact your local veterinarian or refer to a trusted source such as [www.veterinarypartner.com](http://www.veterinarypartner.com). I hope everyone has a happy Thanksgiving!

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

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# 7TH & MUELLER 75TH ANNIVERSARY



On October 17, 1948, a group of 150 members met for the first time in a new building at the corner of 7th & Mueller streets. The congregation was a church plant on the south side of town by the Second and Walnut Street Church of Christ. From those early beginnings the congregation has grown in number and facilities. Larger auditoriums were built in 1954 and 1972, a food and clothing storeroom in 1990 and a children’s educational center in 2008.

The congregation celebrated 75 years at the 7th & Mueller location on October 14-15, 2023. At the Sunday service three current members, Larry Watson, Jerry Carlile and Linda Cline, were joined by Patsy Sollis of Corning. All four were present as children that first Sunday in 1948.

The weekend included a BBQ/Hootenanny-style fundraiser for the church’s 2023 Mission trip to Costa Rica, church history memorabilia scattered throughout the building, a Sunday luncheon and afternoon video presentation created by Brett Carlile. Members and guests were treated to an anniversary booklet commemorating the history of the church and a 5x7 original watercolor print of the current building drawn by Tiffany Eubanks Nolan.

Pulpit minister Micah Williams challenged those in attendance to continue their rich history of service to the community, with a goal for reaching out to “those who need the gospel.” Senior Minister Larry McFadden recalled memories from his own 45-year association with 7th & Mueller and recognized guests such as Costa Rica missionaries Teo and Eugenia Vargas and former minister Eddie Lewis. The celebrations included a number of former members who returned for the anniversary event.



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# SOUPER SUNDAY



Habitat for Humanity is honored to announce the expansion of services to Paragould. Formerly Habitat for Humanity of Greater Jonesboro, we are also excited to share that our new name is Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas.

New Executive Director – formerly the Director of Operations - Angy Abaunza will lead this transition as Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas embraces its role of serving a larger region.

“It is our pleasure to continue working with Angy as the new Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas. Her leadership, experience, and passion for serving the community will allow us to continue to fulfill our mission,” said David Hunter, Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas Board President.

“I am honored for the opportunity to serve our current and future homeowners as the Habitat for Humanity’s Executive Director,” said Abaunza. “This expansion will provide affordable homeownership to qualified families in need in Jonesboro and Paragould. I’m looking forward to collaborating with existing partners as well as continuing to forge new partnerships that will enhance Habitat’s impact in the community by providing accessibility to affordable homeownership and home repairs.”

Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas invites the community to attend the 13th Annual Souper Sunday, hosted at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Red Wolf Convention Center on Sunday, November 5, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Souper Sunday is Habitat’s main fundraiser of the year. Tickets are \$15 online or at the door during the event. Come sample and vote for your favorite soup from over 20 local restaurants.

The winning restaurant wins bragging rights and the coveted ladle trophy. The reigning champion restaurant is Pastaria 49 of Jonesboro. Funds raised go toward Habitat’s vision of “a world where everyone has a decent place to live.” Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas provides services for qualifying families in need of affordable homeownership and home repair. Please contact [info@habitatnea.org](mailto:info@habitatnea.org) for more information.



13th Annual  
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11.5.2023 | 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.



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# ARVEST®

# ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAM DOWNTOWN TRIP

BY STARLA WOOD

I started the Gifted/Talented Coordinator job for the Paragould School District about 17 years ago. I decided I would teach my gifted students about their hometown and our county. So, I organized the first trip back in 2007. I decided we didn't have to go very far to learn lots of information about things right here in our city/county. There is so much to learn right here where we live without having to take a trip far away to learn something new. This year marks the eighth time our GT department has taken these students on this trip. We go every other year, so that each student coming through the gifted program gets to experience it.

In the beginning, a representative from Arkansas Heritage would come to our city and lead us around while we learned about the history of the old courthouse, old buildings, and the Collins Theatre. Now, we have people lined up in our city who have a wealth of knowledge to share with us. So, our day is full of opportunities to hear and learn from people right here in our town.

PSD elementary ALP (Advanced Learning Program) students have been learning about the history of Greene County and Paragould. To wrap up the unit of study, students took a field trip on October 10. We started out at the old courthouse where we heard about the history of our town and the Frank Nash story. Mayor Josh Agee, Judge Rusty McMillon and Erik Wright from the Office of Emergency Management spoke with students about our town. Next, students participated in a mock trial "The Case of the Stolen Candy Bar" as they saw the judicial process played out in the old courtroom. Students were involved in the mock trial.

Later, we saw a canine demonstration presented by Tony Harris from the Greene County Sheriff's Office. Miranda Reynolds, from Mainstreet Paragould, led us to Centennial Park where students painted a caboose Christmas ornament. Next, we headed to the caboose by the tracks where

students searched for the hidden railroad spike. Chesney Brasher, a third grader from Baldwin, found the spike after lots of searching. Next, we ate lunch at Skinny J's. After lunch, we heard about the history of old buildings including a visit to Collins Theatre. Joe Wessell met us at the Collins and shared about the history of that building. Students supported local businesses downtown by going to Something Sweet and Downtown Nutrition. DN offered teas named after our schoolhouses: Crowley, Futrell, Collins, Reynolds, Gould, and Paramore. We ended the day at the Greene County Museum as we heard about and saw the Paragould Meteorite on display. Each student had their individual picture made with the meteorite which will be turned into a Christmas ornament for our classroom tree and their trees at home. It was a great day of learning "right here at home."



## BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT



Photographer:  
Nacole Maxwell

*EmberLynn Rosella Maxwell*

Paragould residents Derek and Megan Maxwell welcomed their newborn, EmberLynn Rosella Maxwell, into the world on August 31, 2023.

EmberLynn, delivered at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, weighed 8 pounds and 1 ounce, and measured 20 inches in length.

EmberLynn was also welcomed by Adilynn, Nailee, Zaidee, LynnLee, Konner, and Kiera. Maternal grandparents are Donna Figgins and Michael Latting and Robert Burgess. Paternal grandparents are Linda Morris and Sid Maxwell. EmberLynn also has many cousins who are excited for her arrival.

### WANT TO ADD A BIRTH, ENGAGEMENT, OR WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT?

SCAN TO GO TO FORM



# BREWING HOPE COFFEE FESTIVAL

Something is brewing ... the Inaugural Brewing Hope Coffee Festival Benefiting Hope Found will take place on November 11, 2023.

"We are so excited to bring this festival to Jonesboro and to Northeast Arkansas as a way to celebrate coffee, fall, and community," says Megan Brown, Hope Found Executive Director, "all while supporting our mission to end human trafficking."

Hope Found fights Human Trafficking right here in Northeast Arkansas through prevention and restoration. The organization provides education to the community, exploitation prevention programs for youth, relationship centered advocacy, as well as survivor-oriented, trauma-informed, holistic care and coordination for victims.

The Inaugural Coffee Festival is a fundraising event that will feature coffee shops and related vendors from around Northeast Arkansas.

The in-person event will be held at The Glass Factory in Downtown Jonesboro, where the air will be filled with aromatic brews and delicious treats. Attendees will sip on various coffees from local shops and vote on their favorite brews in the People's Choice category.

But there's more than coffee — there will be bakeries, chocolate shops, and kid-friendly vendors, too. The event will also feature live music and a VR Interactive experience from Hope Found where attendees can walk in the shoes of Lisa, a victim of trafficking and learn more about how this happened to her so they can learn how to prevent this happening to others.

Presale tickets are available now until November 9 for 15 dollars. General admission tickets at the door are 20 dollars. Veterans and kids under ten get in free. All ticket buyers are entered into a giveaway featuring items from vendors.

"We're so excited to be a part of this event as it supports such an important organization in our community," said Lindsey Spencer, co-owner of Story Coffee House. "And to get to do it celebrating something we love, coffee, alongside our friends in the industry — it's going to be a great day!"



# BREWING HOPE COFFEE FESTIVAL

Benefiting Hope Found

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313 W Huntington in Jonesboro

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[hopefoundnea.org](http://hopefoundnea.org)

TICKETS:



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# GREENE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS TRAVIS HEDGE MIRACLE RODEO

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

The Greene County Fairgrounds played host to the Travis Hedge Miracle Rodeo, a gathering of family and friends catering to the “differently-abled” youth of the area.

Staged in the B.C. Lloyd Entertainment Building, the rodeo offered young people the opportunity to eat as much as they could stand, take the stage to belt out tunes, ride horses outside and take part in fun activities once back in the building, things like having their faces painted, picking out balloon animals and scaled down versions of bull riding and roping.

Travis Hedge was the main force behind seeing the rodeo take place the first Thursday of October each year, and now his family carries on the tradition after his passing. “If you or someone you know has an extra loving loved one who would like to get out and enjoy some hay rides, horse rides, ‘bull riding’, balloons man, face painting, and a few other events with SNACKS,” one of their promotions explained, “MIRACLE RODEO FRIENDS AND FAMILY ... Today is the day!”

A crew of volunteers did its best to see that each participant had his or her wishes come true in a night of true fun and a very visible expression of love.



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# WINGS OF HONOR MUSEUM

81ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE **BY RICHARD BRUMMETT**  
WWII WALNUT RIDGE AIR FIELD



Visitors were welcome on both sides of the street at the Walnut Ridge Regional Airport in mid-October when they were invited to get a closeup look at vintage airplanes at one stop and take a walk through even more history on the other.

The Wings of Honor Museum joined in with the airport staff to celebrate the 81st anniversary of the World War II Air Field, a wartime flight training school located in Walnut Ridge. After only 57 days of construction the former farmlands were transformed into a functional airfield, activated on August 15th, 1942. The site would be used to train World War II pilots, starting with the Vultee BT-13 trainers as their first aircraft. In its busiest days

the airfield contained on average over 3,000 military personnel, and civilian employees numbered in the range of 2,000. In just over 21 months, 5,310 students entered training, with 4,641 graduating.

In order to accommodate the rapidly increasing crowd of people a “new town” was basically constructed. At completion, the airport had three 5,000-foot runways, a 63-acre apron, and four hangars, supported by an engineering building and a 203-bed hospital. Like any other military base, the city had a water plant, sewage plant, laundry facility, swimming pool, gym, mess halls, enlisted and officer quarters, WAC housing, motor pools, control tower, fire station, and many other structures necessary to make life livable and training attainable. Several of the buildings remain today in the area adjacent to Williams Baptist University.

In March of 1945 the airfield was used as a temporary prisoner of war camp, with about 300 German prisoners kept there, and at the end of the war it became an airplane salvage facility. Through the years of 1945-46 about 10,000 planes were flown to Walnut Ridge for dismantling, sale and disposal.

This information and much more can be found in the Wings of Honor Museum, where guests can take self-guided tours of military memorabilia and view expertly crafted displays from all decades. The museum’s Harold Johnson said the October crowd had been “really good” by mid-morning, with visitors filing in steadily. He encouraged each to walk across the street to the Regional Airport, where the museum’s BT-13 aircraft could be seen, along with others. Plane rides were also an option.

That evening guest speaker Bobby Thatcher, Major, USMC (Retired) topped off a day of food, music and entertainment by recounting his years as a Marine pilot.



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# PARAGOULD EXPANSION FOR HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The newly formed Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas is seeking committee members from Greene County to serve on an advisory board. The board will meet monthly while the program of service is in the planning stages with the plan of a quarterly meeting once in place.

Habitat of NEA was formed when the Paragould chapter dissolved, and the Jonesboro chapter expanded to Paragould. Angy Abaunza, the new Executive Director, presented the assembled group with her vision of what the organization can do in Paragould. Currently five families are recipients of Habitat houses in Paragould and there are six building lots. This is a great opportunity for Habitat of NEA to assist Greene County through the Home Ownership program. Angy said, "We want to build three homes in 2024. We need this advisory board to assist in the application, selection, fund raising, materials donations and volunteer recruitment to do this."

The Home Ownership program is not a "FREE house." The recipient is required to volunteer 176 hours and they must be able to afford the "affordable mortgage." Once the advisory committee is in place and the funding is secured the group will release applications to be considered for these lots.

The organization is still in the process of merging and some things still say Jonesboro Habitat, but this meeting is a big step in getting the NEA Habitat established. If you would like to serve on the advisory committee or volunteer in any other way, please contact Angy at [angy@habitatnea.org](mailto:angy@habitatnea.org).



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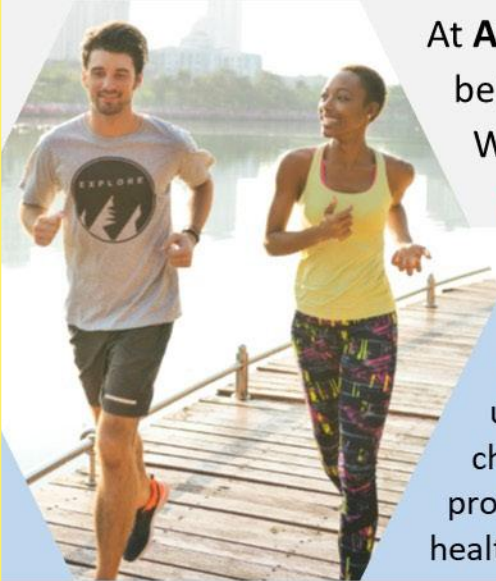
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# Kids Play

in NEA



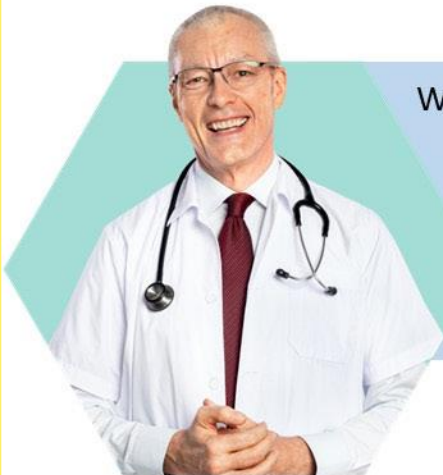
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Fluency -- the rate, smoothness and continuity of sound production  
 Articulation -- the formation of sounds

Language

a) Receptive -- processing what has been heard

b) Expressive -- communicate needs, wants, ideas

Written -- word reading, reading comprehension, written expression, written spelling

Speech therapy with children includes the evaluation and treatment of communication through play using books, games and toys to facilitate naming of colors or

animals, following directions, word identification, producing the correct word sounds. Speech therapists might employ the use of an augmentative and alternative communication such as gestures, finger spelling, or sound production machines to assist children who have difficulty with sound formation.

In recent years, written communication deficits have received more attention and are diagnosed more often than in previous years as educators attempt to identify all obstacles to learning. Dyslexia is a common diagnosis of a written communication disorder. Speech therapists can address dyslexia through evaluation and treatment to assist a child to gain confidence with reading and writing. Therapists at SPT have specialized training to evaluate skills and deficits in regard to written communication as well as to provide effective treatment to address any issues that are identified in the evaluation.

Communication is a vital part of life and can bring joy and happiness, but some struggle with deficits in communication. We want each child to be able to communicate to the best of their ability. If you have concerns regarding your child's ability to verbally communicate with the people in his/her life or if your child struggles with writing, reading, or spelling, speech therapists can be a resource for tips/ideas. If needed, an assessment can be performed to determine deficits and if treatment is warranted. At SPT, we are ready to help each child find its voice.





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# KID ENTREPRENEUR

## Kennedy Wright

BY KAROLE RISKER

cookbook and found a recipe for chocolate chip cookies. She played with the different kinds of chips and decided they were good enough to sell. She has a dream to someday own a bakery, hoping to expand into offering cakes and brownies. In the meantime, Kennedy has begun to offer zucchini and banana breads, as well as lemon loafs. She also makes cake pops that are so good people tell her they are better than Starbucks' cake pops. For special occasions, she also makes chocolate-covered strawberries. Kennedy doesn't just sell her products, she and her mom Nicole, also deliver them.

Kennedy said she currently has about 20 sticks of butter in the freezer, buys bananas 35 at a time, and has had to switch to buying bigger bags of flour. Her business has expanded so much, the family coat closet has turned into a pantry, and Kennedy's cooking staples are in the extra fridge in the garage. "The kitchen is not my own," said Nicole. "She has taken it over when she's baking." But, it's not a complaint. "I'm just proud of her ambition," she said.

Kennedy, a homeschooled 10th grader, also loves working with kids, including helping in her church nursery and babysitting. She has two brothers and a sister. It was her little brother, Lane, who came up with the idea of Kennedy's making cake pops for her business.


Kennedy has also sold her baked goods at the Monette Fall Festival and a harvest craft show. She takes orders through her Facebook page under Kennedy's Cookies and More. She would like to start baking for birthday and office parties, reunions, baby showers, and wedding showers. You can place an order by filling out a form on the page.



At only 15, Kennedy Wright is already in the baking business, selling her wares at the Farmers Market, among other places, and selling out every time she brings her famous cookies. She goes under the name Kennedy's Cookies and More and brings five dozen each of six different types of cookies. She sells them by the dozen, half dozen, and as a single, noting that many people bought her treats and ate them as they shopped that morning. To prepare for the Farmers Market, Kennedy cooks 7-8 hours a day. "It's therapeutic in a way," Kennedy says of cooking. "I just feel like when I'm in the kitchen I have control. I'm doing my own thing."

Kennedy has been baking for at least 10 years, helping her mom in the kitchen when she was little. One day she came across a family





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# RITTER COMMUNICATIONS RAM ACADEMY GRANT



The Ritter Family Philanthropy – a group of Ritter family members and Ritter Communications employees, presented Ali Nortier, Paragould RAM Academy special education teacher with a \$20,000 grant. The group accepts grant requests originating from the Ritter Communications service footprint and determines how to best show Ritter’s community support. Ali said, “This grant will help the school create more inclusive spaces, develop the EAST program, and I will be able to attend an education conference I have wanted to go to for a while.”

Ali submitted the grant on behalf of the educators in this facility. She invited the group to tour the facility and give her the opportunity to show the work she and the team are doing at RAM Academy. “I witnessed the incredibly inspiring work being done with these oftentimes dismissed students. We are so excited to make this check presentation. I believe it’s a grant that will cover a multitude of expenses that the teachers would otherwise be paying out of pocket.

“My hope is that media coverage of this story can help teachers like Ali feel appreciation and support from the community as they read her story. Hopefully, their businesses would also feel moved to show their support as well,” said Jessica Odom, Public Relations Manager at Ritter Communications.

Pictured from left: Brandon Lawshe, Director Flower Farm for Ritter Agribusiness; Maura Ashton, Corporate Secretary and Facilities Manager for E. Ritter & Company; Ali Nortier, RAM Academy; Jessica Odom, Public Relations Manager at Ritter Communications

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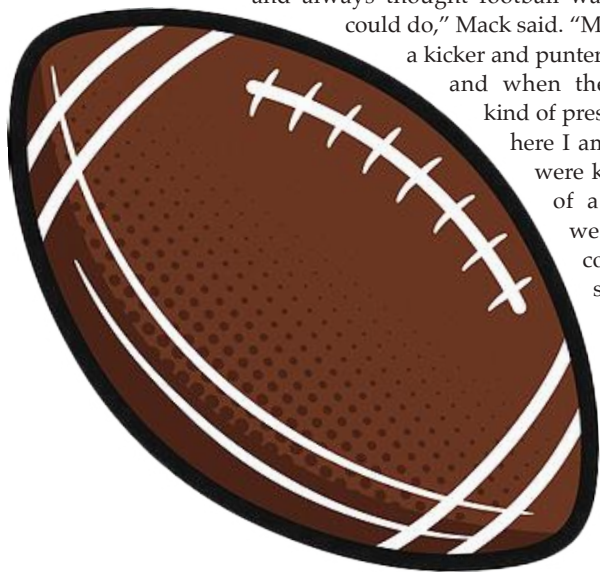
## Mackenzie Allen

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

**M**ackenzie Allen doesn't get her kicks the way most teenage girls do. A lot of hers come on the football field.

Known as Mack to her teammates, the 16-year-old junior has joined the football team at Brookland High School and plans to make her mark as a placekicker for the Bearcats. In her first two games she nailed a 25-yard field goal and added a couple of extra points, but it all just seems like second nature to her.

"I never played football before but I've played soccer my whole life and always thought football was something I could do," Mack said. "My grandpa was a kicker and punter in high school and when the opportunity kind of presented itself, ... here I am. I heard they were kind of in need of a kicker and I went to see if I could do it. My soccer coach sent a video to coach (Mark) Hindsley and he wanted to talk to me, and it just seemed like something I could do."



As for Hindsley's part, he said, "I'm always looking for kickers. I would love to have a group of them and I'd like to have three different kickers for each kind because all three kinds are different types of kicks. I knew what she could do. Her soccer coach had sent me a video and I thought we ought to give her a shot."

Mack's first day "was like a tryout, sort of 'let's see what you've got' and never once did I see fear or nervousness in her," the coach said. "I knew right then she was going to make it."

As for her role on the BHS soccer team, she doesn't just *play* the sport, she excels at it. She has been named All-State twice, All-State Tournament twice, Brookland MVP, and was granted spots on the All-Arkansas Underclassmen Team, and Best Under The Sun honors. "I've played soccer since I could walk, pretty much," Mack said. "Football seemed pretty natural. The way I looked at it, if it's God's will I'd be able to do it, and if it wasn't I wouldn't. I didn't really have any nerves."

Neither did her mom, Janelle Hocutt. When she learned of the possibility of Mack's joining the football team, she "told her to go for it. She doesn't have a lot of fears; I just told her to be herself. I was a little nervous about how the coaches and the other players might respond but I was shocked by how welcoming they have been. Coach Hindsley has been excited about it. He might have had his own reservations but he got out and saw her and really didn't blink an eye. My husband said if she's scoring points, he really didn't think they'd care if she's a girl."

Hindsley said he had "no concerns other than locker room situations. I talked to her mom and I knew she was a really good soccer player and




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after we looked at her I thought she could be ‘soccer Mack’ Mondays and Tuesdays and ‘football Mack’ Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and kick for us.”

“Everyone has been extremely supportive ... classmates, teachers and especially the boys on the football team,” Mack said. “Football is what I thought it would be. It’s exciting. It’s fun. We’re very much a team, even though I do have my own dressing area and we drive to the games instead of riding the bus.”

While her mother calls her “more a focused type” in all walks of life -- she points to Mack’s participation in Student Council and BETA Club, and a straight A academic standing -- she said she just wants her to “do whatever she thinks she can succeed in.”

As for personal goals, Mack doesn’t have a long list: “Accuracy is probably my strong point and the longest field goal I’ve ever kicked is 37 yards. I just hope I can be out there and try to do something like that. But I don’t know anything about how all the conference standings and all that works. I just hope we win games.”

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*A.A. Milne*

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# ARISA HEALTH AIMING FOR ARISA TRAP SHOOT



On Saturday, October 14, Arisa Health hosted the Second annual trap shoot fundraiser – Aiming for Arisa, at the Jonesboro Shooting Sports Complex, presented by Signature Bank.

A huge congratulations to the First Place winners, Jonesboro Trap Team, sponsored by First National Bank. The team members were Kylie Garrison, Mason Waln, Barron Bean, Ryan Despain and Collier Evans.

Second Place winners were the Cross County team, sponsored by MOR Media, with team members Tyson Proctor, Hunter Davis, Addison Price, Jake Allred and Hunter Jarrett. The Third place winners were Jonesboro Trap Team, sponsored by First National Bank, with team members Granger Wilson, Jackson Gordy, Cole Schaefer, Brayden Kirk and Rylan Erwin. Jake Allred was the “sharpest shot” with the best overall score of the event.

Congratulations to all the teams that came out to support the mission of Arisa Health!



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# CROWLEY'S RIDGE ACADEMY

## Crime Scene Investigation

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



After 30 years as an FBI Special Agent, Ed Jernigan has opened up a new and challenging case: He's teaching a Crime Scene Investigation class to teenagers at Crowley's Ridge Academy.

The elective course serves as an introduction to the tools, techniques and legalities regarding the processing of crime scenes and to the collection of evidence, but Ed said one of the biggest challenges is "to try to impart repeatedly ... *TV is not real*. Who has their own lab tech in the basement, qualified to run all those tests? It is not a quick turnaround. You don't get your answers right after the commercial break. What agency has the funds to do all those things you see on TV?"

It's not all rigor and rules, with Ed mixing in a dry sense of humor along with his daily lesson plan, even if the kids don't always catch on. "I tossed out a reference to 'Get Smart' the other day, and ... nothing.

Crickets," he said. "I said, 'Really? Maxwell Smart? The Cone of Silence?' They had no idea what I was talking about. But we got past that."

So far the students have learned how to compile crime scene sketches, do crime scene photography and lift fingerprints. But Ed is taking them on a much deeper tour than the one on the surface, delving into topics like the constitutional basis for an investigation, proper courtroom procedure, and details surrounding a variety of crimes. "It's an elective," he reiterated. "It's not supposed to be too hard but I tell them, yes, I'm going to give you a test. You have to find the right balance. It affects your GPA. Homework is not extra hard, usually just terminology or defining courtroom roles.

"It's an alternative to chorus or art for some of them, and some have said, 'When I grow up I want to do this,' some may be reconsidering."

On one assignment students were to find a room in a house and then do crime scene photography. "I teach them one area of technique and go from there," Ed said. "I want them to be familiar with various crime scene techniques with blood spatters, some trajectory analysis, some different cases. I show them periodically how to analyze a case, how to look for evidence and then, what are the jurisdictional concerns? Helping them to, basically, decide if evidence exists. Come to understand what legal hurdles you have to jump through to lawfully be present."



And, again, television is not much of a help when it comes to getting a true picture of crime scene investigation. "The kids have a picture of what it is from TV," Ed said. "My job is to present reality; I burst their bubble. It's very arduous, very tedious work. Not every student wants to fine tune their skills once we really get into it. TV only shows the fun, interesting part. In the real world, how long did that search warrant you wanted take to get?. How many pages did you have to write up?"

After retiring from the FBI in 2019, Ed "sort of let my wife talk me into teaching here" at the Academy. Becky is a math teacher and convinced Ed to come on board as a chemistry and Algebra III instructor. "I am not a teacher by trade," Ed said, "and I eventually said, 'No more math!' When this came along I thought it could be fun, so I kept the chemistry and biology and added CSI."



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His goal is not necessarily to produce a new crew of investigators, focusing instead on helping the students sharpen their critical thinking skills. "I want them to be able to lead a team, assign tasks, find and process evidence while we're in here," he said, "but I want them to use those skills to deal with everyday life, too. Crime scene investigation is like putting a puzzle together. So is life."

# YOU HEAR, "AUTISM DIAGNOSIS"... WHAT'S NEXT?

Autism is a neurological disorder that impacts an individual's social skills, communication skills, and restrictive-repetitive interest/sensory needs. Hearing your loved one has been diagnosed with autism can evoke strong, overwhelming emotions. The questions about your loved one's future feel endless. When we think about our autistic loved one's future, we can expect our loved one to have the same possibilities and opportunities as a non-autistic person. Our loved one's journey may take a different road or path, but the sky is the limit.

## Navigating Experience

Autistic individuals experience all the same feelings that a neurotypical individual experiences. The major difference between an autistic individual and neurotypical individual is how emotions are demonstrated and/or the autistic individual's ability to understand non-verbal cues correlated to emotions. With appropriate therapy, including ABA therapy, an autistic person can learn to recognize and navigate the emotions of neurotypical individuals. Conversely, neurotypical individuals need to ensure they are involved in therapies so they can learn to recognize, navigate, and support the autistic individual's emotions, as well.

## Social Skills Therapy

Neurotypical individuals rely heavily on metaphors and colloquialisms to teach social rules, social skills, understanding of emotions, and social context. Consider the following quote, "I floated on cloud 9." For an autistic individual, they may interpret such a statement as you sat on cloud number 9 and

floated on it. Now imagine being a 7-year-old on a playground and a peer says to you, "Run under the slide like you're the king of the world." In this sentence, we must understand the verb "run", preposition "under", contraction "you're", and the social context of "king of the world". This combination of language applied to the social context can be very challenging for an autistic individual.

## ABA Therapy

Research evaluating the principles of ABA therapy date back to the early 1900s. Over 50 years of clinical research has demonstrated applied behavior analysis therapy (ABA) leads to the most robust, therapeutic positive outcomes for autistic persons. When you are deciding on an ABA provider, be certain to inquire about these important topics:

1. Is the provider a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst?
2. How long has the provider practiced in the field of ABA?
3. Does the provider utilize a compliance-focused or child-led therapy environment (compliance-focused is known for leading to long-term negative outcomes)?
4. Does the provider utilize remote supervision and/or in-person supervision?
5. Does the provider meet with the guardians multiple times per month to work on in-home and community-based needs?
6. Does the provider have experience writing behavior intervention plans that are tailored to the family's value system?
7. Does the provider have experience designing advanced social skills



Rocky Haynes, PhD, BCBA-D  
Clinical Director

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programming to teach conversation skills, peer play, and community-integrated safety awareness?

## Learning Environment

When my own family was evaluating the best learning environment for my niece, we decided full-time ABA therapy was the most optimal option. Her initial experience in daycare resulted in long durations of crying and head banging because she did not know how to interact with her vocal peers or navigate transitions.

If you're trying to decide whether or not your loved one will be best supported in an environment with neurotypical peers, always ask yourself if your loved one already has the prerequisite language and social skills to feel comfortable. If those skills are still being developed, it might be an overwhelming experience with little opportunity for your loved one to learn from their peers.

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“Hey y’all, I’m Lindsey! I attended the Fort Smith School of Massage Therapy, where I received my license in 2005. I am a Momma to two amazing kids, Aubree and Drake. They are definitely my world. We attend Central Baptist Church in Paragould, where I lead a greeting team and teach the kindergarten Sunday School Class. I have sessions available for Swedish and Deep Tissue, as well as paraffin baths.”

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# Next Month

Resources for a Merry Christmas



The holidays can sometimes be overwhelming. Don't worry though! NEA has plenty of resources to spread holly & cheer!

## Special Section



NEA Seniors Section: Read about local resources to beat those Winter Blues!

## Holiday Greetings



Have a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

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