

NEA'S

# PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2024



*Thankful*

Spirit of gratitude  
shines through Duck  
Classic, Parish family

SPECIAL SECTION: KIDS PLAY  
FREEDOM LODGE: VETERANS FOR VETERANS  
HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS: AFTER SECOND TORNADO

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED





*Drs. Garrett and Brandon Webb, along with their fantastic team, are happy to serve Paragould and the surrounding areas with gentle and high quality dental care.*



**Paragould**  
smile doctor  
Garrett H. Webb, DDS, PA

*Come visit us at our new facility:  
1900 Chateau Boulevard  
in Paragould*



*By incorporating modern dental technology and methods, Paragould Smile Doctor aims to provide an excellent dental experience for all ages.*



**870-239-3141 | [smileparagould.com](http://smileparagould.com)**



# WHAT'S INSIDE

**23** **Sneak Peek**  
*Power Plant to  
Event Center*

**26** **Linda Johnson**  
*Living Life  
with Diabetes*

**27** **The Adventures of Lester**  
*by Vicki McMillan*

**32** **Lynette West**  
*An Entrepreneurial  
Spirit*

**34** **HealthMatters**  
*Got Diabetes? Get Help!*

**38** **AMMC**  
*Marks 75th  
Anniversary*

**40** **Diabetes and Pets**  
*with Dr. Kristin Sullivan*

**51** **Kids Play**  
*Where are They Now?  
Premie Awareness*

**54** **Power of the Pen**  
*Student Campaigns for  
Strawberry Milk*

**66** **Upcoming Events**  
*in Northeast Arkansas*




ON THE COVER -

Cady Parish and her family have much to be thankful for as they help prepare for this year's annual Duck Classic to support the NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation.

Pages 28-30



Cover Photography by Knight Productions 

November 2024 Premiere | 3

NOVEMBER 2024

**PUBLISHER/ADVERTISING SALES**  
Dina Mason [dina@mormediainc.com](mailto:dina@mormediainc.com)

**CONTENT MANAGER/DESIGNER**  
Gretchen Hunt [graphics@mormediainc.com](mailto:graphics@mormediainc.com)

**EDITOR-AT-LARGE**  
Richard Brummett [brummettr34@gmail.com](mailto:brummettr34@gmail.com)

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Richard Brummett  
Gretchen Hunt  
Caitlin LaFarlette  
Chuck Long  
Karan Summitt  
Linda Lou Moore  
Karoline Risker  
Katie Collins  
Vicki McMillan

**ADVERTISING SALES TEAM**

Dina Mason [dina@mormediainc.com](mailto:dina@mormediainc.com)  
Perry Mason [perry@mormediainc.com](mailto:perry@mormediainc.com)  
Brian Osborn [brian@mormediainc.com](mailto:brian@mormediainc.com)  
Samantha Nixon [samantha@mormediainc.com](mailto:samantha@mormediainc.com)

**TO ADVERTISE:**  
Call 870-236-7627  
or email [dina@mormediainc.com](mailto:dina@mormediainc.com)

**SUBSCRIBE FREE ONLINE:**  
[neapremiere.com/onlinesubscription](http://neapremiere.com/onlinesubscription)

**SUBMIT PRESS RELEASES  
& NEWS TO**  
[graphics@mormediainc.com](mailto:graphics@mormediainc.com)



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

Opinions expressed in articles or advertisements, unless otherwise noted, do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Publisher, or the staff. Every effort has been made to ensure that all information presented in this issue is accurate and neither MOR Media, Incorporated, nor any of its staff, is responsible for omissions or information that has been misrepresented to the magazine. Copyright © 2024 MOR Media, Incorporated. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage and retrieval system, without the permission in writing from the Publisher.

All pictorial material reproduced in this book has been accepted on the condition that it is reproduced with the knowledge and prior consent of the photographer concerned. As such, MOR Media, Incorporated, is not responsible for any infringement of copyright or otherwise arising out of publication thereof.

Please recycle this magazine.

# From Us to You

**T**hankful.

If you are reading this, you should know we are thankful for you! Premiere Magazine has enjoyed the opportunities your readership has provided, and we look forward to bringing you more of the Good News and the People Making it Happen in NEA in 2025.

As we wind down the year, we wish you and your family the best of the holiday season. We are so thankful for all the readers and advertisers as well as all those who share their stories so we can bring our readers their good news, and reveal resources through their stories that our readers or someone they know may need.

Please keep the story ideas coming in 2025; you can submit them at [neapremiere.com](http://neapremiere.com).



Dina Mason  
General Manager & Publisher  
[dina@mormediainc.com](mailto:dina@mormediainc.com)

**W**e have so many things to be thankful for this holiday season at Premiere, not the least of which is that the people of NEA continue to welcome us into their lives to tell their stories to our readers. November is, of course, the month of Thanksgiving, and that theme carries throughout this edition, even when it wasn't intentional.

We are excited to share about the Parish family and the annual Duck Classic. The spirit of gratitude shines through the family as they share about becoming owners of DNW Outdoors and Automotive and sponsors of the annual NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation fund-raiser. The Drope family is also featured as they return home in time for the holidays after their house was damaged by the May tornado in Paragould.

Thankfulness is echoed in other stories throughout this month's edition, as well, including articles on diabetes and premature birth awareness, and a story about how John Gatling is using music to make a difference in the lives of others, along with a young boy's excitement to have strawberry milk added to the school cafeteria at his request.

In addition, the issue includes coverage of



numerous community events put on by countless volunteers. Northeast Arkansas kept us hopping in October and we are happy to be able to share photos from many of the events held in the area during this busy time of the year.

We are, of course, especially thankful for our readers and advertisers who make it possible for us to keep reporting on the Good News of Northeast Arkansas and the People Making it Happen.

Gretchen Hunt  
Content Manager & Graphic Designer  
[graphics@mormediainc.com](mailto:graphics@mormediainc.com)

**FOLLOW US  
ONLINE:**





# OUR MORTGAGE OFFICE **HAS MOVED TO** GREENSBOROUGH VILLAGE!

Come see us in First Community Bank's  
newest full service banking center at  
910 CHANCERY LANE.



**JELENA VETETO**  
NMLS# 629680  
SVP | SECONDARY MORTGAGE  
REGIONAL MANAGER  
jelena.veteto@firstcommunity.net



**KARAGON PRESTIDGE**  
NMLS# 2003061  
MORTGAGE LOAN ORIGINATOR  
karagon.prestidge@firstcommunity.net

**JONESBORO** | 910 Chancery Ln. | **870.932.3562** | [firstcommunity.net](https://www.firstcommunity.net)

Offer of credit is subject to credit approval. Bank NMLS #539634





# MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE

**W**hat do Thanksgiving and the classic movie line, "What we have here is a failure to communicate," have in common?

Thanksgiving means different things to different people. To many, Thanksgiving has come to mean: Food, Family, Friends, and Football.

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.

*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?*

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, the food will get cold."

*I've been invited to join friends for Thanksgiving dinner. Should I ask if I can bring something?*

When replying to this type of invitation it is always nice to ask if you can bring something. The hostess may tell you not to bring a thing, or she may ask if you could bring a particular dish. If she asks you to bring something, check to see how many people will be attending so you know how much to prepare.

*Should I bring a hostess gift?*

When you bring a hostess gift, you show you appreciate being invited. A hostess gift is usually one that can be used at the convenience or leisure of the host. A host or hostess gift is a token of appreciation. This type of gift may be a plant, fine candy, a bottle of wine, a book, or other items that may be of interest to the host.

*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?*



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 llmooreparagould@gmail.com.

Usually the best way is to be direct, yet tactful. If the hostess indicates that watching the game is going to interfere with the plans for the day you may want to accept the invitation knowing there will be no game, accept the invitation but ask if she would mind if you quietly slipped out after the meal so you can watch the game elsewhere, or nicely decline the invitation.

Communication: Keeping the lines of communication open on Thanksgiving is something for which we can all be thankful.

## Quote of the Day:

"What we have here is a failure to communicate."

~ Cool Hand Luke

*Glen Sain*  
God Bless Our Troops

CHEVROLET

BEST PRICE  
870.565.4352 | 6345 US 49 | GLENSAINPARAGOULD.COM

BEST SERVICE





Becky Shinabery, Jo Ross and Bonnie Beal

BY SHELBY RUSSOM

Hope Found of Northeast Arkansas helped spread hope for the end of human trafficking at its second annual Brewing Hope Coffee festival on Oct. 12 at The Gardens at Harmony.

The festival celebrated all coffee lovers with an extensive lineup of vendors who were entered into a People's Choice competition where each attendee received drink samples and then picked their favorites in categories including best drip coffee, best specialty drink and best anything but coffee.

The event also included live music, retail booths and kid-friendly activities. The mission of Hope Found NEA is to end human trafficking with the support of the community. If you or someone you know is in need of services, contact the NEA Hope Found HELP line at 1-877-688-HOPE (4673).



Karon Fields



Trey and Elizabeth Gleghorn

For MOR(e) pictures from this event check the Premiere Magazine Facebook page!

# HEALTHCARE THAT

*Revolves around you*

## Services

- ✓ Pre-Employment Services
- ✓ Pediatrics
- ✓ Women's Health
- ✓ Immunizations
- ✓ Behavioral Health
- ✓ Sick Visits/Wellness Check-ups
- ✓ Diagnostic Laboratory & X-Ray
- ✓ Diabetic Screening & Care
- ✓ DOT Physicals & Drugs Screens
- ✓ Insurance Eligibility & More



1stchoice-ar.org  
870-857-3399



Ash Flat • Corning • Paragould • Pocahontas • Salem • Walnut Ridge

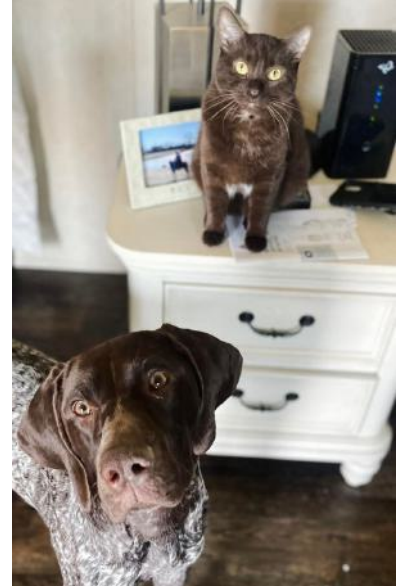


# PET *of the* MONTH

SPONSORED BY ARPETS HOSPITAL

BY SONJA HAMMETT HUTCHISON

Maple and Birdie have a lot in common, but are very different. Maple is a 4-year-old brown cat. We aren't sure of her breed. We got her when she was 6 weeks old. Birdie is a German Shorthair pointer and will be 2 on Halloween. We got her when she was 8 weeks old. Birdie is very high energy while Maple is more of a lazy girl. When Birdie can be calm, they will sit on the back of the couch watching birds and squirrels out the window. They both love to play fetch, go on walks, play in the grass and then take long naps on the couch. Chicken and cheese are their favorite snacks. They are best friends; however, I believe Birdie loves Maple more than Maple loves Birdie.



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.

**THE GREENBRIER COMPANIES**  
Honors All Veterans

*Family members of our Veteran team members from Paragould, Marmaduke, Kennett and Jackson are invited to attend our Military Program Thursday, November 7th*

**NOW HIRING**

Apply online [www.careers.gbrx.com](http://www.careers.gbrx.com)



# FUN & GAMES IN DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD

## Get Downtown

The Get Downtown Festival was held October 4th and 5th in Downtown Paragould. Friday night's festivities included a block party, Cajun Crawl and Downtown After Hours concert. Saturday's activities included Pedal on the Ridge, as well as a 10K, 5K, Kids Fun Run and Doggy Dash. There were a variety of activities including live music, a Touch a Truck event and the first ever Paragould Rotary Club duck race.



Judah Dean



Michael and Blake Harris



Paragould Rotary Club Members



Tim Roswell, Chad Register, Wes Watts



Madelyn Bryant

**Delta Symphony Orchestra**  
**Holiday Concert**

**The Fowler Center**  
**Arkansas State University**  
**Sunday, Dec. 8 ~ 3 p.m.**

**Featuring:**  
**Jenny Powers**  
**Quaine Hogan**  
**Bethania Baray-Harrison**

**Dr. Neale Bartee**  
**Conductor**

**For information/tickets:**  
**[deltasymphonyorchestra.org](http://deltasymphonyorchestra.org)**



# Home for the holidays

## FAMILY THANKFUL TO BE HOME FOLLOWING TORNADO

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

From the outside looking in, it might seem like Bruce and Misty Drope have more to complain about than be thankful for.

They have had their share of trials, having lost their son, Hunter, in 2012 and watched their daughter, Keely, struggle with a heart condition. Add to that having their home hit by tornadoes on two separate occasions, and they would have every excuse to say, "Why us?"

"Bruce and I have had a lot of hard times," Misty said. "We've worked hard to raise our kids and get them out in the world," she added, noting that someone had said something to her about the bad luck her family has had. "I said, 'I don't believe in bad luck. I see it as a testimony. God has been with us through it all.'"

Their most recent trial came in May when their home in Paragould was hit by a tornado, 18 years after their home sustained damage in the 2006 Marmaduke tornado. During the Marmaduke tornado, Misty was teaching in Marmaduke and Bruce was working for the Greene County Sheriff's Department.

"Bruce got called out, and the girls and I hit the bathtub," Misty said, but Bruce would realize quickly the extent of the storm and return to check on his family. While their home, which was located behind the ballpark, received damage, the street behind them suffered total destruction.

After the storm passed, their home was standing but full of debris, including glass. "It pulled it all through the house," Misty said. "It was the scariest thing I've ever been through."

The family had to move everything out of their home, while it was cleaned and repaired. Still, they had much to be thankful for. "We could see nothing but slabs out the back door," Bruce said.

Fast forward to May of 2024. Keely had been at the lake and had to seek shelter earlier due to warnings, so the Droles were already paying attention to the weather.

Misty said Bruce was actually calling his brother because Ryan Vaughan was reporting



he was seeing some things on the radar he didn't like near Crowley's Ridge College.

"The next thing we know, he is saying if you're between Tech Primary and Tech High School, I don't like what I'm seeing there," Misty said. "We of all people knew this could turn bad fast."

As they sought shelter in the closet, Bruce heard the tell-tale sound of shattering glass. "You could hear the roof like it picked up and sat back down," he said.

When the storm passed, there was no electricity, and they could tell they had broken windows, but the morning light showed much more extensive damage. It took the roof off the garage side of the house, and the pressure that built exited the house through the back porch.

Bruce said their insurance agent, Holden Smith, with Lennox Insurance, went above and beyond after the tornado hit.

"He was one of the first ones in our yard that night to make sure we were OK," Bruce said. "He actually started our claim in our yard that night and was with us from start to finish."

"That night I just thought, 'Well, we have a little damage,' but when the sun came up I was like, 'Oh my,'" Bruce said. Because of the damage, insurance was concerned about

the structural integrity of the house. "We had three different engineers come look," Bruce added. It was determined there were no cracks to indicate structural damage, so once insurance cleared them to begin repairs, the work began.

Lance Beasley, with Lance Beasley Roofing, who is a childhood friend, stepped up to not only fix the roof but serve as contractor for other repairs. In addition, they professionally tarped the house to protect it. "We had no new damage because they tarped it," Bruce said.

"He just said, 'I'll take care of it,'" Misty said. "They took control on August 12th," Misty said. "He said 'I'm going to make you a priority. One will be tearing off, one rebuilding, one roofing and we'll get you back into your house as quick as we can.'"

Eric Lehman with Elam Enterprises handled the structural work, replaced the garage doors and took care of the cleaning and the Droles contracted out some specific work, such as window replacement and stucco.

"It was all hands on deck to get us home," Misty said. "Everybody that we contacted to work on the house said we'll get to you as soon as you tell us you're ready for us."

Bruce noted they were also blessed with



perfect weather and on Sept. 7 they were able to move back into their home.



They said they were touched by how many people reached out to offer assistance and encouragement from the night the storm hit until they were able to return home. "I couldn't even tell you who all dropped off Gatorade, sent us messages ..." Misty said. "Lots of friends and family showed up at daylight the next morning," Bruce continued. "Neighbors continued to check on us and watched the house for us." Misty said that helped get them through. "It made a difficult situation a lot better," she said. "We didn't feel like we were in it alone."

Having been in the tornado in Marmaduke, Bruce said there was extra reason to be thankful following the May storm. "One thing just stuck out," he said. "Going through an EF-5 like Marmaduke, I don't know if people realize how bad it could have been with the path it took here."

Misty added she is thankful for the storm coverage provided by the local television station. "The attention Ryan Vaughan gave us made all the difference," she said. "He doesn't wait for the weather people to tell him. We listened because he was completely accurate at Marmaduke - so when he said get in your safe spot, we did."

Misty, who is in her 27th year of teaching, is now the literacy facilitator at GCT Intermediate. Bruce left law enforcement in 2012 and now sells vehicles at MidCo Auto Sales. "I joke all the time, I've either arrested you or helped you," he said.

The Dropses said you can always find a reason to be thankful. "Devastation is what they have in North Carolina right now," Bruce said. Misty agreed saying, "This was just a bump in the road."



The family is especially grateful to be preparing to celebrate their first holidays in their home. "We had just moved in December 29th," Misty said. "We really weren't here that long." She said it is a blessing just to be home and to have all their stuff in one place again, after having to store a lot of their belongings. "Even our dogs are thankful to be home."

"We didn't think we would be here for Thanksgiving and Christmas," she said. "To be home and get to do all that, when we didn't think we were going to be able to do that, we are very thankful."



**COLDWELL  
BANKER**  
REAL ESTATE GROUP

**SERVICE YOU  
DESERVE  
WITH PEOPLE  
YOU TRUST!**

## Counting Our Blessings

**We Are So Thankful For All Our Customers and Clients Who Place Their Trust In Us!**



Carolyn Block  
870.236.0521



Tammy Farmer  
870.236.0350



Claudette Wooten  
870.565.7395



Alicia Karns  
870.565.2615



Susan Crawford  
870.586.4088



Nick Weatherwax  
870.344.5117

**1402 W Court | Paragould, AR | 870.239.2700 | [www.nearkansashomes.com](http://www.nearkansashomes.com)**





# Renaissance Fair

## Event supports red wolf conservation

The inaugural Red Wolf Renaissance Fair was held October 12th and 13th at Craighead Forest Park in Jonesboro. The event featured local artists and entertainers, sword fights, carriage rides, games and more. Many attendees got into the spirit by dressing up as knights, mermaids, wizards and other characters. The event was coordinated to recognize and benefit the proposed American Red Wolf Conservation and Research Center. If fully funded, the center would be located at the park and provide secure enclosures for the critically-endangered American Red Wolf. The event raised over \$12,000 for the cause.



PHOTOS AND TEXT  
BY MEGAN HEYL

## Book a Home Loan Appointment with Jennifer Today!

No matter what kind of mortgage loan you need, we're here to help. We offer Fixed and Adjustable rate loans, FHA, Conventional loans and Rural loans, and VA loans. All with rapid loan approvals and closings!

Call us at **870-586-7433** and we'll help put you in the home of your dreams!



Delivering experience, service and technology since 1931.



Jennifer Rollings



© 2024 Focus Bank. Terms and Conditions apply. See website for details. \*Subject to credit approval. Jennifer Rollings NMLS 728656. Focus Bank NMLS 403606.







# A Spirit of Service

## Teamwork is key for HA CPA

While the Heidi Anderson CPA firm has moved to a new location, Anderson emphasizes nothing has changed. “We have the same friendly faces, same great service,” she said, “just a new location to better serve our clients.”

Efficiency is a priority for the firm, and Anderson said they achieve that by having different specializations and having a teamwork concept that extends to not only serving the clients but also each other.

“We have a good age range and a skill set range,” she said. “I think that’s good because what one person can’t answer, someone else can. We get inquiries from Social Security limits to child care and education credits. That’s a wide range.”

Anderson has been a CPA since 2007 and has been serving the Paragould area since 2009. After working for and then sharing an office space with Debbie Henson CPA for several years, she moved to her former location in 2020 and officially moved into her current location on Court Street in September.

“We are excited about our new space,” she said, noting the new location offers varied meeting spaces and is more conducive to conducting training or meeting with families or teams from a business. “We were bottlenecked at our old location,” she added. “It often created issues if we needed to use the same space for different things.”

While Anderson said a lot of what they do stems from someone needing a tax return done, she said approximately 40 percent of their business

is other accounting services, including periodic financial reports, tax planning, advisory services, payroll and sales tax services, and financial reports for contractor license renewals.

“The most important work we do is in November and December when we are tax planning,” she said. “Having conversations with people on the front end is where the value and tax efficiency is.”

Anderson, who is originally from Nebraska, earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Baylor University. She and her husband moved to Paragould from Texas in 2006. What they originally thought would be a short stop has become their home. “We thought we’d be here 18 to 24 months, but we love it,” she said. They have two children, one who attends Greene County Tech and one who attends Paragould School District. “It has been great having one in each school district,” she said. “I love seeing all our community has to offer and what each district does really well.”

A member of the Northeast Chapter of the Arkansas Society of Certified Public Accountants, she has previously served on the Paragould Chamber board and attended The Crossing with her family.

Anderson said the success of the firm and each client interaction is a team effort. “We try to focus on what needs to be done as a firm,” Anderson said. “There is no ‘not my job’ mentality. We have a great team dynamic. We do service, even within the office. The focus is on providing service to the clients and each other. That is what we try to do well.”

**870-236-1996**  
office.andersoncpa@gmail.com



**Anderson CPA**  
TAXATION ACCOUNTING ADVISORY

**1205 W. Court St.**  
Paragould





**KALMER  
SOLUTIONS**

*Your Business  
Deserves  
Protection  
You Can Be  
Thankful For*

**PROTECTING IT MEANS SAFEGUARDING  
EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS.**

*This Thanksgiving, while you're counting your blessings, remember the peace of mind that comes from knowing your business is secure. Kalmer Solutions gives you the gift of security, so you can focus on what matters most—your clients, your team, and your family. Discover why businesses across the region are thankful for Kalmer Solutions.*

Schedule a consultation today and keep your business safe, secure, and stress-free. Visit [kalmersolutions.com](http://kalmersolutions.com) or call **870.336.2169** to learn more!





# NOW OPEN

## Paragould moves into new municipal complex



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT

PARAGOULD CITY HALL

The city of Paragould held a grand opening for its new municipal complex on October 4th. The event included tours of the building, which houses the city's administrative offices, as well as the police station. Mayor Josh Agee told attendees the construction was funded through American Rescue Plan Act funds provided by the federal government.



Above: Mayor Josh Agee  
At left: Joe Wessell, Rusty McMillon, Jared Pickney, Dustin Rumsey, Robert Thompson, Jason Gazaway



Trevor Wisdom has joined Fabco to lead business development in assembly, equipment refurbishment, and manufacturing within our new Fabco Mechanical and Hydraulic division. A mechanical engineer with over a decade of experience in the steel industry, Trevor has recently supervised a mechanical maintenance team and contributed to construction, commissioning, and machine upgrade projects. The mission of the Fabco Mechanical and Hydraulic team is to enhance our support for the steel and metalworking industries in the region, focusing on equipment manufacture and refurbishment. Let our expertise support your team and elevate your business!



1200 Greene 628 Road, Paragould, AR 72450 | 870-240-7379



# FREEDOM LODGE OUTDOORS

BY KARAN SUMMITT

## *A Veterans for Veterans Idea Comes True*

Some folks call it giving back, while others refer to it as paying it forward. For Shannon Locklear, the personal motivation behind helping veterans experience more of the outdoors is simple. In his own words, “It literally feeds my soul to create a great outdoor experience for others. As a veteran myself, I understand the sacrifices, great or small, veterans make for this great nation.”

That understanding led to action. A 24-year Navy veteran from Antioch, Michigan, a community 40 miles north of Chicago, Locklear’s interest in veteran outdoor experiences began with The Fallen Outdoors, a national organization that coordinates openair sporting adventures for all divisions of the military. Through The Fallen Outdoors organization Locklear was introduced to duck hunting in Northeast Arkansas on the Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Manila.

An idea took hold and Locklear wanted the opportunity to do more. Things began to fall into place in 2023 when a house at O’Kean, in Greene County, Arkansas, appeared on a national foreclosure list. The proximity of the house to waterfowl hunting in flooded rice fields as well as the Dave Donaldson Black River Wildlife Management Area led Locklear to partner with his dad, a Vietnam veteran, and purchase the home. Freedom Lodge Outdoors, a facility created for the sole purpose of offering outdoor trips for veterans, was born.

Getting the lodge ready for occupancy wasn’t easy. Because it stood vacant for six years, the house needed a generous input of repairs, elbow grease and additional funds before Locklear could begin to

welcome hunters. He describes Freedom Lodge Outdoors as a very grassroots effort that depends upon the donations of local businesses, interested parties and his own monies. To help encourage outside donations the lodge is registered as a 501C3 organization.



As this past summer came to a close, Locklear completed the repairs necessary to get the lodge ready for the fall Arkansas hunting season. Facebook shares and word-of-mouth led to a full booking of duck and goose field hunts for the 2024-2025 season. With only a few exceptions, rice fields for these hunts have been donated by local farmers. All of the hunts plus lodging and food are offered at no cost to the veterans, who are responsible for supplying their own gear.

The field hunts utilize pits or skid type blinds in both flooded and dry acreage. Blind heaters are available as needed, and large amounts of quality decoys help zero in on success for the hunters. Fellow veteran guides for the hunts volunteer their services, making this a true “veterans for veterans” effort. Future plans include making arrangements for flooded timber duck hunts and offering accommodations for disabled veterans.

Veterans come to the lodge on Wednesdays and do morning and afternoon hunts on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Evenings are spent doing what Locklear calls “Fireside Chats.” These times together allow the veterans to connect on a personal level and build relationships with other veterans. Locklear promises the chats are “nothing too deep,” just an opportunity to share concerns and build overall spirit.

As any avid hunter knows, time spent chasing waterfowl has a way of creating lasting memories and promoting a camaraderie that is good for mental health. Locklear believes this unique sense of camaraderie will be especially beneficial to veterans. The mission statement for Freedom Lodge Outdoors reflects that belief with the words “Helping Veterans Heal and Prosper.”

Locklear is also involved in outdoor efforts for veterans in his home state of Michigan. These include northern waterfowl hunts, dove hunts and salmon fishing expeditions. When a close friend and fellow veteran





lost his son to suicide, Locklear helped organize the Dylan Kennedy Memorial Goose Hunt as a way of raising awareness for veteran suicide. The loss of a young man who was in his own home during growing up years still echoes in Locklear's voice as he speaks of the Kennedy memorial hunt scheduled for Veterans Day weekend. Suicide prevention among his veteran brothers is especially important to Locklear.

Freedom Lodge Outdoors can accommodate five to eight veterans at one time. Locklear has even organized an all-women veteran goose hunt in early March that is currently fully booked. At this time, the program does not have provisions for individual hunters.

Raising support for the no-cost hunts is an ongoing effort. Locklear mentioned some immediate needs include shoring up the parking area and driveway to the house with additional dirt and gravel, donations for food, utility costs and household supplies and the purchase of a side-by-side. A recent donation by Chad Overman of Overman Buildings supplied the metal for a new roof. It's gifts like these that Locklear says will allow Freedom Lodge Outdoors to thrive, expand and continue to offer hunting experiences to veterans.

The Freedom Lodge Outdoors administrative team includes Locklear and four other veterans — Keith Kennedy, Michael Campese, Raymond Moses and Paul Kah. These men reside in various locations throughout the United States and coordinate similar veteran experiences in their home area, all working underneath the Freedom Lodge Outdoors banner.

For more information on how to schedule a hunt or make a contribution to the lodge in O'Kean, contact Locklear at 847-404-3164, visit the website at [Freedomlodgeoutdoors.com](http://Freedomlodgeoutdoors.com) or find Freedom Lodge Outdoors on Facebook.



**NEA non-profit and charitable organizations are welcome to join us at IV Kings Coffee on Nettleton every Tuesday from 7-10 a.m. to tell Jill listeners your story!**

**Jill 49.3**  
less talk, more music

No Appointments Necessary!



**Jill's**  
**TUESDAY MORNING DISH**  
@ IV Kings from 7-10 a.m.

Sponsored by:

JONESBORO INSURANCE Group, Inc. | ARPets Hospital | FIRST COMMUNITY BANK  
*Where community comes first.*

IV KINGS COFFEE




**You're on the go - don't let your bank slow you down.**

With banking that keeps you connected, you can check your balance, make transfers and more - wherever, whenever.

 **Southern BANK** | **BANKWITHSOUTHERN.COM**

Equal Housing Lender | Member FDIC



# Attention Veterans!



**WE ARE NOW A  
VA APPROVED PROVIDER!**

TRAUMATIC INJURY THERAPIST  
REFERRAL REQUIRED

ASK YOUR VA PROVIDER IF MASSAGE  
IS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOU!



BEST IN PARAGOULD FOR THE PAST 11 CONSECUTIVE YEARS

## INTRODUCING *Brianna Joiner*



*Schedule an appointment with us today!*

Brianna Joiner is a skilled esthetician, specializing in facials and waxing, with a degree from Hair Tech Beauty College.

Since moving to Paragould a year and a half ago, she has developed a deep connection to the community.

Outside of her professional life, Brianna is a dedicated wife and mother. In her free time, she enjoys spending quality time with her family, including outdoor activities like riding their 4-wheeler and side-by-side.

She looks forward to providing personalized skincare solutions to her clients, ensuring they feel confident and cared for.



870.215.0663 | 110 W Court St | Paragould, AR 72450



[rougespaandsalon.com](http://rougespaandsalon.com)



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT



# PINK WARRIORS UNITE



Focus Bank's Team Marcy won the Spirit Award.



This group walked in honor of Christie Long and Tracie Kerns.

A large group gathered on October 12th for the Pink Warrior Walk at the St. Bernards Health and Wellness Center. The annual event included a survivor walk, a spirit contest and a walk/run.



Lynn Raines pins a number on Tabitha Raines.



"Just Ken" was among those supporting breast cancer patients and survivors.



For MOR(e) pictures from this event, check the Premiere Magazine Facebook page!

Never miss out on what's happening in NEA. Keep up with local events like this and find MOR(e) places to explore at [neapremiere.com](http://neapremiere.com)



# LUCK OF THE DRAW

## Elk Hunt Was Dream Come True



There are lots of skills involved in being a successful outdoorsman. Woodsmanship, patience, persistence and stealth are just a few of those. Throughout my outdoors career, I have been blessed with many that were able to demonstrate those skills. But a new skill set has emerged that is essential, especially for the big game hunter that desires to hunt the West. A hunter must become technologically savvy and understand the draw systems for each state and how they work. In many cases the most difficult thing for the hunter desiring to hunt the mountains of Colorado, the plains of Wyoming or the forests of New Mexico is drawing the tag. That also brings into play another factor, good old luck!

Several years ago, I went on an archery elk hunt in Colorado with Kyle Bynum and Brandon Brown. We were not successful in taking an animal but had a great experience. Two years ago, Kevin Keen and I drew elk tags for the Bighorn Mountains in Wyoming, and he was able to take a bull elk, but I did not fill my tag. I had high hopes for 2023.

Tag applications for most Western states are due early in the year, typically January – April, for the hunts the following fall. This requires some planning in time and finances in hopes of drawing a tag. Some of the tags can be easy to draw, but most are not. I decided to swing for the fences and try to draw a coveted New Mexico elk tag. There was less than a five percent chance to draw, but, as I told one of my hunting buddies, “Someone has to draw it!”

A set date is announced for the posting of draw results, and I impatiently waited for that day. I checked my email that morning and had an email from New Mexico, I had drawn the tag. I was so surprised I had to doublecheck a couple times to be sure I was reading it correctly. I was going elk hunting in New Mexico! I knew I could not do the hunt alone so I immediately contacted a few of my

hunting buddies and two, Brent Trout and Daniel Hensley, agreed to go with me.

I began to train, shoot and assemble gear. I had never hunted in this area, so my wife Lorie and I made a quick scouting trip to the unit about three weeks before the hunt. That proved to be very beneficial. Daniel, Brent and I headed to New Mexico a few days before the hunt to set up camp and scout the area. The camping area Lorie and I found was vacant, so we set up our tent and began to look over the unit. We covered several roads in the vehicle and walked a few miles and one thing became very evident ... there was plenty of elk.

On the second afternoon we found a particular area that looked promising. That afternoon we heard one bull bugle several times just over the mountain and when we got back to camp, we went over the maps and made a plan for the next morning.

We drove back into the area the following morning, planning to park about half a mile from the area. We shut off our headlights about one mile before our destination to lessen the impact. We parked and started toward the area and immediately heard a bugle. We had a plan and tried to put it into action, but the elk had other ideas. The elk were a bit further up the valley and we tried to approach from the opposite hillside. It became evident we needed to be down in the valley, so we made the move, crossed a couple fences and headed up the draw.

There were animals throughout the valley, and we were planning our approach when a small bull and a couple cows appeared, as if out of nowhere, just over the hill. This made for a frantic situation, and I tried to rush a shot. It was not immediately obvious, but I missed. Elk still lingered in the valley, including a huge bull, but we felt we needed to ensure a clean miss before I tried another. After a



## CHUCK LONG

Avid Outdoorsman  
Retired Outdoor Educator



thorough search, we concluded it was a miss. I was disappointed but hoped for another opportunity. We sat up that afternoon overlooking a waterhole in the valley, but the only elk we saw were just a bit far. We went back to camp to regroup for the next day.

We woke up a little earlier the next morning and followed the same tactics and were greeted with several bugles as we got out of the truck. We eased down the trail in the predawn darkness. One of the bugling bulls seemed to be getting closer. We slowed our pace and got off the two track road and set up on a nearby fence, using the fenceline and posts as a bit of cover.

It was too early to legally shoot when the bull crested a hill, easily within range. I put my rifle on the bull, and waited as Daniel watched the clock. He counted down the time, two minutes, one minute, and finally legal time arrived. I fired and the bull buckled but ran over the hill, just out of sight. I sat down and tried to fight off the symptoms of "buck fever." We agreed the hit looked good and waited a few minutes before heading up the hill. When we topped the hill, the bull lay dead just on the other side.

I am truly thankful for that experience, the memories and the meals that we have been blessed with from that animal. I am thankful to Lorie for taking the time to do the scouting trip and thankful to Daniel and Brent for the help with the hunt and the packout. This trip would not have been possible without them.

A lot went into this hunt, but it all started with a bit of luck in drawing the tag. If you are interested in going west, my best advice is DO IT! Start making plans now as the application season starts in January. If you need help, please reach out. Maybe next year you will fulfill your dreams somewhere on a mountain. I hope to see you out there!

**LANCE BEASLEY ROOFING**  
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

QUALITY COMES FIRST!

*Locally Owned & Operated*  
**870-476-1919**



# Shaking up Thanksgiving

BY KATIE COLLINS

We'll probably all find ourselves in the vicinity of a pumpkin pie this holiday season, and there's nothing wrong with that – it's a classic. Sometimes you want to "shake" the holiday table up with something that has that classic pumpkin taste but with a twist. Earthquake cake is not known to be aesthetically pleasing which is perfect for someone like me whose talents don't lie

in making baked goods look pretty but who has better luck making things taste good. I've always been a fan of the non-pumpkin version, so I was glad to give this one a try. Go wild with the optional toppings – or don't – the cake is good with or without them, but since it's a holiday, you might as well go all in! Shake things up this Thanksgiving with this Pumpkin Earthquake Cake!

## Pumpkin Earthquake Cake



### Ingredients:

- 1 cup pecans
- 1 cup sweetened shredded coconut
- 1 box cake mix (white, yellow, butter pecan, or spice – your choice!)
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- ½ cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 heaping Tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs
- 8 ounce block cream cheese, softened
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted
- Optional toppings: ¼ cup each of any flavor baking chips, caramel bits, nuts

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 9x13 pan with cooking spray. Sprinkle coconut and pecans on bottom of pan.

In a large bowl, mix cake mix, oil, water, pumpkin, brown sugar,

pumpkin pie spice, vanilla, and eggs together until well combined. Pour batter over the coconut and pecans.

In another large bowl, mix cream cheese, melted butter, and powdered sugar together. Drop by spoonfuls on top of the cake batter. Swirl the cream cheese mixture into the cake mix with a knife. Sprinkle

any of the optional toppings that you like on top and swirl those in as well.

Bake 40-45 minutes. Cake will look like a hot mess but trust the process. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Cut and serve as is, or you can top it with caramel sauce and/or whipped cream. Store in the refrigerator.

## Holiday Pet Photos Project supports NEAHS

The Northeast Arkansas Humane Society's annual Holiday Pet Photos are scheduled for Nov. 18, 19 and 23 in the classroom of the Jonesboro Shooting Sports Complex, 3702 Moore Road in Jonesboro, with Joey Glaub as the photographer.

"I look forward to this event every year; it's always a pleasure to volunteer my time and talents to such a great cause," he said. "My wife and I are dog folks and currently have a 10-year-old rescue, Ruby, that we've had since she was a puppy. We also have a couple of 'brother/sister' Doodles that we've fostered since late 2016. Needless to say, Bella and Teddy are in their permanent home now."

Appointments can be scheduled from 3-7 p.m. Nov. 18 and from 4-8 p.m. Nov. 19. On Nov. 23, appointments can be made from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Appointments can be made by calling or texting 870-897-5258; please do not contact the NEAHS shelter or the Shooting Sports Complex.

"We are so thankful for Joey's continuing support of this project," event organizer Janet Thiel stated. "We have struggled with various locations lately, but the space at the shooting complex worked great last year." Both Thiel and Glaub noted that leashes and carriers should be used because the range sits in a large unfenced area, making it difficult to



corner animals that might decide to explore the space.

Photographs will again be offered in digital format only. For \$35 per pose, pet owners will be able to choose one image from their online proofs and receive a copyright-released file emailed to them.



# SNEAK PEEK

## Power Plant to Event Center



Tim Roswell, Bill Pollard, Drake Wallace



For MOR(e) pictures from this event, check the Premiere Magazine Facebook page!

Susan Youngblood, Tim Wooldridge, Kelly Roswell

BY SHELBY RUSSOM

Main Street Paragould invited the community to take a look at changes being made to the over 100-year-old power plant building on Oct. 3, during the “Power Plant Sneak Peek” event. Collaboration between First National Bank and the City of Paragould helped reinvent the power plant, with multiple entities contributing to the project.

Once a building that sat empty on East Poplar Street, it will now become a unique multi-use event space known as “The Station powered by First National Bank.” The sneak peek of the building’s status was intended to celebrate the achievements of the Greene County Future Fund and get residents excited about the future of Downtown Paragould. The event featured live music from Electric Voodoo Explosion, hors d’oeuvres and a signature “The Station” cocktail.



Abby Kidd, Merisha Hovey



Drew Skaggs, Meredith Smith



Jeff McDonald



# GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT

**B**y itself, the old baseball glove doesn't look like much. It's just a piece of flat, worn leather, cracking here and there as time has taken its toll. But in the overall scheme of things, it is one of the blessings I am most thankful for in this life.

My father brought the glove home to me when I was four years old and from the first time I slipped it onto my hand and learned how to catch ground balls and throws, I really didn't want to do too much else. Looking at it today, it serves as an eternal bond between Dad and me and I always smile when I think of the countless times we went outside at our Campground Community home and he taught me the game I came to love.

I've bought many gloves since that day when my life changed for the better, but it is the path that first one sent me down that clings to my heart today and compels me to be so grateful for all it represents. I became a fair player for around here, good enough to be an All-Stater and earn a college scholarship, and that in itself represents a great reward. Because of that journey to Texas to seek a career as a player, I met as good a friend as I've ever come into contact with – a fellow named Robert Burg from Houston, who was one of my first roommates and remains my best pal even now. That friendship was made possible because Dad bought me a glove, encouraged me to use it, and the good fortune that followed matched me up with so many wonderful friends I can't even begin to list them.

When I was a teenager Paragould High School didn't have a baseball program, so as a lover of the game that made for me a frustrating high school experience. I was envious of my good summertime teammates who got to play for Greene County Tech, Oak Grove, Marmaduke and Crowley's Ridge Academy and others in the high school season, and I could only go to their games and watch. It put us Paragould kids at a great disadvantage when American Legion team tryouts arrived, but all those hours of working on baseball skills either with Dad or on my own paid off and I was fortunate to be a three-year starter for the Legion.

I played alongside some of the best Greene County has produced – Larry Elmore, James "Rooster" Thomas, Kendal Hurt – and witnessed first-hand their incredible talents. The hitting and fielding prowess of Kendal and Larry and the magical arm of Rooster on the mound led us to win after win after win, and I was there beside them ... all because more than a decade earlier my dad bought me a glove.

When I called an end to my college and semi-pro playing days, I felt a sense of loss thinking I might not have the need for a glove any

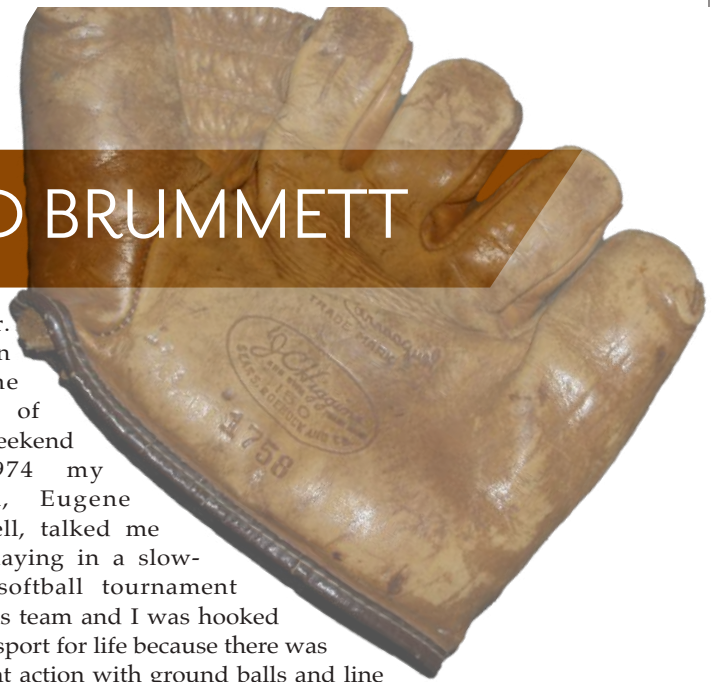
longer. Then on the Fourth of July weekend in 1974 my cousin, Eugene Maxwell, talked me into playing in a slow-pitch softball tournament with his team and I was hooked on the sport for life because there was constant action with ground balls and line drives hit my way, and the glove once again became an important part of my existence.

The following year Gale Maag contacted me and said he wanted me to play shortstop for his Marmaduke team – one of the best around – and I became teammates with fellows like Donnie Gene Reynolds, Kelly Scobey, Wally Shrader and the Markin brothers, Gary and Dalton. I wouldn't have known them personally except for that common bond of loving the game, and my loving the glove.

From there it was on to teams playing at a higher level and making it to the National Championship game twice and forming friendships with people that mean so much to me I can't explain the depth of it ... guys from Kennett, Poplar Bluff, Little Rock, Ozark, Magnolia, Oklahoma, Texas and many points in between, guys I would never have heard of if not for some success in the baseball/softball arenas, guys I would do absolutely anything for today. And I know them, and love them, because my dad bought me a baseball glove.

Back in my junior high and high school years, even after hours of basketball practice on the coldest days of January and February, I often backed the car out of the carport and threw a tennis ball against the brick wall to work on proper fielding technique. Just as in the first days of learning those skills as a tiny country boy, when I had that glove on I needed little else ... not girls or geometry or a car or popularity; all I needed was the feel of that ball plopping into the glove time and again. It brought a feeling of peace, of accomplishment, of something I knew I could do well.

I realized then, and also for whatever success I might find down the road, I owed a great debt to Dad for bringing that first glove home. I don't imagine he saw it as a life-changing moment when he did it; but by doing so he gave me one of the greatest blessings possible. I have a roster full of lifetime friends because he did, and I'm most thankful.







PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT

Alan Dunn and Cathy Strack



The Happy Campers



Miranda Reynolds, Neal Adams, Holly Gordon and Allison Hestand

The Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted its first Cheers with the Chamber after-hours social event on Oct. 1 at Harmon Park.

The event, which included a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the new pickleball courts at the park, also included food from Carlos's Street Tacos & More, as well as live entertainment by The Happy Campers.

Several pickleball enthusiasts attended to help dedicate the courts, while some tried the sport for the first time. Cheers with the Chamber is a new event for members to celebrate the community and share in new developments.



JOHN DEERE



GREENWAY





CHORE BUSTER

# ELEVATE YOUR EFFICIENCY.

3025E TRACTOR + BOX BLADE



FRONTIER BOX BLADE





# Linda Johnson Living life with diabetes

BY KAROLINE RISKER

Linda Johnson watched her mom, Barbara, struggle with diabetes and when she realized she had some of the same symptoms, she decided it was time to make changes. Linda was in her mid-30s when she was told she was pre-diabetic, a condition she lived with for just over a decade. When she started putting on weight she couldn't lose, she went to get bloodwork done, which revealed she had transitioned from pre-diabetes to diabetes.

Her reaction was one of sadness. "I knew my mom had been on insulin and gave herself shots and had to keep track of it," Linda said. She was told she might have to take insulin herself if her numbers didn't get better. Her doctor then set her up with Kelly Stipe, a certified diabetes educator/registered nurse at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, to whom Linda credits much of her success.

"We sat down a good two hours going over different things," Linda said of her visit. The pair went over family history, what led Linda to that point in her health, how stress played a role, her diet, and exercise. "I had been stressed out quite a bit," said Linda. "My mom's health wasn't good and she passed away. A year of grieving ... I said, 'I'm done. I'm going to get past it and move on.' It was one of those things where changing the mindset and getting rid of the stress made me able to focus more on myself. That was the turning point for me."

As a result, Linda has lost almost 50 pounds and to this day she has never been on insulin. Linda said Kelly gave her small changes to make, emphasizing not to do anything drastic but instead setting small goals. One example was changing from using a pre-made cappuccino cup every morning to having regular coffee and using Half and Half, sweetened with Stevia instead of sugar. "I didn't have to change a lot of things to my diet," Linda said. She did have to add protein and eat more, going from eating twice a day to three times a day.

Linda said it was necessary to trick her metabolism to speed back up since she was in insulin resistance. Another big change Linda made was to cut back on eating out.

The weight loss had other effects than just keeping her off of insulin. "Honestly, when the weight started coming off, I was able to do simple things like housework or adding something when I came home from work instead of immediately sitting down. I have way more energy. I can feel it," she said. "My knees would hurt a lot and I don't have that type of pain any more like I had. Once you see the effects of it, it makes you want to keep going."

Another part of her program was to get more active. Linda started swimming a lot in the summer and walking. "I have to find other ways to get exercise in that's more active, like push mowing my front lawn instead of using the riding lawn mower," she said.

Kelly also had Linda on a glucose sensor to monitor her sugar for a year in an attempt to level everything out. They found that Linda was having drops in sugar in the morning at 9 or 10. "It turns out I was eating too late at night," Linda said. "Sugar was spiking at night and bottoming out. I wasn't giving myself enough time to burn off or process (the sugar). We didn't know what was going on until the reading came back from the sensor."

Kelly calls Linda the poster child of what to do when you have a diabetes diagnosis, saying she is a great example of what to do to manage diabetes and lead a successful life.



**REGISTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN \$1000 IN CHAMBER BUCKS!**  
**Nov. 20 - Dec. 8, 2024**  
 Registration locations are listed at [paragould.org](http://paragould.org).  
 For more information, contact the Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce at 870-236-7684.

The Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce presents  
**A Gingerbread Christmas**  
 2024 Shop Paragould First Campaign

Sponsored by



# THE ADVENTURES OF

# Lester

BY VICKI McMILLAN



Hello, Lester here again on a beautiful fall day! 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 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 am thankful I have a nice, fenced backyard, to roll in and chase squirrels. I am also very thankful for my personal vet, Dr. Copeland, who treats me like the king I am.

\* 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’ve seen beautiful art works and statues and beautiful churches. I saw a replica of Michelangelo’s Pieta in a cathedral in St. Paul, Minnesota. 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). 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. Speaking of traveling, I am also thankful I don’t get car sick.

\* 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.

\* I am thankful for the elders at Belle Meade’s Vassar House, including Nana. Those elders give the best ear scratches and tummy rubs! And treats — not a one broken in half.

\* I am thankful that Paragould and Jonesboro now both have Dog Parks! They are great places to play with other doggies, or just chat up cute Doodles or Bassetts!

In closing, I just want to say get off that blanket and work on your own 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!

*Lester*

*Glen Sain*  
God Bless Our Troops

Ford

870.236.8546 | 1301 US 49  
GLENSAINFORD.NET

BEST PRICE  
BEST SERVICE





# Much to be thankful for

## DNW, DUCK CLASSIC SUPPORT NEA BAPTIST FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

As the annual Duck Classic approaches, the Parish family, who have owned DNW Outdoors and DNW Automotive for a little over a year now, reflected on their thankfulness as they have taken on different roles with both the business and the event, which raises funds for the NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation.

When the family purchased DNW in October of 2023, there was a long-standing relationship in place between the business and the Duck Classic. Maintaining that connection was natural for the Parish family, because they were already supporters of the event and the foundation.

Susie Parish and her late husband, Tony, had supported the Duck Classic through the years as attendees, and had also served as landowners for the hunt in the past. "We were always big supporters," Susie said. "Now, we're on the other side of it. We attended many years before we became sponsors. We would go home with a lot of stuff."

Susie said they also developed a relationship with NEA Baptist as Tony spent the final days of his life there. Cady Parish added that as new owners of DNW with all that entails, including their continued commitment to the Duck Classic, they are thankful for DNW founders Dennis and Kay Noell.

"We would not be able to manage even now without having them to guide us," she said. "We are thankful to them for letting us follow in their steps but also put our touch on it. We are so grateful for their family and they have become a part of our family."

Rhonda Parker, event planner for the foundation, said DNW 's



Lindsey, Cody, Cady and Susie Parish

partnership is essential to the event's success. "This event would not happen without the support of DNW," she said. "The Noells and the Parishes have been instrumental in keeping this going."

### A dream come true

Lindsey Parish shared that owning a store like DNW was Cody's childhood dream. He just didn't know it would end up actually being DNW.

"He grew up hunting and fishing," she said, "and what better way to live that dream than to own a hunting store. Probably the first love of his life was hunting, which also gave him his core memories with his dad."



She grew emotional as she considered watching their sons grow up as part of the DNW and hunting community. "For me, it's about passing these things down to my boys and watching them grow up sharing those core memories," Lindsey said. "What better way can you blend with your family and your community than doing what you love?"

She shared that when thinking about hunting one might not necessarily automatically think about community, but they actually blend together. She noted that hunters feed animals and provide habitat. "It all goes full circle," she said."

Cady added that hunting helps form a sense of community between outdoor enthusiasts, as well. "Hunting brings people together," she said. "Especially duck hunting. Duck hunting is like a social gathering. It brings all different types of people and personalities together when they share one common love for the game of hunting."

Cady said she had lots of fond memories of DNW from her childhood. "I grew up deer hunting with my dad," she said. "He brought me here for my first pair a muck boots."

Lindsey laughed as she recalled her and Cody walking through DNW with their son Lane in the buggy at about four months old. "We shared that photo and said, "This store is going to break us,"" she said. "Little did we know."

As Cady reflected on the NEA Baptist Foundation's work and the services provided by DNW, she saw a parallel between the two, along with the Duck Classic. "They help all people – all ethnicities, all ages," she said of the foundation's programs. "At DNW there's something for everybody here; and the Duck Classic helps people from all walks of life."

#### Event continues to grow

Kim Provost, executive director of the foundation, said the Duck Classic has grown every year since the first event raised \$18,000. "In 2023 we raised \$825,000," Rhonda said. "Our goal is to always continue to grow."

The idea for the event stemmed from a group of physicians at NEA

Continued ➡



Cady Parish and the 2024 Duck Truck



## What does the Duck Classic support?

Money raised from the annual Duck Classic helps fund the outreach programs of the NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation. Rhonda Parker, event planner for the foundation, said perhaps even those who support the event each year may not truly realize the impact they are having on the community.

"The mission of NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation is to enhance the health care and lives of those we serve through the programs and services we support," Rhonda said. "We do this through six free programs and a multitude of free services."

The programs, which Parker stressed are offered to residents, regardless of where they receive their healthcare, include:

**Center For Good Grief** – Licensed therapists offer free grief counseling to children, teens and adults who are grieving the loss of a loved one. (In 2023: 1,750 individual sessions, 16 seminars, 28 groups).

**Center for Healthy Children** – Offers a free after school program for children who struggle with obesity. This program helps children and their families reach healthy goals through exercise, nutrition and education (In 2023: partnered with local schools to provide in-person education to nearly 1,000 students, hosted 30 students in after school programs)

**Hope Circle** – Provides a community of hope, support, and educational programs for families living with cancer. These services include free wigs, transportation services and lodging for cancer patients (In 2023: 510 gas cards provided, 231 nights' lodging, 74 wigs, over 5,000 meals to infusion patients)

**Medicine Assistance Program** – In partnership with pharmaceutical companies, this program helps patients receive their life-saving prescriptions at no cost (In 2023: \$4.76 million in prescription medication provided)

**ShareHope** – A free program for those whose lives are touched by the tragic death of a baby through pregnancy loss, stillbirth or in the first few months of life (In 2023: provided over \$5,000 in burial expenses to grieving families, and served over 20 families during loss)

**Wellness Works** – A free personally-tailored fitness program available exclusively for diabetic, cardiopulmonary, and cancer patients to help them as they adjust to chronic illnesses (45 individual sessions per week)



Baptist Clinic who wanted to fund a community foundation and also had a love for the outdoors.

"They wanted to combine their love for duck hunting and the outdoors with community support," Kim said. "We have teams that have hunted for 23 years and teams that are brand new. I think that's a testament to the natural resources, the great duck hunting, as well as our event."

She also talked about the resiliency of the event, having dealt with ice storms, a tornado and COVID. "The event has continued to grow through all those obstacles," Kim said.

A lot of things have changed through the years, including the addition of the Grand Classic giveaway, which started with an individual who donated a vehicle. In 2024 the Grand Classic includes a truck from Central Chevrolet, accessories from DNW, a side by side from Bad Boy Bandit, and a \$15,000 shopping spree from Gamble Home Furnishing. "It's all completely donated," Rhonda said. "That helps us raise a lot of additional funds for these programs."

The silent auction has also changed through the years and is now completely online. It will open on Thanksgiving day. "We started with pen and paper and now it's online," Rhonda said. "And they can bid even if they can't be at the event."

The event has also changed locations through the years, starting at the Colonnade, then later being held at the armory at Arkansas State University and both NEA District Fairgrounds locations, before moving to its current location at First National Bank Arena.

"One thing that has remained the same is the community support," Kim said. Rhonda noted that the event has local, regional, statewide and



2007 Duck Classic at the armory at Arkansas State University

national sponsors. "It continues to grow, but without the connection to the community it would stall out," she said.

Rhonda said they hope the event is as good for the community as it is for the foundation, as it serves as the primary funding source for the foundation's outreach programs. "There's a lot of moving parts," Rhonda said. "We are thankful for a great team that helps make the event happen each year."

For more information on the Duck Classic, including event details, sponsorships, the hunt, volunteering, and the silent auction, which is conducted online, visit [duckclassic.com](http://duckclassic.com) or find Duck Classic on Facebook.



**Lindsey Hagood**  
Owner/Founder

## Elite Senior Care, LLC

### "Our Name Says It ALL"

Our Family Is Here For Yours.  
Elite Senior Care LLC strives to bring the best in home health care services to every individual in need.

We provide a compassionate hand in finding a caregiver fit for you and your family's needs. We provide caring professionals with specialized knowledge to assist in the comfort of your home. Aides are all certified with background checks, drug screenings, and continued education. It is our goal to make sure our clients are put first.



**Arnesa Joplin**  
Regional Supervisor

**We accept the following:**

- AR Choice Waiver
- Medicaid
- Home Care for Veterans
- Passe: Empower
- Arkansas Total Care
- Summitt
- Care Source
- Target Case Management
- Private Pay



**online at [myeliteseniorcare.com](http://myeliteseniorcare.com)**

**CALL US TODAY!**

**Manila:** Corporate Office  
870.570.0340

**Jonesboro:** 870.351.0125

**Paragould:** 870.240.0559

**Blytheville/Osceola:** 870.822.2120

**Marked Tree:** 870.358.1340

**West Memphis:** 870.629.5200

**Mountain Home:** 870.580.0256

**Carlisle/North Little Rock:**  
870.822.2120





# Apply Now for an Opportunity in the Metal Industry!

## The Metals Industry Offers Great Benefits:

- Competitive compensation
- Medical/Dental/Vision Coverage
- Paid Vacation
- Paid Holidays
- 401K With Company Match
- Tuition Reimbursement Program

### To Apply:

Text or Call  
SMS Group at  
870-375-3967



# SMS group



# An Entrepreneurial Spirit

## LYNETTE WEST

BY SHELBY RUSSOM

An entrepreneur is passionate, resilient and determined. Lynette West of Jonesboro's HealthWear Inc. embodies that spirit. Born in Paragould, West set her heart on creating a space where those in the health field could find medical wear and supplies that reflect trends and personal style in a unique way. West said she believes when people feel good about their appearance, it empowers them. Uniforms in the medical field are often boxy and uncomfortable. West said being in an unflattering uniform could potentially hamper someone's work and self-esteem.

"When you feel good about how you look, it kind of pumps up your day, and it gives them that better mentality to care for others," West said. "They do so much for all of the people that they care for and I love helping them find what lets them show their personality while still being in whatever their uniform has to be."

In April of this year, West received the Arkansas Small Business Person of the Year Award recognizing her for her commitment to quality and her contributions to the community. "I put my heart and soul into this," West said of developing her business. "To have something like the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) feel like I am doing something that brings such an impact and such recognition to the area just means the world to me."

After earning a business degree and working several years in

management, West found her passion for helping businesses flourish and made the decision to help set up HealthWear. After working part-time at the company for two years, she became a business partner in 2015 and took sole ownership in

2023. West said the transition from managing positions to business ownership taught her there are major differences between the two and the importance of accepting the support of those around you.

When West became a managing partner of HealthWear on Dec. 2, 2015, the company had hit a rough patch and was set to close its doors on Dec. 31. In a short amount of time, and with a lot of dedication, West was able to turn the business into something successful and profitable for her family and the Jonesboro community. She said her success would not have been possible without her unwavering support system. "My husband is my biggest cheerleader," she said. "He has always had



healthWear inc.  
Scrubs with Style

Jonesboro PREMIERE  
AWARD WINNER  
2023

URA

JONESBORO REGIONAL  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The one-stop shop  
for premiere uniforms  
and medical supplies!

FAMILY OWNED  
SHOP LOCAL  
& OPERATED

1320 Red Wolf Blvd. | Jonesboro AR | 870.336.3046 | healthwearinc.com



complete faith in me and having him really helped me have the confidence to take on being a small business owner.”

Due to recent economic stress, small businesses may find themselves struggling. West said her heart breaks each time she sees a business close its doors. To her, this can be remedied if residents choose to support local businesses, rather than big box stores. “Small businesses are more likely to give back because they care. You’re not just a dollar sign when you come in,” she said. “Every person who walks in my store is important to me.”

West said she is always willing to speak to anyone with questions or concerns about owning a business because she does not want to see anyone fail. She said reaching out to other small business owners will create a support system and strengthen small businesses so they can all successfully give back to their community.

Along with finding a support system, West said small businesses owners should take advantage of the resources available to them such as the SBA Train, Hope, Rise, Innovate and Venture (T.H.R.I.V.E.) Emerging Leaders course. T.H.R.I.V.E is a free 6-month course intended to help established business owners increase and maintain their success. During the course, business owners learn how to manage finances, marketing strategies and more. West said collaborating with professional coaches and mentors during the course helped her to better understand her business. “They really break it down and make you understand how those finances work, what those numbers mean and how to calculate them to understand how you’re doing,” she said.

Although difficult, West said it can be rewarding to run a small business and encourages others to do so. She said each potential owner should have a good plan in place, finances for at least a few years and a headstrong determination to make their dreams a reality.



**| GOATS | TREES | HOLIDAY HOUSE | FIRE PIT |**

**EXPERIENCE CROW'S NEST FARMS**  
 STARTING SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd  
 3607 GREENE 628 ROAD, PARAGOULD

**SHOP ONLINE OR IN PERSON**  
[crowsnestfarms.com](http://crowsnestfarms.com)  
 DELIVERY AVAILABLE

@crowsnestfarms  
 The Crow's Nest Farms





# HEALTH Matters

## Got Diabetes? Get Help!

A diagnosis of diabetes is not something to be taken lightly or left to medication and then forgotten. Making a commitment to SELF-manage diabetes will lower the risk for a multitude of serious complications related to uncontrolled blood sugar levels. It will also increase the likelihood for a long, active and enjoyable life. Diabetes requires attention, but that effort is rewarded with big dividends.

Ignore the above and you may find yourself included in a list of unwelcome statistics like the ones below obtained from the American Diabetes Association and the Centers for Disease Control:

\*Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of blindness among adults aged 18–64 years.

\*Diabetes and high blood sugar are the leading causes for kidney failure and the need for dialysis, accounting for about two-thirds of cases.

\*The top attributor to adult non-traumatic, lower-extremity amputations is uncontrolled diabetes.

\*People with diabetes are 3x more likely to die with heart disease.

Due to its complexity and the lifestyle changes that are needed to self-manage diabetes, most insurance plans cover the cost of professional diabetic education for newly diagnosed diabetics and for yearly refresher visits. These include education for all diagnosis-type 1 diabetes, gestational (pregnancy-related) diabetes and type 2,

adult-onset diabetes.

Sitting down with a diabetic educator and walking through your specific diagnosis is critical to understanding the disease and its impact on your health. A registered nurse with additional certification in diabetes management can help you understand the causes, symptoms and complications of diabetes and how your specific medications work to control blood sugar levels. Diabetic education can also include time with a registered dietitian, who will provide assistance with meal plans and carbohydrate counting. In a nutshell, diabetes educators are able to spend extended time with you, going into details, answering questions and sharing strategies that give you confidence in your own ability to successfully self-manage your health.

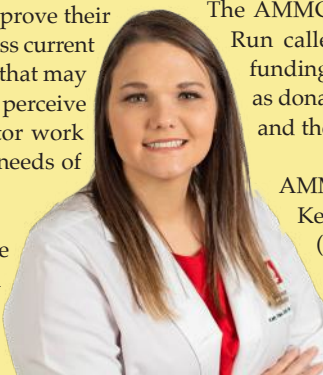
These medical professionals work closely with your primary care physician. After diabetes is diagnosed, to assure insurance coverage your doctor must prescribe the professional diabetic education. Your first visit for education will require a longer span of time, with a follow-up visit some weeks later. Many diabetic educators are available to answer questions between visits. Most diabetic education programs also offer support groups.

All three major medical centers in Northeast Arkansas have diabetes management programs. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes I cannot over-emphasize the importance and benefits of taking time to meet with a diabetes educator. Re-read the statistics above and make a commitment to learn the SELF-management skills that can reduce your own risk for serious complications. The one person who stands to gain the most — or lose the most — is YOU!

### Arkansas Methodist Medical Center Diabetes Care Clinic

The Diabetes Care Clinic at AMMC offers comprehensive diabetic education with a primary purpose of helping diabetics successfully navigate the many decisions that can protect and improve their health. At AMMC Diabetes Care Clinic you will discuss current blood sugar levels, lifestyle, habits and other details that may influence glucose readings or how the patient may perceive their diagnosis. From there, the patient and educator work together to come up with a game plan that fits the needs of the patient.

In addition to individual patient education, the clinic is available to conduct lunch-n-learns at local industries and provide a table at health fairs. A Community Diabetes Event is held quarterly that features a diabetic-friendly meal, guest speakers with



information on topics of interest to the diabetes patient, giveaways and free door prizes. The next event will be held on November 21 at 6 p.m. Please RSVP to 870-239-7016 to attend.

The AMMC Diabetes Care Clinic sponsors an annual Glow Run called 4000 Steps for Diabetes. Proceeds go toward funding diabetes outreach in the local community, as well as donations to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the American Diabetes Association.

AMMC Diabetes Care Clinic Staff:  
Kelly Sipes, RN, BSN, CDCES  
(currently completing insulin pump certification)

Contact for more information:  
900 West Kingshighway, Paragould  
870-239-7155



## NEA Baptist Diabetes Center

NEA Diabetes Center is staffed by a nurse practitioner and an RN educator to aid in the medical management of diabetes along with one-on-one comprehensive education. The Diabetes Center can facilitate continuous glucose monitor orders and insulin pumps where appropriate.

Every patient will receive education and medical appointments. They provide education and management for Type 1 children and adults, Type 2 and gestational diabetes patients. The NEA Baptist Diabetes Center staff is also available for community health fairs, presentations and employee lunch-n-learns.

A diabetes support group meets every other month from 12-1 p.m., with lunch provided at the NEA Conference center. The next meeting will be held on November 13 - an RSVP to 870-936-8286 is required.

NEA Baptist Diabetes Center Staff:  
Amber Toombs, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CDCES  
Sara Rowe, BSN-RN Diabetes Educator

Contact for more information:  
4802 East Johnson,  
Jonesboro  
870-936-8000



## 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.



## St. Bernards Diabetes Management Center

The St. Bernards Diabetes Management Center is recognized by the American Diabetes Association and certified to help adults who have prediabetes, Type 1 diabetes, Type 2 diabetes and gestational (pregnancy) diabetes. The staff includes certified diabetic educators and a registered nutritionist.

Diabetic education includes ways to better manage blood sugar, the latest guidelines for enjoying a tasty, healthy diet with diabetes — learning you don't necessarily need to cut out your favorite foods -- and the signs and symptoms when it's time to seek medical attention. If you have an insulin pump or you're thinking of using one, the staff can work with pump providers to help you use it.

Everyone is welcome to join the St. Bernards free Diabetes Management Support Group. You and a loved one can attend for fellowship, encouragement, education, cooking and more.



They discuss ways to eat healthy with diabetes, go over information about managing diabetes well, play games, and give away door prizes. The next support group meeting will be held on December 3 from 12-1 p.m. at the St. Bernards Wellness Center. RSVP to 870-207-7840.

The St. Bernards Diabetes Management Center staff is available to speak at community events such as civic organizations, churches or health fairs. A staff member is also available at the monthly St. Bernards Community Health Screening. Dates are available at [stb.info](http://stb.info).

St. Bernards Diabetes Management Center Staff:

Courtney Baker, BSN, RN, CDCES, Diabetes Educator  
Tennille Allen, BSN, RN, Diabetes Educator  
Madison Allred, MS, RD, LD, Dietitian

Contact for more information:  
505 East Matthews Ave.,  
Jonesboro  
870-207-7840





*Thankful for time  
with family!*



## Caring When it Matters Most.

*Ridgecrest Health and Rehabilitation specializes in providing short-term transitional services and long-term care services.*

If you or a loved one needs short-term rehabilitation to accelerate recovery and get back on your feet or needs a long-term care setting, then Ridgecrest Health and Rehabilitation is here to help.

**5504 East Johnson Avenue • Jonesboro • 870.932.3271**



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT

# FALL FEST

*Downtown Jonesboro*



Ember Grace Allen

The Downtown Jonesboro Alliance held its annual Fall Fest on October 12th at Union Street Park in Downtown Jonesboro. The event included bounce houses,

local vendors, live music and food trucks. More information on the Downtown Jonesboro Alliance can be found on Facebook or at [downtownjonesboro.com](http://downtownjonesboro.com).



Sydney Glenn, Shelby Thornton, Claire Walz



Marr Street Jam from the Marr Street School of Performing Arts in Pocahontas



Natalie Evins and Macy Epps





Dr. Larry Lawson, Debra Vassar, Brad Bloemer

# AMMC marks 75th

*Lighting the way for a healthier community*

On October 16th, Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (AMMC) commemorated its 75th anniversary with a day filled with joy, reflection, and camaraderie, as the community honored the past while looking toward a promising future.

The anniversary celebration concluded in a community gathering that afternoon in the Herget Atrium. Dr. Larry Lawson, a retired General Surgeon renowned for his years of dedication to AMMC, and past Chief Nursing Officer Debra Vassar shared inspiring words. Current CEO Brad Bloemer welcomed everyone, while Pastor Dane Womack provided an uplifting invocation. A notable moment was the proclamation signing by Mayor Josh Agee, declaring the day as AMMC Day in the city of Paragould. Tori Thompson, director of The AMMC Foundation, spoke about the hospital's significant impact on the community and highlighted The Foundation's fundraising efforts.

She also shared news about AMMC's receiving a \$509,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority for a new MRI machine, an investment that will enhance the capacity to deliver high-quality care.

For 75 years, AMMC has been a vital source of health and healing for Paragould and surrounding communities. Established on October 16, 1949, as Community Methodist Hospital, AMMC has continuously evolved to meet community needs. In the early 1950s, Administrator Eugene Lopez initiated the creation of the Arkansas Methodist Auxiliary, enlisting the support of medical staff spouses. Their fundraising efforts — through plays, raffles, bake sales and theatre productions — were crucial in sustaining the hospital. The auxiliary is one of the oldest in the state and maintains a strong membership today.

Throughout the decades, AMMC has expanded its facilities with



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT

Teresa Vangilder, Roseann Livingston, Tiffany Lidisky



Mark Rowland, Brad Baine, Jimmy Gazaway





Robin Patten, Donna Gibson

significant additions in 1959, 1969, 1970, 1992, and 2001. The 1992 expansion introduced a critical care unit, supported by a capital campaign that launched The Foundation at AMMC. The last major project began in 1996 and was completed in 2001, totaling \$21 million. That project included the addition of outpatient services, a new emergency room, atrium and physician office building.

The hospital rebranded in 1981 as Arkansas Methodist Hospital and in 2005 as Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, reflecting its comprehensive services. In 2011, it broke ground on construction of Chateau on the Ridge, a 59-bed assisted living center, enhancing its mission to serve the community. By 2019, AMMC added a Family & Women's Health Building, which currently operates a family practice clinic, women's clinic and urgent care.

As the leading non-manufacturing employer in the Paragould area, AMMC contributes millions in wages and benefits each year. AMMC also provides millions of dollars in charity and uncompensated care for those in need.



Paige Mosley, Nikki Hensley, Jenny Bennett

# Ajax Floor Center

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING  
FROM OURS TO YOURS!**



our  
♥ GUARDIAN  
ANGEL  
has  
PAWS

- Water Resistant Laminate
- Luxury Vinyl Plank
- Carpet
- Hardwood & Tile
- Custom Blinds
- Shutters & Shades
- Cabinets & Counter Tops

**Your source for  
all floor coverings!**

Authorized Schluter Waterproof System Dealer  
Platinum Dealer for Karndean LVP

**FREE Estimates**

6481 HWY 49 South | 870-236-4000 | [ajaxfloorcenter.com](http://ajaxfloorcenter.com)





# Thank You, Veterans!

[MY100BANK.COM](http://MY100BANK.COM) | A Home BancShares Company (NYSE:HOMB)
 Member  
**FDIC**



# DIABETES AWARENESS

## For Pets Too

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN



**D**iabetes Awareness Month is not just for people! I diagnose diabetes in pets quite frequently. As in people, pets can suffer from Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. I want to briefly go over the pathophysiology (in other words, what went wrong that led to the development of diabetes), the difference between types 1 and 2, symptoms that are associated with the disease process, and the treatment options available.

Now, before I dive into how things are functioning wrongly, we need to first discuss how it should function. The pancreas (a fickle organ if I ever did meet one) can have elevated values and be normal, have normal values and be abnormal, or have a tumor on it you can't see even on ultrasound, and generally not be visible on a radiograph (x-ray). The pancreas is annoying. Now that I have thoroughly vented my frustrations with the temperamental organ, let's talk about what it does.

The pancreas is a glandular organ that has both endocrine and exocrine functions. Endocrine function means it secretes hormones directly into the bloodstream, exocrine means it secretes into ducts that open into the lining of an organ. The endocrine portion secretes a number of hormones into the blood, but for simplicity's sake we'll only discuss insulin. The exocrine portion secretes digestive enzymes that open into the duodenum (the first part of the small intestine) and aids in breaking down nutrients to facilitate absorption. In ideal situations, the pancreas releases perfect levels of hormone at the time in which the

body needs it and releases digestive enzymes when a pet has eaten to help it break its food down and absorb it. However, again, the pancreas upsets easily. It can't be trusted. If your pet ate a very fatty meal, a heavily seasoned piece of meat, or some other special treat, then it could result in inflammation of the pancreas, called pancreatitis. This is where we get to the "what went wrong" portion.

If a pet develops pancreatitis, then the inflammation of the pancreas could be so severe that digestive enzymes are released around the pancreas itself, instead of into the small intestines. One can easily extract that, if digestive enzymes are released, then won't they digest what they are released on? Yes! It's called autodigestion and this process can destroy the cells that are responsible for creating the hormones, such as insulin.

If enough of those cells have been killed, then the body does not have enough insulin to maintain normal blood sugar, which results in diabetes. (You see, the glucose or sugar in blood can't get into the body's cells by itself; it likes to hold hands with insulin because insulin holds the key to get into the cells.) This form of diabetes is Type 1, where the body cannot produce enough insulin and is more common in dogs. Dogs most often get this form, but cats also can develop it.

Type 2 diabetes, more common in cats and rare in dogs, is when the body doesn't respond to or detect insulin in the body as it should; this is called insulin resistance - almost as if the insulin lost the key to get

Schedule Your Holiday Stays Early At The PAWliday Inn!

We have so many reasons to be thankful!

PAWliday Inn

ARPets Hospital

"Where your pets are ARPets!"

Open M-F 7 A.M. - 6 P.M. SAT 8 A.M. - 12 P.M.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT: (870) 336-1000 • 10215 Hwy 49 N Brookland, AR 72417 • arpetshospital.com

Awards: 2019 PREMIERE, 2020 PREMIERE, 2021 PREMIERE, 2022 PREMIERE, 2023 PREMIERE, 2024 PREMIERE



# NOVEMBER

DIABETES MONTH

into the cells or if the cells switched the locks on the insulin. Insulin resistance can have many causes - if you can determine the primary cause and manage or treat it, then the diabetes, which formed only because of that reason, may resolve (theoretically), or the pet may go into remission. Remission of diabetes is not common, but does occur much more frequently in cats that have been diagnosed at the most early part of their disease process. To sum up: Type 1 diabetes is insulin-dependent, Type 2 can be non-insulin-dependent.

If you are still reading this, thank you! That was a lot of science back there. Now, on to the meat and potatoes of this article. What are the signs of this disease and how do you manage it? Being a small animal vet, most of the time I begin to suspect the patient may be suffering from Type 2 diabetes when the owner tells me the patient has been drinking a ton of water, urinating frequently, possibly having urinary accidents in the house or outside of the litter box, losing weight rapidly despite having a good appetite, but sometimes losing appetite altogether.

I worry about Type 1 diabetes when I have a patient that is diagnosed with severe pancreatitis and the blood sugar (glucose) is already significantly elevated. With Type 1 cases, especially when they are acutely ill, these patients need to typically be hospitalized in order to be stabilized. The glucose needs to be managed and monitored to assess if diabetes has truly developed or if it is simply transient and only occurred because of the severe inflammation but didn't lead to death of those insulin-producing cells.

I will say, typically if I have a patient that has severely elevated glucose when presented at the hospital for assessment, those guys tend to have diabetes that will need to be managed for the rest of their lives. With Type 2 diabetes, you want to get control over the diabetes and manage with an appropriate therapy for that patient, but the vet will also want to explore if there are any active disease processes that may have caused the diabetes to form or are preventing it from being managed with therapy.

Now that we understand the what, how, and why, let's move onto the whadda-do-about-it. Obviously we want to manage the blood sugar either with an injectable form of insulin or with an oral tablet/liquid (available for cats) that helps to manage the blood sugar in a different way. There have been major advancements in diabetes mellitus management and to know what is best for your pet, please consult your veterinarian. The key to managing diabetes in your pets best is to understand it better. The next thing is to treat or manage any other conditions that may have been caused by diabetes, such as a urinary tract infection, diabetic ketoacidosis, neuropathy, and more.

I hope this article helped some to better understand the complicated diabetic pathway. No better time to go over the risks of pancreatitis and diabetes than right before Thanksgiving and a big turkey dinner! Everyone have a Happy Thanksgiving — do not give your pets table scraps!

Serving  
Ages 2 & Up,  
Veterans &  
Seniors!

**AWARD WINNING SERVICE  
COMPASSIONATE CLIENT CARE**

**Could you or someone you know  
benefit from Home Care?  
Call today and let us help  
you get qualified!**

**870-222-0088**

**OUR CAREGIVERS ASSIST WITH:**

- Errands
- Hygiene Care
- Bathing
- Dressing
- Meal Prep
- Shopping
- Medication Reminders
- Light Housekeeping
- Laundry
- Companionship
- Transfer Assistance

***Serving The Entire State of Arkansas***

**HONORING THOSE WHO FOUGHT FOR  
OUR COUNTRY  
AND  
OUR FREEDOMS.  
WE THANK YOU TODAY AND EVERY DAY.**

**AWARD WINNING CARE**

**1stchoicehomecare.net**



# 7 QUIRKY CHRISTMAS IDEAS... PLUS FREE GIFT!\*

They've NEVER seen this before!

## THE PRANKSTER

If they love DAD JOKES, they'll use this harmless joke again and again...



and again... Be sure to read closely so you don't miss a thing!

## PETTY QUEEN

They'll never run out of snide remarks with these petty blessings and curses. If they speak sarcasm, these sticky notes are just their language!



## YOUR NERDY FRIEND

You may not understand the complex math in this name plaque, but the nerd in your life will gladly explain it. After all, it's just rocket science!



## THAT GRILL DUDE

(a.k.a. Gourmand)

"You shouldn't need steak sauce if you cook it right!"

"All you really need is salt and pepper."

That guy? Yeah, he'd approve of this stuff!



## THE TRENDY KITCHEN

"I know she's into kitchen stuff, but it's so hard to buy for someone who looks like their kitchen was built on HGTV!" Beautiful. HAND-CRAFTED.

Unique ceramics for coffee lovers and plant parents alike!



## YOUR DAD

(Or Grandpa!)

The #1 thing dads say that doesn't make any sense. (WARNING: Keep him away from page 11!) Who even comes up with this stuff?



## YOUR MOM

Don't get her this if she isn't proud of her HOME STATE!

P.S. Not only for moms!  
P.P.S. Not only Texas.



# \*HURRY! LIMITED SUPPLY OF FREEBIES!

Why are we giving a free gift? We're 100% confident you'll find joy in our products, and they're so different that we think you'll even enjoy ones you weren't shopping for! So ORDER NOW and we'll toss one of our other awesome items in your box, TOTALLY FREE! Just be sure to sign up with your email on our website and mention "Premiere Free Gift" so we know who to send to!

SCAN HERE TO SHOP



Order Today on Amazon or [www.trrDesigns.net](http://www.trrDesigns.net)





PHOTOS AND TEXT  
BY SHELBY RUSSOM



Members of the Paragould community dined under the string lights of Downtown Paragould at the annual Plates on Pruettt event on October 3.

The dinner, catered by Chow at 118, featured a winter salad followed by an herb roasted pork tenderloin, Chow chicken Parmesan, rosemary roasted baby potatoes and green bean bundles wrapped in bacon. The meal ended on a sweet note with a French apple tart topped with whipped cream and berries.

Many organizations and businesses sponsored the event through purchased tables and varying sponsor levels, which included access to the Power Plant Sneak Peek held earlier in the evening. Funds from Plates on Pruettt support Main Street Paragould's mission to revitalize the downtown area.



NEA'S **PREMIERE** MAGAZINE

**FREE**

ONLINE

SUBSCRIPTION













Ann Wagner, Bradbury Art Museum director, Debra Bennett Jackson, and ASU Chancellor Todd Shields

## Women artists meet at BAM

The Arkansas State Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts is marking its 35th anniversary this year and hosted a reception for the Northeast Arkansas region at the Bradbury Art Museum in Jonesboro on October 10th.

The evening began with remarks from Ann Wagner, director of the Bradbury Art Museum, and Arkansas State University Chancellor Todd Shields. Board members Kate Faust Franks, Sandy Alstadt, and

Marilynn Porter shared reflections on the organization's past, present and future, while ASU alumna and former ACNMWA Intern Award Winner Marti Jo Hall spoke about her experience as the 2021 intern award recipient.

In addition to board members, BAM representatives and A-State representatives, the group was joined by artists Kristen Franyutti, Mandy Maxwell Mooneyham and Lynette Watts, who are all part of the organization's 2023-2025 Juried Artist Registry. Dorine Deacon of Jonesboro was a special guest. At 97, she is the only living founding board member of the group.



ACNMWA Board Members (standing): Debra Bennett Jackson, Mary Lynn Reese, Sandy Russell Alstadt, Kate Faust Franks, Demara Titzer, Marilyn Porter; (seated) Honorary Members: Claudia Shannon, Dorine Deacon

# Power your life



### Trusted Protection During Unpredictable Weather

The frequency in severe weather has led to an increase in power outages. More than ever, you need to be prepared. Think about it, without power, you will have no lights, heating or cooling, or refrigeration. You can't even charge your cell phone. But when you have a Generac automatic standby generator, you will have power when you need it most.

**Call or go online today for more information**



**Redgie Jetton Electric, Inc.**  
(870)476-3558 [jettonredgie.com](http://jettonredgie.com)







# PSD seeks old photos

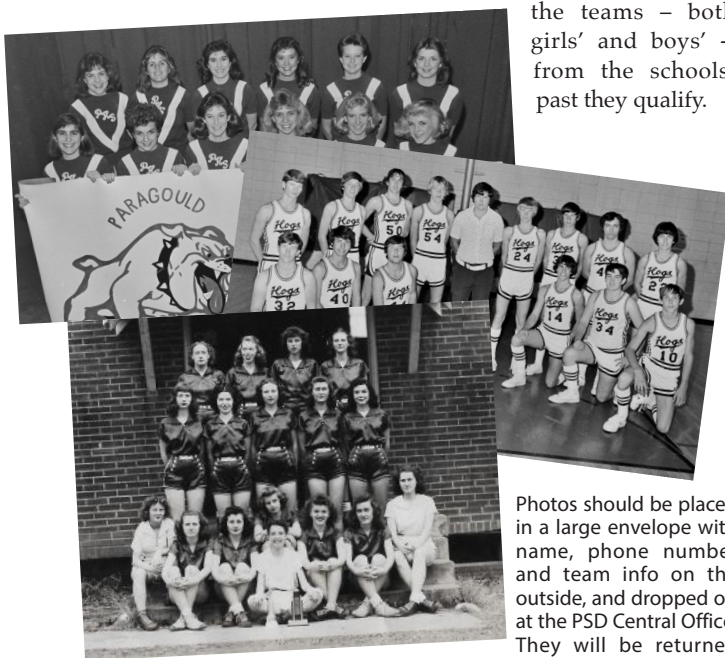
BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

A long-awaited new sports arena is in the works for the Paragould School District, and in addition to providing a more modern athletic facility school personnel also plan to connect fans of the present and future teams to players of the past.

Organizers are currently gathering and soliciting team photographs from the four high schools that combine to make up the Paragould District. Amy Glenn, who serves as the Sports Information Director for the district, said they are seeking "senior high team photos from Stanford, Oak Grove, Ridgecrest and Paragould that will form a collage in our new arena. Photos need to be of basketball, volleyball, cheer and dance only."

The photos will be featured on the walls surrounding the seats above the court surface, and will showcase former players, coaches and managers from the four schools. The current arena, opened in 1963 (the season of PHS' only boys' basketball state championship), has a capacity of 800 people; the new arena will seat around 1,400 fans and will also provide practice space with the availability of two different courts. The district broke ground on the multi-million-dollar project in August.

It makes no difference what year the photos represent; if they show the teams -- both girls' and boys' -- from the schools' past they qualify.



Photos should be placed in a large envelope with name, phone number and team info on the outside, and dropped off at the PSD Central Office. They will be returned after they are scanned.

SUSHI BAR • FULL BAR

Call 870.240.8887  
or Visit our Facebook Page



Scallops Ceviche  
South Beach  
Ocean Boulevard

**KIMONO**  
**JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE**

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE FAVORITES  
AND INNOVATIVE SPECIALTIES

Book your holiday parties in our private HIBACHI ROOM!



PROFESSIONAL HIBACHI CHEFS  
FOR THE FULL EXPERIENCE

[kimonosteakhouse.com](http://kimonosteakhouse.com) | 870.240.8887  
2708 Linwood Dr. | Paragould



# Downtown Paragould

## SHOP LOCAL BUSINESSES

Sweatshirt Weather!  
Shop GS Gifts  
Now for the best selection.

**SHOPGSGIFTS.COM** Online or In-Store  
OPEN TUE-FRI 10-5:30 SAT 10-4

**DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD**

ShopGsgifts.com | 870.335.5298 | 203 N. Pruet St.

**SMOOTHIES | JUICE | TEAS | & MORE**

**225 S. Pruet St. Downtown Paragould**  
**Don't miss our FALL MENU including these favorites:**

- Hayride:** Wild Berry, White Grape
- Gobble Wobble:** Orange, Strawberry
- Peach Crisp:** Peach Papaya, Blackberry
- Harvest Berry:** Blueberry, Strawberry, Cranberry
- Boo Fest:** Pomegranate, Red Raspberry, Dragon Fruit
- Autumn Breeze:** Blackberry, White Grape, Tropical Fruit
- Tractor Pull:** Cherry Limeade, Lemonade, Blue Sweet Tart
- Shakes:** Pecan Pie, Pumpkin Cinnamon Roll, Pumpkin Spice

**HOURS: MON.-FRI. 7-4 | SAT. 7-2**

**SOMETHING PAWSITIVE**  
Cat Lounge next to Something Sweet  
In Downtown Paragould!

**#adontdontshop**

223 A S Pruet St.  
Tuesday - Friday 10-6  
Saturday 10-4

We are so Thankful for your support!

Purrfect Fall Day Spent With The Cats!

- 15 min - \$4
- 30 min - \$6
- 1 hour - \$10

Brought to you by Something Sweet and Ozzie's Legacy

Weddings • Portraits • Commercial • Events

*We are ready to meet all your photography and videography needs!*

**KNIGHT PRODUCTIONS**

**Allstate**

auto rates going up?  
switch and save now

Meredith Smith | Paragould  
870-565-4580

Savings vary. Subject to terms, conditions, & availability. Allstate Fire and Casualty Ins. Co. & affiliates. 3100 Sanders Rd., Northbrook, IL. © 2023 Allstate Insurance Co. HIC1002343

**CHAMPIONS GYMNASTICS**

**Now Enrolling All Classes!**

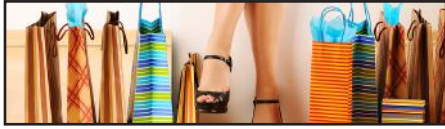
**GIVE THE GIFT OF CONFIDENCE!**  
Gymnastics & Tumbling

Like us on Facebook to stay updated!  
870-236-3286 | championsgymnasticscenter.net



# SAVE THE DATE

## DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD EVENTS



*November 2nd*

11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

All Treats, No Tricks

Participating Downtown Merchants

Main Street Paragould Event



*November 8th*

7:00 p.m.

Zach Rushing - Comedian

*Madhattershows.com*

Downtown Collins Theatre



*November 9th*

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Holiday Open House

Participating Downtown Merchants

Main Street Paragould Event

*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).*

**Happy Thanksgiving**

*Just here for the PIE*

**WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR OUR CUSTOMERS!**

**The Paisley Pineapple**  
Boutique & Gifts

**113 S Pruet St, Downtown Paragould | 870.558.9490**



*November 11th*

8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Veterans Day Appreciation Breakfast

The Crossing

101 S. Pruet Street

Main Street Paragould Event

**COLLINS THEATRE**

**NOVEMBER**

11/1 - Friday at 7:00pm, Narvel Felts, [Showpass.com/narvel](http://Showpass.com/narvel)  
 11/8 - Friday at 7:30pm, Zach Rushing - Comedian, [Madhattershows.com](http://Madhattershows.com)  
 11/9 - Saturday at 7:00pm, Chad Garrett and Friends, \$15 at the door  
 11/14-16 - Magic on the Ridge, [Collinstheatre.com/magic](http://Collinstheatre.com/magic)  
 11/22 - Friday at 7:00pm, Chris Claude  
 11/23 - Saturday at 7:00pm, MJ the Illusion, <https://reza-events.fantazitix.com/nj-events>  
 11/25 - Monday at 7:00pm, Bluegrass Monday, [kasu.org/tickets](http://kasu.org/tickets)

More shows and ticket information can be found online!  
For more info, go to [collinstheatre.com](http://collinstheatre.com)

**SOMETHING Sweet**

**IT'S PUMPKIN SEASON**

Tuesday - Friday 7am - 6pm  
Saturday 9am - 4pm

221 S. Pruet St.  
Downtown Paragould

870.565.5169  
[paragouldsweets.com](http://paragouldsweets.com)

**STRESSED is DESSERTS Spelled Backwards**

Place your Thanksgiving Orders by November 23rd





# John Gatling Making a Difference with Music

BY KAROLINE RISKER

**J**ohn Gatling picked up an ad for a job that gave an address but no other information. He showed up on the last day they took applications and talked to the super, a Vietnam vet, and the pair hit it off. The job was to help at a sheltered workshop for adults with special needs, a position he took.

John has continued to work with people who have special needs in what has become a recurring theme. Years later he walked into an Abilities Unlimited thrift store to buy pants for a job interview and ended up with a job at the thrift store, which led him to working with Special Olympics. Later he found himself in Phoenix and was hired to work at a vocational services company, again working with people with special needs. He took them to jobs and evaluated their skills, recommending them based on the assessment. He was later in North Carolina and served as a leisure coordinator working with people with special needs in a 48-bed division.

Of the 48, only four or five were verbal; some had behavior issues. It was here that he first implemented music in his work. "It (music) was like a switch," he said. "The individuals just responded." His next job took him to Abilities Unlimited in Paragould where he was filling in as a classroom instructor. His musical background prompted him to one day bring in a small PA system and a few instruments, which led to the development of Sound Expressions Music Outreach, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 2017.

Today John plays music and lets anyone who wants do karaoke, sharing his talents with the 250 adults at eight centers for those with intellectual, developmental and/or physical disabilities in four counties across Arkansas under the umbrella of Sound Expressions. They call him the music man.

He comes to a center when they open up at 9 a.m. and stays until they run the buses. "We're there all day with a lunch break," he said. "I'm trying to set up and they are giving out their song requests." He has lunch with them, then they start back up,

using a portable PA with wireless microphones. Over the years he has added some instruments to the mix. "We take hand instruments that are adaptive because some people have trouble grasping," he said. "So we take something easy to have in their hands, like egg shakers." He uses things that are durable, accessible, and easy to play.

"We call it karaoke," he said. "I like to call it full-contact karaoke. It's not just one person on their own - we support each other." John said one individual was visibly nervous about singing and his hands were shaking. He said one of the other individuals came over and put his hands on his shoulder and said, "We are here for you," giving him the confidence to sing. "It's overwhelming," John said of the support and care they have for each other. "They recognize when someone is in need. Because they've lived a life of need."

John mentioned that some individuals like to sing their own songs a capella, but usually when a song is played "we're all out there together," he said. John adds it's a big self-confidence boost. "People with speech impediments are now the first to get in line," he said. "Some have to show me on the phone what they want to sing that day." He said he even has one individual who can't communicate with words and has to tap out on his cell phone with his nose what music he would like to accompany him.

When he sings "he can barely get the vocalizations out," he said, "but





he's smart. Through these songs they can express something they can't articulate in another way."

The karaoke has since spilled over to Ironhorse BBQ where the group takes over the banquet room two Saturdays a month. "They have been gracious and generous to us," John said. "We've been going there five years plus. They always give me the banquet room and a donation every time we go there." The other aspect John likes about going to Ironhorse BBQ is the community integration. "It gets our individuals in the community," he said. "Not so much exposing them as it is exposing the community to them. We are all different, we all have gifts; we all have something to contribute."

John stresses the connection and visibility. "Don't underestimate their value. When we interact, people can see that. People say I didn't know about these individuals. If you're not exposed to it you're less likely to be accepting of it. That's really important with what we are trying to do," he added. "People want to live a life as normal as possible. What can we do to adapt to make that possible." John also mentioned that music is the great unifier, often even breaking down racial/cultural barriers through a shared experience of rhythm, sound and expression.

"We have been able to do the work we do thanks to the support of all the centers we serve, along with generous outside support from Iron Horse Barbeque and Steakhouse, and First United Methodist Church," he said. "It takes a community of support to do anything worthwhile."

John has lived in California, Kansas, North Carolina, Georgia and Arkansas as he cared for family members and pursued degrees. He started in the pre-dental program and found his love of philosophy while in junior college. He has a bachelor's degree in philosophy from

ASU and is the third generation in his family to graduate from his Alma Mater. He has a son, Ian, who lives with his family in Kansas.

John also works with three special needs individuals one-on-one as a Waiver Implementor, a temporary job he is still doing 16 years later.

"Every day they teach me something and I see something that thrills me and amazes me," John said. I'm just rewarded every day. I see that part of humanity that they can teach us about.



**BLACK FRIDAY SPECIAL**

**365 DAYS SAME AS CASH** BLACK FRIDAY ONLY

**GAMING SYSTEMS  
FIREPLACES  
STEREOS  
TV'S UP TO 85 INCHES  
& MORE!**

**GET READY FOR THE HOLIDAYS WITH GIFT WRAPPING & LAYAWAY!**

**Pay-Less** furniture & appliances

870-215-5377  
2901 W Kingshighway, Paragould  
shoppaylessfurniture.com





Get Your Tickets Today!  
[www.collinstheatre.com/magic](http://www.collinstheatre.com/magic)

# MAGIC ON THE RIDGE FESTIVAL

**Nov. 14-16**  
at the historic Collins Theatre  
in Downtown Paragould



**Saturday  
Nov. 16th  
7 p.m.**

DUSTIN TAVELLA



**Saturday  
Nov. 16th  
1 p.m.**

RAN'D SHINE



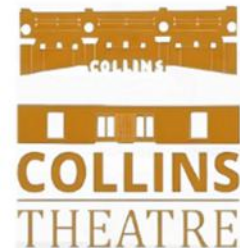
**Thursday  
Nov. 14th  
7 p.m.**

JONATHAN  
ERLANDSON



**Friday  
Nov. 15th  
7 p.m.**

KAYLA DRESCHER



Individual Tickets Available or  
Purchase an ALL ACCESS PASS to see  
ALL FOUR SHOWS for ONE LOW PRICE!



**PREMIERE**  
MAGAZINE

# Kids Play

in NEA

**CALEB HART**

**STUDENT'S CAMPAIGN FOR  
STRAWBERRY MILK SUCCESSFUL**

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW:  
PREEMIE AWARENESS MONTH**  
NOVEMBER 2024





## *When the twins become tweens*

BY KARAN SUMMITT

**D**r. Jeremy and Jennifer Swymn are long past the early weeks with two premature infants, multiple nighttime feedings, frequent diaper changes and endless loads of laundry. The car seats, booster seats and dual strollers have been passed on to others, and the days of potty training two toddlers are long gone.

In their place are the busy days that most parents come to know, those of the teenage years — multiplied times two. When Valley View eighth-grade twins Rocco and Edie Swymn entered junior high, the pace of life accelerated. No one is complaining, least of all Rocco and Edie.

For parents of multiples, flexibility is an essential skill that must be learned early. Getting twins to sleep and eat on the same schedule takes time and patience, as does anything that involves travel, shopping or just getting ready for a family gathering or church. Jennifer shared how the world of baby products and equipment is made for single births, so twins post a logistical-and financial-challenge when everything has to be bought in two's or the amounts (think diapers and wipes) doubled.

As the children grew and began to develop their own personalities, the Swymns learned to resist the tendency to parent them the same way. Treating them as individuals continues to require ongoing intentionality, something that is fostered by spending one-on-one time with each twin. Rocco is now old enough to accompany Dr. Swymn on the road when he travels as the ASU football team physician. The two also share a love for weightlifting and concerts. Edie and Jennifer enjoy trips doing “girl things” that include theater productions, museums and shopping, of course!

Even though Jeremy and Jennifer are intentional about spending time separately with each twin, the family's unanimous favorites are the occasions when all four are together. The companionship and closeness between Rocco and Edie has its roots in a variety of shared family experiences that allowed them to always have a built-in companion



for whatever they wanted to do.

Due to the demands of Dr. Swymn's practice, family time spent traveling out of town has multiple benefits for both the parents and children. Even though an extended trip has to be scheduled in advance, there are fewer interruptions and the twins have an opportunity to experience a bigger world than that of their everyday lives. The Swymns believe that being exposed to different places and cultures has helped Rocco and Edie become more well-rounded, independent and confident young teens.

Now that the children are older, these travel experiences have taken the



place of gifts for Christmas and birthdays. The trips vary in distance and length, but mission work in Costa Rica combined with a few days of relaxation has become something the entire family looks forward to each year. When at home, family dinners are a priority whenever possible.

Jennifer admits having kids the same age has its advantages. The twins are able to participate in age appropriate activities at the same time and help each other with schoolwork. During down time they are very content in each other's company, making for a built-in friend. Coordinating schedules has its challenges, but the twins know each one is expected to be the other's biggest cheerleader.

If the advantages and challenges of twins are magnified, so are the joys. The Swymns talk about the pleasure of watching Rocco and Edie forge a close bond and look out for each other in ways that are protective saying, "It is twice the work, but at the same time double the joy! We have enjoyed every phase and are grateful for the opportunity to raise twins. We know their time at home is going by quickly, and we just try to enjoy being with them and being a part of everything they do."



## GETTING TO KNOW ROCCO AND EDIE SWYMN

Rocco and Edie Swymn are 13 years old and in the eighth grade at Valley View Junior High.

**How would you describe what it is like to be a twin?**

Rocco: It is great because you always have your best friend with you. There is always someone to hang out with and it keeps you from getting lonely.

Edie: You always have someone on your side and you are never bored.

**What are some things you like best about being a twin?**



Rocco: I have someone to share my birthday with.

Edie: I have someone to talk about school things because we are in the same grade and know the same people. Also, you always have a fun fact about yourself!

**What are some things you like least about being a twin?**

Rocco: It is unique and there isn't anything I don't like about it!

Edie: When people ask if we are identical.

**When it comes to your personality traits and your interests in what ways are you alike and in what ways are you different?**



Combined Response: We are similar in that we are both very calm, caring and kind. We are different in how we learn, the subjects we like in school and our hobbies. Both of us are very active in the youth group at church. We each like different sports, but we both play tennis. Rocco plays football and Edie is involved with The Link Theatre Company. We both like playing golf with our parents. Edie likes to be in charge and enjoys being the center of attention. Rocco is more reserved and is okay with not being the boss.



PERSONALIZED CARE. EXCEPTIONAL SMILES.

KELLY-GWYNNE FERGUS, DDS, MDS




2812 Harrisburg Road  
Jonesboro 870.336.3366  
www.FergusOrtho.com





# POWER OF THE PEN

## *Student successfully petitions for strawberry milk*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

The next time someone refers to the “power of the pen,” one Oak Grove Elementary School student can attest to it.

Caleb Hart, an OGE third-grader, had an item on his wish list and decided to write a letter to district Superintendent Dr. Nick Jankoviak to see if he could help make it come true. Much to Caleb’s delight – and surprise – the letter so impressed the administrator that he put steps in motion to comply with the youngster’s wish: Strawberry milk on the school menu.

“I pretty much liked strawberry milk,” said Caleb, 8. “I asked others if they did too and wanted it, and they all said yes. So I went home and told my mom and we talked about writing a letter, and she said I needed three good reasons in the letter. She told me it’s healthy and I knew I liked it, and I thought of the third one (it has fruit in it). I sent it to the superintendent and he said yes.”

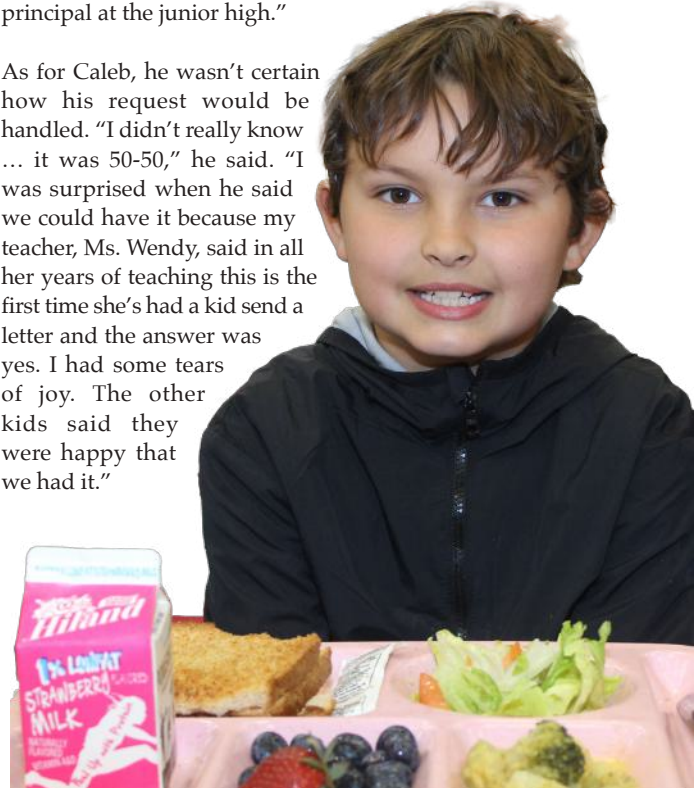
There was a bit more groundwork than simply writing and delivering the letter. In addition to his mom, Hannah, offering her advice, two of Caleb’s teachers and school principal Dr. Morgan Taylor chipped in their expertise to make certain the student had produced a quality product first. Nikki Denning, his Reading and Language instructor, said, “He talked to the principal and said he wanted to write a letter about it and we all wanted to make sure he was doing it right. We guided him through.”

His homeroom teacher, Wendy Blankenship, added, “He said, ‘I have a question for Dr. Taylor. Why can’t we have strawberry milk?’ Then he said he was going to write a letter, so we did a couple of different drafts and we let Miss Nikki read it and Dr. Taylor read it, and it got sent. We’re proud of him.”

Dr. Taylor said Caleb “started coming to me and said, ‘I have an idea

... strawberry milk in the cafeteria.’ We decided we’d have to ask Dr. J and if he was going to send a letter, it would have to be well written. We kept correcting four or five until we were satisfied we could take it to him. We did, and I said he needed to read it in front of him. Dr. J said, ‘We’ve got to get this kid strawberry milk.’ He didn’t realize when he was reading it who his dad is; his dad, Logan, is the assistant principal at the junior high.”

As for Caleb, he wasn’t certain how his request would be handled. “I didn’t really know ... it was 50-50,” he said. “I was surprised when he said we could have it because my teacher, Ms. Wendy, said in all her years of teaching this is the first time she’s had a kid send a letter and the answer was yes. I had some tears of joy. The other kids said they were happy that we had it.”





**Childcare & Speech Therapy**



We accept both private pay and state vouchers.

**870-240-0994** 318 South 12th St., Paragould

**Come join the Fun!!!!**

We are committed to helping your child grow in a loving and fun environment.



**better beginnings**

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

[ARBetterBeginnings.com](http://ARBetterBeginnings.com)





Dr. J said he was both amused and impressed by the request. "There are so many responsibilities for teachers, administration and office staff," he said, "... then you remember this is the reason we do what we do. If you get an opportunity to do something nice, you need to do it. When work gets to be too much sometimes, you step back and you get to deal with the kids' interests a little bit. Honestly, we've got to remember why we do what we do. It's an opportunity to do good, so you do it."

When the superintendent said strawberry milk would be available district wide, Caleb said he "figured out they could have it for my dad's school and the other schools too. That was neat. I don't regret sending the note."

As for Dad, Logan said the news of his son's involvement "kind of caught us off guard, me and Mom. He'd kind of made comments about strawberry milk but then ... 'your son is writing a letter to the superintendent.' I thought, 'Oh, man, is that a joke?' He really wanted strawberry milk, and I didn't even know he liked it.

"But it's cool because it has made him realize you can get things if you work for them. The letter ... he was happy. We were happy. We're proud of him. But now he thinks he can write."

Dr. Jankoviak found some humor in the situation, smiling as he said a few other letters from students "started filing in after this one but that's okay. It was a fun thing." And Caleb's willingness to see a project through to the finish line impressed all the adults involved, prompting Dr. Taylor to say, "You can tell he will someday be a leader."

Caleb's story was featured on the Paragould School District Facebook page, along with a photo of him with Dr. J. After all the publicity, Logan said Caleb came home one day and said, "I guess this is what it's like to be famous." With his own magazine feature, maybe now he is.



**Cutie Patootie**  
Children's Boutique

Find your holiday outfits with us!  
Happy Thanksgiving!

1907 Linwood Dr. Paragould AR • (870) 215-2625  
1608 S Caraway Rd. Jonesboro AR • (870) 604-0212

**THE THURSDAY MORNING  
BREAKFAST CLUB**

at Batten's Donuts & Bakery

Stop by and tell NEA about your non-profit and charitable events through MOR Media's LIVE broadcast on JACK FM!  
... No appointment necessary! ...

In the Paragould Plaza | Thursday Mornings 7AM-10AM

Sponsored by:





# When three makes a crowd

BY KARAN SUMMITT

For parents Dr. Jaime Chavez and Veronica Villegas, their combined years of medical training provided a solid foundation of knowledge about family health. Dr. Chavez is a cardiologist and Veronica received a Doctor of Medicine from Mexico City, Mexico, as well as earning a Master of Public Health in the United States along with certification as a health educator.

Knowledge is always valuable, but no amount of learning can take the place of hands-on experience, especially when bringing newborn triplets home to a family with two older siblings. Life jumps into overdrive, it's "all hands on deck" and book knowledge works itself into everyday life.

As is often the case with multiple births, the triplets made an early appearance. Near the end of her pregnancy Veronica developed preeclampsia (pregnancy-related high blood pressure) and was hospitalized at 31 weeks of gestation. The triplets arrived one week later, and despite their early birth all three babies were at a good weight considering the premature delivery. They spent one month in the NICU, gaining more weight and learning to breath on their own.

For many of us, the uncertainty of bringing a newborn home from the hospital is eased by family members who can be on hand to help during those first weeks. For Jaime, a native of Honduras and Veronica, raised in Mexico City, having family nearby to help with the triplets wasn't an option. Good friends and reliable babysitters stepped in to fill the gap. Even now friends continue to help when the children must be in different places at the same time.

Veronica recalls the initial challenge of giving three newborn infants the individual care all babies need. Another daunting challenge came in the early months of the COVID pandemic when purchase limits were placed on diapers, wipes and formula, making it especially difficult to stock up on the needs of three babies. Getting out with the infants and older siblings, Santiago and Sebastian, who were six and three when the babies were born, was an impossibility even for the simplest errands.



As the triplets grew each child developed its own unique personality. While all three are playful and happy, Sofia is more outgoing, adventurous and shows signs of being a reliable leader. Sara is the reserved one, cautiously watching Sofia go first and then trying to outperform her sister. Samuel is cheerful with a relaxed attitude and willing to go with the flow, always wanting to help.

For Jaime and Veronica, finding ways to spend time with each child requires creativity, deliberate effort and seizing every opportunity. When Sofia, Sara and Samuel were still preschoolers, Jaime, Santiago and Sebastian became involved with the Boy Scouts of America program. Now that the triplets are older and can participate in Cub Scouts, it has become something the family does together. Time in the car between appointments and activities is an opportunity for mini visits, as is homework time.

Trust in God has been a cornerstone for the family of seven. Patience and tolerance are necessary, along with the faith that everything and everyone is going to be okay. Things may not go as planned, but the ability to adjust is a life-lesson all five children are learning early. Family priorities include a determined focus to be grateful and making



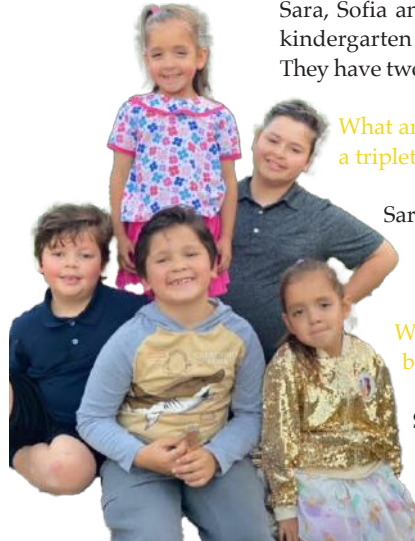
every moment count by taking time to stop and “smell the roses.”

Jaime and Veronica readily admit raising five children hasn't been easy but it has been doable thanks to friends who could help and “the love of God as we prayed for Him to help us and guide us. It has been a wild ride but we've made it so far and they all seem to be very happy and healthy, with a good relationship between each other.”

Whether its two or ten, having happy, healthy children who enjoy each other is a blessing every parent desires. From everyday life, vacations to their native countries visiting relatives or supporting each child in the activities they enjoy, the Chavez-Villegas family has made it a year-round resolution to appreciate the ups and downs of their own wild ride. Parenting is all the fun of one times five and no one is complaining!



## GETTING TO KNOW SARA, SOFIA AND SAMUEL CHAVEZ VILLEGAS



Sara, Sofia and Samuel are six years old and attend kindergarten at Blessed Sacrament Catholic School. They have two older brothers, Santiago and Sebastian..

**What are some things you like best about being a triplet?**

Sara: Having best friends.  
Sofia: Having more kids to play with.  
Samuel: Not being alone.

**What are some things you like least about being a triplet?**

Sara: That we fight.  
Sofia: That we have to share snacks, toys, clothes and especially Mom.  
Samuel: Sharing time with Mom and Dad.

Santiago and Sebastian:

**What is it like to be the big brother of triplets?**

Santiago: It is hard to be kind all the time to them because it's overwhelming. They are cute and loving but can also be very crazy. Being the oldest is great as I can show them how to be nice, kind and not to fight!

Sebastian: It is exhausting and overwhelming, but most of the time it is fun.

**As older brothers, what do you remember from the early days when they were infants and toddlers?**

Santiago: I remember their faces; how cute and funny they were. How sometimes they made messes and it was hilarious.

Sebastian: The crying, the cuteness, the fun of having babies to carry and having them close to me instead of running around all the time.

## SHARE YOUR MILESTONES

**Let us celebrate your big events!  
Tell us about every birthday or anniversary  
on the decade (50<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, 70<sup>th</sup>, etc)!**

**Scan the QR code and fill out the form to  
see your achievement in the next issue of  
Premiere Magazine!**

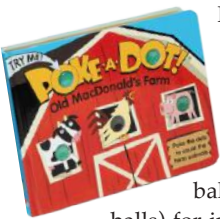




# Christmas toys for formative fun



The holidays are just around the corner. You are probably making your lists and checking them twice. Sometimes, the choices for kids' gifts can be overwhelming. Of course, the latest and greatest toys advertised are ones with bells and whistles and most likely a screen of some sort. Our therapists at Stewart Pediatric Therapy want to give you a few ideas of gifts for under the tree. We generally prefer toys that spark creativity and encourage interaction.



Playsets such as kitchens or work benches are great for imaginative play, plus you can work on so many skills involving fine motor and speech with these sets. Of course, our speech therapists love books and our OTs love puzzles. As a physical therapist, I suggest balls (playground balls, basketballs and goals, soccer balls, bouncy balls) for interactive play and motor planning. Here are a few of our other suggestions.

Megan loves using kinetic sand because the kids can manipulate the sand to make shapes, talk about colors, textures, quantitative



concepts such as more and less, and so many more language concepts all while the child is having a hands-on, tactile experience. She also loves to use magnet tiles. Parents can use these to facilitate several language skills and kids can manipulate them to use their imaginations and build so many different things.

Madison recommends the Fubbles No-Spill Bubble Tumbler. Bubbles are a nearly universal favorite with kids

of all ages. You can promote early speech sounds ("buh-buh," "pop," "whoa!"), basic language concepts (big and small bubbles, more, all gone, a lot and a few, up and down, high and low), and knowledge of basic body parts ("I'm going to pop the bubble with my finger, elbow, foot, etc.") while playing. Bubbles are also good for learning the skills of turn-taking, joint attention, and plain ol' shared enjoyment with someone. This kind is great because it won't spill when it's knocked over or tilted in the hands of an excited child.

Kim suggests a weighted stuffed animal (up to 5 lbs). The animal could be swaddled or dressed up for imaginative play, but it also provides some sensory input for calming. Even if your child does not have sensory issues, it could still be beneficial. We all get sensory overload sometimes.

Halle has several suggestions for your children that are 12 months to 2 years old. Squigz are great for building grasp and release skills, pulling and pushing and pinching for hand strength. Coin/slot toys like this pig work on a great developmental skill to place items in a container and it also works on controlled release of an object. Poke-a-dot books are good for working on pointing and turning pages and digit isolation (using each finger independently). She also suggests Velcro food/fruits which promote using both hands in play, pulling apart and pushing together.



Our pediatric therapists love to play, and we hope that our suggestions will make your Christmas shopping a bit easier.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Stewart Pediatric Therapy




We count you when we count our blessings!

115 N 14th St. Paragould, AR 72450 | 870.476.9017 |  Finding JOY in Motion



# On Pointe

## Dance mom realizes dream

The owners of On Pointe, which recently opened in Jonesboro, are seeking to be a resource to the Northeast Arkansas community they believe is needed as dance continues to grow in popularity.

"A lot of people don't know that dance is so big here," Kerri Cowgill, who owns the shop with her husband, Jason, said. "There are 10 dance studios just between Jonesboro and Paragould alone, in addition to most of the schools having a dance team, in some capacity. It has really grown in the past 10 to 15 years."

She said opening On Pointe has been a dream of hers for a while, but at the beginning of this year they started to put pen to paper and actively working to make it a reality. "My daughters danced competitively for 12 years and throughout that time we always talked about how there was a need for something like this in the community and to be able to get the things you need for dance, whether it be shoes, or tights or apparel," Kerri said.

She said they are striving to fill the needs of local dancers, studios and schools. "We want to connect with the studios and the schools, and we encourage them to let us know if there are specific requirements needed for their programs," Kerri said. "We want to carry what they need so they don't have to go online or to Memphis. We want to be a local resource for them."

On Pointe offers tap, jazz, ballet and even character shoes for those

who participate in theatre. "We can size you if you are just starting out," she said. "We have everything for the more seasoned dancers."

Another feature is a mini stage where the dancers can demo their shoes, and see their apparel underneath a stage light in front of a big mirror. "We wanted something to set us apart and give them a chance to see their whole look once they have put everything together."

Kerri said her twins, Emily and Katie Cooper, who will be 20 in December, danced from when they were 6 all the way up until they were 18-19, and she wishes she could have gone to store like On Pointe with them.

"Much like a lot of our customers, I was not involved in dance as a kid," she said. "When we started this I was learning everything as we went just like a lot of the moms who are new to the sport. We are that resource to be able to show them everything that they need to get started."



Emily and Katie Cooper

## Local Dance Supply Headquarters

### Nutcracker Gift Barre Now Open





SCAN ME







Find us for all of your dance needs!

**Highland Square Shopping Center**  
2810 East Highland Drive, Jonesboro, AR 72401



**(870) 926-1320**  
GetOnPointe.Dance





# When joy comes in a two-pack

BY KARAN SUMMITT

Jumping off in the deep end aptly describes Jacob and Morgan Johnson’s introduction to parenthood. Despite an extended bed rest, twins Addelyn and Cooper Johnson were born at 30 weeks, each barely weighing over three pounds. The premies spent five weeks in the NICU at St. Bernards, receiving oxygen support, tube feedings and aid with temperature regulation.

The uncertainty of those early weeks is long gone. Addy and Cooper are healthy, thriving 10-year-olds with no residual effects from their early arrival. Morgan describes bringing the twins home with these words: “Parenting twin newborns was the most exhausting experience we have ever been through. Around the clock feedings, the hundreds of dirty diapers and the mental toll of being new parents was definitely difficult, but it was all we ever knew, and we made it through with the help of our families and church friends. After having our youngest daughter, we realized just how different it is caring for twins versus caring for one baby. One baby was a breeze!”

Once Addy and Cooper grew past the infant stage and began to crawl, walk and run, the fun began. Morgan laughs as she recounts how the two mastered “childproof” locks by one twin pushing down on the lever and the other twin pulling the drawer or door open. Teamwork between the two started early and continues to this day as they often pair up to accomplish things.

On the flip side, now that the twins are older, they find themselves in situations where they compete against each other and must endure inevitable comparisons. Jacob and Morgan readily admit the biggest challenge of parenting twins is treating the two as individuals with different needs, talents and desires. Helping each twin succeed and grow in its own way and at its own pace is a necessary skill for any parent of multiple children, but especially essential with twins.



Looking back over 10 years of memories with Cooper and Addy led the Johnsons to focus on the simple moments as those that were



most joyful. Holding both twins in their lap while reading a bedtime story or trying to figure out how to slide the two of them into bed at the same time without one waking up brought a smile. A mental picture of the two holding hands as they walked together and reminding each other to look both ways was another memory, as was their first day of school. Hearing them cheer for each other — and younger sister Emery — from the sidelines at sporting events is a simple, everyday moment they don’t want to take for granted.

Morgan sums up life with Cooper and Addy in these words: “The twins are kind, fun, spunky, loving and an absolute joy to our entire family. God created them to be their own unique selves, and despite being twins we see their individual strengths and weaknesses. They love the Lord and are always singing worship music around the house. For us as parents, the most joyful moment of their lives, by far, was when we witnessed them confess their belief in Jesus Christ and be baptized together. They bring joy to our lives in different ways and as their parents we want to always bring out the best in them.”



# GETTING TO KNOW COOPER AND ADELYNN JOHNSON

Cooper and Adelynn (Addy) are 10 years old and in the 5th grade at Greene County Tech

## How would you describe what it is like to be a twin?

Cooper: You always have someone there. She knows everything that is happening and is there if I need help. We have been together since we were born, so I don't know how it would feel to not have a twin.

Addy: I've always had someone to spend time with and share fun things with. We know everything about each other and have never been without each other.



## What are some things you like best about being a twin?

Cooper: I like being a twin because we can help each other with our schoolwork and have someone to do things with at home.

Addy: I like being a twin because it means that we get to go to each other's ballgames and spend time with our friends together.

Both: We like being twins because not many people get to have a twin and that makes us different.

## What are some things you like least about being a twin?

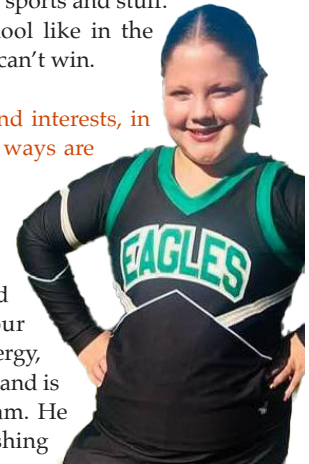
Cooper: Always being compared to each other with things like our grades, how good we are at things like sports and stuff.

Addy: Competing for awards at school like in the science fair and things where we both can't win.

## When it comes to personality traits and interests, in what ways are you alike and in what ways are you different?

Combined Response: We both make good grades and do well in school, have lots of friends and like to spend time with our family, especially our younger cousins. Cooper is a ball of energy, constantly bouncing around the house and is involved in his school's PACE program. He loves to ride his four-wheeler, go fishing and is always looking for a new adventure.

Addy is more reserved, a deep thinker who is kind to everyone. She is always making plans for the next make-up or hair style she is going to perfect. She loves to play volleyball and cheer for her school and is also involved in GCT's PACE program. This year she was voted to be on the Student Council.



## WIN YOUR SHARE OF OVER \$2,500!

Register at these locations to qualify:












@99.3

christmas cash giveaway

YOUR 24/7 CHRISTMAS MUSIC STATION!

sponsored by







1st Place AR Total Care - Corning Trap Squad



PHOTOS BY JOEY GLAUB

HOA Individual Winner - Brady Russon

# Aiming for Arisa Charity Trap Tournament October 12



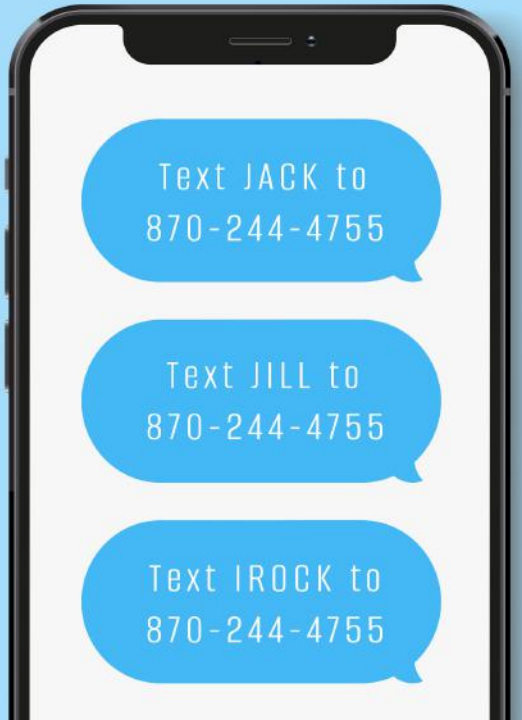
2nd Place First National Bank 1 - Jonesboro Trap Team Red Squad



3rd Place First National Bank 2 - Jonesboro Trap Team White Squad

# WANT TO WIN?

join our text clubs  
today for a chance  
to win FREE  
lunches & more!







# arisa health

*recovery at mills*



**Arisa Health is Arkansas' largest and most comprehensive nonprofit behavioral healthcare provider.**



## *Recovery at Mills*

Arisa Health Recovery at Mills is a 62-bed substance use treatment center in Arkansas for males and females, ages 18 and older. It is the ideal setting for starting your recovery from substance use.

Our commitment to provide personalized treatment programs for our clients is vital to the Arisa Health Recovery at Mills difference.

[www.arisahealth.org](http://www.arisahealth.org) | 1.800.592.9503





# When you defy all the odds

BY MIRANDA GEURIN

Victoria Covington of Batesville has been an inspiration to those who know her since day one. Born weighing only 1 pound and 13 ounces and undergoing heart surgery at 2 days old, she was born a fighter. Now, at 18 years old, Victoria is inspiring many through her artistic abilities.

At the age of 6, she was diagnosed with migraines and arthritis. When she was 9, she was diagnosed with epilepsy. A counselor at Arkansas Children's Hospital told her she needed to find a hobby to distract herself. She first tried to learn the violin. Then a family from her homeschool group was attending a painting class and invited Victoria. Her parents, Brad and Jessie Covington, were told she had natural talent, and they placed her in private lessons.

Now, nine years later, Victoria has sold paintings as far away as California and Florida.



She has sold paintings to several businesses in Batesville and New Hope refuge in Bethesda displays some of her work. She also has paintings displayed at Arkansas Children's Hospital, and she sells her work at several businesses in Batesville and through her mother's Facebook. Victoria and her family are definitely animal lovers. She has a service dog named Maleficent and a Maltese named



Diamond Baby, who could be the subject of an article herself. They also have chickens, cows, two cats, 20 inside birds and three other dogs as well.

Her favorite thing to paint is animals, and she gets a lot of custom requests for painting people's dogs, which she really enjoys. She said she also enjoys abstract art and anything with Jesus on it.

Another interesting fact about Victoria is that her family was told when she was born she would have significant hearing and vision loss due to being in the NICU for three months and they needed to teach her sign language. Her hearing and vision turned out to be just fine, but she now knows braille and speaks fluent sign language. She also speaks Polish, having graduated from high school two years early and is in college for Christian counseling.

Victoria and her family are very involved in their church. She is truly a light to everyone she meets and proof that with God and a dream, anything is possible.



NEA BAPTIST   
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

# DUCK CLASSIC

Banquet • Dec. 10, 2024 • First National Bank Arena  
Live & Silent Auction • Men's & Women's Raffles!

THE  
CAUSE

NEA BAPTIST   
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Center for Good Grief • ShareHope  
Medicine Assistance Program • HopeCircle  
Center For Healthy Children • Wellness Works



**DUCKCLASSIC.COM**

**WIN ME! GRAND CLASSIC**

**\$15,000  
GAMBLE | HOME  
SHOPPING SPREE**

**BAD BOY  
BANDIT**



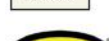
Only 850  
tickets will  
be sold!

**GRAND CLASSIC  
\$100 TICKET**

Duck Truck • Bandit 550 • Furniture Shopping Spree  
Franchi Affinity 3 20-Gauge • Winchester SXP 12-Gauge



**GAMBLE | HOME**



**BAD BOY  
BANDIT**



FUNDED BY  
JONESBORO  
ADVERTISING & PROMOTION COMMISSION





# DON'T MISS THESE *Upcoming Events in NEA*

## Breakfast with Ballerinas

*November 2nd*

Breakfast with Ballerinas, the Foundation of Arts' annual fundraiser featuring the theatre's Nutcracker Ballet cast, will be held Saturday, November 2nd, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. at Central Baptist Church, 3707 Harrisburg Road, in Jonesboro.

Guests of all ages will enjoy a meet and greet with the ballerinas, a story time, a sneak peek dance from the ballet, a delicious breakfast, a fun craft, shopping in the ballerina boutique, and bidding in the silent auction of goodies. Tickets are \$16 each at the door.



## GCT Veterans Day Celebration

*November 8th*

Greene County Tech High School will host its annual Veterans Day Celebration on November 8th at 9 a.m.

Admission is free and all are invited to attend the program in the school's auditorium at 4601 Linwood in Paragould.

A luncheon will follow the program for veterans and their guests.

This is the 53rd year for the school to host its Veterans Day program.



## NHS Veterans Day Program

*November 8th*

Nettleton High School's EAST program will host its annual Veterans Day Program and Luncheon on November 8th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

This will be the first year since 2019 that the school will be able to provide lunch for the veterans and guests. In addition, this year's event will be held off campus at the St. Bernards Auditorium.

All veterans are invited to attend. RSVP: 870-897-0020



## Magic on the Ridge

*Nov. 14th-16th*

Headlining the 2nd annual Magic on the Ridge Festival at The Collins Theatre in Downtown Paragould is Dustin Tavella, the winner of Season 16 of America's Got Talent.

The festival is set for November 14th through 16th and will also feature Jonathan Erlandson, Kayla Drescher and Ran'D Shine.

Individual show tickets, as well as all access passes to see all the shows, are available now. For more information, visit [www.collinstheatre.com/magic](http://www.collinstheatre.com/magic).



## Welcome Home

*Nov. 15th-16th*

The Paragould High School Theatre Department will present The Foreigner at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, November 15th, and Saturday, November 16th, in the PHS Auditorium.

The two-act comedy by American playwright Larry Shue has become a staple of professional and amateur theatre. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students. However, all students and employees of the Paragould School District will be admitted free of charge.



## Thanksgiving Meal

*November 16th*

Welcome Home: Opening the Door to Biblical Hospitality with Author and Speaker Jen Schmidt will be held November 16th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Forest Home Church of the Nazarene, 2403 Ritter Dr., in Jonesboro.

Pre-registration is available for \$40; cost at the door is \$50. Payment can be made online at [www.foresthomenaz.com/women](http://www.foresthomenaz.com/women) or by calling 870-932-9069. The price includes refreshments, lunch and two sessions with Schmidt. Refreshments and shopping by local boutique vendors begins at 9:00 a.m.







*Tis the season*

**November 30th**  
Leachville Christmas Parade, 7:00 p.m.

**December 1st**  
Brookland Christmas Parade, 2:00 p.m.

**December 2nd**  
Tree Lighting, Centennial Park, Paragould, 6:00 p.m.

**December 3rd**  
Paragould Christmas Parade, 7:00 p.m.

**December 6th**  
Jonesboro Christmas Parade, 7:00 p.m.

**December 7th**  
Joy Fest, Downtown Jonesboro, 4:00-10:00 p.m.



**Holiday Late Shopping Hours for November!**

**Wednesdays: 11-7**  
**Thursdays: 11-7**  
**Saturdays: 10:30-6:30**

You are invited to our  
**Holiday Open House**  
**Saturday, November 9th**  
**Scratch off for a discount**  
**up to 50%off!**

**SHOP LOCAL. SHOP SMALL**  
*Downtown Paragould*

**SHOP LOCAL**  
**online or in store.**

ShopGSGifts.com | 870.335.5298 | 203 N. Prueff St.

**Happy Veterans Day!**

We are proud to be a Veteran Owned and Operated business in NEA.

**MITCHELL FUNERAL HOME**  
"OUR FAMILY SERVING YOURS SINCE 1923"

*A complete, traditional service including a quality metal casket is just \$4,570.*

**1520 HWY 49 N. Paragould, AR | 870.236.7765**  
Visit [mitchellfuneralhomes.com](http://mitchellfuneralhomes.com) or call today.

**Celebrate 100 Years OF SERVICE**



# HAPPENINGS

## SCROGGIN RECEIVES LAUREATE AWARD

The American College of Physicians recently awarded Dr. Carroll D. Scroggin Jr., a hematologist/oncologist with NEA Baptist Fowler Family Center for Cancer Care, the Robert Shields Abernathy Laureate Award.



The ACP chapter laureate award recognizes chapter members who have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in medical care, education, research or service to their community, their chapter and ACP.

“Dr. Scroggin is the anchor of our cancer program at NEA Baptist,” said colleague and NEA Baptist Clinic founder, Dr. Ray Hall. “During his 32 years of practice, he has had a major impact on thousands of patients and saved countless lives. He is so deserving of this prestigious award.”

Scroggin earned his medical degree from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in 1985 and completed his internal medicine residency and fellowship in hematology/oncology at the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute in 1991.



## CRC MARKS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould celebrated its 60th anniversary on October 12th, welcoming around 400 alumni and guests.

The anniversary program featured performances from past Choralaires, speakers from each of its six decades, comments from former and current presidents, and a delicious meal provided by CRC. Former Arkansas Senator Tim Wooldridge emceed the program. Wooldridge serves as the college's current advancement executive.

CRC opened as a private, two-year college in 1964, became a four-year college in 2008, and now offers nine different degree programs within the fields of business, education, Biblical studies, and arts and sciences. The Arkansas Department of Higher Education ranked CRC third out of 15 private colleges and universities in Arkansas for enrollment growth from Fall 2023-24 and from Fall 2019 to Fall 2024.

## G&H DECOYS LOCATES IN CORNING

G&H Decoys has relocated its headquarters and manufacturing operations to Corning, with plans to create 77 new jobs in the region. The company is investing more than \$2.1 million to relocate and establish its new manufacturing facility in Arkansas.



“When Rob Hansen approached me about the idea of taking on G&H Decoys, we decided early on that if we weren't doing it to change people's lives – ours, our employees, and the communities – then it wasn't for us,” said Brent Sawyer, general manager and chief financial officer of G&H Decoys. “We wanted to be part of something spectacular, but we also wanted to be an outlet for lifestyle improvement within Northeast Arkansas. We believe in American-made products, and we believe in the American worker. Arkansas has a long history of pride and excellence both in manufacturing and in waterfowl hunting.”

Founded in the late 1940s by John J. Gazalski and J.V. Hutton, G&H Decoy Manufacturing Company has produced “Made in the USA” waterfowl decoys for eight decades. The company was acquired by Five Rivers Plastics Manufacturing in July 2024.



## ST. BERNARDS IS ‘PEDIATRIC READY’

St. Bernards Medical Center celebrated earning Arkansas' first “Pediatric Ready” status for emergency care provided at non-pediatric hospitals during an event on October 2nd after achieving “Gold Tier Recognition” from the Arkansas Department of Health.

The St. Bernards Emergency Department applied for and received the designation this summer through the Arkansas Emergency Medical Services for Children State Partnership Program. This program honors emergency departments and prehospital agencies, such as EMS, for caring for children and their unique health needs.

St. Bernards Emergency Department Pediatric Coordinator Hailey Clifton, RN, said the hospital prioritized the designation after seeing a steady year-over-year increase in the number of emergency visits involving children.

“Nationally, eight out of ten children go to a general emergency department over a specialized pediatric ED,” Clifton said. “Our numbers over the past three years reflect that trend, and we only expect them to go higher.”



# YOU CAN SUCCEED!

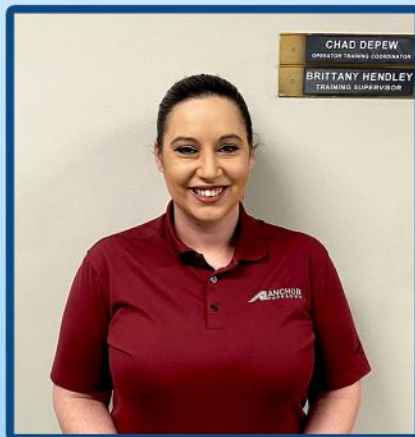
## *Start Your Career Today!*



Anchor Packaging started here in NE Arkansas as a family-owned company out of St. Louis. Our current plant locations in NE Arkansas include Paragould, Jonesboro, and Marmaduke. We encourage our team members to get involved in their communities and we support them when they do.

Vacation Time	Medical Insurance   HSA Alternative
Paid Holidays	Prescription Drug Program
Weekly Pay	Vision & Dental Plans
Bereavement	401(k) Retirement Savings Plan
Tuition Assistance	Basic & Supplemental Life Insurance
Scholarship Program	Short & Long Term Disability
Advancement Opportunities	Flex Savings   Credit Union

Finding, Connecting, & Building a Future  
[anchorpackaging.com/careers](http://anchorpackaging.com/careers)



*“The job provides steady pay, stability, fantastic benefits, and I get to help others succeed and develop in their role and future roles.”*

*~ Brittany Hendley*

**Paragould  
Marmaduke  
Jonesboro**

*Equal Opportunity Employer*

***“I enjoy working at Anchor Packaging because of the people. They are like a second family to me”***





# Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving

During this time of giving thanks, my team and I want to express our gratitude to our customers and our community.



**Virginia Walls Ins Agcy Inc**  
Virginia Walls, Agent  
2305 Linwood Drive  
Paragould, AR 72450

Bus: 870-236-9544  
www.virginiawalls.com  
vw@virginiawalls.com



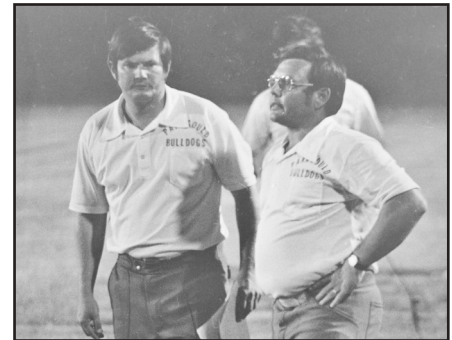
# Next Month

## Holiday Traditions



“Santa Cause” and others will share their favorite holiday traditions.

## NEA Senior Section



Richard Brummett brings you the 50-year reunion of the undefeated Paragould High School football team coached by Bill Keedy.

## Holiday Greetings/Gifts



Watch for gift ideas and holiday cheer from our Premiere advertisers.

## We are Thankful for Your Business.



*Holiday Homes  
are our specialty!*

## Warehouse Flooring

“Make your house new again with floors from Warehouse Flooring”

1709 N. Campground Road Paragould, AR (870) 236-1754





# VISION CARE CENTER OF PARAGOULD

**NOW OPEN AT OUR  
NEW LOCATION!  
4002 LINWOOD DRIVE**



**Corey Craine, OD**  
Optometric Physician

**Zac Inboden, OD**  
Optometric Physician

**Call Today • 870-239-2265**



NEA BAPTIST 

# URGENT CARE Plus

Expanded  Services  
Extended  Hours

- Staffed with emergency-trained physicians and instant access to the NEA Baptist Imaging Center on-site

- Allowing for treatment of more critical non-life threatening injuries and illness which cannot be diagnosed or treated in Urgent Care.

**Urgent Care Plus** is open extended hours for your convenience, because we know that accidents could happen anytime!

- Flu Symptoms
- Lacerations that may need sutures
- Minor orthopedic injuries including minor fractures
- Abdominal pain of undetermined cause
- New onset low back pain
- Productive cough
- Pleurisy
- Nose bleeds
- Inability to urinate or painful urination with or without bleeding
- Persistent nausea and vomiting
- Persistent headache
- Animal bites
- Head injuries without loss of consciousness



3001 Apache Drive • Jonesboro, AR • 870-936-7888  
**OPEN LATE Every Day • 8 am to 11 pm**