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ON THE COVER -

There is much that Katie Morris enjoys about the holidays, singing, collecting Christmas ornaments and shopping! But a highlight every year is spending time with her friend, Santa Cause, who she has seen every year since she was seven, including a visit this year at Tis The Season in Jonesboro.





PREMIERE

DECEMBER 2025

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From Us to You

e hear the phrase "Shop Local" so often that it can start to lose its meaning. But for those of us who work closely with small businesses, its impact is very real — felt every single day.

Online shopping has become part of our routine, and there's nothing wrong with that. But I wish everyone would make at least a small effort to support the businesses owned by our friends and neighbors. When you spend it with a local shop, your dollar doesn't just stop at the register. It turns over three to fifteen times in the community. That means owners reinvest in their storefronts, their families, and their employees — who then spend their wages locally as well.

One study shows that 67 cents of every dollar spent at a local business stays in the community, compared to chain stores where only about 14 cents remain here. The rest goes to corporate headquarters and eventually to shareholders. That difference matters.

I was reminded of this again at the recent Shop Paragould First kickoff event, where we heard from a fantastic speaker, Paige Dennis of Joann's in Fulton, Tennessee. She shared smart, actionable advice for small business owners:

- Offer exceptional service the kind bigbox stores rarely provide.
- Set store hours that actually match your



customers' shopping habits and stick to them.

- Create memorable experiences by collaborating with other local businesses and promoting those experiences together.
- And perhaps her most powerful message: Outwork the competition, and don't quit.

A strong local economy doesn't happen by accident. It grows because people choose to invest in their own community. This season, I hope we all make that choice a little more often.



Dina Mason General Manager & Publisher dina@mormediainc.com

t's the most wonderful time of the year! Lights are twinkling, Jill @ 99.3 is starting its second month of Christmas music and this month's Premiere Magazine is loaded with holiday cheer. I am basking in the glow of it all!

I had such a good time interviewing Katie Morris and Santa Steve for our cover story this month. Both Katie and Santa Cause, as he is referred to for his generous giving to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, can light up a room as much as any Christmas tree.

It is stories like theirs that make me so happy to be where I am, doing what I do - sharing the good news of Northeast Arkansas and the People Making it Happen.



Gretchen Hunt

Content Manager & Graphic Designer graphics@mormediainc.com

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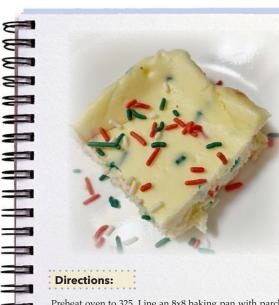
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Cheers for Cheesecake BY KATIE COLLINS

heesecake might just be the perfect dessert. It's incredibly versatile and can be customized to fit just about any theme, season or holiday. From classic New York cheesecake to the nobake lemon version I remember my mom making, there's a type of cheesecake for just about every palate. Unless you don't

like cream cheese, then you'll probably want to go in a different direction.

I wanted to keep it simple this time, with a fairly small batch of cheesecake bars. I mixed in some red and green sprinkles (in the batter and on the finished product) for a festive look, but that's totally optional. I won't even have to go on a rant about how much I dislike a graham cracker crust because these cheesecake bars are crustless. These would be great for a New Year's Eve celebration so you can have one last hurrah before the "eat less carbs and sugar in the New Year" resolution takes over for a few weeks!



Cheesecake Bars

2 – 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened

½ cup granulated sugar

2 large eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract ¼ cup sour cream

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

1/8 teaspoon salt

Festive sprinkles (optional)

Preheat oven to 325. Line an 8x8 baking pan with parchment paper. Beat the cream cheese and sugar together with a hand mixer until smooth. Add the eggs, mixing until combined. Add vanilla, sour cream, flour and salt. Mix until smooth (don't overmix). Gently stir in sprinkles if you're using them.

Pour in prepared pan and smooth out. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until center is set. Let cool at room temperature for 1 hour, then refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Cut into squares, garnish as you like, and serve.





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THE MAGIC BY GRETCHEN HUNT

For Mike Pallardy, his love of model trains led to the creation of a unique Christmas tree that wows visitors of all ages. His wife, Celeste, said the tree, which has multiple tiers with tracks for different sized model trains, was completely Mike's design.

Mike, who has loved model trains since he used to watch them in store windows in St. Louis as a young boy, said he had a train that ran around the top of his cabinets, but he had always wanted to do a train tree. After unsuccessfully trying to find a tree to purchase, he decided to just design one himself.

The couple found an old tree at a second-hand store, which he dismantled and then added layers for each train redecorating the shelves with the greenery he had removed to create the finished look of the tree. He laughed about the experience of turning trash into treasure.

"They didn't want to sell us the tree because the lights didn't work on it and it was pretty rough," he said. "We had to explain to them that we were going to take it completely apart."

After he took it apart, though, what he created was magical.

"I have had several people ask me what I would charge to make them a tree like mine, and I just tell them, you can't afford it," he said.



After negotiating with the grandchildren to look and not touch, they decided to put the tree on a platform with village pieces on the lowest level and then trains in descending sizes on each level from the bottom to the very top of the tree where a tiny train circles the track.

Each train offers a little something different to the experience, including one that blows steam from the engine.

"The kids really do good just watching the trains," Mike said. "I love to watch them too."













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BY MICHELLE WOOLDRIDGE

iver Bear is a 31/2 months old Aussiedoodle. This sweet cuddly puppy has come into our lives at just the right time. His good mood is infectious. River enjoys playing with his bestie Molly (our shorkie), stealing socks, watching the leaves fall and napping in a lap. He is clever and a very good problem solver, which sometimes gets him into trouble. He loves his Blue Diamond chicken treats and will do many commands to obtain one. The best thing about River is how he is healing our hearts. We have had a rough year filled with hard medical diagnosis and grief. River's constant sparkly personality immediately puts a smile on your face. Watching him approach you across the room jumping up like Tigger from Winnie the Pooh makes us all laugh. What a blessing sweet River Bear is to us!

















NOTHING SAYS Happy Holidays **QUITE LIKE THE** WARMTH OF A FIREPLACE

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hristmas remains my favorite holiday, even though I have transformed from present-getter into present-giver. I love seeing the young ones in our family open gifts with great anticipation, just as I did when I was young and innocent, even if I knew at least one box from under the tree was going to contain the obligatory new church clothes.

One of the best things about the Christmas season during my days as a kid was the fact that my cousins from Alabama – Ken and Malinda Burton - would arrive and stay a week or so and we would spend almost the entire time together. Malinda, having been saddled with the misfortune of being a girl, didn't walk around town looking for a ballgame to get into the way Ken and I did; she saved up her energy for all-night card games, late night TV marathons, and hours of unbridled laughter and mischief.

Ken and I did not have access to a gym in those days. We didn't have our Community Center yet and the high schools closest to us were shut down for the holidays, unless their teams had games scheduled and then there might be a practice session or two held, but there were no indoor facilities for grade school kids to frequent. So, our daily routine consisted of taking my basketball and walking from neighborhood to neighborhood in search of some guys playing outside, hoping we would be invited to join in.

We sometimes found action at L.W. Baldwin Elementary's outdoor courts, or at Woodrow Wilson Elementary, or even at the First Baptist Church parking lot and we didn't mind that we had to bundle up with sweatshirts and blue jeans and multiple layers of clothing in order to contend with the December cold. We just walked and played and loved every minute of it, then headed back home to thaw out and play a table-top basketball game I kept in my room, staying entertained for hours.

I was so happy that it didn't occur to me we didn't have much money when I was a kid; I always had all the stuff I needed if not very often all the stuff I wanted. My dad worked downtown at a hardware store for a meager paycheck and my mom was a schoolteacher back in the days when that paid very poorly as well.

So I didn't own a lot of expensive stuff and was somewhat envious of friends who had concreted areas upon which to bounce a basketball, top-of-the-line sporting equipment and, later on, motorcycles for cruising town.

Later in life, I came to appreciate the sacrifices Mom and Dad made in order to put some gifts under the tree. It was many years down the road when I realized one of the more humorous episodes Dad and I shared was spawned by his love for me and his wanting me to have something special.

Understanding my desire to have a basketball backboard and goal of my own, Dad saved up some money and purchased the necessary items to build me one. My friends' dads just went to the "basketball stuff buying place" and got a ready-made outfit; we couldn't afford that, I now know, so Dad bought a post, some boards and some concrete and went about building our own.

He cut the boards to the exact size needed for the backboard, nailed them together and attached them to the pole. After he had painted everything white, he secured the goal and net to the backboard and we alternated using the post hole diggers to prepare the hole for placing it into the ground. Once we shoved it into place and mixed in the concrete, all I had to do was wait a few hours and I'd have my own home basketball haven. I was thrilled and spent several hours in the yard by myself, playing imaginary games as I dribbled and shot my way to victory ... for a couple of days, anyway.

On about Day Three of being a backboard owner, I went outside to shoot and found my little piece of Heaven lying face down on the ground. Seems there are things to know about how deep to sink the supporting pole and what size it needs to be, how heavy to make the backboard and some other things that sounded like geometry or algebra, so I stopped paying attention. All I knew was, Dad was going to have to help me get the thing upright in order for me to continue my march to NBA stardom.

When he got home from work we somehow lifted the backboard off the ground, learning that the moment of impact had squashed the rim in such a way that it resembled a foot-long deli sandwich more than a circular goal.

Dad did his best, using a pair of pliers to pull it back to semi-circle shape, and for the rest of its days I was forced to shoot jump shots at a pecan-shaped goal instead of a round one. Most dads would have gone downtown and purchased a new one, but I figure every spare dollar we had went into the original purchase. So I just shot at the pecan and learned to live with it.

None of my pals really wanted to come shoot on my goal, seeing as how it was deformed, and I usually wound up somewhere else so it mostly stood as a monument to the inability of Dad and me to build a backboard. Many years later, as we looked back on those days and laughed, Dad said, "Well, at least there weren't a bunch of noisy boys out in the yard all the time."

True, but there was a joyous noise in my heart just the same.



Richard Brummett is a journalist with more than 50 years of newspaper and magazine experience. He enjoys writing to help people bring their stories to life, and hopes through his monthly Get Rich column to help put a smile on readers' faces.

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& AWARENESS



ope Found of Northeast Arkansas hosted its 3rd annual Brewing Hope Coffee Festival on Saturday, November 8th, at the Judd Hill Farmer's Market pavilion in Jonesboro. The event showcased area coffee vendors, while giving attendees an opportunity to support Hope Found's efforts to both prevent and provide education about human trafficking.

The event drew its largest crowd ever, with perfect weather, lots of coffee and treats to sample and other shopping and activities. More information on Hope Found can be found at hopefoundnea.org.

















ry In the Life



n November 8th we made our way to Centennial Bank Stadium to watch the Red Wolves take on the Golden Eagles. Daniel, Knox, his friend Zeke, Keller, his friend Jude, and I decided to make the trip ... Kruz, our youngest, opted to stay with his cousins and Mimi. He informed us that he didn't care anything about going and watching a football game ... Mimi is more fun anyway.

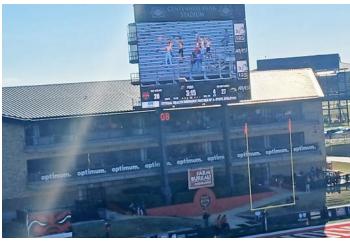
As usual, we were late to the game, and we had to park at JTown's and walk across the road to get to the stadium. It felt like the shortest walk and easiest shot for us not to forget where we parked. This ended up being a super easy spot to get out of and head back home after the game, as well. We did have to pay to park, but we knew that would happen the closer we parked. All of the boys said we had to go back to eat because the food smelled so good, if we weren't late, I would have suggested we just go right then!

We crossed the road and told the boys not to be heathens and be careful not to fall ... of course one out of the four fell but luckily it was when we made it fully across the road and onto the grass. He blamed the grass for being so slick, not the wild running. We made it to the game and of course we had to get food and drinks before we even sat down.

Daniel, Knox, and Zeke went for hot dogs and pretzels. I had to take Keller and Jude over to the complete other side of the stadium because they had to have pizza, from Lost Pizza, which the boys devoured before getting back to our seats. In Keller's own words, "That pizza was fire!" Or maybe he said bussin', I can't keep up. Either way it was good because we had to go back and get more pizza as the game went on. Daniel loaded up on the souvenir cups saying, "We can use these at home!" As if we don't have enough souvenir cups from literally everywhere else.

Our seats were easy to find and easy to get to. Luckily, we didn't have to make a long haul up to get to them. Good thing, because Knox does NOT do heights. He will do roller coasters but absolutely no heights. Our section and anything above us was completely open so the boys moved all around the entire game. For it to be a November game, we were all sweating. I packed hoodies in the car, just in case. Daniel assured me there would be no just in case and in this instance he was right. Don't tell him I said that.

Knox was telling us he might even want to go to Arkansas State when he starts looking at colleges because he could play football and basketball there, plus he wouldn't be far from home and this way everyone would be able to come watch him play super easy. I graduated from ASU in 2017, so I loved hearing that one of the boys actually wanted to go to my alma mater. I loved my time at ASU, and I know he would, too. Plus, the momma (bonus) in me, would love that he was still close enough to see on a weekly



or daily basis.

The Red Wolves played a good game and almost came back and won it, but they ended up with the loss. But before we left, Knox worked his shirt off and started whipping it above his head which tempted Zeke and Keller to start doing the same thing. With it being as hot as it was and the YOLO mentality, we just let them have at it. Jude, however, was not about taking his shirt off. He just laughed at them and kept saying, "Katie do you see them?!"

Just as we were trying to get them to start making our way to the vehicle, a group of college boys came over and said, "Oh no are y'all leaving, we wanted to join in!" Our boys turned and looked at us like C'MON! Naturally we nodded. Then we had our three boys plus the three college guys whipping their shirts above their heads, and they ended up on the Jumbotron! Once they got it all out of their system, we started making our way back to the car and Jude told me, "Dang, I wish I had done that now!" I said to go on, he could still do it, and without skipping a beat he whipped his shirt off and whirled it around his head on the walk back to the car.

We made it back to the car ... no one fell this time, and we got out of the parking lot super easy and started on our way home. Wheels turning, figuratively and literally, Knox said we need to look at coming to an Arkansas State men's basketball game next. Daniel and I looked at each other and just laughed and said, "Yeah, I think we could make that happen."

I am Katie Roe, a media consultant at MOR Media and bonus mom to 3 rambunctious boys... Knox, Keller, and Kruz (the tiny tornado). I married their dad, Daniel Roe, in downtown Paragould in the fall of 2024. Daniel and I are constantly trying to find new adventures. Whether we are tackling a football game, slinging dirt out at the races, or cruising on Lake Norfork we are making memories for a lifetime.

Paragould Ko

he Paragould Rotary Club held its annual Duck Derby on Saturday, November 1st. The event focuses on a rubber duck race with sponsored ducks raising money for the club, but also included a show and shine car show and other family-friendly activities.













ortheast Arkansas veterans were honored at a number of events across the region for the 2025 Veterans Day holiday.

Among the events were programs hosted by schools, including the annual programs and meals provided by the Nettleton School District and Greene County Tech School District.

Many area businesses also hosted events to honor veterans, including Glen Sain Motors, which offered food and prizes at each of its dealerships on Veterans Day.

Communities also held receptions and parades for veterans on or around the holiday, including a breakfast reception at The Station in Downtown Paragould on Veterans Day.





































Sonta ADDS TO THE MAGIC **OF CHRISTMAS**

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

hat started as a 30-minute photo session has turned into a 10-year friendship between Katie Morris and none other than Santa himself — more specifically Santa Steve, who has been helping spread the joy of Christmas for about five years longer than he's known Katie.

"I've been doing this for about 15 years," he said. "God gave me a gift to go out and share the word about His birth and about peace, love and joy around the world and that's what I do. I enjoy the children. Especially the ones that just need a hug. It's a great opportunity and has put me in some places where I felt like I could make a difference with the good Lord's help."

Santa Steve is known as Santa Cause because he donates money from his holly jolly work to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Katie's mom, Gena, said they first met through a Santa experience with William Bell Photography.

"He did 30 minutes," Gena said. "You could come visit with Santa and take pictures. So we did that because she has loved Santa since she was little bitty — never a child that was scared of Santa Claus."

Since that first experience, Katie has had her photo taken with Santa Steve every year, sometimes with quick visits and sometimes with more extended experiences.



Katie is now a sassy 16-year-old but agrees that Christmas would not be the same without a visit with Santa Cause.

This year the two caught up at Tis The Season in Jonesboro, where Katie teased Santa with her love for all things Grinch, and Santa got an update on Katie's activities, including competing with the Greene County Tech swim team and participating in both traditional and unified Special Olympics.

Santa Steve said the relationships he has built through the years









motivates him as he continues his work.

"When I run into children like Katie, it just opens my heart and just helps me spread the love ... just look at her," he said. "She's spread love all in here tonight. Everywhere she goes she spreads love."

Spreading love is what it's all about, according to Santa Cause.

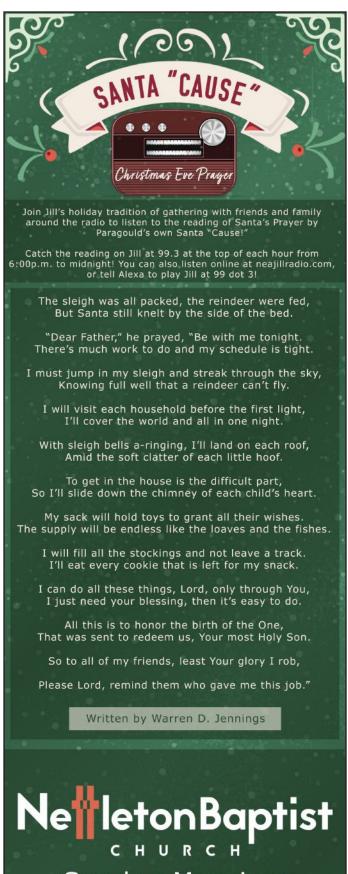
"I travel a lot of different places and I've been into many, many, many homes, and I've always asked them if they mind me sharing the word of God with the kids and so forth and I've never been turned down by anybody. They seem to really appreciate that, and so do I the opportunity to do that."

Continued









Sunday Mornings
Worship Services and Small Groups 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM



He said being Santa opens you up to a lot of different experiences. "I can tell you stories right now that will make you cry," he said, "or, Katie, we could tell them stories that would make them laugh too, couldn't we?"

Gena immediately thought of one such funny story from an NEA Baptist Tree Lighting event.

"Katie was waiting in line when it was over to see Santa and there was a little girl standing beside her and Katie leaned over and said, 'He knows me,'" Gena said, noting the little girl did not believe that Katie knew Santa. "I said you'll just have to wait and see. They get to the front of the line and Santa yelled, 'Katie,' and Katie took off running and that little girl turned around and looked at me and her eyes were as big as her face. And I said, 'She told you she knew Santa Claus.' That's probably my favorite one. She couldn't believe it — that Santa knew Katie's name."

In addition to collecting photos with Santa, Katie also loves collecting Christmas ornaments with her family when they go on trips. Those ornaments



go on the family tree, though, because her tree is decked out in all things Harry Potter, something else she loves.

As she talked with Santa about her poodle, Bella, and her youth group at 7th and Mueller Church of Christ, she was proud to tell him she got baptized. Gena said when they are together it is just like any other friends catching up after not seeing each other for a while.

"They made a fast friendship and they've been friends ever since," she said. "Katie has even introduced him to her cousins. They've all met Santa."

Katie laughed when Santa said, "Katie, you know what, one time I think I need to take you to the North Pole with me." Then she politely let him know that she couldn't leave because Bella would be sad, plus she doesn't like to be cold.

Santa Steve said he is busy every year, but he expects to see even more children this Christmas, along with other members of the Crowley's Ridge Santas. "I tell them they are my helpers," he laughed. "They all get mad at me, you know, but there are other Santas and they are really great guys."

As Christmas approaches, Katie is ready to do all her favorite holiday activities, playing games with her family, eating chocolates, shopping, making presents and watching her favorite Christmas movie "The Grinch."

"Oh no, not The Grinch," Santa said, when Katie said it is her favorite. "I like his hair," she replied.

She also loves music and singing, and said her favorite Christmas song is Hark the Herald Angels Sing, which is appropriate as she shared that what makes Christmas the most special is that it's Jesus's birthday. She said the sad part is that he was crucified, but the best part is that he rose again.

Being excited about Christmas is a given for Katie as she anticipates another visit from her friend, Santa. Gena said she and Katie's dad, Josh, can always expect an early morning on Christmas day as Katie can't wait to see what is waiting under the tree. "She likes to get up at two o'clock in the morning," Gena said, "just to check and see if he's already come."

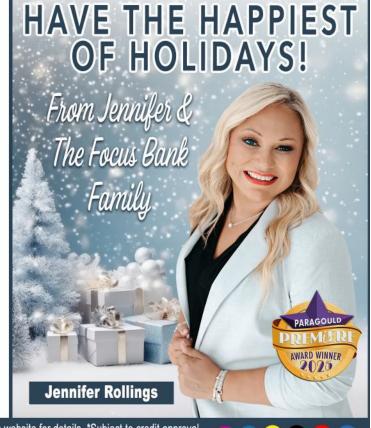




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BY CHUCK LONG



ne of our family's favorite Christmas movies is "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," and it includes the following great oration: "That's what it's all about, isn't it? Gifts, gifts, gifts, gifts, gifts! You know what happens to your gifts? They all come to me!" There is much more to this scene, and it captures many of the thoughts of gift giving during the holiday season. I can understand this frustration and can say I am not the best gift giver, nor the easiest to buy for. But I can help if you have outdoors folks on your gift list; let's talk about a few things that might need to be in the shopping cart.

Clothing is always a need, so let's take a quick look at a few ideas to clothe the outdoors person. Layering is a key to warmth and comfort on the stand or in the boat and there is no better base layer than merino wool. Today's merino wool is a far cry from the itchy, abrasive wool of many years ago. Most suppliers are very picky in sourcing their wool and take care with their manufacturing process to produce a high quality, comfortable garment.

The inherent characteristics of this wool are perfect for the hunter. Wool garments retain their insulating qualities while wet, are durable and naturally reduce human scent. This market has grown over the last few years so there are plenty of options to meet all needs. Socks are a good starting point and an essential part of getting ready for a day outdoors. Thermal underwear, heavier base layers and outerwear also are available in merino wool. Some of the brands I have used or have seen getting strong reviews are Smartwool, Duckworth and Meriwool. There are plenty of others on the market that are good as well.

Outerwear clothing has changed greatly over the last few years. Heavy cotton outerwear has been replaced with fabrics that repel water, block wind and insulate well. There are several manufacturers on the market that provide quality clothing. Sitka, Kuiu and FirstLite are some of the new players, but Columbia and some of the other well-known longtime brands are still out there. Look for terms like windproof, quiet or waterproof on the label, depending on the use. Often this could come down to personal preference so do a little snooping in the closet for preferred brands or camo pattern. I am not a big brand guy, so I tend to look at fit and use for each piece as each manufacturer tends to have their strength and has a certain fit.

Other clothing that might make good gifts would be gloves and some type of headgear. A good pair of waterproof gloves along with a windproof toboggan or other type of headgear will help the hunter stay in the woods longer.

Outdoors folks are also known for their gear and there are lots of options when deciding on a gift. A knife is always appreciated and there are many great knives on the market. A knife to carry to take care of the game after the take is essential. A favorite in that area is one of the knives that offer changeable blades. Outdoor Edge and Havalon are top of the line in knives with replaceable blades. Another option is a folding knife, with Buck, Gerber and Case being top of the line. Some folks might prefer a fixed blade option and Buck or Case offer good options in those. For a really nice gift, find a local knifemaker and









purchase directly from them. We have several in Northeast Arkansas that produce great knives and one of these would make a great gift for a keepsake or for skinning a deer.

If the outdoorsman on your list likes to travel to remote places or rough country to chase game, one of the satellite communicators would be a good choice. A Garmin Inreach or SPOT communication device will provide communication without a cell signal, using satellites to message. There will be a use plan in addition to the cost of the device, but that can be turned off or on as needed. Each brand has its strong suits, but both can save a life.

Another electronic device a hunter might like under the tree would be a new game camera. There are a multitude of brands on the market and, once again, each has its advantages. Check the product features and reviews to determine which one fits the bill. A camera that sends pictures over a cell phone service will also require a monthly plan while in use.

A good backpack that will carry a load is indispensable for a hunter, especially anyone who might head out west. There are several good brands on the market. Badlands, Mystery Ranch and Eberlestock are a few favorites. They will be somewhat expensive, but a good backpack definitely falls under the adage, "you get what you pay for." These will come in various sizes, from daypacks to packs that will carry several days' worth of hunting and camping gear. Think about the use, read some reviews and choose accordingly.

Here are a few quick ideas. Going to the beach next summer? A











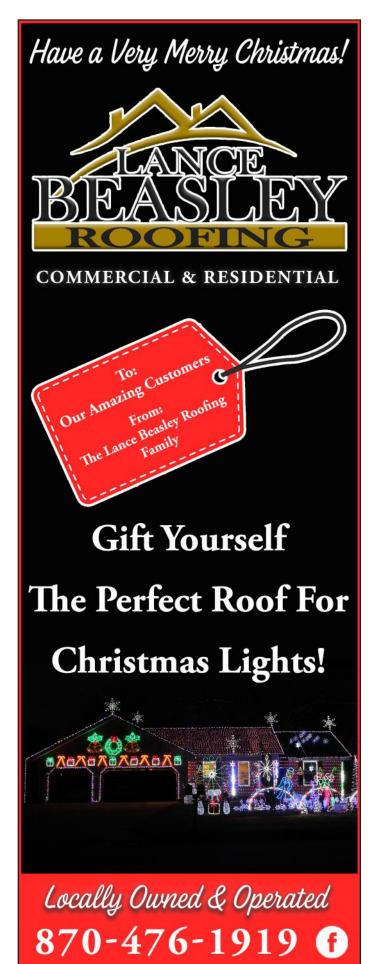


dedicated surf rod and reel or a beach cart for fishing would be good. For a boater? An inflatable personal flotation device could save a life. Going camping? A new cot or sleeping bag could provide more comfort. Duck hunter? New decoys or a new duck call might be needed. A dog person? A GPS collar for the hound or bird dog would be nice.

Now to stuff the stocking. Fill it with a compass, flashlight, skinning gloves, handwarmers, bug spray, sinkers, hooks or ammunition. Throw in a few game bags, some marking tape, bright eyes, energy drink packets and chocolate and they will be ready for the woods or the water.

As you work to fill the list, try to shop local if at all possible. Many of the retailers in our neighborhood can help you check a few things off the list. I hope each of you have a wonderful Christmas. Thanks for reading each month and for the kind comments many of y'all pass on from time to time. May God bless each of your families through this holiday season. To end with a Grinch quote, "Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store, maybe Christmas means a little bit more!" Merry Christmas and I hope to see y'all out there!

Chuck Long is a lifelong Arkansas outdoorsman. Chuck retired from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission after thirty plus years of service and now enjoys sharing his love of the outdoors through writing, speaking events and social media outlets. Have an outdoor question? Reach out to Chuck at cflong2002@yahoo.com.





The Paraghoul 5k/10K was held Saturday, October 25th, in Downtown Paragould. The walk/ run was a fundraiser for The Agape House. With a large turnout of both participants and spectators, the annual event also featured a kids fun run, a mascot race and a costume contest.











Merry Christmas

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Should I list my house during the holidays?

Listing a home during the holiday season can be a smart decision, depending on the local market and personal circumstances.

While there are fewer buyers actively looking at this time of year, the ones who do shop during the holidays are often serious and motivated. They need to move. Since many people wait until spring to list, there is less competition, which can help your house stand out. Holiday décor, when kept tasteful and minimal, can also make a home feel warm and inviting.

However, there are downsides to consider. Buyer traffic tends to be lower, and showings may interfere with holiday plans. Winter weather and dormant landscaping can also



affect curb appeal.

If you're ready to sell and prepared for fewer — but serious — buyers, listing during the holidays can work in your favor. But if you prefer more foot traffic and would rather avoid holiday disruption, waiting until early January can also be effective.

Should I be screened for skin cancer?

Many individuals mistakenly believe that skin cancer only affects those with fair skin or those who sunbathe frequently. In reality, skin cancer can develop in anyone, regardless of skin type or lifestyle.

There's also a misconception that skin cancer is only a concern for older adults. However, data shows that younger adults are increasingly diagnosed with skin cancer due to rising UV exposure from various sources.

Annual skin cancer screenings play a crucial role in identifying skin cancer at its earliest stages. These screenings facilitate proactive skin health management, especially for individuals at higher risk. Early detection of skin cancer leads to more effective treatment options.



APRN. DCNP

Treatment of skin cancers, such as melanoma, basal cell carcinoma, and squamous cell carcinoma, proves more successful when diagnosed promptly.

Don't underestimate the power of early detection; make your skin health a priority and schedule your screening today.



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Does nutrition play a role in my likelihood of contracting the flu?

Yes! Good nutrition helps strengthen the immune system, making it easier for the body to fight off infections like the flu.

Eating a balanced diet rich in vitamins C, D, A, zinc, selenium, and protein – along with staying hydrated and maintaining gut health – supports immune defenses.

Even those who are making good nutrition decisions should remember, though, that for full protection it's still important to get a flu shot.



Internal Medicine

Getting a flu shot is easy, whether you get it at your primary care physician's office, your pharmacy or your local health unit.

So, for your best chance to stay healthy this winter, eat well and protect yourself with a flu shot.

What should I do to make my marketing plan more successful in 2026?

Plan your work and work your plan. Review what worked and what did not in 2025. Remember to think of the 4 P's of marketing:

Product: Is mine still relevant?

Price: Have I priced my product based on value, competition and demand.

Place: Where and how customers can buy your product. Are you open when they shop? Do they want my product online? Do they want it delivered? How can I make sure they choose me in each distribution channel.



Promotion: Use all the channels of marketing — advertising, social media, PR, email marketing — to promote sales, offers and your general brand.

Make a marketing plan that targets your ideal customer and stick to it.



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What are the travel trends for 2026?

Travel in 2026 is all about connection, culture, and curated experiences.

International Hotspots:

- Japan captivates with its harmony of tradition and innovation.
- Costa Rica draws eco-travelers with its "pura vida" lifestyle and lush landscapes.
- Italy remains a timeless favorite for food, art, and coastal beauty.
- Spain offers vibrant cities and Mediterranean charm.
- · France defines romance and refinement.

U.S. Favorites:

- Big Sky, Montana, and Vail, Colorado, are redefining luxury in the great outdoors.
- Charleston, South Carolina, blends history and hospitality.



- National Park Tours attract those craving natural beauty and quiet exploration.
- Nashville, Tennessee delivers culture, creativity, and the unmistakable energy of live music.

As travelers plan ahead, 2026 promises meaningful journeys and unforgettable places — near and far.

How does an x-ray help with chiropractic care?

When your doctor of chiropractic takes an x-ray of your spinal column, he has a "blue print" that shows him much more than signs of pathology or fracture. It shows him whether the spinal structure is normal or out of alignment.

Any abnormal structural alignment may be the cause of health problems. It not only causes weakness in the spine itself, it may also have a harmful effect on the nerve supply to other structures and organs in your body. If the supply is not adequate, this may be causing health problems.

Highly skilled in the manipulation of the spine, your doctor of chiropractic will use this form of treatment to correct any misalignments. He may also instruct you in exercises that will help restore good posture and take any unwanted



pressure off the spine so the misalignments will not recur.

A properly aligned spinal column is essential for your good health. That's why the "blue print" is so important. It can show your doctor exactly where the problems are so they can be treated.



travelmation

travelmation.net/stephaniehancock



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Should I incorporate my small business?

If your small business is generating consistent income, exposing you to liability, or you're aiming to scale and build a more professional brand, incorporating could be a smart move. Forming an LLC or S Corporation offers legal protection, potential tax savings, and added credibility — especially if you're offering advisory services or prepaid packages.

It also helps separate personal and business finances, making operations cleaner and more strategic. However, incorporation comes with added costs and compliance requirements, so it's best suited for businesses earning over \$50K in profit annually or those planning for growth, retirement benefits, or future partnerships. A great determining factor is asking yourself, Is this a side hustle I am doing to earn a bit of extra cash, or is this a career I am building?



If you answer that this is just extra money to make ends meet, then incorporation is not for you. On the other hand, if scaling your business and drowning in self-employment taxes, incorporating may be the answer you have been looking for

How can ketamine help with PTSD?

Ketamine blocks the activity of N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptors in the brain. These receptors are involved in fear responses and storage of traumatic memories. When they are overactivated, a person may experience excessive memories, increased anxiety, intrusive thoughts, avoidance behaviors, nightmares, flashbacks, hyperarousal and fear. In PTSD, overactive NMDA receptors can make it difficult for the brain to learn that triggers and/or memories are no longer actual threats. The brain is basically always in hyperalert.

By blocking the NMDA receptors, ketamine may help to reset the brain, making it easier



to process traumatic memories. It works to reduce inflammation and anxiety which can contribute and worsen PTSD symptoms. Ketamine also helps to repair neural pathways in the brain allowing neurons to better communicate with each together which improves mood, behavior and cognitive function.



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Engagement Announcement



Tokarz - Lehman

Peyton Tokarz of Cabot and Lucas Lehman of Jonesboro have announced their engagement.

The bride-elect is the daughter of Joey and Jamie Tokarz.

The prospective groom is the son of Eric Lehman and Candace Cerrato.

The couple will exchange vows in May of 2027.

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ENGAGEMENT



WEDDING

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Health Natters

BY KARAN SUMMITT

BATTLING ILLNESS



Boosting Your Immune System

chool days usually bring more than just daily routines and busy schedules. Listen closely and you may hear moms complaining that as early as the very first week of school unwanted attendees park themselves in class and come home with the kids — things like strep throat, stomach viruses and sinus infections. These irritating germs have a way of making a fresh return during the holidays when guests from out-of-town bring their own versions along to family gatherings.

It would be nice if dodging a cold or stomach virus were as easy as taking a flu shot. Unfortunately, we've yet to find a reliable way to prevent the common maladies that seem to spread when people are in close proximity. Since they rarely lead to severe complications, most of us simply weather the symptoms, doctoring ourselves with chicken soup, over-the-counter medications and bed rest.

A cold is arguably the most common illness in humans. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is also one of the most common causes of work and school absenteeism. Colds are caused by viral infections. Over 200 different viruses can cause cold symptoms of varying severity.

Viruses that cause colds are spread from person to person through tiny droplets of mucus that enter the air from the nasal passages of infected persons and are inhaled by others. Colds also can be spread by touching surfaces that have been contaminated by infected persons and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. The strongest line of defense against these invisible enemies is a healthy immune system.

Our immune system is a network of cells, tissues and organs that work together to protect the body from infection. To function properly, an immune system must be able to detect a wide variety of unwanted agents called pathogens and distinguish them from the body's own healthy tissue. Pathogens have the ability to change and adapt, making it hard for the immune system to recognize and attack these enemies. Fortunately, our immune system does a remarkable job of defending us but sometimes it fails and a germ successfully invades, making us sick.

You may not know it, but your immune system is an army living on the inside and outside of you. It includes your lymph nodes, skin, intestinal bacteria, spleen, white blood cells and bone marrow. Each soldier in this army has a distinctive job, and they all work together to keep us healthy. In the gut, our "good" bacteria help balance the body's immune response against unwelcome bacteria. These good gut bacteria make sure the immune response is effective but not so violent that it destroys healthy tissue.

The bacteria in our guts can attack pathogens that not only infect the gut, such as the common stomach virus, but also those that infect the lungs, such as a cold or flu virus. The body of a person lacking these good gut bacteria won't have as strong an immune response. As you might guess, a healthy diet increases the strength and number of the "good" gut bacteria, giving us a stronger immune system. That is one of the reasons you hear so much about probiotics and prebiotics

— these food compounds feed the good bacteria in our gut.

BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM TAKE VITAMINS DO EXERCISE AVOID ALCOHOL AND CIGARETTES DRINK MORE WATER SLEEP WELL EAT HEALTHY WASH YOUR HANDS GET SUNSHINE

Unfortunately, as we age the immune system becomes more susceptible to infections, inflammation and disease. Compared with younger people, the elderly are far more likely to contract respiratory infections, influenza and pneumonia. Worldwide, these three are a leading cause of death in people over age 65. No one knows exactly why this happens, but the immune system seems to weaken with age. One possible explanation was found in observing older people's response to vaccines. For example, studies of influenza vaccines have shown that for people over 65, vaccine effectiveness was 23 percent, whereas for healthy children (over age 2), it was 38 percent. Even with this reduction in effectiveness, those who received the vaccines had stronger resistance than the non-vaccinated.

Other researchers are looking at the connection between nutrition and immunity in the elderly. A form of malnutrition that is common, even in affluent countries, is "micronutrient malnutrition." Micronutrient malnutrition refers to a deficiency of essential vitamins and trace minerals. Because seniors tend to eat less and often have less variety in their diets, it can be a common problem among the elderly. Dietary supplements may help older people maintain a healthier immune system.

This knowledge of what happens to our immune system as we age provides a valuable insight for bolstering a child's immune system. Daycare, school attendance and developing bodies make children vulnerable in the war against germs, and at the same time, help them develop natural antibodies and stronger immune systems as they experience and overcome these illnesses. Parents and caregivers can help by feeding kids a healthy diet, making sure they get adequate sleep and exercise and teaching them something as simple as the importance of good hand-washing techniques. Keeping them up to date on immunizations is another important internal defense.

What can adults do to make our aging immune systems stronger? The single best step you can take for a strong and healthy immune system is to follow the general guidelines for good health. Every part of your body, including your immune system, functions better when bolstered by healthy-living habits.

These include the obvious things you've heard before — don't smoke, eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and low in saturated fat. Take time to exercise regularly, maintain a healthy weight and get adequate sleep. Good mental health and stress control is also important to a strong immune system.



Additional recommendations include getting the regular medical screening tests for people in your age group and risk category. The diagnosis of chronic diseases like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease weakens the immune system, making it even more important to stay up-to-date on age-appropriate immunizations and physician visits.

Common winter ailments like colds, stomach viruses and strep throat will always be around but the more attention we give to ramping up our immune system, the stronger it will be when (not if) these irritating and uncomfortable pathogens cross our path. Our immune system is a powerful soldier in the battle for good health if we do our part to keep it armed and ready!

Karan Summitt is a retired health educator with 25 years experience 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.





REMEMBRANCE

The Hispanic Center of Jonesboro hosted its annual Day of the Dead celebration on Saturday, November 15th, at the Cooper Alumni Center on the campus of Arkansas State University. The sold out event was filled with culture, music and food as proceeds went to support the center's more than 20 programs and the services provided to the community.



















Dr. Corey Craine & Dr. Zac Inboden

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1st, in Downtown Pocahontas. The event featured retail and food vendors, a kids zone and live music, as well as a matinee performance of "Twelve Angry Women" at the Marr Street Playhouse.















THE ADVENTURES OF



BY VICKI McMILLAN



was the first of December and all though the pound, the puppies were shaking, not making a sound.

The kennels were cozy, tidy, and neat With hopes that soon there would be families to greet.

Children had made their Christmas lists in advance; And no rescue puppies were on them, without even a glance.

All of a sudden from the hallway there arose such a clatter -

We all ran to the gate to see what was the matter.

I looked down the row - and that gave me pause -Was that man Santa Clause?

He was chubby and plump like a jolly old elf. I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself!

His cheeks were like roses, his beard white as snow;

My heart was racing, my eyes all aglow.

His eyes twinkled behind glasses of chrome. I looked at that sweet face and knew I was home!

He wasn't Santa Clause, and that's OK, because I got to see this nice man every day.

Now this is story I've waited to tell Of how ol' Lester got out of dog jail.

> If you're wanting a pup, be it poodle or hound, remember the forgotten pups waiting in the pound!

Merry Christmas to all!

Your faithful elf,

Lester

(Apologies to Clement Clarke Moore)



MERRY CHRISTMAS!























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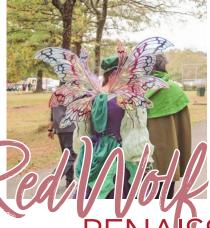














ISSANCE FAIR



raighead Forest Park transformed into a magical place on November 1st and 2nd for the annual Red Wolf Renaissance Fair. The event included vendors, contests, demonstrations and entertainment and supports conservation efforts for the critically endangered American Red Wolf.









eir Favorite Things MMITI hat has been around or I BY KARAN SUMMITT

t's a tradition that has been around as long as the forty-plus years they've been married. When Jan purchased a Department 56 Snow Village piece that first year, it sparked a shared love for going allout on Christmas decorating. By mid-November of each year Tim and Jan Smith's home has been transformed into a warm and delightful wonderland filled with favorite things.

Things the Smiths have purchased easily mingle with family pieces, gifts and cherished finds. In those early days of marriage Tim's mom, Wanda, gifted them crocheted ornaments and placemats they continue to use each year. End-of-season clearance sales have yielded some great holiday decorating bargains, but some of their favorite items come from frequent browsings at flea markets, antique stores and estate sales. As Tim says, "We are always on the lookout!"

Although each piece is special, Tim and Jan have pieces that are especially meaningful — a "secret sister" gift from one of Jan's fellow teachers who unexpectedly passed away, blow molds that once stood in Tim's parent's front yard and three special ornaments from a trip to Disney World with Tim's dad and mom are among them. The bottom shelf of a sofa table holds an array of pictures with Santa from their sons' childhood, and Jan points to a cherished tree skirt that once belonged to a grandmother. It now circles a tree in their home alongside two wooden reindeer they purchased when the boys were smaller.

A Little Golden Book early edition of The Night Before Christmas is a treasure because four-year-old Jan was known to stand in a chair and recite the entire poem to the women at her mom's beauty shop. A Santa drawing proudly displayed in the foyer was a gift from Jan's talented sister and a replica leg lamp from The Christmas Story holds a place of honor in a bedroom window on the front side of their home.

That first Snow Village purchase has expanded into over 40 pieces — so many that Tim and Jan didn't put all of them out this year. Jan gives herself credit for getting the collection started, but Tim willingly jumped on board when Department 56 introduced pieces from the nowclassic movie Christmas Vacation. He has taken over the display setup

and helping Jan keep an eye out for unique pieces. Several of their pieces are vintage ones now discontinued, making them quite valuable, while others reflect personal interests. It was a treat when the two found a radio station that pays homage to Tim's job. When their son married, Jan and Tim gifted the couple their own Snow Village piece — The Honeymooner's Cottage.



The year a niece was

in The Nutcracker ballet kicked off a collection of nutcrackers. Tree ornaments gathered over the years include a sharp eye for antique glass ones, travel souvenirs, a yearly family ornament and cookie cutters for the kitchen tree — one of six trees displayed throughout their home. Jan has another tree in her classroom that showcases ornaments from her students. Each one is labeled with their name and the year Jan taught them.

The couple have holiday decorating down to a fine art. All six trees are set up on a Saturday and then one-by-one they are decorated at night during the next week when the couple gets in from work. Years of experience have taught them how to best display their collections, transforming the rest of the home in just a few hours. The Snow Village takes the longest to set up, but Tim says even that task goes quickly.

Tim credits much of his love for the holidays to his dad, Waylon











Smith. "It wasn't so much the decorating for Dad," Tim remarked. "He loved having family around during the holidays and all of us being together. He loved the Christmas trees, and he especially loved watching the grandsons enjoy the holidays. That first year after Dad passed away, Mom set his place at the table." Tim has tried to carry on the legacy of joy his dad left behind.

Jan feels the same, mentioning they often leave their Christmas décor out during much of January. "We really enjoy the way our home looks and feels during the holidays," she said. "Once we finish, it is so enjoyable to look at, and the atmosphere is quiet and peaceful. So many of our pieces have strong memories attached and putting them out brings back those good times that went by far too fast. Now that our kids are grown, we do it for the younger ones in our family. We want them to have good memories too."





Twelve Days of Christmas WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN FOR OUR FURRY FRIEN



n the first day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a checkup with my favorite vet! Check-ups to perform a wellness exam are key to ensure that your pet is healthy and is the best way to detect diseases early! It is important to get your pet a yearly check-up, but twice yearly exams are recommended!

Wellness exams are also a good time to talk to your vet about any issues or concerns you have about your pet's health and any behavioral concerns.

On the second day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a preventive to keep the bugs and worms away! Heartworm, intestinal parasite, flea and tick prevention are so important to ensure that your pet stays parasite-free! Heartworms are a major problem in this area since they are transmitted by mosquitoes keeping your pet on an effective preventive is key! The type of preventive is important; it is always important to ask and understand why certain preventives may be better than others for your pet.

On the third day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me updated core vaccines to keep me healthy and disease free! Vaccinations are a simple way to best prevent your pet from becoming infected with a highly communicable or contagious disease. Rabies vaccines are an absolute must, but are only regarded as a legal vaccine if they have been administered by a licensed, actively practicing veterinarian.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a vetapproved enzymatic chew to keep my teeth clean and gumline happy! Oral health is very important — as issues of the mouth and teeth can affect all other organ systems. A complete oral exam is part of a complete physical exam and is necessary, as there are disease processes that can occur in the mouth that may not be apparent until at an advanced stage.

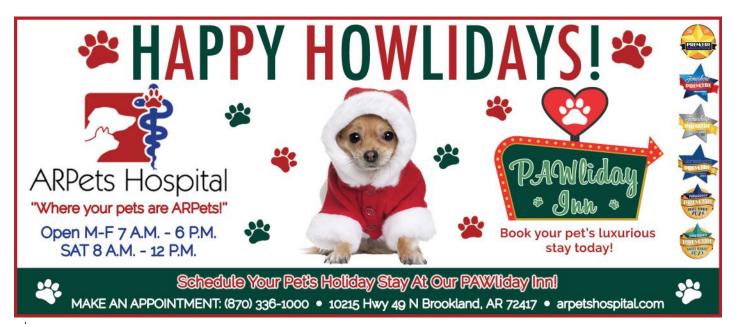
On the fifth day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a day of fun at the PAWliday Inn to socialize with my friends! Daycare is an easy and wonderful way to socialize your pet. Socialization is key to help prevent certain types of anxiety. Pets that go to daycare tend to get along well with other dogs, are less nervous at their vet visits, and also are more accepting of new people. Plus, at PAWliday Inn, we also offer focus and obedience training, agility training, and post a schedule for the month of every day's

daily activity!

On the sixth day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me wellness blood work to ensure that my organ function and blood cell counts are all healthy! Wellness bloodwork is a must! Physical examinations give a ton of information, but it does not always indicate internal organ function. Wellness panels are recommended once yearly in adult pets and twice yearly in senior pets. This way vets can monitor organ health trends before a health issue even manifests

clinically.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me exercise at the dog park to help keep my weight healthy! Exercise is not only good for our muscles and ensures that our weight stays healthy, but



also makes us feel better! Exercising your pet also provides great mental stimulation — this is very important in working breeds that need the exercise or can otherwise develop anxiety and/or destructive behaviors.

On the eighth day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a puzzle treat toy to keep me mentally stimulated and busy! Have a pet that paces or just has a hard time getting all their energy out? Try a puzzle toy! Your pet can smell the treat, but it takes them time, skill, and patience to actually get the treat/kibble out of the puzzle toy. A brain exercise for pets!

On the ninth day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a complete and balanced diet that is scientifically proven and not a brand new trend! Ask any vet, complete and balanced diets that are scientifically proven are key! Did you know there is scientific proof that feeding your pet a raw diet is directly related to antimicrobial resistant bacterial strains that are now causing urinary tract and other types of infections in people? It's true ... and scary. Feeding your pet a complete diet that is formulated for its breed type and lifestage is an even better way to ensure you are giving your pet exactly what it needs, specific to it!

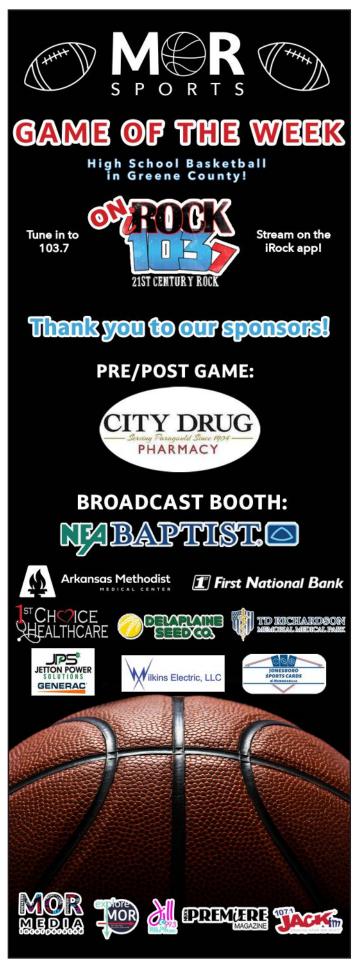
On the tenth day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a day at the PAWliday Inn PAW-Spa to keep my coat clean and mat-free! Pets that shed need once to twice monthly baths in order to help reduce shedding of hair and dander — it's not a cure but it does help! Ask about the De-Shed Bath! Long-coated breeds need regular grooming appointments to prevent issues such as severe matting, ear hair impactions, and ocular infections that can be caused by hair! The PAW-Spa or a visit with your local groomer will help to keep your pet looking good and feeling good!

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a soft and cozy bed to curl up on and rest for Santa PAWs! A cozy place to rest is key to good sleep and overall health! Got a pet that destroys beds? There are indestructible (which are less quickly destructible to certain dogs) and cots that are an option for those that tend to tear up their bed as soon as they are alone with it! Having a comfortable place to rest is very important; resting is when our body heals from normal daily wear and is able to recuperate.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my PAW-rents gave to me a safe and fun new toy to play with in the house! Playing with toys is important to keep us active and engaged! It is also a wonderful way to bond with your pet. There are a ton of options out there for toys; best to find out what your pet doesn't ingest or destroy. The rope dog toys are great for a good game of tug-of-war and can also be a good way for your dogs to clean their own teeth; just be sure to throw it out and replace at the first signs of shredding, as ingestion of strings can be very bad on the intestines.

Wishing you and yours a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Dr. Kristin Sullivan is a small animal veterinarian practicing since 2012. She owns ARPets Hospital and PAWliday Inn in Brookland, Arkansas, with her husband Michael Sullivan. She strives to provide the highest quality veterinary care, advocating for her patients, and works to educate the public in animal health care and preventive medicine, while promoting the human-animal bond.



Merry Christmas!

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he April Nicole Foundation and Arkansas Methodist Medical Center's Project Hope joined forces for Pink Night Out on October 27th at Chow at One Eighteen in Downtown Paragould.

The event included hors d'oeuvres, presentations by both organizations and cancer survivors who have benefited from their services, and a goody bag for attendees. Ticket sales benefited both organizations.









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rung Entrepreneurs **HOWCASE PRODUCTS**

The Greene County Community Fund hosted a Greene County Junior Business Fair on Saturday, November 8th, to give area youth a chance to show off their products and test their entrepreneurial skills.

The youths paid a vendor fee with proceeds supporting the GCCF, and then were able to

showcase their products to attendees as they worked to promote and sell their wares.

GCCF Executive Director Candice Keatts said they hope to repeat the event. "These kids didn't just make money - they made friends, connections, and gained the knowledge and confidence to keep chasing their dreams."









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Tuesday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m. - Christmas Parade Saturday, Dec. 6, 5-8 p.m. - Pruett Park Saturday, Dec. 13, 5-8 p.m. - Pruett Park Saturday, Dec. 20, 12-3 p.m., Something Sweet Saturday, Dec. 20, 5-8 p.m. - Pruett Park

SAVE THE DATE UPCOMING EVENT

December 6th

2:00-6:00 p.m. Cocoa Crawl **Participating Merchants**

December 13th

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. **Holiday Market** Paragould Farmers Market

December 13th

1:00-4:00 p.m.

Christmas Craft Crawl Participating Merchants

December 18th

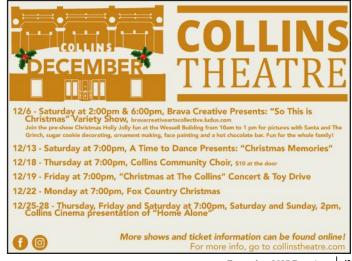
Ladies make your lists starting Dec. 1! Wise men save the date (time TBA)!

> Wise Men's Shopping **Participating Merchants**

December 25th-28th

Thur., Fri., Sat., 7pm/Sat., Sun. 2pm **Collins Cinema Presents** Home Alone **Downtown Collins Theatre**







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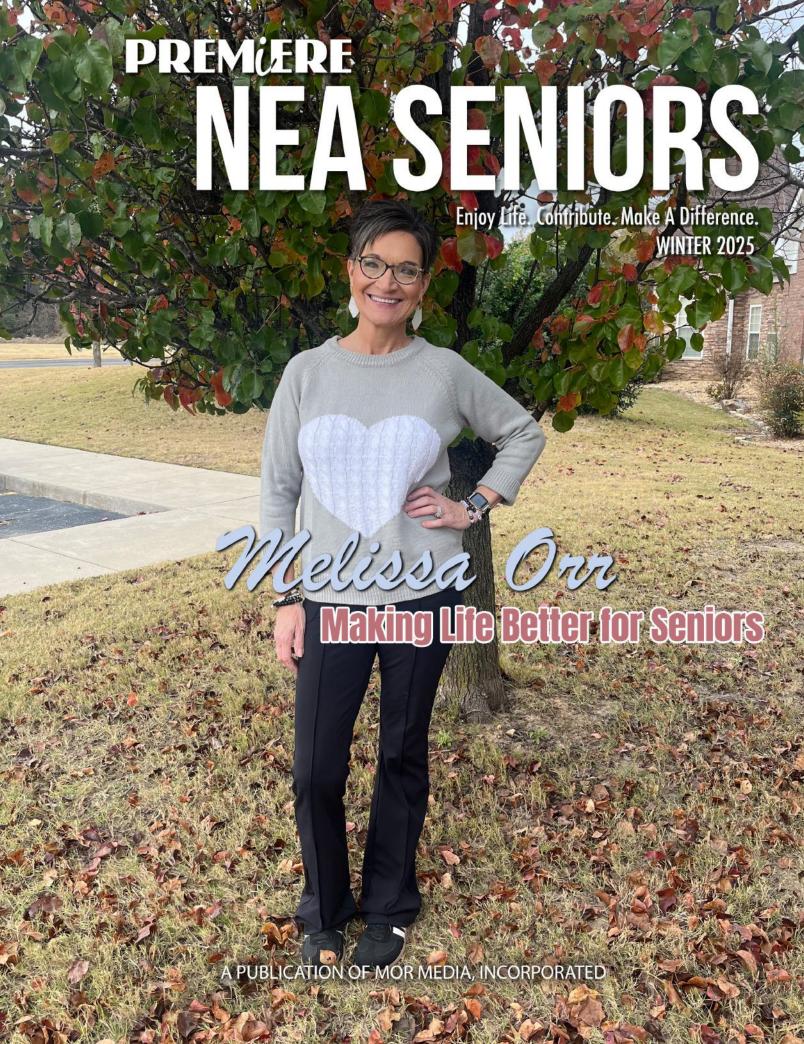
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Dennis-Man

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

ennis Manley was not an All-State athlete while attending Brookland High School, but to all who knew him he was an All-American guy.

A 1965 graduate of BHS, Dennis played baseball and basketball and developed a deep love for everything connected to the Bearcats — and also an unbridled love for his sweetheart, Sue Nelms, marrying her months after they graduated. While Sue and others in the Brookland community readily admit today's students most likely have no idea

who Dennis was, his influence lives on.

"I heard a lot about him when I first got here," said the current Athletic Director and boys basketball coach Bobby Gross. "Sue did our scorebook for a long time, and I think his name is always mentioned when you talk about Brookland athletics. We're kind of continuing his legacy; he put everything he could into the kids."

Each year the school awards the Dennis Manley Scholarship to a male and female athlete, taking into consideration, Bobby said, "character, athletic achievement and being an overall good kid. Every year we give a \$500 scholarship at Awards Day."

Funding

scholarship comes from gate and concessions taken in at the annual preseason basketball scrimmage referred to as "the Dennis Manley. We named the scrimmage the Dennis Manley Scrimmage, sort of his night. That goes to fund the scholarship. We've taken in probably close to \$3,000 to \$5,000 sometimes, depending on the year. What I've heard about his love for the kids and the community, then we definitely need to keep that scholarship going and it would probably be a great idea to put something up there in the gym lobby and keep attention on it."

Dennis passed away in July of 1993 after a 19-month battle with renal cell carcinoma. But while making his own mark on the softball fields and basketball courts of the area, he also coached Brookland boys in baseball and basketball for about 15 years. Many of the adults attending Bearcats' games today, watching their own children play, got their start under the instruction Dennis provided voluntarily.

"He was a good player, but Brookland wasn't all that good back then," Sue recalled. "I think the first time they ever won the NEA was in '70 or '71. He started coaching when Ryan (the youngest of their four sons) was little. He didn't coach the other boys and thought that was the biggest mistake of his life; he said he should have. But he was pretty





busy playing pretty much year-round himself then." Known as an expert long-range shooter in area men's basketball leagues and tournaments, he helped several teams bring home tournament and league championship trophies. But it was on the softball field where he truly excelled as a pitcher and expert hitter, earning selection to the Arkansas Softball Hall of Fame in 2001. "People seem to have the highest respect for

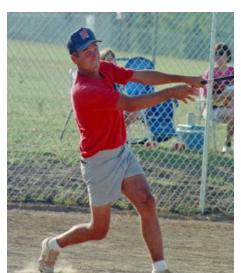
him," Sue said. "Dennis wasn't quick or big and strong, but nobody wanted it more than he did."

That may have shown up in his coaching, as well. Sue said when he first starting coaching Ryan and his teammates "when they were 7, 8 and 9, I don't know if they won a game. In their third year, they won first place. He coached basketball three years, fourth, fifth and sixth with Ryan's group and baseball with Ryan from 7 to 15. He coached

through Babe Ruth age. And I know he did a lot with the Booster Club and with that old gym. He did a lot of work on the remodel, put in a drop ceiling. Dennis and three others worked hours and hours. He worked on the fields and ran the scoreboard. Whatever he could do, he did."

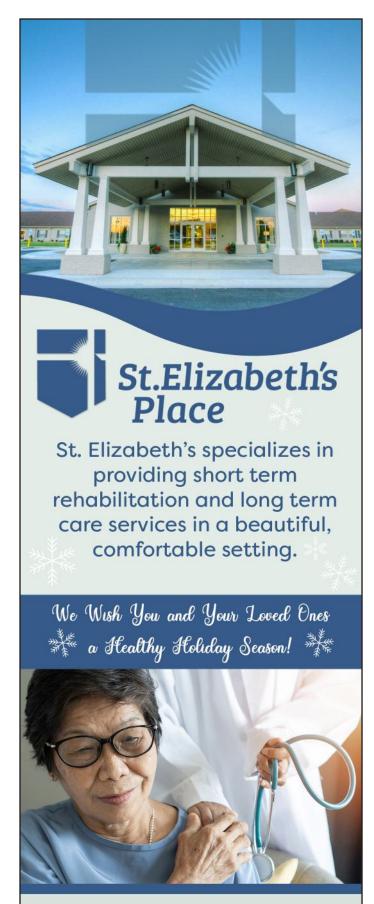


Sue said on one of their final trips home from the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Dennis asked her to "tell the grandkids about me." That has turned into quite an audience considering that sons Tony, Scott, Rodney and Ryan and their spouses have provided Sue with 16 grandchildren and 6 great-grandkids, and almost all of them congregate at her house after church each week for a Sunday meal. "I talk about Dennis so much now that the grandkids think



they knew him," Sue said, obviously accomplishing her mission of keeping him on the young ones' minds.

"What I understand about the award thev give his name," said, "is that the committee takes into consideration what is really an allaround athlete, and a good person in general. That's what he was."



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This cottage is named after Howard "Bo" Tuberville.

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This cottage is named after Murl Anthony "Tony" White. Fall Bucket List
The Green House Cottages of Belle Meade

esidents of The Green House Cottages of Belle Meade made short work of completing a Fall Bucket List. Activities included a hay ride, baking cinnamon rolls, fall crafts, making candy apples, a scavenger hunt, a drive-in movie, making trail mix, a hot cocoa night, a fall photo shoot and more.























REMEMBERING VETERANS AT CHRISTMAS

s Pine Log Cemetery board members are making preparations for the Ifourth year of participating in the Wreaths Across America Program, they are also making a way for those who have veterans in other cemeteries to participate.

Wreaths are available through the program for \$17 each, and individuals can purchase a wreath to place on their veteran's gravesite, or donations can be made in any amount to help cover the cost of wreaths, with organizers working with volunteers to place the wreaths on Saturday, December 13th.

"We will see that every veteran in Pine Log Cemetery gets one placed," said Beth Foster, who is a member of the cemetery board along with Teddy Foster, Ted Mabry, Jody Foster, David Trantham, Tammy Trantham and Becca Foster. "If someone wants to purchase and come pick up and take to another cemetery that can be done also."

The December 13th event at Pine Log Cemetery will begin at 10 a.m. and will include a ceremony, as well as placement of the wreaths. The wreaths will arrive by truck on December 12th and volunteers are needed that morning to help unload the truck, as well. "It is awesome to have our local law



enforcement agencies and biker clubs escort the semi-truck, transporting the wreaths to the cemetery," Becca Foster said.

Last year, organizers were impressed with the volunteers who worked in the rain to place wreaths, especially the Brookland JROTC students who went above and beyond, according to Becca Foster.

"This team showed up and showed the utmost respect to make certain that every veteran was saluted, named and thanked for their service," Becca said. This year, two new groups that have confirmed they will be assisting are the Greene County Tech JROTC



and Elite Hospice.

Last year, organizers were also able to place some wreaths at other nearby cemeteries. Becca said the goal for the future is to have an 18-wheeler full of wreaths delivered to be distributed around NEA.

Anyone who is interested in purchasing a wreath, participating as a sponsor or volunteering with the program can reach out to Beth or Becca at 870-932-2893.

"Our goal is to continue to grow the program and make it even bigger and better," Becca said. "If any business, school or local program would like to help feel free to reach out to any of us at Foster's Monument in Brookland or anyone on the Pine Log Cemetery Board."



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MOORE MAN

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE



uying and giving presents can present problems for even the most seasoned shopper. Here are some frequently asked questions:

take the surprise out of receiving an unexpected gift.

OUESTION:

What should I do if someone unexpectedly gives me a gift and I have no gift to give in return?

ANSWER:

If someone surprises you with a gift, accept it graciously. Thank the person for the gift and be certain to write a thank-you note. Not every gift needs to be reciprocated. If you like, you may return the favor at a later date.

During the holidays, when there is often a flurry of gift giving, buying

Quote of the Day:

"It came without ribbons

It came without tags

It came without packages, boxes or bags

Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't thought of before

Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a

Maybe Christmas ... perhaps ... means a little bit

- Dr. Seuss How The Grinch Stole Christmas

OUESTION:

When giving a gift how do I determine how much to spend?

ANSWER:

Generally speaking, when giving gifts to co-workers or office associates, the price range of gifts is determined by agreement. This price range helps everyone to stay within a comfortable budget. Exceeding this price range can make other co-workers or associates feel uncomfortable.

Giving gifts to friends and relatives is often more difficult if there is no stated or implied price range. Finding out the recipient's interests, likes or dislikes can help you find an appropriate gift that is within your budget.

QUESTION:

Is it appropriate to "Re-Gift?"

ANSWER:

This depends upon the situation. There is one school of thought that says that you should never "re-gift." There are, however, other authorities that say that "re-gifting" can be done if in good taste. In other words, when re-gifting, no tacky, used, dirty or broken gifts.

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.



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s Scott Holden and Chris Enger reflect on the holiday season this year, they have something extra to celebrate.

The former classmates, who both graduated from Nettleton High School, say they have been blessed to see many success stories in their new clinic, QC Kinetix, over the past

Focused on regenerative medicine, QC Kinetix helps individuals overcome joint degeneration by using their own body to heal itself.

Scott said one story that stands out to him from this past year is a patient who came to the clinic with knee pain. The patient, who is in her early 80s, was upset that she was unable to plant her garden this year.

"A few weeks after beginning a personalized treatment plan, she came into the clinic with a grin and told us she was able to plant her garden," Scott said.

Chris, who has a background in physical therapy, said while there is a place for surgery in the healing process, he is proud to be able to offer a less invasive option for those who are good candidates for the regenerative therapy.

He shared a story about a patient who was greatly affected by shoulder and upper back pain. The patient and a family member explained how her pain was limiting her ability to participate in normal daily activities that she enjoys such as eating out with friends and family.

"Her family also had a trip planned to Disney World that she was contemplating not going to because of her issues and the demands she felt it put on her family members," Chris said. "Her pain was taking away things in her life that provide her joy."

The patient followed a treatment plan and noticed consistent improvement in her pain. Chris was happy to report that the patient was able to go on her trip to Disney World with her family.



Some of QC Kinetix's success stories are individuals who were seeking pain relief or better mobility, but for some it was the gift of independence they were after.

While most take being able to do the normal activities in their lives they enjoy for granted, for someone with chronic joint pain, these activities can be an unbearable feat. Seeking treatment to improve their condition is vital to improving their quality of life. QC Kinetix works to provide patients with options that can provide healing without the use of drugs or surgery.

Scott said perhaps some of their most meaningful success stories have been the ones that gave individuals back that freedom to be able to go and do that had been taken away from them by either age or injury.

While Scott has the business background and Chris brings the medical field experience, the two both said the most rewarding part is helping their patients reach their goals.

"That is definitely something to celebrate as we look forward to Christmas and a New Year serving our clients at QC Kinetix," Scott said.

Senior Olympics

hateau on the Ridge participated in the District 5 Senior Olympics on October 23rd at the Paragould Community Center.

Burl Langston was recognized as the oldest Olympian! He is 101.

Rex Loftin, Betty Forkum, Betty Edgar and JH Ermert brought home medals for their winning performances at the event.















Making Life Better for Seniors BY KARAN SUMMITT

f she is anywhere in the vicinity, you probably will hear Melissa Orr before you see her. Her strong, upbeat voice is not easy to ignore, even if you are an aging senior with diminished hearing. The old E.F. Hutton slogan could easily be adapted to say, "When Melissa talks, people listen."

They listen because they know fun and laughter are just around the corner. They listen because they know she cares. Melissa's current position as Activity Director for Chateau on the Ridge includes creating and coordinating a wide variety of activities

for the residents — activities that range from on-site games and holiday events to shopping and field trips, crafts, birthday celebrations, bringing

in special guests and seasonal decorating. Melissa balances these lighthearted activities with Bible

studies, devotionals and oldfashioned hymn singings.

You might wonder why Melissa pours so much of her heart and energy into finding ways to enhance the daily

lives of the Chateau residents. She describes it this way:

"My role is all about creating moments of joy, connection and purpose for our residents. I design and lead programs that support their emotional, physical and cognitive well-being. That can look like anything from exercise classes and arts and crafts to playing games or meaningful one-on-one time. My goal is to make every resident feel seen, valued and engaged in life. I take the time to learn each person's background, interests and abilities. It's more than planning events, it's about building a sense of community, preserving their dignity and helping them continue to grow, discover and connect with others."

Not everyone might choose a career working with aging seniors. Their ailments and limitations bring built-in challenges that require creativity, patience and understanding. Melissa began her career at Chateau on the Ridge as a CNA in 2014, eventually taking on the role of Activity Director four years ago. When asked about making a deeper dive into planning activities for the residents, she responded with enthusiasm, crediting the residents with blessing her life far more than she does theirs.

"I love their resilience. Many have overcome hardships, loss and unexpected life turns, yet they continue on with strength, humor and grace. They inspire me daily and their appreciation for the simple gestures touches my heart. I also love their authenticity. Older adults are refreshingly honest and genuine. They've reached a stage of life where they

aren't trying to impress anyone, and they've learned to value what really matters. Every day they remind me to slow down, to value

connections and find joy in the simple things."

"Melissa is a ball of energy and perfect for our Activity Director at the Chateau. She is always working to find new activities, games, crafts and places to visit."

— Debbie Farrell Administrator

Melissa tears up when she mentions the gap these older folks have filled in her life. She describes coming to work as "kind of like spending the weekend with grandparents," and goes on to say they have become the nurturing, spiritual family Melissa didn't always have in her growing up

years. Several times each week Melissa schedules a voluntary group devotional and mentioned how the deeper talks with those who attend have helped her own spiritual growth. She remarked, "I know when they say they will pray for me or for one of my children, they are going





to do it. I know it because they will stay in touch and ask me how things are going. They fill my heart with so much gratitude."

Melissa's work with seniors isn't limited to The Chateau. She also takes on evening and weekend work as a sitter with homebound elders, readily admitting that "sitter" is a deceiving word. To these one-on-one experiences Melissa brings the same enthusiasm and effort as she does to her

Activity Director role, working hard to find the things that will bring joy to the lives of mostly homebound clients. Depending on the individual, Melissa plans manicures and hair style days, takes them out of their homes for a drive and even brings in games and crafts. Her goal, whether as Activity Director or private sitter, is that

"they feel safe with me. They deserve someone good to take care of them and I love bringing a smile to their faces."

Melissa's strong voice gets even more passionate when she talks about our culture's tendency to overlook the needs of senior adults or assume they have little to offer as they age. In her words, "The elderly bring so much heart, history and meaning into every interaction. When we visit with them, ask about their lives and listen to their wisdom, we can learn so much from their successes and mistakes. It is a shame so many



elders are neglected in the last years of their lives."

Melissa willingly shares the credit for her successes as Activity Director with her assistant Anna and the rest of the staff at Chateau on the Ridge. To carry out her ideas it takes the combined effort from all the employees, and they are eager to go along with anything she imagines. Melissa's words were simple — "They want to do for the residents just like I do!"

Her role as Activity Director and a private sitter is more than a job to



Melissa, it's a calling ... a calling that reaps as many blessings in her own life as those she obviously brings into the lives of the seniors in her care. Melissa simply says:

"I love my work. I love what I do and I love my people. I love the relationships I have with their families. I know without a shadow of a doubt this is what I was meant to do at this stage of my life."



IAPPY TO BE H r. Roger Cagle recently opened his CR Doc Family Care practice inside TD Richardson Memorial in Paragould but he's far from new to the area. He has cared for families in this community

for more than 40 years.

After COVID, Dr. Cagle accepted a Chief Medical Officer position in Texas to help supplement the income from his Paragould office. While there, he also served as an associate professor with the University of Houston. "I worked with their first class of graduates," he said. But even though his time in Texas was meaningful, he never intended to leave Paragould or Greene County permanently. This is home for him and his wife, Star, and eventually, he knew it was time to return. "My wife and I were traveling back and forth and it was getting lonesome. She was also having trouble with her shoulder. She had to have surgery on it and it was just too much for her to take care of things by herself. So, I decided it was a good time to come home." However, returning

That's when the administrators of the TD Richardson Memorial facility stepped in. "They had a clinic, they had a need, and I needed a place to work," he said. The partnership came together naturally, creating a seamless path for him to return to caring for the community he has

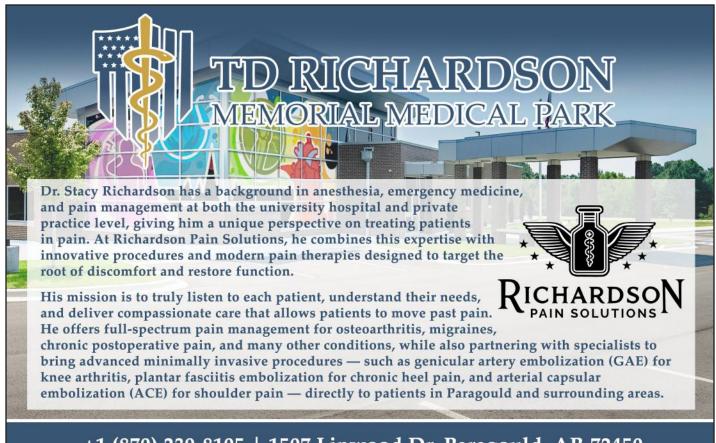
came with challenges. "Due to circumstances beyond my control, I had to shut my Paragould office down to meet my contractual obligations in Texas," he explained. "So when I came back, I really didn't have a

place to set up an office and go back to work."

DR. CAGLE PRACTICING IN PARAGOULD served for decades, while also giving him the opportunity to reconnect

with long-time patients and reestablish his presence in Paragould. "It's a really nice clinic. I've enjoyed my time here so far."

TD Richardson Memorial is a unique facility, housing several independent practices under one roof, including Dr. Cagle's family care practice. Dr. Cagle brings extensive experience to the clinic, including



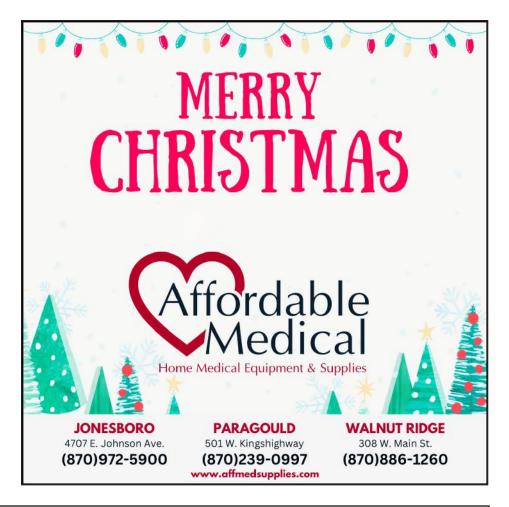
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his service in leadership as president of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) in 2001. Dr. Cagle described his practice as a full-service family clinic. "We see everything," he said. "We have X-rays, ultrasounds, and labs in the office. And walk-ins are welcome."

Being back home and practicing in Paragould again has been an easy transition for Dr. Cagle. "It's felt like I never left," he said. "It's nice to be back home — familiar surroundings with the family and a really nice place to work."

Away from work, Dr. Cagle has also eased back into the routines he enjoys most. He and his wife live out in the county, and in his spare time, he enjoys cutting horses. "I'm down to one horse now instead of a dozen or so," he said. When he left for Texas, he kept one horse to take with him, but they have since sold that horse. He is now working with a new horse he picked up earlier this year from training.

Just as he's found his rhythm again at home, he's found it in his practice as well — caring for the families of Paragould from his new home base at TD Richardson Memorial, right back where he belongs.





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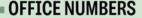
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ELQUBISHIN

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

very congregation understands a commitment to the young people in the church is vital to growth and longevity, but the group resting at the other end of the age spectrum is also one of great importance and deserving of attention.

Seventh and Mueller Church of Christ in Paragould has found a way to not only recognize the senior citizens in its fold, but to expand that focus to the entire community through its EverGreens program. "The point of emphasis -- things to do at 55-plus. This is my directive," said Jim Powell, Seniors Minister at Seventh and Mueller.

With that in mind, the 7M EverGreens crowd holds a community luncheon the first Wednesday of each month, inviting any and all senior citizens in the area to enjoy a free meal, fellowship and more. "We always have a devotional and have a great meal," Jim said. "The ladies here prepare it, they do the prep work ahead of time and the setup the day of; they are busy in the kitchen, and they're the real ones who make it work. They are the heroes here."

A small steering committee works on the speakers and entertainment for each session, thinking a few months ahead. "Karan Summitt knows





so many people through her work with St. Bernards," Jim explained, "and she has provided speakers. We've had The Little Cabin Band perform, people from St. Bernards and from AMMC, doctors, Charlie Jackson, Ryan Vaughan ... we try to do things age-specific to the 55 group. We try to mix it up, keep it fresh. The Fire Department will come soon with a presentation and Joey Becerra will bring his kids from CRA to entertain."

The monthly meal has become so popular that The Chateau on the Ridge brings a busload each time and the crowd now averages more than 100 monthly. Visitors seat themselves and are then treated to the meal, prepared and delivered to the tables by EverGreens workers. The devotional is uplifting and speakers/entertainers provide information ranging from helpful hints to the seniors crowd to plain old fun and laughter.

"The EverGreens started in about 2022," Jim said. "Larry McFadden



was here and 🖁 he was doing that back then. It's the same premise now, to help the 55-plus group here at the church with more activities. When I took over full-time I tried to look at what to



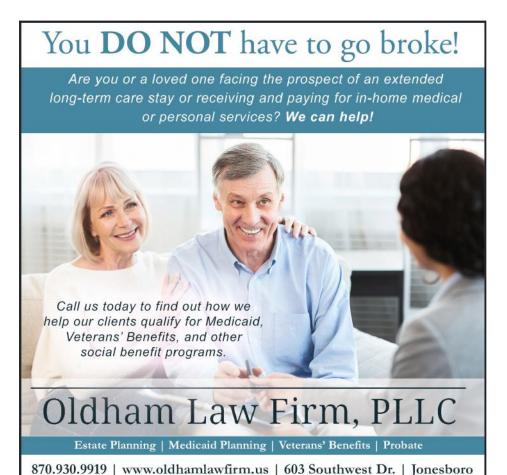
do to enhance the program. We wanted to reach out, to get more people in the building. That's when the idea of a meal every month started. You've got the bunch from St. John's in Lafe and the Senior B.E.E.S., and, now, how do we expand? Let's open it up to a community luncheon.

"We've been really pleased. We have an average of around 120; we've had as many as 145. It's a good mix of folks, some maybe with no church affiliation. Obviously, we hope to reach them and at least two I know of come all the time to the meal and, suddenly, they're in our Bible Class and church services. It's not just a community luncheon, it's a need to find a way for a healthy blend of things of interest and importance to seniors."

The logo and group motto are based on Psalms 92:12-13, which says, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God." The program's Facebook page promotes it as "a ministry of 7th and Mueller Church of Christ. Seniors seeking to be fresh and green, planted in the house of the Lord and flourishing spiritually in His service."

Jim ties that in with the overall view of the senior-aged group helping make up the church audience and the Paragould community. "Flourishing, timeless, vital," he said. "That's how we see ourselves."















t. Bernards Village marked Veterans Day with a special display of photos and memorabilia. This is the 8th consecutive year residents of The Village have put together this display, which honors residents, staff, or their family members who served in the United States Armed Forces.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS



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B.E.E.S. SENIOR CITIZENS

Busily Enjoying Everyday Seniors



Celebrating the Holidays

Thanks to Our Community Support

Cake & Pie Auction



Flower Donations









Alzheimer's Awareness

EVENT HELD AT BUNGALOWS











ovember is Alzheimer's Awareness Month, and KFLO 102.9 FM radio station, along with Dierksen Hospice, helped the residents of The Bungalows at Jonesboro with a fundraiser benefiting the Alzheimer's Association on November 17th. The agencies joined together for a fun-filled afternoon making Christmas ornaments to sell to benefit the Alzheimer's Association.

The room was decorated with purple tablecloths to represent the Alzheimer's Association color and balloons of different colors were on each table: blue representing those living with Alzheimer's, purple for those who have lost a loved one to the disease, yellow for caregivers, orange for supporters, and white for hope for a cure.

After making ornaments, resident enjoyed purple cow floats while listening to golden oldies music provided by KFLO. Some even danced. It was an enjoyable way to benefit a worthy cause.







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GIFT GUIDE



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PHYSICAL THERAPY

MOVEMENT AND INDEPENDENCE RESTORED

BY CODY ROGERS, PT, DPT ST. BERNARDS REHAB SERVICES PARAGOULD CLINIC

That if you had tools to improve your bodily pain and limitations? That's the core premise of physical therapy (PT) services at St. Bernards, where PT is an empowering, active partnership with you to reclaim your physical well-being. Because we rely upon proven, evidence-



based strategies to help you regain strength, improve mobility and keep the physical abilities you need to live fully, you may benefit from PT regardless of your age or health challenges.

When Physical Therapy is Right for You

PT is the ideal first step for a wide range of conditions, offering powerful, non-invasive benefits.

Pain Relief & Injury Recovery: PT is essential if you struggle with persistent back, neck or joint pain, or are recovering from a sports injury, such as a torn ACL, or total joint replacement. We identify the root causes of your pain to help you move better and avoid the need for additional imaging or pain medications. During your injury rehabilitation, we guide you to recover or improve your range of motion and to prevent recurrent injuries.

Balance and Safety: Your vestibular system includes a complex set of structures and neural pathways that help you maintain balance and spatial orientation. When you experience dizziness or vertigo, it can be a signal that something is not right with this system. In these cases, we provide specialized vestibular rehabilitation to improve your mobility and balance as well as reduce or eliminate the symptoms of vertigo. We also provide comprehensive balance and fall prevention programs, which is a great way to dramatically reduce the risk of dangerous falls, especially for older adults.

Preventative Care: PT can teach you the correct body mechanics and exercises to prevent future injuries before they occur. Before you try a new exercise regimen, activity or sport — especially if you are injury prone — you may consult a PT first.

Specialized Services Across Our Region

We support your personalized care with advanced, specialized services available across our regional network, including clinics in Jonesboro, Paragould, Pocahontas, Manila, Trumann, Wynne and Walnut Ridge. While individual services vary by clinic, we will work to get the specific care you need wherever you live. Highlights include:

Aquatic Therapy: The buoyancy of warm water supports your weight, making movement easier if you have chronic pain.

Advanced Neurological Care: At our assisted-living facility St. Bernards Villa, we offer virtual reality PT (Neuro Rehab VR) to safely simulate physical movement in real-world environments. In addition, Parkinson's patients can undergo certified treatments like PWR! Moves and LSVT BIG therapy to help with their motor skills and movements.

Industrial Rehab: Accidents are a part of everyday life, both on the job and off. We help injured employees return to their jobs in a safe and timely manner.

When PT is Not the First Step

While PT is highly versatile, it isn't always the first step. If you experience acute trauma or an emergency, you need immediate medical attention and should call 9-1-1. Similarly, if your pain accompanies signs of systemic illness or infection, a primary care physician must rule out an underlying disease first.

This distinction is why we pioneered Arkansas's first PT in the ED program. If you visit the Emergency Department with a pain or mobility issue that isn't a true emergency, a physical therapist can triage you immediately, start treatment and set up quick outpatient follow-up appointments, ensuring you get the right care at the right time.

Personalized Progress: A Partner for Life

Your healing journey relies on personalized medicine and a commitment from our dedicated teams across the region. Choosing PT means choosing an expert medical partner who will maximize your independence to improve your overall quality of life.





IT TAKES A VILLAGE VETERANS COMMUNITY GETS BOOST FROM ARDAR

A \$47,000 donation from the Arkansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (ARDAR) to the Veterans' Cottages was an important boost for the combined effort of the City of Jonesboro, Arkansas State University and the Beck Center for Veterans to offer transitional housing for veterans in need.

Gale Markley, who served as state regent of the ARDAR for the past three years, said part of their mission is to support active duty service members and veterans of the military.

"Historically, state regents selected projects to benefit causes in the central and northwest areas of the state. This is the first time a project was selected that benefits the northern and northeast parts of the state," said Markley, who currently serves as honorary state regent for ARDAR.

"She made the Veterans Cottages her personal project, which they allow them to do to raise funds," said C.H. Overbay, who is secretary of the advisory board for the Beck Center for Veterans. "Since the cottages opened in 2021, the ARDAR has repeatedly helped with different projects. They have supplied Christmas gifts and any needs that existed. Almost every year, they do something to assist the Veterans Cottages."

Accepting the funds were Jonesboro Mayor Harold Copenhaver and representatives from the Beck Center for Veterans.

"This way we can grow community support because there are challenges with the



community and understanding our veterans. As times change, so do the needs for our veterans," said Copenhaver. "This \$47,000 is a big boost for the cottages, but more importantly, for the ultimate concern, our veterans."

Retired Brig. Gen. Keith Klemmer, who is chair of the Beck Center for Veterans board of directors at A-State, said the Beck Center has become one of the primary organizations for veterans in this region, and he is happy to have this opportunity to continue to provide this needed support.

"This is going to help us support our veteran community through the cottages for the foreseeable future in partnership with the city of Jonesboro," said Klemmer.

Overbay said there are no restrictions on what the funds can be used for, but said this donation will be a huge help for the cottages.

"This is going to be a reboot for the Veterans Cottages. We've worked with the mayor

and the city remapping what their goals and objectives are," added Overbay, who noted the cottages provide temporary housing for veterans. "It's not long-term, but what the Beck board does is to act as a referral and a clearing house for individuals who need this assistance."

The Beck Center for Veterans, established in 2007 by Buddy and Charlotte Beck, is a nonprofit agency that works to provide services to supplement the needs of veterans who are eligible for government benefits and fill in gaps where they exist.

Helping organizations like the Veterans Cottages is just one of many projects the ARDAR participates in each year. "All Arkansas DAR members and chapters contributed to this project, not just one chapter, but all 2,200 members in the state," Markley added.

Speaking on the importance of this donation, Klemmer added, "It takes a village to keep a village going."



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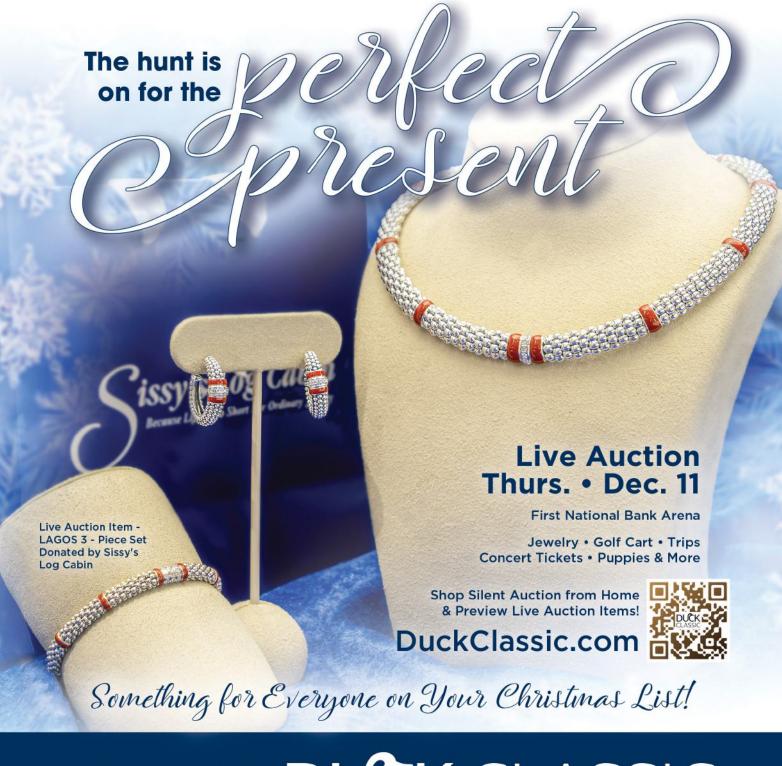
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Upcoming Events in NEA



Inspired Exhibit

Now-Dec. 17th

The "Inspired" exhibition, featuring artwork by area high school students is on display at Bradbury Art Museum (BAM) on the Arkansas State University Campus through December 17th.

The students' work is displayed alongside the "Echoes of Silent Migration" exhibit by Somayeh Faal, who was the featured juror for this year's "Inspired" program. BAM is open noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.



Baby State

December 4th

St. Bernards Baby State will be Thursday, December 4th, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the St. Bernards Auditorium, located at 505 East Washington Avenue in Jonesboro.

Prenatal and Birthcare Center experts will be available to answer questions and provide resources for your family's new addition. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 870-207-7300 or visit stbernards.info.



Joy Fest

December 6th

The Downtown Jonesboro Alliance will host Joy Fest Saturday, December 6th, on Union Street in Jonesboro.

The free event will include the Christmas tree lighting, live music, kids' activities and a Holiday Market with local vendors and treats. Bring the family for a fun day of shopping, festive traditions, and even a chance to meet Santa Claus while you explore historic Downtown Jonesboro.





December 2nd

Walnut Ridge Christmas Parade, 6:00 p.m. Paragould Christmas Parade, 7:00 p.m.

December 4th

Pocahontas Christmas Parade, 6:00 p.m.

December 5th

Trumann Christmas Parade, 6:30 p.m. Jonesboro Christmas Parade, 7:00 p.m.

December 6th

Lake City Christmas Parade, 6:00 p.m. Corning Christmas Parade, 6:00 p.m.

December 7th

Brookland Christmas Parade, 2:00 p.m.

December 9th

Swifton Christmas Parade, 6:00 p.m.

December 13th

Cash Christmas Parade, 5:30 p.m. Manila Christmas Parade, 6:00 p.m. Monette Christmas Parade, 6:00 p.m.

December 14th

Rector Christmas Parade, 1:30 p.m.

December 20th

Cardwell Christmas Parade, 6 p.m.



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HAPPENINGS

PROVOST PROMOTED AT F&M BANK

Farmers & Merchants Bank and The Bank of Fayetteville have announced the promotion of Brett Provost to the newly created role of

Vice President of Farm Management. Provost is based in the bank's Jonesboro office, where he will lead efforts to expand and enhance the bank's farm management services across Arkansas.

As Vice President of Farm Management, Provost will oversee every aspect of farm operations on behalf of clients, including tenant selection and leasing, commodity marketing, agronomics, conservation practices and capital improvement projects.



He will also help clients navigate the tax advantages associated with long-term improvements.

Provost brings nearly three decades of agricultural and banking experience to his new role, joining Farmers and Merchants Bank in 2012 as Vice President of Agricultural and Commercial Lending. Provost is also a fourth-generation farmer and landowner who is a managing member of Provost Farms LLC.

Provost and his wife, Kimberly (Looney) Provost, were married in 1998. They have one adult son, Drace.

BRTC'S ALPHIN HONORED BY ASRC

Black River Technical College's Jessica Alphin, Director of Clinical Education and Respiratory Instructor, was recently named Educator

of the Year by the Arkansas Society for Respiratory Care (ASRC).

Alphin, who also serves as President of the ASRC Board of Directors, was recognized at the 53rd Annual ASCR State Meeting in Hot Springs.

This award is given to an ASRC respiratory care practitioner who "exhibits professionalism, leadership and care for Jessica Alphin humanity."



Attending with Alphin were BRTC's current respiratory care students. The students had the opportunity to meet and network with students from other institutions and listen to professionals in their field talk about advancements in respiratory care.

BRTC's Respiratory Care program is an 18-month program that begins in January every year. This program prepares graduates with demonstrative competence in the knowledge, skills, and behavior domains of respiratory care practice as performed by registered respiratory therapists.

CCCF OFFERS STRATEGIC IMPACT GRANTS

announced significant, one-time CRAIGHEAD COUNTY

The Craighead County A R K A N S A S Community Foundation community foundation

transformational grant available to non-profit organizations in Craighead County.

This grant is designed to redefine an organization's operations, strategy, and services. Compared to annual Giving Tree grants where amounts range anywhere from \$500-\$10,000, requests for the strategic impact grants may be up to \$100,000 per organization. This funding is expected to broaden the organization's scope of work, expand outreach efforts, or enhance service delivery - leading to sustainable, long-term growth for both the non-profit and the community it serves.

"Strengthening and enhancing local non-profits is at the core of what we do. By providing non-profits with grant dollars of this magnitude, we hope to provide opportunity not just to survive, but to adapt, grow, and meet the evolving needs of our community," said Ty Jones, board chair for CCCF

Applications have been sent to Craighead County non-profits. If any non-profit organization did not receive an application, one may be obtained by contacting Melissa Ayers at craigheadcounty@arcf.org.

The application period closes on January 31st. Grants will be awarded following an application and formal site visit from the CCCF Board of Directors.

GREAT CLIPS AWARDS \$5,000 SCHOLARSHIP



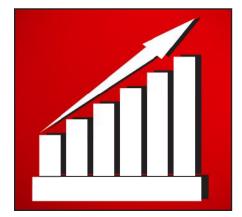
Great Clips, Inc. sponsors an annual national scholarship competition for aspiring cosmetologists across the United States and Canada. Each year, 10 students are selected from more than 2,000 applicants to receive a \$5,000 scholarship.

This year, Carrie Boston, a student at the Arkansas Academy of Hair Design in Jonesboro, was named one of the 10 national winners. In her heartfelt essay, Carrie shared her personal journey and lifelong connection to beauty — one that began as a little girl spending time with her mother and grandmother.

Kristy Beliew, local Great Clips' franchisee, and Kathy Schultz, Great Clips' General Manager, had the honor of presenting Carrie with her \$5,000 scholarship check during a special recognition ceremony.

Next Month

People Behind Progress



Read about individuals who are making an impact on the future of their communities.

A New Year



Check out tips for setting and reaching your goals in 2026.

Christmas Scenes



Enjoy a look back at holiday events from around Northeast Arkansas.





