

NEA'S PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

JUNE 2025

The Sisters Of **ST. BERNARDS** 125 YEARS OF CARE



NEA SENIORS
HORSEING AROUND
BUSINESS MILESTONES

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The Olivetan Benedictine Sisters of the Holy Angels Convent have lived out their calling over the past 125 years through their service to the patients and employees at St. Bernards Healthcare.

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From Us to You

Don't wait. We all have things we want to do, and we all think we can do them later. I had plans to go places – take my mom places – later. But we were both busy and took for granted that we could do the other things later.

My favorite shirt is one that says, "Take the Trip... Eat the Cake... Buy the Shoes." We Wright girls buy the shoes for sure, and we eat plenty of cake, I wish we would have taken her on more trips. I am thankful for this trip. My sister DeAnna and I took her on a cruise, and we had a blast.

My family and I wish to thank this wonderful community for all the cards, food, flowers, messages and more during this sorrowing time.



Dina Mason

Dina Mason
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The start of summer always offers a little excitement, even for those of us who are not in school. The days are longer, the schedule is more relaxed and we often have more opportunities to take vacations or spend time with family and friends.

I guess you could say summer offers us a chance to horse around a little, so it seems fitting that we have an equestrian theme in this month's magazine with stories ranging from horse-inspired art, to equine competitors and hobbyists to how horses can help in therapeutic ways.

Our June edition also includes a special Milestones section as we highlight Northeast Arkansas businesses who have been serving our communities steadfastly for 10 to 140 years. Putting in the work to have a successful business, often means sacrificing some of those laid back summer days and we salute

these business owners for their efforts.

The transition to summer is hitting a little different this year as my youngest son graduated from Greene County

Tech, and my German exchange student had to board a plane and go home after living 10 months in the Hunt house. I'm excited, though, to see what the next stage of life brings for them and for me.

Gretchen Hunt

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The Loose Caboose

PARAGOULD FESTIVAL RETURNS

After a long hiatus, the City of Paragould welcomed back the Loose Caboose Festival on May 15th through 17th with open arms.

Loose Caboose, a train-themed festival celebrating all things Paragould, began next to the train tracks and wound throughout downtown. The festival highlighted the community spirit, history and innovative creativity that the city has to offer for everyone near and far.

The long-awaited return of the festival featured a carnival, vendor market, food court, live music, a petting zoo, several fun and interactive kid-friendly activities and so much more!

The Loose Caboose Festival is set to return once again the third weekend of May of 2026.



Look for more photos from this event on the Premiere Magazine Facebook page.

Celebrating Peanut Butter Cookies

BY KATIE COLLINS

You can't go wrong with a quick and easy treat – something you can make and take to a summer gathering or just to take care of that craving for a little something sweet. These Peanut Butter Cookie Bars are easy to make and get high points for their great peanut butter cookie taste, but in bar form. I've made them twice now, and I think they'll be a go-to recipe anytime I need or want a sweet treat that's fast and doesn't make a huge mess.

You can use creamy or crunchy peanut butter, you can add in chocolate chips, peanut butter chips, chopped nuts, or just make as is – whatever you're feeling! These would be great served warm as a cookie bar sundae with ice cream and a drizzle of hot fudge, too. National Peanut Butter Cookie Day is June 12th and while these bars aren't shaped like traditional cookies, I think the taste is close enough to count and celebrate with!



Peanut Butter Cookie Bars

Ingredients:

- 1 stick unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ cup peanut butter
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- Optional: Baking chips, nuts (measure with your heart)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 and line an 8x8 baking pan with parchment or foil.

Melt butter in a large bowl. Add the brown sugar and stir together until thoroughly mixed. Add the egg and vanilla and stir. Add peanut butter and stir until well combined. Stir in salt and flour until combined. Spread in the baking pan and bake for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool then cut into squares.



Oasis Arts & Eats



The sun was shining and spirits were high as the 8th annual Oasis Arts and Eats Fest went off without a hitch! The largest Arts Festival in NEA was held in Downtown Jonesboro Saturday, April 26th, with over 100 vendors lining the block. The event boasted a variety of local artists, crafters, food trucks, live entertainment and much more. There was a great turnout, with tons of folks coming out to support the community.



A PASSION For Horses

FROM HOBBY TO COLLEGE

BY MADELYN MCFARLAND

It was a beautiful, sunny day at Mark Dunham's Quarter Horse stable as the dogs were chasing each other through the field and further down the pasture, a momma horse and her baby were grazing. The scene was exactly where I'd expect to find someone like Mark's daughter, Sidney, who smiled as she recounted her earliest days on horseback. "I started riding by myself the summer after I turned two, right before I turned three."

The stable is where you are likely to find Sidney, if she's not working or at school, that is, and she shared how much spending time with her horse means to her.

"If I'd had a bad day or something just didn't go the way I wanted it to, I would just send my dad a little text and be like, hey, I need a break," she said. "I would come down, I'd get my horse out, I'd get him ready, go down, and ride. By the time I got done riding, I would talk. But for that first like hour, I was like, 'No.' So, this has been my happy place since I was little."

Sidney, 22, is a Valley View graduate and Jonesboro native. She's currently enrolled in the nursing program at TCU, set to graduate this December. Apart from being a hardworking student, she is also an award-winning equestrian. Sidney's family shares that passion, and it's always been a huge part of their lives. Her parents, Mark and Clare Dunham, are both multi award winners themselves. Mark is still a trainer, and Sidney feels blessed to have her father as one of her many coaches. She credits much of her success to the people around her, her family and team.



She received the NCEA Standout Athlete of the Month Award in her sophomore year (September of 2023), as well as TCU Leadership Award for Athletics in her junior year. Sidney grew up competing in Western all-around events. She placed in the top 10 in multiple events at the All-American Quarter Horse Congress and earned Reserve World Champion in the L3 14-18 Trail at the Youth World honors. Safe to say they have an expansive trophy collection tucked away in the family office.

Sitting on the worn leather couch across from the viewing window, she pointed out some of the barn's inhabitants. There were two donkeys and a few horses enjoying some hay, and outside the stable was busy, as well. Sidney's dad was putting a harness on Chloe, a beautiful chestnut mare with white socks on her back legs. She was happy to see us coming. "She's my queen bee, she's sassy and she's straight up a girl," Sidney said. "Don't touch her. Don't mess with her. If it's not her idea, you can go home. She's my whole heart, and I love her dearly."

When asked about growing up on the ranch, she said, "I've been really blessed, and this place and horses themselves have been truly what has gotten me where I am today. Looking back, it's crazy to think that I was so lucky as to get to do all this, but then it's crazy, because I wouldn't know what I'd do without it."

Sidney's passion for horses has stayed with her throughout both her high school and college career. When speaking about transitioning






to college with some of her schoolmates, she said, "We were the first class in program history to commit to, sign, graduate, and all of us stay at the school together. The eight of us are really close, those are my best friends."

She said it was different to go from competing as an individual to being part of a team. "It's a lot, but it teaches you a lot. Now my teammates have to do good. Just because I got my point, doesn't mean they get theirs," she said, noting that most of the team only competed individually before signing at TCU. "Then you get thrown into the deep end with a whole bunch of other girls, and it turns out to be really cool."




With graduation right around the corner, Sidney has a lot of exciting things coming to fruition. "I worked at St. Jude's last summer, and I'm working there again this summer. I love everything about it. The plan is to be a pediatric oncology nurse. I'm going to apply to a bunch of places, but I think I'd like to stay in Fort Worth, Texas. Cook Children's Hospital has been such an impactful part of our community, and TCU's. I can give back to the people and families that provided so much for us."

With so many achievements under her belt already, here's to many happy trails to come!



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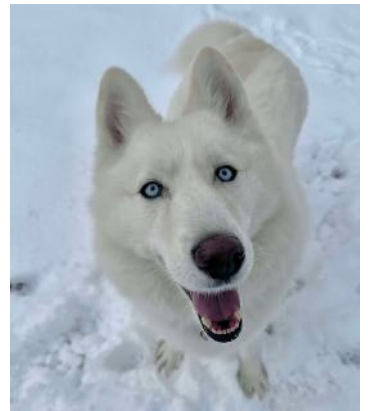



PET *of the* MONTH

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BY DENISSE HALFORD

This is Bruno. He is 4 (almost 5) years old, full Siberian Husky, and 100% personality. We've had him since he was 6 weeks old, and he was born in Batesville. He's got all the classic husky traits: loud, stubborn, hilarious, and dramatic in the best way. Bruno loves car rides, people, hanging out with his doggy daycare buddies, and never says no to a pup cup (but don't expect him to work for it — he knows he's earned it just by being himself!). Bruno also understands both English and Spanish - when he feels like listening of course. He's the kind of dog who makes friends everywhere he goes and leaves a little trail of fur and laughter behind him. We love him dearly and he makes life so much better. We are so lucky to have him.



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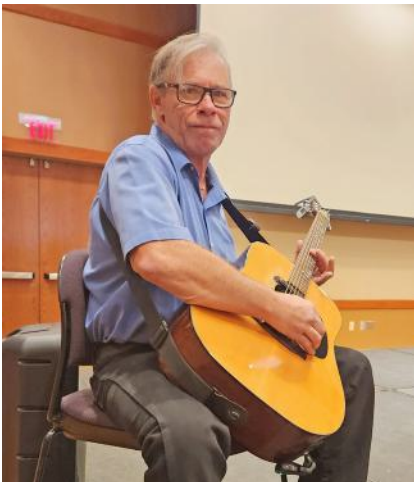
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Celebrating 70 Years



The United Way of Northeast Arkansas celebrated 70 years of impact during its Annual Luncheon on May 6th at Centennial Hall on the campus of Arkansas State University. A catered lunch and live music were featured, and the event included a trip down memory lane, as well as recognition of recent success during the 2024 campaign.



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT



BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Chances are good when you pull up at the If Wishes Were Horses (IWWH) farm just outside of Paragould, a cluster of horses will sidle up as if to ask if they can help you. Chances are also good that one or more of the animals is part of the Equine Therapy program at the farm, having been through extensive training in order to qualify for participation.

"We have got a curriculum we start them on at birth," said Susan Boyd, owner/operator/and any other title you can think of for her at the facility. "For about the first five years ... we put them through it. We do selective breeding, also. We cull the ones that won't cut it, and keep only the ones that will make it."

The premise of equine therapy is that interacting with a horse under the supervision of a mental and physical health professional can complement traditional treatments to best support recovery. Interactions may include riding or assisted riding, in addition to feeding, grooming, and providing other kinds of care. Animal researchers have observed that horses — like dogs, dolphins, and other intelligent creatures — are keenly tuned in to people and their emotions.

Equine therapy uses interactions with horses to aid emotional healing and improve skills like trust and empathy. It has been used to treat anxiety, depression and trauma recovery, and is believed to help patients build confidence and self-awareness. To compliment the different kinds of therapy needed, there must also be different kinds of horses.

"They need to be one of three kinds: Low energy; bi-curiosity; good

temperament," Susan said. "Then they can help in the different levels of therapy. At Level 1, the person needs to be able to ride horses independently. For Level 2 we're dealing with equine psychotherapy. Riding is not the main focus. We like a horse that's a little pesky, one that will push people's buttons. Level 3 is those people who can't ride independently and require side walkers to accompany them."

Partnering with The Henry Wrinkles Foundation, the farm offers these forms of therapy to clients:

Therapeutic Riding

Therapeutic Riding is a recreational horseback riding class adapted specifically for individuals with disabilities. Riders will improve on their posture, core strength, and balance while also building confidence and independence in everyday living skills. The class





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is taught with a riding instructor and side-walkers to ensure participant safety.

Hippotherapy

Hippotherapy is an intervention used by occupational, physical, and speech therapists. It incorporates using the natural movement of horses to help engage sensory, neuromotor, and cognitive systems. IWWH works with the provider of choice in achieving treatment plan goals. The horses have been carefully selected and trained for participant safety.

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) is a type of therapy used by mental health professionals to help improve social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skills of clients. EAP does not necessarily involve riding but will use equine animals in ground activities such as moving the horse around and completing tasks. EAP frequently uses a group therapy setting but it is not required and can be done 1 on 1.

Equine therapy has proven beneficial to older adults, veterans, and at-risk youth, addressing mental, emotional and physical health and improving coordination. And the farm has the horses needed to match the therapy prescribed to the individual.

According to information available online, all IWWH therapy and trail horses must complete their foundation training program and be able to complete each task to pass training. Tasks include standing still for bath, clipping, and tacking, picking up feet easily, trailer loading, ponying horses and being ponied. Horses must be desensitized to all kinds of objects including tarps, noodles, balls, cars, bikes, and ATVs, as well as loud noises like gunshots, lawn equipment, etc. The horse will have at least 90 days under saddle with 60 being trail ridden. Completion of the program will certify that the horse shows competency in being an ideal trail partner. This training also focuses on building a "foundation" of skills necessary to produce the safest possible therapy horse.

Therapy Training

Therapeutic horse training takes the built in foundation training and maximizes it for therapy use.

Horses that are deemed candidates for potential therapy use will be assessed on five personality and physical characteristics: courage, stamina, athleticism, temperament, and energy. Once selected, the horse will undergo the training most closely aligning with type of therapy it will be used in, with the training continuing until the horse's 7th year.

Therapy Horse Certification


The development of the training program has given tremendous insight on what it takes to produce a safe and effective therapy horse. Once identified as a horse capable of performing the required duties, each must go through personality and physical assessment, then complete a test of competency based on practices from the therapy training program. If both are passed the horse will be certified by IWWH as having the potential of being used in equine

assisted therapy.



"We're still working out the kinks on some things," Susan said, "but we have partnered with Pathways in Paragould for OT, PT and Speech therapy. We expect things to be picking up real soon with summer coming on."





For more information about the equine therapy program, contact Susan at the Henry Wrinkles Foundation at 870-450-2438.





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Delta Symphony Orchestra

SPRING WITHOUT END

PHOTOS BY ANNA OSBORNE



The Delta Symphony Orchestra held its final concert of the 2024-25 season on Saturday, May 10th, at the Fowler Center on the campus of Arkansas State University. The Spring Without End Concert featured a performance of Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1, as well as a joint performance with the Delta Youth Symphony Orchestra. Prior to the concert, local artists displayed their work for attendees to enjoy.



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Big Business for Small Businesses

BY DINA MASON



I have long wanted to do a Blog offering my fellow small business owners tips and insights I come across as an avid trades publications reader and a research junkie.

I love seeing data that helps me in my day-to-day operations of my small company. When you wear "all" the hats a broad spectrum of articles applies to you personally. As one who has been involved in marketing so many kinds of companies over the past 35 years as a media consultant, if it does not apply directly to me I can usually see something one of my clients or community partners may need to know.

Let's kick this off with some recent data about the radio industry. I find that all small businesses, including mine, would like to find the "silver bullet" answer to marketing their company. Unfortunately, it is more like a "turkey shot" (thanks, Perry, for the fact that I know a "scatter pattern").

Marketing your business is a continuous process of multi-channel efforts that change continuously. I know that sounds exhausting, because it is. I hope this column has something you can use in marketing your business or organization. Feel free to contact me if you have specific questions or want to brainstorm ideas anytime.

New technology is great, but have you ever heard, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water?" I feel like mass media is the "baby" and the bath water is your marketing plan.

Radio may be old school, but it works! Especially LOCAL radio. *Edison Research's Share of Ear for the fourth quarter of 2024 finds that AM/FM still dominates in-car listening. The in-car share of 86% reinforces AM/FM's standing as the primary way to reach consumers on their path to purchase.

In a typical day among ad-supported media, 18% listen only to digital audio and not AM/FM radio; 22% listen to digital audio and AM/FM radio; and 61% only listen to AM/FM radio and not digital audio. Most local businesses are not going to be on satellite radio or TV, due to a cost factor, so this research helps show there are still large local audiences listening to regular radio. And radio is a budget friendly medium bringing a good return on investment to your plan when bought correctly.

Questions? Let's talk soon!

*From the latest Share of Ear study, which surveys 4,000 each year to gauge daily reach and time spent with all forms of audio.

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Celebrating Fathers

BY CHUCK LONG

BE A DIFFERENCE MAKER



As a youngster I was blessed to enjoy many of the opportunities this area had to offer. I fished and hunted but also enjoyed playing baseball, walking through plowed fields, collecting bait, skipping rocks and shooting .22s, along with many other activities. As I look back now, one of the greatest blessings I had during my youth was having someone willing to get me out there and help me through those endeavors.

I have previously mentioned many of those individuals in this space. Some were blood kin, many were not. With June being the month we celebrate Father's Day, I wanted to share a few more stories about some of those wonderful folks. This is a word of thank you to all those who invested in me, and also an encouragement to any who might read this to take the time to invest time in others.

Like many youngsters of the '70s, I really enjoyed baseball. I began organized baseball as a 10-year-old with tryouts at Bland Park. When the teams were announced, I was tabbed to play with Walmart in the American League. What a great time that was! At the first practice we met our coach, Greg Conn. I played for Coach Conn for three years, two with Walmart, and then one in the National League with First National Bank.

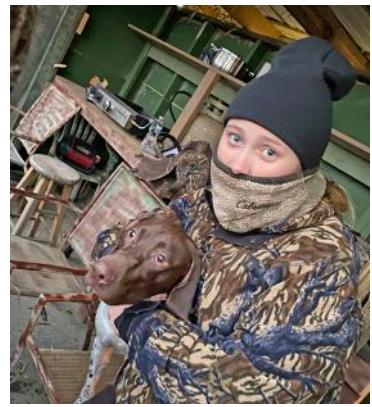
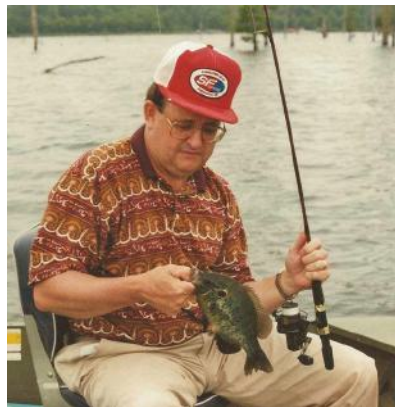
He truly enjoyed baseball, challenged us to be better and instilled in us the courage to be out there and play the game. I was a little guy for my age, but he made me feel 10 feet tall when I stepped on the baseball field. Though my size has definitely caught up with my age, life can still make you feel small. The courage instilled by Coach Conn has proven very important in many facets of my life.

Some of my greatest mentors were our neighbors in the Coffman Community and one of those was George Hyde. George was known for rabbit hunting and the good crop of beagles he kept on hand. I was able to get out in the field and chase cottontails and swamp rabbits with George and his pack of hounds on a few occasions. I learned many lessons while watching George conduct a rabbit hunt.

He was humble, low-key and appreciative of the opportunity to be out there. One of the best lessons was patience. George carried a stool with him and, instead of recklessly chasing the dogs when they struck a rabbit, he would simply sit down and wait. He knew the rabbit would make a circle and come back around if he remained patient. That lesson of patience, when I can follow it, has oft rewarded me with great benefits.

With this article being written in conjunction with the celebration of Father's Day, I would be remiss if I did not mention my dad, Charles Long. We spent many days in a johnboat chasing bluegill. We would fill a cooler with ice, drinks and snacks, pick up some bait and head to Portia Bay, Lake Charles or Shirey Bay. We had a 14' boat and a sculling paddle. We used telescopic fiberglass poles and carried just enough tackle to fit the needs of the trip.

We would fish all day, or at least until the heat ran us off the water,



and then head home and clean our catch, scaling the bream, cutting off the head and leaving the rest of the fish intact. Mom would then cook a few for supper. It was a great dose of keeping things simple. Those lessons of simplicity seem to be very rare in our present world. Life has become so complicated and tech heavy that simplicity is getting pushed to the curb by the need to be busy. The world seems to hold little value in slowing down and enjoying life.

These men, and so many other folks, made a difference in my life by giving just a bit of time, providing some inspiration, and setting an example. In a world that often seems chaotic and scattered, examples like that are priceless.

I want to encourage those who read this to celebrate Father's Day by thanking your dad, granddad, or other person in your life who gave their time to you. In addition to that, find an avenue to share some time



with your children and with other kids. Take a kid hunting or fishing. Take a kid for a walk in a creek or across a plowed field. Take them on a hike, look at leaves, or go out at night and chase lightning bugs. Play catch, shoot some baskets or toss a football.

No matter the outdoor activity or the sport, we are blessed with lots of great options right here in Northeast Arkansas. Make it a point to take some time and invest in our kids. The dividends will be great. I hope to see you 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.



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The Sisters Of St. Bernards 125 Years

BY GRETCHEN HUNT



When St. Bernards Hospital was founded by the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters on July 5, 1900, to help with a malaria outbreak in Northeast Arkansas, there was no way to predict the incredible growth for what would become St. Bernards Medical Center.

St. Bernards had humble beginnings at the urging of Father Eugene Weibel, as the Sisters, who were trained as teachers, prepared six rooms in a frame house on East Matthews Street in downtown Jonesboro to care for the sick.

"That first little hospital started with a raffle for a watch," Mother Mary Clare Beznar said. "When the need was great, the Sisters brought their beds over."



Mary Clare said while much has changed in the world of medicine over the past 125 years, the Sisters of the Holy Angels Convent have remained steadfast in the way they worship and the way they serve with St. Bernards. "We don't believe the Christ-like care we are to give has changed by one inch – not one minuscule," she said.

That care is something that can make a world of difference for patients facing uncertainty. "You're facing your mortality in this building," Mary Clare said, "often facing the hardest time that you've ever experienced."

She said she believes the Sisters' most important work right now for the hospital is prayer. "When we started this hospital the Sisters did everything. They were the nurses, the techs, they did the laundry."

For a long time the sisters still filled many roles at St. Bernards, but as the hospital grew and the number of Sisters has decreased, the focus shifted to spiritual care, though the Sisters remain active in both the governance of the hospital and in staffing the Pastoral Care Department. "Our prayer life is still our strongest gift we have to offer to this part of the world and to the world," Mary Clare said.

That care is offered to all, no matter their beliefs or their past. "Whether they're good in the eyes of the world does not matter to us," she said. "We want that for all people from conception to death."

"The Sisters are not just here for the patients, but also the employees," Mary Clare added, noting they also pray for the community as a whole. "Even if you don't personally come here to the hospital at St. Bernards, we want your life to be impacted."

Mother Mary Clare joined the Holy Angel Convent in 2005 and has been a Superior since 2022.

Originally from Texas, when she graduated from high school she joined the Air Force and then attended nursing school.

"I trained as an EMT in the Air Force and it made me realize I wanted to go to nursing school," she said. "I felt God's call and decided to be a missionary." While living as a missionary in Honduras, she said she really felt the call to become a Sister. "I got mad. I didn't really want to do that."

And for a couple years, she tried to ignore the call. "I did labor and delivery, bought a house, tried to set up life like normal," but the call remained and through prayer and scripture, including the story of Abraham and Isaac, Mary Clare eventually answered.

"I realized He asked a much bigger sacrifice of Abraham than of me," she said. "I totally started trusting in Him. My friends told me about

Continued ➡



this community in Jonesboro with Sisters that have a hospital." She struggled again as her vision for herself was joining a group like Mother Teresa's Order and serving in other countries.

"I came to visit here and it was so perfect, so calming, but I said no," she said. "I didn't want to join the first community I visited." But when she visited other communities, she never felt that same peace and decided to stop looking and let God show her the way.

She said He did just that when she was helping with a conference and the Sisters from the Holy Angels Convent in Jonesboro heard about it and decided to attend. She said even though the Sisters were out of sorts from their travels, as soon as they arrived she felt that peace again. "They asked if I wanted to pray Vespers with them, which is the evening prayer, and I said yes. They put the book in my hands and I heard a voice in my heart – 'This is the community you're supposed to be with and these are the prayers you're supposed to be praying.'"

Her decision was made, and she's never regretted it.

"I've had fears along the way, but I've never wavered that this is where I'm supposed to be," she said. "I've never questioned that I'm supposed to be in this community. I believe that each Sister in our community has their own story just like mine."

She shared a glimpse of what a day is like for the Sisters, including 6 a.m. Mass, followed by morning prayers in community and then breakfast in silence. "We live a very silent life in some ways to foster a sense of the presence of God all day long," she said. "This is a time to be fed physically and spiritually."



During the day, the Sisters have work duties, some at jobs within the convent and some at the hospital, such as Sister Johanna Marie Melnyk, St. Bernards' Vice President for Mission and Ethics. Lunch is recreational, meaning a time for visiting during the meal, and a holy hour is held from 4-5 p.m. for silent meditation followed by the evening prayers.

Supper includes a reading from a spiritual book, followed by a time to share about the day's events or play a game of cards or a yard game. "We have a good time together," Mary Clare said.

The day ends with the evening closing prayers and a time of reflection





While many who work at St. Bernards are not Catholic, or possibly even Christian, they can still cite the hospital's mission statement: "The mission of St. Bernards Healthcare is to provide Christ-like healing to the community through education, treatment and health services," which gives them something to guide their way.

"The days are not always easy or good or fun," Mary Clare said. "But it's a very holy endeavor. That mission has not changed – the purpose and the mission of what we are doing at St. Bernards."



and silence begins at 8 p.m. until the next morning. "It is a time of reflection," Mary Clare said. "We don't have TVs in our rooms, so it really is a time of silence. We get up early too, so we want to be in bed."

And on the weekends, the schedule is the same, but Mass begins at 6:30 instead of 6, Mary Clare laughed.

She stressed the importance of the connection between the Sisters and St. Bernards as she discussed Sister Therese of Liseux, a cloistered nun who never left her convent, but lived her life in prayer for missionaries around the world.

"When I really think about it – everything I do when I'm doing it with Christ is then lived out in the lives of everybody here," she said. "If you're in Christ and He's in you, then we're all together and there's no lacking or disconnect. Even if someone doesn't have faith, I still think God can allow their work to be done through Him and for Him."

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Pet Preparedness Month

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

Pets & Severe Weather



June is pet preparedness month and after the recent events with tornadoes and horrible storm outbreaks that we have experienced, I wanted to take this opportunity to discuss preparing your pet(s) for an emergency.

I recently had a client bring her pets to me and report that one of the recent tornadoes had completely destroyed her home, a home in which she had lived with her husband for all of their adult lives. She told me that when she knew the tornado was headed toward their area, she and her husband got to the safest spot in their home with their two pets.

The storm decimated their home. She said that before the tornado hit she was in her home with a roof over her head, and after the tornado hit them head-on it left nothing except for the brick wall they were sheltering behind, and she was staring up at the sky while still standing in what had been her home only 15 seconds earlier. This amazing woman grabbed all the important things for emergency and survival that she could in a short matter of time before the storm hit.

It is situations like this -- pop-up storms and tornadoes happening seemingly everywhere, that should drive us to ensure we are prepared for when disaster strikes.

Thank goodness for the amazing K8 Weather team for doing the very best to keep us all protected and aware! Just like meteorologists

prepare us for bad weather, we should prepare ourselves for possible disaster. Of course this starts with preparing for ourselves, spouses or significant others, children, and other family members. But this article will focus on how to prepare your pets.



First, like my savvy client, have their leashes, harnesses/collars, and identifying tags on them. Even if going to a storm shelter on your property, if you walk outside, best to have your pet on a leash to avoid any pet from running off because of fear from the storm, excitement, or just plain ole not listening.

Medications:

Grab any necessary medications your pet has to have to manage disease processes. If in a hurry, do not worry with any other medications that are not required daily for your pet -- you will wind up packing things you do not need, waste time in doing so, and may miss something else more important.

Pet First Aid Kit:

This you can prepare on your own with over-the-counter items and keep on hand for any moment's notice. Some of these items include bottled water, saline flush, bandage materials, hydrogen peroxide, antibiotic ointment, flashlight with batteries, towel or blanket, travel pet food and water dishes (collapsible work and pack great!), and a gallon size zip-lock baggie of their food. I would

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recommend having all of this packed into a waterproof backpack to keep your arms otherwise free.

Documents:

Luckily most veterinary practices have digital copies they can send you if these are lost. Unless the documents are irreplaceable, then do not worry about them. The only

document I would consider essential is a list of emergency contacts, which I also recommend laminating to avoid the ink from running and rendering it illegible. This document should be updated regularly in case of number changes, etc.

Lastly, always make sure everyone in your household knows where the emergency items are placed, otherwise it winds up being a wild goose chase! I hope the worst of this tornado season is over and that this article helps you out to be best prepared for if disaster strikes!

For more information on how to prepare your pets for disaster, please check out the American Red Cross website, ASPCA, or ARPets Hospital.



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.



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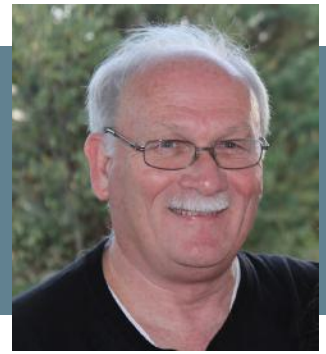
MARMADUKE HOSTS MAYFEST

The spirit of community was strong May 2nd and 3rd when the Marmaduke Picnic Association hosted the Marmaduke Mayfest Community Picnic. The event included a parade as well as live music, vendors, a beauty pageant and more at the Marmaduke City Park. Proceeds from the event were designated for the local Marmaduke cemeteries.



Get Rich

WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



After a couple of hours standing in line – with a brief interruption to make a side trip to the Health Department for birth certificates – my wife and I are now the proud owners of government-mandated Real IDs. Apparently, I’ve been roaming the planet for the last 60 or 70 years with a fake ID, although I don’t recall ever purchasing one the way many of my high school and college classmates did in order to buy alcohol or get into nightclubs.

I’ve yet to take my first drink of alcohol, so I haven’t needed any sort of identification allowing me to buy some, and clubbing for the purpose of dancing and drinking and who knows what else was never on my to-do list. I had read I might need this newfangled Real ID with the fancy star at the top if I planned on flying anywhere, and just in the last couple of weeks my best friend suggested I fly down to Houston so we can get together and drive out west to Abilene to visit our old college coach.

So, Cindy and I decided we’d go get the new piece of plastic that says we are who we are, and I researched on the Google what documents we would need to take along. We learned we would need either a passport or birth certificate, and neither of us has ever had the former and had no idea where to look for the latter. Again, the Googler said we could take various replacement documents which would suffice, so we headed out with tax returns, utility bills, Social Security cards and a folder of other things, certain we were prepared to prove we are old people, not terrorists.

Without this federally compliant state-issued license or identification card that the DHS says is a more secure form of identification we might not be able to fly domestically or access certain federal buildings and facilities. Until this recent request for me to fly, I was perfectly fine not being able to board a plane or enter a federal building, like a courthouse where someone might want to put me on trial. “Sorry,” I could say, “but I can’t take the stand; I don’t have a new ID.”

When the REAL ID Act was signed into law in 2005, it enacted a recommendation from the 9/11 Commission that the government set security standards for state-issued driver’s licenses and IDs. “REAL ID is a coordinated effort by the federal government to improve the reliability and accuracy of driver’s licenses and identification cards,” a Transportation Security Administration Security Director for airports in the New York City region said. “The improvements are intended to inhibit terrorists’ ability to evade detection by using fraudulent identification.”

I don’t particularly want terrorists meandering around our nation at will, but I’m a little hesitant to think evil organizations are in the habit of recruiting overweight, bald, old white men to carry out their

missions. I thought maybe my appearance would cut me some slack with the ID giver-outers, but I was wrong.

As we stood in the line that never seemed to move, we kept hearing whispers and mumbles about the birth certificate being a definite must. I wasn’t overly worried because I had my Google backup information at the ready, but when I finally made it face to face with the official awarder of IDs, she told me I must produce a passport or birth certificate. “Well,” I said in my nicest old man voice, “I’ve never had a passport and it would seem my standing in front of you on the other side of this plexiglass partition should be proof enough that I’m born.”

She was not amused and said, “What about your birth certificate?”

“I’m pretty sure mine is etched on a cave wall somewhere,” I replied, and told her I’ve never actually seen a copy of mine but I am almost positive I was born once. If mine is in with the things I inherited from my mother upon her death, it is in plastic tote #27 on the bottom of a pile of boxes and furniture and samples from my father’s traveling salesman days, and by the time I could dig down to it we probably will be teleporting instead of boarding planes.

“I Googled alternative documents I could substitute and ...,” I said, but before I could finish the sentence she said, “Google’s wrong.” It was pretty obvious she had had to respond to that statement several times already and considering that, she showed great composure. She told me we’d have to go to the County Health Department and get copies of the birth certificates, so we gave up our places in line, drove across town to the assigned destination and filled out some forms. Twenty-four dollars later we both had proof we were born.

Looking over my brand new old document I realized I had never seen my official paperwork. I didn’t know we lived on East Emerson Street back in August of 1952, and I had never done the math to figure out how old my parents were when I arrived. For the record, they were 25 and 26.

We returned to the Real ID-gettin’ place and got back in line, sharing our newfound proofs of birth and before long owned shiny new driver’s licenses with our mandatory star shining brightly for the official airplane and federal building monitors to approve. Now I feel like I need to go somewhere, just to get my twenty-four dollars’ worth.

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.

PAINTING A *New Picture*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Sometimes we choose our path in life, sometimes it chooses us. Just ask the very talented Allie Louise, who thought she had a pretty good plan for her future until life painted a whole new picture.

A 2018 graduate of Greene County Tech High School, Allie Thomas Parker planned on going to college on an athletic scholarship with the intentions of studying pre-med. But during her senior year at GCT her focus took a different turn.

"I took an art class in high school, but was never really interested in art seriously or long term," Allie says today. "I was a three-sport athlete and had my goals of going to college on a basketball scholarship. However, in that art class in high school I had a painting that won second in State and at that point was told a time or two that I should really consider what a career in the art world may look like, with again more disinterest from my end. Which in hindsight, is very typical 17-year-old behavior!"

"I can credit my amazing teacher, James Jumper, at Greene County Tech for believing in me and planting small seeds in my head along the course of that class that I had the talent in me to be a successful artist."

In May of 2022, Allie graduated with a Bachelor's of Science degree, but during her senior year of college she "discovered the world of pastel art and from there I was hooked. I spent hours reading about the medium, watching tutorials online, and practicing. In December of 2022, my husband and I made the decision to move cross country to Montana



and within a few months I was accepted with my first horse painting "Cowboy at Dusk" into a prestigious gallery in August of 2023 in Big Timber, Montana. I think recognition of 'wow, maybe I can actually do this' set in when I delivered that piece of artwork and it sold within a month. It was not about the dollar amount it sold for, but the fullness I felt in my heart and soul that this was THE career for me."

Now 25 and residing in Livingston, Montana, with her husband, Allie has become known for her incredibly detailed painting of horses, done in such a manner that many at first believe they are looking at a giant photograph. She is proud of the infinite detail each contains, down to the most delicate of brush strokes.

"My day-to-day life is very chaotic in terms of job capacity, but I love my job(s) and it's hard to limit hours in the day of working," Allie says. "I start my days at 3 a.m. in the studio painting with a cup (or two) of coffee and work until about 8 a.m. before going into the office where I work as an interior designer here in Livingston, as well. My painting fulfills my creative needs and although interior design is creative as well -- it more so fulfills my analytical, technical side in terms of precision of architectural drawings and material technicalities. I have been selling art full-time now for two years, but can't walk away from the interior design so I work two full-time jobs and I love every second of it. I tell people with a big smile and gratitude that I GET to be an artist and interior designer for my profession. I'm very lucky and very thankful for all of the people that believed in my creativity then, and believe in it now."

Her fondness for horses as a frequent painting subject comes from both without and within. "Myself, like most people, feel a deep, soul-level connection with horses," she explains. "Horses are special for many reasons, both practical and emotional, though they are most often known for their beauty and grace. Their powerful builds and elegant movements can captivate anyone who truly observes them but, for me, I'm more so captivated by their ability for companionship, their intelligence, their therapeutic grace, and their historic versatility. Throughout history, horses have held significant roles in different





cultures, symbolizing strength, freedom, and nobility and for a reason -- they are remarkable creatures that continue to inspire and enrich human lives in countless ways."

Completion of a project depends on the size and complexity of the piece. Sometimes she can finish a painting in about three hours and sometimes it takes 150 hours, creating pieces

from 16x20 inches all the way to 48x60 with various composition and intricate details.

"I am my worst critic, and though I seek perfection I understand and appreciate the imperfections in my work," Allie says. "I also am a person that LOVES constructive criticism. I think it's important to ask others of their perspective on my pieces (what they love about it, what they would have liked to see differently, or just simply helping pull my best work out of me). Constructive criticism from myself and others is always a great opportunity to learn, grow, and better my techniques.

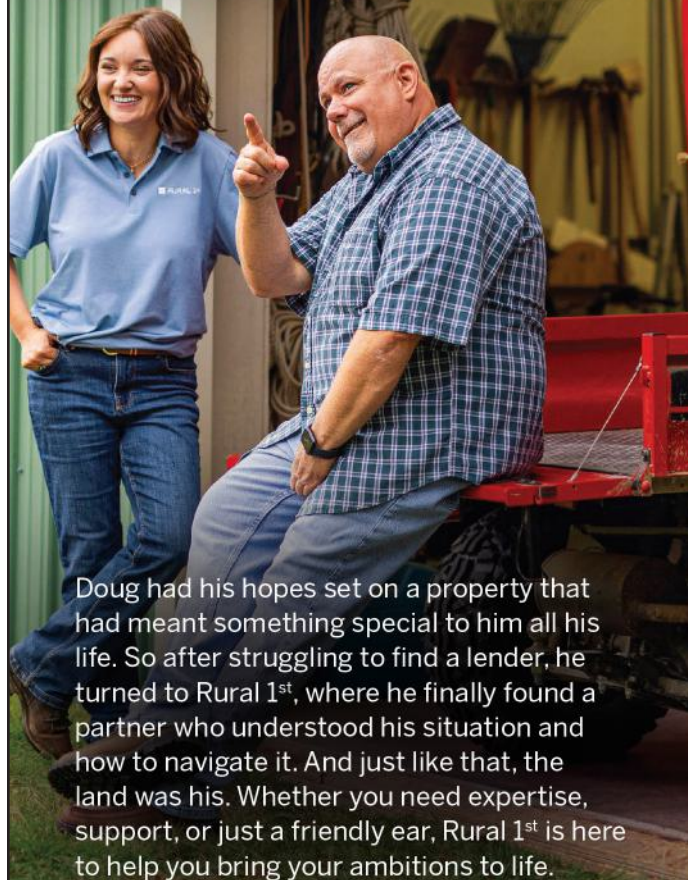
"I started by working with photographers who would shoot the reference photos in collaboration with my ideas. Then I taught myself how to use a camera and started shooting the compositions for my saddle pieces. Recently, I have been painting from my head and heart. The reason for not using reference photos now is to push myself to dig deeper within. I do commissions fairly frequently and really enjoy helping bring clients' wishes to life. For commissions, I work from reference photos or from ideas clients may have."

Looking back on a plan that switched from making moves on a basketball court to one of making brush strokes on canvas, Allie says it was simply a matter of cultivating a talent hidden within. "I was the typical Greene County Tech teen that played three sports, and (humbly) excelled in all," she remembers. "However, the transformation in careers was a huge surprise to me -- but I do believe that everything happens for a reason and one important thing that I stand by is always finding your path on your own, no matter how hard it is to get there. No matter the amount of people that may tell you, 'I told you that's what you needed to be doing all along.' For me, it has created this sense of thankfulness for the people that have shaped me, but most importantly a sense of trust and gratification in myself that I will always find my way."

Allie is the daughter of Raina and Lawson Thomas of Paragould and her work can be viewed by searching Allie Louise Art.



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Public media service of Arkansas State University, KASU, commemorated its 68th birthday on May 9th, with a ticketed celebration and an on-air fundraising event.

KASU, which signed on the air on May 17, 1957, invited its listeners to celebrate its anniversary in the Cooper Alumni Center.

The event also featured a celebration for Arkansas musician Henry Glover, who was honored with live music from the Time Machine band and an exhibit of his life. Attendees also enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and a silent auction.



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Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas is currently accepting applications for the Homeownership Program.

Applications can be picked up at the main Office at 520 W. Monroe Ave., the ReStore at 3610 E. Highland Drive, both in Jonesboro, or online at habitatnea.org.

"Affordable home ownership is an essential need," said Angy Abaunza, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas. As applications become available, "we are seeking out qualifying applicants to own a Habitat home."

Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas builds strength, stability, and self-reliance through providing shelter in Jonesboro and Paragould.

"While homeownership is a great investment in our communities, it is also a powerful reminder that home ownership is the key to stability, growth and opportunities," said Darlene Nicks, Habitat's Homeowner Services Chair.

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More from the E.C. Barton & Company Archives

1902

P. C. Barton sells his grocery store and incorporates Barton Lumber & Brick. P.C. purchased the Citizens Brick Company.



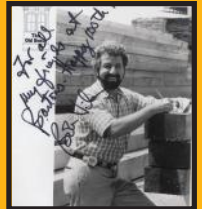
1975

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Beginning as the Arkansas Rice Growers Cooperative Association, Riceland is a farmer-owned agricultural cooperative specializing in the marketing, processing and distribution of both rice and soybeans. This concept emerged from a need for Eastern Arkansas rice farmers to improve their bargaining power and build infrastructure for storing and milling rice.



Riceland opened its rice mill in Jonesboro in 1939. The current milling facility in Jonesboro opened in 1977. Over time the Jonesboro rice mill has grown into the largest rice milling facility in the United States.

While not a traditional family-owned business, Riceland is still owned and governed by the farm members who grow the rice and soybeans, remaining deeply rooted in the communities that formed the business.

Many farms involved in the cooperative have been passed down for generations, building a strong, lasting relationship between farm members and Riceland. Several members of the families have been a part of Riceland either directly as farmers or indirectly through employment.

Directly involving farmers and their families is a major goal of Riceland. They are committed to supporting the company's legacy and to welcoming the next generation of membership, whether continuing a



family tradition or starting their own journey. Riceland proudly stands as a cooperative that values sustainability, innovation and community.

Having over a century to build strong ties with members, employees and customers, Riceland has established credibility and expertise, allowing the cooperative to constantly evolve to meet the modern-day needs of customers and consumers.

Riceland's structure as a farmer-owned cooperative remains dear to them and will not change. However, they will continue to be flexible and evolve their brand and operations to reflect their core mission of helping farmers sustainably feed the world. Riceland honors its company roots by prioritizing the needs of our members and rural communities, while investing in innovation, conservation and quality to ensure their products meet the demands of a changing world.

Riceland is more than a brand; it's a legacy of cooperation, community and sustainability. As agriculture continues to change, Riceland remains committed to helping farmers feed the world, sustainably.



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Since its humble beginnings in 1900 as a six-bedroom house hospital, St. Bernards has upheld a mission to provide Christ-like healing through education, treatment and health services. An independent, non-profit, Catholic healthcare system founded and still sponsored by the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters in Jonesboro, St. Bernards now includes more than 100 affiliate locations, 40-plus medical specialties and 260 healthcare providers.



Comprehensive Healthcare Services

St. Bernards Healthcare operates three hospitals:

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- St. Bernards CrossRidge Community Hospital – A Critical Access Hospital serving Wynne and surrounding Cross County

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- St. Bernards Clopton Clinic – Multi-specialty clinic with 25-plus providers
- Paragould Medical Park – Outpatient medical hub that includes primary, extended hours and growing specialty care services
- St. Bernards Heart & Vascular – Comprehensive, award-winning cardiovascular care

- St. Bernards Surgical Associates – Implementing pioneering robotic surgical technology
- St. Bernards OB-GYN Associates – The region's most experienced women's health providers
- St. Bernards Pregnancy Clinic – Accessible prenatal and postpartum care
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- Partnerships with A-State Athletics – Official healthcare provider
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225 E. Washington, Jonesboro

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Through the Years



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We offer multiple locations and telehealth services to give you better access, wherever you live.

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125 Years of Healing Beyond Medicine



Heath Funeral Home

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF SERVICE

Heath Funeral Home has spent 80 years serving the community, providing high quality services to families of those who have passed.

Founded in 1945 by Verlyn Heath, the funeral home has continued to thrive under the care of the Heath family for three generations. Verlyn's children, Butch Heath and Lynda Heath White, ran the business for several decades, and the reins have since been passed to grandchildren Jeremy and Zac Heath. Throughout the years, eight Heath family members have worked full-time at the funeral home and others have joined as part-time employees or interns.

Jeremy Heath said his family's funeral home differs from others because of their dedication to high-quality service.

"Verlyn Heath instilled in us a desire to provide a sincere, personal service to every family that comes through our doors," Jeremy said.

Jeremy said Verlyn's passion for caring for families during the most difficult time in their lives came from the loss of both of his parents and the profound impact the support of the funeral home, that provided the services, had on his life. Verlyn almost immediately decided to work for that funeral home and became the youngest embalmer in the United States.

Verlyn's impact is still prevalent in the current Heath Funeral Home.



"His understanding of the importance of taking as many burdens off of families as possible has been passed down from generation to generation and is the guiding principle behind all that we do," Zac said.

Heath Funeral Home is more than just a business to the family. Instead, it is a part of them, working its way into every aspect of their lives.

"Growing up, we were involved in discussions about ways to improve

the services we provide," Jeremy said. "Those conversations continue to this day, regardless of the venue, whether it be dinner, a birthday or a holiday."



Jeremy said while this may seem like a disadvantage, it provides a constant stream of ideas on how to improve every aspect of Heath Funeral Home. Every person in the family, even those not currently working for the business, have their voices heard in company conversations.

The opportunity to serve the community and build a three-generation strong business is incredibly important to the Heath family. This time within the community has allowed them to build strong relationships with their customers and even serve the same families for multiple generations.

"It's not uncommon for a family member to tell us that our father or grandfather served their family during the loss of their grandparents or great-grandparents," Zac said. "A special and lasting bond is formed when you have the privilege of walking with the same people across multiple life-changing losses."

Being ingrained in the community for so long carries with it a plethora of knowledge on how to run the business, but Jeremy said the Heath

870-236-7676

321 W. Garland St., Paragould

heathfuneralhome.com



family values the relationships it has built with decades of service even more.

"It's always special when a family we have served comes over at a restaurant to share a story or a hug," he said.

Jeremy said those wishing to start their own business should lean on those who came before them for advice and help.

"Form relationships with those who have done what you're hoping to do," he said. "They will have insights from their experience that could save you from a lot of growing pains."

The Heath family has truly valued the ability to serve the community for so long. Walking along with those who are suffering and taking on some of the burden, and doing the best possible job at it, is something they hope to continue to do for many more generations to come.





Glen Sain Motors

CELEBRATING OVER 70 YEARS OF SERVICE

Glen Sain Motors is a name that has become synonymous with amazing service and strong family roots.

In 1954, R.C. Tracer began the current Rector location, later led by Glen Sain. The tradition of keeping Glen Sain Motors in the family has since continued and has helped maintain their strong family legacy with the purchase of the business by Glen's daughter, Gail, and her husband, Danny Ford. Under the leadership of Danny and Gail, Glen Sain Motors has expanded into Paragould and Kennett, Missouri. Gail and Danny plan to continue the business with their sons, Kirk and Todd, and even their grandchildren, keeping the dealership rooted in family.

"Over the years, multiple family members have worked in the dealership, and we're proud to say that we currently have three generations actively involved," Danny said. "It continues to be a true family-owned and operated business."

Glen Sain Motors is known for being more than just a car dealership; it's a thriving family tradition of caring for others. They focus on their customer experience and dedicate themselves to providing quality service even after the sale has taken place. "We make sure our customers are taken care of well beyond the purchase," Danny said. "Which we hope makes us stand out from the rest."

Being in business for 70 years has led the family to establish strong, trust-based relationships with their customers. Danny said Glen Sain Motors has had the privilege to serve some of the same families for years, something they love and appreciate.

Danny said the downside to having a family business is having to take work to family dinners and celebrations. But there's an upside to being



able to talk things out as a family, and it stretches beyond the doors of their homes.

"Honestly, that's made us even closer. We're really tight-knit, not just with family, but with our employees too," he said. "We actually refer to our employees as our Glen Sain family because it feels like one big family here."

The Glen Sain family has truly enjoyed being a part of Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri. This honor is not something that they take lightly, and they continue to dedicate every day to providing the best quality of service to their customers.

"It means everything to us to have earned their trust to be a part of their lives through the generations," Danny said. "We are so grateful for the relationships we have built and the opportunity to give back when we can."



870-565-4352

6345 US 49, Paragould

glensain.com

Hyde's Pest Control, Inc.



CELEBRATING 55+ YEARS OF SERVICE

Telpher Campbell started his pest control business in the 1960s, and his son-in-law, Jerry Hyde, joined Telpher's business in 1974. Working for Telpher is where Jerry obtained much of his pest control experience and knowledge.

After Telpher sold his business to a national company, Jerry established Hyde's Termite and Pest Control, Inc. Jerry's daughters, Shannan Price and Bobbie Williams, joined Hyde's when they graduated from college.

Today, Hyde's has four branches, one each in Paragould, Walnut Ridge, Highland and Kennett, Missouri. Servicing much of Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri, Hyde's is currently looking to expand into other areas.

Shannan and Bobbie represent the third generation of their family in the pest control business and are very humbled to know that they are serving some customers who have also been with the company for three generations.

Being family-owned and having longevity in the community brings nothing but positives for the company. Shannan stated, "Our clients aren't just customers, many are friends that we see at church, the Post Office and restaurants. We know who pays our bills and we are ready to assist our customers with questions most anywhere they see us."

Unlike some companies, customers do not have to call a 1-800 number and talk to a customer service representative who is possibly in another state. "We have brick and mortar locations in each area," Jerry said. "We try to be accessible when needed and involved in the community. Our kids and grandkids go to school here and we are involved in many other community activities." As Shannan said, "It's good to put a face with who you're doing business with."

Shannan and Bobbie have worked for over 20 years at Hyde's, but both know if a question comes up and they are needing assistance, they don't have far to go to get help. As Shannan noted, "If it's been done, my dad has seen it done."



HYDE'S TERMITE
& PEST CONTROL, INC.

870-236-2382

716 Fairview Rd., Paragould

hydestermite.com



The Steel Yard, Inc.

CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF SERVICE

The Steel Yard, Incorporated steel service center has served its customers for over 45 years and still strives daily to provide the best services and highest quality materials.

The company opened its doors as Century Steel in 1980 and shifted six years later to The Steel Yard, Incorporated (TSY), under Ernest Cooper Sr., a name it has since kept. In 1996, Ernest's son, Butch Cooper, joined the operation as the lead role in managing the business. TSY has since grown exponentially, including adding a new location in Springdale three years ago. The region now recognizes TSY as a leading regional provider of steel, aluminum, stainless and galvanized material and fabrication services.

Dillon Osment, TSY Vice President, said he would love to see the business passed down to the next generation and hopes they continue to fulfill TSY's mission of providing the same quality of service to big companies as well as the everyday customer.

Being a part of the community for so many years has helped The Steel Yard determine exactly how they want the business to run, as well as establish a solid core of employees who have been with the company for more than 15 years.

Dillon said if someone wants to own a business, they must be prepared to work hard and be consistent, as well as be open to



learning new things to keep up with technological advances. And, of course, value your customers and employees.

"Always make your customers your number one priority," he said. "Even if that means making some sacrifices on your bottom line. Most importantly, take care of your employees."



870-236-8534

304 North 35th Ave., Paragould

steel-yard.com

Crowley's Ridge Raceway



CELEBRATING 38 YEARS OF SERVICE



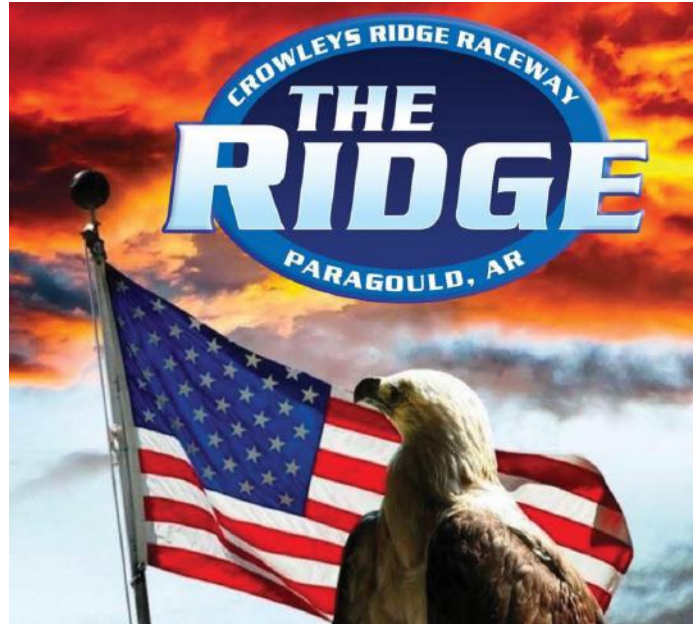
In the spring of 1987, Crowley's Ridge Raceway lit up with its first-ever race, born from the dream of the Francis family to bring the thrill of speed to Paragould.

Crowley's Ridge Raceway began with the decision of Glen and Pat Francis to move from California to Paragould and build their own racetrack. They spent years dedicated to maintaining the track and hosting every race they could. That love of racing and maintaining the racetrack was passed down to their son and his wife, Trent and Brenda Francis, who are still dedicated to the ¼ mile clay oval track to this day.

As their family grew, the business grew as well, with the addition of their daughters and their husbands, solidifying the racetrack as an integral part of Trent's entire life.

Not only is the racetrack deeply ingrained in the Francis family's history, but it has become a beloved piece of Paragould culture with many dedicated fans. The track has even been the site of weddings, engagements, and parties, and has also been featured in "The Bachelor" and various commercials.

Trent said the track has been home to a little bit of everything, from local heroes to the famous, and he is incredibly grateful for Paragould's love of the track.



The Francis family's love for the track is easy to see, from keeping it neat and clean to carefully preserving the history and memorabilia of the racetrack in a garage between their home and the track.

Now, the track has been open for 38 years, with countless races taking place year after year. The family is thankful for the support Paragould has shown them and hopes to continue racing on the ridge for many years to come.



870-236-3141

1708 AR-351, Paragould

crowleysridgeraceway.com



Mr. T's at Riverside

CELEBRATING 42 YEARS OF SERVICE

For decades, Mr. T's at Riverside has been a staple of Cardwell, Missouri, and surrounding cities with the largest selection of wines, beer and spirits in the area.

The legacy of the 13,000 square foot convenience store began in 1977 when Tommy and Betty Hyde purchased the land, including a leased building that originally housed Gulf Oil. When the Gulf Oil lease expired in 1983, Betty's daughter and her husband, Bonida and Bob Poynor, left Michigan and returned to Missouri to begin their journey as business owners.

In 1993, Bob and Bonida purchased the fuel station from Betty and Tommy. They incorporated Mr. T's Riverside in 1996 as Riverside and Company Incorporated. Then, in May of 1999, Bob and Bonida purchased Riverside Liquor Incorporated.

In 2001, a fire destroyed the original gas station, but Bob and Bonida were not defeated. Instead, they took this devastation as a chance to rebuild the gas station and added a liquor store and Riverside Café, serving home-style ribs and burgers. This change invites their customers to fuel up and chow down at the convenient all-in-one location.

In 2018, Brian and Nicole Poynor were added to the family business with their takeover of both Riverside Liquor, Inc. and Riverside & Co., Inc. Since their addition, Brian and Nicole added a third location in Red Onion, Missouri, in 2019, known as Mr. T's Express. This year, they added a new truck stop and restaurant to the ever-growing Mr. T's family of businesses.

Throughout the years, many family members have worked in the business as well, including cousins, nieces, nephews, and more.

Nicole said she does not know what the future holds, but she hopes



573-654-2313

496 Hwy. 412, Cardwell, MO

mrtsriverside.com

to see the business remain in the family for years to come.

The passing down of the business has brought with it many changes, but one thing that has never changed is the quality of service and products.

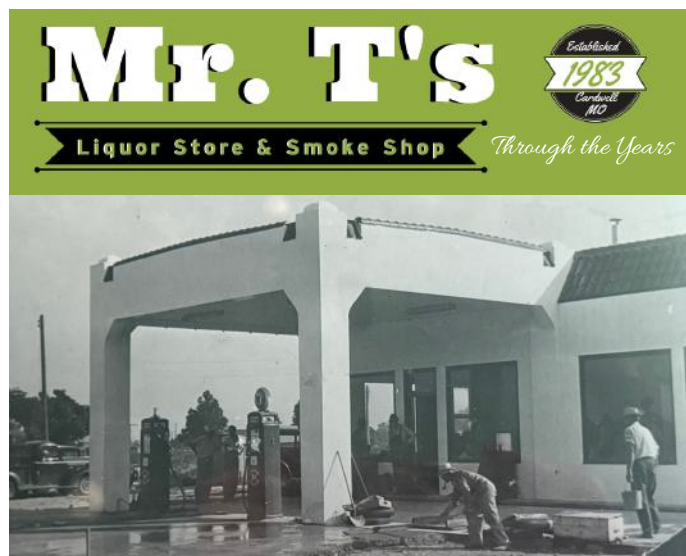
"We strive to have the largest selection and the lowest prices for all of our products," Nicole said. "We try to have all the hard-to-get bourbons and the best customer service."

Nicole said having the company within the family for decades has been positive for the family and has created a sense of trust and branding for the store.

"Everyone knows where the Kahlua colored waters are," she said.

With Mr. T's being open 365 days a year, family members often finds themselves brainstorming ways to better the store, despite efforts to try not to talk about business all the time. A big goal of theirs for this year is to improve their social media.

As a part of the community for 42 years, Mr. T's at Riverside has brought fun and a great selection of liquors, food and tobacco products to everyone near and far. The family has enjoyed being a staple and hopes to spend many more years serving the community on the Kahlua colored waters of the St. Francis River.



Open 365 Days a Year



Michelle's Excavating

CELEBRATING 33 YEARS OF SERVICE

Michelle's Excavating Inc. was born in 1992 out of Michelle Rushing's determination and a love of construction sparked by her father.

When Michelle's father formed a concrete business, a young Michelle got a first-hand look at how contracting companies operate and learned many meaningful lessons. One of the lessons her father taught her, to not be timid about trying anything she wanted to achieve, led her to pursue her dreams of owning her own excavating company.

In mid-1991, Michelle made the decision to meet with a local bank about starting her own contracting business. By November of the same year, she was actively pursuing her dream with the earning of her contractor's license.

Her first job in 1992 was no easy task, but Michelle was not afraid of the hard work ahead. She purchased some used and new equipment and got to work. With the help of her 6-man crew comprised of past colleagues, the first job of Michelle's Excavating was complete.

The first year of business was slowed by rain, but Michelle never gave up or lost hope in her company. She pushed forward and eventually began to solicit private dirt work on federally-funded road projects. She was encouraged even more to continue her business when she finally received recognition for the quality of the company's work and was asked to take on larger projects within the community.

The expansion of Michelle's Excavating has been a slow and difficult process, but it has been rewarding for Michelle to follow her dreams. When things get tough, Michelle never pulls away and instead pours more into the company and finds new ways to help it succeed.

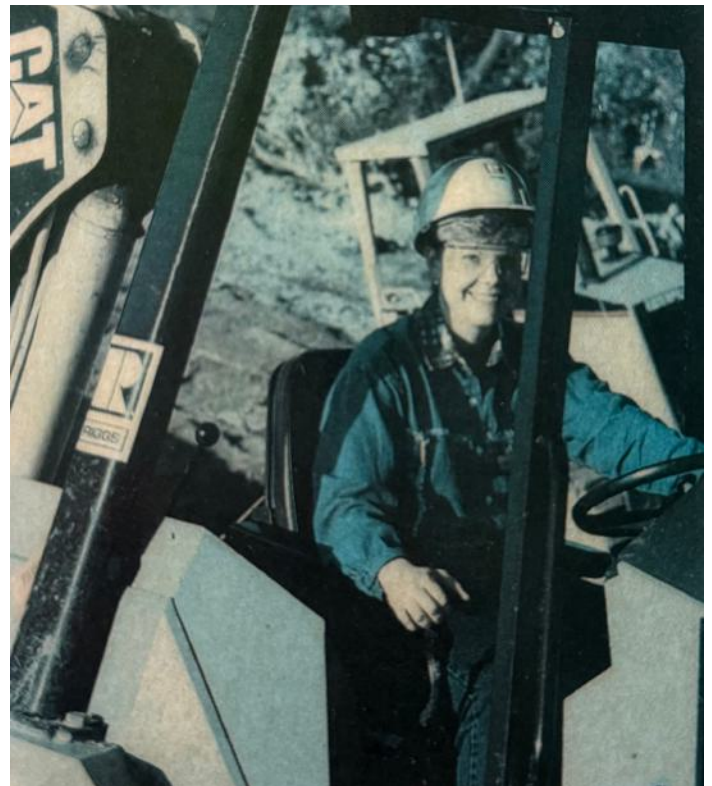
Even as a busy business owner, Michelle never lets her family fall to the

back. She believes it is important to still be present with her children and husband regardless of what the company is going through, but owning a family business has its challenges. Michelle said family meals still often turn into company decisions and her marriage often feels a bit of stress from 24/7 work conversations and no time to rest or relax since they have both taken up positions within the company.

Michelle said when the company began at her family farm on Highway 351, she moved an office trailer to their house so she could work and still be a part of her children's lives.

That office trailer, much like the company, continued to grow with many expansions and additional buildings added to the mix. The next big step came with the decision to move the operation to Brookland. "We bought out R&B paving," she said. "It was a big step – purchasing equipment, an office and shop."

In 1996, Michelle's goal was to see the company continue to grow and it has done just that. In 2004, Michelle's Excavating was awarded an asphalt job in which they would need to purchase an asphalt paver. In their first year with a paver, they laid 1,500 tons of asphalt. In 2024 they successfully laid 40,000 tons of asphalt with a new paver which cost the company \$550,000, showcasing a massive growth for the company.



870-239-4913

10134 Hwy. 49B Brookland, AR

Mon-Fri: 8am - 5pm



Michelle said it has been a privilege to help develop areas of the community. One notable job is the work her company did for the Paragould Airport which included taxiways, hangers and more, as well as helping with the building of the Paragould Sports Complex.

Michelle and her determined spirit provide a guide for anyone wishing to start their own business. She said it is important to expand your reach and consider other types of work to help a business grow. "Diversity is needed to succeed long term," she said. "After focusing our first 10 years on dirt work, we saw the vision to expand into laying asphalt. It was a very good thing for us." Michelle said it is crucial, when starting a construction company, to have a game plan and a roster of team players including a banker, insurance and bonding company, a C.P.A, an office manager and crew supervisors. She said most importantly to do your best.

"Be forgiving to yourself," she said. "Obstacles will pop up – handle them and get back on track. Delay is not defeat."



Determined to Be the Best



Chuck's RV

CELEBRATING 29 YEARS OF SERVICE

Chuck's RV has been supplying dependable recreational vehicles and services to Arkansas since July of 1996. Today, Chuck's legacy lives on through his family's dedication to the business.

Originally involved in full-time flooring while dabbling in buying and selling trailers on the side, Chuck Guthrie had no issue switching gears to full-time when he was presented with the opportunity to purchase his friend's RV dealership.

The business, Austin RV, provided Chuck with the inventory he needed to open up his own RV sales business in Corning, fittingly named Chuck's RV. Later on, Chuck decided to purchase the original site of Austin RV, as well, and transform that space into the current Paragould home of Chuck's RV.

Jason Guthrie said the process of his father's opening Chuck's RV was not an easy one and had very little return for the first several years.

"Financial setbacks, medical disasters that took Chuck away from the business for extended lengths of time and general learning curves of the business were all difficulties," he said. "But as a family, we worked through them."

In 2012, Chuck's wife, Sandy, and Jason took over Chuck's RV as 50/50 partners, keeping the business in the family, something they hope to see continue. All members of Chuck's immediate family have worked in the business. After Chuck's passing in 2023, Sandy, Jason and Cody have continued to serve the customers of Chuck's RV.

Others who have and currently work for the business as service technicians and office personnel are like family. Jason said although they are not blood relatives, they have quickly become part of the Chuck's RV family and often attend family parties and celebrations.

Chuck's RV specializes in sales and service of towable fifth wheels and trailers and does so with friendly, reliable customer service – something the company takes great pride in and does so regardless of whether the customer is buying new, pre-owned or needs their RV serviced.

Owning Chuck's RV has come with positives and some negatives for the family. Jason said he enjoys having an established customer base



and taking care of their needs, but he often finds himself working long, difficult hours.

"I have worked at home on weekends, carried a laptop on family vacations to be able to work on vacation, checked and answered emails while sitting on a deer stand and ordered service parts from my phone while laying on a bed in the emergency room," he said.

Jason and his family's dedication to their customers runs deep. He said it is a humbling feeling to realize the number of customers they have, especially repeat customers who have grown to be more like family.

"It really touches my heart when a customer stops in just to say hi," he said. "Or around the holidays drops off a small gift and especially when tragedy hits and you get words of comfort or they show up to show you how much a customer turned friend truly cares."

Jason said when opening and running a business, it is important to research, plan and be ready for the unexpected.

"Just when you think you have it figured out, it changes and you're back to the drawing board," he said. "Don't let the setbacks discourage you to the point of quitting."

From the Chuck's RV family: Thank you for the last 29 years. Thank you for the friends and memories we've made. We look forward to making many more happy campers and campers happy!

870-236-8200

3301 Linwood Dr, Paragould

chucksrvsales.com

Lance Beasley Roofing



CELEBRATING 23 YEARS OF SERVICE

Since opening in 2002, Lance Beasley Roofing has spent 23 years dedicated to repairing and replacing residential and commercial roofs.

Lance and Mary Beasley began the process of creating their business to fill a void within Paragould and contribute to the ever-growing community. Once they replaced their first roof, they were hooked regardless of how difficult the job can be.

Mary said she and Lance work stressful and very long hours, but it is all worth it to create something beautiful and long-lasting for their customers.



"Yes, we take our work home and, yes, we work long hours, but those extra hours and extra conversations have made us who we are and helped us become successful," Lance said.

Lance Beasley Roofing now supplies all roof types from shingle to metal for its customers, many of which have come back time and time again.

In 2022, Lance and Mary decided to expand their family business with the addition of their daughter, Taylor, as business manager. Now, they all serve the community together.

The Beasley family considers themselves blessed to be able to serve Paragould and cherishes the customers, suppliers and vendors who have become their lifelong friends.

"Paragould and NEA is a community like no other," Mary said. "Being able to contribute to its thriving is the very least we can do."

The Beasleys are especially proud to be a part of projects that support the community, such as the new pavilion added at the Paragould Community Center near the playground.



Lance said if anyone wants to start out in the construction business, it's important to do the work yourself first and learn everything you can about the manual labor side and be an involved boss.

"Don't just become a boss that can quote, but a boss that knows firsthand how to fix any issues that may arise," he said.

The Beasley family of businesses also includes Beasley Contracting, LLC, a general contracting company that holds unlimited licensing for all commercial work in Arkansas.

870-476-1919

4707 #2 West Kingshighway, Paragould

Monday-Friday
9am -5:30pm



Forbs Tire

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SERVICE



When Kenny Forbs started Forbs Tire, he literally built the business from nothing. His sweat equity has more than paid off, though.

"I started it out over at Mr. T's in 2000," he said. "I started it with \$2,000 and an old beat-up truck that burnt oil. I worked daylight 'til dark, seven days a week, 'til I built up where I'm at now."

After 14 years, he moved to his current location, at 3083 Greene 905 Road off Highway 135. He said the growth of his business led him to need to open a shop.

"I just kept getting bigger and bigger," he said. "I couldn't just do it out of the truck anymore. The demand was there, more or less."

That demand came in all sizes.

"I specialize in pretty much anything from lawnmower tires all the way up to OTR, which is your loaders and big construction equipment," he said. "We do combines and tractors and everything. If it rolls, we mess with it."

He said his dad, Lester Forbs, who passed away on February 7th, led him into the

business. "He was who got me started in all this, more or less," Kenny said.

In 1985, his dad was the manager for McCall Tire and Kenny worked with him there for 10 years after he graduated high school. Then after he went out on his own and started Forbs Tire, his dad ended up working with him in the new business.

"He worked for me probably five to six years and kind of coached me through a little bit," Kenny said. "He worked and he said, 'One of the days I'm gonna quit you.' I said, 'OK.' He just kept lingering on and lingering on and

870-215-6991

3083 GR 905 Rd., Paragould

forbstireservice.com



he kept showing up. I said, 'I thought you were quitting.' He said, 'I ain't got nothing else to do, I thought I'd just come here and sit.' It's an experience to work with your family, especially when you're that close."

Kenny said he is thankful for his loyal customer base that has helped his business grow the past 25 years.

"Southeast Missouri and Northeast Arkansas have been great to me," he said. "The farmers have been tremendous for me. I'd say that's probably 80 percent of my business is the farmers. I like the big stuff. I like the challenge."

He said he plans to stay in the business until the day he can't do it anymore. "It's physical labor. It makes it tough some days. Your body doesn't work it like it did when it was 22, 23 years old, but somehow I manage."



But, Kenny said, when you own a business it isn't just something you do, it is who you are.

"You live it. You take it home with you," he said. "You're always thinking of a better way to do things, to be more profitable, and to make it easier on everyone else."

And of course, in the business of getting people back on the road or back in the field, there is extra satisfaction for Kenny and his crew.

"I've always enjoyed it," he said. "I love to help people and make sure they get on their merry way without any troubles."

He is known for going the extra mile to take care of his customers. "Even on weekends. If they call, I still go out. I'm just about a 24-7 guy. I can't say no."



Tractor, Truck & Passenger Tires



Oldham Law Firm

CELEBRATING 23 YEARS OF SERVICE

Oldham Law Firm was founded on June 1st, 2002, by Chad Oldham, who had graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 2001 and earned his master's of law with emphasis in estate planning at the University of Missouri in Kansas City.

"The firm has always specialized in estate planning and elder law," Chad said. "We also do a lot of small business work and real estate work."

The firm got its start at 2201 Fair Park Blvd. in an office suite inside the then American State Bank building, where Chad was working as a trust, investments and insurance officer, as well as starting his solo practice.

"At night, most often, after business hours, I was drafting wills and trusts and other estate planning documents," he said. The office remained there until April of 2006 when the firm moved to its current location at 603 Southwest Drive, where it has been located almost 20 years.

The firm has three full-time employees, including Officer Manager Julia Gray, who has been with the company for approximately 15 years. Kim Tate serves as receptionist and secretary, and Erin Hodges serves as assistant paralegal.

"My wife, Tiffany, and I are both practicing attorneys and she helps out at the firm sometimes, but she also has full-time employment outside of the firm," Chad said, as he discussed life as a sole practitioner.

"I always thought I had the ability and given the type of law that we practice, it lends itself to a solo practice," he said.

For most of the 23 years, Chad has been the only attorney at Oldham Law Firm, but he has often still had a peer to bounce things off at the office.

"For many of the last 15 last years there has been another attorney in the office; they're not part of the firm, but we space share and sometimes employee share," he said. "At points and periods of time when we didn't have other lawyers in the office, I would miss the camaraderie and the ability to bounce ideas off people."

Chad discussed the evolution of the practice in recent years.

"More and more of our efforts have been focused in the area of asset protection with the ever-increasing rise in cost of skilled nursing care," he said. "More and more families are faced with that realization, and at an average cost statewide now of approximately \$9,000 per month that is at the forefront of many people's concerns as they think

to their senior years and growing old. The demand for that sort of work dictates what we do here."

He said there have been a lot of changes over the past 23 years, especially with technological advances. "Eight years ago we initiated online filing throughout the 2nd Judicial District," he said.

There have also been new courtrooms, new courthouses, new judges and new legislatures. "The law is always evolving and changing," he said.

He did note that the work his practice does has been more consistent than some other areas. "The area of law that I find myself in for the most part has stayed rather constant, but it still changes."

He noted, for instance, that changes in the law offer protections for the family home, motor vehicle and up to \$150,000 for the spouse. "The biggest challenge is overcoming vast misconceptions and bad information," he said. After that, he said following the old adage of an ounce of prevention is key. "Proper planning is the order of the day," he said. "Folks need to contemplate, consider and take action. If the good Lord blesses us with a long life, then statistically, ultimately, we will all need some level of care."

As the firm has grown and needs have evolved, Chad said it has also begun to engage in trust and estate litigation

"As I've aged and been involved with families throughout the years, I've seen a lot of that," he said. "For better or worse, there will always be discourse and disagreements among family and that gives way to that sort of litigation, so we find ourselves engaged in that sort of work as well.

"We still do some family law stuff, as well as small business formation and consultation and real estate work," he added, "but estate planning, elder law and probate is the focal point of the practice."



870-930-9919

603 Southwest Dr., Jonesboro

oldhamlawfirm.us

Georgious Custom Jewelry Designs

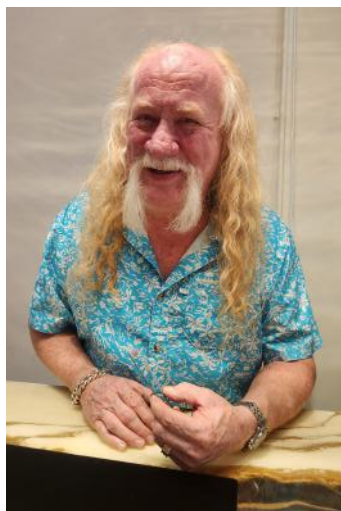


CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

When George and Denise Gotcher relocated from Texas to Arkansas for him to work for Sissy's Log Cabin as a Master Jeweler it could be described as a step out on faith. They took another step 10 years ago when George decided to start his own business.

In March of 2015, the couple established GDCG Jewelry, which was just their initials, and people were tracking them down at their home wanting George to do work for them.

As the business developed, they formed an LLC in May of 2016, and Georgious Custom Jewelry Designs was born, with the name symbolizing that George created pieces that were beyond gorgeous, they were Georgious!



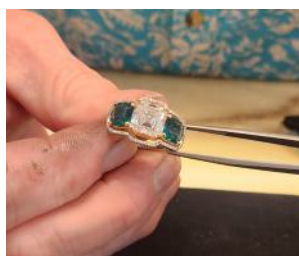
In October of 2017, they leased a small corner space on Union in Downtown Jonesboro, but had their eyes open for a larger storefront. That opportunity presented itself in September of 2020, when their current location at 308 S. Main Street became available.

"We will have been at this location five years in September," Denise said, noting that the evolution happened naturally. "When he started working at the house, he

said, 'I've got to build a shop.' He had so many clients who contacted him for custom jobs, so he outgrew the home shop quick. He grew fast."

But the transition wasn't without difficulties. Even showing the income from the years of renting, when it was time to purchase their current location, it took nine months to get a loan.

"Mark Morrow with Arvest Bank took a risk," Denise said, noting they have also invested much into the building with extensive remodeling. "Every year that we've had this building our sales have grown. February, March and April of this year were our best months in the five years."



Approximately 90 percent of the sales at Georgious Custom Jewelry Designs are brand new builds designed by

George and his customers. One of his favorite things to do is repurpose old pieces.

"Taking a barn door and turning it into a dinner table," George said as he discussed his work to use old pieces, often heirlooms, to create new jewelry. "The best thing to do is when a young person comes in and they have all their grandmother's or families' jewelry and they find a mounting somewhere, could be at another store, and they take a picture and bring it to me and ask, 'Can you do this?'"



He said in addition to reusing the stones, he also encourages the customers to reuse the gold. "I'll add some stones to it, or we'll omit some, but they get what they want, and you can't beat that."

Denise, who recently retired after 26 years in the commercial insurance business, said she is happy to be able to be at the store full-time now, though she was already very involved behind the scenes.

"This has been very rewarding," she said. "The people here kept us here. The last 10 years have been nothing but growth and improvement. We love Jonesboro. We've made so many friends who are like family."

While the business has seen much success over the past 10 years, for George, it is about making jewelry and building relationships, more than it is about making money.

"There's not much that I turn down," he said. "People come in with a clock or a piece of costume jewelry, a piece of lead, that means something to them, I try to fix it for them, because I know what it means to them. To me to get it fixed and see that smile, I live for that smile, that tear and that hug, that's me, that's better than money."





NEA Signs

CELEBRATING 13 YEARS OF SERVICE



Founded in 2012, NEA Signs in Paragould is more than a sign shop, and owners Josh and Brandy Rogers strive to provide their customers with everything they need to brand their business.

"As a full-service sign shop, we are committed to providing marketing solutions for local NEA business through signs, banners and other advertising materials," Josh said. "Your success is our success, so when you partner with us, you choose a team that cares."

While NEA Signs has proudly served the residents of the Paragould area for all their sign-related needs for the past 13 years, the company's reach has grown to become a sign company and commercial contractor in five states.

"We pride ourselves on a strong work ethic and always put our clients first," Josh said. "We offer our clients top quality at competitive rates. Our experience easily qualifies us to meet the needs of businesses, both small and large, with the best customer service around!"

Josh said his family, team at NEA Signs and the support from the community are what he credits for the company's success. "I couldn't do it without my family and exceptional employees," he said.

For those interested in taking their marketing to the next level, NEA Signs is available for consultations.

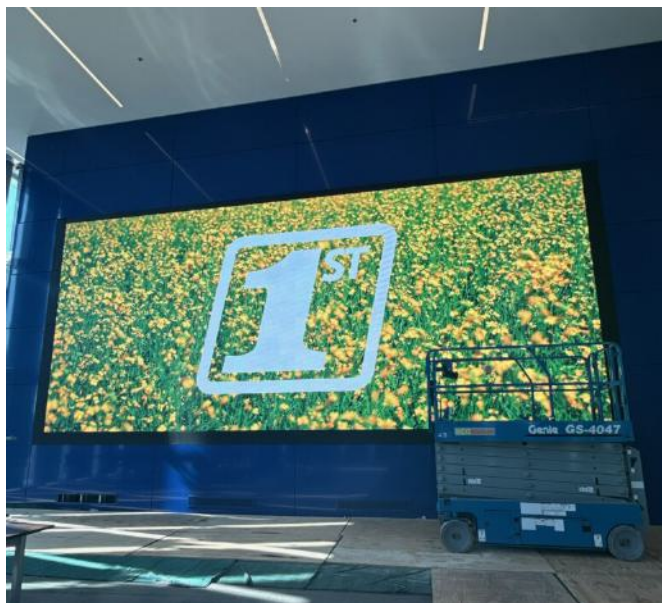
"We'll strategize with you on commercial signs, banners, and other media to promote your brand and message," Josh said. "As we've stated before, your success is our success and we love to see our clients in Northeast Arkansas and beyond thrive!"



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WHY CHOOSE NEA SIGNS?

For any business or organization, having a striking and professional look is key. What better way to make your storefront shine than with a unique custom created sign? Whether you're seeking trendy LED or neon signs, custom signs, awnings, banners or trophies, NEA Signs can do it all!

- Signs are the most impactful way to draw attention to your business. Leave it to NEA Signs to design and install commercial signage that will draw in your customer base.
- Awnings and canopies add style and functionality to your business front. These structures protect your customers from the outdoor elements while creating an inviting entrance.
- At NEA Signs we offer digital printing services to expand your logo and branding on all types of media including signs, banners, flyers and more!
- Honor achievements and milestones for schools, sports, the work place and more through custom engraved trophies and plaques by NEA Signs.

Your Full-Service Sign Shop



Lennox Insurance

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Lennox Insurance opened its doors in February of 2016 with one goal in mind: to help the community with its insurance needs. Now, the business is thriving and specializes in personal, commercial and life insurance.

Holden and Jordan Smith, owners of Lennox Insurance, have worked tirelessly to support their family-owned business and build it from the ground up.

Holden said the process of opening a business was an interesting and difficult experience that no one could have truly prepared him for. He said it took so much more than expected to start a successful business from scratch.

Originally located at 1905 Linwood Drive, the company has since moved into a more fitting space at 113 W. Court Street in Paragould. Here, Holden, Jordan, and their family work to grow their business and provide a unique mix of local feel and modern insurance sales techniques.

"It is a very delicate balance, but we feel like we manage it well and that our clients agree," Holden said.

Holden said the difference in their family business from their first day versus their 10th year is astounding. He said now, their brand has become recognizable within the community – a huge step in the right direction.

"You don't realize when you open a business just how many times you will have to introduce yourself and how many people will say, 'I am sorry, you are who? And you're from where?' I will never forget the first time I went into my spiel about who we were and someone said, 'It's okay, I know who you guys

are," he said. "It was such a relief."

Work doesn't stop at the doors for the family of Lennox Insurance. They often find themselves discussing work at home and even during holidays, reliving the successes and losses of the business.

"Having a family business is a lot like having another child," Holden said. "You're proud of it when it does well, and you're disappointed in yourself when it fails at something. It is definitely a roller coaster."

Holden said when operating a business, owners should embrace every moment, good or bad and learn to enjoy the journey. He said it is important to remember every company has its ups and downs, it's just easier to see when it's your own.

"Some days are going to be absolutely awful. Other days, you will think you have it all figured out. Both times, you will be wrong. It's never as bad as you think, and you never have it as dialed in as you think," he said. "Learn to embrace it and enjoy it no matter what part of the journey you are in."

Overall, owning a family business has been rewarding for Lennox Insurance, and they look forward to the new clientele they will receive in the years to come, as well as continuing to serve those who have already entrusted them with their insurance.



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Goals For Good

Supporting the Community One Kick at a Time

Thore Cardinal Von Widdern, a Greene County Tech High School junior and exchange student from Germany with the AYA (Academic Year Abroad) program, organized and hosted a community service project this spring to support local school counselors' efforts to provide for the needs of their students.

Goals for Good included a kick-a-thon fundraiser that culminated with a community celebration on Saturday, May 3rd, at the Paragould Community Center soccer fields. AYA and the Greene County Soccer

Association partnered to help Thore realize his goal to raise funds as well as collect food and hygiene items for the local school districts. Several area businesses also sponsored the event by making donations to help out or to support the schools.

The May 3rd event included games and activities, refreshments and a community leaders kickoff. The Paragould Police Department won the kickoff. There was also a donation drop off point, and numerous door prizes were given away.



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT



THE ADVENTURES OF

Lester

BY VICKI McMILLAN



Hello all, Lester here! Can you believe it's June already? The months are just like a herd of horses — THEY'RE OFF!! Being incarcerated at the Jonesboro Dog Jail, I did not see many horses.

Occasionally a horse trailer would speed by with a horse tail hanging out the back - which always made me wonder about the horse. Did he race, did he pull a plow or was he headed to the glue factory?

When I found my forever home, I got to see more horses. Vicki and I would drive to work at Batesville, through Cave City, and there was a beautiful paint that always greeted us at the fence. And Mrs. Holly Fletcher and her husband Ken had pretty horses that we'd visit.



Then one day while we were in Louisville, Kentucky, we went to Churchill Downs. It was not Derby Day or even a race day, but we toured the museum. We saw trophies and artifacts from some of the greatest horses in the world: Secretariat, American Pharoah and a bunch of others.

Then you'll get to see the racetrack, the stables, and the dedicated folks who take care of these special horses. And they have several stable dogs that help, too! Isn't that great? After all of this sight-seeing, we

were ready for a mint julep and a hot brown, which are available at the Derby Café. (Unfortunately, all yours truly got was a bowl of water, but I was at CHURCHILL DOWNS!!!) On the way to the car, stop by the Finish Line Gift Shop and buy something horsey.

A little closer to home, Vassar House at Belle Meade held its first Kentucky Derby Day. It was a day filled with big hats, horse races, mock mint juleps and ribbons.

You'll just have to trust Ol' Lester when I tell you this: The Elders raced their horses on TOILET PAPER. Yes, like Charmin or the cheap stuff we bought during Covid. They would unroll a section of toilet paper and put their horse on the end. Then when the starter's pistol went off, the Elders would roll the toilet paper toward them, whichever horse got over the finish line first was the winner. By the way, Mr. Gilbert Rainey and his plastic horse Smokey won the inaugural Vassar House Kentucky Derby. I'd have to say, a good time was had by all.

If you take a drive in the country in Northeast Arkansas, you can see some beautiful horses, like at the Brengard horse farm, and others.

Well, I need to trot off (see what I did there). Fill your pockets with carrots and apples and find you some friendly horses!



Tally ho!
Lester

MOORE on MANNERS

Celebrating Father's Day

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE



Many historians attribute Father's Day to Sonora Smart Dodd. It was in 1909, while listening to a Mother's Day sermon, that Mrs. Dodd thought about honoring her father. Mrs. Dodd's father, William Smart, was a Civil War veteran who raised six children after his wife died.

In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge recognized the idea of Father's Day. However, it was not until 1966 that President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the proclamation that declared the third Sunday in June as "Father's Day." In 1972 President Nixon issued a Presidential Proclamation assuring annual recognition of Father's Day.

Quote of the Day:

A Dad's Take On How To Diaper A Baby:
"Spread the diaper in the position of the diamond with you at bat. Then fold second base down to home and set the baby on the pitcher's mound. Put first base and third base together, bring up home plate and pin the three together. Of course, in case of rain, you gotta call the game and start all over again."

- Jimmy Piersall, Boston Red Sox,
Baseball Author

If you are honoring your father with a gift this Father's Day, you may want to take into consideration what he would like. Be creative when thinking about that Father's Day treat. Here are a few things to consider:

Is he the outdoor type? Does he enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, backpacking, swimming, skiing or playing golf?

Is he a gourmet chef or a back yard cook? Is he current on the newest gadgets or is he the grand master of the grill? Consider his level of experience and the space for storing equipment.

Are sports and/or fitness gifts of interest to him? Is he interested in tennis or golf? What about a gym membership or home gym equipment?

Does he enjoy reading? What type of book would capture his interest?

Does travel interest him? What would make travel easier for business or pleasure?

What does he need or what would he like in terms of clothing? Don't forget that gift certificates make size, color and style easier for both the buyer and the receiver.

Does he love technology? Finding out if he is low-tech or high-tech is the key to finding the right gift.

What are his tastes in music or movies? Does he like the classics, the standards or the newest, latest, cutting-edge releases?

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Would he simply like to hear from you?

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 lmooreparagould@gmail.com.

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6/21 - Saturday at 1:00pm & 7:00pm *Cinderella Dance Production, Presented by: Cue the Applause, tickets are \$10 at the door, children 2 & under are free*

6/23 - Monday at 7:00pm, *Bluegrass Monday, kasu.org/tickets*

6/28 - Friday at 7:00pm, *Cliff & Susan, Showpass.com/cliffsusan*

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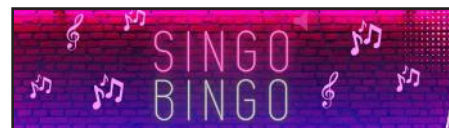
Paint on Pruett
Art Alley
Main Street Paragould Event



June 7th

7:00 p.m.

Downtown After Hours
Music: The Happy Campers
The Station
Main Street Paragould Event



June 12th

7:00 p.m.

Singo Bingo
1812 Pizza Co.
Main Street Paragould Event

*A complete listing of all Downtown events can be found under
"Events" at downtownparagould.com or
facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events.*



June 14th

7:00 p.m.

Downtown After Hours
Music: Erik Trio Band
The Station
Main Street Paragould Event



June 21st

7:00 p.m.

Downtown After Hours
Music: Drive South
The Station
Main Street Paragould Event



June 23rd

7:00 p.m.

Bluegrass Monday
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June 28th

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Downtown After Hours
Music: Everyday Life
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GETTING BACK *On the Horse*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Generally, when we tell someone they need to “get right back on the horse” it’s an admonition to immediately confront some sort of failure and try again. When a real cowboy has to be given that bit of advice it is often a bit harder to complete the task because they’ve actually been tossed, usually with varying degrees of injury.

Marmaduke’s Gary Priest knows first-hand what getting bucked off a horse can mean, and he’s the first to say that getting back in the saddle isn’t the easiest thing to do. “When I first started riding again it was in the back of my mind every time I got on a horse ... ‘Don’t get hurt.’ But it doesn’t keep me from riding when I want to,” he says, thinking back to a life-threatening injury he suffered years ago.

Known fondly to friends and family as Lightnin’, Gary grew up around horses and riders and says “cowboys were just in the family. I had two cousins that rode bulls, one that did horse shows, one was a saddle bronc rider. I’ve always, ever since I was a kid, loved being on a horse. I never could afford one and always had to ride someone else’s. It’s the freedom. You’re out there among God’s nature.”

“It’s a Priest thing,” his wife, Ida, says. “He used to scare me to death, doing things like night riding with no phone. But that’s just what he loved to do. In the summertime I would never see him. He was either at a horse show or trailriding. At family reunions they would sit around swapping horse stories.”

That affinity for horses and riding and the rodeo life led him to begin taking part in the National Chuckwagon Races in Clinton, Arkansas, an event that draws more than 20,000 spectators and participants



annually. But in his last performance, things didn’t go as planned.

“It was September 3rd, 2000,” both Ida and Lightnin’ say with great recollection, but he remembers only part of what transpired. “I was the outrider for a chuckwagon team,” he said. “He has to be in front of the wagon before it gets to the finish line. You’re running wide open, hammer down. The horse I usually used had taken sick and they brought me a horse I was not familiar with and the last I remember I took the reins, and whipped it a bit and he bucked me off ... wide open.”

Ida, back home attending the county fair beauty contest with their daughter, Shelly, had actually had a bad feeling about her husband’s taking part that day to begin with. “I remember that day,” she said. “I woke up with a feeling and I said, ‘Don’t ride.’ But he said, ‘I’m gonna win’ and then, sure enough ... I told you so.”

Now 73, Lightnin’ said much of the accident is fuzzy and many parts of it have simply been told to him. Being thrown at full speed with a loaded wagon bearing down from behind represents danger at its highest degree. Ida took the phone call here and tried to keep her composure. “He hit the ground they said and he just laid there,” she remembers. “I was here at the Greene County Fair and they called me

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and asked if they could airlift him and of course I said yes. Then I took off and we met them at UAMS; it was a long ride."

For Lightnin's part, he relies more on what he's been told as well. "They said I died twice before we got to the hospital," he explained. "My heart quit. I had a severe head injury, broken ribs, collarbone, punctured lungs. I don't remember lots of things about it and I don't remember everything right like I should just day to day. But I'm still here."

Ida said making it through the ordeal has certainly given her a greater appreciation of life itself. "The doctor I met with said he would probably not make it," Ida recalls of one of the first hospital visits. "I sent word home and people started praying all over the United States. He was on everybody's prayer list everywhere. This team of doctors I had discussions with would say, 'We're trying' and I said, 'Please don't let him die.' He was in the hospital 16 days, like in a coma. He went to Baptist Rehab about four weeks and then life began again."

"I didn't feel necessarily scared about him being on horses again because I knew that was such a big part of his life, but they said if he got another head injury he would die, so I said, 'No more chuckwagons.' And that was that."

"I did it for three years; that's all I can remember," Lightnin' says of the Chuckwagon races. "I sold out of horses last year ... the farm, the horses, the trailer. Due to my surgeries I don't ride any more. Of all the crazy things I've done in life, there's no adrenaline rush like the Chuckwagon. You go back in time a hundred years. I have good memories, especially of riding with my grandkids. And Shelly rode with me, too. But my memory isn't what it is supposed to be."

One thing he is certain about is how he got his nickname. When he was just a boy he was hanging around a shop when the owner asked



him to retrieve a particular wrench for him. "So I sauntered over there to get it," he explains, "then I sauntered back with it taking my nice easy time and he said, 'Well, don't hurt yourself there, Lightnin'.' And it stuck. And I love it."

In addition to riding, he helped build the Marmaduke Arena, was active in The Marmaduke Western Club, and organized "all kinds of events for kids to take part in. We really tried to make it a family event, and maybe let someone learn to love horses and riding as much as I did. The memories I have, they're almost all good ones."



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Mother's Day

TEA TIME AT THE BUNGALOWS



The Bungalows' annual Mother's Day Tea included mothers, daughters, granddaughters, sisters and friends. The oldest mother, Eutha Bankston, 104 years old, was recognized, along with Roma Richardson for having the most children. She has six. The color theme was sage green and dusty pink. Party favors were made by our lady residents. Appetizers of cubed cheese, crackers, grapes and cheesecake bites were served, as well as various flavors of tea. The ladies played Tea Party Bingo and discussed questions that caused everyone to reminisce about their childhood, youth and motherhood.



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SUBMITTED BY DR. CRISTINA ROSCA
ST. BERNARDS GERIATRICS SPECIALIST

Aging brings change — some expected, others surprising. In fact, what worked a decade ago may not work today. To undergo healthy aging, it requires a proactive approach that recognizes how our physical, mental and emotional needs evolve. At St. Bernards Senior Health Clinic, we believe that getting older doesn't mean slowing down. It means choosing care that helps us preserve what we have, regain what we lost and most importantly, live well.

Caring for seniors differs from younger adults. Each new year might bring new challenges, like memory loss, frailty, balance problems, medication side effects and chronic conditions like arthritis, diabetes or high blood pressure. These changes demand specialized knowledge and a compassionate, whole-person approach. That's where geriatric medicine comes in.

Geriatricians are specially-trained physicians who examine how aging affects every system of the body. They work alongside therapists, nurses, social workers and case managers to assess each patient's needs and help them maintain independence. They may serve as or supplement a primary care doctor, or they can consult with other specialists to identify potential issues early — before they become serious.

Still, we recognize that seniors often need even more advanced care options.


With a growing prevalence of Alzheimer's and other dementia cases nationwide, St. Bernards emphasizes early and accurate diagnosis. Neuropsychological and genetic testing as well as serological markers can show early signs of disease. In addition, we provide the latest disease-modifying treatments, like Leqembi® and Kisunla™, targeting Alzheimer's at its earliest stages, potentially even reversing harmful brain changes.

Beyond medication, we offer a full support system: social work, neuropsychology and psychiatry as well as cognitive therapy classes in collaboration with Arkansas State University. Our overall vision of a Mind and Memory Wellness Center will expand these services even further.

But healthy aging isn't just about the mind — it's also about staying physically strong and emotionally connected. Fall prevention is key, and we work with physical therapy and rehabilitation partners to improve strength and balance. Emotional support is equally vital. Seniors often face loneliness or depression, and our clinic helps connect them with housing, transportation, support groups and social opportunities.

Our services extend beyond the clinic. We see patients at home when transportation is an issue, provide dementia care in assisted living facilities and partner with specialists in internal medicine, radiology, geriatric psychiatry and more. Whether patients come to us directly or are referred by another provider, we offer collaborative, individualized care to support even the most complex cases.

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Ombudsmen Advocating for patients in long-term care



Tamika Jones - Volunteer Coordinator, June Johnson, Bennie Ousley, Jerlene Duncan

The East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging works tirelessly to connect seniors, caregivers, the disabled and other diverse communities with resources and personalized services throughout the state. Initiatives such as the Ombudsman Program help the agency grow ever closer to completing that mission.

Ombudsmen serve as advocates for residents in long-term care facilities and work to make their lives easier through investigating, reporting on and settling any complaints a resident may have. These advocates work

to ensure each client receives the best care possible and their voice is heard.



Elvin Smith

The EAAAA Ombudsman Program also includes a current set of six integral volunteers. These volunteers make regular visits to their assigned facility to educate residents on the program. Region III Ombudsmen Elvin Smith said being a volunteer means forming a friendship with clients while acting as the eyes and ears to the Regional Ombudsman to ensure every

client is happy with the care they are receiving. Tamika Jones, volunteer program coordinator for EAAAA, echoed this sentiment.

"Residents need advocates to be their voice, their eyes, their ears," she said. "Especially when they've already gone through so much. Someone advocating for them has the ability to help make things a tad bit easier."

Due to the pandemic, the number of volunteers within the EAAAA program has dwindled. Elvin said he hopes to see those numbers begin to increase to provide a volunteer in every facility.

Bennie Ousley, a volunteer for 15 years, said the Ombudsman Volunteer program has been rewarding. He especially enjoys meeting with the residents, who have come to look forward to his visits.

"When I walk into the facility, the residents are happy," he said. "This brings joy to my heart and puts a smile on my face."

Due to his many years of positive experiences, Bennie said he absolutely recommends that anyone interested in the program consider becoming a volunteer.

For more information on volunteering with the Ombudsman Program, contact Tamika Jones via email at tjones@eaaaa.org or by phone at 870-930-2235.

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Meet The Staff OF JONESBORO QC KINETIX

Kaytlyn Ferguson

Kaytlyn, who was born and raised in Bono, where she still lives, is a 2018 graduate of Westside High School. She works at the front desk at QC Kinetix. She is also a licensed aesthetician, and owns her own business to utilize those skills.

REGENERATE



She came to QC Kinetix with previous office experience at her parents' business, Denver's Refrigeration, but said she also likes the restorative measures that the clinic provides without using drugs or surgery. "I think it's a very cool science that is going to really expand in the upcoming years," she said.

Kaytlyn has two dogs, Hades and Athena, and likes to play video games and hang out with her boyfriend. She said she is very family oriented and loves to travel, with her next trip planned to Cancun.

Erin Stovall

Erin, a native of Detroit who now lives in Jonesboro, serves as medical assistant, phlebotomist and specimen processor at QC Kinetix. A graduate of Westside Christian Academy in Detroit, she served 15 years in the U.S. Navy, then attended Virginia College and earned her LPN license, as well as multiple certifications including medical assistant and phlebotomy, and an associates in office management.



Having been through an ACL replacement and a left rotator cuff repair, she said offering options other than surgery and opioids is what drew her to QC Kinetix. "I just liked what they have going on," she said. "It's just using ourselves to heal ourselves. I think that's really awesome."

Erin and her husband, who is originally from Jonesboro, have three children, 21, 18 and 9, one a college grad, one a high school grad and one still in elementary. She said she likes to read and travel. She also has what she refers to as "a crazy infatuation with sneakers."

Lisa Sherrill

Lisa, who has lived in Hardy since the age of 8, is a graduate of Highland High School. Serving as nurse practitioner at QC Kinetix, she earned her RN degree in 1993 from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro and then went back for her masters and completed her APRN in 2006.

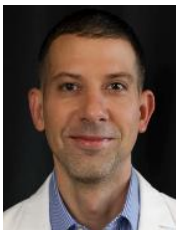


After moving back from living briefly in Florida, Lisa was looking for a local job when the opportunity at QC Kinetix caught her eye. "I did a lot of injections in my family clinic before, but I had never done regenerative medicine so it really sparked my interest," she said.

Lisa said her life includes a lot of work, as she has three jobs, and her children are grown, but she is engaged and is spending time integrating her life with her soon to be husband, including the four dogs they have between them. She also enjoys traveling, hiking and enjoying the beauty of the outdoors in Arkansas.

Dr. Justin Garzone

Dr. Garzone, medical director for QC Kinetix in Jonesboro, is board-certified in internal medicine and holds fellowships with the American College of Physicians, American College of Osteopathic Internists and the Society of Hospital Medicine.



He received his medical degree from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his internship and residency at St. Michael's Medical Center through Seton Hall University. Dr. Garzone's clinical expertise spans internal, functional, regenerative and anti-aging medicine, as well as critical care, geriatrics, addiction and hospice/palliative care.

He has performed thousands of bone marrow aspirations and joint injections. As a principal investigator in regenerative medicine clinical trials, he plays a key role in advancing the field.

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50 Years Of Veterinary Medicine

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

Dr. Everett Rogers is hanging up his white coat, but his 50 years of service as a veterinarian in Arkansas have left their mark as evidenced by his selection by the Arkansas Veterinary Medical Association as the 2024 Arkansas Veterinarian of the Year.

The honor was presented to Dr. Rogers, who retired at the end of May from the Jonesboro Family Pet Hospital, during the association's winter meeting on Feb. 8th in Hot Springs. The citation reads, "In recognition of your unselfish and untiring efforts on behalf of veterinary medicine. Dr. Rogers is a superb leader, mentor and friend. He has served his profession and association in many ways and we are all better because of him."

"They select one per year," Dr. Rogers said. "It's kind of a once in a lifetime honor."

Veterinarians across the state submit nominees, who then assemble resumes to accompany the nomination for consideration by a committee made up of prior winners.

"I consider it not an award — like if you play really good on a basketball team you're the MVP — it's really not that," he said. "It's based on activities within the community, professional activities within the veterinary community and within the association. Things we all ought to do normally."

He said he was taught by many, including a professor at the University



of Arkansas, Dr. Paul Noland, who was his advisor, teacher, mentor and friend, that helping others went beyond the day-to-day duties of a vet.

"To me it's things I do naturally, going back to what was instilled in me by my parents, to give back to your community," he said. "The late Dr. Robert Fahr (who founded the Paragould Animal Clinic) and the late Dr. James Laird (who took over from him) had the same philosophy of giving back in various ways, so it has been instilled in me from the beginning stages of my life. I try to extend that same philosophy to the young veterinarians that I've come in contact with."

Dr. Rogers said it was a total and absolute shock and humbling experience to receive this award, which is kept a secret from the recipient until it is announced at the banquet. "Everybody from the staff here, my wife and family, they kept it absolutely secret from me," he said.

He said the award was not something he was trying to win, the things he was honored for are just stuff he does naturally.

Having been raised in Greene County on a cattle farm and participated in 4-H and FFA activities, he recalled that when he became a vet he would provide the required testing for the FFA and 4-H kids to show their animals at the fairs at no charge. He was also a charter member of the Greene County 4-H Foundation and served as secretary for 20 years.

That is just one example of the ways Dr. Rogers has given back to his community through the years. In addition, he has been very active in numerous community civic organizations in Northeast Arkansas. He and his wife are active members of First United Methodist Church in Paragould where he teaches an adult Sunday School Class.

Dr. Rogers earned his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, with Honors degree from the University of Arkansas in 19971, then his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Missouri in 1975. He then started his own practice, Rogers Animal Clinic in Paragould, which he sold in 1995 to Dr. Jerry Miller.

"One of the difficulties of the profession is your time is not your own, especially in a mixed animal practice," he said. "I got to feeling guilty that I was not spending as much time with my family as I needed."

His youngest, Casey, was active in 4-H and FFA and he pledged to



spend more time with him. "I could block off time for him and do relief work around his events."

So, he did relief work for almost five years filling in for vets on vacation, which allowed him to set his own schedule and attend livestock shows with his son. During that time, he worked at various clinics in El Dorado, Fort Smith, Trumann, Little Rock, Malvern, Hot Springs and Kennett, Missouri.

He also did some relief work for Jonesboro Family Pet Hospital, and in 2000, they asked him if he would consider taking a full-time position there.

"I thought to myself, let me see ... not have to stay at Motel 6s and be on the road all the time, yeah, I'll take the job."

Dr. Rogers has seen a lot in 50 years of working as a vet, and as he prepared for his retirement, he reflected on the changes the industry has seen during those years, one of which is the movement away from solo-practitioners.

"There are a lot of advantages to working in a multi-person clinic," he said. "It offers better quality of life than a solo practice. Now, very few go out on their own like we did in the '70s and '80s. It was not uncommon for a graduate to go to a community and just open up their own practice and start out from ground zero, and we just don't see that much anymore."

He also noted the change in demographics among veterinarians.

"My class at Missouri, we had 65 in it — 60 of them were hairy-legged guys, we had five women in our class. Today, nationwide of all veterinary students, about 85 percent or so are women. So we have seen a dramatic flip flop in the number of applicants and the number of women in the profession. Which is good. I think it has changed, maybe softened, the profession a little bit. Women tend to have a little gentler personality lots of times than some of us guys do."

That softening undoubtedly helps as Dr. Rogers noted another major change — people's perceptions of their pets.

"Back in the '70s, '80s and before, dogs were in the barn, yard pets. Then they moved to the front porch, and people became a little closer, and that's not to say that we who had pets back in the '60s didn't love and take care of them, yes we did, but there was a line there, they were there, we were here, and then gradually they got kind of moved close to the house under the front porch and so forth, and then another few years go by and they're in the living room and now they're in the bedroom. For many people today, their pet, their dogs or cats and even other pets, exotic pets, are considered a member of the family."

"We used to see it a lot in older people, the empty nest syndrome, you know the last kids move away and then they would become more and more attached to the pets," he continued. "Today we've got a lot of



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Continued ➡



younger people that are for one reason or another delaying having a family, those pets are literally their kids.”

He said there has also been a tremendous change in diagnostic technologies. “Back in the early years, blood work had to be sent to an outside lab or sometimes local hospitals would run them for you on their human platforms. Now we have in-clinic capabilities that can do more than what the human labs could do 20 years ago. So, we can get answers within minutes rather than days.”

There have also been different medications and treatments that have been developed over the years, along with the evolution of care to include pet insurance.

“Graduates now are coming out knowing things that for those of us who graduated in the ‘70s and early ‘80s these things weren’t even known about then. About every three to five years, the amount of information doubles. One of the main reasons we have our annual meeting is to have continuing education to renew our license. It’s hard to keep up with all the new advances.”

As expected, Dr. Rogers has had some unique experiences during his 50 years working as a vet.

“One of the most interesting cases I had early on there was a lady living in Paragould that had a boa constrictor and it kind of got a respiratory infection. One thing about our profession is we as a profession – we’re not so much competitors with each other – we’re more colleagues with each other. One of the strong traits of our profession is that all of us know other veterinarians that we can call — in this case, the veterinarian that worked at the St. Louis Zoo. I called him, and he said give it this and this antibiotic daily and she’d bring that snake in and we’d give it an injection once a day for about 10 days and it got well.”

He also recalled a client who lived in Marmaduke that had a cow that was calving on Christmas Eve. “She couldn’t have it, so I went up on an emergency call, and pulled the calf and it lived and did well and he named it Doc’s Christmas present.”

Growth in opportunities for prospective veterinarians is another change Dr. Rogers has witnessed since the mid 1970s when there were

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around 15 vet schools in the country, with most graduating 65 to 80 students.

"Now 30 vet schools are open and operating, running class sizes of 100 to 150 and more, plus right now we do have 13 schools that are in the process of becoming accredited, needless to say two of them in Arkansas," he said. Dr. Rogers has been an active supporter of the A-State College of Veterinary Medicine, serving on the Dean Search Committee. "I think ASU and Lyon are both projecting starting class sizes of about 100 to 120 a class beginning in 2026. In the near future there are going to be a lot more people graduating than there are now and there's already tremendous more people graduating now than there were several years ago."

Dr. Rogers credits the support and sacrifices of his family: wife, Sandy, and sons, Mike, Brian and Casey, for the ability to reach the 50-year milestone of his career. He said there have also been numerous colleagues and support staff who have been invaluable in helping him to reach this goal. His parting thought is that "I have tried to 'fight the good fight, run the race well and hopefully kept the faith' throughout my 50 years as an active, practicing veterinarian."

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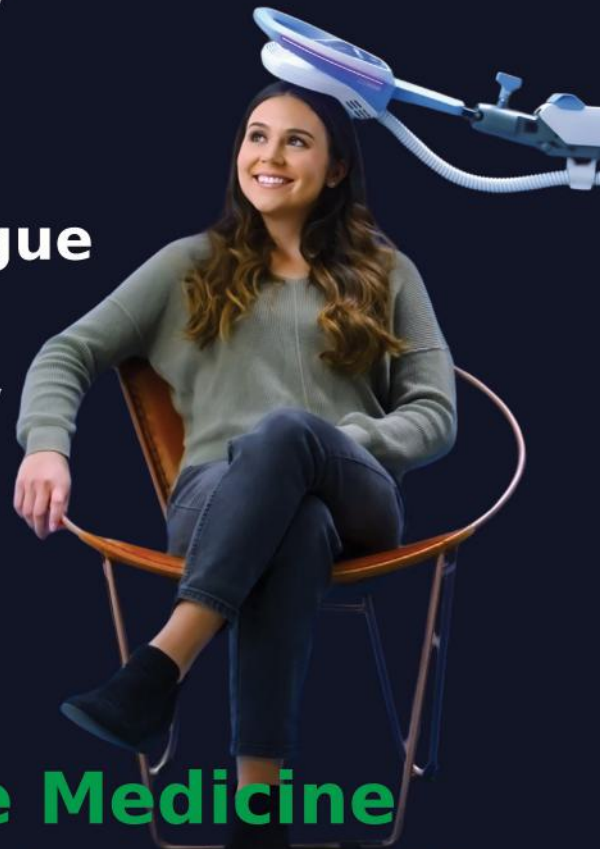
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PHOTOS BY KATIE ROE

ARKANSAS PROGRESSIVE MEDICINE HOSTS LAUNCH PARTY

Arkansas Progressive Medicine hosted a launch party for EXOMIND on Wednesday, May 14th, to introduce the holistic mental wellness treatment. EXOMIND is the first neuro-regenerative and FDA-cleared technology to help with depression, addiction, sleep regulation, binge eating disorder, mental clarity and more. The launch party included specials, giveaways, refreshments and demonstrations at the Arkansas Progressive Medicine clinic, located at 1000 E. Matthews Ave., Ste. E. in Jonesboro.



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Health Matters

BY KARAN SUMMITT

STROKE AWARENESS



Everyone Needs to Know About Strokes

In the world of health awareness, May is Stroke Prevention Month. I know, it's June -- but stroke awareness is a topic worthy of attention at any time of the year. It's also something my family has experienced in an up-close and personal way. Consider a few statistics from the Centers for Disease Control related to this devastating, but not uncommon, health condition:

- In the United States, 1 in 6 deaths (17.5%) from cardiovascular disease was due to stroke.
- Every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a stroke. Every 3 minutes and 11 seconds, someone dies of stroke in this country.
- Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability. Americans spend an average of 45.5 billion on direct and indirect costs of stroke.
- Stroke risk increases with age, but strokes can — and do — occur at any age.

A stroke, sometimes called a brain attack, occurs when something blocks blood supply to part of the brain or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. In either case, parts of the brain become damaged or die. Strokes can cause lasting brain damage, long-term disability, or even death.

High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity and diabetes are leading causes of stroke. One in three U.S. adults has at least one of these conditions or risk factors. If you suffer from high blood pressure, you have a one-and-a-half times higher risk for stroke. The risk is also higher for people who have experienced a previous stroke or who suffer from TIA's -- commonly referred to as mini-strokes.

Family history and ethnicity impact stroke risk. Family members share genes, behaviors, lifestyles and environments that can influence their health and their risk for disease. People who are non-Hispanic Black

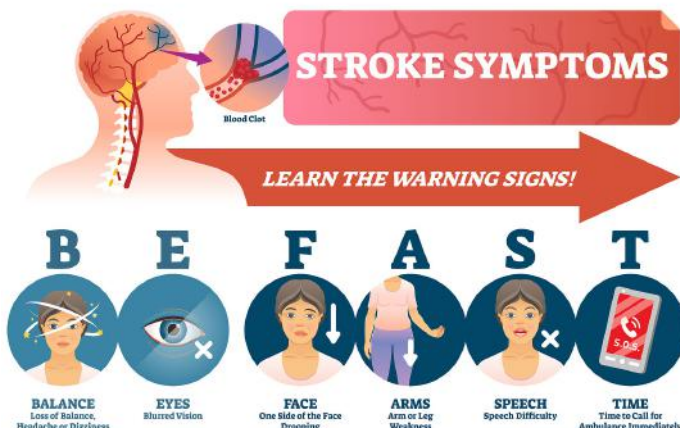


or Pacific Islander are more likely to die from a stroke than people who are non-Hispanic White, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Asian. The risk of having a first stroke is nearly twice as high for Black people as for White people. These sobering numbers can be a combination of genes, lifestyle and access to health education and services.

Common heart disorders can increase your risk for stroke. For example, coronary artery disease increases your risk for stroke, because plaque builds up in the arteries and blocks the flow of oxygen-rich blood to the brain.

Other heart conditions, such as heart valve defects, irregular heartbeat (including atrial fibrillation), and enlarged heart chambers, can cause blood clots that may break loose and cause a stroke. In February of 2014, my 52-year-old brother experienced a serious stroke. Seemingly very healthy, with little medical issues other than allergies to slow him down, Kevin unknowingly had atrial fibrillation. When the chambers of the heart do not beat in sync, blood pools in the lower chambers and can lead to clots that enter the artery system. On a cold, snowy night one such clot found its way to Kevin's brain.

Kevin's wife Laurie, a registered nurse, immediately recognized the

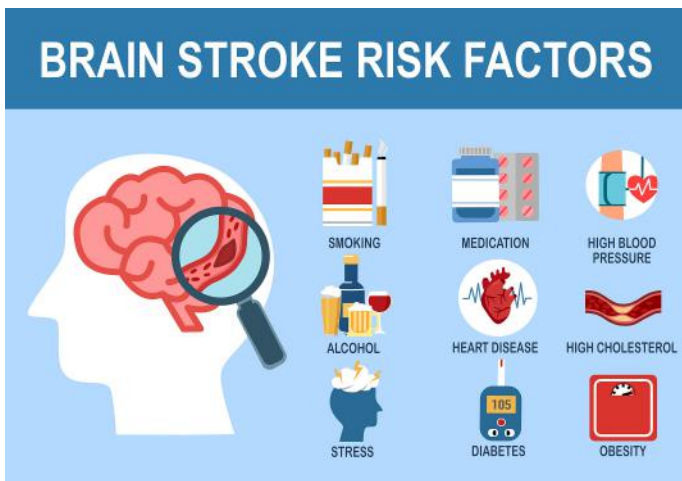


signs of a stroke in Kevin's behavior and called for an ambulance. This step was critical because time is an enemy to stroke recovery. An EMT crew can alert the nearest hospital that a stroke patient is being transported so the medical staff will be ready to assess and begin needed treatments. One such treatment is tissue plasminogen activator (tPA). If a stroke patient arrives at the hospital within three hours of the first signs of an ischemic stroke, where the artery in the brain is blocked, tPA may be able to break up any blood clots and improve the chances of recovery.

Kevin arrived at the hospital in ample time to receive tPA. Due to the seriousness of his stroke, the medication likely saved his life and spared him complete disability. My brother's road to regaining quality of life was long and arduous, and although Kevin did not fully recover all his physical abilities, he is able to enjoy life, especially with three precious grandsons. Laurie has been beside him every step of the way. The stroke was life-changing for both of them, but they are a shining example of faith and perseverance to all who know them.

B.E.F.A.S.T has become the key to recognizing the warning signs of a stroke.

- **B--Balance:** Has the person experienced a sudden loss of balance?
- **E--Eyes:** Ask about vision loss, blurry or double vision problems.
- **F--Face:** Ask the person to smile. Does the mouth droop?
- **A--Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm droop downward?
- **S--Speech:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?
- **T--Time:** If you observe any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately. Be sure and note when the first symptoms occurred.



In Arkansas, we live in a southern band of states called the "stroke belt," so chances are you rub elbows every day with someone who is at risk for a stroke. Maybe you even see their reflection in the mirror each morning.

Stroke prevention saves lives. Knowing the warning signs saves lives. Be informed.

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.



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Taking Time for the Trails

BY KARAN SUMMITT

Monty Williams grew up riding motorcycles, but he doesn't hesitate to tell you a love for horses runs deeply in his DNA. His dad had tried his hand at roping and his grandfather raised Appaloosas. Donna Williams' love for horses included time in younger days spent on the barrel racing circuit.

Monty's own horse story began some 30 years ago when he moved from West Texas to Benton to take a job in the public utilities industry. While there he got involved with a Three-Man Chuckwagon Racing team. The chuckwagon teams included a driver, outrider and cook -- Monty's job. For some 15 years he and his partners would go every other weekend to a different town and participate in races.

Monty met Donna in Clinton, at the National Chuckwagon Race Competition. Donna's husband had passed away, and a compassionate girlfriend invited her to spend the weekend at the races. The friend's son was participating in the competition.

The two women squeezed their camping rig into an open space next to Monty's team. Monty noticed the two ladies were struggling to get the camper leveled and offered his help. Donna traded Monty's assistance for a hot meal, and over the passing of time that chance meeting made its way into a marriage.

Work took Monty from Benton to Northeast Arkansas. After 15 years of racing, chuckwagon competitions were turning into work. The new job meant relocating and finding a new home. When a 40-acre horse farm nestled in the rolling hills of Crowley's Ridge came along at a good price, Monty's DNA for horses was finding a permanent home.

The move to the horse farm is a story in itself. Originally owned by a Jonesboro investor, the 40 acres included beautiful white fenced

Monty & Donna Williams



pastures and two barns. Monty's bachelor pad apartment in one of the barns proved to be too small when the couple married, so Donna set out to turn that barn into a home.

The goal was to retain as much of the character of the original barn as possible. The stalls were turned into bedrooms and an office. The original 2x12 pine walls and vaulted wood ceilings called for an open concept with rustic décor that includes cowhide rugs and farm-themed memorabilia. Even with the necessary addition of a kitchen and bath, the warm, inviting atmosphere of their barn-home blends seamlessly into its surroundings. An original garage door opens to a new back porch running the length of the original barn. Comfortable seating looks out on a pond and white fenced pastures.

New friends with a common interest in horses invited the couple to join them on trail rides, something Monty and Donna immediately found enjoyable. These days the twenty or so riders in their group get together frequently for one-day outings at nearby places like Scatter Creek and Lake Bono. Overnight and weekend rides include locations such as Village Creek State Park, Shawnee Creek in Eminence, Missouri, and Norfolk River Ranch at West Plains, Missouri.

A typical trail ride averages about 10 miles and can take three to four hours with ample time built in to stop for snacks or a meal, visiting and enjoying the surroundings.

Participants range in age from their mid-twenties to mid-seventies, making trail riding suitable for a lifelong hobby. Rides aren't considered over until the group gathers around a campfire, catches up on the news and has a good round of karaoke.

Monty and Donna admit trail rides aren't always easy. "Even though there is





work involved like getting the horses ready for the rides and staying focused while in the saddle, they are good therapy. You have to love the animals, and it will cost money, but the social interaction with others and being in nature is worth all the time, effort and money."

That work and money includes brushing the horses down after a long ride, keeping them fed and having them shod about every six to eight weeks. Big expenses include the purchase and upkeep of a horse trailer/camper and making sure the animals get a yearly Coggins test and Five-in-One Vaccine.

Donna has her own good reasons to appreciate trail ride therapy. Just a short time after retiring from the Arkansas Highway Department, she was diagnosed with cancer. Uncertain if riding would ever be in her future again, a successful stem cell transplant kept the door open and Donna recovered. Another setback occurred two years ago when Donna lost her daughter to cancer. Riding has been a good balm for her grief.

"Sometimes I just get out on my horse and talk to the Lord. I feel closer to God when I'm riding and in the beauty of nature," she shared.

For Monty, trail rides feed his love for being with others and sharing the camaraderie that comes with a group of folks who enjoy the same things. Working with the horses helps him stay active, with the actual riding being a good workout for core strength. The fact that riding comes with built-in health benefits is another big plus.

Monty, Donna and their group of trail riding friends have affectionately named themselves The Motley Crew Horse Riders. 2025 spring rains

led to several canceled rides, making the group eager for an upcoming yearly event at Buck Hollow Ranch in Randolph County, a privately owned wildlife ranch. The owner sponsors an invitation-only trail ride in the spring and fall, making it a good opportunity to reconnect with folks from other riding groups who attend the event.

Listening to Monty and Donna talk about saddling up and hitting the trails for a ride makes me wish I could tag along. You can sense their love for the inherent peace to be found in taking time to move at a slower pace, intentionally shutting out the hurry of everyday life.

Donna says it best when she sums up their love for trail rides with a few simple words. "Some folks love the beach. We love horses."



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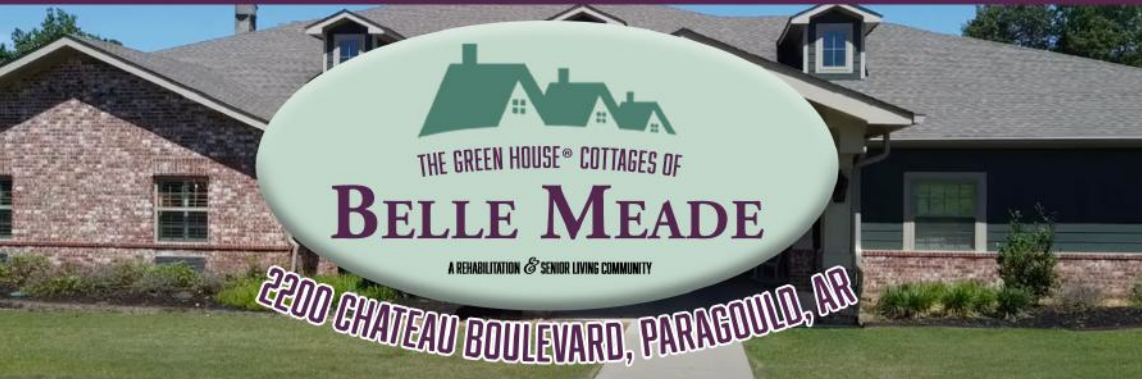
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Spring Gala

LAWRENCE HEALTHCARE



Lawrence Healthcare supporters gathered on May 3rd to celebrate and bring awareness to the efforts of Lawrence Memorial Hospital and Lawrence Hall Health & Rehab.

The gala, held at the Stan Jones Mallard Lodge, recognized outstanding individuals who contribute to their mission. These included a Special Advocate for Lawrence Healthcare, the Daisy Award Winner of the Year and the BEE Award Winner of the Year.

Alongside these recognitions, attendees enjoyed a dinner, live music and both a live and silent auction. Proceeds from the event were reinvested in the Lawrence Healthcare Community Food Pantry to aid in mitigating food insecurity.



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Life can be uncertain. What would happen if you were suddenly unable to make decisions for yourself? Advance planning can ensure that your finances remain stable and your health care wishes are followed. Here are some items you may want to consider when thinking about advance directives:

- Gather information. Decisions should reflect your personal values and beliefs. Make sure that you gather reliable information and make thoughtful, informed decisions. Think about your wants and needs for the future.
- Establish advance directives if desired. There are a variety of different types of documents including living wills and durable power of attorney for health care. Learn more about advance directives at www.arkbar.com
- Share copies with doctor and family. It's a good idea to make sure that the important people in your life are aware of your wishes and plans.
- Prepare a financial inventory. This can help others make sure that bills are paid and assets are protected if you are ever unable to make decisions.
- Determine net worth. A net worth statement lists all of your assets and liabilities. It's a good place to list all of the valuable items that you own.
- Make financial decisions. Is someone prepared to step in and make sure that your bills are paid and medical costs are covered? In the event of your death, does anyone know your wishes for funeral arrangements and distribution of property? You may decide to appoint someone to act on your behalf.
- Write an ethical will. Much of the legacy you leave your friends and family is not material goods. Your greatest influence is through the values, beliefs, and life experiences that have made you the unique individual you are. Preserve your stories, life experiences, and wisdom for future generations in an ethical will. The ethical will can be given to your family and friends at any time or upon your death.

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Upcoming Events in NEA



Cancer Survivors

June 1st

Join NEA Baptist and community members in celebrating Cancer Survivors Day on June 1st from 1 to 2:30 p.m. The free event, held at the Valley View Church of Christ located at 4500 Southwest Drive in Jonesboro, will include lunch, door prizes, fellowship and more!

This event is open to everyone and gives those who have had a past cancer diagnosis and their families a chance to celebrate life after cancer and to inspire those who have been newly diagnosed. For more information, call (870) 936-7005.



Baby State

June 10th

Drop by on June 10th from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the St. Bernards Auditorium at 505 E. Washington Ave. in Jonesboro to learn more on how to care for yourself and your baby before and after birth. Learn everything you need to know to prepare yourself to be the best parent you can be. Door prizes, pain control options, car seat and sleep safety, infant care education, specialty baby vendors, health and wellness tips and a newborn photographer will all be available at the event. For more information, call (870) 207-7300 or visit stbernards.info.



Motorcycle Rodeo

June 14th

Join the Jonesboro Police Department on June 14th for a day of excitement at Arkansas' only Motorcycle Rodeo. Bring your family and watch as motorcycle officers show off their skills and compete in various events.

This year, the event is in partnership with the DARE to Show Your Ride Car Show, so attendees can also enjoy vendors and food trucks. The events will take place at the Joe Mack Campbell Park, with the fun beginning at 9:00 a.m. All proceeds benefit the Jonesboro DARE Program.



Juneteenth Events

June 12th - 19th

Area residents are invited to celebrate Juneteenth with KLEK in Jonesboro for the 8th year in a row!

The celebration, taking place June 12th through 19th, will feature a community fair, parade, fireworks display, a mayoral proclamation and more!

All events are free and family-friendly opportunities to celebrate the end of slavery in the United States and immerse yourselves in the rich cultural

heritage and contributions of African Americans. More information can be found online.

The Eddie Mae Herron Center in Pocahontas will host a Juneteenth event on June 14th!

Join members of the EMHC for food and craft vendors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

These Juneteenth events will commemorate the announcement of the abolition of slavery in the state of Texas in 1865.



Triple Swing

June 20th - 24th

For the 35th year in a row, St. Bernards Advocates' Triple Swing will include three fun-filled events to raise money for hospital equipment.

The first event is an '80s-themed Dinner Dance on Friday, June 20th, that invites attendees to take a step back in time with high-energy live music from Boom Kinetic, paired with a nostalgic arcade setup and dinner. Tickets for the dance are \$125 per person and \$1,000 for a table of eight.

The fun continues on Sunday, June 22nd, at the Ridgpointe Country Club with a pickleball tournament complete with a prize package for the winner of each division. Registration ends June 13th and will be \$120 for a team of two.

Last, but not least, the Golf Scramble will feature four flights with a four-player scramble format on June 23rd and 24th at the Ridgpointe Country Club. For more information, visit stbernards.info/triple-swing.

The Collins Theatre's **BIG GRASS** Bluegrass Festival

TWO-DAY EVENT SET IN
DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD

BIG GRASS BLUEGRASS

Come out and experience a weekend of the finest bluegrass that music has to offer! The 2025 Big Grass Bluegrass Festival is back at the Collins Theatre at 120 West Emerson Street in Downtown Paragould on Friday, July 25th, and Saturday, July 26th.

This year, the festival features some outstanding names in the world of bluegrass music for two days of unforgettable entertainment!

Opening the festival on Friday, July 25th, at 7 p.m. is none other than Grand Ole Opry regulars, The Tennessee Mafia Jug Band, followed by the legendary Jeff Parker and Company. Jeff is an International Bluegrass Music Association Showcase Artist. This show is one you won't want to miss!

Saturday, July 26th, will feature a day full of the sweet sounds of bluegrass music with a 1 p.m. show including IBMA Showcase Artists Lindley Creek, IBMA Songwriter of the Year winner Donna Ulisse and the Poor Mountain Boys, and chart-topping, award-winning bluegrass sensation, Breaking Grass.

Saturday night, the 7 p.m. show will feature current SPBGMA Entertainers of the Year, The Kody Norris Show, and closing out the festival is the one and only Appalachian Road Show including multiple Grammy nominated musicians that bring new-generation interpretations on traditional Americana, bluegrass and folk music all tied together to the heart of the Appalachian region of the United States.

Get your tickets online at www.collinstheatre.com/bluegrass. All seats are reserved, so get your tickets now and secure your favorite spot in air-conditioned comfort. For more information, call the theatre manager at 870-236-6252.



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SHARING STORIES

The Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library has announced the Your Library, Your Story Campaign. This is a community driven campaign that focuses on highlighting community voices.

"We believe there is truly something for everyone at the library." Rylie Yawson, Marketing and PR Manager, said. "This campaign is about honoring our community's stories and showing how the library has made a meaningful difference in so many lives."

Through this campaign the library invites patrons to share how the library has played a role in their story. Submissions will be collected through a community-wide survey, available online and in physical form at the library. These stories will help spotlight the library's role as a hub for learning, connection, creativity and support.

The campaign will run throughout the end of the year, with ongoing promotions, featured testimonials and prize giveaways throughout. The survey link can be found on the library's website and social media platforms.

In celebration of the campaign, the library is also offering "Your Library, Your Story" yard signs, bookmarks and magnets, available at the library while supplies last.

For more information about the campaign, visit the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library's website and follow its social media pages for updates.

The Library is located at 315 W. Oak Ave. in Jonesboro. For more information about the library, visit the website at www.libraryinjonesboro.org, visit the library's Facebook page, or call 870-935-5133.



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Wilson Award YATES RECEIVES HONOR

Amber Yates of Salem was named the 2025 R.E. Lee Wilson Award winner at Arkansas State University's Distinguished Service and Wilson Award dinner April 24th at the Cooper Alumni Center.

This is the 92nd year that the Wilson Award, A-State's highest award to a graduating student, has been presented. The award was presented to Yates by Perry Wilson, the award namesake's great-great-grandson.

Yates, a communication studies major in the College of Liberal

Arts and Communication, graduated from A-State in December.

She is one of six exceptional students chosen to be a Distinguished Service Award (DSA) winner. All six nominees for the Wilson Award were honored at the ceremony.

Other DSA honorees included Elizabeth England of Piedmont, Mo.; Rachel Mooneyham of Jonesboro; Sabrina Pierce of Maumelle; Braden M. Ross of Nashville, Ark.; and Jonathan Schaufler of Salem.



Wilson Award Winner Amber Yates and A-State Chancellor Todd Shields



Distinguished Service Award Winners: Braden M. Ross, Sabrina Pierce, Amber Yates, Elizabeth England and Jonathan Schaufler

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HAPPENINGS

LIEBHABER JOINS FARMERS & MERCHANTS

Farmers & Merchants Bank and The Bank of Fayetteville have announced that Brett Liebhaber has joined the bank as a Commercial Loan Officer. Liebhaber will be based at the bank's Pocahontas branch, bringing with him more than 20 years of experience in banking and public service.

A Pocahontas native, Liebhaber began his career at the Bank of Pocahontas in 1998 after earning a Bachelor of Science in business from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. He was promoted to Loan Officer and completed the Graduate School of Banking in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2003.

That same year, he began a successful 22-year career with the Social Security Administration. Liebhaber joined Farmers and Merchants Bank on March 31.

Liebhaber remains actively involved in the Pocahontas community and has served in leadership roles with the Rolling Hills Country Club, St. Paul Catholic Church and the Black River Technical College Foundation Board. He and his wife, Karen, Vice President of Advancement at Black River Technical College, live in Pocahontas. They have two children.



Brett Liebhaber

STATLER RETIRES AFTER 38 YEARS AT BRTC

Black River Technical College's Dean of General Education Donna Statler has retired after 38 years of service. Before accepting the role of dean in 2017, Statler served in different positions throughout the college like GED instructor, math instructor and math division chair.

To thank her for her years of service, BRTC held a retirement reception on the Pocahontas campus. Around 60 guests made up of faculty, staff, family and friends came to celebrate. BRTC President Dr. Martin Eggensperger and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Brad Baine shared stories about Statler.

Baine spoke about the impact Statler had on Academic Affairs, saying she was "the glue that held us all together." Baine also read statements from former students, faculty and staff about their time with Statler and how thankful they are for her.

"She was hands-down the best math teacher I ever had," a former student said. "She was always so kind and you could tell she cared about our success." Statler was also presented with a plaque and a bench to thank her for her time and dedication to BRTC.



Donna Statler

STUDY REPORTS ON ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NYITCOM AT A-STATE

The New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine is not only producing doctors, it's also producing dollars, with an estimated \$44.6 million in economic impact during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Parker Strategy Group published a study in May titled, "A-State Powers Growth: Transforming the Economy and Inspiring Hearts and Minds." The project was completed on behalf of Arkansas State University and included an overview of the impact made by NYITCOM, which opened a location on A-State's Jonesboro campus in 2016 through a private-public partnership between A-State and New York Institute of Technology.

The study showed that NYITCOM at A-State's \$44.6 million in economic impact includes the support of 263 jobs and operations that result in \$2.2 million in additional state and local taxes.

"In addition to making an impact on health care and health education



in this region, we've always been focused on making positive contributions to our state and region through a number of ancillary avenues," said Shane Speights, D.O., dean of NYITCOM at A-State. "It's invigorating to see that not only are we leading much-needed health outreach programs and producing physicians who are now practicing here, but we are also making a significant contribution to the local and state economy. We're just thrilled to see that."

Next Month

Life-Saving Heroes



As the United States marks National Heroes Day in July, we will be sharing stories of those who have become heroes through life-saving donations.

Paragould Awards



Don't miss our special section announcing the winners in the Paragould Premiere Awards.

Happy Independence Day



Look for full details on the 2025 Paragould Fireworks Display presented by MOR Media and the Paragould A&P Commission.



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