

The background of the cover is a photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt and sunglasses on her head. She is smiling and standing in a lush green field of tall grass or grain. The sky is clear and blue in the background.

NEA'S PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2025

COURTENEY SISK IMPACTING AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURE IN NEA
NEA SENIORS: LIFELONG FRIENDS
END OF AN ERA: GREENE COUNTY RESCUE SQUAD

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

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ON THE COVER -

Courtney Wall Sisk would say agriculture has had a major impact on her life, but it is obvious she has also had a major impact on agriculture in Northeast Arkansas and beyond.

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Cover Photo by Karan Summitt

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From Us to You

September always gets me in the "Ready for Fall" mode and all this focus on agriculture has made it even stronger!

Mums, pumpkins, corn stalks, pumpkin spice coffee – I love it all. I look forward to the leaves turning all the shades of yellow and the cool, crisp morning air. Even though I am not a big football person I love seeing the team spirit all around and the sense of community.

September also starts the next round of so many community events. Many foundations and non-profits hold their biggest fundraisers in the fall, and we try to promote and attend as many as we can. We encourage you to participate, even if it is to attend and have a good time; your ticket purchase helps the organization accomplish its goal.

Having been a volunteer on so many events, I can say that your business sponsoring, or you registering for a 5k or buying a ticket to attend an event means more to the staff and committee than you think. It has been hard to keep up with all the events coming up and getting the information lined out for the next few months but it shows there is something for everyone to get involved in from fairs to



festivals to banquets and races. You can have fun and support great causes in Northeast Arkansas.

And Premiere will be there to shine a light on all the "good news and the people making it happen!"

Dina Mason
General Manager & Publisher
dina@mormediainc.com

During my 26 years in the newspaper business, one of my favorite things to do was farm family coverage. It always amazed me the diversity, ingenuity and resourcefulness I learned about each year. I'm glad I still get a little taste of that with Premiere as we spotlight agriculture in Northeast Arkansas during the month of September.

Perhaps one of the things that stands out the most is the generosity of farmers. We have all heard stories of how the agriculture community will pull together to help harvest a crop if a fellow farmer falls on a hard time. In this month's magazine, we also see how farmers have banded together over the years to help those with autism and those who are suffering from food insecurity.

We are also excited to spotlight Greene County native Courtney Wall Sisk, who shows that as agriculture continues to change, so does the role women play in the industry.



To our farmers, we say, "Thank You," as you continue to put food on our tables and clothes on our backs. To our readers, we say "Thank You" for giving us the opportunity to share these stories of the good news in Northeast Arkansas and the farmers making it happen!

Gretchen Hunt
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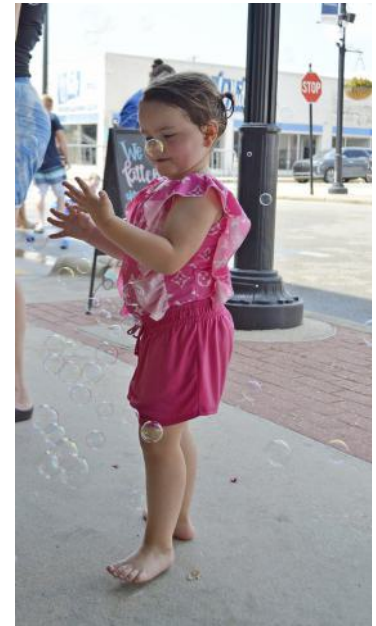
Street Splash

FUN IN DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD

It was wet and wild in the streets of Downtown Paragould on Saturday, August 16th, as Main Street Paragould hosted its annual Street Splash event. Area churches, police and fire personnel and other organizations assisted with the event, which included bounce houses, snow cones and sprinklers, including fire hydrants that were opened for the event.



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT



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Manifesting Fall

BY KATIE COLLINS

I've been trying so hard to manifest fall lately. I've already been eating Reese's pumpkins in the hopes of urging fall to hurry up and get here. I'm ready for fall temperatures more than anything, but the fall/Halloween/pumpkin/spooky vibes need to hurry and get here too! I somehow managed to refrain from making a pumpkin recipe this month. The recipe I decided to go with does remind me of fall for some reason, even though it's not pumpkin.

Now, I don't want to start any trouble, but I do know that some people call this treat Goey Butter Cake. That's fine. You do you. For me, it's always been Chess Squares. You can make these with whatever flavor of cake mix you wish, but my go-to has always been the chocolate version. Keep your fingers crossed that it will feel like fall soon, and in the meantime, enjoy these Chocolate Chess Squares.



Chocolate Chess Squares

Ingredients:

- 1 box chocolate cake mix
- 1 stick of butter, melted
- 3 large eggs
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 4 cups powdered sugar

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350. Spray a 9x13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

Mix the cake mix, melted butter and one egg together. Press into the bottom of the pan.

Mix softened cream cheese and remaining two eggs with a mixer until combined. Add half of the powdered sugar and mix again. Add the remaining powdered sugar and mix until combined.

Spread over the cake layer. Bake 35-40 minutes or until the top is golden. Cool for about an hour then enjoy!



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GROWING HOPE

With the NEA Food Bank

BY ESTRELLA BELTRAN

In Northeast Arkansas, the fight against hunger is being strengthened by an often-overlooked group of community heroes: local farmers and producers. Their contributions of fresh, locally grown food help ensure that families across the region have access to nutritious meals year-round. These efforts do more than fill plates — they nourish communities, preserve traditions, and strengthen the local food system.

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas regularly receives donations of fresh fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, sweet corn, cucumbers, melons and squash. Protein donations — including beef and pork — also make their way from local producers to families in need.

The volume varies with the seasons, but during peak harvest months, donations often arrive weekly. In the winter months, contributions are less frequent, though the need remains high. Whenever funding allows, the Food Bank supplements these gifts by purchasing produce and proteins directly from area farmers, keeping dollars local while feeding neighbors.

One particularly impactful relationship has been with Cane Island Produce. This partnership began in 2024 when the Food Bank launched its Farm to Food Bank program. Cane Island Produce was eager to step in, donating part of its harvest to families who otherwise might not have access to fresh, local produce and meat. With additional support from the Arkansas Community Foundation's Harvesting Hope Project, the Food Bank was later able to begin purchasing from Cane Island, turning early donations into a steady stream of support.

The results have been transformative. Thousands of pounds of fresh, healthy food have been distributed to families across Northeast Arkansas, providing essential nutrients that are often the hardest to afford on a tight budget. But the impact is more than nutritional — it's deeply personal.



One mother shared how Cane Island's tomatoes made it possible to prepare her grandmother's spaghetti recipe for her children. "Fresh food is more than sustenance," says Food Bank Chief Development Officer Rebecca Hendrix. "It's connection, tradition and joy."

Of course, there are challenges. Fresh produce has a short shelf life, which means that pick-ups, deliveries, and distributions must be carefully coordinated to reach families while food is still at its best. Funding is another obstacle, especially as the need in Northeast Arkansas continues to grow.

Still, the dedication of local farmers remains steadfast. "They are unsung heroes in the fight against hunger," Hendrix says. "Their willingness to share part of their harvest — often at their own expense — means healthier meals for families who might not otherwise have access. Supporting local agriculture isn't just about buying local; it's about recognizing the role these producers play in building a stronger, more food-secure community."

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For Hendrix, the mission is both personal and professional. “No one should have to wonder where their next meal will come from — especially in a state as rich in agricultural resources as Arkansas,” she explains. “Partnerships with local growers create a ripple effect that touches everyone involved. Together, we’re building a healthier, stronger Northeast Arkansas for all.”

The message is clear: When farmers, producers, and community partners join forces, hunger doesn’t stand a chance. And in Northeast Arkansas, the harvest is not only feeding families — it’s planting seeds of hope for the future.

EMPTY BOWLS

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas will host its Empty Bowls drive-through fundraiser on Thursday, September 25th, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The \$25 ticket includes soup, sandwich, salad and dessert, as well as a ceramic bowl handcrafted by an art student as a reminder that somewhere someone’s bowl is empty. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. For more information, find the Food Bank of NEA on Facebook.



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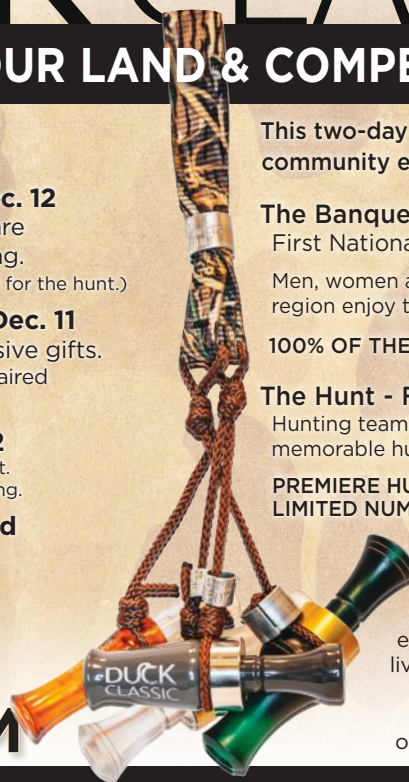
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PET *of the* MONTH

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BY KEISHA KETCHUM-WOOD

Bubbles and Biscuit are full-blooded Bichon Frise brothers, but Bubbles is 7 and Biscuit is 1. Even though they are years apart, they share the same doggy mommy and daddy! They came from Patricia Roche of Savannah Bichons in Ocala, Florida. We got Bubbles in 2018 and Biscuit in 2024. They also have a half bichon brother, Fluffy, who is 2 (he comes from the same daddy)! Biscuit loves peanut butter. Bubbles loves creamed corn. Biscuit loves chewing on his yak treats and chasing his toys around or just holding them in his mouth. Bubbles prefers to just cuddle, especially under the covers.



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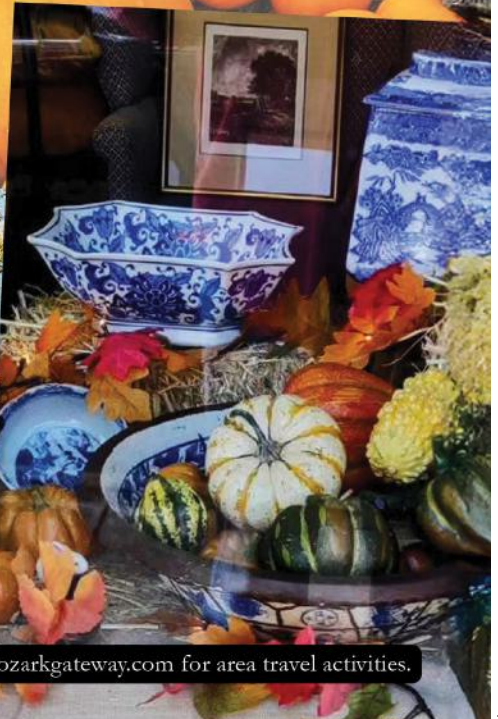
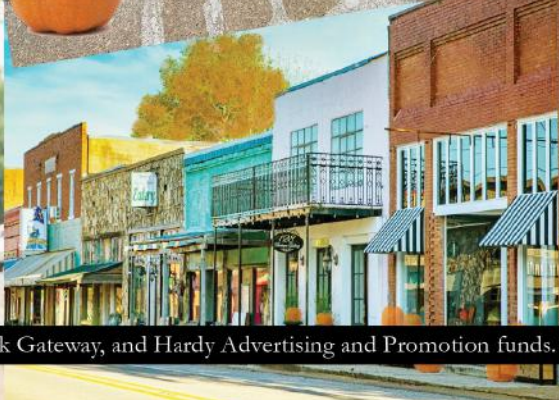
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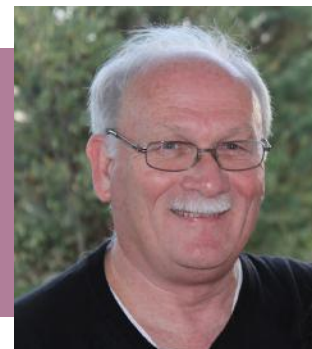
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Get Rich

WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



Even for someone like me, it's not hard to tell when school is back in session. Social media outlets are flooded with photos moms post of their kids' back-to-school clothes, back-to-school hairstyles, and back-to-school facial expressions, both happy and sad.

While looking them over I often wonder how the younger versions of me would fit into today's public school arena. Back in my day, we didn't diagnose unruly and fidgety kids with mental health conditions ... we paddled them, which was more than enough to convince me to be still and quiet until the bell rang.

I am convinced the "today" me would be tagged with some of those initials experts seem to have too many of, labeling me with ADD, ADHD, ODD, EIEIO, or AEIOU and sometimes Y, among others. I was a good student but one who had absolutely no interest in being in a classroom at any time, anywhere, at any age.

For starters, I blame the grownups in my life. My parents and grandparents and couples at church made starting to school sound so magical. "I hear Richard's starting *school* this year," I heard repeatedly during my fifth year of life, but it was the way they said "school" that made it sound so enticing. I was getting new clothes, and pencils and paper of my very own, and a haircut before it was even official haircut day. This school must be the greatest place a kid could ever go, I assumed, then came home pretty disappointed after a day of math, coloring and reading.

Not my thing.

It took many years for me to share with my mother – a teacher for most of my life – how much I disliked school and everything about it, starting with that first long day in Mrs. Marie Butler's class at Marmaduke Elementary School. I could already read, and spell, and add and subtract, and color inside the lines. I didn't see the need to revisit those things on a daily basis. The outdoors held sunshine and playground equipment and I felt imprisoned behind a desk.

The only subjects I ever had the slightest fondness for centered on the English language. Up until about our first couple of years in high school, English class consisted of diagramming sentences and having spelling tests. That was okay with me because the spelling tests represented a sort of competition – especially since Mrs. Haynes posted perfect tests on the wall above the blackboard in her seventh-grade classroom – and I was blessed with the ability to remember how to spell the weekly list of words with ease. So I was, in a sense, winning something.

But once we moved on from words and such into reading something called the classics and to writing term papers, even the one class I

could somewhat abide joined the others as a laborious hour. I wasn't unruly, or uncooperative; I was unmotivated because I couldn't see how much of this knowledge I was being fed was going to benefit me on the job market.

Maybe I was thinking too practically; I knew when I grew up I was not going to accept a job that asked me to quote Longfellow, or to add and multiply the alphabet, or to write a daily report that included footnotes and a bibliography. I was probably going to be a ballplayer or a coach and I think most people associated with ballplayers and coaches will tell you right up front, the majority of them are not highly skilled wordsmiths. They are much better with whistles and lanyards than with gerunds and past participles, and that's pretty much how I pictured myself later in life, wearing coaches' shorts and a T-shirt and making kids run bleachers and line drills. And if I had to write a report, I could spell run, bleachers and several other athletic words with ease, probably even back when I was in Mrs. Butler's class.

There were times in high school when I knew right up front I needed to pay attention in a particular class, usually because my grade had dipped into the 70s on our most recent test. So I would have a pep talk with myself in preparation, then get distracted only moments into the teacher's presentation. I remember specifically a day in Mrs. Monroe's history class when she very early on used the word "rebound" while referring to some nation's economy, and my mind immediately made a U-turn to the basketball court and the first game of that season, when I went to the backboard in hopes of a rebound but, instead, made contact full-speed with Lonnie Webber's elbow and wound up with my nose resituated just below my left eye.

As I was mentally reliving the ensuing trip to the specialist to reset my broken nose, picturing a needle as long as a horse's leg and recalling a tear rolling down Mom's face as she watched the procedure, I heard Mrs. Monroe call my name and I could only respond with my typical answer: "I don't know."

That was the answer because I honestly had no idea what the question was; she could have been calling roll for all I knew. So in today's academic setting I imagine my report card would contain the words "seems easily distracted" or "does not pay attention in class" on the teacher's comments section.

But, in my defense, I would know how to spell all of those words.

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.

BEEKEEPING *How Sweet It Is*

BY MADELYN MCFARLAND

Approximately 8,000 years ago, someone looked inside a beehive and thought, "That looks delicious, never mind the thousands of black and yellow flying needles" and so humanity's love for the bee was born.

Beekeeping has been a part of Elizabeth Hoke's life for a long time. Her husband Brandon and his family have kept bees for generations. "His mom kept bees; that means his grandmother also kept bees in a separate hive," Elizabeth said. "His grandfather was the oldest beekeeper in the county for quite some time. When we moved out

here, we thought, 'We have to get bees.' It was a natural progression."

The hive, a short walk away, was buzzing with activity when we arrived. We greeted them cheerfully and asked them not to sting us. The protective gear helped. Fully suited up, Elizabeth got to work. After breaking through the wax seal, we took a look inside. "I'm a lazy beekeeper," she said laughing. "I'm gonna let the bees do their thing, because they don't need us to exist. We just keep bees so we can have honey."

Beekeepers are there to lend a



helping hand when needed, according to Elizabeth, who also owns Generations Floral Company. "They go out instinctively to these flowers, come back and do a little dance, and then they all know where to go. That's crazy!"

More than 75% of the food we eat depends on pollinators, and honeybees are the single most frequent pollinators in the world.

The hive is full of worker bees, weaving through the frames somewhat sluggishly. Beekeepers use a smoker to help keep bees calm during hive inspections, as it masks the alarm pheromones they secrete when they sense danger.



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"You can see here where they've started to build it up" she said, pointing out the wax forming hexagon ridges on an empty frame. "There are seven frames of capped honey here," she says happily, putting the lid back on the hive.



Elizabeth shared some of her favorite ways to enjoy the bees' handiwork. "We drink bourbon and honey. That's our daily cocktail," she said. "The last time we did a harvest was a full out, labor-intensive process. We got nine gallons, so I've been living off that honey for a while now!"

Natural, properly-preserved honey has no expiration date. The ancient Egyptians began beekeeping around 2,500 BCE. Archaeologists discovered 3,000-year-old honey in King Tutankhamen's tomb when it was unearthed in 1922, and it was still good. Thanks to the bees' honey-making process and its biological makeup, organisms that spoil food cannot survive in honey. It is truly a superfood!

We could stand to learn a thing or two from honeybees. Their work ethic is out of this world; healthy colonies can make 60-100 pounds of honey each year. These amazing little insects are so integral to our everyday lives. Beekeeping is a labor of love, and the reward is sweet.



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Land Management

BY CHUCK LONG IN A FARMING COMMUNITY



I consider it a great blessing to have grown up in a farming community. Both sets of my grandparents were farm families that tilled the soil of Eastern Greene County for many years. Cotton was king during that time, and I can remember the smell of cotton seeds, hoeing the middles, the joy of tromping around in a trailer full of cotton and the satisfaction my grandparents had of trailering a load to Samuels Gin. It was a wonderful lifestyle full of blessings.

Farming has changed very much since that time. Farms are much bigger, the equipment is larger and more efficient, and there are fewer people involved in the lifestyle. That is unfortunate as many great life lessons can be harvested from tilling the soil. But there is a trend that allows the everyday person to be involved in a type of farming, if only on a very small scale. That trend is the desire to manage property and farm for wildlife. Recent years have seen many landowners turn to various forms of land management to improve their acreage for wildlife and this has allowed many to get back to the roots of turning the soil, planting seed and reaping a harvest.

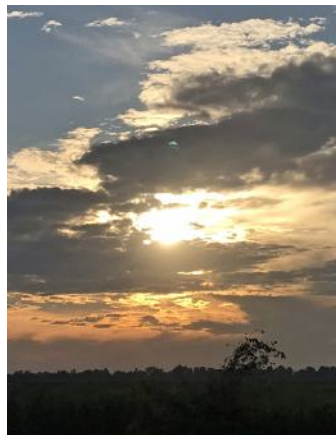
Private land management at the scale we are currently seeing is relatively new. Twenty-five years ago, there were a few folks who practiced land management, but those efforts were often sporadic and not focused. In recent years, however, the business of food plots and land and wildlife management have seen exponential growth. It has turned into a diverse and sometimes confusing mix of techniques and products. Here are a few basics that might help.

Bird feeders or a butterfly garden are a great starting point in learning about wildlife and the interaction with various plants or techniques. I have learned much about animal behavior watching birds go to and from a feeder. The basic principles of spacing between food sources, safe distances from danger and food selectivity are just a few. Lessons in the back yard are a great starting point for young and old alike.

Property management begins with asking a few questions and developing a plan. What species do I want to attract? What needs of the habitat am I trying to meet? Is the intent to hunt the area? What is the long-term plan? What is the budget?

Once a few questions are answered, build a plan. The first step in the process should be to run a soil test. This test will reveal how the soil needs to be amended to provide the best base for seeds. There are online vendors that provide this service, but a great first call would be to the local Extension Office. The folks there are professionals in the soil field and can get things headed in the right direction.

Till or no till has become a big debate in the food plot world. In our experience, tilling works great for short-term projects, especially when moisture is available or in the forecast. No-till, on the other hand, is good for fields that will remain in food plots for the long term, areas that might suffer from lack of moisture, or areas that will receive minimal maintenance. There are strong advantages to either technique, and there is lots of great information on the internet to help guide the decision.

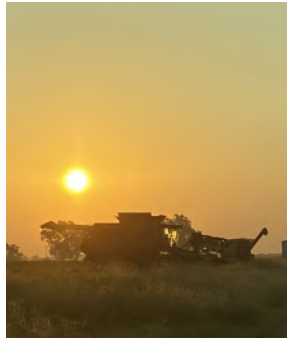


Once the soil bed has been prepped, it's time for seed. This may be one of the most confusing steps of the process. There are a vast number of manufacturers, varieties and seed types on the market. We have tried many of the brands and many different plants and we keep going back to the basics. A simple mix of wheat, oats, some brassicas like turnips or radishes, along with some red clover has served us well. The local feed store is a great stop for this seed as they can usually get what's needed and know what works best locally.

One key thing to remember is that food plots should only be a part of the process of land management. One of my longtime hunting buddies, David Wilcox, has been working on his property near Smithville for many years and he will vouch for the fact that variety is the key.

Their property has food plots, and they also do prescribed fires along with forest management. Burning is the most cost-effective land management tool in the arsenal. Historically, most woodlands were treated with fire either by nature or through a man-made fire on at least a yearly basis. Fire encourages many cycles that are beneficial to the land and should be a part of any management plan.

Forest management is also a vital part of Wilcox's plan and proper management can provide great benefits. Like fire, proper forest management enhances the natural cycles and spurs rich natural foods and provides long-lasting benefits to wildlife.



Just like farming, land management is a skill developed over time. It is also a very technical skill that can be tweaked and tailored to fit certain needs or certain tracts of land. Just like a farmer that sees that opened boll of cotton or a full ear of corn, it's great to pull up to a managed piece of property and see a herd of deer, flock of turkeys or covey of quail.

There are plenty of resources out there to help in the management journey. As mentioned earlier, the Extension Service is a great resource. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has a strong group of folks in its Private Lands Division dedicated to helping landowners. There are some great podcasts and YouTube channels on the topic. Growing Deer has some great information and there are some excellent Facebook pages in regard to deer management.

Make a plan, till the soil, plant a few seeds, light a fire or two and help the wildlife on your property. 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.

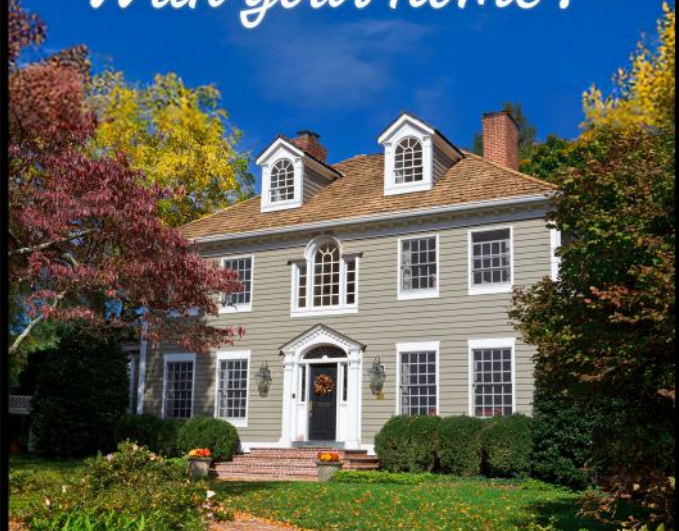


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COURTENEY WALL SISK

Protecting A Family Legacy

BY KARAN SUMMITT



The seeds were planted when young — Courteney would spend time on her grandparents' farm. Those random seeds grew deeper roots when her dad decided to move the family back to Northeast Arkansas and join his brother in taking over their father's farming operation. Courteney was old enough by then to drive a tractor and work on the farm. At sixteen it was hard, knowing all her teenage friends were enjoying lazy summers and she had to get up early and go to the fields.

Those feelings soon gave way to a peace that remains with Courteney Wall Sisk today when she is on a tractor or walking the rice levees and soybean or corn rows. The seeming monotony of driving a tractor all day allows the mind to clear and puts the chaos that comes with family life in perspective. According to Courteney, time in the fields is "heaven on earth."

Choosing agriculture as a career path wasn't easy for a girl headed to college in the 1990s. Courteney wanted to be "in the middle of things" and knew credibility would be an issue. Even her own granddad was apprehensive. Her father, Dean, sat Courteney down for a hard, heart-to-heart talk. He fully supported her career goals but admitted it was a man's world. As a woman she



would have to work harder and go further to prove she wasn't content to be on the sidelines, that she wanted to be fully involved in farming.

Courteney accepted those terms and went full force, eventually completing a Bachelor of Arts in Agriculture Business and then earning a Master of Science in Agriculture, both from Arkansas State University. At the time there were only a handful of women in the Ag building at ASU. Through the years they've stayed close, and Courteney says it's been enjoyable to see where their career paths have led.

Courteney's own career began with an agriculture company out of Mississippi. She was the only female and many times farmers would doubt her knowledge, so she learned early on to "know my stuff." Courteney laughs, saying with respect that farmers are an intelligent group and can easily smell out a fake. This job was followed by a 10-year stint as a Farm Bureau adjuster investigating claims. Time and good old-fashioned persistence led to what Courteney considers one of her highest compliments from a farmer who remarked "you are one of our people."

Courteney is married to Josh Sisk and when their twins - a boy and girl - came along, she came home for a few years to be with the children and help her dad and uncle on the family farm. About the time the twins were ready for kindergarten, the University of Arkansas had an opening in the Greene County Extension office. From there Courteney moved to her current position of 10 years as a Lawrence County Agriculture Agent.

Courteney's path from farmer's daughter eventually led to co-owner and business partner with her first cousin, Luke Wall. The two are fifth generation farmers in the Wall family. While the early grandfathers tended much smaller plots of land, it was their immediate grandfather who grew the operation in the mid-sixties, adding more acreage and expanding. Grandpa Leonard's original 300 acres has now grown to the 2,200 acres Courteney and Luke manage today.

The two officially took over the family farm from their dads in 2021. Luke handles the day-to-day field operations and Courteney does the business side of the farm. If they need help on a tractor or with weed and insect control, she is able to assist with that.






Courteney's involvement in agriculture goes well beyond the family farm. She is a member of the Arkansas County Agricultural Agent Association as well as the National Agriculture County Agent Association. She serves on the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee and is on the Lawrence County Fair Board and USA Rice Leadership Program.

Inclusion in the Rice Leadership Program is highly competitive. Courteney is only one of seven members chosen from across the country, and like many times in the past finds herself as the only female in the group. The commitment involves four trips over a two-year period to the top rice-producing states, and Courteney describes it as a full, head-on experience of examining U.S. rice production from beginning to end, with a goal for finding better growing practices, better production methods, better yields, better marketing and increasing demand. The trips end with a visit to Washington, D.C., encouraging elected officials to enact better legislation for rice farmers.

Courteney is a trained facilitator/teacher for Annie's Project, a national program for women that educates them on the business side of agriculture. It had its beginnings when Annie Fleck, a farmer's wife from Illinois, struggled alongside her husband to make their operation profitable. Over time Annie's persistence in seeing farming as a business led to many changes, eventual successes and financial stability. Today, Annie's Project is a free course that helps women learn these business aspects of agriculture, with a goal to ensure families are able to pass on their farms to future generations.



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Open Sign-ups begin in November through the
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Facebook Page. No cost to attend.

As with any business, farming has its challenges. Weather always plays a critical role in determining the bottom line, and the unrelenting heat of this year has been hard on crops, especially when temperatures failed to cool down at night. Courteney's task of managing the business side becomes even more important. It includes watching the futures market, competitive overseas markets and being mindful of expenditures. It is always a juggle to separate farm wants from needs and weigh that against expected yields and how all of it will affect the bottom line.

Continued ➡

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Future goals for Courteney involve trying to diversify the farm and move from solely depending on row crops to investing in poultry and cattle as a way to help provide a more secure financial basis. In 2024, over 20% of Arkansas farmers went out of business. It is predicted that if 2025 turns out to be a hard year, another 20% will follow suit. For family farms, these are sobering statistics.

The deep roots from five generations of farmers in her immediate family drives Courteney to want to see her own children be the sixth generation to farm the land. She tears up as she talks about the legacy her forefathers started and how she wants to make them proud.

When asked what keeps her grounded, especially during the hard



and uncertain times, her words and passion for her family heritage, the land and farm life came through this way: "After a bad day or even a bad year, I still know my biggest goal is to protect the farm and pass it on to the kids. I can't let one bad year define all that is good about the farm experience. I know that if I keep my eyes on God and my family we can weather the highs and lows that are inevitable with farm life."

2025 Farm Families of The Year

- Clay: Casey and Jade Simpson, Rector
- Craighead: Christian Family Farm, Cash
- Greene: Felty/Rowe families, Delaplaine
- Lawrence: Richey and Doty families, Walnut Ridge
- Mississippi: Dalton and Skiver Dilldine, Blytheville
- Poinsett: Joe, Wade and Will Drace, Tyrnza
- Randolph: Kent and Blake Bennett, Pocahontas

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If you suffer an injury on the job to one of your spinal discs, you will feel the results in back pain and rigidity that may come with even a slight movement. Spinal disc problems are not likely to correct themselves. They are much more likely to become worse until you receive treatment.

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Dr. John Bibb

Your employer's workmen's compensation insurance includes treatment by a chiropractic physician. Without resorting to drugs or surgery, he will use highly skilled manipulation techniques and other therapies to help restore the spinal disc to healthy functioning and relieve your pain and discomfort.

When's the best time to book international travel?

The truth is — it depends on the destination! Here's a simple breakdown to help you hit that sweet spot:

Caribbean (Mexico, Bahamas & more) — Aim to book 2-5 months out. That's when you'll usually find the best deals on flights and resorts — plus, you'll still have a great selection of rooms and cruise dates. Booking earlier is great, but you still have time to find what you're looking for if you wait.

Canada — Whether it's fall foliage or a cozy ski trip, Canada's magic is worth the planning. Book at least 2 months ahead, but if you want more options — especially for popular spots — 6-8 months out is even better.

European — Europe's a different ballgame.



Stephanie Hancock

With competitive hotels and flight schedules that shift fast, the best strategy is to plan early — up to 11 months in advance. You'll get the first pick of cute boutique hotels and those better flights.

Last minute trips are fun, but can be stressful. If you are planning international travel, booking in advance is always best.



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travelmation.net/stephaniehancock

How can I increase the value of my home?

There are several ways to increase a home's value (without breaking the bank) and help it sell faster.

Painting is the easiest way to increase value and make it more attractive to potential buyers. Painting can give the home a fresh, clean look. Neutral colors are the way to go. Painting can lighten and brighten any room!

Updating your kitchen is a great way to increase value, as well. Change out those tired old drawer pulls with a newer style.



Sandra Kelly

If your cabinets look worn, painting them can also give a fresh look. Make sure that all doors and drawers open and close properly.

Adding a tile backsplash is also a great way to add value without too much extra expense.

How do I budget for advertising in my small business?

Advertising is an investment in the success of your business and is an important part of your overall marketing plan. The paid part of your marketing plan (advertising) should be a percentage of your budgeted sales.

If your sales last year in that month were \$20,000 and you are setting your budget based on expected sales of \$25,000 for this year, your advertising budget for the month should be at least \$2,500.



Dina Mason

That advertising budget needs to be planned with a good media mix and great creative that promotes your brand and has an immediate call to action to make your register ring.

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What is a Dermatology Certified Nurse Practitioner (DCNP)?

As a DCNP, I am an advanced practice nurse with specialized training and national certification in dermatology. This means I diagnose and treat a full range of skin, hair, and nail conditions – from acne, eczema, and rashes to skin cancer screenings and cosmetic dermatology.

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Nancy Pemberton
APRN, DCNP

dermatologic surgeons to provide coordinated, evidence-based care for a wide range of skin conditions.

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Are there stretches my adolescent athlete can do to lessen the impact of sports on their body?

Every practice or game should start with a light warm-up and end with stretching. Stretching should create a feeling of mild tension, not sharp pain.

Examples of beneficial stretches for athletes include: Hip flexor and groin stretch (e.g. a forward lunge) to open up the hips and reduce strain on the lower back; Hamstring stretch (e.g. seated toe-touch or a gentle standing toe touch/cross-over) to protect the back of the thighs and knees; Quadriceps stretch (e.g. standing quad stretch) to keep the front of the thighs flexible; 4-Calf stretch (e.g. heel drop off a step or wall calf stretch) to relieve tightness



Dr. Charbel Maroun
Chief of Orthopedics and Spine Surgery

in the lower legs and Achilles tendons.

It is also important to set aside time to build strength and rest and recover. Young athletes can enjoy sports today while protecting their bodies for tomorrow.



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Premiere Magazine is searching for 20 individuals under 25 who are making a big impact in their community. These young leaders will have the opportunity to be recognized for their contributions to our community in the November edition of Premiere! Don't miss this chance to tell us all about the amazing people in your life.

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Caring For Senior Pets

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

BEING PROACTIVE VITAL



Just like with people, care for your senior pet can become a bit more intensive. As they start to visibly age on the outside, all of their internal organs are aging with them. Sounds like a silly thing to say, right? But this is often not considered, especially when your pet has always been healthy.

We see these changes reflected in their bloodwork, their ability to move around/mobilize, and even on their muzzle, which grays or turns white. Taking care of your senior pet can be made easier when tackling things on the front end. Ensuring that your pet is getting its biannual wellness exams and wellness bloodwork panels will help to put you in the best position of proactive care and not just reactive care.

I would say the most common thing I deal with for senior care is arthritis. Arthritis affects almost all of the senior pets I see. In large breed dogs, I see it affect them generally any time after the age of seven. In my small breed dogs it sometimes does not affect them until after the age of ten.

Cats hide their symptoms of pain very well. Cats generally do not limp and do not vocalize when they are experiencing pain; they are very stoic. Most times with cats, the only symptoms you get are that they are not jumping on the surfaces they used to jump on, or are more reluctant to jump on those surfaces, and sometimes start having accidents outside of their litter pan because it is too painful to crawl into it.

I have had cats that have presented for a presumed urinary tract

infection because of urinary accidents in the house, and that cat simply had arthritis and could not get into the litter box. When the litter box was moved, and the cat's pain was managed, that cat began to use its litter pan again.

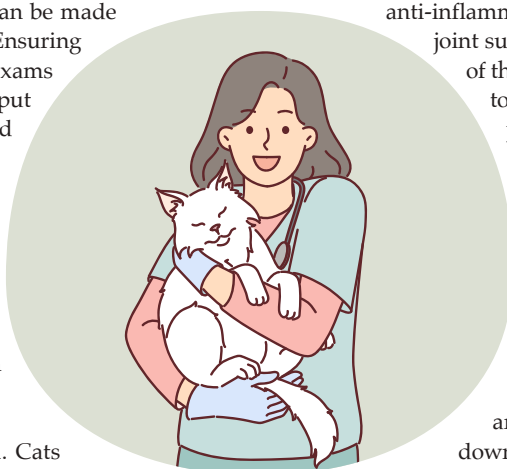
There are numerous ways to manage pain and to help slow down the progression of arthritic disease, but it depends on your pet and its lifestyle. However, most pain management should consist of an anti-inflammatory to relieve the symptoms of arthritis, a joint supplement to help slow down the progression of the disease, and laser/Hydro/physical therapy to further manage the disease progress, decrease pain, and manage symptoms.

Now, I don't want to harp only on arthritis for too long, although I could pretty well go for days. So I will end the arthritis conversation here and will transition to something different.

Oftentimes in senior pets, the changes in their body, which are occurring due to age, are not things we can see physically slow them down. By this, I mean their internal organ function.

The brain, heart, kidneys and liver are amongst the hardest working organs in the body. Disease of any of these organs can easily be disguised as something else, or just a general slowing down.

Dogs and cats with heart disease are generally more lethargic and easily exhausted. Most people think this is because they are just getting older, but the problem is actually their heart function. Heart disease can also present as a cough, which can again be confused with



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seasonal allergies, kennel cough, or drinking water too fast. With decreased liver and kidney function, typically the first thing that is observed at home is a diminished appetite. And again, this can be confused as “oh, they’re just getting older and don’t want to eat as much because they’re not doing as much.”

This might be true, but this is where the wellness bloodwork panels come in handy. If these panels are checked regularly, then any variation of their normal pattern can be seen much sooner. By this, I mean that if your pet’s blood sugar always runs around 75 to 80, and suddenly I see that it is around 140, which is still considered normal, but this is almost double for your pet, then I will know to start monitoring closely for any other signs of diabetes and to get on the preventative side of diabetes through diet and possibly weight loss, which can occur in them just like it does in us.

Now, another common occurrence in senior pets, which is one of the toughest to talk about, is cancer. I see cancer in pets of all ages, although it is more common in my older patients. There are certain breeds that we see certain forms of cancer in more frequently; we call these predisposed breeds. A few of these predisposed breeds I see commonly in this area are Labrador retrievers, Boxers, Golden retrievers, German Shepherd dogs, Great Danes, Rottweilers, French Bulldogs, Siberian Huskies and Beagles.

Until recently the only way to diagnose cancer was to perform diagnostic imaging; by that, I mean radiographs, ultrasound, CT scans, MRIs, etc. However, there is now a test that can detect cancer before any symptoms or clinical signs are even observed! How awesome is that? I repeat: There is now a test that can detect seven forms of canine (doggy) cancer before the dog has any symptoms.

Now, this test is still new but I find it completely amazing that we can detect a problem before we even realize anything has changed. This is a test that will be offered with my senior wellness package to give a more comprehensive wellness screening. You may be wondering, how does it work and what has to be done? It’s super easy. It’s a blood test. I draw blood from a patient as part of its normal senior visit, submit the prepared blood sample to the lab, and get the results for this particular test back in just a few days.

I have seen cancer do some pretty vicious things to pets. It generally starts small and then can get out of control quickly. If there is something that I could do before it is a major issue and could buy that pet more quality time with its family just with a simple blood test, then why not?

By monitoring wellness blood work, routine physical examinations, and journaling any changes with their normal behavior, it will put you in the best possible position to not only help extend your pet’s life, but to promote the quality of its life. The best medicine is preventative medicine. Being proactive is a major part of medicine, especially with senior pets — don’t wait until a small change becomes a major problem!

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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Bluegrass Festival

Highlight at Collins

The annual Big Grass Bluegrass Festival July 25th and 26th at the Historic Collins Theatre in Downtown Paragould featured performances by some of the outstanding names in bluegrass music.

Performers included The Tennessee Mafia Jug Band, Lindley Creek, Donna Ulisse and the Poor Mountain Boys, Breaking Grass, The Kody Norris Show and The Appalachian Road Show.



Brandon Harper, Joe Wessell



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT



Jamie Dial, Jennifer Harper, Tim Lamb



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Glen Sain
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AG FOR AUTISM *Community Fest*

Ag for Autism, which began in 2012 as a group of agriculture related businesses teaming up to support local kids on the autism spectrum, has grown into a community-wide movement.

Sarah Caples, executive director of Ag for Autism, said the growth of the organization has been exponential.

"While our roots are in farming, today we partner with businesses of all kinds to raise funds and award grants that give families access to life-changing therapies, tools and resources," Sarah said.

The group held its annual Community Fest at Harmony Gardens in Jonesboro on July 26th with more than 500 in attendance.

"Community Fest is our favorite day of the year — the day we get to give it all back," Sarah said. "All year long, Ag for Autism hosts fundraisers and events to raise money for children on the autism spectrum. Then, at Community Fest, we gather with families, friends and supporters to award grants that make a real difference."

This year alone, Ag for Autism awarded over 220 grants and gave back more than \$200,000 in the form of sensory items, iPads for speech therapy, sensory room items for nonprofits and schools, and much more.

"It's a celebration of generosity, community spirit, and seeing those smiles when needs are met," Sarah said.

More information on how to become involved can be found at agforautism.org





PHOTOS COURTESY OF MOMENTS BY MAX



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 18 - NEAHBA
+ Ag for Autism
Golf Tournament
at Sage Meadows

Oct. 4 - Carnage
4 a Cause Derby
Greene County
Fairgrounds

Sept. 27 - Sensory
Day at Let's
Roll Bowling in
Paragould

Feb. 8 - Super
Bowl Bash at
Harmony Gardens
in Jonesboro



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THE ADVENTURES OF

Lester

BY VICKI McMILLAN



Happy September! Lester here, to tell you about my latest adventure — that just happens to fit right in with this month's focus on agriculture.

I (and Vicki and Mac, of course, since I can't legally drive) just returned from Door County, Wisconsin. The farms in Illinois and Wisconsin - mostly corn - were beautiful rolling fields, not flat like we see here. And they did not have those big alien-looking things that water the crops! The farmers mowed the edges of the fields, and that, combined with the beautiful old barns and farmhouses, made for a picturesque drive through the countryside. No interstates for us, even though Mac is a retired civil engineer.

After setting up camp in Egg Harbor, we toured a cherry orchard, Hyline Cherry Orchard. It was cherry picking time and there were several "you pick 'em" places that were busy. Each orchard had a market where they sold their cherries, plus all kinds of jams, jellies and such. You could also get a guided tour of the orchard with educational programs on planting and harvesting cherries. Likewise with apple orchards, although not as prevalent in the area.



A short ferry ride to Washington Island found us in a lavender farm. Fragrant Isle has 21 acres of beautiful lavender plants that produced the best smell ever! Again, there were educational programs that described extracting oil from the lavender plant and the varied uses of lavender. Lavender blooms are used for everything from frou-frou things (candles, bath oils, soaps) to pharmaceutical additives for treating anxiety and insomnia. Also they

made some fine lavender ice cream! And of course the farm had a market that sold all of the frou-frou items.

And who among us can pass up a winery?? Door Peninsula is the oldest winery in Door

County and third oldest in Wisconsin. Started in an old schoolhouse, the vineyards now include grapes from California and Washington, plus five varieties from Wisconsin suited for the shorter growing season and harsh winters. The winery has tastings, a restaurant, music and, of course, a gift shop.



Ol' Lester being a city dog had to do a little research and come to find out, these types of farms fall into the category of agritourism. Agritourism basically is bringing the public (tourists) onto the farm. Agritourism educates the public on various phases of planting and harvesting, and brings increased dollars to the farm. Examples that we all know are you pick 'em farms, dude ranches, wineries and even farm camps and/or campgrounds (think Harvest Host).

We have some examples of agritourism here in our area including Juniper Tree Meadery, Pumpkin Hollow and Jackson Farms. This ol' scrappy pound dog is going to try these when the weather is cooler. That's all for now - go to Door County if you get the chance.

Your traveling canine,

Lester



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GREENWAY HOSTS ARKANSAS' FIRST PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION JOHN DEERE AUTONOMOUS TRACTOR

Greenway Equipment welcomed guests to the first public demonstration of the John Deere Fully-Autonomous Tractor in the region during the Greenway Technology Showcase, held at the Greenway Equipment Tech Farm in Newport in July.

Attendees — including farmers, legislators, industry partners and media — experienced firsthand how John Deere's newest autonomous solutions are reshaping the future of farming. The event featured live

demonstrations of the autonomous 8R tractor, See & Spray™ precision spraying system, Weave Automation, and other advanced technologies now available through Greenway. "This was a milestone moment, not just for Greenway, but for agriculture in our region," said Bill Midkiff, CEO of Greenway Equipment. "We were proud to be the first to show how this level of autonomy can work on local farms, and how these technologies can give producers back their most valuable resource — time."

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The John Deere autonomous system is available as a precision upgrade for MY22 and newer 9R and 9RX tractors, as well as MY21 and newer 8R and 8RX models. Select MY25 John Deere tractors and tillage tools come autonomy-ready from the factory. The system uses 16 roof-mounted cameras to provide a full 360-degree perception view around the tractor and attached tillage tool, helping the machine safely navigate and work independently in the field.

“Autonomy doesn’t mean replacing the farmer — it’s about empowering them,” said Dr. Jeff Barnes, Greenway’s Vice President of Technology. “This technology helps operators finish more work in less time, extend their working windows, and reallocate labor to higher-value tasks when it matters most.”

To assist with the transition to autonomous operation, John Deere has integrated these systems into the precision ag tools many customers already use. Technologies like AutoPath™, AutoTrac™ Turn Automation, and John Deere Operations Center™ Mobile are central to the seamless performance of these autonomous solutions in real-world conditions.



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MOORE on MANNERS

Age-appropriate Table Manners

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE



As we celebrate agriculture and the popularity of farm-to-table dining continues to grow, it's a good time to consider what are age-appropriate manners and when is it a good time to try to teach table manners?

In most cases, it's never too early for preschool and school age children to start learning basic table manners. Of course, table manners should be age appropriate. Even little ones can understand some basic rules. A four-year-old may not be able to use a spoon or fork easily, but he or she can try to say "Please" and "Thank You."

Quote of the Day:

"The dinner table is the center for the teaching and practicing not of just table manners but of conversation and consideration."

- Judith Martin

A work in progress

Of course, dining disasters are often the rule rather than the exception. However, a little practice and patience can help a child feel comfortable and confident no matter the dining situation.

When helping a child learn table manners, developmental skills vary, so what is applicable for one child may not be appropriate for another. Learning table manners is a work in progress. It won't happen over just one meal. Continued guidance and consistency are keys to success. Practicing table manners at home can also help a child feel more self-assured when going out to eat and dining with others.

Quick tips

Preschoolers can begin to try:

- To wash their hands before eating.
- To say "Please" and "Thank You."
- To stay in their chair for a short period of time.
- To be quiet while grace is being said.
- Not to throw utensils.
- Not to grab food from the plates of others.

School-age children can begin to try:

- To place a napkin in their lap.
- To learn table placements.

- To wait until everyone is seated before eating.
- To leave the table before blowing their nose.
- To hold eating utensils correctly.
- To cut meat into bite size pieces.
- To chew with their mouth closed.
- To say "Excuse Me" if they burp at the table.
- To keep elbows off the table.
- To sit up straight at the table.
- To wait to be excused from the table.

The payoff

Are table manners relevant? Dinner may be less stressful if you don't remind your child about appropriate table manners, but he or she may not be better for it in the long run. Begin with the basics. There is a payoff. Later, when your child is invited to a friendly function, has dinner with the parents of a romantic interest or has his or her first job interview over lunch or dinner, they will thank 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 llmooreparagould@gmail.com.

8th Annual CASA Classic

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FOR CHILDREN
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CASA CLASSIC PROVIDING HELP FOR CHILDREN

The 8th annual CASA Classic Golf Tournament, set for October 7th, offers individuals and businesses the opportunity to join forces to support children in the 2nd Judicial District of Arkansas.

The event, which benefits Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), will be held at Sage Meadows Golf Course with tee times at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m.

There are opportunities to participate in the tournament as a sponsor, team or both.

"The CASA Classic brings together community leaders, businesses and supporters for a day of golf and networking," Angela Tate, executive director for CASA of the 2nd Judicial District of Arkansas, said. "All proceeds will directly support CASA's mission to advocate for abused and neglected children in our community."

Teams of four are invited to compete in the tournament, and players of all skill levels are welcome.

"Whether you're a seasoned golfer or just looking for a fun way to support a great cause, there's a place for you at the CASA Classic," Angela said.

There are a variety of sponsorship options available, according to Angela, who said she encourages businesses to get involved.

"Help provide a voice for abused and neglected children in foster care who need a consistent, caring adult advocating for their best interest," she said.

For more information on sponsorship or to register a team, call 870-273-5415 or email angie.tate@neacasa.org.

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Lifelong Friends

**High School Pals Back in
School Together 40 Years Later**

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

TOGETHER Again

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

(Editor's Note: Richard Brummett, who wrote this article, also served as the infield coach for the 1976 and 1977 Paragould American Legion teams.)



They hugged, they laughed, they shed a few tears. Assembling as a group for the first time since their remarkable two-year state tournament run in the late 1970s, more than a dozen former Paragould American Legion baseball players and coaches sat down for an afternoon of fond remembrances in May.

With Gary Washington serving as their head coach, Paragould's 1976 team finished with a 44-11 record and a third place finish in the state tournament. Ten players returned for the 1977 version, and Paragould went 35-13 and finished second in the state to Pine Bluff. But just as important as the impressive win-loss records and tournament showings was the fact that these players set the tone of high expectations for the local Legion program. Making the team was no longer enough; you were expected to compete for the state championship and Paragould became a highly respected program throughout the state, thanks to the performance of those two teams.

Having talked for years about getting the club back together, several admitted those conversations always seemed to be more talk than action and another year would pass by, and then another, and suddenly 49 had

disappeared since they last took the field. But it was another sort of passing that finally got the ball rolling, according to Randy Bishop, who was one of the driving forces behind the reunion's happening. "We lost Clifton (Garmrath) a few years ago and even though he wasn't on the Legion team, he was part of us, a friend to most of us," Bishop, a slick-fielding second baseman explained. "And then we lost Randy Rogers, and Kerwin Hurt, and then Keith Milligan had serious medical issues ... it made me realize we were only going to lose more as time went by. You said it best, you know; you said the roster is only going to get shorter from now on. So I said, 'We've got to get this done.'

"I was blessed to talk to the guys from time to time and we'd always say we're gonna get together and then we wouldn't follow through. Me and Randy Rogers started talking about it five, six, seven years ago and we kind of dropped the ball on it. We all talked again about making it possible and in about two days Rick Poe and Mark Miller and me had it up and together. It was just one of those God things. It happened. And when we got in touch with the other players the big question was, 'Can Coach Brummett be there? And can



Coach Washington be there?' To the guys, that was everything. Y'all were so special to us."

With help from Miller, an All-State catcher on the 1976 team, the Paragould Country Club was reserved and the former players, the two coaches and even the bat girl met up.

Washington, who spent five years in professional ball with the New York Yankees and Pittsburgh Pirates organizations, has many times referred to these particular teams as two of his all-time favorites, explaining why by saying, "First of all, they were very, very talented. That's Number One, at almost every position. They all had strengths. They

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Front from left, coaches Richard Brummett and Gary Washington; Randy Bishop, Kevin Reddick, Donald Barker; back from left, Tim Wooldridge, Gene Robinson, Ron McCreless, Mark Miller, Rick Poe, Kelly Kelley, Tommy Jumper, Gary Winn, Mitch Nelson and Archie Johnson.

were special in that they all fit into the way I like to play the game. They had some good fundamentals and they were so appreciative about learning things they had not heard before. I had learned so much in pro ball that I could teach them and you with the infield, they respected you and the way you handled things. And then, on top of that, they were just winners in almost every aspect."

"Best summer of my life," Miller said of the '76 season. "Practiced hard as a team, played hard as a team and most of all we wanted to enjoy the moment because it will never happen again. We did all that as a team and we were successful that summer. I made lifelong relationships with my teammates and coaches that I still cherish today and not only at reunions but through staying in contact with them. I look at my scrapbook often and relive that summer 49 years ago and it seems like yesterday."

Washington reeled off names that come to mind when thinking of the two clubs, names that were important to the program he was trying to build: Randy Rogers, Rick Poe, Joel Philhours, Mike Kinman, Kevin Reddick, Donald Barker, Mitch Nelson, Bishop, Miller. "I could name almost every one of them," he said, "because every guy on those teams knew what it took to be a part of a winning team. Number One, they were willing to learn; Number Two, they actually played that way. We could put the game in the players' hands; that's what the pros want to do, and that's what we could do with this bunch."

Several of the players were All-District and All-State performers over the two seasons, almost all of them played college baseball at some level, and Rogers, Poe and Nelson all signed professional contracts.

"Man, so many good players," Washington

recalled, with names like Milligan, Archie Johnson, Gary Winn, Gene Robinson, Tommy Jumper, Ron McCreless, Scott Bowlin, Steve Tarry and Tim Wooldridge again coming to mind. "What great guys we had, and we also had great parents. They rode the bus with us sometimes and those guys just got along so well."

His daughter Kelly – now Kelly Kelley – was the bat girl and she touched the players' hearts at the reunion, telling them how much they meant to her childhood. "I thought it was the greatest time of my life," she said. "Me, a little girl, hanging around with all these good-looking teenage boys. I was in Heaven."

She was also sometimes amazed, and shocked, at the players' antics in the dugout. "But I didn't care," she said, referring to spitting contests and such. "I thought I was the luckiest girl on Earth."

Bishop called the reunion "just a blast. One of the best things I've done. And Kelly was great, the life of the party. Not in the least did we have any idea of the impact on her. Her words were so refreshing. None of us guys even thought about having an impact on her."

They had an impact on lots of people. Home crowds were large as baseball fans joined in with family and friends to watch an excellent on-field product. "I just wish the readers could know we not only did it for the city of Paragould, but the community as a whole and our love for the game," Reddick, the strong-armed shortstop, said. "This is so cool. I had a great time when we got together. We should have been doing it sooner before we had lost so many but it was great. I hadn't seen Gene Robinson or Donald Barker since the last game we played, I don't guess. It was great."

So, as the conversation bounced from



Barker's dramatic game-winning home run that disappeared into the darkness of the Blytheville night and wrapped up the first state tournament slot, to the day Milligan plunked a Memphis batter in retaliation, and on to Poe's lining a base hit in the state tournament when the other team was trying to intentionally walk him, the day went down as one to go into the victory column.

"We will have this reunion again, probably next year," Bishop said. "What a joy, what a blessing. We will try to do it again next year and get those who couldn't get to this one involved."

The coaches also hope for a return visit, just to be around players who brought joy to their lives as well. "Every one of those kids was this way ..." Washington said, "they wanted to win and were willing to do what it took to win. And, boy, were they fun to coach."

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This cottage is named after Murl Anthony "Tony" White.

ACTIVITIES AT BELLE MEADE

The second annual Vassar House Mother-Daughter Tea Party was held Saturday, June 7th, at the Green House Cottages of Belle Meade. Covers were laid for 25 guests, and the atmosphere was that of the Plaza in Manhattan. Tea, scones with cream and two types of jams, petit fours and tea sandwiches were enjoyed by attendees.



The residents of the Green House Cottages of Belle Meade have enjoyed a variety of balloon-related activities recently including balloon exercises, making hot air balloon cupcakes and playing balloon ball.



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Memorials That Stand the Test of Time

BLAZING A TRAIL *Together*

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

When Kimberly Warmath and Janet Baugh-Ortman were students together as members of the Valley View High School class of 1981, they had no way to know they would be students together again more than 40 years later.

But thanks to Act 678, which was passed by the Arkansas Legislature in 1975, they are doing just that as online students at the University of Arkansas and with free tuition to boot. The state law provides that Arkansas residents who have reached the age of 60 can attend any state-funded institution at no cost, though fees and textbook costs still apply.

For Kimberly and Janet, their journey back to school is just part of the trail they have blazed together through the years, sometimes side-by-side and sometimes further away, but somehow it seems, often in the same direction.

After graduating from high school, both married and had children and then found themselves as single moms, going back to school at Arkansas State University. Kimberly earned her associate's degree in nursing in 1995, and Janet, who had completed her LPN at Delta Vo Tech completed her ASN at Arkansas State in 1998.

"We've had so many similar life experiences," Kimberly said. "But we come from totally different backgrounds. She's a farm girl and I'm a military brat. ... We are polar opposites, but we are alike where it counts."

Janet said those differences just make their friendship stronger. "Through this journey of school, we complement each other," she said. "The things that I'm weak in, she's strong in, because we are very opposite and our brains work differently."

The two would end up spending several years working together at the



Jonesboro Human Development Center during their lengthy nursing careers. Then in the fall of 2023, they made the decision to start working toward their bachelor's degrees.

"It would have been extremely easy for both of us to have gone back and just got our BSN, but we felt like we wanted to learn something else," Kimberly said. Both decided to work toward a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies, but each selected their areas of emphasis based on their interests in serving others.

Kimberly's minors are in law, social work and addiction studies. "When I retire I want to volunteer with women in the court system. I feel like those areas would enhance my nursing skills and that I might could be of service to someone stuck in the system."

Janet chose to focus on criminology, social work and child advocacy. "I am a graduate of the citizens police academy," she said, noting she serves as an ambassador for the Jonesboro Police Department. "I was always interested in criminology and would have done law enforcement

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had I not done nursing. I have just eaten those classes up.”

She said she would love to be able to incorporate her therapy dogs and the things she is learning in her volunteer work with the police department.

Both ladies said the biggest struggle with going back to school was the technology, but they praised the staff at the University of Arkansas, as well as their sons for assisting them with the online program.

“We always joke and say we birthed our IT departments,” Kimberly said.

Kimberly graduated with her bachelor’s degree in December of 2024 and is now starting on her master’s in interdisciplinary studies, while Janet, who has taken it a bit slower due to other activities she is involved with, has three classes left for her bachelor’s degree. The two did take one full-time semester together so they could try to make the Chancellor’s List, which they were able to easily do as straight-A students.

“You’re a different student,” Kimberly said of going back to school at an older age. “You are very serious about your work. There is no frivolity to it.”

She said she also felt a responsibility to the other students, because she felt going back as an adult, they had things they could learn from her. Janet agreed, adding the instructors into the mix as well.

“I can’t tell you how many times the instructors have sent me something saying it’s really neat to see your perspective, because a lot



of the courses are geared toward how are you going to use this in your career and I’m not – I’m going to use it in volunteerism.”

For those considering taking advantage of the tuition program, Kimberly’s advice is, “Do it! Start out slow, get your feet wet. Ask for help.”

Janet said she would feel unfulfilled if she had not continued her education. “I consider myself probably a lifelong learner,” she said. “I’m not even going to say I’m going to stop with a master’s. I might just take a class here and there. But I think if you ever thought that you couldn’t do it, you can.”

Both ladies said they would be happy to talk to anyone who is considering taking advantage of Act 678 at one of the state’s colleges or universities.

“I would say don’t be afraid,” Janet added. “It’s never too late to follow your dreams.”



Lindsey Hagood
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TD Richardson Memorial *Continuing a Legacy of Care*

BY ALYSSA RICHARDSON



TD Richardson Memorial honors the late Dr. Travis D. Richardson — an orthopedic spine surgeon lovingly remembered for his love for a good Hawaiian shirt, his dedication to medicine, and his genuine care for his family and patients. Having grown up in a small town himself, Dr. Richardson had a big heart for small communities. With him, he carried compassion and steadfast determination — qualities that fueled his commitment to the community he loved. He founded the medical clinic and surgical center at 1507 Linwood Drive to meet the needs he saw in his community: long wait times, overburdened providers, and patients traveling far for essential care. His mission was to better serve people like him.

When his work was unexpectedly cut short, his son, Nick Richardson, knew he had to carry forward what his father had begun. Naming the clinic after him was the first step, which was both a tribute to his work and a promise to continue his legacy. The American flag in the logo reflects not only Dr. Richardson's pride in his country and community reinforced by his time in the U.S. National Guard, but also his unwavering commitment to serving others.

Today, Dr. Travis Richardson's legacy continues under the leadership of his son and continued partnership of his former colleagues, including his brother, Dr. Stacy Richardson. Nick Richardson leads the four independent private practices located in the

facility — Richardson Pain Solutions, CR Doc Family Care, SARC Heart and Vein, and Integrative Orthopedics (formerly known as SARC Orthopedics) — ensuring they operate smoothly to provide privately-owned specialized care for the community in one location.

"In a healthcare world dominated by large corporate systems, our approach is different. There's no corporate chain dictating how our physicians practice. Each practice within our building remains independently operated by the physician that you have an appointment with. And the part our patients love most is that no matter what you're coming in for, you're greeted by the same people who already know you because our medical assistants and care teams work across specialties. So, whether you're here for pain management, cardiology, family medicine, or orthopedics, you're seeing the same familiar faces. It makes your care easier, connected, and a whole lot more personal. Another bonus for our patients is that our setup makes it easy to schedule appointments for different specialties back-to-back on the same day." — Nick Richardson, Chief Operating Officer

The second half of the facility is a fully-decked out surgical center (including a brand-new cardiac cath lab), where the physicians you see in the clinic provide innovative procedures and surgeries to further enhance patients' care. This coordinated approach means patients receive care from the same trusted physicians in both settings. Tracie Yielding describes her experience, starting from her care at the clinic and completing a procedure at the surgical center:

"I first came to TD Richardson Memorial because of lower back pain. I saw Dr. Stacy Richardson with Richardson Pain Solutions. My first impression of the clinic and staff was that everybody and everything was excellent. Everybody listened and explained everything clearly. Dr. Richardson suggested that we do a radiofrequency (ablation) on my lower back, which is a procedure where the nerves were



Dr. Travis Richardson (left) and son, Nick Richardson, at the 2021 AOMA Conference where Dr. Richardson won the "White Coat Memorial Award," which says, "In recognition of someone who gives abundantly in all they do. To honor those that come before them and to support the development of those that come after. In service to the osteopathic profession so that they may better advance the health of their patients for generations to come."

burnt. At the surgery center, the staff treated me like family. I am type two diabetic and the staff took special care of me to make sure my condition was managed while I was having my procedure. I had no pain during my procedure and the recovery was easy with no problems after. My lower back is now fine and I'll be coming back to get my upper back done soon. I highly recommend TD Richardson Memorial to others." — Tracie Yielding

At its heart, TD Richardson Memorial is more than a place to see a doctor — it is the continuation of a family's promise to care for its community. Every visit supports not only your health, but also the local families who live and work alongside you, including ours. We believe healthcare should feel personal, familiar, and easy to access. Without having to navigate a massive medical campus or search for a parking spot.



Brothers Dr. Travis Richardson (left) and Dr. Stacy Richardson during their time in the U.S. National Guard.

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Dr. Stacy Richardson has a background in anesthesia, emergency medicine, and pain management at both the university hospital and private practice level, giving him a unique perspective on treating patients in pain. At Richardson Pain Solutions, he combines this expertise with innovative procedures and modern pain therapies designed to target the root of discomfort and restore function. His mission is to truly listen to each patient, understand their needs, and deliver compassionate care that allows patients to move past pain.



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Knee pain was a way of life for Joan Blagdon.

"They would hurt, from sports when I was younger, you know getting older, getting osteo arthritis and things, and I was working out at the gym and things and then my knees started hurting."

A QC Kinetix ad was the nudge she needed to pick up the phone and call. On the other end Chris Enger, who co-owns the local clinic with Scott Holden, filled her in on the regenerative medicine procedures the clinic offers and the fact that the first consultation is free.

She said her first impression during that consultation was very positive. "Everything made sense. I was being injected with my own blood products, which was a bonus for me. So I decided yeah, let's try it and see what happens."

Joan decided to do the treatment on her right knee. She said the experience was good from the first injection and with each subsequent injection she discovered her knee was feeling good.

"I've had no adverse affects," she said. "Everything has been going along and it's been feeling good."

She said Chris' experience as a physical therapist helped when she had some tightness following the second injection. "He gave me some exercises to do to help with that."

Joan said it means a lot that the clinic is run by people like Chris and Scott. "They are very lovely people," she said. "You get the feeling that you're cared for."

A retired nurse herself, she said quality of care is very important to her.

"When I've had questions, Chris got ahold of the physician who is in charge of these clinics and within that same day by that afternoon I had the answer," she said. "They are very efficient."

She said she also experienced that quality care from the clinic's nurse practitioner Lisa Sherrill, technician Erin Stovall, and front desk receptionist Kaytlyn Ferguson.

As she completed her treatments at the beginning of August, she was looking forward to the things she was going to be able to do more easily with her improved knee, but she also acknowledged she was going to miss the staff she had grown used to seeing.

"I was treated with respect and care and just friendliness," she said. "I always felt like I was cared about."





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FRIENDS

In the Friendly City

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

"Long friendships are like jewels, polished over time to become beautiful and enduring." -- Celia Brayfield

Friendships that stand the test of time are as precious as any gift one may possess. Knowing someone is just a phone call away during any of life's ups and downs is priceless; understanding someone is willing to give of themselves to help make your life better is what having a true friend is all about.

Seven members of Paragould High School's class of 1974 know the feeling well, fostering relationships that have stood for decades, valuing the closeness that defines their company. It is rare for a large group to remain connected for such a long time – even before their school years for some – but these seven have shared trips, celebrated birthdays and anniversaries, consoled and cajoled for a long, long time.

Lee Beasley, Nan Diggs, Gina Jarrett, Sandy Jetton, Sandy Lynn, Lanie Mangrum and Leslie Reeves share something a lot of people simply don't have. They are friends in every sense of the word and have been seemingly forever. Lanie, Nan and Gina go back to their time as infants due to their families associating with each other. "Nan and I have the longest friendship," Lanie said. "Nan and I were born several months apart. Our friendship began in 1956 as infants in the cradle room at First United Methodist Church Paragould." Sandy Lynn joined them as Woodrow Wilson first-graders, Leslie arrived just before their fourth-grade year, Sandy Jetton in middle school and Lee in the ninth grade.

"We have remained close because we love each other and make an effort to be there when needed," Nan said. "We have been there for our weddings, birth of our children, our children's weddings and death of our parents. The most meaningful for me was how we all came together to care for Leslie. That is true friendship."

"Just a few years ago I was diagnosed with breast cancer at about the



same time that I was going through a divorce," Leslie explained. "My two daughters have small children, and wanted to be with me as much as they could, but my girlfriends said that they could drop everything and take turns being with me for 2-3 days each, nursing me back to health following my mastectomy. Nan Williams Diggs, Sandy Blanton Lynn and Lanie Ratton Mangrum all have medical backgrounds, so they came first, and then Gina came for the last stint when I needed less medical care. You can't imagine how much that meant to me. And I know that we would do the same thing for any of us."

That sense of loyalty and love is one of the defining factors of this collection of different personalities, all the pieces fitting in just the right places to make a beautiful friendship circle. The consensus is that Sandy Jetton is the historian, "queen of photos, selfies, and posting them on Facebook," according to Gina. "I've often thought that she was missing the experience of what was actually happening. But her photos are wonderful reminders of where we've been, what we've done, and who we are."

Nan is calming and levelheaded and teams with Lanie and Sandy Blanton as medical advisors; Lanie is the ladies' "collective memory ... she remembers everything;" Leslie is the avid traveler; Lee is the quietest and Gina the responsible "take charge" person.

They say their relationships blossomed once their children were older, giving them more time for adventures of their own. They've packed their bags and headed off to places like Cozumel, Cabo, and Key West, but enjoy gathering at local restaurants and nearby locations just as much. The most important thing they share, according to Gina, is "such a simple answer, but just our lives ... the good, the bad, the successes, the challenges, the easy and the hard things. When we were

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planning our 40th class reunion, we realized we really, really loved each other's company, that we weren't getting any younger, that our kids could survive without us, our husbands were self-sufficient, and maybe we needed to spend more time together. We started planning a trip away before we got 'old.' I'm the oldest so we decided to go before I turned 60. The '60 in the City' trip was planned for New York City. We do weekends away ... Hardy, Beaver Lake, Fayetteville, and Memphis. We get together for dinner for birthday dinners."



The times shared have provided memorable moments, like the one in Memphis when they were up so late and being so loud that "around 11 p.m. there was a knock on one of the doors," Lanie recalled, "it was hotel management! There had been a report of us being noisy! All I could think of was here are seven, sixty-plus-year-old women getting kicked out of The Peabody Hotel for making too much noise. We still have good laugh over that."

And that's what close, loving friendships are about ... love and laughter. Sandy Jetton says the closeness is prolonged because when together "we don't argue ... we have different opinions on some things but we choose to just enjoy life and each other. We don't need a peacemaker. Getting old with good friends is a blast!"

Those sentiments are echoed by Leslie: "I think that the main thing is that we were so close to begin with. We spent so much time together in high school. But another reason is because we have been intentional about getting together. And we don't let our differences divide us. We differ in our religious perspectives and our political perspectives, but we don't dwell on those differences. We never argue. Sometimes one of us cares more about where we're going, or what we're doing, and we let that person take the lead. We don't have conflicts."

What they have is fun, and they've been having it for a long time, from bunking parties to dances and cruising town to lifelong memories. "I do remember that we were the dreaded class," Nan said. "Several teachers retired after having our class of 1974. I asked Mrs. Haynes why we were the dreaded class. She said we were silly and didn't take anything seriously. We were having a good time. When we go to a restaurant now we are placed in a separate room. On airplanes we are seated in the back. I think those teachers are warning supernaturally these businesses about us."






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Pricilla Boggs was crowned queen at the Chateau on the Ridge Senior Pageant, which was also a fundraiser for Together We Foster. The ladies enjoyed a day of pampering with hair and makeup done by younger pageant girls. The judges for the pageant were also younger pageant contestants. The event netted more than \$500 worth of supplies for Together We Foster.



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WHAT STORY DO YOUR NUMBERS TELL?

BY DR. DYLAN BARNETT
ST. BERNARDS FAMILY MEDICINE SPECIALIST
PARAGOULD DOCTORS CLINIC



Did you know that numbers tell an important story about your health and well-being? When you go to the doctor, we look at several simple health measurements that clue us on how your body is doing on the inside. When we find a number that's off target, it helps us find potential problems, even if you feel perfectly fine. If the problem is detected early, we can rewrite how that number affects your story.

While the health needs of each person are unique, we should all keep tabs on the following:

Blood pressure is one of the most important numbers to track. It shows how hard your blood pushes against your artery walls. A healthy blood pressure is below 120 (top number, or systolic) over 80 (bottom number, or diastolic). High blood pressure can lead to heart attacks, strokes and kidney damage, often without any warning signs.

Blood sugar, or glucose, measures how much sugar is in your blood. If it's too high, it may mean diabetes or prediabetes. A normal fasting blood sugar (eight to 12 hours without eating and only drinking water) is under 100, and an A1C (blood sugar measurement over three months) under 5.7% shows good, long-term control.

Cholesterol numbers tell us about the fats in your blood. Too much of the wrong kinds of fats can clog your arteries, impacting your blood flow and heart function.

Ideally:

- Total cholesterol should be under 200.
- LDL ("bad") cholesterol should be under 100.
- HDL ("good") cholesterol should be over 60.
- Triglycerides should be under 150.

BMI, or body mass index, helps us see if your weight is in a healthy range. A normal BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9. But BMI has limits — it can't tell the difference between muscle and fat. That's why measuring your waist size and body fat percentage can also be important depending upon your body composition. For the general population, a waist under 40 inches for men and 35 inches for women lowers the risk of heart disease.

Other key numbers include your resting heart rate, which should be 60 to 100 beats per minute, your oxygen level, which should be 95 to 100%, and a bone density score if you're over the age of 50 or at risk for osteoporosis.

Knowing your health numbers is one of the simplest and smartest ways to protect your heart, your brain and your life. At Paragould Doctors Clinic inside Paragould Medical Park, our team believes in preventing sickness, not just treating it. We check your numbers, explain what they mean and work with you on a plan to keep you healthy.

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Family Night AT THE BUNGALOWS

Family Night at The Bungalows at Jonesboro is always lots of fun and this time was no exception. The theme was Hawaiian Luau. There was no shortage of fun, smiles and laughter. Everyone seemed to enjoy spending time with their family and the opportunity to meet other residents' families. They especially enjoyed playing Bingo, and we're not sure who enjoyed it the most, the residents or their families! We look forward to seeing what is in store for the next Family Night.



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Celebrations!

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Ruth Brogdon turned 102 on August 18th and she was honored with a birthday celebration at The Bungalows at Jonesboro Assisted Living where she has resided for the past year. Surrounded by family, friends and fellow residents, she received many congratulations and well-wishes. Born in Cave City in 1923, she has one son, two grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She has lived in Jonesboro for the past 64 years. She is best known for owning and operating Ruth's Beauty Shop for many years.

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BY MADELYN MCFARLAND

The ladies laugh as they finish breakfast, their waitress refills their coffee mugs as they chat. Reaching for their purses, Donna Childers says with a wink, "We always go Dutch, and we always pay cash."

Iva Clairday, Deloris Cole, Margie Crocker, Donna Childers and Gloria Foster meet every Thursday morning to play cards (Shanghai Rummy) at Fat City. They've met weekly for cards for over a decade, but their friendship began in elementary school.

They were students together at Brookland in the 1950s. When asked how they used to pass the time, Margie said, "In our younger days,



it was Tom's Cafe in Brookland. After everything, and we'd close it down. Or we drug Nettleton Avenue."

Tom's was the place to be, with teens gathering after games or to blow off steam on the weekend.

"We'd put money in the jukebox and dance ... the boys didn't dance, so the girls danced



together," Margie added. They described the boys lined up against the wall, watching their fun.

"I don't know how he stayed open, because we didn't eat there. Did we?" asked Iva, and they all laughed some more. Upon further discussion, they decided one of them must have ordered a burger and fries at Tom's at least once. "Donna and I were cheerleaders," Deloris said, "so we went until we were hungry."

Laughter is a constant with this bunch. They've spent many vacations, holidays and birthdays doubled over giggling about something. "Oh, that'd be a cute story to tell," Gloria encouraged Donna when sports came up again.

"We had four brothers," Donna said, "so in the seventh grade, I went out for basketball. The coach let me be the manager, and I kept up with the girls' bags. The next year, he told us if we could go and climb up into the attic in the gym to find a uniform, we could play. So we did, and he let us play. And guess what Margie did? She went to the wrong end and shot." Margie then chimed in, "Well, I tripped one of our own girls, so I didn't get to play anymore."

"We went back to cheerleading," Donna said. Gloria scored a total of two points in her short-lived school basketball career. A fact she states proudly.

Life looks a lot differently than it did in the '50s. They've had children



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and grandchildren, been through heartache and grief, but have always been there for each other. The founding members of ETA Pi (I ate a pie) sorority still meet most Thursdays at 8:30 to play cards and drink coffee.

Many milestones have been celebrated along the way, and their newest player, Donna's granddaughter Molly, is giving them all a run for their money.



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Health Matters

BY KARAN SUMMITT

IMPORTANT BONDS



Friendships Make For Better Health

American culture places a high premium on romantic love, but the benefits of strong, lasting friendships may play an even greater role. Psychological research suggests that stable, healthy friendships are crucial for well-being and longevity.

Good friendships come with a whole host of health benefits — so many, in fact, that researchers believe friendships have a more significant impact on our health than romantic relationships. For example, one 10-year Australian study found that older people with a bigger circle of friends were 22% less likely to die within the study period than those with a smaller circle of friends.

Dan Buettner — a National Geographic fellow and author, who studied the people of Okinawa, Japan, where average life expectancy for women is 90 — said, “I argue that the most powerful thing you can do to add healthy years is to cultivate your immediate social network.”

Specifically, Buettner advises people focus on three to five real-world friends, as opposed to online acquaintances on social media. “In general you want friends with whom you can have a meaningful conversation,” he said. “You can call them on a bad day and they will care. Your group of friends are better than any drug or anti-aging supplement and will do more for you than just about anything.”

People who have friends are more satisfied with their lives and less likely to suffer from depression. They’re also less likely to die from all causes, including heart problems and a range of chronic diseases.

Studies have shown the following about the power of friendships:

- In women battling breast cancer, those without any close friends were four times as likely to die from breast cancer as women with the same disease who had at least 10 friends.
- Having a life partner had no effect on a person’s risk of heart attack



or fatal coronary heart disease, but having friendships did. In fact, the researchers found that a lack of social support was as bad for a person’s cardiovascular health as smoking.

- Having friends also can help you deal with stress. Adult friendships, especially high-quality ones that provide social support and companionship, can protect against mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

On the other hand, people who are low in social connection — because of isolation, loneliness, or poor-quality relationships — face an increased risk of premature death. Even having a pet as a friend or companion seems to fill the gap of loneliness and increases the likelihood of living longer and happier.

Friendships grow and are strengthened when we remember that the first step to finding good friends is to be a good friend. Not every person may be your best friend, but psychologists suggest we promote social connections across society — including in school, at work, in church and even in public spaces such as the local grocery store or our favorite gas station. Cross-generational friendships also are important, allowing older ages to feel wanted and needed and younger generations to learn and be encouraged.

3 Tips on Being a Good Friend

In writing for the New York Times’ “Smarter Living,” Tara Parker-Pope offers three tips on how you can strengthen your existing friendships and be a good friend.

1. Make time for your friends. It’s important to make time for your friends even when life gets busy. Consistency is more important than frequency. For instance, creating a tradition, even if it’s infrequent, is one of the best ways to sustain a friendship when life gets busy. One potential strategy might be scheduling friend dates, yearly vacations together or something as simple as phone calls.

Noting that even a few minutes of friendship is important, Parker-Pope emphasizes that you don’t have to dedicate a large amount of time. But if life gets in the way, small gestures will matter a lot to your friends, such as texting photos of things that make you think of them



and making sure you're there for the big life events, like weddings and graduations.

2. Listen to your friends. When a friend is talking to you, it's important to really listen to what they're saying. First, you need to "really listen" to their answers when you ask them a question. Most people don't actively listen when they ask questions like, "How are you?" so demonstrate that you are paying attention by maintaining eye contact and showing friends you are interested in what they have to say.



Second, repeat what you're hearing from them as a way to let them know you do hear them. Make sure the focus of the conversation stays on them.

Third, if you find yourself uncertain about how to respond to a friend, ask how he or she feels about the situation rather than questioning your friend on the details. And while it's fine to relate to them or share some of your own experiences, make sure you don't shift the focus of the conversation onto you.

Lastly, help your friends brainstorm to find solutions to their problems rather than immediately offering advice. To do this, you can ask a question like "What do you want to do about this?"

3. Reveal more about yourself. Self-disclosure "is the building block of intimacy and usually leads to the other person revealing something personal as well."

Arthur Aron, a scientist at State University of New York at Stony Brook, found that pairs of strangers became very close when they completed and shared with each other a questionnaire that asked a series of personal questions. According to Parker-Pope, the takeaway is "we form our deepest connections with friends when we are willing to be vulnerable and venture into personal territory in our conversations."



After having to reduce social contact during the COVID pandemic, researchers realized how connections impact every age and sector of society. We still have a lot to learn about how and why friendships support health and well-being, but what we do know is that if we don't interact regularly, things go really bad and remarkably fast. The take-away truth is simple -- friendships matter to good health and that makes them good medicine.

An ancient Biblical passage from Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 comes to mind:
*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:
 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.
 But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.
 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?
 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
 A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

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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AMMC FOUNDATION TOURNEY TO TEE OFF

The Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (AMMC) Foundation Golf Tournament is Thursday, September 11th, at the Paragould Country Club.

The 2025 Corporate Sponsors are Pepsi, Glen Sain and AllCare Specialty Pharmacy. Glen Sain is also donating a vehicle for

the hole-in-one prize, according to Tori Thompson, Foundation Director.

The AMMC Foundation is still accepting teams and sponsors for this year's tournament. For more information, contact The Foundation at 870-239-7077 or at www.myammc.org/golf-classic.





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MAY 18-22: SPRING IN THE SMOKIES
 (includes Food and Flower Festival at Dollywood!)

MAY 22-JUNE 5: GREEK ISLES & MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE

JUNE 1 - 8: MACKINAC ISLAND (Fly In)

JUNE 15-27: ALASKA LAND AND SEA

JUNE 19-29: SWITZERLAND BY RAIL

End of an Era GCRS SIGNS OFF

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

There was a Heath in charge at the beginning and still a Heath in charge at the end when the Greene County Rescue Squad signed off for the last time in August.

Butch Heath, who founded the unit in 1983 and became its first Chief, was always at the forefront of the squad's activities and served in any capacity necessary while his son, Jeremy, was at the helm on the final



day as the squad ended 42 years of service to the community. The squad's equipment was donated to the Western Greene County Fire Department where it will be used in the same manner by many of the same people, since a number of GCRS members already work with the fire department.

"I will miss it, I'm sure," Butch said. "It has been a rewarding 42 years of community support, particularly the volunteers who gave their time to the county. Most of them stayed on for 10 years or more and every one of them and their families were willing to give to people in their time of need."

Butch saw the squad's inventory of equipment grow from "about three hand tools out of the trunk of my car to what we have today. Way back then we got some programs together and presented it to civic clubs and groups and they got behind us. The Kiwanis Club early on got us some of our first equipment and we started covering all the surrounding counties. We even helped a lot of the other departments get started. We were fortunate."

Butch said when Ron Rooney at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center helped the Rescue Squad get its first ambulance, "it became our first truck and it served us well. We kept growing and over time had four different Jaws of Life and multiple tools. One truck was especially designed for our equipment and another truck was used to get to other places that one couldn't. We were able to get a Hummer to bring patients out when other trucks couldn't get to them. And everything



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was financed by individuals and organizations in Paragould and Greene County."

"Rural fire departments have obtained the equipment and training that are necessary to do the things that we do," Jeremy said, explaining the decision to disband the team. "Basically, the Rescue Squad is gone to the Western Greene County Fire Department. We donated our equipment and trucks and some of our members joined their department. We basically dissolved the unit and as a non-profit we had to either sell the equipment at market value or donate it. Over time grants and funding became available and fire departments are taxpayer funded ... we were all donations. So it really made sense, that the time had come, so to speak."

He said serving as Chief, knowing the hard work and time his father had put into the same position, was an honor, as was being by his side on the squad's final day together. "Being Chief was pretty special, it really was," he said. "It meant a lot to be there as we came to an end. Really to be able to serve with my dad alongside, seeing something he has been so dedicated to. To have that moment, I was blessed to be in that."

"We live in an amazing community, always top notch. People go out of their way to help others, whether it's with time or finances or expertise. The community is a big part of why the Rescue Squad is where it is, with over \$1 million in equipment now."

He mentioned particularly "people like Curtis Davenport, an Executive Member and the longest running chief of more than 20 years. He did a lot of training and research ... he has a wealth of knowledge he shared. And there are so many others."



Near the end of the ceremony Butch signed off with dispatch for the final time and informed them the Rescue Squad was permanently out of service. He and Curtis surrendered the keys to the main rescue trucks to Chief James Potter and board member Bart Rowe of the Western Greene County Fire Department, who then returned them and asked them to get behind the wheel one last time.

"I was not expecting that," Butch said. "I really had mixed emotions. But when I pulled up and saw how well they had it set up, I knew they've got it covered. It's a perfect spot for the equipment with the Western Greene County Fire Department."

"They let him drive our main rescue truck to its new home," Jeremy said. "Dad drove #76 and Curtis drove #77. It was a special, bittersweet day, but a day that needed to happen. The torch has been passed."



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PINK WARRIOR FUN RUN/WALK SUPPORTING NEA PATIENTS, SURVIVORS

On Saturday, October 11th, the St. Bernards Women's Council will host the fifth annual Pink Warrior Fun Run/Walk. All proceeds benefit breast health services in Northeast Arkansas.

The Hytrol Pink Spirit Contest will begin at 8:15 the day of the event. Participants are encouraged to put teams together, wear lots of pink, and share their spirit for those who are impacted by breast cancer.

Survivors and anyone currently undergoing treatment are invited to participate in the Survivor Parade at 8:30 a.m.

The fun run/walk 5K, open to all, will begin at 9 a.m. A one-mile option is also available. The event will begin and end at St. Bernards Health & Wellness.

Early Bird Registration is \$35, and registration will change to \$40 after September 15th. All who register before September 23rd will receive a T-shirt at packet pickup.

Packet pick-up will be Friday, October 10th, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, October 11th, from 7-9 a.m. at St. Bernards Health & Wellness.

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DON'T MISS THESE *Upcoming Events in NEA*



Butterfly Release

September 7th

St. Bernards Advocates will host their annual Butterfly Release on Sunday, September 7th, at 2 p.m. in the St. Bernards Imaging Center parking lot, located at 1144 East Matthews Avenue.

The Butterfly Release features a release of butterflies in honor or memory of loved ones and is a fundraiser for the Flo & Phil Jones Hospice House. Individual butterflies are \$16 each or 10 butterflies for \$150.

For more information or to purchase butterflies, call the St. Bernards Foundation at 870-207-2500 or visit stbernards.info/events.



Heart & Sole

September 20th

The Heart & Sole 5K, 10K and Half Marathon, presented by the Community Health Education Foundation and NEA Baptist, will be Saturday, September 20th.

Participants in the 10K and Half Marathon must sign up as runners, but the 5K has both a running and walking division. The race will start and end at NEA Baptist Hospital at 4800 East Johnson Avenue in Jonesboro.

The race will take place rain or shine. Race participants should register at raceroster.com by September 3rd to receive a T-shirt. Final registration deadline is September 10th.



Beatles at the Ridge

September 20th

Beatles at the Ridge will take place Saturday, September 20th, in Walnut Ridge. The event kicks off at 10 a.m. and the Liverpool Legends take the stage at 7:30 p.m.

About 100 vendors will be set up for the festival, including at least a dozen food vendors. Children's attractions are on tap again this year, as well, and the Abbey Road Car Show will run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Beatles at the Ridge is a free admission music festival that encompasses several city blocks on the north side of Main Street in Downtown Walnut Ridge.



Health Fair

September 26th

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center is hosting a Men's & Women's Community Health Fair Friday, September 26th, from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The free event is open to the public and features health screenings, as well as vendors for all types of health needs for individuals of any age. Several different medical specialties will be represented at the health fair.

The Health Fair will be held in the AMMC Auditorium/Atrium at 900 West Kingshighway in Paragould. For more information, call 870-236-7016.



BBQ Fest

September 26th-27th

The Downtown Jonesboro BBQ and Music Festival will transform the streets of Downtown Jonesboro on Friday and Saturday, September 26th and 27th, with free live music, including Dumpstaphunk and That Arena Rock Show.

The festival also hosts a Kansas City Barbecue Society-sanctioned Arkansas State Championship competition with over \$13,000 in prize money, along with food and craft vendors.

For more information find them on Facebook or visit downtownjonesborobbq.com.



DSO Gala

September 27th

In preparation for its upcoming season, the Delta Symphony Orchestra will host its annual gala on Saturday, September 27th, at 6 p.m. at The Station in Downtown Paragould.

The theme is Diamond of the Season: A Symphony Affair. Music, elegance, fine dining and merriment awaits, all in support of the arts. Black tie with Bridgerton flair is optional.

Individual tickets or tables for 8 are available. For more information visit deltasymphonyorchestra.org or call 870-761-8254.



Greene County Fair

Sept. 1st-6th

The 138th edition of the Greene County Fair is set for September 1st through the 6th at the fairgrounds in Paragould. Armbands are available every day of the fair for ride enthusiasts. This year's fair features a circus, live music, livestock competitions, karaoke, wrestling, two nights of demolition derby action and more.

Wednesday night is Buddy Night, Thursday is Senior Citizens Day, and the fair wraps up Saturday with Kids Day.

For more information, find the Greene County Fair on Facebook.

NEA District Fair

Sept. 18th-27th

The Northeast Arkansas District Fair will take place on the grounds of Nettleton Baptist Church at 7001 Johnson Avenue in Jonesboro from September 18th through September 27th.

The fair, which will be closed September 21st, features nine days of family fun that include two weekends of carnival rides, food, and games on the midway. There will also be live music and entertainment throughout the fair.

For more information, find the Northeast Arkansas District Fair on Facebook.

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HAPPENINGS

WILSON RECEIVES STALLCUP SCHOLARSHIP

Kayne Wilson of Paragould received the 2025 Dr. Tory Lee Stallcup Scholarship. Kayne is a third-year medical student at New York Institute of Technology at Arkansas State University.

The Dr. Tory Lee Stallcup Scholarship was created to encourage local medical students to move back to Greene County to practice medicine. Dr. Stallcup was a beloved physician from Paragould who passed away in August 2012.



Kayne Wilson, Tori Thompson

"The scholarship is a fitting tribute to the legacy of Dr. Stallcup," said Arkansas Methodist Medical Center Foundation Director Tori Thompson, who presented the scholarship award.

"After graduation in 2027, my plans for the future include staying in Northeast Arkansas serving the communities who shaped me into what I am today," stated Kayne Wilson.

JONESBORO ADDS PARK RANGER PROGRAM



The City of Jonesboro has announced the official launch of its new City Park Ranger Program, marking a milestone as one of the first municipalities in Arkansas to develop a full-time initiative blending public safety, law enforcement, community engagement and environmental stewardship.

The inaugural team includes four full-time rangers: Joshua Andrews, Myles Copenhaver, Brandon Curry and Christian Munoz. They began service on July 7th – supporting everything from park safety to community engagement. The rangers will serve across Jonesboro's 26-plus parks, community centers, Downtown Entertainment District, green spaces and citywide special events.

"We're reimagining what public service looks like in our parks, our neighborhoods, and our events," Mayor Harold Copenhaver said. "These park rangers represent a new era of visibility, safety and community pride."



GROUND BROKEN ON NEW JONESBORO AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING

The Jonesboro Airport Commission officially broke ground August 12th on a state-of-the-art terminal to replace the facility lost in the March 28, 2020, EF3 tornado that destroyed much of the city's airport infrastructure — including the 10,000-square-foot commercial terminal.

The loss was a significant setback for a vital regional connection point that links Northeast Arkansas residents, businesses and opportunities to destinations around the world.

"Jonesboro has proven to be a resilient community, rebuilding even stronger. And the new airport terminal is no exception," said Jonesboro Mayor Harold Copenhaver.

The new \$6 million, 13,300-square-foot terminal will feature expanded passenger amenities, food service and upgraded TSA accommodations, making air travel more convenient, efficient and welcoming for travelers.

Officials at the groundbreaking emphasized that the terminal will serve as more than a building — it will be a gateway, a hub of opportunity, and a symbol of momentum for Northeast Arkansas.

Copenhaver thanked partners, leaders and the community for believing in the vision of the new terminal: "The future of air travel in Jonesboro starts right here, right now."



Festival Continues Tradition

The 42nd annual Trumann Wild Duck Festival offers something for everyone October 10th and 11th at the Trumann Sports Complex. PBJ Happee Days Shows of Marion will provide amusement rides and attractions throughout the weekend, and charity bingo begins at 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, followed by large fireworks displays each night at 9.

Attendees can enjoy free live concerts on Saturday at the outdoor stage, featuring local favorites Brewster and Company, Griff "The Drifter" Evans and Southwind Drive Band. Due to growing demand, vendor and group rental locations have been expanded to 80 spaces. Free spaces are available for military and first responders. Discounted rates are offered to nonprofit organizations.

The Wild Duck Festival has its roots in the annual Singer Barbecue that was held each fall for the employees of the Singer Company in Trumann beginning in 1948. Trumann at the time was almost a company town, so the picnic brought out most of the residents, as well as county and state dignitaries. More than 500 attended the first event, and later events were said to have garnered several thousand attendees.

The barbecue was held at the company's Community House; a facility built in 1927 to meet the social and recreational needs of the company's employees. After the barbecue meal had been consumed, participants were treated to live music, games and several levels of beauty pageants that featured the children of Singer employees. In the evening, after a fireworks display, a dance was held inside the Community House that would generally last until midnight.

When the Singer Company closed its facility in Trumann in 1982, the event the community looked forward to each year for more than 30 years, was missed. The following year, the Trumann Area Chamber of Commerce created the Wild Duck Festival, drawing on the region's popularity as a duck hunter's paradise. Over the years, it has grown from a city-wide event to a well-known regional celebration that attracts many thousands of visitors.

"We anticipate welcoming over 20,000 visitors to this year's festival," Bob Sowell, executive director of the Trumann Area Chamber of Commerce, said. "Don't miss this exciting weekend of family-friendly entertainment and community celebration!"

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October always includes stories of inspiration as we feature individuals impacted by breast cancer and highlight resources to assist those still in the fight.

Pastor Appreciation



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Happy Halloween



October is always a fun time for spooky displays, costumes and lots of sweet treats as we celebrate Halloween in NEA.

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