



NEA'S **PREMIERE**
MAGAZINE
FEBRUARY 2026

**A HEART
FOR
ART**

**PASSION
LEADS TO
IMPACT**

**BRAVO: SPOTLIGHTING NEA FAMILIES
A FORMAL AFFAIR: WEDDINGS, PROM & MORE
SCOTT MCDANIEL: PARTNERING TO SUPPORT LOCAL ART**

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ON THE COVER -

Art is more than a passion for Mandy Mooneyham. Art is life, and something she loves to share! Her touch can be seen throughout Downtown Paragould, where she has been involved in several public art projects.

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Cover Photo by Karoline Risker

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From Us to You

February brings hearts and love everywhere — from Valentine's Day to the start of wedding planning season. At Premiere, we celebrate love of community every month, and when our monthly brainstorming group landed on the theme "Art with a Heart for Community," the hardest part was narrowing down the options.

The arts play a vital role in building community pride. Whether it's visual public art, watching friends and neighbors perform on stage, catching a talented local band at a neighborhood venue, or gathering with friends to learn a new craft, each experience fosters pride, togetherness and a strong sense of belonging.

I am continually amazed by the local talent in NEA. Maybe it's because I have a face for radio — and the only instrument I can play is the radio — but this area is overflowing with creativity. Even more impressive is how many artists are willing to share their talents in ways that benefit the community.

Those of us who are less artistically gifted can still do our part by supporting the places where these artists share their work and by encouraging others to join us. Supporting the arts doesn't have to mean funding a mural



or purchasing an expensive piece of art. It can be as simple as buying a ticket to a local production, choosing a restaurant that has local music, or sharing a photo on social media while enjoying a local mural.

Thank you to the talented artists who create **Art with a Heart for Community**. During this season of love, let's all show a little more heart for the arts in our community.

Dina Mason

Dina Mason
General Manager & Publisher
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Our February edition includes a special Formal Affair section, with much of the focus on weddings. I really enjoyed putting together the wedding spotlights for the section, especially learning a little bit about each couple and how they met.

This year my husband and I will celebrate 30 years of wedded bliss in June. Like one of our couples featured this month, Jason and I were also high school sweethearts, but we did not attend the same high school.

After dating our senior year, we did attend college together at Arkansas State and were married between our sophomore and junior years. Ours was a traditional, small church wedding, with cake, nuts and mints in the fellowship hall immediately following the service. The world of weddings has evolved a lot in 30 years, and couples today have so many options right here in NEA to design the wedding of their dreams.



We hope you enjoy reading about our featured couples and learning about NEA businesses that are ready to help bring your dream event to life.

Gretchen Hunt

Gretchen Hunt
Content Manager & Graphic Designer
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The Best of Both Worlds

BY ACEA EDINGTON




In our house we love to cook, but we have a lot of dietary constraints we must consider. I've been a Craighead County 4-H member for five years. Over the past five years I have had the opportunity to "sharpen" my cooking skills. One of the skills I have worked on is how to make healthy swaps for some of our family favorites. This incredible chocolate cake checks all the boxes.

My dad is diabetic and my mom has wheat allergies and Alpha-Gal. I know, I know, you are thinking how could you possibly make a rich, decadent cake with all those restrictions? I promise you it can be done! Replacing the refined sugar with coconut sugar and honey means no glycemic spike, and with zero flour my mom does not have to worry about her wheat allergy. Dairy intolerance or Alpha-Gal, no problem, there is no dairy in this recipe. This decadent, rich, moist cake is also made heart friendly by using coconut oil instead of vegetable oil or butter.

4-H has given me the opportunity to learn new skills and compete in many competitions from the local, county and state to world level all the while learning to embody the 4-H motto, "To make the best better." This

cake was already one of the best we've tried but in true 4-H fashion and a little "Edington editing" we think we've made it even better. I hope you enjoy this gluten free, dairy free, low carb, low glycemic, rich, decadent, fudgy, healthy chocolate cake.

Premiere is partnering with the Greene County and Craighead County Extension offices to provide our recipes. Acea Edington is a member of 4-H in Craighead County.



Decadent (& Healthy) Chocolate Cake

Ingredients:	Cake	Glaze
	8 oz gluten-free semi-sweet chocolate chips	4 oz gluten-free semi-sweet chocolate chips
	1 cup coconut oil	3 tbsp coconut oil
	1 1/4 cups coconut sugar	1 tbsp almond milk
	6 eggs, lightly beaten	1 tbsp honey
	1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder	1/4 tsp vanilla extract

Directions:

For the cake:
Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray a 9-inch spring-form pan or 9-inch round cake pan with non-stick spray. Line bottom with a circle of wax or parchment paper and spray the paper. Place chocolate and coconut oil in a medium- to large-sized pan over medium-low heat. Stirring often, melt the chocolate with the coconut oil until completely blended. Remove pan from heat. Add sugar and mix well. Add eggs, a little at a time, and mix well. Sift cocoa onto mix and stir until just blended. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the cake has risen and the top has formed a thin crust. It may crack just a bit. The cake should be just firm in the center when done. Cool cake for 10 minutes, then invert onto a plate, removing sides if using a spring-form pan. Remove parchment/wax paper and allow the cake to continue to cool.

For the glaze:
While cake is baking, prepare glaze. In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, melt chocolate chips with coconut oil, stirring frequently until smooth. Remove from heat. Stir in milk, honey and vanilla. Set aside to cool slightly. When cake has cooled, pour glaze onto the center. Using a spatula or the back of a spoon, very gently smooth the glaze along the top and sides of the cake. Chill for at least 30 minutes before serving. This sets the glaze and makes the cake easier to slice.



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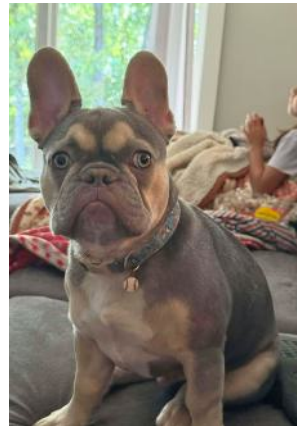
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BY BRENTNEY LAMMERS

Meet Moose — this four-legged heartthrob with main-character energy. A lilac and tan point French Bulldog, Moose firmly believes life is better when all eyes are on him (and honestly, he's not wrong). Born in Paragould, and proudly repping his roots from Misty River Frenchies, Moose officially settled into his forever home in March 2025 — and has been running the household ever since.

Celebrating his first birthday in January 2026, Moose fills his days with the essentials: a never-ending rotation of toys, enthusiastic snacking, and soaking up affection from literally anyone willing to provide it. Come springtime, he happily hits the road, tagging along to travel baseball games to cheer on his human brother — strategically positioned for maximum cuddles and the occasional concession stand score.

In short? Moose is equal parts cuddle bug, toy enthusiast and certified scene-stealer — and he wouldn't have it any other way.





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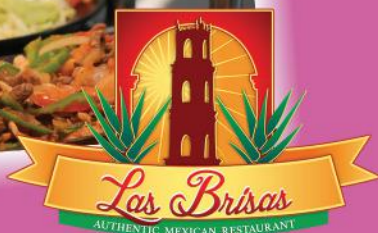
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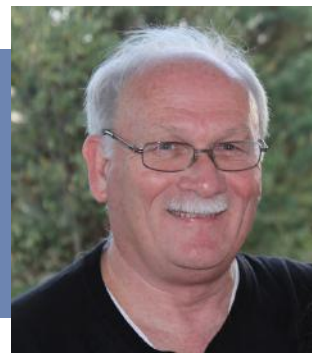
Chocolate Mile High Cake or
Cheese Cake for Two



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Get Rich

WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



There's an old saying about never being too old to learn something and I agree with that wholeheartedly. Reading is a great way to educate ourselves and I do that daily in a lot of different subject areas, simply trying to stay updated on what is happening in the world around me and also to discover facts I never knew or had misunderstood up to that time.

Sometimes I wonder how people can be my age and still mispronounce – even totally mangle – words and phrases common to our language, and my first thought is usually, “Don’t you ever read? Don’t you ever open a book or read the crawlers on the TV screen?”

Some of you are getting ready to learn

what a crawler is just now. It’s a line of text that scrolls horizontally across the bottom of the TV screen, often used to display breaking news, sports updates or weather alerts. They provide viewers with quick access to important information while they’re watching a program or sports event, and are not there specifically to cover up the line containing the score of the ballgame I’m viewing.

We usually find mispronounced words by little children cute or amusing and I know they are simply uttering things the way they hear them way down there in their tiny world. Sound, I have been told, travels up so I deduced from that “fact” that maybe the real words just never made it down to where their little ears were, and that’s how we came to hear words like

puscetti instead of spaghetti, hushpuffies instead of hushpuppies and Sank Louis instead of Saint Louis.

I singled out the word “fact” because, actually, sound doesn’t necessarily travel up or down. Sound will spread out in all directions unless something blocks or redirects it. It may travel at different speeds through different mediums such as air or solids, but it will continue to expand in all directions equally unless something acts upon those sound waves. I learned that by reading.

I was amazed to find in recent weeks that I was right when I thought I was wrong; for decades I bought into the theory that I misheard and then mispronounced the lyrics to a song that was popular during

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my childhood. I remember adults in my life walking around singing the catchy lyrics to *Mairzy Doats*, a song that at one time reached No. 1 on the charts. *Mairzy Doats* is what I heard, anyway, but someone – probably my much smarter sister – told me the song was *Mares Eat Oats* and I slinked away to the back yard with my embarrassment while I threw a ball against the wall.

Being pretty short, this is what I heard the grownups sing:

Mairzy doats and dozy doats
And liddle lamzy divey
A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?

But according to the one who critiqued my singing, the words were:

Mares eat oats
And does eat oats
And little lambs eat ivy,
A kid'll eat ivy too, wouldn't you?

Personally, I think we have to cut kids from the 1950s and '60s some slack, because another No. 1 hit – *The Witch Doctor* – contained a chorus of:

"Ooh eee, ooh ah-ah, ting tang

Walla-walla, bing-bang
Ooh eee, ooh ah-ah, ting tang
Walla-walla, bing-bang."

So I think mairzy doats and dozy doats were perfectly acceptable down in my world. Come to find out, through reading, *Mairzy Doats* is a novelty song written and composed in 1943 by Milton Drake, Al Hoffman, and Jerry Livingston. The lyrics make no sense as written, but are near homophones of real phrases. The song's title, for example, is a homophone of "Mares eat oats." I'm going to call my sister.

The song was first played on radio station WOR, New York, and made the pop charts several times, with a version by the Merry Macs reaching No. 1 in March 1944.

The song's refrain, as written on the sheet music, seems goofy:

"Mairzy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey
A kiddley divey too, wouldn't you?"

However, the lyrics of the bridge provide an explanation:

"If the words sound queer and funny to

your ear, a little bit jumbled and jivey, sing "Mares eat oats and does eat oats and little lambs eat ivy," which leads into the final line of "a kid'll eat ivy, too; wouldn't you?"

Drake said the song had been based on an English nursery rhyme. According to the story, Drake's four-year-old daughter came home singing, "Cowzy tweet and sowzy tweet and liddle sharksy doisters." (Cows eat wheat and sows eat wheat and little sharks eat oysters.)

Having read that, I feel better about myself and my childhood interpretation, and I've been singing the lyrics – as those of you my age will also find yourselves doing – for days now.

If you can't get them out of your head, blame that on reading.

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

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PARTNERING *To Support Local Art*

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

Art has had a major impact on Scott McDaniel's life. Now Scott is doing his part to lend support to the art community in Northeast Arkansas through the Ramsons Art Partnership to make sure art is there to impact others, as well.

"All corporations need to be philanthropic," Scott said. "And I think it's incredibly important to align your philanthropy with your values. I am somebody who can speak first-hand about the power of art and what art can and does do for people all the time."

He said it is also a good fit based on the company's economic structure, being a mid-sized company with a limited budget.

"We're not going to be able to drop just tons of money on things," he said, noting that while any entity would benefit from their philanthropic giving, the arts are continually underfunded, leading to learning how to stretch a dollar. "That's what they do. The people who are on the front lines of art - they know about doing more with less. So what if we just gave them a little bit more. So that's kind of what we decided to hang our hat on and so far it's been pretty successful."

Ramsons Art Partnership is in its third year, after being launched and branded in 2024, and Scott listed some of the results so far, including helping launch a pottery studio, helping an all-age concert venue get off the ground, and helping Williams Baptist University with a matching campaign to send some of its students to Sundance.

Now the partnership is in the process of giving \$1,000 no strings attached mini grants to various school districts in the area.

"That was in our initiative this past year and it's been wildly successful," Scott said. "There are now two venues that exist that would not exist otherwise. There are multiple school districts in our area that are getting these mini grants and being successful and we

sent a bunch of kids from Williams Baptist to Sundance. It works. It's making a difference."

Art is also very personal for Scott, though.

"I found myself in the arts," he said. "I was very lost before that. I have always found myself in the arts."

A poet, Scott said he has written poetry his entire life, but has taken it seriously for the past 10 years, with a major accomplishment having been picked up by the American Poetry Review. He also recently completed his first collection, for which he is currently pursuing publishing options. "I have a couple of publishers lined up, who are friends as well, and they've both encouraged me to push it out to other people."

Scott's work at Ramsons provides support for his own art, as well. "As Guy Clark said, 'There ain't no money in poetry, and there ain't no poetry in money,' so if you're going to be a poet you've got to do something else besides that," he said. "A lot of us teach. I'm not a teacher. I'm more involved in the world, so what it's done is it's informed my work a lot because I write about normal people doing normal things in a way that I try to make accessible to anybody. My goal would be that something I say or write or whatever might resonate with just an everyday person because at the end of the day we are all people and we all feel the same things; it's just some people were cursed with the ability to express it. That's my job, I think, is to try to capture whatever I see, whatever I feel, and try to do it in some kind of universal way."

Collaboration has long been a priority for Scott, who has presented a poetry series for the past 10 years where he tries to do about two shows a year, including open mics and guest performers.

"I've always tried to bring in friends of mine who are much more famous and acclaimed and talented," he said. "It kind of feels like a diplomatic mission as well, because on the one hand I want to sell poetry to the world because I know how it's moved me and how it's affected my life. And I want to sell Jonesboro to the world, too, because what these folks do when they come here, they love the community, like they absolutely love Jonesboro. It's wild. All of them have said the best reading they have had has been here in Jonesboro."

Scott said that through some personal growth, he came up with the concept called The Confluence, which is more than just spoken word. "It combines multi-disciplinary arts all under one roof," he said. "Metaphorically, a confluence is a point where two rivers meet and then they become one river. The concept of the show is it's a place





where multiple arts meet and form its own art."

"There is a spoken word plus musical component," he added. "We bring guests from out of town, local talent as well, have some great collaborators and co-conspirators."

Pop-up by nature, Scott said the performances are ready when they are ready, with two being held so far at different locations and plans in the works to hold another in the spring at Abe's Place, probably in April.

"We want to frequent different businesses, you know bring different people in there," he said. "It started out you'd get about 20 or 30 pretty easy as far as headcount, and it's blossomed to about a hundred. I think the last show we did it was about 175. We try to get it to where we bring it to the people, but also for businesses, put people in the seats and let them spend some money and help the economy."

While being on stage helped break Scott out of his shell, he said his experience working on the school newspaper did the same to encourage his writing.

"The first time my writing was ever seen by the public was when I was writing a column for The Golden Times," he said. "I'll never forget handing it out for the very first time and people reading it and liking it and laughing. It's probably not funny now, but it was funny then."

First times can still bring nerves though, and Scott recalled the first time he read in Jonesboro outside of open mics was during an event at Bradbury Art Museum.

"At that point in time I'd read in New York twice and Ireland once, and it was the most terrifying thing I ever did was read at the Bradbury Art Museum," he said. "There's something about it you know. You want to do good for your hometown."

That desire to do good for Jonesboro and the surrounding area is what keeps Scott driving forward with his support of the arts, including the recent launch of shownea.com.

The latest initiative of the Ramsons Art Partnership, SHOW is designed to promote and brand the local art scene.

"One thing that we noticed is that a lot of people just don't know about what's here," Scott said. "Our goal is to find 12 big events – 12 nights in Jonesboro – as good as or better than you can get out of town."

Quarterly newsletters and special marketing will promote those big events, backed up by the shownea.com website that will be constantly sharing about other things going on, such as classes that can be taken, concerts, art shows and more.

Scott said it is going to be a different kind of campaign. "Instead of buy, buy, buy, it's going to be about experiences. People underimagine what Jonesboro can be. The bottom line is they think we can't have it here. They will leave town to go experience something that they can get right here locally that is maybe better."

He quickly listed some talent and resources that are often overlooked, including high school theater programs, talking about a recent production at Jonesboro High School that brought him to tears.

"I'm just going to rattle off some things I know ... in Boo & Finney you have two people who went to the best graduate school for ceramics on earth, look at Matt (Cavanaugh) and Jenny (Powers) you have two people who were on Broadway, if you look at Mary Hollis (Inboden) you have a working actress who is on multiple TV shows and highly

Continued ➡

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respected in that world, the musicians that you have here, the artists that you have over at ASU. You have venues like Abe's Place popping up and the Lounge. There is good stuff here, but people underimagine what it could be and then it becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy."

Scott said the ultimate goal of SHOW is to connect the people looking for experiences in the arts with all the opportunities that are available.

"If this was an alien planet that we're looking at to try to figure out can it support life, and in this analogy life equals art, we have a carbon-rich environment," he said. "The concept of SHOW is to say we have this here if you show up. We will show out if you show up."

He said his vision is for the Ramsons Art Partnership to continue to build on what is already in place.

"I want it to be connective tissue. I want it to be branding. I want it to be seed money. I want it to be in-kind donations. I want it to be that kind of stuff. That way we can build it up because it's all here and it's ready and it's a perfect time."

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THE ADVENTURES OF

BY VICKI McMILLAN



Lester



Hello, all! Lester here — enjoying a quiet February morning. We had a very relaxing trip to Tybee Island and so far, we are still chilled. In fact, I'm in my kitchen bed watching Vicki and Brennan get out their paints and easels. They often do crafty things, but today it looks like they are planning to fire out two masterpieces. Sometimes they use oil paints and sometimes they use acrylics. Today, it's the oils — they must be very serious.

I didn't have much exposure to art in the Jonesboro Dog Jail, but since I joined the family, I've seen a lot of art museums and galleries. You may be thinking that ol' Lester has become ORGUEILLEUX, but let me assure you JE NE SUIS PAS. I do enjoy seeing different types of art works. And besides, knowing a little French and a little about art goes a long way picking up chicks at the dog park!

If you can't make it to Paris to see the Louvre, all is not lost. Just jet over to Arkansas State to the Bradbury Art Museum (the BAM to those of us in the know). The Bradbury exhibits (see what I did there) works of local artists and some national artists. In fact, one of our own — Mandy Mooneyham — has had her work shown at the BAM. She also



did a portrait of Cousin Elee that was perfect and brought tears to our eyes — well, not mine but everyone else's. The BAM also has educational programs for the community, as does the Foundation of the Arts in Jonesboro, too.

Drive on to Memphis and check out the Brooks Museum of Art. Opened in 1916, the Brooks is the oldest and largest in the state of Tennessee. If you wear your beret, you might think you were in the Louvre as you look at Italian Renaissance, Baroque and Impressionist paintings. The Brooks also has paintings by the nationally-known artist Carroll Cloar who is from Earle, Arkansas. Also in Memphis is the Dixon, which houses a collection of French Impressionist paintings, which Ol' Lester thinks are really cool.

When you leave Memphis, head on down I-40 to Little Rock for a day at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts in MacArthur Park. The museum has 14,000 objects in the permanent collection with rotating temporary exhibits. The AMFA has an interesting history going back more than 100 years. The museum is built on traditional Quapaw land, and the first building was a WPA project in 1937. The reimagined arts center opened its doors in

2023. Plan to spend the day and if you get hungry, there's a great café.

Now, if you want to venture farther from home, head to New York City and see the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim. If you want to be a little more laid back, head to Santa Fe, where the art galleries outnumber stray cats. (I know because I have - er "counted" stray cats.)

If you really want to spend some time viewing good art, try the Princeton University Art Museum. It has recently reopened from a four-year project that actually rebuilt the building. One interesting point about this museum (at least according to Vicki the history nut) is that the collecting began in 1755! That's even older than Nana!

If you just want to think about art and not really see it, read *The Goldfinch*, written by Donna Tartt another Mississippi novelist. The *Goldfinch* is a Dutch painting done in 1654. Vicki and I are currently listening to *Mona's Eyes*, which explores art through the eyes of a 10-year-old and her grandfather.

Well, folks — all this art talk has made me want a croissant and a nap. Until next time!

Adieu,
Lester

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Isaiah 43:19

Health Matters

BY KARAN SUMMITT

GOOD MEDICINE

Loving Your Way to Better Health

February brings Valentine's Day, a holiday for remembering those we love. In recent years gifts have expanded to include more than sweethearts and marriage partners — stores are full of card and gift ideas for the extended family members and close friends we treasure, helping us give them a token of our appreciation.

A long list of people close to the heart is good medicine for a healthy physical heart. Loving relationships contribute to healthier and happier bodies. Being happily married seems to bring on the biggest health benefit, but fostering close connections with our siblings, children and friends also has a direct impact on health. Research has proven several specific health benefits when we give and receive love.

Love has been proven to lower blood pressure. In 2007, studies found that happily married couples had lower blood pressure than both singles and unhappily married couples. A 2010 study found the same effect was true in close friendships.

According to the Health and Human Services Department, married couples have better access to healthcare, fewer doctor visits and shorter hospital stays. The National Longitudinal Mortality Study found they have a longer lifespan and less substance abuse.

People with supportive relationships scored 3.5 points lower on an 84-point depression scale and report less anxiety and better stress management. Other studies claim that rates for all serious diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's, lung and heart disease, decrease when surrounded by loving, stable connections. In the much recommended Mediterranean Diet (a diet well-proven for promoting good health, reduced stress and longevity) the base of the pyramid model includes



strong social relationships.

The immune system also benefits when we are close to others. Married people report fewer colds and faster healing. In a study at Ohio State University Medical Center, researchers gave married couples blister wounds. The wounds healed nearly twice as fast in spouses with a loving partner compared to those with hostility towards each other. One study found that women undergoing MRIs showed less brain anxiety when holding their husbands' hands. Another credited healthy relationships with better chronic pain control, fewer headaches and backaches and a greater ability to deal with pain without depending on medications.

Why do loving, supportive relationships impact our physical health in such powerful ways? It seems to begin in the brain, not the heart. The "feel-good" hormone oxytocin is released when we hug or kiss someone we love. Oxytocin has been linked to trust, and it helps us bond with everyone from newborns to business associates. Studies show that oxytocin can suppress stress hormones and boost immunity. It may be as simple as sharing private jokes. Laughter promotes heart benefits by increasing blood flow. In a study from the University of Maryland School of Medicine comparing one group of participants that watched a comedy with a second group that watched a more stressful movie, the blood vessels expanded to allow better blood flow during the comedy, while the blood vessels constricted during the stressful movie. Mental stress can cause narrowing of the vessels and lead to atherosclerosis.

In a wider sense, loving and being loved leads to a more positive outlook on life. This has the ability to spark a greater commitment to practicing behaviors like adequate sleep, good diet and plenty of exercise that support a healthier lifestyle.



Most of us live with overlapping social networks and relationships that may last many years or just long enough to meet a need. Cancer patients find support from others who have walked in their shoes, as do grieving widows and widowers. That is the power of affection, concern and bonding to bring healing.



Kasley Killam, author of the book, "The Art and Science of Connection," sees taking close relationships for granted as a common problem. Killam, a social scientist who's been publicizing the science of social connection for more than a decade, argues that social health matters as much to our well-being as mental and physical health — and, in fact, is interrelated to each of these and necessary for keeping us fit.

Killam defines social health as having deeper connection, mutual support, and feeling cared for, understood, valued and like you belong. She writes, "The wide-reaching significance of relationships is overlooked and underappreciated because it has been buried in the conversation on mental health. This is a huge problem. Human connection is so important, so influential for our overall health and longevity, that it deserves to rise from the shadows and stand tall in the spotlight."

I can attest to the truth of the quote above. Over the years my own life has been blessed with close, loving relationships that nurtured me in



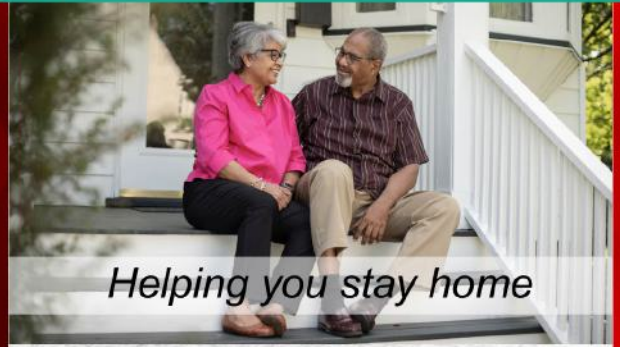
my formative years and supported me during the hard seasons that come with adult life. Good health is a blessing but having people in your life who share the ups-and-downs is an even greater blessing.

An old proverb says that with trusted companions, "a joy is doubled and a sorrow is halved." Scripture talks about how two friends are good, but a strand of three chords is not easily broken. Want to stay healthy? Put in the

hard work to create and cherish strong relationships with the people you love. It seems these everyday connections are powerful medicine for our physical wellbeing. And this year on Valentine's Day, show the people you love how much they mean to you!

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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ART IS LIFE

Passion Leads to Impact

BY KAROLINE RISKER

A noticeable improvement in Downtown Paragould is the many art projects that can be found on brick walls, in alleys, and even adorning infrastructure.

One such project is the large-scale mural located in the Power Plant Park in Downtown Paragould, completed by local artist Mandy Mooneyham, who called it one of the most challenging projects she's ever had the privilege to create.

Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Allison Hestand said Mandy is one of Paragould's greatest assets.

"I'd like to keep her our best kept secret but her talent is too great not to share," Allison said. "Time and time again, Mandy delivers beauty around our community. The largest project I have worked with Mandy on was the storage containers and old water silos behind the newly saved Power Plant. It was a huge undertaking and she could not have done any better! We love when we can showcase local artists on projects; it makes them that much better."

The artwork on the containers and silos, full of vibrant color, was commissioned as a gift in memory of Steve Adams. The project was made possible by his family as a tribute to the beauty Steve brought to the community. Mandy completed the project in June after two and a half months.

The artist, only 5 feet tall, was able to paint the rather tall murals using a 12-foot pole. "It takes a lot," she said. "A lot of experience and a lot of control." Mandy mentioned that she lifts weights and exercises a lot,



giving her the strength she needs to put her full body into the work and wield the pole. "I'm careful but sure of my movements," she added. "I was able to paint everything from the ground."

Mandy was also instrumental in starting the community's art alley, also located in Downtown Paragould, where she coordinated the painting of its design kick off. In addition, she created the mural by LA's Bar & Grill. Her current project is working on a mural for The Crossing, which will be a motif of a black sheep, a piece she is especially excited about.

"With the murals I do it's not necessarily my chosen subject matter,

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but this is more my style of realism in this one, so I love it," she said. "They mocked it up in AI and I'm painting it. Even though I got a mockup, it's no one else's work. In a way, artists and AI aren't the best of friends, but here we made it work. I like the idea of trying to beat the computer. I'm trying to knock this out of the park, but it's also me versus the machine. It's more realism, which is more of my forte. In this one I can show off a little bit. Lots of grunge and it's very fun."

Mandy doesn't look for the mural projects, they seem to find her. "Murals started as something I keep getting roped into in the nicest way," she said. "I never advertised for it. I'm just involved in the area and (get projects) by word of mouth."

Mandy's passion is painting and her signature subject is chairs and trees together in what she calls chree (chair + tree). In her words, chrees are a visual metaphor of the symbiotic relationship between our grounded existence and the boundless growth and transformation of our thoughts. "Basically it's an image of how our mind works, how we change and grow organically," she said. "Our mind works to furnish our roots with our memory structures in their own ways. That's where the chair comes in. We structure memories in the way we remember them."

Mandy said art is more than just a passion. "Every day there is something to do with art," she said. "In my free time you will almost always see me with a paintbrush. I am always drawing. It's more than a passion for me. It's just how life is. I am art."

She comes by it honestly. Mandy drew on her love of art watching her grandmothers as they knitted intricate doilies. Her dad, too, as a mechanic, was instrumental in her development - watching someone



who was good at what he did and was driven through it. "I'm incredibly driven to explore my art," she said. "I can explore it in the most intricate, in-depth ways."

Mandy's work is not just on display on the walls of Paragould. She has had a number of shows where her work, both paintings and sculptures, were featured. In particular, she is proud to have done a show at the Bradbury Art Museum in Jonesboro. She has also had shows in Batesville, El Dorado, and other galleries across Arkansas.

Mandy thinks art makes a city better by bringing people together and making them feel pride in their city. "Art and visual improvement has a way of uplifting everybody, she said."

Continued ➡

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Allison said she couldn't agree more, pointing out that public art matters because it creates a stronger sense of place and identity. "When referring to public art I was once told, "If perception is reality, then lets change people's perception by changing their reality" and I think that sums up the purpose of public art perfectly."

Mandy's "day job" is the UI/UX Director at Flowershop Network where she builds systems and works with development teams. She is married to Ben Mooneyham. Mandy loves the local community and the civic groups that work together to make life in Paragould better. "I love that we invest back in the community," she said. "I think that's something you don't get in a lot of towns. There is a true love of making life better."



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Westley Watts Promoted to Partner

Branch, Thompson, Warmath, Dale & Butler is excited to announce that Wesley Watts has accepted a partner position at the firm. A Jonesboro native, Wesley graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 2019 before moving to Little Rock, where he worked for almost two years before returning to Northeast Arkansas and joining Branch, Thompson, Warmath, Dale & Butler as an associate attorney in April of 2021.

Since then, Wesley has maintained a legal practice in a multitude of areas of the law at BTWDB, specifically focusing on personal injury litigation, estate planning/probate, entity formation/regulatory compliance, and general civil litigation surrounding breaches of contract, landlord/tenant disputes, and debtor/creditor lawsuits. Wesley is a graduate of Leadership Paragould, Class of 2021-22, and also serves as a part-time Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, handling felony cases in Greene County Circuit Court.

Wesley is married to Sydney Watts, who is also a practicing attorney in Paragould, and they welcomed their first child, Molly Frances, in August of 2025. They have three dogs, Teddy, Delta, and Buster. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with family, golfing, and watching sports.



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Advice From PREMIERE Experts

How do I know if I am having migraines versus reoccurring sinus headaches?

A sinus headache is typically associated with symptoms like sinus pain, pressure and sinus congestion. These headaches often occur seasonally or in response to allergies and can usually be relieved with over-the-counter cold medications.

Migraines, on the other hand, are accompanied with distinct symptoms such as nausea and sensitivity to light and sound, which are not common with sinus headaches. To manage a migraine, you can start with over-the-counter medications like Excedrin for Migraine or ibuprofen, and rest in a dark, quiet space.



Dr. Melissa Wright
Family Medicine
Certified Headache Specialist

If your headaches persist or do not respond to these treatments, it's important to consult your doctor. They can help determine the underlying cause and recommend more effective treatment options tailored to your needs depending on your specific diagnosis.

I've tried several diets, but always gain the weight back. What am I doing wrong?

You're not alone - many people regain weight after dieting.

Why it happens: Your body fights back with slower metabolism and raging hunger hormones, plus extreme diets are impossible to stick with long-term.

How to finally make it last:

- Lose slowly (1-2 lbs/week)
- Eat mostly high-protein, high-fiber foods
- Strength train and move daily
- Build habits, not "diets" - treat slip-ups as data, not failure
- Get ongoing support instead of going solo



Heather Landers

General tips help, but real, lasting change comes from a plan made for **YOUR** body, lifestyle, and challenges.

Ready to break the cycle for good? Healthy Life is here to help you! Let's connect and create a realistic plan that actually sticks for you!



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I'm getting married in June 2026. When do I need to start treatments to have the best "Face" for my big day?

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding. June 2026 gives us the greatest gift in skincare: time. Healthy, radiant skin is built gradually, not rushed, and starting early allows treatments to work synergistically while avoiding last-minute stress or reactions.

The biggest mistake brides make is starting too late or doing too much too close to the wedding. The goal is not to look different - it's to look like the best version of yourself.

The earlier you start and stay consistent the better. Your wedding-day skin will look



Nancy Pemberton
APRN, DCNP

effortless, natural, and camera-ready - exactly how it should.

Treatments to Commonly Consider for Brides:

- Medical-grade skincare regimen
- Botox
- Professional acne or pigmentation management

How do I know how much house I can afford?

Knowing how much house you can afford comes down to your debt to income ratios and comfort level - not just what a lender will approve.

Lenders generally follow the 28/36 guideline. This means that the house payment cannot be more than 28% of your gross monthly income and your total debt payments must be lower than 36% of your income.

A very rough estimate (before taxes & insurance) is a home price of 3 to 4 times your annual income. The best place to start is to have a lender look over your



Sandra Kelley

numbers and pre-qualify you.

If the payment they determine you qualify for seems high, it is always ok to spend less! You need to be comfortable with your monthly budget and you know your lifestyle better than anyone else.



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What is Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy?

Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy or KAP is a form of therapy that is combined with ketamine medication. With KAP, it's not just about receiving ketamine for symptom relief but creating meaningful, lasting psychological change.

Ketamine helps the patient become more relaxed, open and flexible, which makes emotions, memories and insights more accessible both during and after a ketamine treatment. This enhanced mental flexibility makes it easier for patients to process trauma and break negative emotions, thought patterns and behaviors associated with depression. The goal is for the patient to gain insight and create more positive and



Carrie Tate

adaptive thinking.

Following ketamine treatment, integration takes place. This is where the experience, insights and emotions are discussed and the focus becomes how to create real change by applying this information to daily life and relationships.

What are the benefits of chiropractic care during pregnancy?

If you are experiencing pain in your back and other health problems related to your spine during pregnancy, you may be able to benefit from treatment by a doctor of chiropractic.

The stress caused by spinal misalignments and postural distortions can be very painful and discomforting, especially with increased weight. Relief of spinal irritations will help reduce unnecessary tension and promote relaxation and restful sleep, which is particularly important during pregnancy. Adjustments are also important to help insure that your pelvic bones are properly aligned.

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Dr. John Bibb

structural problems that interfere with the normal functioning of your nervous system.

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Does the Big Beautiful Bill Act eliminate taxes on tips and overtime?

Not exactly. While often summarized as "no tax on tips and overtime," the law actually creates new federal tax deductions for qualifying income starting in the 2025 tax year. These earnings remain part of your gross income, but you can deduct a portion to reduce your federal taxable income.

The act allows for the following deductions:
- Qualified Cash Tips: Up to \$25,000 for single and joint filers (for 'customarily tipped' positions).
- Overtime Premium: Up to \$25,000 for joint filers (or \$12,500 for single filers).

The IRS has stated that W-2 and 1099 forms will not be updated to separate these figures. Consequently, workers must calculate these totals themselves to claim the deduction.



*Chastity Mott
& Anita Soltero*

We recommend tracking your tips and overtime carefully to ensure you have accurate totals for filing. Closely review your payroll statements to confirm that tip and overtime reporting is clear. Planning ahead for your 2025 filing may help meaningfully reduce your tax liability.

Which marketing channels should we use?

Businesses often assume digital is the only answer, but the most effective strategy usually includes a mix. Local media, social platforms, community involvement, and word-of-mouth all work together to create awareness and credibility.

Businesses grow faster when they become part of the community conversation. Sponsorships, local media, events, and partnerships help build trust – and trust drives buying decisions. The biggest mistake businesses make is waiting too long to market or changing direction too quickly. Marketing is about showing up consistently, telling your story clearly, and staying visible even when immediate results aren't obvious.



Dina Alason

When done right, marketing doesn't just bring customers in the door – it builds a business people remember, trust, and recommend.

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Looking Forward

BY CHUCK LONG

TO A YEAR OF FISHING



According to the calendar it is still winter, but many outdoorsmen are laying aside their bows, rifles and shotguns and gearing up to hit the water and catch a few fish. The thoughts of a family fish fry or a personal trophy are often on the angler's mind as they cast their favorite bait. Whether it be a jig flipped to a brushpile, a floater alongside a cypress tree or a worm on the bottom of a favorite river, all can possibly produce a lifetime of memories and full coolers.

A fish fry is a great way to celebrate a day on the water, but there are also some other interesting opportunities for anglers of Arkansas waters to keep in mind to make that catch very special. Each year there are fish caught that might be worthy of consideration for a state record, they might qualify for Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Master Angler Program or they could help propagate the species for future generations through the Legacy Lunker Program. Here are some basics for each of these programs and a couple of other ideas to keep those special fishing moments fresh on the mind.

State records are kept for a variety of species. The state record for the largemouth bass, the most popular fish in Arkansas, currently sits at 16 lbs. 4 oz. with a fish caught from Mallard Lake in 1976. Fifty years is a long time to stand as a record, but that fish continues to hold the spot. Several other records have stood the test of time, with a smallmouth bass of 7 lbs. 5 oz. setting the bar in 1969 and a sauger of 6 lbs. 12 oz. holding that spot since 1976. Some records have been set recently, including the white sucker at 1 lb. 14 oz. in 2025 and a hefty paddlefish at over 127 lbs. in 2024. Though it does not happen often, there is always the chance the next cast could yield something worthy of record book consideration. Here are a few tips to improve the odds of getting into the book.

The first thing to do is purchase the proper license. A bass that would have broken the state record was disqualified a few years ago because the angler had not purchased a license. Next, become familiar with the current records. The records can be found by a quick search for Arkansas state record fish. The list is available at agfc.com or in the AGFC Fishing Handbook of Regulations. A quick review of the procedures for submission of a record is also important. Once the fish is taken, there are very specific steps that need to be followed to maintain the integrity of the fish and the possibility of a record. Possible record fish have been disqualified due to improper handling or weighing.

Though a record fish might come from any body of water, fishing in a body of water that is known for larger fish of the species being pursued will up the odds. One of my favorite tips is for the angler to be knowledgeable in basic fish identification. There have been recent records set because the angler knew the fish was a species that had not been entered into the books; thus, he was able to enter the fish and became a state record holder.

The odds of state record fish might seem low, but another program offers a great chance for recognition. The chances of catching a fish that qualifies for the AGFC Master Angler Award Program are pretty good. For example, a 2.5 lb. crappie, a 20 lb. flathead catfish or a 12 lb.



drum would earn honors in the Master Angler Program. A qualifying fish will earn a pin and a letter of recognition for the angler. Fish species are divided into categories and once a fish from four different categories has been entered, the angler is recognized as a Master Angler and receives a certificate and commemorative coin. The rules for this program are much less stringent than the rules for the state record program and can be found at agfc.com with a search for the Master Angler Program.

The latest program to acknowledge an angler for an outstanding catch is the AGFC's Legacy Lunker Program, which began this year. This program gives anglers a chance to be noted for a great catch and also gives anglers the chance to play a role in fish management in Arkansas. Any angler who catches a 10-plus-pound largemouth bass during the months of January through March can contact AGFC at (833) 948-BASS and donate the live fish. That fish could then be used in the propagation of future generations of largemouth bass. For full details on this exciting program, check agfc.com for the Legacy Lunker Program.

Not worried about a record or big fish? Another great way to make a year of fishing a little more entertaining is to keep a "fish list." I like to



keep a running list of fish species that are taken each year. This might be on paper or through a quick snap of a picture of each species as it is taken. This is a great way to challenge angling skills by learning new techniques, or fishing in different bodies of water to target certain species of fish. What's a realistic number of species for a year? Twenty species is a good goal, but double that is entirely possible in Arkansas.

Spring will be here before we know it. Easter flowers will sprout, dogwoods will bloom and crappie will head to the shallows to spawn. With this change of seasons, there will be some wonderful opportunities to get on the water. Start planning now to catch a few fish, make some memories and enjoy a fish fry with friends and family. Maybe your name will even end up in the record books. 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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A Day In The Life

BY KATIE ROE

YOU'RE GONNA MISS THIS



Here it is the end of January, and it still looks like Christmas threw up in our house ... literally. Our tree and decorations are still up. We celebrated our last family Christmas get together this past weekend. We still have one singular gift under the tree; in my defense, it came in super late. Oh, I should add that our Christmas tree is a real tree and, yes, I understand that is a fire hazard. To be fair, we got it super late ... maybe the week before Christmas! (Story of our lives, being late on everything.)

Our living room is covered with all the Christmas goodies that our boys have gotten. Our boys are living room kids, so that means anything they are playing with has to come to the living room. The number of blankets, Legos, balls, etc., that are in our living room and that I have stepped on is ridiculous. We have had the boys pick up and put up, and it still always ends up back all over the living room.

Our front door still has the Christmas wreath, and the plug ins/wax melts all still have our Christmas scents. So, when I tell you Christmas has thrown up, we just need Santa chilling on the couch. In all the chaos, I still wouldn't have it any other way. Maybe a few less Legos imprinted in my feet, but I know this chaos is a blessing to most.

When the boys are home, it's loud and everyone is in everyone's business. And I really wouldn't trade that. Daniel and I complain about not being able to keep the house clean and his grandma reminds me every time ... "Enjoy it because one day there won't be messes to clean up."

I think there are some lessons here:

- Don't beat yourself up if the Christmas decorations are still up; you're

just ahead of everyone else.

- The chaos just means there's life being lived.
- Messy floors mean happy kids.
- Lego imprints are just happy reminders (right?).

We don't live a slow life, and I think that's what I love most. The memories, the messes, the noise ... it all shows life is happening. I like to think that all this mess and stress just mean we are in the best years of our lives. So, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy Valentine's Day! I promise the Christmas tree will be down by Valentine's Day.

2026 ... I have a feeling that you are going to be good to us. Here's to tripping over balls in the hall, hollering from the Legos stuck in my foot, kids running through the house, never being able to find the remote, blankets strewn through the house ... the simple chaos that just means we are living. Because one day we won't have this.

I think Trace Adkins wrote a song about this, but Grandma made me stop and realize how true it is.

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

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A NEW LOOK AT *Heart Health*

Dr. Sadeem Mahmood's work with SARC Heart & Vein at TD Richardson Memorial in Paragould goes beyond treating blocked heart arteries or abnormal heart rhythms.

"In cardiology, the heart is often treated as a solitary hero," he said. "Yet the truth is more complex. The heart is only as strong as the system it serves. That's where my work has evolved."

Dr. Mahmood said he focuses on how blood flow throughout the body affects everyday life — whether that shows up as chronic knee pain that limits movement, prostate symptoms that reduce quality of life, or pelvic pain that disrupts daily activities.

"These may not be considered 'heart problems' in the traditional sense, but they are vascular problems," he said. "And vascular health is central to overall cardiovascular health."



Innovative, minimally invasive procedures such as Genicular Artery Embolization (GAE), Prostate Artery Embolization (PAE), and Adhesive Capsulitis Embolization (ACE) are examples of procedures that reflect how cardiovascular care is changing.

"These procedures allow me to target diseased vessels and help patients heal without major surgery," Dr. Mahmood said. "The science is sophisticated but the goal is simple: restore balance, restore flow, restore life."

Dr. Mahmood is welcoming patients seeking minimally invasive cardiac and vascular solutions. His office can be reached at 870-239-8105.

The end goal is a healthier system and thus a healthier heart. "When circulation is restored, the heart feels it too," he said.



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Dr. Sadeem Mahmood, MD, FACC, has extensive training in internal medicine, cardiovascular disease, and interventional cardiology. Dr. Mahmood's focus is on the entire circulatory system, from heart procedures to innovative vein and vascular treatments that relieve pain, reduce swelling, and restore healthy blood flow.



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A Formal Affair



Grant & Chandra



PHOTOS BY KNIGHT PRODUCTIONS

High school sweethearts Chandra Suberano and Grant Register were joined in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony on May 31st, 2025, at St. Mary's Catholic Church by Father Alex Smith, who was assisted by Deacon Ricardo Puello.

Grant and Chandra's first date was their Junior Prom at Greene County Tech High School. After admiring his beautiful classmate for some time, but being too shy to talk to her, a friend recommended he ask her to prom and the rest is history!

Parents of the couple are Donna and Randy Mooney and Chad and Amy Register, and the mothers of the bride and groom with help from family, friends and wedding planner Sherry West prepared the flowers for the ceremony and reception. Amy said the couple and their family were blessed to have many friends and family members come together to help decorate for the occasion.

With a pastel floral theme for attendants and flowers, the service included music by Bernard Raley (organist), Jon Adams (violinist), Ella Murray (vocalist), and Bjorn Skoog (vocalist).

Chandra's dress was an elegant ivory matte mikado trumpet design with a square neckline and detachable oversized bow on the back with a full train. She chose a beautiful veil with lace trim to accompany her gown.

The reception was held at The Station, which was the perfect setting for dinner and dancing. A wonderful meal was served by Chow Catering, including several stations to give guests choices.

The couple already has a good start on special memories, after a surprise proposal was pulled off in Las Vegas overlooking the Bellagio fountains with the Register family in attendance. Following the wedding they honeymooned at Secrets Tides in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

They have recently moved back to Paragould and are expecting a daughter in April.



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Engagement Announcement



Quiaragua - Ruppel

Alexander Ruppel of Jonesboro and Fabiola Quiaragua of Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela, have announced their engagement.

The bride-elect is the daughter of Wendy Bacadare and José Quiaragua.

The prospective groom is the son of Heather and Lance Ruppel.

The couple will exchange vows October 17th, 2026, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

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Bodie & Kendra



PHOTOS BY AMBER PEEK

A rustic-themed outdoor ceremony offered a truly special setting, surrounded by beautiful trees, as Kendra McAbee and Bodie McFarland exchanged vows on October 27th, 2025. Parents of the couple are Terry and Lisa McAbee and Kim Anderson and Britt McFarland.

Bodie and Kendra first met in high school through mutual friends. Years later they reconnected when she was 23 and he was 24. Shortly after, they began dating and have been inseparable ever since.

"In 2023, we bought our first home together," Kendra said. "Before we had even moved in our kitchen table, Bodie proposed in the most heartfelt way. He put on music and asked me to dance with him in our empty kitchen. In the middle of the song, he got down on one knee and asked me to marry him."



The couple originally planned to wait until at least 2026 to get married but in August of 2025 made the last-minute decision to not wait any longer. Kendra said she told Bodie and her parents that if she could find a dress and work out the other details, they would get married in October.

The dress was one of many details that seemed to just fall into place. Kendra was beautiful in a classic ivory/white wedding gown with a lace bodice and delicate floral detailing from Jessica's Bridal & Formal in Bay. Featuring a soft V-neckline, the bodice flows seamlessly into a full, airy skirt made of layers of tulle.

"We wanted our wedding to be in October, as it marked our seven-year anniversary. Within just a few short months, we managed to find the dress, have it altered, book the venue, and gather all of the decorations," Kendra said. "Everything turned out beautifully, and I was shocked at how it all fell into place."

Something Sweet created the three-tier wedding cake, which featured burnt orange icing on the bottom tier that softly faded to white as it rose, creating a beautiful ombré effect, with samplings of the wedding florals angled across the cake, tying it into the wedding décor. "They created a delicious cake, listened carefully to my vision, and brought it to life beautifully," Kendra said.

The one sacrifice, if you want to call it that, was a Monday night ceremony, which is unusual, but as Kendra pointed out venues book quickly.

The couple enjoyed a honeymoon in San Francisco, including exploring Napa Valley wine country, whale watching, and attending their first NHL game. Now happily married, they continue to build their life side by side, traveling America together as team truck drivers.





The Ladies of Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro will host Charity Ball 2026: An Evening in Oz — a night where magic meets meaning and the Emerald City awaits — on February 28, 2026, at the Embassy Suites Jonesboro Red Wolf Convention Center. Attendees will enjoy an unforgettable evening of Wicked Good Fun, all in support of the children of Craighead County.

The journey begins at 5 p.m. with a stroll down the Yellow Brick Road, featuring registration, a cocktail hour, and the opportunity to browse the Silent Auction. Guests will then enjoy dinner and program highlights, followed by the signature Live Auction, where bidders can vie for incredible packages, including the beloved Toto Puppy Package, hunting trips, spa treatments and much more.

As the night continues, the celebration truly comes alive. Dance and sing along with local band Everyday Life, enjoy beats from DJ Spence with Suspense Entertainment, and try your luck in our fan-favorite Gaming Room, where high-stakes games offer chances to win a Gun Safe Prize Package. Be sure to capture the magic with a spin on the 360 photo booth for the perfect keepsake from an epic evening.

“Year after year, Charity Ball remains one of Northeast Arkansas’ biggest and most anticipated nights, and 2026 promises to continue that legacy,” JA Communications Chair Kasey Eakins said. “The Ladies of Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro are dedicated

to creating a night filled with wonder, generosity and purpose — because the children in Craighead County deserve nothing less.”

Charity Ball is JA of Jonesboro’s only fundraising event, and every dollar raised directly supports its 12 service projects. Each year, JA proudly serves more than 4,000 children and their families. Since the inaugural Charity Ball in 1972, more than \$1,000,000 in scholarships have been awarded to Craighead County high school seniors. Mentoring programs such as Girls Enrichment and CYS allow members to pour into young lives — building confidence, self-esteem, and helping break the cycle of dependence. Share and Wear has provided over 700 articles of clothing to children in need in just the past six months alone with an ever growing need.



“So we ask — do you have the brains, heart and courage to be a change For Good?” Kasey said. “If so, text CHARITYBALL2026 to 44834 and join us in making a lasting difference today, tomorrow, and for years to come.”



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Timothy & Gena



PHOTOS BY NELSON FILMS AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Gena McCullar and Timothy Rowe met on New Year's Eve as 2019 became 2020, but how they met might lead one to believe it was fate.

"We met at a New Year's Eve Party that neither of us wanted to go to or would usually go to," Gena said. "We have been together ever since."

Timothy proposed to Gena while they were on a trip to South Carolina in September of 2024.

The couple exchanged vows on November 1st, 2025, during a beautiful outdoor ceremony at the pergola on the grounds of The Silos, followed by a reception in the barn, which has been transformed into the perfect venue for dinner and dancing.

Parents of the couple are Laura McCullar and the late Brent McCullar and Billy and Chong Rowe.

Gena was escorted down the aisle by her brother, wearing a fit and flare style wedding gown. The couple had plenty of assistance during the ceremony, as the wedding featured six flower girls and three ringbearers. "All of my friends have children," Gena laughed.





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All those ringbearers had an important job, as Gena's wedding band holds special memories; it was custom made from a ring her dad had given to her mom.

Following the wedding, the couple traveled to Cancun for a honeymoon at Breathless Resort.



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Prom

CHECK LIST



Planning ahead can make all the difference to ensure a fun and stress-free Prom experience. Start by making a to do list including both the tasks that need to be completed ahead of time, like selecting your dress or tux, as well as the last-minute items like confirming your dinner reservations.

One of the earliest items on the list is selecting your attire, but that includes more than just finding the perfect dress or the right suit. Don't forget you also need shoes and accessories to complete the total look.

For the young ladies, practicing your make-up look ahead of time can help the day-of preparations go smoothly. Whether you are using a professional makeup artist or not, having a trial run will help prevent a last-minute disaster.

Along the same vein, guys and girls both should try on their outfits in advance, paying attention to the length of hems, fit of the waist and overall comfort. Slide those shoes on and walk around in them a little too – it will make a big difference on prom night.

Even if you break in your dress shoes, it would still be a good idea to carry an extra pair of comfortable shoes. As the evening wears on, having a pair of sneakers or ballet flats can be a lifesaver.

Lastly, the days leading up to prom are not the time to try new hair or skincare products, risking an unexpected reaction. Personal care products, such as deodorant, cologne or perfume, can also be added to this list of things not to experiment with on prom night.

Having a check list can keep something from slipping your mind, and the best part is getting to watch your list get smaller as prom night approaches.

Shopping List

For the girls:

- That perfect prom dress
- Accessories that sparkle and shine, from jewelry to hairpieces to cute clutches
- Travel-size beauty must-haves for touch-ups
- Comfortable footwear for dancing the night away at the after-party

For the boys:

- A tuxedo, suit, or separates for the perfect fit
- Sharp dress shoes to pull your look together
- A boutonniere for a dash of style
- Casual clothes for kicking back at the after-party





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WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN



February is Dental Health Awareness Month for pets - dental health plays such an important role to your pet's overall health, but is often overlooked. For this reason, February has been designated Pet Dental Health Month in order to bring awareness to these diseases that are so very common and easily managed with routine care and attention.

Something I recommend to every client, so long as it is safely feasible, is to brush their pet's teeth often. There are toothbrush kits and toothpastes available for pets - these toothpastes must be made for pets and safe to swallow. As you can imagine, you can't very well ask your dog or cat to spit and rinse!

If brushing your pet's teeth is simply not an option, which I completely understand - some just will not permit it, then other options for keeping the teeth clean are helpful. There are several options for healthy chews that will help to break down tartar and calculus build-up safely. (Did you know you can even apply a small layer of pet toothpaste to the VOHC approved dental chew in order to effectively have them brush their own teeth?)

VOHC stands for Veterinary Oral Health Council and they place their seal on products that have been scientifically tested and proven

to effectively reduce plaque and tartar build-up, reducing the risk and helping to prevent periodontal disease. If the "oral health product" does not have this seal, then I would consider a different product that does. Most products that have the VOHC Seal of Acceptance proudly display this hard-earned badge of honor on their packaging. There are a ton of products out there to consider, so it's always best to check with your vet on what option would be best for your pet.

Other things to remain aware of when teeth brushing is impossible are the signs of dental disease. Dental Disease occurs in 4 stages. Stage 1 is gingivitis: This is when the gums become inflamed and can be swollen and there is some plaque covering the teeth. Malodorous (or stinky) breath is typically observed at this stage. Stage 2 is Early Periodontitis: This is when there is severe inflammation to the entire attached gum, heavier plaque and tartar accumulation, and bad breath is much more noticeable. Stage 3 is Moderate Periodontitis: This is when the tartar and calculus are destroying the gumline, their mouth can become quite sore at this stage and may affect their ability to prehense and chew their food. Stage 4 is Advanced Periodontitis: This is the worst stage - at this point the calculus and tartar



have built to a point that they are destroying the gumline, bacteria from the mouth that has collected on the teeth, gums, and tooth roots can gain access to the bloodstream and can cause systemic disease affecting major organs such as the heart, kidneys, and liver.

Some signs that your pet may be suffering from dental disease or oral pain are excessive drooling, difficulty chewing, chewing only on one side, bad breath, leaving blood on their chew toys, chattering of the jaw, weight loss (due to desire but inability to eat), and many more. An

important thing to remember when it comes to oral health is that if you wouldn't want to chew on it, best to not give it to your pet. All too often I see fractured teeth from dog's chewing on very hard objects, severely worn teeth from some avid tennis ball fetching, or objects lodged in the pet's mouth (especially sticks!) from chewing on things outside.

Aside from brushing your pet's teeth and VOHC approved dental chews/toothbrushes/toothpaste, having your pet examined by your local veterinarian every six months is the best way to maintain good oral health! Pets age faster than people and having biannual examinations is critical. When examined every six months, it gives an

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opportunity for the vet to identify problems sometimes before the pet ever develops any symptoms of the disease. This is also important for puppies and young dogs, as many of them have often retained deciduous teeth (or baby teeth), that can cause major problems to their permanent teeth neighbors if they do not fall out as they should.

There are a great number of diseases and problems that can occur in the mouth of your pet. If you are concerned about your pet, have noticed any of the aforementioned clinical signs, or just feel they need a good check-up, please reach out to your local veterinarian. Happy Dental Health Awareness Month!

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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SHOWCASING *Local Artists' Work*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

It's always nice when an idea works out as envisioned, even better when one's expectations are exceeded. That's how Connie Whitman, Assistant Director at the Greene County Library, views her dream of exhibiting the works of local artists in the library, smiling as she steps back to consider the incredible reception the program has received.

"I am absolutely very, very pleased with the response," she said. "Some people come in just to see the artwork. We've had photographs, puzzles, woodwork, wreaths, watercolors, barn quilts, drawings, mixed media and sculpture, too. We take pride in working with the local artists."

Connie said she has always loved art and it occurred to her that other area residents might share her passion and enjoy seeing what their neighbors had to offer in the way of creativity. In March of 2018 she put things into action. "I just thought it would be kind of cool," she said. "I'm always trying to come up with some crazy idea. I thought it would be neat to feature local artists; we already had the racks, and they didn't need to stay empty."

"So through Facebook, walk-ins, staff, word of mouth, we got the news out and at first we had somebody, then we didn't, and since then it's been very steady. I just thought it was an opportunity to access that talent, and why have a blank space here in the library? We had the



room, we had the racks, why not fill them up? I have been so fortunate; the library has been so supportive of it."

When someone contacts Connie about displaying their work in the main room, she asks what kind of art they're dealing with and will "generally ask for 12 to 15 pieces, depending on the size, but we can accommodate any. And I think we had an 8-year-old artist once. We



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encourage all artists, regardless of age. It's not only fun for the people to see but you can learn something.

"Secondly, there's a long waiting list. The next available open spot is in 2027, we're already booked that far ahead. In the event people cancel or move away, we'll move someone up on the list. But it will be a long wait."

The main room, however, isn't the only space available for locals to display their work. The Gallery at 120 opened in November of 2022 and incorporates the large Legacy Room and the hallway leading to it as places for artwork to hang as well. It highlights local artists for a longer period – four months at a time – and gives them the opportunity to show more pieces in a larger area of the library. "We line the hallway on both sides," Connie said, "and then go all around the room inside. We ask to have at least 35 to 50 pieces, depending on the size. We love to show the big pieces."

Artists are changed approximately three times a year to keep the exhibit fresh. Connie explained, "Exhibiting for a longer period allows patrons to get to know the artist, view their work and purchase something that might appeal to them. All sales are between artist and buyer, with all proceeds going directly to the artist. I think it's exciting each time we switch artists. We love for people to come in. We've had so many wonderful comments about the talented people on display and we'd love to hear from more."

Twelve artists have participated in the longer exhibitions and Connie said, "It's been an honor to share their beautiful artwork with our community. We have so much talent in Northeast Arkansas and the bootheel of Missouri."



Now in her eighth year as Assistant Director, Connie said working with the public in various ways keeps things interesting. "We have book clubs, workshops ... I enjoy my job so much, exploring different avenues," she said. "I love working with local authors. We always encourage them to bring in their works. They have their own section."

Asking her to select a favorite work leaves her guessing. "Oh, my goodness, I love it all," she said. "We've had just some amazing artists. It is a wonderful community we live in."

Anyone interested in learning more about the ways to share their talents with the public can call Connie at 870-236-8611 or email her at conniew@mylibrarynow.org.



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Show Your Co-Workers Love With Civility

Valentine's Day is known for love, so show your co-workers some love every day with civility in the office. Civility in the office can certainly make life easier. For most, small offices, crowded desks and cramped cubicles are all a part of the office setting.

Working in these conditions several hours a day can certainly be trying and often too close for comfort. If you think about it, though, this small space is - "Home away from home."

If you spend most of your time in this type of environment, following a few guidelines can make the office atmosphere much more pleasant.

- Honor your colleagues' privacy before entering their office space.
- Ask if it is a good time to discuss business.
- Wait until you are asked to be seated. It's not a good idea to just "plop-down" and begin to visit.
- Keep your hands to yourself. Don't touch or pick up personal objects or materials that belong to your co-worker unless asked to do so.
- Arrive on time to meetings and virtual calls. When conducting business, be aware that others in the area can hear you. Keep your language professional.
- If you have personal business, it is best to discuss it elsewhere.
- Close working conditions mean personal hygiene is a must.
- It's best to conduct personal grooming away from your desk.
- Try to keep articles not applicable to your work off your desk.
- Almost everyone has been asked to contribute to some type of fundraiser. Although there are many good causes, don't assume your co-workers are as enthusiastic about it as you. Telling your colleagues that they need to or should contribute may make them ill at ease. They may not want to support

a particular cause or make a monetary contribution.

- Light-hearted humor and jokes can certainly add to a fun or relaxing time at the office. However, be aware of your surroundings. Inappropriate language and behavior can make others uncomfortable and may result in charges of sexual harassment.
- Respect your co-workers' office space and desk. Don't use or remove any of their items without asking permission.
- If your office has a lounge or break room help keep it clean. Remember the phrase: "Your mother doesn't work here."

You may not be able to choose the size of your office or your workspace, but practicing politeness and consideration can make office life easier.

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.

Quote of the Day:

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- Thomas Sowell

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2/20 - Friday at 7:00pm, Jason Crabb, Jasoncrabb.com

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*More information about Downtown Paragould can be found
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February 2nd

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Downtown Collins Theatre

February 6th-8th

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Princess Bride
Downtown Collins Theatre

February 22nd

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SPOTLIGHTING NEA FAMILIES



Drama Team
Son's love for theater
becomes family affair

FEBRUARY 2026

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

INSTILLING AN *Early Love For Art*

BY KARAN SUMMITT

Art education and showcasing the work done by students is a priority for Paragould Schools as the district makes plans for its annual K-12 Art Show.

The district-wide event features student submissions from a wide variety of art mediums. The community is invited to attend the show, which will be held April 9th, from 5-7 p.m. at the Oak Grove Middle School campus multi-purpose room.

With the show in its third year, the PSD art staff has worked hard to incorporate some

type of growth annually, with a goal toward making the event larger and displaying more student work. Plans for the future include recognizing outstanding student work in each medium and grade level with some type of award.

For students and the PSD staff, the annual Art Show serves many purposes. Fundamentally it provides an opportunity to celebrate student creativity and allow those who might not have the opportunity to be recognized in other academic areas to get their “15 minutes of fame.”

The Art Show also serves to demonstrate the educational value of the visual arts across all grade levels. It allows younger students to connect with and be inspired by older students. The works on display at the show build an early interest in the art curriculum by giving these lower grade students a glimpse of what they can look forward to in future art classes.

Participation in the Art Show highlights each student’s hard work and creativity, building personal confidence in their abilities and motivating the student to tackle more difficult



projects. For those seeking a career in art, the projects can be added to their portfolio, and as with any academic endeavor, the effort that goes into preparing a submission for the event encourages personal growth, motivation, time management and skill development.

The Paragould School District employs five art instructors in grades K-12. They are Rachel Perrish, Shawn Wright, Ginger Grahn, Tiffany Nolan and Shannon Lamb. The K-12 art curriculum is a standards-based academic program that intentionally builds critical thinking, literacy and real-world skills at every grade level.



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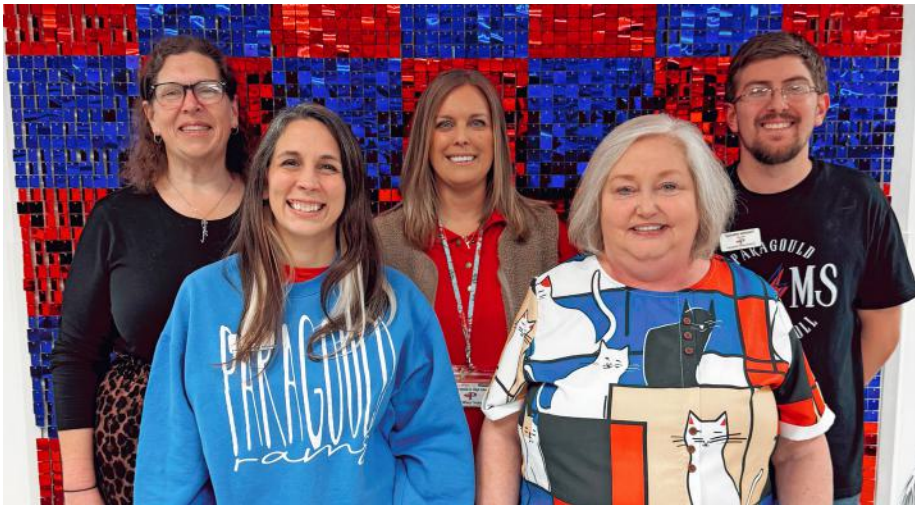


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The Arkansas Department of Education visual arts standards require students to create, respond, connect, and present their work — meaning students must plan their ideas and problem-solve through challenges, explaining how their artistic choices and the work they have created connects to history, culture and personal experience.

From a wider perspective the Annual Art Show helps families, administrators and community members see how the students are growing beyond traditional academic subjects.

The event strengthens the school culture by bringing students and the community together, encourages collaboration among teachers and promotes equity by ensuring that students from every school, background and grade level have a venue for showcasing their talents.

PSD students are encouraged to participate in other area art exhibits, as well. Each March the Greene County Library features the work of PSD junior high students. High school students are invited to attend a field trip opportunity to Arkansas State University called Inspired. This program allows them to learn new skills, visit the ASU campus and see current works on display in the Bradbury Art Museum. The students are challenged to create their own works and submit pieces for an art competition. A number of current PHS

students and alumni have earned a spot in this prestigious event.

The high school art students have also completed murals at Paragould High School, School of the 21st Century, Oak Grove Middle School, and Oak Grove Elementary.

When weather permits PSD art students will resume work on an outdoor mural at the Oak Grove Elementary campus. Other student art projects on tap for the coming months and years include mini indoor “Art Alley” murals at two school locations. High school and junior high students are heading up these projects and are looking for students willing to submit original designs.

PHS students are eligible to take Art 2, a course designed for those interested in an art-related career. The class allows students to learn and practice skills that have the potential to become income-producing. It includes subjects as varied as illustrating comics, creating tattoos, cutting and coloring hair and arranging bouquets.

For Paragould’s teachers and students, having a heart for art is more than creating a “pretty picture.” The district’s approach to art education allows all students to improve their technical skills as they progress through the grades and learn how to analyze images, communicate meaning, persevere through mistakes and think creatively — the same skills that directly support success in reading, writing and future careers, even those outside the arts.

In addition, the students gain confidence for tackling everyday life. As one teacher commented, “Many high school kids like to pretend it’s not a big deal when their artwork goes into the show, but you can always see their faces glow when someone compliments a piece they’ve made. It’s a sense of pride that’s hard to hide.”





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I LOVE OF STAGE *Becomes Family Affair*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Reed Scudder isn't an imposing figure upon first glance, but he's obviously not afraid to accept a big challenge when stepping onto the stage.

The 8-year-old second-grader has fallen in love with the theater, hoping to be in just about any local production that has a role for kids and after six such performances he's ready for more. Reed's affinity for the stage has helped Greene County Fine Arts Council (GCFAC) productions become a family affair, since parents Heather and Tyler are also part of the act.

Heather, a music major at Arkansas State University, was recently elected to the GCFAC but says it was "an accident, honestly. Reed was in a show and I was going to be there anyway, so all of a sudden I'm in. We'd actually been in two shows, in the orchestra, Tyler and I. Cabaret was one of the first shows in the region after Covid. And many years ago we were in the orchestra for Fiddler on the Roof."

In their roles as stage parents taxiing Reed around to the various appointments connected to performing, the Scudders found a common ground. "We do shows he wants to do," Heather said. "We get him to practice and auditions. He always wants us in the shows. By doing so, we both ended up falling in love with the theater ourselves."

Tyler said he likes being involved, especially in the musical sense, but will "just fill in where they need us to. In the ensemble, or like in Annie where I had a couple of speaking parts. I like to play in the orchestra when they have one. I usually wait until the last minute, but I support, help out any way I can."

That brings us to Reed, who relishes the role of performer. "He actually started shows before he was old enough," Heather said. "I think he was 4. They needed more Munchkins and there were not enough kids and they said to just bring him in. (Director) Thom Fielder took a chance on Reed and said if he can listen and take directions it's sort of 'no harm, no foul' and he joined the Lollipop Guild."



"I thought it would be fun," Reed said, admitting his initial time on the stage "got me a little nervous. But now, no."

Heather said every time there's going to be a GCFAC show with kids in it "we watch the movie together to see what it's like. He's wanted to do every one so far. Only the first time was he nervous but now



he's done six -- Footloose, Annie, The Wizard of Oz, Matilda, White Christmas, and Cinderella. He's done some dancing. He was a guard for the wizard ... a Baby Winkie. They were all musicals, so there's been some singing."

As for Heather, music is "what I've always loved. I grew up in a musical family but none pursued it beyond just playing. I was the first who was bold enough to do that." And she readily admits Reed's courage in stepping on stage has not only helped him become a more confident young person, it has helped her as well. "He's really not afraid to try. He'll try anything once," she said of her son. "He's awesome. I was miserably shy, but he's not. I've gotten a lot less shy because of him. I've taken a lot of leadership roles on campus. I just said to myself, 'If Reed can get up on stage, why can't I do this?' And so I have become invested in leadership across different groups."



Along with acting, Reed is interested in video games, Legos, gymnastics and tumbling, and loves to go to ASU women's basketball games. Mom is in the pep band and he loves tagging along, cheering on the Lady Red Wolves. Returning to thoughts of the stage, Reed said he "likes making new friends in plays" and is willing to do whatever is asked of him to make a play be a success. "Anything they ask," Heather said, "he answers, 'Yes, I will.' He was a mechanic in Matilda and when they mentioned 'how big is the wrench?' we just said, 'How big you got; he'll do it.' He usually speaks up, speaks his mind ... He's always been really goofy and silly, kind of a comedian at home."

A straight-A student at Woodrow Wilson Elementary, Reed said he likes math and history, and learning about Greek mythology. The



academic success just adds to the pride his parents take when watching his acting career unfold.

"Oh, yes," Heather said when considering how proud they are of his continued improvement on stage. "From 4 until now, we don't know what all he can do. They will be doing Frozen, which we will audition for in the summer, but I don't think he will be nervous at all. In auditions, he's pretty confident it will happen. He's just confident, period."



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Sharing Support THROUGH ARTISTIC TALENTS

Methodist Family Health recently expanded its services for children and families in Northeast Arkansas with the opening of Methodist Children's Behavioral Hospital-Jonesboro. The new 70-bed acute psychiatric hospital will serve patients under the age of 18 who need short-term, inpatient treatment for mental health crises, filling an urgent need for area families who previously had to travel long distances to find care.

With the opening of the facility, the community came together in an effort to make a difference in the lives of the future patients through sharing their artistic talents.

The Junior Auxiliary Crown Club of Jonesboro shared a little love with the teens who will receive treatment by painting ceiling tiles as a service project. Their creativity not only brightens the space but also reminds those receiving psychiatric treatment that the community supports them.



Professor Susan Whiteland and five of her students from Arkansas State University donated their time and talent to help create a calming and inviting environment for children at the new hospital. They spent more than 80 hours completing six hand-

Painted murals.

The students reflected that they were thankful to be a part of creating artwork that would offer support and positivity to the hospital's patients.

"During my time working on the murals, I began to understand what



impact I could make within my community," Miah Wood, one of the ASU students said. "Although the murals might seem small to me, they can be something bigger for the patients viewing them. Someone spent time working on these murals for them to see. These patients were actively thought of during the murals' creation. Though they will never know of my existence, it is comforting to know I impacted them positively in some way."

Employees of the new hospital also contributed with their talents.

Sarah Sumpter, clinical director, and her family spent a weekend together painting a first-floor hallway. Sumpter's daughter Madeline designed the mural that clients will pass by every day on their way to the cafeteria.

Abby Furby, a recreation behavioral instructor, also decided to liven up her recreational therapy room by painting her own mural. Integrating artwork throughout the facility creates a visually therapeutic environment that reduces the hospital's clinical feel and reinforces a

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sense of comfort and support.

"Given that we are treating adolescents struggling with a mental health crisis, we have to be mindful of objects on the walls that could be potentially used for harm," says Kayla Beamon, MCBH-J Hospital Administrator. "These murals and ceiling tiles help the hospital feel like a place for healing and hope while also maintaining a safe environment."

For more opportunities to share your time and talents with Methodist Family Health, including art in other spaces, contact Nikki Shannon at 870-333-2257 or nshannon@methodistfamily.org.



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ART PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN

Free and Process Art are the best art activities

- Free Art is open-ended, meaning children can freely choose what materials to use, how to use them, and what to create.
- Process Art is about the creative process of making art, not about the end product.
- Avoid Product Art, which is doing a project to make a particular end product with a specific look.



The most important characteristics of Process Art:

- There is NO specific way of how it should look.
- There is NO right or wrong way to do it.
- It is important NOT to correct how/where they draw, glue, or paint things.
- The finished product is completely the child's own.
- It should be an open-ended, enjoyable experience.



Why shouldn't we correct them?

While it is sometimes hard not to show a child the "right way" to do things, it's important not to correct them:

- Children take joy in creating, not the result.
- We do not want to become their inner voice doubting themselves.
- Instead of telling them where the eyes should be, state something like, "What a cool eye!"

Tips to Encourage Process Art

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up."
-Pablo Picasso

- Discuss their artwork. Ask them about the colors they used or how they made it. For example, "Did you use a paintbrush or your fingers to make this part?"
- Give specific, effective praise, such as, "You worked so hard cutting these shapes!"
- Resist overtaking their art.
- When you are doing projects with different steps, make sure they are not restricting.
- Always allow messes! Allowing them to explore materials and how they want to work with them will encourage cognitive development and problem-solving skills.
- They can help clean up the mess when they're finished.
- ALWAYS HAVE FUN!

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While the first family of 2026 preferred privacy, AMMC is proud to welcome its first babies of 2026, with several new arrivals in the early days of the new year. The hospital celebrates every birth and the dedicated team that supports our growing community. AMMC wishes all families a joyful and healthy start to 2026.



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PARAGOULD PREMIERE AWARD WINNER 2025



ART TEACHER HONORED FOR WORK

Local art teacher and artist Jordan Blake was recently selected for a statewide honor with one of her pieces. Her work, "Crops at Daylight," was selected for the Arkansas Arts Council Small Works on Paper, which will tour the state of Arkansas during 2026.

The 2026 show opened at the Altheimer Gallery at the Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas in Pine Bluff with a reception on January 8th.

Jordan, who teaches junior and senior high art at Greene County Tech, said being selected for SWOP is a big honor for her. "Arkansas is home to many great artists and I'm thrilled to be recognized among them," she said. "My hope is that Arkansans statewide will come and experience firsthand the remarkable talent that makes Arkansas so special."

JHS STEP TEAM RECEIVES \$50,000 GRANT

The Academies at Jonesboro High School Step Team, Tau Delta Pi, was recently named as a recipient of a \$50,000 grant from the MidAtlantic Arts Foundation through the US Regional Arts Organizations' Walking Together grants program.

The team plans to use the funds to continue

its Little Cane Step Academy, attend an HBCU college tour, and expand step teams within the district's junior high schools. According to the grant announcement, the support will allow Tau Delta Pi to continue to develop traditional artists and leaders who are community minded individuals and keepers of valuable cultural heritage.

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HAPPENINGS

WINTNER NEW DIRECTOR AT BAM

The Bradbury Art Museum (BAM) at Arkansas State University has named a new director. Julia Wintner, whose work bridges global contemporary art, community-engaged museum practice, and academic leadership, has been selected to serve as director.

Wintner has a storied background, rooted in work that has taken her across the globe.

"My career has been shaped by international collaborations that explore how art connects global communities," said Wintner. "Through teaching and curatorial work in Russia, India, Thailand and Vietnam, as well as research across Europe and the United States, I have seen firsthand how museums can foster cross-cultural dialogue and imaginative thinking."

A curator, educator and scholar, she has a Master of Fine Arts in curatorial studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College in New York.

Wintner previously served as director of the Art Gallery and Museum Services at Eastern Connecticut State University. In addition to her museum experience, she was awarded the Fulbright Teaching and Research award in 2023.



VOCAL SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWED AT A-STATE

Arkansas State University has established a new endowed fund to support students pursuing vocal music education. The Dixon, McDonald and Turnbow Sisterhood Endowed Enrichment Fund will provide annual financial assistance for full-time vocal music education majors who participate in professional development experiences such as regional or national conferences in choral music or choral music education.

The fund was created through a \$25,000 gift and will generate \$1,000 annually to support two \$500 enrichment awards. Awards are available to students in the Department of Music within the College of Liberal Arts and Communication.

The fund honors the lifelong bond of three A-State alumnae: Venus Dixon Hamilton of Paragould, Janeene McDonald Lee of Brinkley, and Sherry Turnbow Phillians of Wynne. The trio met as vocal music education students in the 1980s.



JILL'S CASH WINNER CHOOSES FOOD BANK OF NEA FOR UNICO BANK DONATION

Hunter Kersey was the big winner in the Jill's Christmas Cash giveaway, winning \$1,000 for himself and \$1,000 for charity. He selected Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas from Unico Bank's list of charities to be the recipient of a \$1,000 donation as part of the annual promotion.

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas, which has distributed several million pounds of food since 1983, provides hunger relief to people in need by raising awareness, securing resources, and distributing food through a network of non-profit agencies and programs.



WHEELER RECEIVES TRANSITIONS CARE AWARD

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center Emergency Department Director Lacey Wheeler, RN, BSN, has received the Transitions of Care Award from the Arkansas Department of Health.

This recognition honors her exceptional leadership and significant contributions to improving stroke care for patients in the community. The Transitions of Care Award is presented annually to only three individuals across Arkansas for the work they do with stroke patients and/or their families as part of the patient's transition of care.

As Emergency Department Director, Lacey plays a crucial role in leading the department's clinical operations. She has demonstrated a deep commitment to enhancing Transitions of Care for stroke patients by working closely with emergency and inpatient teams to ensure seamless communication and rapid treatment. Her efforts focus on creating efficient workflows that directly benefit patient outcomes.

Lacey was specifically recognized for her innovative work in strengthening and streamlining the stroke alert process at AMMC. She spearheaded a multidisciplinary initiative involving the ED, radiology, lab, and neurology departments to improve coordination and response times. Lacey's work has directly improved the timeliness and quality of care for stroke patients, leading to better outcomes and enhanced recovery.

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DON'T MISS THESE *Upcoming Events in NEA*



Young Artists Concert

February 15th

The Delta Symphony Orchestra will host its Young Artist Concert on Sunday, February 15th, at 3 p.m. at Riceland Hall in the Fowler Center on the campus of Arkansas State University. The concert features the winners of the DSO's nationwide 2026 Young Artist Competition, as well as a youth chorus from area schools.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.deltasymphonyorchestra.org. For more information, group rates and special needs accommodations, call 870-761-8254.



Red Dress Gala

February 21st

The Community Health Education Foundation will host its annual Red Dress Gala, Denim and Diamonds, on Saturday, February 21st.

The fundraiser will be held in Centennial Hall on the campus of Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. For more information or to make reservations, email chefjonesboro@gmail.com or call 870-931-4044.

CHEF's mission is to be a premiere non-profit health organization that annually provides health education and chronic disease programs.



Alley Cruise

February 22nd

Fast Glass Corvettes will host the 16th annual "Alley" Cruise Bowling for St. Jude on Sunday, February 22nd, at 1 p.m. at Hijinx in Jonesboro.

Four-player coed teams can register for \$120, which includes three games of bowling, equipment, a large single-topping pizza and a pitcher of soft drinks. Registration is due by February 16th. Sponsorships are also available.

For more information, contact Carol Barnhill at carolbarnhill57@gmail.com or Renee Turner at creneeturner10589@gmail.com.

THE THURSDAY MORNING BREAKFAST CLUB

at Batten's Donuts & Bakery

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

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

Sponsored by:



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MEDICAL CENTER



Polar Plunge

February 24th

Dive into cold water for a cause at the Jonesboro Polar Plunge on Tuesday, February 24th, at 6 p.m. at the Jonesboro Youth Center, 1421 W. Nettleton Avenue.

Proceeds will benefit Special Olympics. Register to jump on-site the day of the plunge starting at 5 p.m. or in advance online. Awards will begin at 5:45 p.m., followed by the plunge.

Individuals can also support Special Olympics by donating; find the Polar Plunge online and then you can donate to your favorite plunger or team!

Next Month

NEA Women:
Movers & Shakers



We'll be marking National Women's History Month by spotlighting NEA women who are making history today!

Staycation



It's almost Spring Break! Local businesses can take advantage of our March edition to let readers know what they can do right here in NEA.

ENCORE



Our NEA Seniors section has a new look, but the same purpose as we share stories and information of interest to NEA's senior residents.

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NEA BAPTIST 

Heart Month



Heart Day at NEA

February 13 • 9 am – 12 pm

NEA Baptist Conference Center
4800 East Johnson Ave.

We invite you to join us for
**FREE Heart Health Screenings &
Education, Nutrition & Fun Activities**

For more accurate lab results, **please fast after midnight**
(Black coffee or water only).

HEARTTALK
with NEA BAPTIST 

Enjoy a **FREE lunch & discussion** with
Dr. Lena Awar & Dr. Ore Oladiran
Thursday • February 26

Doors Open 11:00 am

Lunch served at 12:00

Southwest Church of Christ

1601 James St.



FREE Tickets at
<https://neabaptistclinic.org/hearttalk>