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**PARENTERIE**  
MAGAZINE

THRIFTING & UPCYCLING

BACK TO SCHOOL

SPECIAL SECTION: KIDS PLAY

August 2023

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10

Pet of the Month: Indy



15

United Way Funding Announcements



17

St. Bernards Triple Swing



22

Generating Innovative Networks Groundbreaking

# WHAT'S INSIDE

14 Teacher Feature  
*Kandice Fields*

41 Teacher Feature  
*Kathy Rowe*

26 Why Thrift?  
*by Gabby Powell*

42 Teacher Feature  
*Carol Thomas*

27 Secondhand Nostalgia  
*by Katie Collins*

44 Teacher Feature  
*Suzette Killough*

31 Kids Play  
*Special Section*

45 Teacher Feature  
*Nancy Mangrum*

39 Teacher Feature  
*Kelle Boozar*

51 Teacher Feature  
*Larry Mitchell*



ON THE COVER -  
Teacher Feature: Mrs. Betty Gatlin  
Page 19

Cover Photo by Richard Brummett



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# From the Publisher



August is here, and summer is almost gone. Back to School means different things depending on what life stage you are in. But it means back to the hustle and bustle of routines and activities around school and sports and making plans for “the rest of the year” for all.

Premiere is the busiest from February to after the 4th of July. Our staff took the Friday after the 4th off, and Perry and I took our annual trip to White River to camp (in our camper so “Glamp”). We did this last year and said we would make an annual event of it. As you can see by the picture, I caught the biggest fish — both years. And that is all I’m going to say about that.

I love the season of change -- spring and fall are my favorites. August is the “set-up” for fall and by the time we get to August I am ready! As I look at the rest of the year, I realize it is no less busy than the first half: Fairs, festivals, ballgames, and the holidays fill up the calendar fast. I try to remind myself that busy is good – just make sure you are enjoying the moments along the way.

Premiere strives to showcase the opportunities in NEA to enrich your everyday life, and I believe we have a lot of opportunities for you to learn about in this edition. We also took the opportunity to seek teachers who have dedicated their careers to our education systems over the years and set them forth as examples of the impact teachers have.

I hope you enjoy this edition at least as much as I enjoyed catching these browns on the White River. Be sure and keep up with Premiere for the 3rd Annual White River trip in July 2024 – we will see if the streak continues.

Thank you for helping us publish the “Good News and the People Making it Happen in NEA!”

dina@mormediainc.com

*Dina Mason*

Publisher

A special “Thank you!” to Travis Adams at Tintmasters for connecting us with his dad, Russell Adams!

*Glen Sain*  
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# GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT

One of my good friends and I were discussing how the world seems to be passing us by because we can't keep up with modern technology.

I told him of an incident recently where I was in Jonesboro and needed to go across town to an address I had never visited in order to photograph a baby for the cover of *Premiere*. I got the mom on the phone and she was trying to give me directions when she resorted to, "Hey, if you have in iPhone I can drop you a pin."

"Well, I'm sure that makes perfect sense to someone your age," I told her, "but by the time I figure out what you're talking about, your child will be in the third grade."

She handed the phone to her husband, who walked me through it the old-fashioned way, like Lewis and Clark would have done it, with street names and landmarks. I made it there on time, and even had the presence of mind to backtrack my way out of the neighborhood and into familiar territory in order to return home.

These super-duper cell phones have changed the way we do almost everything. Not very many people still write important things down on notepads anymore, opting instead to key them into their phones. People watch movies, check social media, send texts, book appointments ... just about anything one needs to accomplish can be done with these devices.

I get it. When you've been walking the highway toward old age as long as I have -- if I can make it to the end of the month I'll be 71 -- you have about three choices when it comes to progress: Step aside and let it pass you by; stand in the way and get run over; or try to hold on and learn new stuff so as not to get swept away. Unfortunately, I have chosen Step One and am rapidly getting lost in a world of clicks, beeps and now, pins.

One of my longtime friends from the newspaper world sat down with me recently and we rehashed the good old days when both of us won numerous awards for action sports photography. Snapping the

camera shutter at just the right moment to capture that slam dunk or the diving catch takes some talent, and we remember the feeling of seeing that great shot make it into print. Sometimes a friend from another newspaper would call you and compliment you for the photo and there was a great sense of pride in connecting with a job well done, and you'd describe the particulars of the moment that allowed you to come away with the great photograph.

Now I'm wondering if all these people who use their phones to photograph their food have the same sense of accomplishment. The "look at my food photo" is one stage of this technological advancement I will



never be able to wrap my head around. People I consider a lot smarter than I am pull out these phone/cameras and take pictures of plates of food, then post them on social media. My first newspaper editor, a really good photographer in his own right, often posts pictures of the breakfast he just cooked. One of my best friends, a retired professional photographer, recently shared a picture of a watermelon he bought.

I can't grasp this technological advancement. I don't relate to the process. Are you assuming I've never actually seen food? All you have to do is look at my waistline and

you will be assured I have. Do you feel there are multitudes of us out here so interested in your daily comings and goings that you say to yourself, "Dang, I bet everyone is wondering what I'm having for lunch. Better snap off a picture of this lasagna and put it on Facebook." Or are you just so happy you didn't burn the meal for once that you feel compelled to put up a picture of a plate lunch?

Just today I've been treated to photos of tomatoes, steaks on a grill, Boston butts, sandwiches with a bite out of them, ice cream ... and all I can say is, "Really?" This is a sign of an advanced society, to photograph food? It would be different if these people were artists *painting* the food; to look at a piece of meat on a plate and recreate it with paint and brush so that it looks exactly like meat on a plate, now that takes talent. But to photograph it? I mean, it's not like it's a difficult shot. The cow is dead now and can't run, so it's just a piece of meat sitting there. Or a tomato. Or a cucumber. Or a casserole.

I'm wondering if these foodtographers go into detail with their friends on just how they managed to get the photo, the same way we sports guys do.

"Did you see the picture I posted on Facebook yesterday? It was hamburgers on my grill."

"Yeah, I saw that. Great shot."

"Thanks. I timed it just right and got smoke coming up and everything."

"Man, you've got some talent. Did you see the picture of my BLT?"

"I did. Great color. Today I'm going to try and shoot a salad."

"Good luck, man. Salads ... they're hard to shoot. Sometimes the croutons roll a little bit."

I guess when they're done with their next food picture they can just drop me a pin.





# THE ADVENTURES OF

BY VICKI McMILLAN

# Lester

**H**ello,  
Lester, here!

August means back to school, and nothing says education to me more than a library. I've traveled to a few Presidential libraries in my life, which may have contributed to my stellar Jeopardy performance.

The National Archives and Records Administration oversees 15 Presidential Libraries -- more presidents than this have libraries, but only the 15 are monitored by the NARA. My favorite is the Clinton Library in Little Rock, beside the Arkansas River. In addition to all the national documents, it has columns throughout the library that house President Clinton's daily schedules - every one of them! I was so fascinated by that, but Vicki would not let me down to go smell them. Also there was a replica of the



Oval Office with the Resolute Desk that looked pretty cozy. But, again, I was not allowed to sniff anything.

Another interesting library was the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library in Austin, Texas. Vicki always says this is her favorite. It's on the campus of the University of Texas, and has more of a working vibe than some of the others. As President Johnson liked to conduct business on the telephone, there are several phones throughout the library among the different exhibits. My favorite one (Vicki put it on speaker) was a conversation LBJ had with Jackie

Kennedy shortly after she and her children had moved out of the White House following JFK's assassination. The President was offering to send Bar-B-Que over to her house, and, in her wispy voice, Mrs. Kennedy was graciously declining. This library has an active archives as part of it and is often busy with graduate students. Also, the library had a replica of the Oval Office with Resolute Desk AND this time the Oval Office had three televisions: ABC, CBS, and NBC! No cable in those days: Shudder!!

While we were in Texas, we also saw the George W. Bush Library which had a lot of September 11th information, including a huge steel beam from the World Trade Center. Then we went to College Station (Boo Aggies) and toured the George H.W. Bush Library. One sad side note: Barbara Bush died in Houston while we were touring. The news crews were all around us. And, yes, this scrappy little pound dog was on CNN! I should point out that both of these Presidential libraries had replicas of the Oval Office with the Resolute Desk. Again, I was imprisoned by the Man's leash.



Some other interesting thoughts I've had about Presidential libraries:

- President U. S. Grant's library is located at Mississippi State University ... a Union General's memorabilia located in the home state of Confederate President Jeff Davis.
- President Gerald Ford has two Presidential sites and he couldn't even keep a golf ball on the fairway.
- President Jimmy Carter's library is aptly called the Carter Center for Peace.
- President Herbert Hoover's library in West Branch, Iowa, is a testimony to all he did for the USA. He was one smart dude, and the library reflects it. And guess what? No Oval Office with a Resolute Desk. There you go.

If you haven't been to the Clinton Library, shame on you. For the price of a Sonic hot dog, I'll give you a personal tour.

Keep reading and learning,  
Lester



# Lessons LEARNED IN Motherhood

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Last year I put Eva in daycare for the first time since she was born. I only took her two or three days a week, and it only lasted a few months, but it was enough to give me a taste of freedom from the stay-at-home life. Eva seemed to love it, too.

It ended up not working out and I was back at home full-time with my daughter. While hard, I was able to make even more precious memories with her. But as 2023 started and I finished my schooling to be a medical coder, I finally admitted to myself it was time for daycare again so I could find a job and identity outside of "Mom."

We were extremely lucky to find a full-time spot without too long of a wait. I could tell Eva was ready for full days of activities and playing with other kids, but I feared how she would do without me. We've been nearly inseparable in the last three years, after all. She cried her first day at drop-off

but before I even made it home, I received a text from her teacher saying she was already playing. And when I picked her up that afternoon her excitement was through the roof: She made friends, colored, played outside, and even took a nap.

It has been incredible being able to get work done during the day without a million little interruptions. Yet, my mind is constantly on Eva. Are the other kids being nice to her? Is she being nice to them? Is she actually having fun? But in just the short time she has been at this daycare, I have watched her blossom. She is learning so much and our family has a new appreciation for one another whenever we all get home in the evening. We cherish our time together a little bit more now. For so long I feared whether I was doing the right thing by not keeping her home with me, but I am learning this is what she needs, and we will all be better for it.



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# PET

# of the MONTH

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BY NATALEE JO GRIFFIN



We adopted Toast when she was just a kitten. She stole our hearts from day one. She just turned 2 on August 1. She's a female orange cat, which is pretty rare; only about 20% of orange cats are female! She spends most of her days playing with her toys, napping in her cat tree, cuddling with her kitty sisters, and wearing silly costumes. She is very, very shy and takes a while to warm up to strangers, but once comfortable she shows her crazy side. She's very talkative and can carry a conversation almost like she's human. We are blessed to be her parents.



Want to see your pet featured in Premiere? Submit your pet via our Facebook post each month! Follow NEA Premiere Magazine to stay in the know.



# OBESEITY IN PETS

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

**O**besity in pets is something I see all too often in the veterinary world, and, to be frank, something the population as a whole has gotten used to and now accepts as a new normal. However, obesity is not healthy and comes with many risks, including overall decreased quality of life. Obesity occurs when the pet takes in more calories than what their body needs to support and maintain. Of course this doesn't happen overnight, but occurs when this is the habit.

Pets that overeat and have a sedentary lifestyle are at the highest risk, but there are certain breeds that are genetically predisposed and therefore are at a greater risk than those breeds not predisposed. Dog breeds such as Bassett hounds, cocker spaniels, English bulldogs, pugs, and dachshunds are on this list. Now, that's not to say if you get or have one of these breeds they are going to be overweight, just that they are genetically at a higher risk.

Now, I mentioned earlier our idea of a normal weight has drifted away from the true normal over the years. Bluntly, we have gotten used to seeing pets overweight so much so that now a pet at a normal weight may look underweight to some people. I often am asked, "She looks skinny, how much should I be feeding her?" Or, "My neighbor said my dog is malnourished, does he look ok?" And another common one is, "When will he start putting some weight on? I'm feeding him a ton and he's just not gaining." Each case is different and you can't pigeonhole any one of them, but I will say that puppies (especially large breed puppies) tend to be lanky in their first 1-2 years as their skeletons grow. It is after the skeleton becomes mature that the muscles really start to develop and then conditioning (or fat layers) are laid down. This is normal. I often compare young, growing large breed puppies to baby deer -- all leggy and lanky and just a bit awkward, and this is perfectly normal. We can't expect for a puppy to have the muscling and conditioning of an adult dog because they aren't one.

On the other hand, we shouldn't feed a grown adult dog that has a sedentary life like a wolf, because it's not one. Herein lies the main issue. Overfeeding. You have a pet, you love your pet, your pet loves snacks, you give it extra snacks. A vicious cycle. And a cycle that can be tough to break. However, there are options. I want to again preface this next statement by stating first that no two cases are ever the same and all must be considered

individually given the patient's needs and the client's needs and expectations. A general rule to keep in mind is simply to reduce the calories consumed and to exercise more. For some patients, that simple recipe is all that is required, but for others calorie reduction to help promote healthy weight loss is necessary prior to implementing an exercise plan due to bone/joint problems, especially back, hips, and knees. By losing weight by cutting calories first, the pet's body will not be quite as strained to lift the excess body weight and is less likely to suffer any injuries while on its weight loss journey.

Keep in mind, this is easy to talk about and to create a plan, but implementing it and sticking with it is where the success is. I have a dinner table my family and I eat at every night. I have four dogs. The dogs don't beg me for food -- they know the weak links and tattle on them regularly -- the weak links in my house ... the kids. My kids are young and think feeding the dog is fun -- so to avoid this, the dogs go out to play or to their "bedroom" (which is their kennel) during dinner. This takes the temptation away from my kids feeding the dogs, especially when they have broccoli on their plates that I insist they eat. Small changes like this can have a huge impact on your pet's diet and weight loss journey. For more information on pet obesity and choosing a diet that is right for your pet, contact your veterinarian or refer to a trusted website like American Veterinary Medical Association's website for pet owners.





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# MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE

**S**ummer vacation is almost over. Before we know, it will be time to get back into the routine of school. Often the transition from summer vacation to the new school year can be an adjustment for the whole family. Teachers suggest that planning for the school year can make the transition from summer vacation to back-to-school easier for parents as well as children. Keep in mind the following when beginning the school year.

#### SCHOOL'S WEBSITE

Check the school's website for important information.

#### ROUTINE

Establishing an earlier bedtime schedule will help getting up earlier. Also, giving children time to prepare for the next school day such as picking out clothes, organizing books, and learning to get up early can make hectic school mornings go smoother. Practicing these routines a few weeks before actually going back to school can get everyone off on the right foot.

#### SCHEDULES

Making a schedule of the school day along with after school activities helps to let everyone know

what needs to be done. Don't forget to factor in not only the school schedule, but also homework, chores, dinner, play time, etc.

#### LIBRARY

A trip to the library before school starts can brush the dust off some neglected reading skills. Select books that are enjoyable and interesting. Make reading fun!

#### STUDY TIME

Introducing children to a study schedule can assist in preparing them for homework and school projects. Playing games that incorporate reading and math skills helps children get ready for school.

#### SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Buying back-to-school supplies ahead of time is one less worry for both the student and parent.

#### ACTIVITIES

Planning back-to-school activities or parties gets everyone ready for the new school year and helps make the transition more comfortable.

#### SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Children feel more comfortable if they know

where they will be and who they will be with. Knowing the location of their classroom and meeting the teacher can help lessen the "butterflies in the stomach" feeling.

#### COMMON COURTESIES

Take time, before school starts, to talk to your child about being courteous to others. Good manners are common courtesies that make life easier. Beginning a new school routine can be hard, but a little preparation, along with treating others as you would like to be treated, can help smooth out some of the rough spots of the school day.

#### BACK-TO-SCHOOL - QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." - Henry B. Adams

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 manners@paragould.net.

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## Sandy Rowe

### Premiere Dental Hygienist





# MRS. Kandice Fields

BY KAROLINE RISKER

As students are heading back to school this month, Kandice Fields will be graduating with a degree in psychology from Arkansas State University. That might sound pretty typical, but her story is anything but. Kandice was diagnosed with stage 4 thyroid cancer while she worked toward her degree. The day after her diagnosis, her son Kason was diagnosed with autism.

That was six years ago. Today she is making a full circle as she completes her degree as the latest step toward helping other families with special needs. She wants people to know there is hope after the fight; cancer is not the end of the story, and neither is having a child with special needs.

Kandice found out she had cancer in March 2017 when her nurse practitioner pushed her to get an ultrasound. She then had surgery. Ten days later she got a confirmed cancer diagnosis. The next day Kason was diagnosed with autism. She then had another surgery and met with an oncologist team for treatment at St. Bernards Cancer Center. "At the time I was more concerned with getting Kason what he needed," she said. "It took a year to get back to normal between radiation and appointments."

During that time, she was taking Kason to a psychologist. Since the diagnosis, Kason has been doing speech therapy, and ABA (applied behavior analysis). "He is the light I needed at the time," Kandice said. "All I could think about was getting better because I knew he needed me. When someone says you have Stage 4 cancer, you think about your kids. I had to make sure I could be there for the long run."

Kandice said that of the two battles, the autism diagnosis was the more difficult. "It was such a struggle to get insurance to pay for some of his services," she said. "I had to fight to have speech because there were no physical disabilities. We had to prove he had it and that it gave him lifestyle problems, whereas cancer is a diagnosis and they can see it with a lab report. I was fighting more for him than myself. I guess as a mom you struggle more with wanting your child to have success. Yes, I'm a cancer patient but I had a clear path on how to fight it. Autism is unpredictable. Your plan changes, insurance changes, and you have to adapt to your surroundings."

Kandice said the biggest challenge was staying positive. "I try my best to look at any situation of 'you are in this situation for a reason.' Focusing on the good got me out of the darkness.

"A lot of people look at people with disabilities as a disadvantage, but to know him is a joy," said Kandice of her son. "There's a love that they have. They don't understand the hate in the world. They just love everybody. To be a part of that and watch a kid smile, it's just a wonderful feeling. One person told me, 'I'm so sorry he's autistic. You must be disappointed.' I said, 'No. My son is the most loving caring, affectionate child.'"



Kandice now wants to use her struggles to help others. "A lot of people have difficulties," she said. "I knew I had to do what I had to do." So, Kandice, a dental assistant for 16 years, felt a desire to do something new. "Something told me I wasn't in the right place to do what I needed to do. Everyone can tell I light up when I talk to others about autism.

"I told my boyfriend I'm not where I'm supposed to be," she said. "My job is to help other special needs parents."

Kandice's next step is to apply to a masters program, which will take 1 1/2 years to 2 1/2 years to complete, depending on which program she enters. The end goal is to earn a doctorate in child development and "to work with autistic children and their parents in whatever way I can do that," she said. "I want to be there for the families that have to go on the same journeys that I have to go on for my son."

More specifically, her goal is to help parents learn to adapt with their child. "Parents don't know where to start after the diagnosis. It took me a while," she added. "I just know that that's what I'm supposed to do."

Kandice can still not be taken off of the cancer list and is given blood every eight weeks to ensure everything is okay. Even though she is still battling with her own health struggles, Kandice made the Chancellor's List at ASU. She also won a mental health scholarship at a convention she will attend this month. She believes the worst is behind her. Kason is now able to speak (he was non-verbal until age 6) and is much more independent. "He is super smart, good at mechanics and electricity. When he has his mind on something he is determined he will do it and nothing will stop him," said Kandice.

Kandice is also mom to Jesse Welch and bonus children Jackson Bailey and Robert Darnell. She is engaged to Jeremy Darnell.

How did she do it? "I just did it," Kandice said. "I didn't have a choice. But I knew the outcome would be amazing. If I could just help one person with their journey, then I've succeeded."

# UNITED WAY FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT



United Way of Northeast Arkansas announced its 2024 funding partner programs to various nonprofits across the region. These organizations aide four areas of need in Northeast Arkansas: health, education, financial stability, and basic needs. Newly appointed Executive Director, Heather Coats, enthusiastically presented checks to over 20 local nonprofit programs.

Grants were given to local nonprofits in amounts ranging from roughly \$2,000 to \$40,000. Programs such as the “La Escuelita” Bilingual After School Program, Hope Found of Northeast Arkansas, AR Single Parent Scholarship Fund, and so many more were honored to receive these

donations. As so many recipients commented, it takes good people working together to make good changes happen in our community.

The mission of United Way of Northeast Arkansas can be encompassed by the short phrase of “Live United.” These two simple words express how the organization is working alongside community groups to invest in Northeast Arkansas by targeting the critical needs for our area.

If you would like to volunteer your time or donate another way, visit [www.uwnea.org](http://www.uwnea.org) to find organizations that are making a local impact.



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The darkness of the early morning was gradually replaced with a sunny sky as the day came to life. With the sunshine came a Southeast wind at about ten miles an hour and, as if on cue, mallards began to pile out of the North. Large bunches and small bunches at “medium” height flew across the timber, headed in a southerly direction. As the ducks came into view above the flooded oaks, they were met with a symphony of calls. Several of my hunting friends yearned for their attention in hopes they would respond favorably, see the plastic decoys, and flutter into the timber providing fodder for some anxious gun barrels.

I have been fortunate to enjoy many days as described above with many wonderful people. Whether it was a day standing in flooded timber, an evening in deer camp, an afternoon following beagles through briar thickets or sitting with friends on the bank with lines in the water, one thing that makes any outdoor day even better is sharing it with family and friends. The relationships built in the outdoors are unique, steadfast and solidified with each outing.



As a youngster I was fortunate to spend many days outdoors with my family. Along with that family came scores of other people, friends of the family who provided lots of depth to those days. Though many of those folks in the age range of my grandparents have passed, friendships continue with many of their families, and we often talk about those days.



As I began to enjoy the outdoors on my own, I was fortunate to have some of the best guys and gals to share the outdoors with. We were in the beginning years of our outdoor journey, and we learned together. We learned the importance of a properly brushed blind, the need for good equipment that would function, the importance of a well-placed shot, and respect for the game we pursued and the land we pursued it on. Many of the basics of the outdoors were formed alongside other young men and women following the same pursuits.



That has led to a multitude of outdoor friends, some being the most important relationships I have. These are friends I can count on at most anytime. I have friends that will help me drag a deer, brush a blind, repair a boat, build a stand, clean some fish or take care of a multitude of other outdoor tasks.

But those very same friends were there for our family after the tornado devastated our home, there during health scares, family losses and there for a cookout or Bible study. They became family.

Outdoor friends get to know each other better than most casual relationships. We are there for highs and lows and through some of the most honest, transparent situations of our lives. We know each other well enough to know what the other might be thinking. Last year, my buddy and I had studied maps individually in preparation for our elk hunt in a new area. We sat down together to go over our plan, we had basically marked the same locations, thinking very much alike. On any given morning of duck hunting, we know whose role is whose, usually without saying a word. One person generally gives the decoys an arrangement, we work together on calling ducks, and we know who will call the shot when the fowl get within range. It is a true team effort with a desire to make it the best for everyone.

This camaraderie built with time in the outdoors is unlike any other. I formed some special bonds with some guys who were teammates in various sports, and I have ties with many folks through school and community as well. But there is something about the outdoors bond that seems to trump others. It is an almost timeless bond that holds strong. It is a bond that picks right up where it left off, no matter the length of absence. And it is a bond that builds great memories and holds a future of many more.

Unfortunately, I see that drifting away in today’s outdoors society. It seems many outdoorsmen today are more set on “personal” gain for themselves or for their group. It seems we have less thought of bringing others into our circle to introduce them to the sport. It seems we have less willingness to share the tricks of the trade with those around us who might be seeking to enjoy the outdoors and find their place out there.

And statistics reflect that attitude. Though there was a slight uptick in those heading outdoors during the pandemic, the overall trend continues to show a decrease in those that are out there. The reasons are broad, but one common thread in all studies indicates many folks want to get involved, but they do not know where to start. Their family members or friends are not active in the outdoors, so they are a little insecure about stepping into unfamiliar waters.

But that is where we, as outdoorsmen and women, can make a difference. As you make outdoor plans try to include someone new. It might be someone on the fringe of getting out there, it might be someone who needs a little guidance in a new skill or technique, or it might be someone who just needs an outdoor friend. Take some time and effort to help them get out and make some memories in the outdoors.

As stated earlier, I have been very blessed to share the woods and waters with a host of people. To my family and friends that have accompanied me, challenged me, or just talked about the outdoors with me, thank you! Thanks for taking the time. Thanks to all that read this and especially to those who take the time to get someone else into the woods or on the water. If you ever need anything, please let me know. I hope to see you out there!

St. Bernards  
**TRIPLE Swing**

Every year, volunteers across NEA come to support the St. Bernards Triple Swing event. This year's fundraiser included a golf tournament, pickleball social, and a spectacular dinner/dance. The theme for this year's event was Livin' in the Land of the Delta Blues. Funding raised from this year's event will go toward expanding the surgical services offered at St. Bernards.



**PARAGOULD ROTARY**  
 100 YEARS OF SERVICE



The Paragould Rotary Club hosted its 100+ years Celebration and Awards Installation Banquet this past month. Various members were honored for perfect attendance, Rotarian of the Year, the Top Notch Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award. The club values service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and leadership to create a better community for all who live here.

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# MRS. Betty Gatlin

BY KARAN SUMMITT

There's Cher, Bono and Sting; Moses, Mohammed and Charlemagne. From ancient times until now, only a rare few achieve one-name recognition. For 65 years Betty Gatlin has been "Mrs. Betty" to hundreds of students and their parents, her given name prefaced by the respectful term all southern children learn from birth.

Those 65 years include 40 years at Crowley's Ridge Academy (CRA) and 25 years at the Balcom Learning Center, an on-campus school at Childrens' Homes, Inc. (CHI). They began in 1954 when Betty started her career at the young age of 20, teaching at CRA on a provisional certificate. Eventually she earned a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education from Harding College. In all, Betty spent 40 years at CRA in grades one through six.

A bit of history. Betty comes from a family of five children, all of them educators. She credits her parents, who only attended school through the sixth and eighth grades, for placing a high value on ensuring their offspring received an education beyond their own opportunities.

Those early teaching years were lean, with Betty earning a whopping \$125 per month for the first several years. In 1958 she married Jerry Gatlin, a union that lasted 60 years. In time the couple added two sons and a daughter to their home. The children brought new challenges for Betty as she learned to juggle family and work, always with the goal of keeping family life a priority. With Jerry's support, the days revolved around church, school, the kids' activities and a large extended family. During these lean years, a tradition of playing cards and board games took root. Rumor has it competition at the Gatlin game table can be intense!



Any 65-year career will see multiple changes. In the 1950s, students hand printed lessons from dusty black chalkboards. In time, handouts progressed from purple copies on mimeograph machines to printer copies to smartboards with electronic pens. In more recent years video games and media exposure have demanded creative teaching strategies to hold the children's attention. In all these changes and modernizations, Betty found certain fundamentals remain. Children still wanted to learn, still needed structure, acceptance and approval. They would thrive with praise and encouragement when dispersed in an atmosphere of impartiality.

From the beginning, Betty's personal philosophy guided her approach to teaching. Each year she wanted to help students feel good about themselves and develop a strong, balanced self-esteem that would guide them through the difficulties of life. As with any teacher, she wanted them to learn the appropriate material for promotion to the next grade. When students thought about time in Betty's classroom, she hoped they would remember that she loved them, was fair and wanted them to learn as much as possible.

Betty shared an experience from her own childhood that impacted her perspective as an educator. During the Great Depression, her family moved from the familiarity of Greene County to Springfield, Missouri. Betty remembered the feeling of being an outsider in a new environment. Years later her heart would lead her to provide extra support for those students in her classroom that did not seem to fit in.

Mrs. Betty taught first grade for 20 years. In a small school like CRA with only one class per grade, many students shared the same traditions and experiences from each grade. For Mrs. Betty's first graders, cleaning their desks with shaving cream, daily read-aloud travels with The Boxcar Children, phonics recitations and letters to Santa that were saved and displayed in the hall when these same students became seniors kept those memories and traditions alive. Betty's memories include being at CRA from its inception





Harrell Austin (CRA Superintendent 1973-1993). *Betty Gatlin has lived a life of dedication and devotion to the Lord, to church, family, children, Crowley's Ridge Academy and Children's Homes, Inc. In a time when recent reports express concern that too many students enter junior high at a third-grade reading level, she is committed to ensuring every student succeeds. I have been blessed to observe that commitment both as a student in her class and as her superintendent for 20 years.*

Scott Gatlin (CRA Superintendent 1993-1997). *As much as anyone I know, I believe Betty Gatlin wakes up every morning with the intention of being a blessing to whoever God puts in her path. Even at her current age, she still blesses students, co-workers and friends of every age group in ways that honor God and reflect his love. Every educator needs to have that outlook, but my mom exemplifies it as well as anyone with whom I've ever worked.*

Dan Stokes (CRA Elementary Principal). *Mrs. Betty believed in routines. At any given time of the day, you knew what she and her students were doing. This attention to structure, combined with clear expectations for behavior, created a safe environment for children to learn and grow. Mrs. Betty and her students worked as a team so everyone could succeed. Individual needs were met, but not at the expense of what was best for the group.*

Dale Horn (CRA Superintendent 1997-2008). *It was a blessing to work with Mrs. Betty. She created an environment in which her students were held accountable but were also encouraged and taught how to treat and respect others. In my personal opinion, Mrs. Betty was a true molder of dreams. She made a difference in touching the hearts and minds of all her students.*

Cindy Wood (Balcom Learning Center Supervisor). *Mrs. Betty is a quiet leader who earns the respect of students and peers alike. Her warm demeanor makes new students feel welcome and she helps her students become confident in their subject matter. From her example, we are learning as much as the students about how to live a life that is truly successful every day.*

On a personal note, three of my four children were students in Mrs. Betty's first grade class. Our daughter recalls how they made "birthday books" for one another, taking time to celebrate each classmate on their special day. As a parent I never doubted her genuine concern for my child, her commitment to fairness and her willingness to be available.

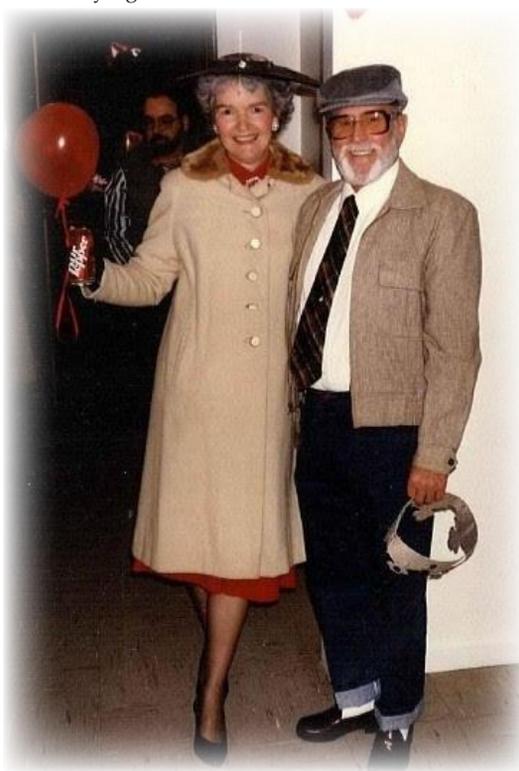
I remember her frankness, gently letting me know when my child's attitudes or grades needed improving, and I recall how she could spot early areas of strength in a child's talents and abilities. It was Mrs. Betty who first noticed that our second son had "a mind like a calculator" because he could compute numbers quickly. He now has a business career in accounting and finance.

It has been said if you find your passion, you will never work a day in your life. Watching her eyes light up as she talks about a lifetime in the classroom, it looks as if 65 years ago Betty Gatlin found a passion that still makes every day enjoyable. For her students and fellow educators, Mrs. Betty is far more than a one-word name. She is simply "The Best!"

and then watching the school grow and survive and the challenge of teaching all three of her own children. After retiring from CRA, Betty transitioned from first graders to teaching teens one-on-one at the CHI Balcom Learning Center. Students come to the Center with unique needs, many of them testing below age-appropriate learning. With each teen, teachers begin at the student's personal level, relishing how quickly they excel and make up for lost time. In Betty's words, "Working with these special students as a second career has been very rewarding. It has been a great blessing from God to be 90 years old and still allowed to stay in the classroom all these years."

In a time when many teachers are taking early retirement or moving to other careers, Mrs. Betty remained in education. Two things kept her motivated. The first is a philosophy of life handed down from her father, Burl Buchanan. She remembers Buchanan saying he wanted to have a purpose or reason for getting up each morning, hoping to make a positive impact in someone's life. Betty channeled that philosophy toward making an impact in the lives of children. The second reason is a bit closer to home. Betty wanted to remain relevant, to continue growing and living out the purpose for her life. Teaching helps her fight any normal tendencies to be sedentary that come with aging. In her own words, it keeps her "up and going each day."

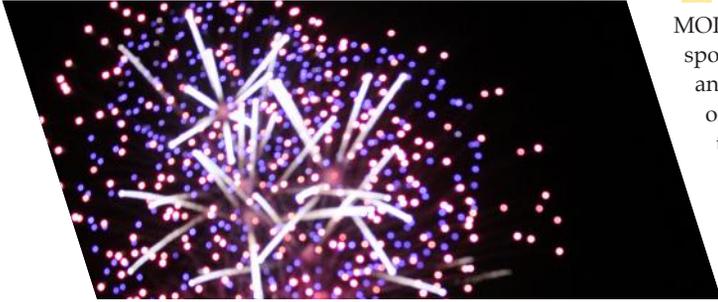
Betty's teaching efforts received ample recognition. In 1998, she was awarded the KAIT8 Shannon Wright Golden Ruler Award and was named Walmart Teacher of the Year and National Christian Educator of the Year that same year. These public accolades are reinforced by the comments from administrators who had firsthand experience of Betty's impact on students. Some of their words include:



# PARAGOULD BIG BANG



**F**reedom and fireworks were on full display at the 2023 Paragould Fireworks Show on the Fourth of July.



MOR Media, the Paragould A&P Commission, and dozens of other local sponsors came together to provide the community with free hot dogs, drinks, and ice cream while they celebrated with their families and friends. The tug-of-war contest ended with the Paragould Fire Department defending its title as reigning champions against a collection of eager challengers. Many attendees also enjoyed playing in the 870 Cornhole Nation amateur and competitive games throughout the evening.



The gates to the Paragould Rotary Park softball complex opened to the public at 6:30. The fireworks display began around 9:30, despite the scare of surrounding rain showers.

The Bringer of the Boom, also known as Bryan Butts, and his crew lit up the night sky with bursts of colors and light. While each “boom” was followed with “oohs” and “ahhs” of amazement, it is our hope they also served to bring a time of remembrance to our nation’s Independence Day.

None of these events would ever happen without the support of our outstanding sponsors and attendees, so thank you for making it happen!



# VFW CAR SHOW



Organizers of a Fourth of July car show for veterans got a pleasant surprise when the day of the event arrived.

More than 70 cars, trucks and motorcycles were stationed around the new Paragould Community Pavilion for onlookers to enjoy. "We didn't know," said Kenny Wright, one of the organizers of the Veterans Appreciation Day Car, Truck and Bike Show, on the day of the event. "We thought

maybe there'd be ten, fifteen, twenty. We were thrilled when we saw how many people wanted to be a part of this."

A combined effort by area veterans' organizations, the show featured live music, food trucks and vendors and information on services available to local veterans. Paragould VFW Commander Mark Davis had explained prior to the show that "the VFW, DAV, American Legion and VFW Auxiliary -- and the

Veterans Support Organization, also -- are all working together to put on this car show for the veterans, just to help them see what all we do and what all we can do," he said. "... We're all working together to let local veterans know we're there for them."

While the show specifically targeted veterans as a way of showing appreciation, it was open to anyone who felt like dropping by and the large crowd seemed to show the public's appreciation.

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Major advancements are coming for the Paragould and surrounding area entrepreneurs. The Generating Innovative Networks (G.I.N.) will be an all-inclusive resource for the community. The G.I.N. will include various office spaces, a food incubator kitchen, a maker's trade center, an event space, four start-up business incubator spaces, and will provide business and technology mentorship from various partners.



## GENERATING INNOVATIVE NETWORKS

*Groundbreaking Ceremony*

The primary goal of the G.I.N. is to become the hub for entrepreneurial spirits within the community. Both new and existing businesses will be provided opportunities to grow and expand through the resources provided at the G.I.N. Soft skills, such as job interview skills, resume building, and more will also be available through this program.

The groundbreaking event for the G.I.N. introduced the new designs to the community and potential partners. The Economic Development Corporation of Paragould will operate and spearhead the G.I.N. with the support from various partners.

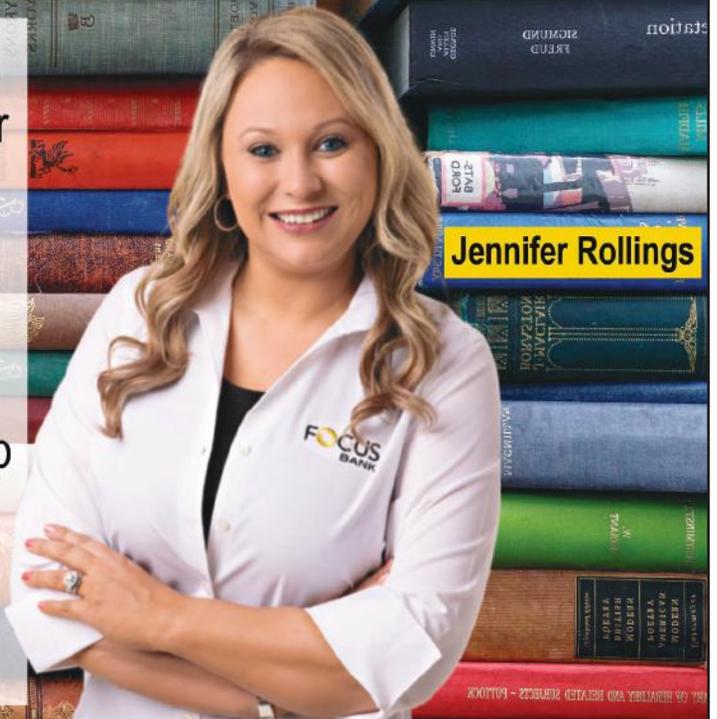
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Visit [www.discoverparagould.org](http://www.discoverparagould.org) and click on the Generating Innovative Networks tab to learn more about these exciting new additions coming to Downtown Paragould!



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 Sydney Adams & Zach Tuhoski - September 30, 2023  
 Taylor Williams & Casen DeHart - October 6, 2023   
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 08/12 - Saturday at 7pm, Nightwing Concert:  
 Featuring The Happy Campers  
 08/18-08/20 - Friday & Saturday at 7pm, Sunday at 2pm  
 Steel Magnolias, Presented by: Act II Performing Arts  
 08/19 - Saturday at 12pm, Precious Gems Pageant  
 08/26 - Saturday at 7pm, Chad Garrett & Friends  
 08/28 - Monday at 7pm, Bluegrass Monday

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# SAVE THE DATE

## DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD EVENTS



August 4th

6:00pm

Singo Bingo  
Skinny J's, 6:00 p.m.



August 5th

10am - 12pm

Street Splash  
Bounce houses, water sprinklers,  
open hydrants, Touch-A-Truck  
Downtown Paragould



August 5th

3:30pm

Book Club: From Below  
Weber Book House



August 18th & 20th

7pm and 2pm

Steel Magnolias  
The Collins Theatre



August 19th

4:00pm-10pm

Henry Wrinkles Foundation Car/Art  
Show  
Downtown Paragould

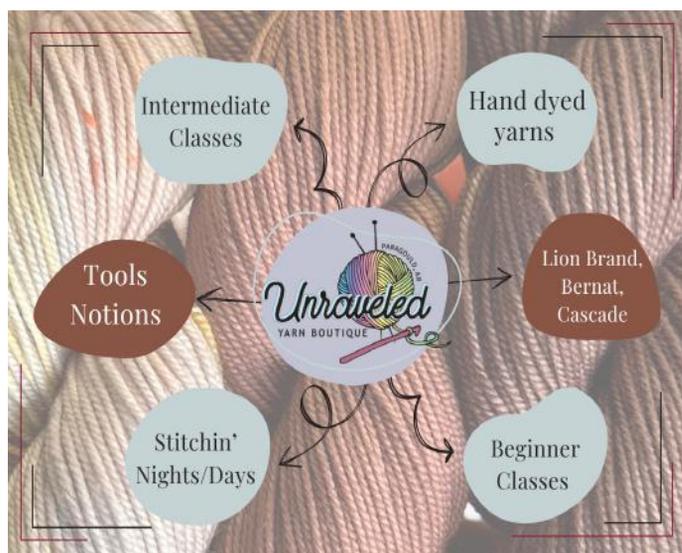
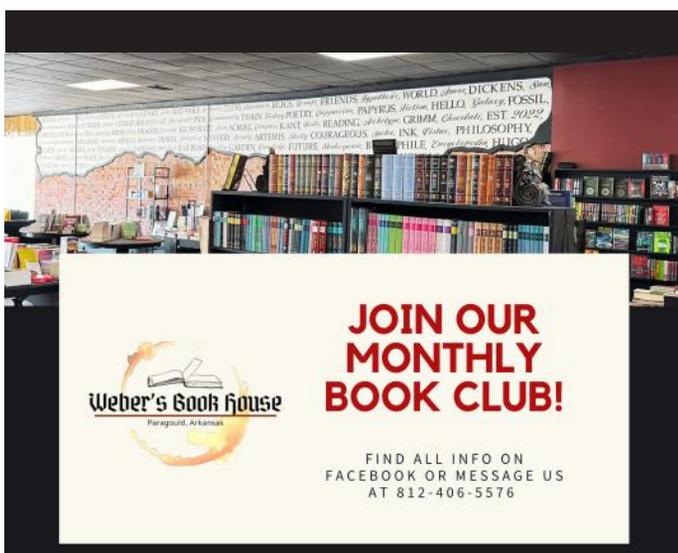


August 28th

7pm

KASU's Bluegrass Monday  
The Collins Theatre

*A complete listing of all Downtown events can be found under "Events" at [downtownparagould.com](http://downtownparagould.com) or [facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events](https://facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events).*





# WHY Thrift?

BY GABBY POWELL

**T**rends come and go, but this trend might have just found its foothold to outlast the rest. Thrifting has taken over social media and society today as a stylish, eco-friendly, low-cost shopping alternative. Here's why you should hop on board this trend and revive your style and your wallet.

With prices soaring and many people having trouble finding spare money for decor, gifts, clothes, etc., thrifting provides a perfect alternative to the traditional means of shopping. Items found in your local thrift store may be a little rough around the edges, but at half price or more, who can complain?! If you're willing to learn a new skill to sew, even a loose thread cannot hold you back

from finding the perfect piece. And if you search hard enough, you may find items with their original tags at discounted prices that need no work at all! From furniture to clothing to books and more, your wallet will be thanking you for finding deals that will help stretch your budget.

For years, global warming and climate change have filled the headlines, but oftentimes the average person does not know what they can do to help. Whether you are overwhelmed by the thought or just don't know where to start, thrifting and upcycling items may be the perfect fit for you to make a difference. Shopping at local thrift stores helps reduce waste by extending the lifetime of items that others have no use for anymore. Sustainable

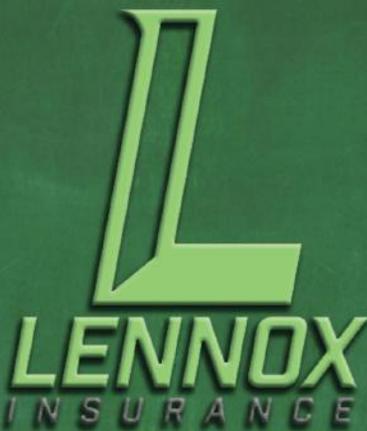
habits add up over time to create a healthier and more beautiful world.

From personal to world-wide benefits, local thrifting is also a way to plug into your community. Many second-hand stores aid non-profit organizations, are locally owned, or support local aid programs. Donating your items to these stores allows them to continue to provide low-cost options for community members who may have no other shopping options. So, whether you are looking for vintage styles or simply want to clean out your closet, supporting your local thrift store is supporting your local community.

Next time you need to find new clothes, kitchenware, household items, etc., find a local thrift store to stop at first. Shop off-season when demand for specific items is low, look for discount days or tags on certain items, and follow the store online to see when new items come in to make the most of your thrift experience. Now go see what treasures are waiting to be brought back to life!



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# SECONDHAND *Nostalgia*

BY KATIE COLLINS



I've always enjoyed a good secondhand shop. The possibilities are endless when it comes to the treasures you can find. I'm usually on the lookout for unique items that I've never seen before. Lately, though, I'm on a mission of nostalgia. A recent trip to Relics Antique Mall in Springfield, Missouri, had me bringing home an item I'd been searching for.

Sometime in the late '80s/early '90s, I managed to enter a contest I found near a Coke display while grocery shopping with my mom. The grand prize was a concert for your school by Kool & The Gang. I tore off an entry form, took it home, filled it out, mailed it, and then forgot about it. One day I received a letter in the mail. While I hadn't won the grand prize, I did win a runner-up prize – a Sony Sports Boombox. A few days later, my prize arrived!

It was a bright yellow, AM/FM, single cassette deck boombox with a handle that could sit on top or be moved to the side for optimal walking around and blasting the tunes. Six "D" batteries later, and I was able to take my music outside to all corners of the yard.

I can't quite remember at what point we parted ways. After moving several times in my twenties, I got tired of moving so much stuff and I probably donated my yellow friend to a thrift store. I didn't give it much thought for quite a few years, but suddenly it became my mission to re-acquire a working boombox like I had before.

If you've ever been to Relics, you know the store is massive. We had walked through several aisles when suddenly I spotted it. Bright yellow, detachable/moveable handle, AM/FM, single cassette. It was picture perfect, and just like I remembered it. It was definitely coming home with me. The tag didn't say if it worked or not, so I was nervous. Once I got back to Paragould, I went to the store for batteries, then it was the moment of truth – the first one, at least! The radio works! My next hurdle? I didn't have any cassette tapes to try out. So, I headed out to my favorite local thrift shop, Henry's 2nd Chance, to see what they might have (aside from Beauty, the most precious shop cat who was fast asleep in a chair). Jackpot! I found two cassettes to try at the bargain price of a quarter each and hurried home. It was the second moment of truth – would the cassettes work? I loaded my newly acquired copy of Richard Marx's "Repeat Offender" in, crossed my fingers, and pressed play. Music and nostalgia filled the living room.

Be sure to check out all of our local secondhand stores, as well as those you have to travel for, and see what treasures you can find.

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| <h3 style="text-align: center;">Personal Care</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Our personal care services provide Senior and disabled individuals with caring assistance for daily activities that range from dressing to meal preparation.</p>                          | <h3 style="text-align: center;">Attendant Care</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Our attendant services take a compassionate approach to assisting clients with a range of day-to-day living needs. Whatever your level of care requires, we're here for you.</p>                     |
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# JUNETEENTH

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE



Jonesboro celebrated its 6th annual Juneteenth holiday hosted by KLEK June 15-19. After last year's events pulling in over 16,000 people, this year's four-day celebration included a business expo, worship service, health fair, parade, and reading of the Juneteenth Proclamation. The parade was hosted by KAIT's Imani Williams and Shamal Carter, President of the Craighead County Chapter of the NAACP. The culmination of events was dedicated to Qubilah Jones, who passed away in December 2022. Jones was a host of KLEK's "Community Conversations," as well as the visionary for the Juneteenth in Jonesboro Celebration.



Juneteenth, now in its third year of being a national holiday, celebrates the final day African Americans were enslaved after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.



Back to school

is right around the corner.  
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# Say NO to Head Lice!

It's that time of year again! School is officially back in session which also means, so are head lice! Head lice are most commonly spread by direct head-to-head contact, but can also be spread by sharing clothes or fabric-like belongings. Here are just a few ways you and your loved ones can stay head lice free this school year:



- **Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere**
- **Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.**
- **Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfect combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5-10 minutes.**
- **Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.**
- **Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle.**



Another great way to keep head lice away is by using a proper daily preventative! Our professionals here at Rouge highly recommend the Rosemary Repel by Fairy Tales Hair Care. This number 1 preventative has products such as shampoo, conditioner, and detangler that all include organic ingredients such as rosemary, tea tree, and peppermint. This brand has been recommended by pediatricians, school nurses, and moms since 1999 and works like a charm! Contact our cosmetologist professionals (Amanda, Candace, or Atley) here at Rouge Spa & Salon for more information!



*Schedule an appointment with us today!*



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# Lovely Lemons

BY KATIE COLLINS

I have been a lemon fan for as long as I can remember. Lemonade, lemon desserts, raw lemon eaten like an orange with a sprinkle of salt even. All of my lemon consumption has probably kept me from getting the dreaded pirate disease, scurvy, if we're being real here. I don't think we have enough lemon recipes out there in the world, so I was pretty thrilled to come across this lemon-centric loaf cake recipe. It's quick and easy to make, and you can choose your own adventure by picking your favorite berries. Just make sure to cut bigger berries like strawberries into smaller pieces. The original version of the recipe used blueberries, but I chose raspberries for mine. Enjoy the last official month of summer with a Lemon Berry Loaf Cake.

## Lovely Lemons

**Ingredients:**

- Zest from 2 lemons
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 2 Tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups fresh or frozen berries (1 cup goes in batter, ½ cup goes on top)

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a loaf pan with non-stick spray.

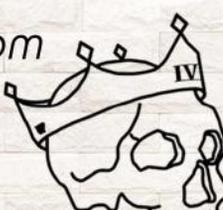
In a large bowl, combine the sugar and lemon zest and whisk together. Then whisk in the oil and vanilla until combined. Whisk in the eggs, one at a time, then the lemon juice and sour cream. Sprinkle the baking soda and salt in and whisk very well. Then fold the flour in gently until just combined. Fold in 1 cup of the berries.

Pour the batter in the prepared pan, smooth the top and place your remaining ½ cup of berries on top. You can sprinkle with sugar if you like, it makes a nice crunchy top. Bake for 60-70 minutes, rotating the pan after about 30 minutes. The cake is done when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with moist crumbs.

Remove from the oven and let cool in the pan 20 minutes. Then run a knife around the edges to loosen and turn the cake out on a wire rack to cool. It will be upside down, so carefully turn it right side up. Let cool on the wire rack at room temperature then slice and serve. Store the cake wrapped on the counter for up to 3 days. Makes 8-10 servings

## Jill's

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# Kids Play

in NEA



## ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

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# HEALTH *Matters*

## KARAN SUMMITT

Retired Health Educator  
25 years educating people of all ages on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. She teaches and writes with a passion for sharing simple, doable strategies that make better health possible for almost everyone.



With August the lazy days of summer come to a screeching halt. Teachers head off to in-service meetings and moms and dads begin the task of getting the kids ready for another year of school. In the excitement of new clothes, the perfect backpack and shopping carts filled with school supplies, don't forget to include healthy foods for breakfast, lunch and after-school snacks. Of all the things we can do to help our children go to school prepared to learn, a healthy physical body is at or near the top of the list.

About one in three school-age children is overweight or obese, nearly triple the rate of 1963. Childhood obesity is causing a broad range of health problems that previously weren't seen until adulthood. These include high blood pressure, type two diabetes and elevated blood cholesterol levels.

Excess weight at young ages has been linked to higher and earlier death rates in adulthood. Obese children have an 80 percent chance of staying obese their entire lives.

Good health in our children is about more than a number on the scale. It is about building a foundation of healthy behaviors that will stay with them for a lifetime. It includes not just the proper diet but plenty of physical activity, good sleep habits and an abundance of sensitive emotional care.

Getting up and getting to school on time can make breakfast a challenge, because some of the easiest foods to grab can be poor in nutrients. Avoid highly sweetened cereals, pastries, and sugared drinks marketed as juice substitutes. Children need a combination of complex

carbohydrates (hot or cold whole grain cereals and breads), fruits and lean proteins such as peanut butter, eggs or low-fat yogurt. Round it off with a good source of calcium, and this combination of nutrients will provide an immediate shot of energy for waking up sleepy bodies. It also will sustain a child's body until lunchtime without the peaks and valleys resulting from a meal of refined sugars.

Lunches need the same combination of nutrients, so include a sandwich made with whole grain bread. If your youngster complains about the texture of traditional wheat bread, try the "white" whole grain variety. It is nutritionally comparable to darker whole grain breads. Lean deli meats, peanut butter or low-fat chicken or tuna salad add the protein component. Throw in a fruit or easy-to-grab veggies with some



dip and add something they like for a treat. Don't forget a note that reminds them they are special to you.

By the end of the school day, appetites are prone to peak, and children come home begging for something to eat. Microwave popcorn, string cheese, fruit, frozen yogurt, juice bars and well-chosen granola-type bars can be great snacks. Instead of turning on the television, encourage them to take advantage of the last few hours of daylight for playing outside. Take healthy snacks with you if there are stops between school and home.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, all children need a minimum of sixty minutes physical activity each day and age-appropriate sleep habits in a quiet room without the distraction of TV or any devices. A good diet, plenty of exercise and adequate rest are as essential to education as pencils, paper and calculators. Send your child to school with a healthy body primed to learn and watch them grow academically, physically and emotionally. Good habits begun early in life are a great foundation for better health at any age.

# ★ How much sleep does my child need? ★

## AGE GROUP

Infants 4 - 12 months old

Children 1 - 2 years old

Children 3 - 5 years old

Children 6 - 12 years old

Teens 13 - 18 years old

## HOURS PER NIGHT

12 - 16 hours per 24 hour period

11 - 14 hours per 24 hour period

10 - 13 hours per 24 hour period

9 - 12 hours per 24 hour period

8 - 10 hours per 24 hours

Naps included, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics





Dr. Calixto Cazano



Abbey Taber, APRN



Dr. Justin Yancey  
Pediatrician



Charrae Burdin, APRN



## Scheduled Appointments & Walk-ins Welcome!

- Sick Visits/Wellness Check-ups
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## ASTHMA ACTION PLAN *for Children in NEA*

**T**he Arkansas Children’s Hospital Jonesboro Clinic added a full-time pediatric pulmonary specialist to support children in Northeast Arkansas suffering from asthma. Katie Stickler, A.P.R.N., C.P.N.P.-P.C., a pulmonary specialty nurse, joined the clinic’s full-time staff in April. Stickler, a native of Paragould, focuses on patients with asthma and supports others with pulmonary needs. Modern telemedicine equipment allows Stickler to coordinate with colleagues at Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH) in Little Rock, bringing nationally ranked pulmonology care closer to home. Pulmonology was one of Arkansas Children’s seven specialties ranked in U.S. News and World Report’s 2023-2024 Best Children’s Hospitals list.

“My transition into my full-time role at the ACH Jonesboro Clinic has been a positive and seamless experience,” Stickler said. “The staff is excellent and has met every capacity of support I could have imagined. And the patients and families have been so thankful to have this resource so close to home.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, asthma is one of the most common chronic illnesses of children in the U.S., impacting nearly 6 million. The American Lung Association estimates school-aged children miss almost 8 million school days yearly due to asthma. Adding access to full-time asthma and pulmonary care for children in Northeast Arkansas

is a step toward improving the region’s physical, mental and economic health.

The Arkansas Children’s care team includes a respiratory therapist, a pulmonary specialty nurse and a pulmonologist — all with pediatric training. In the ACH Jonesboro Clinic, Stickler meets with patients and their caregivers in person to evaluate factors impacting each child’s asthma — like secondhand smoke or pet dander — and can then prescribe medications and action plans.

Using telehealth technology, respiratory therapists at ACH coach patients through pulmonary function tests measuring lung health. While the patient is exhaling into a tube in Jonesboro, data is transferred instantaneously to monitors at ACH in Little Rock. Respiratory therapists compile results into a report and share it with a pulmonologist, who analyzes the data. Based on test results and the exam, Stickler recommends an action plan. The respiratory therapist meets with the family and reviews the plan, which explains how often to use inhalers depending on whether the patient is doing well, showing some symptoms like coughing or wheezing, or having a full asthma attack.

Help your child breathe easier; make an appointment at the ACH Jonesboro Clinic by visiting <https://www.archildrens.org/kids>

# Birth Announcement

Rlyan Michael Gregory Melton

Tosha Dodson and Ryan Melton announce the birth of their son, Rlyan Melton.

Rlyan was born on June 27, 2023, at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, weighing 6 pounds, 5 ounces and was 20 inches long.

He is welcomed by his siblings Brycein, Carson, Aubree, and Kenleigh Dodson and grandparents Teresa and Greg Shatley and Glenda Melton.



# Cutie Patootie

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**Arkansas Children's Hospital** | Jonesboro Clinic

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# FALL LEAGUES

**NOW FORMING**

## MONDAY

**12PM YOUNG AT HEART**

4 MEMBER ANY SENIORS COMBO  
STARTS AUG. 21

**6:30PM PINETTE**

4 MEMBER TEAM (WOMEN)  
MEETS AUG. 14 / STARTS AUG. 21

## TUESDAY

**9:30AM EXPRESSO YOURSELF**

3 MEMBER ANY COMBO  
MEETS AUG. 15 / STARTS AUG. 22

**6PM BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL**

5 MEMBER ANY COMBO  
MEETS AUG. 15 / STARTS AUG. 22

## THURSDAY

**6PM PINSPINNERS**

4 MEMBER TEAM (ONE MUST BE OPPOSITE SEX)  
MEETS AUG. 17 / STARTS AUG. 25



## YOUTH LEAGUE

10AM-12PM  
MEET/FUNDAY AUG. 26  
STARTS SEPT. 9TH

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# Get a Head Start

## ARKANSAS EARLY LEARNING



**A**rkansas Early Learning (AEL) was established to serve the most vulnerable children ages birth to five and their families throughout the state of Arkansas.

Arkansas Early Learning, Inc., is a non-profit organization, building a stronger community by empowering children and families with skills essential to their success.

AEL provides a variety of comprehensive services that address individual needs, promote school readiness and future success,

beginning with programs for pregnant mothers that continue through the child(ren)'s transition into kindergarten. This is accomplished through parent involvement and parent partnerships to support the development of their child(ren).

Arkansas Early Learning provides services at multiple locations, at no cost to eligible families. For more information contact 870-931-1172; to apply visit our website at [www.earlylearning.org](http://www.earlylearning.org). AEL is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



## DOESN'T YOUR CHILD DESERVE A HEAD START

Arkansas Early Learning's school readiness programs are more than child care. Give your child the experience of a classroom curriculum tailored to their individual needs.

All our students receive meals, family services, health services and more.

Our Head Start program promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provisions of educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to enrolled children and their families. Children with disabilities welcome.

Serving Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Greene, Jackson, and Poinsett counties.

Give your 0-5 year old child a Head Start by enrolling them in our school readiness program.

No cost to eligible families.

For more information contact 870-931-1172 or see more information at [earlylearning.org](http://earlylearning.org)

**Now Enrolling!**

**ARKANSAS  
EARLY  
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# College Readiness Tips

BY NATALIE HARRELL

**I**t's never too early to start thinking about your future. Being a high school student is both exciting and stressful. When you're a teenager, four years seems like forever, but the truth is it will be behind you before you know it. If you think that you even might want to go to college to pursue an Associate's or Bachelor's degree, the time to start making plans and applying is now. Now, that's not to say that if you wait until the summer after graduation to apply you're completely doomed, but the sooner you start planning, applying, developing certain skills, and even saving money, the more pleasant a college experience you will have when the time comes.

## PLAN

Your primary focus in high school should be to succeed academically and figure out what your interests are. My advice would be to keep your GPA up and know what you want your class schedule (aka academic plan) to look like for all four years. Your academic plan should include all of the classes required to graduate. Consider challenging yourself with Honors and AP classes you could take and when to take them, and don't forget to include some classes that you'll enjoy as electives as well. For example, if you're someone who excels in science, struggles in English but enjoys the outdoors, ask your counselor about an AP Biology or Environmental Science class and what agriculture courses are offered at your school. And speaking of your counselor, don't be afraid to ask your favorite adults questions about college and life in general. These relationships will come in handy when it comes time for recommendation letters.

## APPLY

Applying to colleges you're interested in while in high school is so important, and there are many right here in Northeast Arkansas that don't even require an application fee. I know that at Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould, if you apply before May 31st of your junior year, you automatically receive a \$500 ("Early Bird") scholarship should you end up enrolling! Applying early also comes in handy when sorting out your test score and financial aid information. Again, it just makes your life a lot easier.

## DEVELOP SKILLS

Maintaining a high enough GPA for college and scholarships depends on good study habits.

When I was in high school, I thought I knew what studying was, but it wasn't until I actually got to college that I learned how to properly study. If I could go back, I would make it a point to do the following:

- Find a time management organization system and stick to it in all areas. For me, it was a physical planner. I still use one every day.
- Complete assignments and turn them in on time.
- Note taking skills. Don't just copy what your teacher puts on the board. Otherwise, when you sit down to study them, they may or may not make sense to you. Not everyone learns the same way and not everyone studies the same way. Learn how to take helpful notes now.
- Teamwork. Learn how to work in a group. Whether you like it or not, I can't think of a single profession where you don't have to in some way collaborate with others. Might as well make the most out of it and sharpen your communication and leadership skills.
- Get plenty of exercise, sunshine, and sleep. Yes, sleep is a skill. Just trust me on this one.

## SAVE

Remember when I mentioned that "Early Bird" scholarship? Sometimes, even when students have the perfect resume and GPA, they still aren't always able to pay for college without taking out student loans. Research scholarships at all of the institutions you're interested in now so you can decide on how much money you need to save up or take out. Also, spend your summers productively. Not only does getting a part-time job help you save, it also looks great on college applications and future resumes. To determine your eligibility for federal student aid, filling out your FAFSA is a great place to start.

Looking ahead to college seems light years away when you're still a kid learning who you actually are, and you should enjoy your teen years before they're gone. But follow these steps while you're still enjoying high school to ensure your transition to college will be easier and your college experience will be enjoyable.

# MRS. *Kelle Boozer*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



**N**earing 30 years as a kindergarten teacher in the Paragould School District, Kelle Boozer has seen a lot, heard a lot, learned a lot, accomplished a lot.

“It is my responsibility to try and create an environment of success,” she said, “and to produce citizens who want to help their community and serve, as I’ve been saying for 28 years now.”

Getting positive feedback from those former students is always a big boost, like when she runs into one who says “I learned so much from you” or “you impacted my life. Those things make you happy you’re

doing what you do.” Even if, as one former student told her, “You taught me how to blow my nose. Well, that is something we all have to learn how to do. In kindergarten we have to potty train and teach them how to tie their shoes ... but I’ll never forget that one saying I taught him how to blow his nose.”

After almost three decades in the classroom, Kelle has obviously seen many changes in the way education is approached and viewed. “There have been lots of changes in the expectations for teachers,” she said, “for kindergartners, for the curriculum. I still want the children to have fun while they learn and it is my job to create an environment that is inclusive for all.”

She said students will come to her with different backgrounds and different expectations from both education and personal life, but she encourages all to “celebrate our differences. The curriculum for kindergarten today is a little more rigid, more structured as far as what the state requires. I’m not sure which way is better but as an educator I am trying to teach success; I hope I do that.”

Kelle said while some of the little ones “may not remember what they’ve been taught, I hope they know they have been loved. When they go out the door I tell them they’re loved and ask them what they learned today. You know, teachers are some of the only ones who go to bed and worry about others’ kids at night.”

Throughout her journey that started at the Oak Grove campus and has landed her at the Paragould Primary School, Kelle hasn’t considered any other routes. “I really never thought about changing grades,” she said. “You know, it’s sort of, ‘Kindergarten. If you love it, why change?’ I imagine I’ll just keep doing what I’m doing until I no longer can.”

*Making life better...  
even homework!*

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# Aiming For Arisa

## TRAP SHOOT TOURNAMENT

**A**risa Health is Arkansas' largest and most comprehensive nonprofit behavioral healthcare provider. Arisa provides an array of services from outpatient behavioral health such as individual, family, and group counseling to many intensive services for children and adults.

Formed in 2020 by the affiliation of four long-standing community mental health centers, Arisa (pronounced uh-RISS-uh) leads with exceptional care that nurtures health and well-being for all. Those legacy organizations are Counseling Associates, based in Conway; Mid-South Health Systems, based in Jonesboro; Ozark Guidance, in Springdale; and Professional Counseling Associates, in North Little Rock.

Arisa Health utilizes a Whole-Health approach and has established Primary Care clinics to provide holistic and coordinated care for Arkansans to lead to better outcomes. These Primary Care clinics are available at

several sites, including one in Jonesboro and a mobile clinic to help reach rural areas.

Throughout Arkansas and the nation, significantly increased numbers of people are seeking treatment for mental health issues, many for the first time in their lives. Arisa is focused on taking care of Arkansans and living its vision of "Transforming Communities, One Life at a Time."

Arisa leads with exceptional care that nurtures health and well-being for all, serving 41 counties throughout Arkansas. Arisa was formed to provide accessible mental health services across the state. The network of resources that has been assembled now offers care for all Arkansans -- the insured, underinsured, as well as people with no insurance.

With that charitable mission in mind, Arisa will host its second trap shoot tournament fundraiser in Northeast Arkansas on

October 14 -- Aiming for Arisa -- a Trap Shoot Tournament at the Jonesboro Shooting Sports Complex. The event will host teams of five who will shoot two rounds of traps for a total of 50 shots. Teams may use 12- or 20-gauge shotguns, and ammo is provided. Team prizes are \$500, \$250, and \$125, and an overall top shooter 1st prize of \$100.

As a nonprofit community mental health center, Arisa is the safety net for the most vulnerable people in our communities. Sponsoring a team or being a field sponsor for this event can make a profound difference by helping us provide services and meet needs that aren't covered by health insurance or grants. If your company would like to sponsor the event or enter a team, contact Anna Taul at 479-750-2020, ext. 7224; or email her at [anna.taul@arisahealth.org](mailto:anna.taul@arisahealth.org). The sponsorship deadline is September 29.

**SAT**  
**10**  
**14**  
**23**



**AIMING FOR ARISA**

**TRAP SHOOT TOURNAMENT**  
*Fundraiser benefitting behavioral health*

**JONESBORO SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX**  
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**\$1,000 FOR A TEAM OF 5**  
*Sponsorships are available*

**INDIVIDUAL SHOOTER 1ST PRIZE - \$100**  
*Team Prizes: 1st \$500 | 2nd \$250 | 3rd \$125*

**2 ROUNDS OF TRAP**  
*50 shots total*  
*12 or 20 gauge allowed*

Contact Anna at [anna.taul@arisahealth.org](mailto:anna.taul@arisahealth.org) or 479-750-2020 Ext. 7224 for sponsorship or event questions.

# MRS. *Kathy Rowe*

BY KARAN SUMMITT

In 1980 at age 21 Kathy Rowe began her first year of teaching at Crowley's Ridge Academy. Years earlier she had attended kindergarten at CRA, too young to know that in 16 short years that same class would become a second home for her adult teaching career.

Kathy's heart for teaching children began where many elementary teachers begin - as a teen helper assisting older women in Sunday School classes at church. Through their mentoring, she learned to love working with children. In time, Kathy earned a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee.

Her career spans 33 years at CRA and three years with the Paragould School District. Her love for kindergarten students is fed by the progress they make in learning to read. "They come in barely knowing their letters and sounds, and by Christmas break they are reading words for themselves," she said. "Their minds are so eager and fresh. I want them to learn to read and to love to read, and for that love to stay with them all through school."

Even for children who attend preschool, kindergarten marks one of life's notable changes. Kathy mentioned how many of her students start school afraid of new experiences. "I want them to become socially

confident and learn to treat themselves and others with kindness. Even if home life is less than ideal, they can come to school and find acceptance and a happy atmosphere. My goal is they leave kindergarten a better human being than when they entered and are on their way to becoming good citizens," she said.

Thirty-three years brought its share of challenges. One of the biggest has been the increase in school violence. "We always prepared for tornadoes and fires," Kathy said. "Now we have to be prepared for intruders who want to do harm." All of this preparation is especially hard with young students. Educators are trained on safety measures but try to avoid discussions that would increase anxiety in the children.

"This was never a fear when I began teaching," Kathy commented. "Now we have to be constantly aware of student safety in the classroom, on the playground and on field trips, while still allowing the children to have fun and feel secure."

When Kathy reminisces, some things stand out. Teaching in a small school gave her the advantage of being a working mom, yet still seeing her own children throughout the day. Being employed by her alma mater allowed her to teach alongside the same educators that were once her own teachers. "I'm so thankful Harrell Austin took a chance on hiring a young woman barely out of her teens," she said.

Perhaps Austin hired Kathy because he saw in her what she has seen in small children for the last 33 years: "Children are human beings — little ones, but still with value and promise. You have to be good to them, because they learn more by how you treat them than by what you say to them."

Kathy treasures a quote that seems to sum up her own personal philosophy, one that works as much in life as it does in education. It simply says, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."



## OPEN HOUSE

August 15th  
5:00-7:00

**FREE!** Registration and August **FREE!** for New members.

**50% OFF** September for Current Members if their new member referral signs up.

## MEGA OPEN GYM



August 17th  
5:00-7:00

**FREE!** All schools are invited. Show your School Spirit and wear school shirt or school colors.

The school that has the most representatives gets **FREE!** open gym for the month of September.



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# MRS. *Carol Thomas*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



Every teacher needs a summer break, just not the kind Carol Thomas got. A misstep when handing out awards following a piano recital for some of her students resulted in a broken wrist, but the injury in no way has dampened her love of her craft or her passion for sharing it with others.

In addition to giving private lessons and playing the piano at Lafe Baptist Church, Carol is the Primary Music Teacher for the Paragould district, a job she's held down for 35 of her 42 years as a school instructor.

She started her career at Delaplaine and then taught at Hoxie for three years before settling in at Paragould and working a job she says "is just wonderful. When they first opened the Primary School, Dr. Jankoviak said, 'Please come to the school and start our music program' and I said yes, and I have been very happy there. It is the best facility I have worked in, and I've taught all over the district except at the high school."

Introducing students ages 5-7 to the world of music is not the easiest chore, but Carol said once the children understand what it's all about they fall in love with it. "The first nine weeks we do rhythm music. I get out the drums and they love it," she explained. "The second nine weeks we do a choral session and present a Christmas program" and from there they graduate to more intense instruction where they actually learn to read music.

"I've definitely seen a lot of changes over the years in education," she said, "and society has changed, but I've also become a better teacher. I've become better because of it and I enjoy my work every day. I come to work happy and just look at work as a blessing. I have a wonderful school job, a wonderful teaching job, and a wonderful church job."

Carol said starting the little ones out with the basics requires a lot of "saying it over and over again, but what helps me deal with it is our high school band. They've been state champions repeatedly and when I hear them play and think, 'I taught some of those kids,' my heart swells. I taught some of them from the very start, before they reached their ninth grade year and got to march out on those fields. I had some sort of influence and, although I know I did not do much, I hope they remember those days when we first started music together."

She enjoys keeping in touch with former students and has reached the point where she's instructing some of their children now, and until recently felt as though "I'd never quit, just teach forever. But this (raising her injured wrist) has made things a little different. I might teach four or five more years and then retire. It's hard for me to think about hanging it up; I've always been there.

"I guess I'll just play it year by year."



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# A Road to Independence

## PROBLEM SOLVING

**H**ave you ever asked yourself, “How is this kid ever going to make it in the real world?” My late father reflected on this exact question when trying to help guide each of us teens to adulthood. Dad always thought he had the solutions to our problems. I never failed to counter why his solutions were unrealistic. This exchange of disagreement almost always ended with dad saying, “Rocky Dean, I tell ya’ what. You can walk a horse to the pail but you just cannot make em’ drink” and he would walk away.

In my teenage mind, I had won. But, in reality, I did not win and Dad just “washed his hands of my stubbornness.” It was in graduate school when I realized what Dad was attempting to achieve all those years ago; to teach me to independently evaluate problems and develop appropriate solutions. The critical problem with his approach was that he was trying to give a “know it all teenager” the answer. But, my dad was correct in his pursuit to teach me problem solving skills. These skills are the foundation to healthy habits, healthy relationships, developing independent living skills for adulthood, and are an evidence-based intervention for

helping individuals to self-regulate their emotions.

Learning to problem solve is like learning to play a banjo; “good banjo players spend a lot of time tuning their banjos” (Tucker Childers). The more time your teen spends tuning their problem-solving skills, they are more likely to make safer, healthier, and calmer decisions.

Step 1: Your teen comes to you with a problem. [Pause before you deliver a solution]

Step 2: Ask your teen how they might solve the problem. Have them think about a minimum of 3 different solutions.

Step 3: Ask your teen to identify the positive and negative outcomes for each solution. These can include the impact on them, the family, their friends, the community. Be certain to avoid statements like, “That will not work because \_\_\_”.

Step 4: Ask your teen to identify which solution they would like to first try.

Step 5: Encourage your teen to use the



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Clinical Director

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solution. Set up a follow-up meeting to discuss how things went.

If you feel the urge to give an option to your teen, you can use a question to allow them to independently think through the option (e.g., how do you think that solution might work on a rainy day? How do you think that solution might impact your siblings?)

One final note to remember: “Nobody learns to juggle without dropping a few balls.” (Tucker Childers)

Allow your teens to juggle through their solutions and be there to support them when they fail.

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# MRS. BY KARAN SUMMITT

## Suzette Killough

Teaching English was her subject of choice, but it is the students that keep her coming back to the classroom each year. "I like getting to know them and finding out what their interests are," she shared. "The beginning of the school year is always an exciting time because I get to see them and catch up on what happened over the summer break. Many times I get to have a student for multiple years, as well as their siblings and sometimes even the next generation."

The difficult times are balanced by an abundance of good memories. Being a classroom sponsor and going on trips with the students helped Suzette get to know them outside the classroom setting. She especially loved teaching the literary classics and introducing students to a broader world outside their own community and experiences. Through reading the classics and in-class discussions the students learn about social injustices, differences in economic status and unfamiliar cultures. Now and then certain students show an aptitude for journalism and creative writing. Knowing the work in her classes might open the door to careers and skills they would embrace as adults was also very satisfying.

Like many educators, Suzette Killough developed a love for teaching long before she stepped into the classroom as an instructor. She recalls hours of "playing school" with her younger brother James and creating handouts for him to complete. It must have worked for both of them. James also chose a career in education.

Like many long-time instructors, Suzette mentioned the necessity of adjusting to new technology as one of the greatest challenges of her career. The demands of COVID-19 brought that challenge to new heights. "I continued to come to my classroom every day," she commented. "So much of the lesson content did not lend itself to remote learning. My fears were it was too hard for some and too easy for others. I didn't have that face-to-face contact that always helped me assess their understanding, and they didn't have the support of having me just a few steps away. The additional work for a remote classroom was overwhelming at times, for both teachers and the students."

In May of this year Suzette completed 36 years of teaching English in grades seven through twelve. Those years include time in the Bay and Paragould School districts and, more recently, 26 years at Crowley's Ridge Academy. As a student, English was her favorite subject. The love of being with older kids cemented her decision to teach at the junior high and high school levels.

For Suzette, subject matter is secondary to an overall goal of making students feel loved and valued: "I want them to believe I was fair and that I cared about them. Developing relationships with my students is the most rewarding part of teaching."

"I'm just an average teacher who loves the kids," she says with a smile. "Over the years their needs haven't changed. They still come into my classroom needing acceptance and affirmation." Suzette may judge her teaching skills as average, but students who have felt that love and acceptance might beg to differ.

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# MRS. *Nancy Mangrum*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



For 50 years “Ms. Nancy” has patrolled the hallways at Greene County Tech High School and as far as she can say, there is no definite end in sight.

“I really like what I’m doing,” said Nancy Mangrum, who instructs GCT seniors in the Resource Room, helping them learn the ropes of English and Personal Finance. “I don’t know what I would do with myself if I didn’t have the classroom to get up and go to. I want to help people and I want to make a difference. I know that sounds like a cliché, but I have been so blessed that I just want to help these kids.”

She is a big proponent of the life skills aspect promoted by the Personal Finance program, and she thinks anything she can do to help the soon-to-be-graduated students cope with everyday life beyond their school days is her calling. “We try hard to learn how to earn money and then take care of it,” she said. “I say to them all year long, ‘If you don’t take care of your money, someone else will.’ I want them to learn to be accountable and learn to manage money.

“I’m real big on having them know all about the ins and outs of having a bank account, and how you make out a check, and how you keep up with your spending in the register. Do you know we don’t even teach cursive writing anymore? I tell them we have to learn it so they can sign a check with their distinctive signature. If you just print some letters, anyone can sign your name and take your money. So every time one of my seniors learns to write in cursive, they get all excited.”

Explaining the importance of paying bills, buying everyday necessities and knowing how to shop is something “a lot of these kids aren’t hearing anywhere else. It’s things they don’t think about because a lot of them haven’t ever dealt with money.”

She said her paraprofessional, Patty Collier, has been with her for 23 years and “I could not get a better one. We work together perfectly” and that allows more time for some one-on-one sessions if required. They help the students learn to interact more appropriately and stress acceptable responses to life situations. “We did something this year that I am so, so proud of,” Nancy said. “We wrote notes of affirmation. They have these folders on the wall, small manila envelopes for each kid, and we asked them ever so often to write something encouraging to another student, or to a teacher or an administrator.”

When cafeteria workers shared some excess breakfast items with the class, students presented the women with notes of thanks that “just made some of them cry. They did an excellent job writing those. I was so proud of them.”

Nancy said she simply wants students to leave her class better prepared for life after high school. “I tell them to pay attention to this stuff we’re learning,” she said, “to get ready for life, because this all goes hand in hand.”



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For more information on this event, please visit [beatlesattheridge.com](http://beatlesattheridge.com).

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Becky Pethers, mother, for Aaron Pethers,  
2023 Arkids Graduate



## What is your favorite memory with Arkids?

"So many great memories, like when he learned his colors and shapes and he was so excited to tell us that he could say all of his ABCs, all of the things he learns every day about weather, insects, and different animals, and the memories and friendships he has made with so many kids."

## What would like to tell other parents/caregivers about Arkids?

"How great the staff is in helping and teaching my child so many things. They are all so patient and kind. I am confident in knowing that when my kid goes to kindergarten all the things he has learned and mastered that he would do great in the future. Thank you Arkids for everything y'all have done for my child. We are going to miss all of y'all."

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**Mollie Jones, mother, for Heath and Lincoln Jones,  
2023 Arkids Graduates**



**What is your favorite memory with Arkids?**

"I have so many. For starters, the teachers at Arkids have always been a delight to be around. I definitely love all of the parties they have for the kids, how much my boys, Heath and Lincoln, have grown by going there. I too have grown as a mother by trusting in Arkids to help my babies flourish and get ready for kindergarten!"

**What would you like to tell other parents/caregivers about Arkids?**

"If you need help with speech therapy or any other type of resource for your child: This is the place. I don't know what I would have done without Ms. Amanda and all the other amazing teachers and staff there. Great kids, great experience, and I would suggest anyone to go and take their kids here. They will grow, learn, be potty trained, and so much more in no time! Thank you!"



**WE ARE A PRESCHOOL PROGRAM!**

Let us help set your child up for a successful transition to kindergarten! Crystal Brown, mother of Xzavier Brown, a 2021 Arkids graduate, had this to say about his transition to public schools.



**How did Xzavier change while at Arkids?**

"He started communicating with us in full sentences. I loved hearing about his day and what he learned. Every day he came home and he had improved in some aspect. It's like a big family up there. He also began to tell us his feelings. If he couldn't tell us, he would show us and he learned how to do that at Arkids. With him starting to talk, we also learned that he was dyslexic and got him some extra support. Now he's in a reading competition at the local library and has read over 100 books."

**What has school been like for Xzavier since he graduated?**

"While he was at Arkids he loved counting everything. Now he is a year ahead in math. He graduated first grade on the Honor Roll and won awards for math and reading."

Crystal reported the public school had this to say about him, "Xzavier has been doing outstanding. He was very advanced when he came into kindergarten and loved the hands-on learning. Ever since he's been with us, he's been a go-getter."



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# Preschool Preparation

BY PAM PARKER OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES LEARNING SCHOOL

Children will be attending school for the next 14 years of their lives, so preschool is the best time to set the stage for a love of learning. In addition, the preschool age (2 ½ years old to 5 years old) is one of the most crucial developmental stages in a human's life because brain and physical developments are happening rapidly. Learning is a natural part of life, and parents want to help their child grow and learn throughout childhood. Children will learn and grow in all areas of development: cognitively, emotionally, socially, physically, creatively, and spiritually.

One of the best tools to help a preschooler love and succeed in preschool doesn't cost much. Parents are encouraged to read, read and read to children. Children who are read to (and later read on their own) for 20 minutes a day throughout the school year are exposed to 1,800,000 more words in a school year (more if you read during the summer). Children who are read to (and later read to themselves) for 5 minutes per day are exposed to 282,000 words in a school year. If parents leave video games and "screen

time" off, children will benefit from parent interactions with puzzles, games, matching, stacking, pretending, and communication. Parents can schedule a "family night" with no electronic devices and sit around with their child playing games, painting, playing (inside and outside), singing, and talking. The brain develops over time; much of the foundation is built during the first 5 years of life. When a child enters preschool a whole new world of learning opens up to it. This new world can be a little intimidating and scary. But parents have the tools to help their child be ready for (and thrive in) preschool.

If a child is attending a preschool, parents can set up a tour to show the child where he/she will be going to school. If possible, parents can have the child meet and talk to the teacher. This will help relieve some of the stress of the first day. Communication with the child is most important. Parents should talk with their child about what is going on in preschool and read books about going to preschool.

To make the school morning go a little

smoother, parents can prepare as much as possible the night before. At bath time, have the child "help" pick out the clothes and shoes for the next day so there will not be a frantic search the morning of school. Get all items for school set in a certain place for easy reach when dashing out the door the morning of school. Parents should talk positively about going to preschool and about the teacher.

After school, instead of turning on a radio or iPad, discuss the day with your child. Ask open-ended questions and have the child tell you about the school day. Parents can make question cards with various questions to choose from each day. Parents are exhausted at the end of their workday, but the limited time at home is crucial in the development of the fascinating preschool child.

The 18 years a child is home truly pass quickly. Savor and make the most of the precious time you have with your child.

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# MR. Larry Mitchell

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



Larry Mitchell made the trip from Indiana to Northeast Arkansas more than 50 years ago and decided to stay, and in that time has become a vital part of the Greene County Tech system.

Following three older brothers to Arkansas State University, Larry eventually did his student teaching at GCT, was offered a job

as a coach and high school math instructor, and has been wearing the green and gold ever since. "I spent 25 years in the classroom and then coached in football, baseball, basketball and golf," he said, looking back on 51 years in the Tech district. "I worked for a long time with Larry Elmore in baseball and Mike Holder in basketball, two great guys. It couldn't have been any better."

When GCT decided to "get more serious in our technical efforts, I guess all the principals wanted me to do it for some reason. I was one of the first to have a computer in the classroom ... it was just a stand alone, not on the network or anything. We didn't have the internet back then, and so we started that up and I stayed with it probably 10 years total. Then I moved into Student Records, overseeing data for students."

Located now at the Central Office and known as the ESchool Coordinator, Larry said he still has fond recollections of his years in the classroom and in the coaching realm. "I miss the classroom, I really do," he said. "And coaching. Just being around the kids sort of

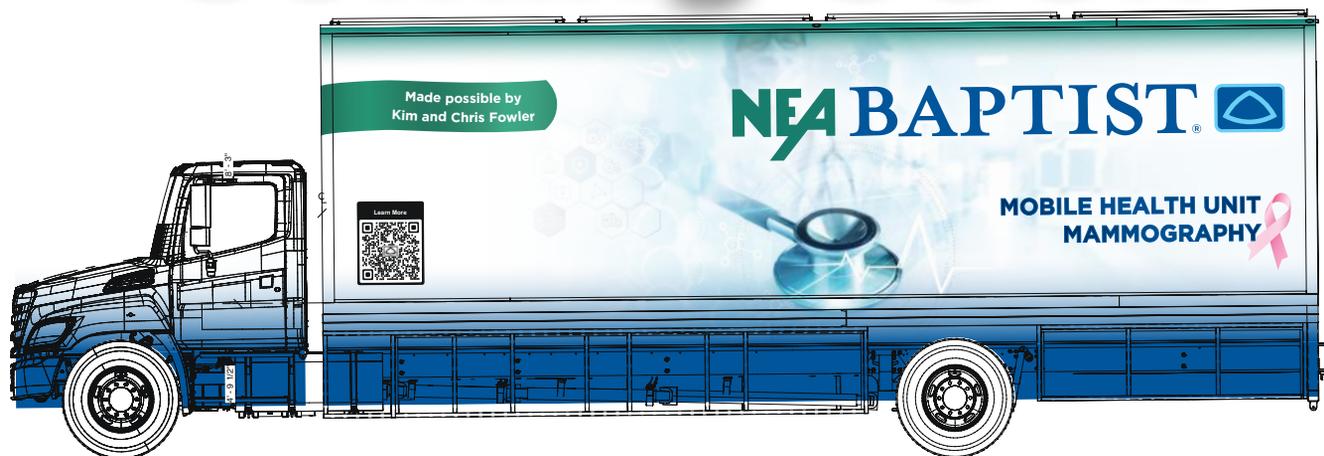
keeps you going and alert. Those games in the old Reynolds Fieldhouse ... those Tech-Paragould games ... they were events."

He is aware of the changing face of education, but has an interesting take on daily campus life today. "Classroom technology has exploded," he explained, "but it still comes down to when that door closes and the teacher starts talking -- that's the important thing. Are you going to learn or are you not going to learn? That's the same as it has been since back when I first started.

"Public schools have kind of gotten a bad name that they don't deserve today. There are still a whole bunch of good students willing to learn, graduating and getting good jobs and we're still turning out good people."

One of the giant differences between his early years and today is in the students' daily lifestyle. "Kids are so mobile now," he said. "They are able to communicate literally tens of ways ... social media, email, texting. That part is a big change. When I was in the classroom, kids were talking about phoning each other on land lines at night. And everyone has a car today. More kids used to ride buses. But kids are still the same. They are still here, ready to absorb."

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# 4Runner AT COLLINS THEATRE

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Craig Morris finds it hard to control his enthusiasm regarding the scheduled August 5 performance of 4Runner at Paragould's Collins Theatre.

"This will be the first full band show of the new 4Runner tour," the singer/songwriter said. "When we first started back in '95, our first show was at the Collins. So we have come full circle."

The band found success the first time around with a number of harmony-laden hit singles but their recording label suddenly called it quits and Morris, along with fellow band members Billy Crittenden, Lee Hilliard and Jim Chapman, had to move on to other career choices. Now, with a new recording deal and a recently released album, 4Runner looks to pick up where it left off, albeit with a slight roster change. Craig's son, Sam, has replaced Crittenden in the lineup but Paragould music lovers know that can only mean good things. The Morris family is a vital part of the Ultimate Oldies Show staged frequently at the Collins, so Sam will be no stranger to audience members.

In fact, the Morris Family is going to serve as the opening act. "It's going to be very strange," Craig said, "performing in both the opening act and in the headliner. But I couldn't come up with a better opening act. Our family has a lot of love for Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri. I don't know if I'm supposed to go backstage and change outfits or not after we open."

4Runner's debut album was released in May 1995 and "Cain's Blood" started attracting attention, as did additional singles "A Heart with 4 Wheel Drive," "Home Alone" and "Ripples" ... then the label closed up shop and future projects never released. Craig said the current edition of the band has put serious thought into the songs chosen for presentation and they will "range from songs that will move people, to songs that talk about being in a small town and getting out to see the world, to ones that make you

want to listen to your inner voice. 'Senses' is one about loving and losing that love; it is just gorgeous.

"More than anything, it is the voices all up front, the harmony. We all want to project light through the music. Some will be up tempo, some will be lyrics with deep meaning. And even some gospel. I hope folks will come out. I believe they will leave feeling glad they did. It will be fun for the whole family, including mine."

Showtime August 5 is 7 p.m. Ticket sales will be handled by Joe Wessell, who also produces the Ultimate Oldies performances. He can be reached by calling 870-215-2253.



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# Next Month

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## NEA Seniors



Our NEA Seniors section will highlight area seniors and those who help care for them.

## Student Ag Activities



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