

NEA'S

PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2024

COUNTING BLESSINGS

CANCER JOURNEY INCLUDES TWO BIRTHS

SPOOKY SEASON
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS
SPECIAL SECTION: PROFESSIONAL PROFILES

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

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DUCK CLASSIC

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Center For Good Grief - provides free therapy services for children, teens, and adults who have lost a loved one.

Center for Healthy Children - Our mission is to teach and motivate overweight children and their families to build a solid foundation for a healthy lifestyle FREE of charge.

HopeCircle - Housed in the NEA Baptist Fowler Family Center for Cancer Care, HopeCircle provides a community of hope, support, and educational programming, free of charge for families living with catastrophic illnesses.

Medicine Assistance Program - This program helps patients obtain their prescriptions from pharmaceutical companies for free.

All of our programs are offered at no cost to our community and provide much needed support and assistance to those most in need.

Please know that your participation matters. Your generosity changes lives in our community and beyond. Register online today at DuckClassic.com.

For more information contact Clint Parton at 870.926.2890 or Clint.Parton@simmonsbank.com

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OCTOBER 2024

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From Us to You

Fall, Y'all! I love everything about Fall – except the change of weather to cold, of course. Our October edition is packed with stuff to do and the hardest thing this time of year is to choose what we can get in print and what we must “leave on the trim table,” a term old newspaper peeps will get from the days of wax machines and X-Acto knives.

You won't want to miss the Professional Profiles section to learn more about the expertise you have access to right here in Northeast Arkansas. Keep this edition around or remember we have our online archive at neapremiere.com, which you can refer to when in need of a local professional in so many areas of expertise. You are bound to need one of them in the near future.

As always, we thank our advertisers for their continued support of Premiere Magazine. Enjoy Fall in NEA and don't forget to send us all the “Good News and the People Making it Happen!”



Dina Mason

Dina Mason
General Manager & Publisher
dina@mormediainc.com

We have some great stories from some pretty amazing people in our October edition of Premiere.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and I think we can all agree that cancer is scary, but we had some truly uplifting stories shared with us that we are proud to be able to pass on to our readers.

Don't worry, though, if you are looking for a fright, we do have some Spooky Season features, as well. I have always loved Halloween and I'm glad to learn I am not alone. Whether it's dressing up for a Trunk-or-Treat or driving around and checking out the Halloween displays like the one Fletcher Wright puts together each year (just for the fun of it!), maybe it is just fun to leave reality behind for a little while.

So grab a bowl of chili and enjoy this month's edition. We are continually amazed at the good things that are happening in Northeast Arkansas, and we love writing about the people who are making it happen!



Gretchen Hunt

Gretchen Hunt
Content Manager & Graphic Designer
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JOE SMITH

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MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE

Monsters and Manners can peacefully coexist during Halloween. Whether attending a fall festival, a holiday carnival or a costume party, when saying "trick or treat," the accompanying words "please" and "thank you" can work wonders as ghosts and goblins fill their sacks with Halloween goodies.

With the emphasis on "BOO!" not "BOO HOO!" - here are some quick tips to make sure the evening is safe and fun:

BOO

DOs FOR TRICK OR TREATERS

Do say "Trick or Treat" or "Happy Halloween."

Do say "Thank You" when someone gives you candy or a treat.

Do wear flame resistant costumes.

Do wear light reflective clothes.

Do take along a flashlight or a glow stick.

Do wear reflective tape on costumes to

increase visibility.

Do travel with friends.

Do look both ways before crossing the street.

DOs FOR PARENTS

Do review basic safety rules before going out to trick or treat.

Do have an adult accompany small children.

Do remember to keep costumes and disguises appropriate for the child's age.

Do know where your children are going and with whom.

Do remind your children to bring home candy and other treats for your inspection.

Do provide adequate lighting for trick or treaters.

Do keep the porch or your designated area safe, so that visiting trick or treaters don't get hurt.

Do explain the consequences of vandalism to your children.

BOO HOO!

DON'Ts FOR TRICK OR TREATERS

Don't forget to use the words "please" and "thank you."

Don't grab candy.



Linda Lou Moore is a certified etiquette consultant. She offers business professionalism and dining seminars for adults, and etiquette and dining programs for children and teens. Contact via Post Office Box 726, Paragould 72451 or at llmooreparagould@gmail.com.

Don't whine if you get something you don't like.

Don't go to unfamiliar places, unaccompanied.

Don't wear masks that obstruct your vision.

Don't wear ill fitting clothes that can cause you to trip or fall.

Don't go to a house that does not have on the porch light.

Don't run through flower beds or other carefully tended areas.

Don't touch decorations, when visiting houses, unless you have permission.

Don't litter the yard with candy wrappers.

Quote of the Day:

"Clothes make a statement. Costumes tell a story."

~ Mason Cooley

September Premiere Magazine Correction

The article on the 50-year class reunion for the Oak Grove class of 1974, inadvertently ran with the wrong photo for the names printed. The correct photo is printed below.



Angela (Danley) Smith, Ronnie Winn, Melanie (Heasley) Hudson, Leslie Taylor, Patty (Breckenridge) Matheney, Debbie (Sparks) Breckenridge, Diane (White) Robinson, Mike Tynes, Paul Barnhardt, Linda (Reeves) Potter, Tom Wray, Jeannie Massey, Janet (Hyde) Kellim, Emma (Heritage) Haynes, Joy (Lamb) Folkes, Mary Jo (Siebert) Granger and Roger Folkes.

BIG BOY 4014

Visits Paragould

Big Boy 4014 traveled through Northeast Arkansas on September 13, with a scheduled stop in Piggott as the steam engine traveled from Poplar Bluff, Mo., to Jonesboro. Those who had gathered in Downtown Paragould to watch the giant locomotive pass by were treated to a surprise when the engine made a quick stop at the Main Street crossing before continuing on its journey. Twenty-five Big Boys were built during World War II, but only eight survived and No. 4014 is the only one still in operation. *For more photos and video check the Premiere Magazine Facebook page. Readers are encouraged to share their photos and videos with us, as well.*



Carly Hurt, Kellan Hurt, Kevin Hurt



Kreed Wheeler, Scott Wheeler, Zane Wheeler



Bridget Newsom, Jovie Newsom, Lily Newsom

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BY APRIL MORGAN

We found Callie as a stray in our neighbor's yard. She was only a couple of months old, and she was hungry and afraid. Her sweet and sassy personality won us over immediately and she became part of the family. Her favorite pastimes are napping on the couch, catching frogs and lizards in the garage, and chasing anything that rolls. We call her "Jungle Cat" when she is in fierce play mode. Callie Cat is one of a kind, and we can't imagine life without her!



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.

SHARE YOUR MILESTONES!

Let us celebrate your big events! Every birthday anniversary on the decade or between (50th, 65th, 70th, 75th, etc.) we want to help celebrate!

Just scan the QR code and fill out the form to see your achievement in the next issue of Premiere Magazine!



Preventative Care BEST DEFENSE AGAINST BREAST CANCER

SUBMITTED BY
ARKANSAS METHODIST MEDICAL CENTER

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time when we come together to educate, support, and uplift those affected by breast cancer. Breast cancer remains one of the most common cancers among women worldwide. According to the American Cancer Society, about 1 in 8 U.S. women will develop invasive breast cancer in their lifetime. While these statistics can be daunting, the good news is that early detection significantly increases the chances of successful treatment and survival.

At Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (AMMC), we believe the best defense against breast cancer is preventive care practices such as self-exams, annual mammograms, and regular checkups with an OBGYN or primary care provider.

Self-Exams

Self-exams are the first line of defense against breast cancer. They are simple, cost-free, and

can be done in the comfort of your home.

Annual Mammograms

Annual mammograms are essential for early detection. These low-dose x-ray images of the breast can detect tumors that may not be felt during a physical exam. At AMMC, we offer 3D mammography. This advanced technology is particularly beneficial for women with dense breast tissue.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends that women at average risk for breast cancer get mammograms every other year from age 40 to 74. The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that women ages 45 to 54 get yearly mammograms, and women ages 55 and older can switch to every other year or continue yearly. Both organizations suggest that women discuss their individual risk factors with their healthcare provider to make informed decisions about when to begin screening. For women at high risk, both recommend earlier and more frequent screenings. It's important to weigh the benefits of early detection against potential

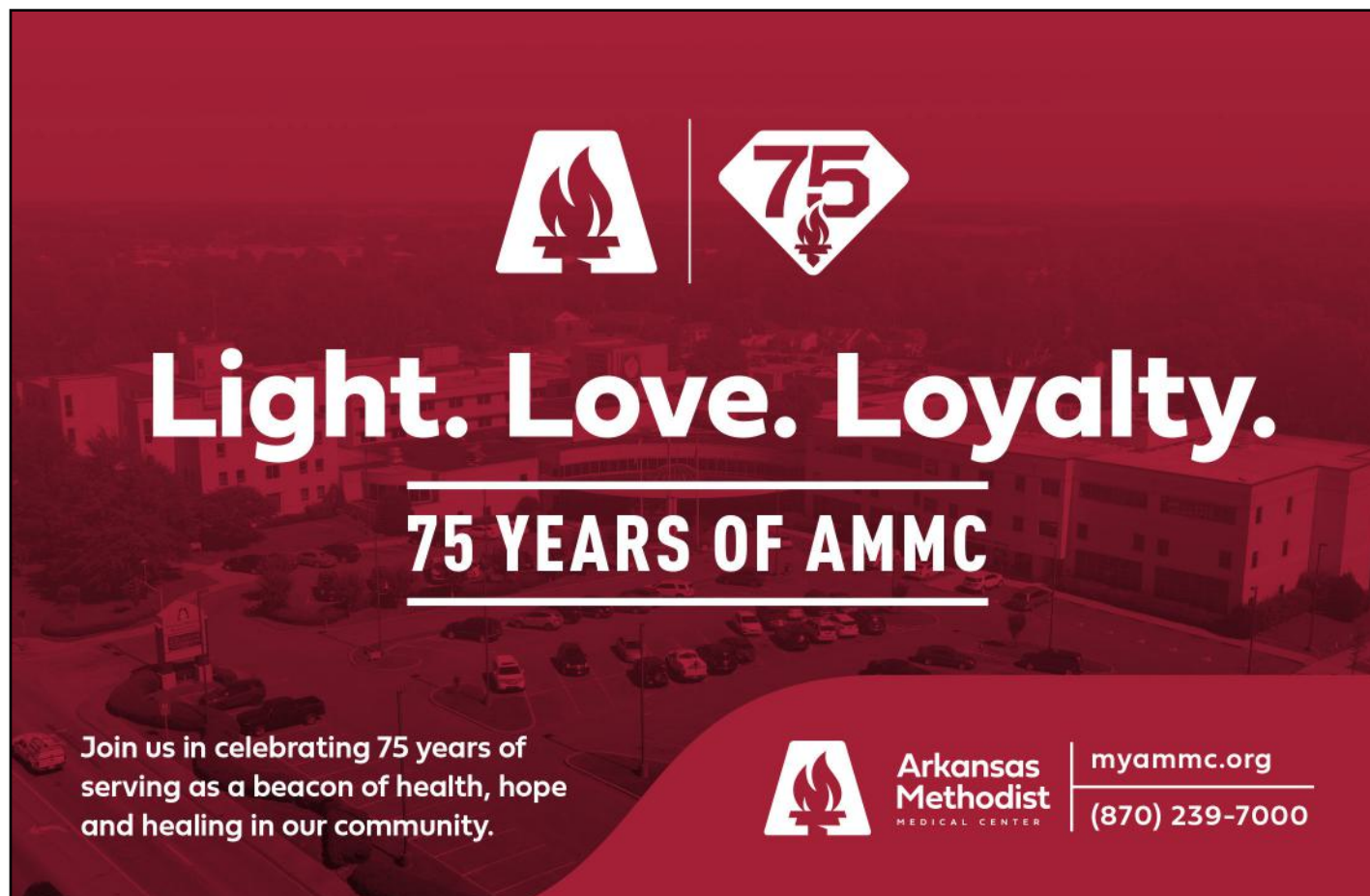
risks, such as false positives and overtreatment.

AMMC's Commitment to Preventative Care

At AMMC, we are committed to providing comprehensive care that encompasses both prevention and treatment. Every woman has the power to take charge of her health through preventative care. By performing regular self-exams, scheduling annual mammograms, and maintaining routine checkups with an OBGYN or primary care provider, you can significantly reduce your risk. If you haven't scheduled your annual mammogram or checkup, now is the perfect time to do so. To schedule an appointment with AMMC Women's Clinic, call 870-205-2002.

Join the Fight Against Breast Cancer

Let's work together to create a future where breast cancer is detected early and treated effectively. Remember, at AMMC, we are not just your healthcare providers. We are your neighbors, committed to supporting you with health, hope and healing. Let's shine together in the fight against breast cancer.



The banner features a dark red background with a faint aerial view of the AMMC campus. At the top center, there are two white logos: the AMMC torch logo and a diamond-shaped logo containing the number '75' and a smaller torch logo. Below these logos, the text 'Light. Love. Loyalty.' is written in a large, white, serif font. Underneath this, '75 YEARS OF AMMC' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, flanked by two horizontal white lines. In the bottom left corner, white text reads: 'Join us in celebrating 75 years of serving as a beacon of health, hope and healing in our community.' In the bottom right corner, there is a white torch logo, the text 'Arkansas Methodist MEDICAL CENTER', the website 'myammc.org', and the phone number '(870) 239-7000'.

Beatles

VISIT WAS 60 YEARS AGO

BY KAROLINE RISKE

One small moment changed history in a small town in Northeast Arkansas. Sixty years ago, on September 18, The Beatles landed in Walnut Ridge, a town which today boasts a population of just over 5,000 people. There was no fanfare for the event as no one was really supposed to know.

Three local teens had heard a big plane fly over the Davey Crockett Restaurant that night so they went to check it out. The trio were stunned to find The Beatles getting on a plane that would take them to a dude ranch in Alton, Missouri. The question then became: When would The Beatles come back to the plane to leave?

H.T. Moore, a senior at Walnut Ridge High School at the time and today a practicing attorney in Paragould, covered athletics for The Times Dispatch and ended up writing the most famous story of his short career. He got a call from someone who told him The Beatles had landed in Walnut Ridge the night before. He laughed but ended up leaving the office and headed into town anyway. The pilot was easy to spot. He had on a white shirt and a black tie on a Saturday morning. H.T. asked him and he "was very guarded," he said. "He indicated that they (The Beatles) had been jostled up by a crowd in Dallas and didn't want another one." H.T. convinced the pilot to let it slip since the paper wouldn't report on the event until after it was all over. The



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHARLES SNAPP

pilot replied: "I can't tell you when they will be there, but I wouldn't go to church on Sunday."

The next day, he and about 300 other people gathered at the airport. The mayor got on an old PA speaker to tell people "We don't want trouble, riots, or bad publicity - be well mannered." Some false excitement came from the crowd when some spotted a crop-duster flying over. Then another plane came in and Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney walked to the big plane; John Lennon and George Harrison were in a Suburban and got out and joined the other two. After they boarded the plane, Paul looked out the window and John waved once. The famous band then left for their final concert on their legendary tour in New York.

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Carrie Mae Snapp was one of the lucky ones to see them off that day. Not only that, she and three friends noticed the plane was sitting on the tarmac in the early hours Saturday morning and pulled the emergency door open. Two managed to get into the plane, including Carrie Mae, who took some pillows. Carrie Mae came back the next day and got to the site "bright and early" despite its being a Sunday. "We were a big church-going area," she explained. "I was lucky enough to have parents that knew what it meant for me to see them." Her father even captured several photographs of The Beatles, some of which are shared here.

"I was just so excited I was in shock," she added. "I can't tell you how Beatle crazy I was. A year later Mother took me to Memphis to see them. It was exciting but not as good as seeing them in person. You had a personal moment with them." Carrie Mae got close enough to actually touch George Harrison. She said she could have touched Paul if she hadn't been so busy jumping up and down from excitement.

The town has capitalized on the event, creating artwork in the downtown area and hosting a festival the third weekend in September to commemorate The Beatles' brief visit. The festival draws people from all around. Carrie Mae said she used to have a store, "Imagine," where she sold rock 'n roll memorabilia. "You would not believe the people from out of state," she said, sharing that folks from 36 states and three foreign countries had come through her shop.

The festival draws a crowd each year, especially for the headlining event, The Liverpool Legends, a group George Harrison's sister, Louise Harrison, put together. Louise even came to Walnut Ridge herself and "gave us her blessing," said Carrie Mae. The hoopla around the event has caused USA Today to name Walnut Ridge one of the top 10 places to visit for Beatles history. There is even a play in the works about the

amazing weekend when the Beatles came. Reflecting on all that has happened in the past 60 years, Carrie Mae said, "It's amazing what one moment in time can do for you."

She recalled that at the age of 14 she wore her Easter dress to meet The Beatles, because, "You never knew when they would see you and fall in love."

"I'm 74 now and I've told the story a million times to keep it alive," Carrie Mae added. "I remember everything about that day."



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BY SHELBY RUSSOM

The nine members of Together We Foster have served NEA's foster care communities for years.

Since 2017, the organization has worked to fulfill its mission of supporting foster and biological families, foster children, and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The organization continuously advocates for the support needed to see success within these families.

"I think it's great for the community because our ultimate goal is to reunify families," board member Autumn Clark said. "To get the families the help that they need so the children can go back to their parents."

For the past three years, Together We Foster has hosted their biggest fundraising event - a dinner and auction. The event, known as "Better Together," provides the community with an opportunity to support the organization and their local foster families through donations, ticket purchases and bidding on auction items.

Tonya Wright, president of the board and foster parent for 11 years, said the event brings awareness to how the community can help everyone involved in foster care. "It's just a time to really bring everybody together and show them the kind side of foster care," she said. "So many people from Greene County, Randolph County and Craighead County come together to help support the event and we are just so blessed by this."

In previous years, the event has been attended by approximately



Ryan Vaughan, Ellie Wright, and Faith Wright

300 people from across NEA. And its third year was no different as general admission tickets (priced at \$20 each) sold out.

This year, the event, held at the Crossing Church in Downtown Paragould, raised over \$40,000 and had 20 sponsors. Executive Director Lindsay Roberts said the money raised plays a huge part in their ability to continue supporting NEA foster families.

"We rely completely on community support and grants to run our day-to-day operations, and this event helps make all of that possible," Lindsay said. "It also allows us to share our successes with our supporters and lets them see first-hand how their support helps."



Autumn Pennington



Participants bid on silent auction items



Lindsay Roberts

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ALS WALK

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The Walk to Defeat ALS was held Sept. 14 on the campus of Arkansas State University. The event shows individuals with ALS and their families they are not alone as the walk celebrates those who are bravely fighting ALS and honors those who have passed from the disease.



PHOTOS BY BRIAN OSBORN

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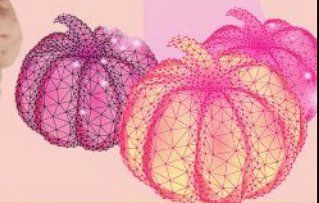
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Kristin Addison-Brown

An Unexpected Journey

BY KARAN SUMMITT

Kristin Addison-Brown's journey with breast cancer has had more than its share of unexpected detours, twists and turns. From the initial diagnosis to her most recent treatment, Kristin has found herself in that small percentage of folks who fall outside typical risk factors. The detour has been bumpy, but Kristin is learning to focus on the blessings.

A neuro-psychologist with emphasis in geriatric patients, Kristin spent much of her career treating the elderly, especially those with dementia-related conditions. That training proved invaluable when her own mother was diagnosed with dementia. To help her dad in his role as primary caregiver for her mom, Kristin moved both parents next door.

In 2017, Kristin's mom was diagnosed with stage 2 invasive lobular carcinoma that was hormone positive. Testing revealed there were no genetic links to the cancer, so Kristin felt confident in following normal guidelines for her own breast care.

In her early 40s Kristin's mammogram in August of 2021 was clear. A September 2022 mammogram revealed a cyst that tested benign, with guidelines for a six-month follow-up. At the March 2023 mammogram and another one three months later in June 2023 the cyst was gone. Kristin was then scheduled to have a normal yearly screening of both breasts in September of 2023. At this mammogram, both breasts remained clear of any abnormalities.

On Christmas Eve of that same year Kristin found a lump in her right breast and scheduled testing as soon as the holiday break would allow. An ultrasound was followed by an MRI and a biopsy to reveal stage 2 breast cancer. Kristin feels blessed that the lump was in a location she could easily notice and feel.

Unlike her mother's hormone positive diagnosis, Kristin's tumor was diagnosed as triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC). TNBC lumps are tumors that test negative for estrogen receptors, progesterone receptors, and excess HER2 protein. These results mean the growth of the cancer is not fueled by the hormones estrogen and progesterone, or by the HER2 protein. About 10-20 percent of breast cancers are triple-negative breast cancers.

Kristin's plan of treatment followed the protocol for stage 2 TNBC patients. She would have six months of chemotherapy, followed by surgery and extensive radiation treatments.

Testing after the first three months of chemotherapy revealed the tumor had shrunk by 50 percent. Kristin remembers she could no longer feel the lump. As planned, the oncologist administered a stronger dose of chemo, but by the end of month four Kristin could feel the tumor growing again, even with the stronger chemo. By month six, the tumor had returned to its original size.

Kristin consulted with two surgeons. Both felt she was a good candidate for a lumpectomy because there was no indication the cancer had spread to the lymph nodes. She began working with physicians at West Cancer Center in Memphis and on August 8, 2024, the lump was removed along with several lymph nodes for more extensive testing. The surgeon was able to get clear margins around the tumor, but a pathology report showed microscopic cancer cells in three of the four lymph nodes.

Kristin received the disheartening news that the original tumor showed minimal





effect from the chemo treatments and that she had a 70 percent chance of re-occurrence in one to two years. With TNBC patients this news is especially sobering because with re-occurrence the cancer has usually metastasized and spread to other parts of the body.

A clinical trial is currently under way with a new drug that shows promising results in late stage breast cancer patients. Kristin must undergo the six weeks of 30 radiation treatments and then plans to enter the trial to see how the drug performs on patients in earlier stages of breast cancer. Trial protocol includes nine more months of chemo infusions every three weeks with all the typical side effects most chemotherapy patients experience.

At this point in life Kristin's breast cancer detour has become the journey. Along the way, the healthcare practitioner learned firsthand what it means to be the patient. Kristin shared, "So many times I've said to myself that I'm glad I understand from a professional standpoint how the healthcare system works. This has helped me navigate my own treatment in an efficient way to get the prompt attention my condition needed."

As with any cancer patient, the emotional impact is hard. Under typical conditions, TNBC has a 40-60 percent re-occurrence depending on initial stage at diagnosis. It is more likely to return than other types of breast cancer. Even when treatment is successfully completed, this knowledge is always in the back of the patient's mind until they reach the five-year mark when the risk drops dramatically. As mentioned earlier, Kristin's poor response to the initial chemotherapy raised her personal risk of re-occurrence to 70 percent.

When first diagnosed, Kristin's thoughts were for the care of

her 13-year old son and widowed dad should she not be here. She stayed focused during those first six months of chemo by concentrating on goals and marking down time until treatments were finished, thinking in terms of "when all this is over." She laughs as she shares how she immersed herself in grisly crime novels, thinking they would offer some distraction from her tendency to be consumed by the uncertainties of her diagnosis.

All that thinking fell by the wayside when the tumor did not respond. Kristin says, "I had to lay aside any thoughts of 'when I don't have cancer' and realize I don't know when - or if - that day might come. I've had to adjust my expectations and learn to make

Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) is ONE of many forms of breast cancer



TNBC tumors are estrogen-receptor negative, progesterone-receptor negative and Her2-negative, meaning they do not exhibit any of these three known receptors.



Approximately every half hour, a woman in the US is diagnosed with TNBC.



15-20% of breast cancer cases are triple negative.



TNBC tends to be more aggressive, more likely to recur, and more difficult to treat than other types of breast cancer.



Kristin's breast cancer at a relatively young age has given her empathy for anyone who experiences an unexpected tragedy, especially one out of season. She makes it a point to think positively about healing, but also feels blessed to have the opportunity to plan in advance for the possibility of a shorter life if things come to that -- something many others are unable to do.

"I'm blessed I have a job that allows me to work from home," she said. "Every day is a gift, and I no longer feel the typical monotony of life where one day rolls into another, and you wonder where time has gone. I've been blessed by my career of helping others, and I desperately want to do more of that. Cancer has given me a much deeper appreciation for the everyday, ordinary things of life."


Cancer is not a journey Kristin — or any of us — would willingly take, but the lessons learned while navigating the unexpected can make for a wisdom that is hard to find when life stays on the well-beaten path. Kristin Addison-Brown's determination to enjoy the blessings of this detour is a good reminder to all of us — take time to treasure the ordinary and mundane things of life. You may find them to be priceless someday.

plans with cancer instead of after cancer."

Kristin praises the great support she has received from friends, prayer warriors and her medical team, saying she can feel their love and concern. The everyday frustrations of life like someone cutting in the car line or automated prompts on the phone have turned into prayers of thanks to God for the "privilege" of being around to experience the annoyance, accompanied by a heartfelt request for more years of these annoyances.

Common Symptoms of Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

- Lump or mass in the breast or armpit area
- Redness, pain, irritation, swelling in the breast
- Breast changes in size or shape
- Nipple changes, discharge, or flaking and peeling



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Above: A sheep waits for its turn in the show ring

At left: Haley Dinkins and Kynlea Baldwin

At right: Doug and Melanie Matheny

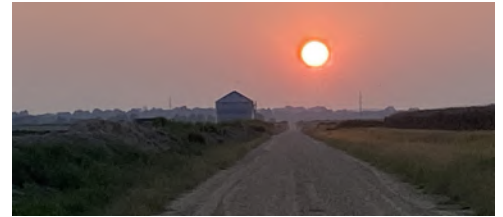


For MOR(e) pictures from the Greene County Fair and pictures from the NEA District Fair, check the Premiere Magazine Facebook page!

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A PLACE FOR ANY DAY

Outdoors offers peace



I enjoy writing these columns as it often helps rekindle memories that might otherwise become dull. As with most outdoorsmen, I also like to tell stories and have been blessed with several very entertaining episodes over the years. But this month I have a story I have not shared on many occasions. Though it occurred over forty years ago, these memories are still fresh. The story may sound depressing on the face, but the aftermath has offered me solace, guidance and continually fuels my fire to be out in the great outdoors that have been fashioned for our benefit by an awesome God.

I had a very special relationship with both sets of grandparents and my love for the outdoors was molded by their influence. I continue to rely on the lessons of life I learned in their presence. I often stayed at one of my grandparents' homes during hunting seasons since both sets lived on the east side of Paragould in the Coffman area. This provided quick access to lots of hunting area.

It was December of 1985, and I was on Christmas break from Crowley's Ridge College. The Christmas season, duck hunting and a break from school offered a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. But a heavy air hung over our family as my granddad, Carl Long, was in the final stages of a battle with cancer.

Prior to duck season, some friends and I had constructed a small duck blind on the St. Francis River just north of Paragould and it was our go-to for duck hunting. It was a basic stick-up blind brushed with cane and coffee beans, but it had proven to be in a good spot, and we had been very successful throughout the season.

I had chosen to stay with Mama and Papa Blanton on the evening of December 22 and had set my alarm to get up early the next morning and head to the duck blind. The alarm went off and I got up and began to get ready, but I could feel something was different. When I

came out of my room, I could smell coffee and, like most mornings, the kitchen light was on. Mama Blanton would often fix me some coffee and something to eat before I left to hunt. But when I walked into the kitchen, I could tell something was wrong. Mama greeted me and gave me a hug and simply said, "Your granddad has passed away."

I was numb. I had tried to mentally prepare myself because I knew his death was imminent, but I was at a loss. I sat there in the kitchen for a minute as thoughts went through my head. It was a feeling of sadness, loss, desperation and hopelessness. Even knowing death was about to happen, the finality of the pronouncement that it had occurred shook me.

I sat there a bit and talked with Mama and Papa, but then something told me to get up, get ready, go meet the buddies and go hunting. And that is what I did. We went to the duck blind and I sat, mostly silent, for much of the morning. As twenty-year-olds, you do not share much personal information, and I never told my buddies my granddad had passed. They knew something was up, but they never inquired, so I never said a word about his passing.

When I got back home, arrangements had been made and the funeral would happen the next day, Christmas Eve, December 24, 1985.

I do not remember much from that day of hunting. I do not remember how many ducks we saw or killed but, as far as hunting days in my life, it has been one of the most significant. Not because of a bag limit or anything else, but that time in the blind allowed me to gather my thoughts, prepare my mind and come to some sort of terms with the loss of one of the greatest men I had known. It did not lessen the sting or long-term impact, but it did help me as I headed down the road of grief.

CHUCK LONG

Avid Outdoorsman
Retired Outdoor Educator



That day also changed my perspective regarding the outdoors. It set in motion a college major change, which ultimately resulted in a fulfilling career in an outdoors related field. It helped me understand death and loss in a new perspective and an appreciation for each and every day we have to spend out there. It tested my faith, my heart and my will and, as I look back now, I see that it solidified me.

Albert Einstein once said, "Look deep into nature, then you will understand everything better." I could not agree more. The outdoors is where I go to find peace, quietness, and understanding. Just like it benefited me on that day of tragic loss, I truly feel our society could benefit from time in the outdoors. There is so much noise and interference in our world, some dedicated time away from that is profitable for mind, body and soul.

My grandparents have all now passed, but I am truly thankful for the lessons they taught me. Whether it was digging worms, canning corn, calling ducks or raising beagles, each one taught me many very special things. As a grandparent I hope I can do the same.

I know this story may sound a little depressing, but to me it has become one the cornerstones of my life. With several friends enduring losses recently, this event in my life has been on my heart and I hope sharing may help someone in a similar situation. I also hope it helps each of us understand the importance of the outdoors and spending moments out there with parents, grandparents and friends.

I want to thank y'all for reading each month and I hope something in these columns spurs a spark to get out and enjoy the outdoors. If you need anything outdoors related, let me know and I hope to see you out there!

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It's the Great Pumpkin Coffee Cake!

BY KATIE COLLINS

Isn't it great that you can eat a slice of cake for breakfast, and it's totally cool as long as you call it "coffee cake?" This is the spirit of the Charles Schulz classic, "It's The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown." Linus holds an unwavering belief in the existence of the Great Pumpkin, and why not?

I feel like the Great Pumpkin would totally get behind the Peanuts gang or anyone else eating cake for breakfast! After all, he is supposed to bring treats to the person with the most sincere pumpkin patch, and this Pumpkin Coffee Cake is full of the most sincere pumpkin flavor!



Ingredients:

Streusel:

½ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup packed brown sugar
1 heaping teaspoon cinnamon
4 Tablespoons butter, melted
½ cup chopped pecans

Cake:

½ cup granulated sugar
6 Tablespoons salted butter, softened
¾ cup pumpkin puree
2 Tablespoons whole milk

2 Tablespoons sour cream

1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 ¼ teaspoons baking powder
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 heaping Tablespoons pumpkin pie spice

Glaze:

¾ cup powdered sugar
1-2 Tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350. Spray a 9-inch round cake pan with cooking spray.

In a medium bowl, mix the streusel ingredients with a fork until well mixed. Set aside.

For the cake, beat sugar and butter in a large bowl until fluffy. Add pumpkin, milk, and sour cream and mix. Add egg and vanilla and mix until

smooth. Add flour, baking powder, and pumpkin pie spice and mix until smooth.

Spread half of the cake batter into the cake pan. Top batter with about half of the streusel mixture. Spread the remaining cake batter over the streusel, then top with the remaining streusel. Top with more chopped pecans if you like.

Bake for 24-26 minutes, or until it passes the toothpick test. Cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then remove the cake to a rack to finish cooling. Once the cake is cooled, make the glaze by combining the powdered sugar, milk, and pumpkin pie spice. Place the cooled cake on a plate and drizzle with the glaze. You can add even more chopped pecans as garnish if you'd like. Slice and enjoy!

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GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT

I used to think sitting in a room full of teenagers and trying to understand what they were saying was one of the most difficult tasks imaginable, but I think we have discovered an even deeper plunge into the unknown than that.

It is hard to turn on the television these days without coming across politicians speaking directly into the camera as they seek election, nodding their heads and gesturing as they pontificate while doing everything except answering the questions posed to them.

They seem to be unable to go from Point A, which is the question, to Point B, which is the answer. That's all we want; we ask you the questions, you give us the answers. Instead, they go from Point A to G to F to R, back to P and over to Z while throwing in countless worn-out phrases that are currently popular yet have little – or nothing -- to do with the subject at hand. When finished they fold their hands and smile at the camera with a look of great self-satisfaction, knowing they have dodged the issue once more in expert fashion.

Meanwhile, many of us have listened intently, trying to educate ourselves in order to know how to vote properly, yet we know no more than we did when the conversation started and, apparently, we're all supposed to be happy. In fact, we may know less.

While I never aspired to enter politics, I do wish I had known the mumbo-jumbo gibberish angle was an option open to me when I was a high school student. I could have used a few issue-dodging responses when I realized I had forgotten to do my homework and showed up for class unprepared. The uncomfortable conversations would have been much more enjoyable had I been able to "politician" them up a bit:

Teacher: Richard, why don't you share with the class the answer you got for question Number 3?

Me: Let's see, that would be ... The Declaration of Independence.

Teacher: It would be what?

Me: The Declaration of Independence.

She: This is Geometry class.

Me: Oh. In that case, 7.

She: And just how did you arrive at that answer?

Me: You have to think outside the box.

She: What?

Me: You have to think outside the box. That's what I was doing ... thinking outside the box.

She: What does that even mean?

Me: Trust the process.

She: Do what?

Me: Trust the process. You have to trust the process.

She: That makes no sense.

Me: It's fuzzy math.

She: What in the world are you talking about?

Me: Fuzzy math. You know, trust the process. Think outside the box. At the end of the day, these are all talking points we have to consider.

She: I have no idea what you are talking about, and I don't think you do either.

Me: This is the new normal. You have to be woke. You know, think outside the box.

She: Well, I think we're just going to put a zero in your box and be done with it.

Me: I can't breathe.

She: What?

Me: White Grades Matter.

She: I think we'll just move on.

If this habit of talking in complete circles is supposed to work for politicians in front of news crews, I wonder if it works for everyday motorists who are pulled over by the traffic police.

Officer: Do you know why I pulled you over?

Driver: No, sir.

Officer: You were speeding.

Driver: I believe that is fake news.



Officer: You believe what?

Driver: That's fake news.

Officer: What now?

Driver: It's fake news. You may believe I was speeding but you have to trust the process.

Officer: I have to trust what process?

Driver: That's a good question.

Officer: I'm glad you liked it. Now, let's talk about this issue of speeding.

Driver: Well, we can, but it's not a panacea. We need to be thinking outside the box.

Officer: What?

Driver: It is what it is. It's not necessarily a game changer, if I was speeding, I mean.

Officer: Okay. Why don't you just take this ticket and sign right there at the bottom?

Driver: This must be a battleground state.

Officer: I don't know about that, but this is a battle you can take up with the judge.

Driver: We need to consider balancing the ticket.

Officer: How's that?

Driver: Balancing the ticket. You know, looking for a bailout of some kind.

Officer: You're only making things worse.

Driver: Well, you're obviously biased. I think you have to consider how the grassroots segment of society feels about these things.

Officer: I'm biased now?

Driver: That's a new buzzword. You know, you're biased. You've been drinking the Kool-Aid.

Officer: I'm pretty sure I know who's been drinking. Just sign here and slow it down.

Yeah, well, it is what it is.



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A photograph of an elderly woman sitting at a table, looking at a book, with a younger woman standing behind her, placing a hand on her shoulder. A pink breast cancer awareness ribbon is overlaid on the left side of the image.



Family Fun Holiday displays are tradition

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

It really doesn't matter that not too many people see Fletcher Wright's impressive Halloween yard display; it's the thought behind it that counts.

Fletcher, 15 and a freshman at Marmaduke High School, goes all out with a lawn full of inflatables, motorized spooky things and hanging witches, ghosts and goblins, adding on each year to make things bigger and better ... just because he wants to.

"It's his stuff," said his mother, BJ Wright. "It started between the time he was a baby and walking or talking. He loves decorating the yard. He loves doing it. He looks forward to it and to making it better every year. We do every holiday."

"Veterans Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Christmas, Fourth of July," Fletcher said. "I just love the holidays and want to show it this way."

BJ said the enormous display items aren't cheap, but Fletcher bears almost all of the financial burden. "He buys a lot of this stuff himself," she explained. "He sells chicken eggs and saves up and buys all this. When we go on vacations he wants to know if we can stop at flea markets and see if they have something he can use. He loves his inflatables."

Fletcher said he finds the creativity alluring and likes to step back and look at the finished products with pride. "I think it looks good every

year," he said, "but every year I want to add something." He has more than thirty inflatable characters and items and almost as many motorized eye-catchers, and everywhere you turn something is moving, blinking or flashing to get your attention.

"I think it's pretty neat," he said, struggling to decide which is his favorite because he likes them all.

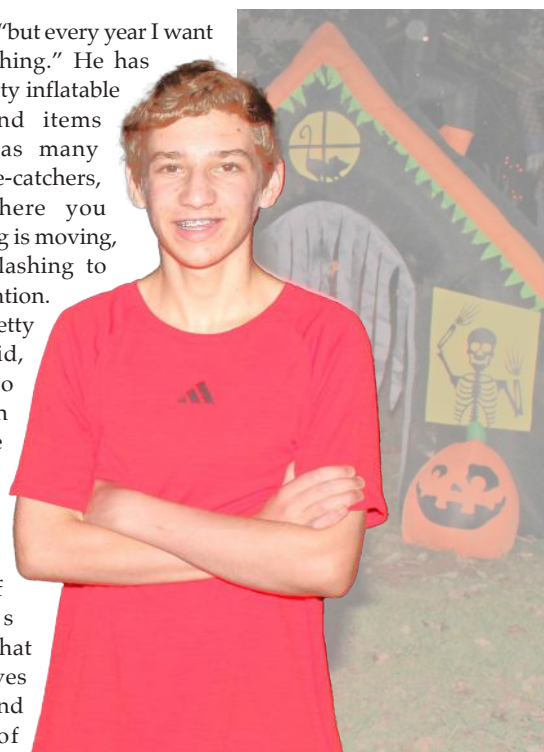
The unique aspect of Fletcher's creations is that the family lives on a dead end road off of County Road

508 not too far from Lafe, so very few motorists venture into the area to see the impressive display. But that's fine with him, and also okay with his parents, who love seeing their son take so much pride in a project and seeing each holiday's show through to completion.

Looking at this year's masterpiece, which has spilled over from the front yard into the side area for the first time, BJ said, "Well, we do have a shed in the back that's supposed to be mine for my stuff, but guess who's shed it is? It's where all this goes."

And Fletcher's dad, Perry, said grownups who know where they live have asked him "why in the world would you do all that when no one's going to see it? Why? Because he loves doing it. It's his thing and we love it. And that's all that matters."

As for how long the practice will continue, Fletcher has a ready answer: "As long as I live," he says, repeating, "as long as I live. I could be 80 and I'll still be doing it."



THE ADVENTURES OF

Lester

BY VICKI McMILLAN



Hello, all — Lester here! Is it just me or did September just fly by? Of course, I was traveling for several days so that may have put the pedal to metal!!!

Vicki, Mac and I went on an awesome trip to New Jersey — a state we had not spent much time in prior to this. Now we've all heard the New Jersey jokes: real housewives, Jersey shore, bad salsa ... but let me tell you, it was major fun. And since I am the canine Rick Steves, I know.

We spent several days in the Princeton area, where John Martin lives. While we were there, we saw Princeton University (duh) the fourth oldest university in the country. Its alums include Woodrow Wilson (the President, not the elementary school), James Madison, Michelle Obama, and most importantly, the Amazon guy, Jeff Bezos!! The Chapel was a sight to behold — very ornate or should I say DEMURE? Princeton University has an extraordinary art museum that houses over 112,000 objects. Unfortunately, it is currently closed for renovations until late 2025. (I told Mac that he and I had dodged a bullet, and he agreed. Vicki said we were Philistines — which is not true, we are both Methodists.)

We also visited the area around the Institute for Advanced Studies. (You can't go in unless you are super smart and I hated to leave Vicki and Mac behind.) We walked in the woods where Robert Oppenheimer and Albert Einstein strolled, not together because apparently they hated each other. To think, I did my business on the very ground where these two discussed the bombs that would change the world. In the future, the Founder's Walk plaque will list the great thinkers of the world: Albert Einstein, Robert Oppenheimer and Lester Martin.

The area has beautiful old houses, centuries-old trees, and even some Revolutionary War sites. We even saw Fort Nonsense, called that because George Washington's troops thought that building it was just busy work.

We left New Jersey for a brief stay in Delaware on the Indian River. Vicki, of course, had to look for shells. I was thinking I'd add another unauthorized beach visit, but low and behold, dogs are welcome! We tried our hand at clamming and crabbing on the Delaware shoreline. Some of the areas had lots of trash in the water, so water shoes are a must. I must admit, some of those big blue crabs scared the dickens out of ol' Lester! We didn't catch enough for a meal, but hey, now your scrappy pound dog from the Dog Jail in Jonesboro can fend for himself provided he is abandoned on a seashore with proper equipment, four water shoes, and a valid recreational fishing license.

On the way back south, we stopped for a few days' stay in Cape May, New Jersey, and it was like stepping back in time. The entire town is a National Historical Site and has the second largest concentration of restored gingerbread homes next to San Francisco (real houses, not those things we make at Christmas). Beautiful beaches and again we went shelling, but this time we also went on a whale watching tour — even ME!! There's an old lighthouse and a WW2 watch tower, to make sure those pesky German subs didn't get too close.

All in all, a great trip! Now I've got to get focused on my Halloween costume and of course, football!

A side note: In the days ahead we have some serious choices to make. You know what I am talking about. DO NOT CONTINUE TO BREAK TREATS IN HALF AND TRY TO FOOL US. Just choose to give us the whole treat. It's that simple.

As always, your pal,
Lester



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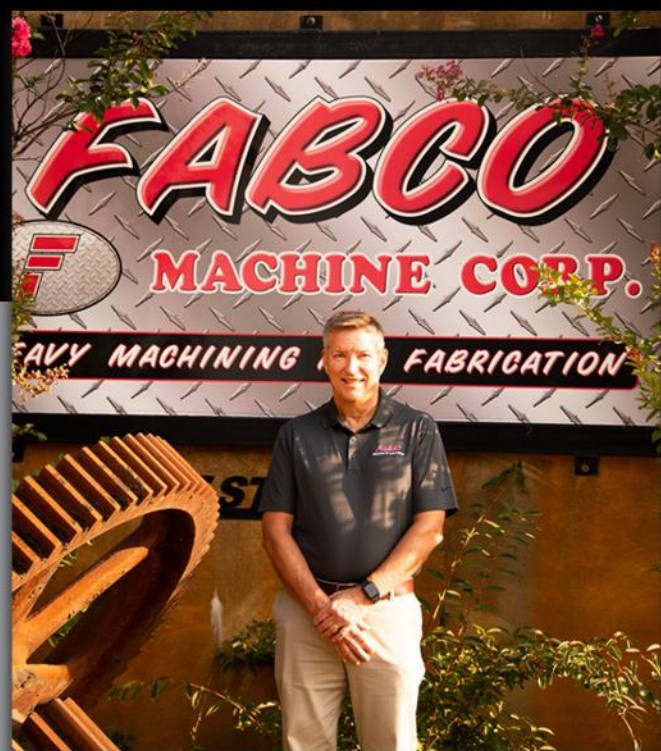
AMMC Health Fair draws crowd



Arkansas Methodist Medical Center hosted a combined health fair for men and women on Sept. 20 with a big turnout from vendors and the community.



Kenneth (Nick) Nickerson has returned to FABCO Industrial to lead the new Custom Engineering & Automation division. Nick is a Mechanical Engineer and has been a practicing professional engineer since 1990. For the last eight years Nick has focused on custom automated machine design and build. Nick's most recent experience has been automation and build of conveyor roller manufacturing machines. The Custom Engineering & Automation team is made up of experienced engineers with over 100 years of combined experience. The mission of the Custom Engineering & Automation division of FABCO is to design, build and automate custom machines with a focus on custom conveyor roller fabrication machines as the OEM.



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PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT

PARAGOULD PRIDE

Community Pep Rally includes groundbreaking

Paragould School District hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for its new arena on August 23 as part of its second annual Community Pep Rally. A large crowd was on hand for the groundbreaking, including students, faculty and staff, administrators and school board members, as well as those working on construction of the arena, local dignitaries and members of the community. The 60,000 square-foot arena will offer more than 1,300 seats; multiple locker rooms and coaches' offices; weight and training rooms; cheer and dance studios; state of the art broadcast and media spaces; and a community hospitality room. Following the ceremony, the crowd moved to the football field to participate in the Community Pep Rally activities.



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Samantha Bocanegra

Counting blessings on cancer journey

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

No one would ever call cancer a blessing, but Samantha Bocanegra can look back on the past few years and see lots of blessings that came during her cancer journey, including the birth of two of her children and a closer relationship with her Savior.

Samantha, 30, who lives in Imboden, is currently undergoing preventative chemo treatments at NEA Baptist following a three-year battle with breast cancer that mostly happened before she even knew she had cancer.

Three years ago Samantha found a lump – not knowing she was pregnant with her middle child, Luna, at the time. “I noticed the lump and thought ‘let me just have someone else look at it,’” she said. There was some concern the lump could be related to caffeine intake, so Samantha stopped caffeine, but it didn’t help.

When she went to her OB doctor, she discovered she was pregnant and it was determined the lump was probably related to hormone changes with the pregnancy or was a fibroid cyst, which she was prone to get. After she had Luna, the spot on her breast became painful. “They always said breast cancer is not painful so we were convinced it was not breast cancer,” Samantha said.

In December of 2023, Samantha said she decided she needed to follow up with her PCP and it was still believed the lump would prove to be a fibroid cyst, but they made plans to set up a scan. In the meantime, Samantha had a feeling she might be pregnant again and a pregnancy test revealed she was indeed expecting their third daughter.



PHOTO BY NATHAN KNIGHT

Samantha stressed that she and her medical providers did not ignore the lump – it just didn’t present like cancer. “I woke up one



SUBMITTED PHOTOS



morning and something just didn't sit right," she said. She called and set up an ultrasound of the affected area, which was quickly followed by a biopsy and a cancer diagnosis.

The lump now measured 13 centimeters and three of 12 lymph nodes tested were also cancerous. "After that it was an appointment every day," she said. Following the Feb. 15 diagnosis, she had a single mastectomy on Feb. 23 – her pregnancy making the doctor recommend against a double mastectomy, though she plans to have her second breast removed in about a year and a half.

"Three weeks later I had my port placed and March 28th I started chemo," she said, noting that many call the AC treatment she took while pregnant The Red Devil. "But I like to call it the blood of Jesus," she said. "We did the four rounds and I had the baby on July 30th." Isabella was born five weeks early, weighing four pounds, four ounces, but did not have to spend time in the NICU. Samantha was able to breastfeed her for two weeks, and then she started her current treatment, 12 rounds of chemotherapy that will hopefully keep her in remission.

She said she is thankful for the care she has received at NEA Baptist. "NEA has just been so good to us," she said as she sat in the lobby accepting compliments from the passing staff on her beautiful baby girl. "They get to know you personally."

Samantha said just before her diagnosis, they began attending church at Faith Worship Center in Portia, which proved to be just what they needed in the months ahead.

"We hadn't been going to church," she said. "I believe in Jesus, and I'm not saying you have to go to church to go to Heaven, but I believe that was God bringing us back to church. It has brought me closer to Jesus. My story could be a totally different story. Bro. Steve prays for us. The church family prays with us. You just have to pray and believe it's all happening for a reason and He has a plan for us all."

Looking on the bright side seems to be second nature for Samantha,

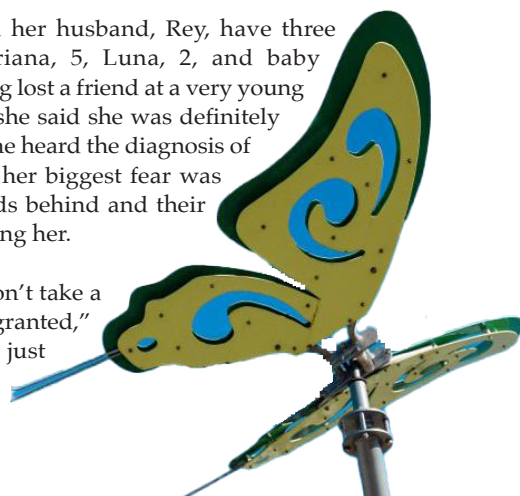


who also noted she never got as sick as expected with the chemo and she personally thinks part of the reason for that is because of her pregnancy. "They expected me to be really sick," she said. "But I never got really sick. The worst I had was my hair loss – and a sinus infection – most people I was around didn't even know I was sick."

She said with her first round of chemo she was concerned about losing her hair, but when it came out, she actually loved being bald. She said she would have never cut her hair short on her own, but now that she has short hair she gets compliments all the time from people who have no idea about her struggle with cancer. "I actually had a lady at my bank who cut her hair short because she saw mine and it gave her the courage to try a hairstyle she had wanted to try for a long time," Samantha said.

Samantha and her husband, Rey, have three daughters, Ariana, 5, Luna, 2, and baby Isabella. Having lost a friend at a very young age to cancer, she said she was definitely scared when she heard the diagnosis of cancer, noting her biggest fear was leaving her kids behind and their not remembering her.

"I definitely don't take a single day for granted," she said. "You just gotta keep going and keep living life."





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HEALTH *Matters*

The War on Breast Cancer

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, making it a good time to review the facts surrounding this disease that strikes one in eight women. Every year, breast cancer accounts for about 30% of all new cancer cases in U.S. women and is second only to lung cancer as one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths in women. Nationwide, it claims the lives of 42,000 women each year. In Arkansas, around 2,500 women are diagnosed with breast cancer per year and nearly 400 women die due to breast cancer.

There are two main types of breast cancer. The most common, invasive ductal carcinoma (IDC), starts in a milk duct of the breast, breaks through the wall of the duct, and grows into the fatty tissue of the breast. At this point, it may be able to spread to other parts of the body through the lymphatic system and bloodstream. About 8 of 10 invasive breast cancers are infiltrating ductal carcinomas.

A less common type, invasive lobular carcinoma (ILC), starts in the milk-producing glands (lobules). Like IDC, it can spread to other parts of the body. About one invasive breast cancer in 10 is an ILC. The remaining one percent is due to several other rare types of breast cancer.

Like all cancers, prevention is a matter of lowering—not eliminating—the risk. The following factors increase a woman's risk for breast cancer:

Age — most breast cancers are found in women 50 years and older. Average age is 62.

Long-term use of hormone replacement therapy.

Personal history of breast cancer or non-cancerous breast diseases.

Family history of breast cancer on either your mother's or father's side of the family.

Women who have inherited changes (mutations) to certain genes, such as BRCA1 and BRCA2, are at higher risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Starting menstrual periods before age 12 and starting menopause after age 55 expose women to hormones longer, raising their risk of getting breast cancer.

Treatment with radiation therapy to the breast/chest.

Exposure to diethylstilbestrol (DES).

Dense breasts by mammogram.

Excessive alcohol use.

As with many other diseases, the risk for breast cancer can be lowered by certain behaviors. This is especially important when a woman is faced with risk factors that are out of her control. According to the Centers for Disease Control risk-lowering behaviors include:

Being older when you first had your menstrual period.

Starting menopause at an earlier age.

Giving birth to more children and being younger at the birth of your first child.

Breastfeeding your children.

Getting regular exercise.

Maintaining a healthy weight.

It is important to note that most women who develop breast cancer do not have any known risk factors or a history of the disease in their families. Routine breast cancer screenings can detect it in the early stages when it is easier to treat. Five year survival rates for stages one and two of breast cancer average a 90-100 percent survival rate, but that number drops to 68 percent for stage three and a dismal 22 percent for stage four. These survival rates vary depending on each person's diagnosis and treatment, but no amount of treatment can match the benefits of early detection.

There are over four million breast cancer survivors in the United States. Besides early detection and treatment, survival rates are influenced by some of the same behaviors associated with lowering the risk. Two in particular, exercise and weight management, have been shown to have





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.

a positive impact on survival rates. The amount of exercise found to be protective against a recurrence was calculated to be only about a mile of walking per day. Another study found weight gain to have a negative impact on longevity rates.

More knowledge about the impact of lifestyle behaviors, combined with advances in treatment will lead to a growing number of "Pink Warriors," that select group of women who have survived breast cancer.

No woman wants to hear the words "You have breast cancer." But for those who do, early detection combined with treatment and a proactive emphasis on healthy lifestyle behaviors will increase the likelihood of remission. And that's a word everyone is happy to hear.

Ways to Reduce Your Risk for Breast Cancer



Keeping a healthy weight.



Exercising regularly.



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Lexi Gipson, Jayden Stone, Lincoln Lewallen, Corbin Miller, Ava Anthony, Carson Robinson, Hunter Radin

Talent and Costumes and Haunted Houses ... Oh My!

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

When Halloween rolls around Marmaduke High School students are allowed to show out and not get in trouble for it.

Choir Director Emily Clark points to the annual Talent Show and Costume Judging as a way for students to take the stage in front of their peers and put on a display. "This will be the third year for it," Emily said. "They get up in front of everyone while the whole student body in grades seven through twelve watches." Talent acts range from singers to dancers to "whatever. We've had some interesting ones before, but usually it's singing, dancing or playing an instrument."

While faculty members are busy judging the talent entries, other students choose to take part in a Halloween costume contest. "We do it on Halloween so that adds to it," Emily said. "I try to get some people who are talented but don't want to show it to at least do the costume contest, and they get to show their talent that way."

Art students are also invited to create haunted houses to be judged by their peers during the festive occasion. Sponsored by the Marmaduke school choirs, the events serve as a fundraiser for the groups. This year the funds are to be used to purchase new risers.

"It's just a fun day for everyone," Emily explained.

Spooky Events!

Dracula

October 24th-31st — Greene County Fine Arts Council presents Dracula! For \$17 a person, enjoy a production of Dracula at The Collins Theatre on October 24th, 25th, and 26th at 7:00 p.m., October 27th at 2:00 p.m. or October 31st at 7:00 p.m.!

Halloween Scramble

October 24th 6:00 p.m. — Grab your friends, your tennis gear and your best costume, and head to 3609 Race Street in Jonesboro for a spooky game of scramble! The event, hosted by the Northeast Arkansas Tennis Association, will begin at 6:00 p.m. on October 24th. There will be prizes for first- and second-place teams, plus a chance to win a gift card to Tennis Warehouse for best costume! The Northeast Arkansas Tennis Association asks that participants bring items to donate to the local NEA Food Bank. Those items include easy-open cans, toiletries, cleaning supplies, etc.

Paraghoul 5k/10k/kids' Fun Run

October 26th 8 a.m. (for main race) 9:45 (for kids) — Show off your best costume at the Paraghoul Fun Run! The race, beginning and ending in Downtown Paragould, will take participants on a thrilling and festive adventure! Participants can expect medals for all finishers, trophies for the first three to finish and huge prizes for those in the best costumes! Those who

participate in the kids' version of the race will get a shirt, a medal, a Paraghoul sticker and lots of candy! The 5K and 10K runs are \$35 a person and will begin at 8:00 a.m. The Kids' Fun Run is \$10 a person and will begin at 9:45 a.m. Registration for all races ends October 25th at 11:59 p.m.

Trick-Or-Treat in Downtown Paragould

October 30th 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. — Fill your evening with fun, candy and great costumes with trick-or-treating in Downtown Paragould! Local businesses will be passing out candy on October 30th from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Community Trick or Treat

October 30th 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. — Head down to the Paragould Community Center on October 30th for a night of candy from local businesses, organizations, individuals and churches! Show off your best costume and have a ton of fun from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Boo in the 'Boro

October 31st from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. — The Mayor's Youth Advancement Council of Jonesboro invites you and your entire family for a free, safe and fun event with everything from a "trunk or treat" to games and face painting! The event will include activities for all ages from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on October 31st at Union Park, 405 Union Avenue.



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PHOTOS BY DINA MASON



Jay and Leslie Allen, Mary Ann Allen, Daniel Allen

60 Years

Allen Engineering has deep roots

BY GRETCHEN HUNT AND DINA MASON

When Dewayne and Mary Ann Allen started a ready-mix concrete business in Piggott in 1964, there was no way they could have known their operation would evolve and grow to the extent it has 60 years later.

Often, industry specialists find themselves developing equipment to make their jobs more efficient. In the case of Allen Engineering Corporation, that natural evolution has greatly impacted not only the Allens' business, but the concrete industry worldwide. In 1977, Dewayne manufactured Allen's first piece of concrete equipment. In 2024, Allen Engineering designs, manufactures, distributes and markets a line of concrete equipment that is sold in 30 countries around the world.

Dewayne passed away in 2020, but the business, headquartered in Paragould, remains family-owned as their son, Jay, serves as CEO and Mary Ann is chairwoman of the board. Jay's wife, Leslie, serves as secretary/treasurer and is on the AEC Board.

Jay and Leslie's son, Daniel, recently rejoined the family business and is serving as customer service manager, moving back to Paragould from Springfield, Mo. He recalls spending time at the factory from the time he was around 10 and working full time during the summers while attending high school and college. "I worked probably around seven or eight summers," he said, "so I have a lot of experience here in the plant."

Jay said that like Daniel, he grew up at the family business. "In 1972, we moved here and had a mobile home on the premises," he said,

noting they lived on site for a couple of years. "So, my connection to this property goes back to the very early '70s. This was kind of like my playground, so I loved it."

Jay officially started working for the company in high school doing janitorial work, and eventually started working in assembly. "That was very formative for me," he said. "That's when I knew for sure I wanted to get my college degree." He recalled returning one summer during college to work in customer service, but said for several years he was out of the business as he pursued his education in Texas. After graduate school, he began working full-time for Allen, but was not on-site in Paragould.

"I ran the international side of our business," he said. "So I was remote – kind of before it was cool." He worked out of Atlanta until 1999 when he and Leslie moved back to Paragould. "Of course we love it here, so we have been here ever since."

Most of Allen Engineering's equipment line is manufactured at the company's 173,000-square-foot plant in Paragould, which is located on the same property Dewayne purchased in 1968 for his ready-mix operation.

With a very active and aggressive trade show schedule, Daniel noted the company has six U.S. based sales reps, an international sales manager and sister partnerships in Australia and Singapore. As the company has expanded, selling to dealers across the world, one might ask why AEC has remained located in Paragould. That's never been in question for the Allen family, though, according to Daniel.



"We're from here" he said. "My granddad was from here. He brought my grandmother back here from Illinois and he started his ready-mix business in the back yard there and ever since we've stayed on this piece of property. We love Paragould. We love being a part of Greene County."

He said over the years they have had a lot of help from elected officials and members of the community, as well as a lot of loyal employees. "There's no reason for us to leave," he said. "We've been here 60 years. We want to do another 60. I'm the third generation and passionate about working in Paragould and making products for the whole world. We're a family-owned 60 year old company that sells internationally. It's something we think is really cool and we're really glad that we have a lot of local people on the team with us."

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HALLOWEEN Pet Safety Tips!

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN



Halloween is one of my favorite holidays! As a kid, I loved getting dressed up for Halloween and going trick-or-treating. My sisters and a couple of my cousins would sit on the floor to trade and barter our Halloween loot. (I always loved those Reese's Cups and could always count on a trade for the Chick O Stick with my sister!) Something I always looked forward to, and I'm sure we've all experienced at some point while out trick-or-treating, is that inevitably a dog will run out the front door to either bark or greet the people that rang the doorbell. I was always so excited to see all of the neighbors' pets, even if those pets were more questionable of my presence than friendly. In this article, I want to briefly go over some basic tips to keep your pet safe this Halloween.

With all the doorbells going off on Halloween, some pets will undoubtedly be more anxious and on-edge. I know at my house, if the doorbell rings, all the dogs sound the alarm and take off to protect the house, especially my Pomeranian, Ralph. If you are expecting numerous trick-or-treaters and your pet is prone to dashing out the door as soon as it is opened, it might be best to keep it confined to a separate part of the house or in a kennel. Another option is to place a baby gate at the outside of the door to be used to prevent its escape.

In the event your pet does escape, contacting a neighborhood group via text or other messaging service may help to spread the word about

the missing pet quickly to help get it home safe and fast. It is also important to contact animal control or another animal agency if your pet is not found quickly - you can inquire if an animal of your pet's description has been picked up or let them know if they find an animal that fits your pet's description they can contact you. If your pet is microchipped, this will get it home if it is taken to an animal facility and scanned. Most animal facilities, including most vet hospitals and clinics, have a microchip reader and can scan these animals with their universal reader. Further, they can look up the microchip number to help get that pet back home!

No pet safety tips list would be complete without mention of toxins! Feeding your pet Halloween candy is never recommended. Most candies are toxic, or have a toxic ingredient in the candy, to pets. Chocolate, raisins, and any sugar-free Xylitol-containing candy could be fatal if ingested by your pet. Best to be safe, give them one of their pet treats for Halloween in lieu of any human candy.

Dressing your pet up for Halloween? (Please send us pictures! They are always so cute!) Make sure the costume is comfortable for your pet. Keep in mind that Arkansas Halloweens can sometimes still be quite warm outside, ensuring that your pet's costume does not cause it to get overheated is crucial. If you have an older pet, it's best to make your walk brief and only if it can tolerate the weather. Young



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pets: Ensure they are fully vaccinated before taking them to meet new friends, otherwise you could risk exposing them to a deadly viral or bacterial disease.

I hope everyone has a wonderful fall season and a happy HOWL-o-ween!

A photograph of three children in Halloween costumes. A girl in an orange witch costume with a large white hat is holding a red string. A girl in a white bunny costume is holding a yellow bucket with a jack-o'-lantern face. A boy in a striped shirt is also holding a red string. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

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A photograph of a baby with a joyful expression, wearing a red sweater with a white collar and a small bell. The baby is being held by an adult's hands.

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Breast Cancer with a Positive Attitude

Katelyn Petty

BY KARAN SUMMITT

At twenty years of age most of us are enjoying a relatively carefree life. Our days might include time with friends, a job, college classes, sometimes all three — but certainly not breast cancer.

But then, most of us are not Katelyn Petty.

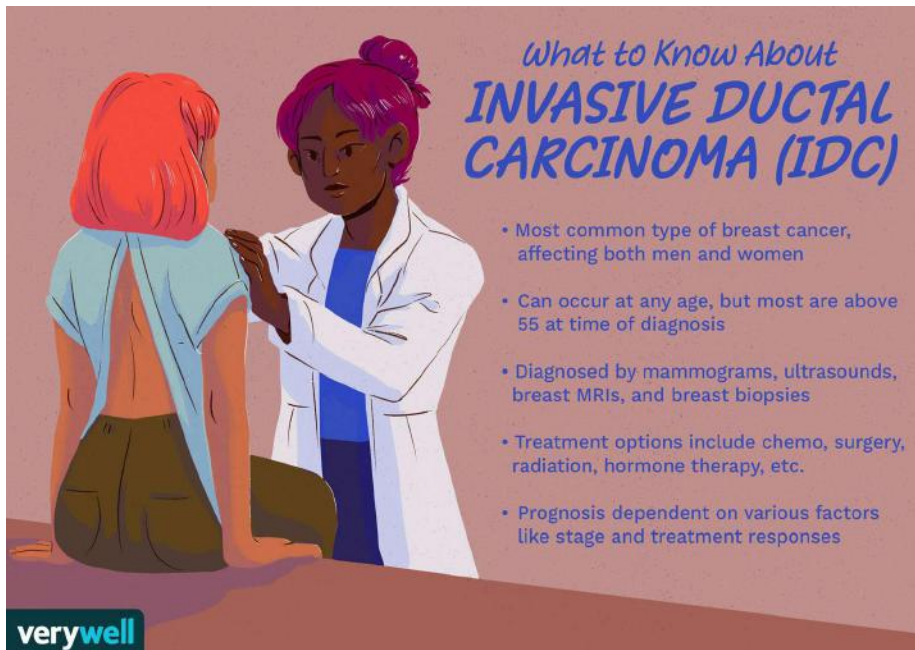
Just after turning 20 in October of 2022, Katelyn raised her arms to pull off a shirt. In the mirror her eyes caught a glimpse of a breast lump the size of a peanut M&M. She immediately called her mom, Jennifer Barrow, who assured her it was probably a benign fibroadenoma lump, something Jennifer herself had experienced. The lump was painful, lending some urgency for Katelyn to visit with her PCP, who scheduled her for an ultrasound at St. Bernards Imaging Center. The ultrasound seemed to indicate the lump was nothing more than a cyst, but a biopsy was ordered before undergoing surgery to remove it.

Katelyn was referred to the breast team at UAMS, and on January 30, 2023, the biopsy was performed. Three days later on February 2, while sitting in the living room with her roommate, a call came that the lump was Stage 1 estrogen+ / progesterone+ / HER2-, invasive ductal carcinoma. Once again Katelyn reached out to Jennifer, who simply said, “Come home right now.”

Katelyn had her first appointment with the surgeon on February 6, followed by an appointment with an oncologist on February 15, 2023. Her relatively carefree life was about to be put on hold for a bit.

Katelyn was offered two choices of treatment. She could opt for a lumpectomy with radiation or undergo a double mastectomy with reconstructive breast surgery plus 5 years of Tamoxifen, an oral drug that treats hormone receptor-positive breast cancer. Although surgery was a more radical choice, the probability was much higher that no chemotherapy or radiation would be needed, and it offered a lower risk for the cancer to re-occur. In addition, the lumpectomy had a small risk for unknown damage to the heart and lungs, as well as a higher risk for re-occurrence.

Katelyn underwent a double mastectomy with breast reconstruction on May 24, 2023. At that time, the surgeon removed five lymph nodes,





and in June the news came back that all of the nodes tested clear of any cancer cells. Reconstructive surgery involved the insertion of breast expanders, and these were followed up with implants some six months later once her breasts were at a desired size.

The immediate healing process required Katelyn to restrict movement in the areas affected by the mastectomy. She easily identifies her most difficult time as the weeks after surgery when she needed help with basic personal needs like bathing and getting dressed. Once again Jennifer was there. Nerve damage due to removing the breasts and lymph nodes helped reduce the pain associated with such an extensive surgery. That feeling has yet to return.

Katelyn admits it is in her nature to be positive, to try and brighten the world around her. In the early days before a definite diagnosis she mentally prepared herself to hear the word “cancer,” but balanced that with the confidence she had a closeknit family to give her support. Her work family at WalMart became another layer of support when the diagnosis was confirmed.

“All of this has just pushed me to be more positive, especially in the daily frustrations we have with other people,” she said. “I’ve come to realize we never know what they may be going through. When my diagnosis was posted on Facebook, my manager brought me in and shared that my attitude was inspiring others, including their own self, to be more positive about personal problems.”

While Katelyn acknowledges the cancer and its treatment brought some difficult things to deal with like knowing she will never be able to breastfeed, the ongoing nerve damage and scarring, she is more committed than ever to reach out to others who are going through tough times — whatever their struggles may be.

“I’m thankful for what I have, and I don’t take it for granted that I get a second chance with life,” she said. “Sometimes I have survivor’s guilt

because so many don’t have the great outlook for long-term healing that I have, but I know that just means I have a greater responsibility to use my life for good.”

Post surgery pathology revealed Katelyn’s tumor had a variant in the MSH2 gene, something that is still being studied. She donated all the removed tissue to breast cancer research in hopes of helping others.

Katelyn is currently into her five-year Tamoxifen regime, with minimal side effects. While the “what ifs” of the cancer returning are always in the back of her mind, her thoughts stay focused on the future.

“I’ve come to realize it is not as important to have a big house or new vehicle as it is to live within my means, enjoy every day and be prepared for the unexpected. One in eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. I was my family’s one in eight,” she said.

At her first oncology visit, Katelyn received a packet of information that included the following quote: “As Survivors, we learn that survivorship is an attitude we adopt. It is the one component of recovery no one else can do for us. We have to decide for ourselves how we intend to respond to our illness and how we will approach our recovery. We, alone, decide to become Survivors.” (Judy Kneece)

Katelyn’s positive approach to life will be a key ingredient for surviving, no matter what the future may bring. It is an admirable trait that makes her wise beyond her years, and something the rest of us -- no matter what our age -- can adapt to our own troubles.

A cancer diagnosis might have taken the word “carefree” out of Katelyn’s vocabulary, but it could not steal her enthusiasm for encouraging and helping others. Some things may be gone, but what remains is what matters most. Katelyn Petty’s positive attitude makes her a true survivor at life.



AFTERNOON TEA

Love of teapots leads to event

BY VICKI McMILLAN

As life's paths often become circuitous, a recent afternoon tea held The Green House Cottages of Belle Meade's Vassar House started with a two-year old spotting a teapot in a flea market.

Susan Sprouse, now nine years old and entering the fourth grade at Greene County Tech, was that two-year old. Her grandmother, Cynthia Coleman, encouraged Susan with her teapot collecting, and her interest in the (nearly) lost art of an afternoon tea. Kimberly Williams, who is a caregiver and activities specialist at Vassar House, and Cynthia are life-long friends. So when Susan wanted to host an afternoon tea she knew exactly where to go.

The table was laid at Vassar House for 25 ladies — the 10 residents of

the house and their families and friends. Fabric corsages were given to the attending ladies as favors. White linen cloths and fine china decorated the table for the June event, along with summer flowers. Tea bags were provided in small handmade envelopes, with lemon and sugar cubes, lovingly made by Susan in colors to match the linen napkins and flowers. The iconic three-tiered trays were piled with finger sandwiches and petit fours – all homemade by the grandmother and granddaughter duo. Not only are the two bringing back civility one tea cup at a time, they are reinforcing the unbreakable bond between grandmother and granddaughter.

By the way, if you see a crocodile-shaped tea pot, let us know: Susan is looking for one!

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NEA'S PREMIERE MAGAZINE



PHOTOS BY SHELBY RUSSOM

Welcome to A-State



Ethan Foster, Jonesboro; TJ Oxner, Beebe



Ella Murray, Jonesboro

In celebration of a new school year at Arkansas State, the university hosted a Community and Organization Fair on August 28th. The event boasted a wide variety of booths and opportunities for students to connect with the NEA community. The booths included local businesses, student-led organizations, churches, restaurants and more. In addition to opportunities to get involved, several booths gave away goodies including free lemonade, coffee, cookies and much more — kicking the year off with a sweet beginning.



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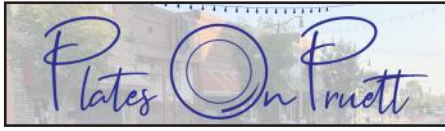
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October 3rd

6:30 p.m.

Plates On Pruett

Pruett Street

Main Street Paragould Event



October 12

7:00 p.m.

Napoleon Dynamite LIVE!

VIP Meet & Greet at 6:00 p.m.

Madhattershows.com

Downtown Collins Theatre

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



October 18th

7:30 p.m.

Downtown After Hours
Vicki Bishop & The Good Guys

Paragould Community Pavilion

Main Street Paragould Event



October 26

3:00 p.m.

Downtown Trick-or-Treat
Main Street Paragould Event

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Real Estate

SANDRA KELLEY

For Sandra Kelley, helping her clients see the potential in their future homes is what she loves most about her work as a real estate broker.

"I absolutely love helping homeowners reach their goals in what they want in a home," Kelley said. "I help them visualize how they can decorate or remodel a home to be what their vision is of the perfect home. I love remodeling houses. I probably should have been in construction."

The owner of Weichert REALTORS, Home Source in Paragould, Kelley has been in real estate since April of 2000, but that is not where she saw herself when she was younger. "When I was younger, I wanted to be in advertising," she said. "I never thought real estate would be the way I did it though."

She has thrived in the real estate industry, earning top producer recognition since 2001 and receiving Realtor of the Year honors in 2008, 2014 and 2021. Kelley has several real estate education designations



and certifications and was president of the Arkansas REALTORS Association in 2022. She has also served the local REALTOR Board in various positions including president of the Paragould Board of REALTORS in 2014, and is very involved in her community.

"I have served on the Special Olympics fundraising committee — I even did the Polar Plunge the last two years — and the Paragould Board of Directors," Kelley said. "I currently serve on the Habitat for Humanities of NEA representing Greene County. I have been involved at Saint Mary's Catholic School and Church."

She and her husband, Jason, have two kids, Rachelle and Aiden, and she got her first inside dog in January of 2023. "He is a Sheepadoodle named Toby and I bring him to work with me even though he is huge," she laughed. She enjoys being artistic in her downtime, though she doesn't consider herself an artist. "I have a She-Shed and love to paint even though I am not an artist," she said. "It is just fun to create things."

Kelley said she loves helping others find their dream homes as she lives and works in her dream hometown. "I am not originally from Paragould but have called it home for almost 28 years," she said. "Even though I love to travel and see new places I love coming home and could not dream of a better life to live."

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DR. MICHAEL STIDHAM

Experience is the best teacher, and for Dr. Michael Stidham his job as a chiropractor has been greatly impacted both by his experience as the provider and his experience as the patient. "I always knew I wanted to do something in the medical field," he said. "About halfway through undergrad is when I decided to pursue a degree in chiropractic. One of the reasons I chose this was because of past experiences of being injured and seeing Dr. Michael Jarman. I seemed to always have the best results when I would go to his chiropractic office and I think that's what made it an easy choice for me. I could tell that he enjoyed what he did, because it showed in the treatment plan and results I received. I wanted to see people get results like I did when I, myself, was a patient."

Stidham, now a doctor in chiropractic, said he was fortunate to be able to do his internship at Paragould Chiropractic under Dr. Jarman during his last two semesters of chiropractic school. "I graduated in December of 2021 and began my career in January 2022," he said. "I love that I was fortunate enough to do my internship here, where I currently work, because I am able to still see and follow through with patients today that I have seen in the past."

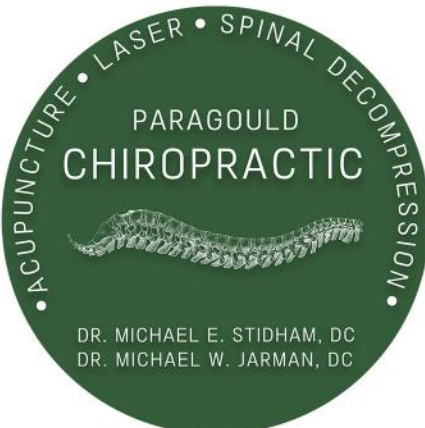
As a doctor in chiropractic, Stidham treats and works to prevent a lot of issues caused by misalignment of the skeletal system and injuries overall to the musculoskeletal system. He is also certified in acupuncture and laser therapy. "Both are great additional ways to improve outcomes for many patients," he said. "I have seen a lot of benefits to both treatments on my patients. They both have more than just one benefit to your treatment plan and overall health."

Dr. Stidham and his wife, Alexa, and have been married for three years and have a 15-month-old son. "Most of my days off involve hanging out with them and watching our son enjoy life," he said. "When I'm not doing that, I enjoy going golfing or fishing. I am also a big fan of football season so whether I am with family or friends, whatever we're doing, football is on." Not surprisingly, fall is his favorite season — but not just because of football. "I love fall because of the weather change



and all of the events that come with it such as football, tailgating, bonfires and the holidays," he said. "Because of the fall I would say Halloween and Thanksgiving are probably my favorite holidays. Having a little boy makes Halloween even better as we look forward to being able to watch him dress up and have fun at events."

Dr. Stidham finds that same joy in all aspects of his life — both personally and professionally — especially when helping his patients. "I love a success story," he said. "I love being able to see a patient on their first visit in the office and watch them improve throughout their treatment plan. I love seeing my patients happy with the results that we worked towards. I always look forward to going to work and I enjoy what I do every day."




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Dr. Michael E. Stidham

Funeral Director

ZAC HEATH

While Zac Heath began working full-time as a funeral director at his family's funeral home in February, he has more experience than his time on the clock might imply.

Heath, who is also COO of Heath Funeral Home, said, "The funeral home was founded by my grandfather, Verlyn Heath, nearly 80 years ago, and was run by my father, Butch Heath, and his sister, Lynda Heath White, before my brother, Jeremy, took it over a couple of years ago. I literally grew up around the business. I've also been a licensed funeral director for over 24 years, so, even though I'm technically a fairly new full-time funeral director, I'm pretty familiar with the business."

Heath served his apprenticeship and got licensed while attending Arkansas State University for his undergraduate degree, but said he never expected to go into the business. "My intentions then were to pursue a career in film and television, and I only got licensed so that I could assist my family whenever needed," he said. Heath has spent the past 18 years in Los Angeles, working on movies, shows, and commercials, mostly as a Unit Production Manager (budgeting and scheduling productions), but also worked in a variety of other positions including wardrobe, sound, and occasionally producing, writing and directing.

That time led to one of his most memorable experiences when a group of about 50 Brazilians chanted his name while tossing him in the air in celebration of wrapping a movie that he worked on in São Paulo.

"I loved what I was doing and enjoyed my life in Los Angeles, but a part of me was always missing being closer to my family and being a part of their everyday lives," he said. "A couple of industry-wide strikes shut down most productions last year, and it happened to coincide with a few people retiring at the funeral home, which presented an opportunity for me to work alongside my brother. Initially it was just going to be for a month, but that month had quite an impact on me. I enjoyed working with my brother and being around my family more regularly, I found fulfillment in trying to take as many burdens as possible off of the families we serve so that they could focus on grieving and being with their loved ones, and my dog absolutely loved getting to know her fur-cousins and spending time with my mom (her new favorite person). At the end of that month, it felt like it was time to make a career change."

While he has only been home for a few months, Heath is looking forward to becoming more involved in the community, including involvement in the upcoming Leadership Paragould class. "I'm excited about the growing opportunities that Paragould has to offer, especially in the arts, and I hope to be a part of expanding those opportunities," he said. "I'd especially love to see a cinema-type experience emerge here, one that contains an interactive element to it — such as movie screenings that are followed by a Q&A with a person connected to



that movie."

He is also enjoying doing the things he loves — "I love coming across a film from a talented director I previously didn't know, and then watching as many of their films as I can," he said. "I love finding restaurants that have good vegan dishes. I love how excited my dog, Zoey, gets about all the scents along the sidewalk as we go for a walk."

While he remains a card-carrying member of the Director's Guild of America (still carrying his card in his wallet as he said it represents years of sweat and tears); he is also equally proud of his Arkansas Funeral Director's license, which is framed and mounted on his office wall.

Heath said being a funeral director can be very rewarding work. "When you lose a loved one, there are usually several stages of grief that a person goes through — from denial to anger to bargaining to depression and finally to acceptance. Most people experience some form of most or all of these stages during a significant loss," he said. "At the same time, they may also be saddled with handling a myriad of responsibilities that come with the end of a life; everything from making arrangements for the funeral to closing accounts and property that were in that person's name. At the funeral home, we want to ease the burden as much as possible on the families we serve, so that they are able to spend that time grieving and being with their loved ones."



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Accounting

ANNA LATHAM

Sometimes you find yourself following in your parent's footsteps before you even realize it. That was the case for Anna Latham, who has spent the last 10 years working in public accounting with her dad, Jimmy Wilson CPA.

"If you ask my dad, he will say that growing up I would say, 'I don't know what I want to do but I know I don't want to do what you do!' Obviously, now that has changed," Latham said. "I started college with an idea of what I wanted to do, but pretty quickly I realized the path I was on wasn't for me. I was just drawn more to business classes and more specifically found out my favorites were my accounting classes."

Having graduated from the University of Central Arkansas in 2014 with her degree in accounting, Latham went on to earn her CPA license in April of 2023.

"It was a huge goal of mine to get my CPA license," she said, noting that she loves to be able to help the firm's clients in whatever ways she can. "A lot of them are small businesses owners in our community and I like being able to help them grow and understand their business," she said.



A member of Junior Auxiliary of Paragould, she has served as the treasurer for the past three years. "It's been such a fun experience being able to give back to the children of Greene County," she said.

She and her husband, Garret, are celebrating their one-year anniversary this month. "On a day off you can most likely find me at home hanging out with my three dogs, Gus, Winnie and Buddy," Latham said. "Buddy is the newest member of our family after we became his foster, we quickly foster failed and decided to make him part of our family."

While she enjoys her home time, she also loves to travel. "Every year my mom and I take a trip together to a different part of the world. Our most recent trips have taken us to Switzerland, Australia, and South Africa," she said. "We try to do something fun and unique at each place we visit. This past year, we went to a perfume class and got to create our own signature scent!"

Latham shared that her favorite holiday is Thanksgiving. "I love getting together with family and eating all the yummy food," she said. "My friends know this about me and even threw me a surprise Thanksgiving themed birthday party, in the middle of August."

That love of spending time with family makes her career choice the perfect fit. "It's definitely been a blessing," Latham said, "because I've gotten the opportunity to work closely with my dad and learn so much from him daily!"

Jimmy D. Wilson

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Lending

MANDY BEASLEY

Mandy Beasley definitely brings experience to the table when she sits down with her customers as a loan officer at Rural 1st, which is the consumer lending division of Farm Credit Mid-America.

"I have been working in the banking industry for my whole life, so I guess it was just in my cards to do this job," she said. "I have been at Farm Credit for six years and I worked at a local bank for 18 years before that."

Beasley noted she can lend for a variety of purposes including construction loans, home purchases and refinances, land and lot loans. "I love helping people make their dreams a reality," she said. "From buying land to build on in the future to building their dream home, it is so much fun to be a part of that!"

In addition to her extensive background in banking, she has also been through Leadership Paragould and is an affiliate member of the Paragould Board of Realtors. Community involvement is also important to her.

"I am involved with some of the booster clubs for a local school, and I try to attend community events when I can," she said. "At this stage in my life, my days revolve around my two sons who both play baseball and football. They keep me busy for sure! I enjoy cooking, puzzles, riding the side-by-side, going to the river, and getting to play an occasional game of golf."



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Owner / Cake Artist Entrepreneur

TRACY MOTHERSHED

The saying, "When you do something you love, you'll never work a day in your life," might not be exactly true, but when you love your work the way Tracy Mothershed loves running Something Sweet in Downtown Paragould the work seems more like fun.

"I love it. When you do something for so long you get tired of it, but I could eat sugar all day," she joked. "I love exploring new recipes, and I love the artistic side of cake decorating." Mothershed started decorating cakes at home over 30 years ago while her husband was in the military and they were living in a place where she couldn't find a cake for her kids. "So I just started decorating cakes," she said. "Everything I do is self-taught." While she did most of her learning before YouTube, she said she does enjoy watching videos now to learn new tricks and easier ways to do things.

After her husband retired from the military and they moved back to Paragould, she opened Something Sweet in 2011. "I opened it just as a place to decorate cakes, but it has evolved into so much more," she said, noting she has explored baking much more, adding things like breakfast items, scones and pastries. "We also have ice cream, fudge and candies and, of course, coffee," she added. The previous tenant left an espresso machine, and while Mothershed had a love for drinking coffee, she was definitely not a barista. "I didn't know anything about coffee, except to drink it," she laughed. "But I have learned a lot about coffee."

Mothershed, who never anticipated moving back to Paragould, said sometimes life is not what you expect, but that doesn't mean it can't be something good and that's what she decided to make it. "I could whine and complain, or I could create a space where I could be content and create joy for others," she said. "I hope that I've created the place where people feel joy when they come in." She continues to look for ways to have a positive impact on the community, whether it be through community service like her time spent on the Main Street Paragould Board focusing on downtown revitalization, or through her church, Brown's Chapel Baptist Church.

With several Premiere awards under her belt, as well as the Best Cinnamon Roll at the Get Downtown Festival two years in a row and the Best Dessert at the Main Street Paragould Taste of the Ridge contest three years in a row, Mothershed still said she is constantly looking for new treats for her customers. "My brain is just always what can I do, what can I bring to Paragould, what can I bring for a different experience?" she said. "When I do get time off I love to travel. I love exploring. I love adventure."

Having been to Guatemala twice on mission trips, she and her daughters recently took a vacation there to celebrate their birthdays and visit a former employee of the bakery. That trip, like all others, also included stops at coffee shops and bakeries to see if there was



something she might want to add to her offerings in Downtown Paragould.

That spirit is what led to the opening of Something Pawsitive in 2021. Mothershed said the recognition that there was not a rescue for cats in Paragould, and having visited other places with cat cafes, led to her decision to open Something Pawsitive when the building next door came open.

"I wanted it to be a place where the cats are not exploited," she said, noting that all the cats are rescue cats, who have been spayed, neutered and vet checked. "They are ready for adoption." Something Pawsitive works in conjunction with Ozzie's Legacy, a dedicated group that rescues cats, but had no place to offer them for adoption when they were ready. "I'm like the foster mom," Mothershed said. "I get to love on them, baby them and take care of them." They have seen 300 adoptions in the past three years.

She said her life is pretty complete with her three C's. "Cakes, coffee and cats ... I'm happy."

While she was in Guatemala, she said they were driving and the pavement ended and forked into three dirt roads, "My daughter asked if we should turn around and without really thinking I just replied, 'Life's too short to turn around.'" Mothershed said when she thought back on that moment she realized what a good analogy it was for life, "We're not promised tomorrow. Do what you can and do it to the best of your ability."

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Insurance

HOLDEN SMITH

Holden Smith is fully invested in Paragould, not only as the owner of Lennox Insurance, but also as a family man and member of the community.

With eight and a half years in the insurance business, Smith said Lennox is a full-service independent insurance agency. He said the best thing about his job is the people he gets to work with. "I have an amazing team and they do a wonderful job," Smith said. "I truly enjoy the people I get to work with on a daily basis."

He has been recognized by the Professional Insurance Agents of Arkansas, receiving the Randy Henry Award and the Young Agent of the Year Award.

Prior to launching his insurance career, Smith spent a year selling cars. "I had a great time and really enjoyed it," he said.

Coaching his daughter's sports teams is just one way he is involved in the community. "I have been on the board at Fox Hills, and I am active in the Chamber," he added. He said he also enjoys playing golf and spending time with his wife and kids. The family has a mini shonoodle named Toby.

He shared some of the things he loves, like a good ribeye, Christmas and the city of Paragould. "I've been here since day one," Smith said. "The people are wonderful and it's been a great place to start a business and raise a family."



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CHAD OLDHAM

Chad Oldham, who is in his 22nd year of practice, developed an interest in elder law early and has expanded his knowledge to become an expert in the field.

"We do a lot of wills, trusts, powers of attorney and living wills," he said. "I also do a lot of guardianships for both disabled young people and elderly who have succumbed to age-related afflictions such as Alzheimer's and dementia."

Oldham, who is also a certified trust and financial adviser, started his career as a trust officer with American State Bank. "I've always had an interest in trust and estate planning," he said.

A 1994 graduate of Crowley's Ridge Academy in Paragould, he earned his undergraduate degree in finance from the University of Arkansas in 1997 and his MBA from U of A in 1998. After graduating from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 2001, Oldham decided to continue his education. "I did a one-year master's of law with emphasis in estate planning at the University of Missouri in Kansas City," he said.

During his time studying at Kansas City, he took an elective course titled Elder Law, which included not only traditional estate planning, but also planning for those with disabilities. "A lot of that course work was trust planning for families with special needs children and grandchildren," he said, "but also assisting with seniors in their golden years both at home and in the case that they have to go into a facility. That course was my first real in-depth introduction to that field of law."

Through the years, Oldham has pursued continuing education in the field of elder law through the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, and several years ago he co-wrote the book "Medicaid Secrets," which was re-released in an updated format in 2022.

As Oldham focused on elder law, he also



developed a knowledge of societal benefit programs, especially Medicare and Medicaid, as well as benefits to veterans through the Veterans Administration.

An expansion of the law that went into effect in 2006 offered detailed explanation of how it related to individuals qualifying for Medicaid assistance. "I took that body of law and studied it extensively," Oldham said. "I undertook to develop some planning initiatives, only to find out the state of Arkansas and DHS didn't particularly care for it and it culminated in a law suit."

In Jackson v. Selig, filed in 2010, Richard F. Jackson sued the Arkansas Department of Human Services after he was denied Medicaid. "The end result of that case was the federal courts essentially siding with the petitioners and thereby paving the way for particular modes and methods of protecting assets for individuals facing long-term care," Oldham said. "We have relied on that case to guide us in our work."

Oldham said there have been more changes to the law in recent years, but there is a constant battle with both misinformation and people simply not being prepared. "The federal law put into place protections to protect the financial interests of families who are faced with this insurmountable burden, not only emotionally, but financially," he said, noting the average cost of long-term care is \$8,500 a month. "You can imagine that's impossible for most, particularly here in Arkansas."

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

He said in addition to sitting down with an estate planning attorney, individuals should also meet with their financial advisor and should specifically examine the benefits of long-term care insurance. "One in four Arkansans spend an average of two years in long-term care, but less than one percent have long-term care insurance," he said. "We carry homeowner's insurance, but the incidence of catastrophic loss is around 8 percent. There is a much higher chance of needing long-term care insurance."

In addition, Oldham said only around 20 percent of people have a valid estate plan to deal with administration and disposition of their estate in the event of their death. While, it might not be a popular subject, it is one that he said needs to be addressed.

"When you participate in sports or Quiz Bowl or such as a kid, when you go to college, really everything we do in life, we prepare for," he said. "But life itself, as we age, we find that so many people have failed to plan for living into our golden years and ultimately our death."

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Financial Planning

CARRIE QURAISHI

Carrie Russom Quraishi, JD, CAPP is the principal of Quraishi Law & Wealth based in Jonesboro. Her primary focus is on helping families and small business owners minimize taxes, protect their wealth, and leave a lasting legacy through comprehensive wealth planning.

Drawing on her extensive experience and legal expertise, Quraishi takes a client-first approach, emphasizing the importance of creating integrated financial, legal, and life plans to safeguard what matters most. She firmly believes that proper estate, tax and wealth planning can significantly impact families for generations to come, bringing wisdom and insight to the planning process.

Quraishi graduated cum laude with a degree in finance from Arkansas State University and later earned her Juris Doctorate from Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of Law. She is a published author, with books such as "The Dirty Dozen: 12 Costly Mistakes Families Make In Their Estate Plan" and "Smart, Simple Wealth: How to Get It, Keep It, and Pass It On."

Quraishi emphasized the importance of providing clear and straightforward advice on complex topics like retirement planning and investing, asset protection, and estate planning. "I believe that simplicity and understanding are key to creating effective solutions for my clients," she said, emphasizing the significance of choosing a knowledgeable and experienced attorney and adviser for estate planning, asset protection, and wealth management. "You need someone who takes the time to understand the client's needs and design a tailored plan accordingly," she said.

Quraishi Law & Wealth has been recognized for its excellence in the field. "We've been so fortunate to be voted Best of NEA's Best Financial Planner four times," Quraishi said.

Community involvement is also important to Quraishi. "I am involved with the Women's Leadership Center at Arkansas State University, where I get to mentor young women as they begin their professional careers," she said. "Quraishi Law & Wealth also started 'Quraishi Helping Hands' where each quarter our firm, employees and clients participate in a non-profit event to help the community. In the past year alone, we've raised money for St. Jude, packed food at the NEA Food Bank, donated books to the local Little Libraries, and were a sponsor at September's Walk to End Alzheimer's here in Jonesboro."



Quraishi's husband, JR, also works in the practice as the firm's tax strategist, and they have two children, Cade (12) and Catherine (4). She said her daughter has developed a love for one of her old hobbies. "I love showing horses and am a former AQHA (American Quarter Horse Association) world champion," she said. "Although I haven't competed in about 20 years, my 4-year-old daughter has discovered her love for horses and we are excited about getting back into showing as a family."

Having grown up in the small town of Corning, Quraishi said she experienced the benefits of a close-knit community and strong relationships. "The slower pace and sense of security provided a solid foundation, instilling values like respect, responsibility, and a strong work ethic," she said. "Though I live in Jonesboro now, the upbringing in Corning continues to influence my outlook and approach to life."



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Accounting

SHANNON MASINGALE and MANDI JERNIGAN

MASINGALE & JERNIGAN

Mandi Jernigan and Shannon Masingale credit their mentors with preparing them for their future as owners of Masingale and Jernigan Accounting in Paragould. Now they are paying it forward as they begin training the next generation.

"We both worked in this field during college — Mandi under her late mentor, Rex Bouldin, and Shannon under her great uncle, Charlie Partlow — both of whom we credit for teaching us so much about what we do today," Jernigan said. "Since graduating college, we each have over 26 years of experience in accounting."

They are now using that experience to mentor Jernigan's oldest son, Max. "I said to Max, 'Come work with us at M&J for two weeks.



You will either love it or won't be able to get out of there fast enough.' That was almost two years ago, so it is safe to say he loves it," Jernigan said. "He has a real gift for this profession, and we want to encourage and enhance that by teaching him to be the best in this field."

"We are looking forward to the future and keeping this business within our families for multiple generations," Jernigan added. "Max is currently obtaining his Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Arkansas State University and is already a Registered Tax Return Preparer with the IRS."

Masingale and Jernigan said they enjoy every day on the job with their office dog, General Ledger Masingale Jernigan, as they strive to provide top-notch service to their clients. "We truly have a passion for our work ... for financially guiding our clients and seeking the best possible outcome for them, be it personally or professionally," Masingale said.

"We love this community, and especially take pride in helping our neighbors and friends be successful in their business endeavors."

Their efforts have not gone unnoticed as they have been named Best Accounting Company and/or Tax Service seven times in the Paragould Premiere Awards, as well as Reader's Choice Tax Service two times in the Paragould Daily Press and Best Accounting Service and/or Tax Service three times in the Best of Northeast Arkansas Awards.

Jernigan said as they look to the future, they will continue to provide the highest quality services. "Our business does not only span generations of accounting, but also generations of clients," she said. "We are now servicing children and grandchildren of taxpayers whose returns we have prepared for years. Family and community are what we love, and we hope to be a part of your family and your community for years to come."



MAX JERNIGAN and MANDI JERNIGAN



Auto Sales

MATTHEW DREW & JEFF BARNES

Matthew Drew and Jeff Barnes have teamed up to create a sales duo that continues to fill the needs of used car shoppers in Northeast Arkansas and beyond at Larry's Auto Sales of Paragould, Inc.

Drew is in his 15th year at Larry's, serving as sales manager at Larry's Auto Sales #1, located on Highway 49 North, across from Monroe, but his experience goes back much further. "I have been around cars my entire life," he said. "I remember going with my grandpa on buying days to wholesalers when I was younger."

The business, founded in 1976 by Larry Breckenridge, is not where his grandson expected to have his career, though.

"It was never in my plan to join our family business," Drew said. "Believe it or not, I started college with the intent for Radio/TV. After a year in college, I shifted focus to other things, got married and asked my grandfather for a job. He obliged and the rest is history. I am thankful that through Brian Osborn, I am able to live out a little bit of my want for radio through our fun commercials for Larry's. Jeff Barnes, Brian and I have a blast recording and sharing our antics with our area."

Barnes, who is sales manager at Larry's Auto Sales #2, located on Highway 49 North at the city limits, has won territory manager of the year multiple times. In addition to seven years of experience in auto sales, he also has 30-plus years of sales and marketing experience in the solid waste industry. He said his favorite thing about the job is interacting with his customers.

Drew agreed, saying helping someone get on the road is very fulfilling. "Anytime I am able to fulfill a need of a customer, I am better for it," he said. "I get to see all walks of life from our area and help with their situations, sometimes wants, sometimes needs. We typically have something for everyone and in between."

Drew, who is a member of Harvest Baptist Church, said he enjoys serving his community through his church any way he can. "I also enjoy assisting my son's Little League team and helping kids learn the game the best I can," he said. "I'm no pro by any means, but



if I can help kids gain an understanding of the game and learn great sportsmanship in the process, I'm happy!"

He and his wife, Samantha, were high school sweethearts and have been married for 15 years. "We have three beautiful children, Jaxson (13), Gracyn (11) and Rowan (8)," Drew said. "I wouldn't trade the world for my family and have been incredibly blessed by God in my life and thank him every day for it. (PSALMS 20)"

He said he is also an avid Arkansas Razorbacks fan. "I love Hogs sports and probably get a little too invested sometimes," Drew said. "Aside from that, I enjoy biking at church with friends and around my neighborhood. I love playing ball with my son. All around spending time with my kids and my wife in my downtime is my favorite thing to do. We have two dogs, Lola the Bassett Hound and

Scarlett the Dachshund, as well as two cats, Pumpkin and Carter. Within the past year, somehow, we've started raising rabbits, as well, so that's fun (note sarcasm)."

Grilling is something he also enjoys. "I do love to eat and have many things that I enjoy, but my all-time favorite would have to be a home-grilled ribeye," he said. "There is something about doing it myself with my seasonings that can't be beat by any restaurant."

Barnes is also a member of Harvest Baptist Church and is involved with the Greene County Boys and Girls Club, having volunteered with Boys Club basketball.

Outside of work, he enjoys riding his bike and hunting and fishing, as well as following his favorite sports teams. "I love my Kansas City Chiefs, Arkansas Razorbacks and Oklahoma Sooners," he said.

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Outside of the salon, Katelyn loves spending time with her dog, Benji, and enjoys traveling and making memories with her family. When summer rolls around, you'll often find her relaxing by the pool.

We're thrilled to have Katelyn on board and can't wait for you to experience her incredible talent!

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Love of photography comes naturally

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

Tracy Brengard may not consider herself an artist, but that doesn't mean her photographs are not art. A sampling of those photos is on display at The Gallery at 120, located in the Greene County Library in Paragould.

"I grew up in Paragould and lived here most of my life," the Paragould

High School graduate said. "I spent a lot of time in this library when I was a little girl. I love this library."

Photography is a rather new hobby for Tracy, but one she has developed quickly. "My husband gave me a camera a couple years ago for Christmas," she said. "I see something and I just want to take a picture of it. I'm drawn to color. I'm drawn to clouds. I'm motivated by nature. I just have to take a picture."

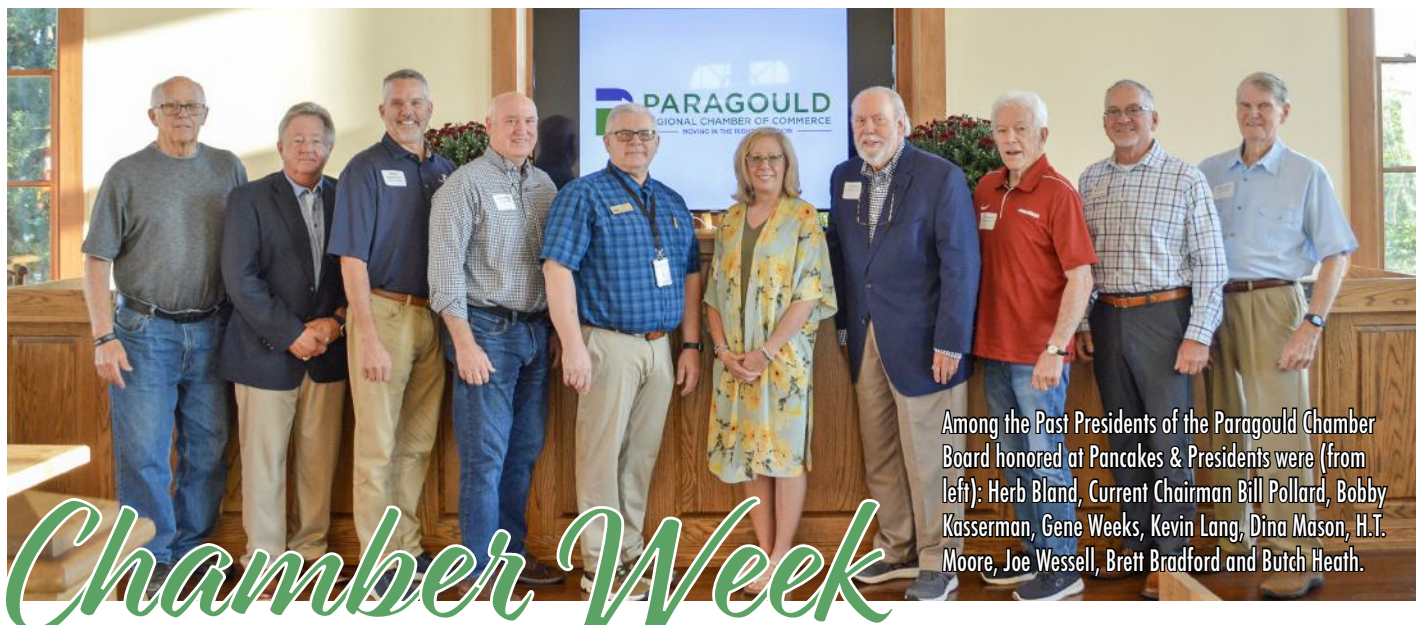
She said she loves using her camera, but sometimes when she sees something that inspires her and she doesn't have her camera, she just snaps pictures with her iPhone. The self-taught photographer said she would have never done an exhibition without encouragement from her friends.

"I haven't taken any classes or really learned about my camera," Tracy laughed. "I just use it." She said she began posting photos to Facebook and getting positive feedback. "People commented and it motivated me to take more."

Tracy said a friend helped arrange her show at the library, which will remain on display through December. "It was overwhelming to pick which pictures to display," she said, noting she grouped them in different categories such as clouds, horses and flowers for the exhibition.

She said photographs, much like the books in the library, tell a story. "I hope in these photos I have shared you can find one or two that speak to you," Tracy said.





Among the Past Presidents of the Paragould Chamber Board honored at Pancakes & Presidents were (from left): Herb Bland, Current Chairman Bill Pollard, Bobby Kasserman, Gene Weeks, Kevin Lang, Dina Mason, H.T. Moore, Joe Wessell, Brett Bradford and Butch Heath.

Chamber Week

Paragould area businesses celebrate

The Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce celebrated Chamber Week September 16th through 20th with several different events.

The week kicked off with Pancakes & Presidents, during which Chamber members were invited to enjoy a pancake breakfast as past presidents of the organization were honored for their service.

Other activities throughout the week included a Lunch & Learn breakout session, a movie on the lawn, a cornhole tournament and lunch on the lawn on September 20th to close out the week.

Throughout the week, individuals could also participate in Chamber Quest, a scavenger hunt of different Chamber members, with hints leading participants to the correct businesses.



JONATHAN ERLANDSON

Direct from the Maxwell Blade Theatre of Magic in Hot Springs, Arkansas, is illusionist Jonathan Erlandson. With dangerous stunts and illusions to mentalism and sleight-of-hand, every moment of the show will both shock and amaze audiences in an unforgettable and unique experience.



KAYLA DRESCHER

She has been picked as David Copperfield's "Next Great Magician" and has dazzled audiences on Penn & Teller's "Fool Us", Access Hollywood, The Today Show and more. Kayla's "Magic in Heels" show is perfect for both adults and families that love magic. Kayla's show includes amazing sleight-of-hand and acts of mentalism that will leave you speechless.



DUSTIN TAVELLA

Headlining the 2nd annual Magic on the Ridge Festival is the winner of Season 16 of America's Got Talent, magician Dustin Tavella. Hot off of his residency at the Reza Live Theatre in Branson, Missouri, with his "Now I See" show, Dustin brings his amazing and unique stage performance to Magic on the Ridge. His high-energy spectacle will keep you on the edge of your seat while leaving you inspired. You've seen him on television and in Branson, and now come see him in Downtown Paragould as the closing performance of Magic on the Ridge!



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A fan favorite from the Magic on the Ridge Festival, Ran'D Shine has been seen on Penn & Teller's Fool Us, and Masters of Illusion among other televised broadcasts. Touring in over 27 countries, Ran'D is back at Magic on the Ridge to blow your mind! With a show that leaves you absolutely breathless and shocked, he's come back with even more tricks up his sleeve.

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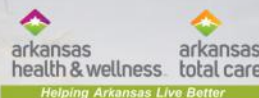
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DON'T MISS THESE *Upcoming Events in NEA*

Get Downtown Fest

Oct. 4th-5th

Make plans to visit Downtown Paragould on October 4th and 5th for the 8th Annual Get Downtown Festival. The fun starts with a Block Party Friday night, as well as a Downtown After Hours concert from Hayfield, and a family friendly movie in the street.

The festival continues Saturday with Pedal on the Ridge as well as a 10K, 5K, Kids Fun Run, and Doggie Dash races. There will be a Touch a Truck event, talent show, and two stages of live music.

Find them on Facebook or visit getdowntownfestival.com for more information.



Brewing Hope

October 12th

The 2nd annual Brewing Hope Coffee Festival benefiting Hope Found will take place on October 12th from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Gardens at Harmony in Jonesboro.

The coffee fest will feature coffee shops and related vendors, including food vendors, bakeries, and retailers from around Northeast Arkansas.

The event will include multiple People's Choice voting opportunities, ranging from Drip Coffee and Specialty Drinks to "Anything But Coffee." Presale tickets are available now for \$20 at hopefoundnea.org/coffee. Kids under 10 get in free.



Car Show

October 12th

Celebrate the life of Myranda McSpadden-Reed and spread awareness for Metastatic Breast Cancer on October 12th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Greene County Fairgrounds with 727 Motorsports in Paragould. All proceeds go to the CARTI Cancer Center in Little Rock.

The event will consist of trophies, food trucks, and door prizes. Entry fee is \$5 a person (12 and under are free) or 5 tickets for \$20.

Registration to enter a car will be from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. the day of the event with a \$15 entry fee. For more information, call 727 Motorsports at (870) 938-3686.



Barket Market

October 12th

Attend the Barket Market for barks, wagging tails, local businesses and early Christmas shopping at Power Plant Park in Paragould!

The Arkansas Pet Savers event features local vendors selling everything from home décor to soap and jewelry on October 12th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Plus, there will be a chance to meet new furry friends with dogs available for adoption. All proceeds will benefit The Arkansas Pet Savers.



Fall Fest

October 12th

The Downtown Jonesboro Alliance is hosting its annual Fall Fest on October 12th at Union Street Park from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is something for the whole family!

The Fall Fest will include activities for all ages, including a petting zoo with kangaroos, bounce houses, local vendors, live music, and more!

For more information visit Downtown Jonesboro Alliance on Facebook or online at downtownjonesboro.com.



Harlem Wizards

October 15th

Enjoy laughs, hoops, dunks, and more with the Harlem Wizards as they take on the Greene County Tech Dream Team October 15th at the GCT Junior High Gymnasium.

Fun will be had by all! Tickets are on sale now online at www.harlemwizards.com. Tickets will be available at the gate at a slight increase.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Greene County Tech Odyssey of the Mind program.





A Night of Stars

Broadway star Brent Barrett, whose professional credits include playing the title role in *The Phantom of the Opera*, will headline The Link Theatre Company's annual gala, "A Night of Stars!"

"A Night of Stars" will take place Thursday, October 17th, at the Embassy Suites Ballroom, located at 223 Red Wolf Boulevard. The biggest Broadway party of the year will begin at 6:00 p.m., and will feature dinner, drinks, and a multitude of performances showcasing Broadway and local talent.

Single tickets can be purchased by visiting www.thelinktheatre.org. Table reservations can be secured by emailing info@thelinktheatre.org.



Souper Sunday

Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas will host the 14th annual Souper Sunday November 3 at The Embassy Suites by Hilton Red Wolf Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Souper Sunday is Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas' primary fundraiser of the year featuring soups from over 15 local businesses. The winning restaurant earns bragging rights and the coveted ladle trophy.

Presale tickets online (until October 27th) are \$15. After that date, tickets can still be bought in person at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Jonesboro for \$15 but they will be \$20 online and at the door. Ticket purchasers enjoy trying all soups, bread, and homemade desserts. Children five and under get in free.

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HAPPENINGS



CRC BREAKS GROUND ON SCIENCE CENTER

Crowley's Ridge College, a private four-year church-affiliated liberal arts college, announced the construction of a new Chemistry building on its campus at 100 College Drive in Paragould with a groundbreaking celebration on Sept. 5. Construction on the new building is expected to be finished and ready to open for the Fall 2025 semester.

The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation awarded a \$662,333 grant, which is the largest received in school history since opening in 1964, to go toward the construction.

"This extremely generous grant gift from the Mabee Foundation is a tremendous blessing," says CRC President Dr. Richard Johnson. "It will help Crowley's Ridge College pay for the cost of installing new

lift stations at every building on campus and will also help fund the cost of our new chemistry facility."

The state-of-the-art chemistry facility will feature three classrooms, offices and a chemistry lab to better serve students who are studying in CRC's new joint programs with Freed-Hardeman and Harding University's nursing, biology and Pharm.D. programs. The current science building is staying and will receive some upgrades as well.

Both college and community leaders participated in the groundbreaking ceremony highlighting the historical significance and importance of this new addition to the campus.

ST. BERNARDS EARNS CERTIFICATION

St. Bernards Medical Center has earned a prestigious certification from the nation's largest medical accrediting body, The Joint Commission, to perform advanced total hip and knee replacement procedures.

This new certification, the Gold Seal of Approval®, represents the highest recognition for St. Bernards meeting or exceeding standards for total hip and knee replacements. The Joint Commission collaborated with the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons on the certification, monitoring patient consultations, surgeries, rehabilitation and follow-up visits. To receive approval, St. Bernards recently underwent a rigorous, unannounced, onsite review.

Brian Dickson, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon with Jonesboro Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine (JOSM) practicing at St. Bernards, said certification starts with the St. Bernards Total Joint Advantage Program.

"From initial consultations to post-surgery rehabilitation and everything in between, we lead the region in crafting custom recovery programs for joint patients," Dr. Dickson said. "This restoration of mobility can help people continue to live active, independent lives. I'm grateful The Joint Commission recognizes the hard work our team does every day."



JONESBORO UNLIMITED AWARDED GRANT

Jonesboro Unlimited has been awarded a \$700,000 grant by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration to support small business development and expansion in Northeast Arkansas.

The grant will support the JumpStart Partnership, which will help local entrepreneurs and small business owners find the assistance they need to get started and grow. The initiative will act as a single resource to connect entrepreneurs with service providers across Northeast Arkansas. Additionally, it will increase awareness and expand those services by providing more program opportunities, events, and advocacy at local, regional, and state levels.



The grant aids Jonesboro Unlimited in its dedication to the advancement of economic success for the city and region.

"Thank you to the Economic Development Administration for its continued investment in Northeast Arkansas through entrepreneurship and small business support," said Mark Young, President and CEO of Jonesboro Unlimited. "It is an integral part of our five-year strategic plan, and we look forward to better supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem."



MOR Media Sports

GAME OF THE WEEK

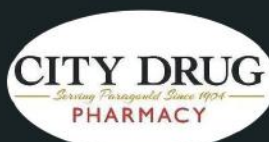
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Next Month

Thankfulness



We will be sharing stories of gratitude during the traditional month of Thanksgiving.

Kids Play



National Diabetes and Preemie Awareness Month will be among the focuses in next month's Kids Play special section.

Philanthropy



Check out our spotlight on community support of local charities.



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