

NEA'S

PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2025

SURVIVOR
THRIVING AFTER CANCER

**HALLOWEEN
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS
SPECIAL SECTION: PASTOR APPRECIATION**

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

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ON THE COVER -

As Dr. Savannah Stewart was completing her bachelor's degree and preparing for dental school, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She is now thriving as a survivor, having completed both dental and orthodontic school and opened her own practice earlier this year as she strives to make the most of the time she has been given.

Pages 20-23

Cover Photo by Gretchen Hunt

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From Us to You

October — really? 2025 has flown by so fast! This is the time of year we start planning for the next Premiere themes and start asking the community what they would like to read and who they know creating the “Good News” in Northeast Arkansas.

One of our go to sources for themes is “National” this or that months and for several years it has been brought up that October is National Pastor Appreciation Month. We have always left it on the list because – how can you pick who to feature?

We decided to take a suggestion of an “advertorial” section like we do Family-Owned Businesses and several other sections and create the Pastor Appreciation section you see in this edition, offering churches the opportunity to purchase an ad for their church and we would do a story on the pastor.

Premiere’s articles always try to focus on the people. I think the section is interesting and if someone is looking for a church home it is a good opportunity to preview the people involved with that church. I’m not sure if we will do it again, but if you see it and wish your church and pastor were included you are welcome to email me, and we will keep a list of who to contact if we decide to do this next October.



Of course, I would also love to have emails of any other story ideas you might have for 2026! I started the magazine in 2007, and someone said I would run out of good news to publish in no time. I think we have proven them wrong, and we plan to continue doing so!

Dina Mason

Dina Mason
General Manager & Publisher
dina@mormediainc.com

Another edition of Premiere has come together, and I’m once again so proud of the stories we tell month in and month out about the people of Northeast Arkansas.

Our October edition has some inspiring stories of those who have faced off with breast cancer and those who are working to make a difference for those who have been diagnosed with the disease.

We are also excited to share some Halloween fun, including the tradition of Greg Vance and his family and employees to do an elaborate display at Jonesboro Overheard Door. Be sure to check out the photos, and if you can make time go by and see the display in person.

October is always a busy month and when you look at the upcoming events, you will see this year is no different. So, get out and enjoy the fall weather, and then curl up at home



and read about the Good News of Northeast Arkansas and the People Making It Happen.

Gretchen Hunt

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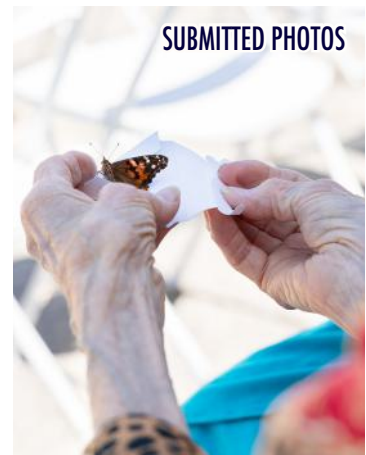


Butterfly Release HONOR & REMEMBER



Many gathered together on Sunday, September 7th, as the St. Bernards Advocates hosted the annual Butterfly Release in the St. Bernards Imaging Center parking lot.

The Butterfly Release features a release of butterflies in honor or memory of loved ones and is a fundraiser for the Flo & Phil Jones Hospice House.



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Fall Into Apple Bars!

BY KATIE COLLINS

Let's talk about these apple bars! They're kind of like cake, kind of like blondies, and they offer a great taste of fall. My favorite apple variety is Honey Crisp, so that's what I went

with for this recipe. The frosting is optional on these – I think the bars would be great without it if you want to skip it. Enjoy fall, as well as these Apple Bars with Cinnamon Cream Cheese Frosting!



Apple Bars

Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, melted	½ cup chopped pecans (optional)
2 cups packed brown sugar	
2 large eggs	
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	
2 cups all-purpose flour	
1 teaspoon baking powder	
½ teaspoon baking soda	
1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon	
½ teaspoon salt	
1 ½ cups peeled and diced apples (about 2 medium apples)	
	Frosting:
	8 ounces cream cheese, softened
	½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
	2 Tablespoons pure maple syrup
	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
	1 teaspoon cinnamon
	2 cups powdered sugar

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350. Spray a 9x13 baking pan with non-stick cooking spray or line with parchment paper.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together melted butter, brown sugar, eggs and vanilla until smooth. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Stir the dry ingredients into the wet and stir until just combined. Gently fold in the apples and nuts. Pour batter into the prepared pan, and bake for about 30 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool completely.

For the frosting, mix the softened cream cheese and butter together until creamy. Add the maple syrup, vanilla and cinnamon and mix until combined. Mix in the powdered sugar, about a half cup at a time, until all combined. Spread on cooled bars and enjoy!

Glen Sain

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APRIL NICOLE FOUNDATION

Providing Hopeful Memories

BY KARAN SUMMITT

It's not an uncommon story, but one rare enough we assume it always happens to others. For Kellye Doyle, breast cancer at a relatively young age became her story.

The Doyles were in a busy season of life. Kellye spent the last five or so years working for the City of Jonesboro as an HR Generalist. Husband Chris was employed by Arkansas State University as a Director of Infrastructure and Networking Service. Tenth-grader Noah was on the cross country and track teams at school, and fifth-grader Olivia did gymnastics, played soccer and was on the school archery team. Chris and the children were involved in scouting. Church involvement at Central Baptist rounded out family life.

Kellye has a family history of breast cancer. In October of 2023, she was at the age for her OBGYN to request a mammogram with insurance coverage. Two months later, in December, at age 36, Kelly had her first mammogram. Nothing unusual showed up on that first scan, but Dr. Umphrey with NEA Baptist requested a three month follow-up MRI due to her strong family history.

Umphrey's proactive approach paid off — the MRI showed something on the scans this time. Two weeks later a biopsy was performed, and Kellye was diagnosed with grade 3 ductal carcinoma

in situ (DCIS) with comedonecrosis, a non-invasive form of breast cancer that remains confined to the milk ducts of the breast. The comedonecrosis tends to make this type of breast cancer more aggressive. Kellye's cancer came almost exactly five years after her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Due to Kellye's age and family history, a double mastectomy was advised. In the weeks before the mastectomy surgery, Kellye injured her knee and was confined to a wheelchair. She went through multiple sessions of physical therapy on the knee but ended up having to have knee surgery around the same time as the double mastectomy. The difficulty of trying to use crutches or push herself in a wheelchair while the mastectomy incisions were still tender led Chris to purchase an electric wheelchair at Abilities Unlimited for a small fraction of the usual cost.

In 2024 the Doyles' busy life slowed down as Kellye recovered. She missed many of the kids' activities. Everyday memories the family once took for granted were shifted and gave way to uncertainty while the healing process and the time it required took precedence. Olivia gave up gymnastics and Noah had to miss out on scouting activities and friends night. Chris spent much of his extra time outside the demands of work taking care of Kellye's needs.

As the year passed and 2025 approached, The April Nicole Foundation offered an opportunity for the family to recapture some of what was lost during that year of healing. In her application Kellye mentioned

a particular request:

"My family and I absolutely love being outdoors. We love camping, hiking, swimming, canoeing, you name it. There's something so freeing being outdoors and so peaceful. At times when I find myself in my head, I will take a walk to relieve the stress. After all the stress, scheduling issues and worries from the year before, I knew we needed peace and quiet. We needed our safe space."

— Kellye Doyle

The Foundation found, as Kellye described it, an

"absolute perfect spot for our little family in Townsend, Tennessee." The getaway included a cozy, rustic cabin with private access to nearby water and a guided walk in the woods through the Smoky Mountains that ended at a breathtaking waterfall. The tour guide shared tips on what plants were poisonous and what could be eaten on deep woodland trails.

During their stay, the family was treated to a 4th of July fireworks show sponsored by local firefighters. A wonderful meal on a cozy farm also included a horse-drawn

I am truly thankful for the April Nicole Foundation. They gave me back some time that I felt had been stripped away from the year before. This foundation is truly making a difference.





carriage ride and s'mores by an open fire. On their last day, the family spent time at the Anakeesta tourist stop that featured an obstacle course, rollercoasters and outdoor music. Kellye even found time for a stress relieving massage! She summed it up by saying the family loved their stay so much they decided to go back at their earliest convenience.

April Biggs would be happy to know the first recipients of the April Nicole Foundation found their Hopeful Memory to be everything April wanted it to be. Kellye reflected on the experience with these words:

"That trip will forever be a memory my family will talk about. I spent the previous year having to constantly give my kids bad news or tell them, 'No, we can't do that.' It gave me the 'yes, we can!' back! To give back to my kids and husband what I felt like I had taken away from them was the best peace of mind I could ever have. To be in a quiet place just watching my kids play Jenga and laugh and eat popcorn together was so hopeful that last year was in the past. Having everything laid out for us with almost every detail was such a nice getaway."



FOUNDATION HONORS LOVE OF TRAVEL

The April Nicole Foundation Board of Directors is made up of April's husband, Jeremy Biggs, her daughter, Ava, and members of April's loving family along with some of her closest friends. April passed away in 2023 at age 40 from breast cancer.

The Foundation grew out of a trip that Jeremy, April and Ava made to Italy in 2022. April's unexpected illness and sobering diagnosis re-centered life for the Biggs family.

Ava describes it this way: "From that moment forward, we all learned what it meant to truly live life. Life isn't about working until the weekend or surrounding yourself with constant stress; life is about enjoying the time you're able to spend on this earth, with your loved ones, with your friends, with nature itself. The April Nicole Foundation exists to provide families with those same memories that I made with my mom and dad in Italy. If families experiencing the same situation as we were, with mothers battling breast cancer while still providing for children in the home, can have the opportunity to go on these Hopeful Memories, it will be my life's

goal to provide them."

In the weeks before she passed, April would lecture family members about what to do after her death.

Repeatedly she emphasized they "not let this all be for nothing." April's love for planning family trips with detailed itineraries became a seed that gave birth to the April Nicole Foundation and the idea of helping families in similar circumstances create their own Hopeful Memories.

Funding for the foundation currently comes from donations, with a goal that in the future grants will be awarded to further propel the mission. Application forms can be found on the April Nicole Foundation website and emailed to ava@aprilnicolefoundation.com. The board reviews each applicant, and once an applicant is approved meetings are set up to learn more about them, their family and their dream trip.

More information, including ways to donate, can be found at aprilnicolefoundation.com and on the April Nicole Foundation Facebook page.

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PET *of the* MONTH

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BY HANNAH VOWELL

Moose is a kitten we found on the side of the road really sick early this summer. I took him in and nursed him back to health, and he started gaining weight and showing his personality. Moose soon showed some of his favorite hobbies: riding in cars, sitting in boxes, and playing with anything and everything. His favorite snack is stolen food from the older cats in our house. He loves to sit on his humans' faces in order to show his love. He spends his days attacking the cat in the mirror (which may or may not be him, he is not sure) and sleeping on a repurposed doll bed which fits him perfectly. Moose may have had a rough start to life, but he enjoys his days being one of the silliest cats around.



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Beatles at the Ridge

CROWD COMES TOGETHER FOR FESTIVAL

Beatles at the Ridge drew a large crowd to Downtown Walnut Ridge on Saturday, September 20th, as the event featured a large variety of vendors, a car show, kids activities and live music including a performance by The Liverpool Legends, which closed out the festival. The event is a celebration of community as Walnut Ridge remembers when the Beatles made a brief stop in the small town in 1964 on their way to Missouri for a weekend of recreation and rest. Organized through the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, the festival has become a fun day for local residents, as well as a draw for visitors from near and far.



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT



For MOR(e) pictures from Beatles at the Ridge, check the Premiere Magazine Facebook page!



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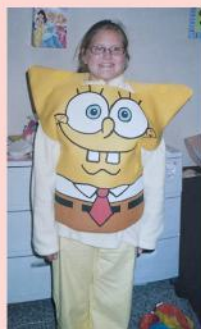
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D. Shawnda



B. Lindsey



C. Candace



E. Amanda



C. Allison



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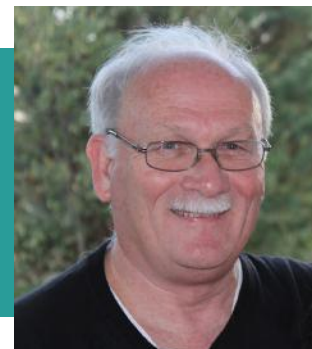
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Get Rich

WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



Sometime in the middle of this month my high school graduating class is scheduled to hold a reunion. We will be marking 55 years since the days when we walked the halls of Paragould High School, which doesn't really seem possible.

My senior year of 1970 held a number of firsts for me. I had my first date, which many people seem to find odd since most of my friends started getting girlfriends in junior high school or even earlier. Not me; baseball was the only date I needed and whatever free time I had was dedicated to that relationship until just before school started that year and I asked a girl out. Before long, I discovered that teenage girls all dolled up on a Friday night smelled a lot better than teenage boys in a dugout on a hot summer afternoon.

It followed that I would find my first true girlfriend, a sophomore named Vanita Blankenship, a really pretty girl with a great sense of humor. As most teen romances do, ours ended, mostly because I got nervous about wanting to spend so much time with a girl instead of with a baseball glove and I called a permanent time out. But at least I had learned how to call a girl on the phone without having a panic attack, and I even had casual conversations with female classmates as the days passed by.

When it comes to "firsts" my first-period bookkeeping class provided two important ones. While I was supposed to be paying attention and learning terms like Debits and Credits, and Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable, I was busy one morning looking out the window. I noticed an incredibly cute girl coming out of the gym lobby – long hair, short skirt, great face – and I elbowed Jerry Davenport, who sat next to me, nodding toward the outside in efforts to be a good teammate. Jerry took a look and said, "Yeah, that's my cousin," but you have to understand that even if it had been Raquel Welch walking across campus Jerry would have said she was his cousin or that he used to date her. That was just one of his patented responses.

"I'm sure she is," I responded, but this time he said he was serious. He said her name was Cindy Hollis and she was his cousin and I told him he needed to introduce me to her. He assured me he would, then never did, but I fooled him anyway and married her a few years later. That is still my favorite morning in bookkeeping.

A few weeks later I was almost paying attention when someone knocked on the door and then opened it slightly. "Is Brummett in here?" I heard a male voice ask, recognizing it as basketball coach Doy Pannell's. Mrs. Golden assured him I was and he asked to see me in the hallway. I went out, and he confronted me about my decision not to play basketball as a senior.

Where in the past the only words I could conjure up in conversation with a coach were either "yes, sir" or "no, sir," this time I went ahead and stated my case. During my junior year, things had not gone as planned for either Coach or me. I actually started the first few games of the season at point guard, something that scared me to death because I had never been called on to play any important role in years prior. But there I was, starting alongside four seniors.

Until we took a road trip to Memphis, that is. We pulled up in the parking lot at Overton High School to have a rematch with the great Johnny Neumann and as I stepped off the bus coach Clinton Gore, the JV coach, said, "Brummett, dress out with the B team tonight." I said, "Yes, sir" and that constituted the entire conversation around my demotion from varsity starter to B team sub.

I didn't have the courage to ask, neither coach ever offered an explanation, and I settled in as a basketball afterthought and never played another meaningful minute on the varsity that year. In fact, when it came

time to go the district tournament, we had one player too many and I had to flip a coin to see if I even got to dress out; in perfect harmony with the rest of the season, I lost the toss and had to sit in the bleachers in street clothes as the rest of the Bulldogs took the court.

I explained to Coach Pannell that a fellow doesn't feel much like an important part of the program when he has to flip a coin just to see if he gets to wear his uniform and sit on the bench, and since I already had drawn interest from a number of colleges as a baseball prospect I figured I'd just focus my efforts there.

"No, sir," he said, and took hold of my forearm, led me down to Mr. Smalling's office and had him change my schedule from last period Study Hall to Athletics. That also constituted the entire conversation around that event, but I'm glad now he made the move, even though our team was not good at all. He and I became great friends as the years passed – I was a pall bearer at his funeral – and we often laughed about that morning and whether he made a good decision or not. "I'm going to have to study on that," he would always say.

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

ON THE OTHER SIDE *Of Cancer*

BY KAROLINE RISKER

Jodi Ketcham Turano, an OBGYN doctor at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, found herself on the other side of treatment when at only 46 she was diagnosed with breast cancer. It all started when she went to a routine mammogram and ultrasound. Finally, after a lumpectomy, a port, chemotherapy for 12 weeks, immunotherapy for a year, and a mastectomy, Jodi is on the other side of a tough diagnosis.

"No residual cancer, so here we are," she said. That statement is a reflection on her great attitude even from the very beginning. When her daughter Riley first found out and asked if she was going to die, Jodi's response was, "No, I have plenty of time to annoy you."

Jodi's family was a big part of her successful treatment and recovery. Her husband, Mike, also a doctor, was, in her words, "amazing."

"He's been with me every step of the way," she said. "He has waited on me hand and foot and bought pink roses every week since January first. Really if it wasn't for him I don't know if I would be as strong as I am."

Mike was key even in the beginning of the process. "He was there when she (the radiologist) called," she said. "I had a blank stare then started to cry." The radiologist happened to be one of Mike's patients so he called her back. His response: "It will be fine. We'll get through it," to which she said, "Yeah, it'll be fine."

"I was like, ok, well, this is what we have. I did my own research, I

had a plan and I was fine with it. Of course, nothing goes the way you planned. I had a port and chemo. I didn't have a choice," she said. "I could be upset but I wasn't. I wanted to work through it."

Now that she has finished treatment she said she feels good. "The reconstruction is nothing to joke about. But the fact that I didn't have the residual disease makes me feel good. I'm just on an inhibitor for 10 years and hopefully this chapter will be closed."

Jodi was able to continue to work, even through the weeks of chemo. "I wore a mask the whole time. I had treatments on Friday and then had the weekend to recover and was back at work on Monday. I took medicine for pain, nausea, and diarrhea. I had coverage (at work) for call, so I just had to do clinics and surgery. As a doctor your patients have to be taken care of." Then, she added with that amazing attitude: "Put on your game face, take your meds, and go to work."

After going through the process, Jodi has advice for others finding themselves in her situation. "Really lean on your family," she said. "You definitely can have your days. Grieve. It's not something you can harp on because it's something you have no control over. Yes, you can be sad and 'why me,' but ultimately you don't have a choice. Go through it, keep your head up."

She added that everyone will have bad days, but the key is to keep going. "You will have hard days, but to harp on it makes it worse. I knew I had to do it, so I never got sad about it." Jodi also exercised every day. "I made it a point to run or hike or do Peloton, even for just 15 minutes a day, even if I was tired. I think it helped."

Jodi also warns that even though everything else can get back to



normal, the assumption that it can't happen to you definitely goes away. "Medical anxiety is real," she said. "I didn't expect that. Before I would have to practically be dying to go to a doctor. Now when something happens, I immediately go to a bad scenario. Medical anxiety can happen and it's ok. Nothing to be embarrassed about."

Still, for the most part, Jodi's life has been what it was before: "We still cook, bake, work out, hang with friends." Jodi's family also likes to travel; the beach is a favorite destination.

Now, Jodi wants to be sure others find support like she had. "Breast cancer can hit anyone," she said, noting she is a great example of how random the disease is as she has no history of breast cancer in her family. "Just bad luck," she said. "It's one in eight. It doesn't select people. Get your mammogram."

She pointed out that in addition to free mammogram and screening services, there are many resources for people who have been diagnosed, including centers that have free wigs and a program called

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Knitted Knockers that provides knitted prosthetics. She also encouraged patients to use resources provided by national breast cancer associations, as well as the many online resources that are available.

But the best resource just might be Jodi herself. "I am willing to tell my story to anybody if it helps," she said. "No one should have to do this by themselves. I'm always there to help, guide, find resources."

"I think that despite being diagnosed with breast cancer, the diagnosis doesn't define you and you can't let it," she continued. "So if I can help just one person I can be happy."



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A PLACE OF HONOR NONA DIXON

A painting of Paragould's first librarian, Nona Rosenberg Dixon, is now on permanent display in the lobby of the Greene County Public Library. A native of Yazoo City, Mississippi, Dixon would serve as the city's first librarian from January 1936 to 1941. Since that time, the library has employed fourteen librarians and directors, with Mike Rogers being the current director, taking the position in 2014.

When Paragould's first library opened in 1936, it was in a one-room space above downtown's Trail Blazer's Cafe on West Court Street. Appointed as the first librarian, Dixon, a local businesswoman, ensured the lasting success with the area's library system for decades to come.

When the library first opened it was a city institution. It was not until 1952 that local voters passed a tax in favor of the library, thus ensuring it would thereafter be a countywide service.

However, the first days of what would become the Greene County Public Library were challenging. With a goal of 600 books needed from residents, the library was partly funded by the Paragould chapter of the Business and Professional Women's Club, with other funding coming from the Carnegie Foundation and the Works Progress Administration. Some of the library's first documented books include: Zane Grey's "The U.P. Trail;" "Edison: The Man And His Work" by George S. Bryan; "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe and "The Deerslayer" by James Fenimore Cooper. Despite her success, Dixon's time at the library was relatively short-lived. She was replaced in July 1941 by Pearl Diggs.

A woman who once dined with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in 1957, Dixon was recognized as the top-producing and long-standing agent with Mutual of New York Insurance Company. It was noted she had 35 years as an agent in Northeast Arkansas. A lifelong member of the Business and Professional Women's Club in Paragould, Dixon died in January 1974 without family or heirs.

Today, Dixon's memory and legacy are recalled by all those who work and visit in the Greene County Public Library. After much research by library genealogist Tonya Barnes, a photo was finally located to commission Dixon's painting by local artist Robert Huffines of Paragould. Huffines also offers portrait drawing classes and has exhibited paintings and drawings in the main room of the library for several years.





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White-Tailed Deer

BY CHUCK LONG

A TRUE SUCCESS STORY



Almost everyone likes to recount a good success story. It might be a sports related story remembering the thrill of watching the 1994 Razorbacks basketball team, the 2011 St. Louis Cardinals or the Dallas Cowboys of the 1990s. It might be an inspiring story of someone who rose to fame through hard work and personal success like Ronald Reagan, Dolly Parton or Dale Earnhardt. It might even be the stories of business successes like Walmart or Apple. All those are great, but some of my favorites are the many wildlife-related success stories that have happened across our nation. A few of the best stories happened right here in the Natural State, with one having a direct impact on Northeast Arkansas.

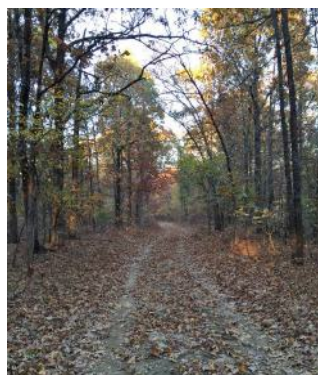
The history of the white-tailed deer in Arkansas began eons ago with cervids like deer and elk occupying habitats all across the state. Early explorers noted the numbers of deer encounters in their writings and venison was a staple of the diets of these adventurers. There were plenty of deer to meet the needs of these diets, but as the human population in Arkansas expanded, deer became a commodity. They were hunted for commercial purposes, with the meat being sold and shipped back east. The advent of the railroad expedited this practice. As settlements began to spring up in Arkansas, timber also became a valuable commodity, and lands were cleared leaving many areas void of habitat.

Commercial use of venison, commercial timber harvest and unregulated hunting led to a rapid decline in deer numbers across the state. By the early 1900s numbers were estimated to be at five hundred deer or less. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission was formed in 1915 and with it came regulations and rules to try to turn the tide of population loss. "A Survey of Arkansas Game" published by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission in 1951 indicates deer were found in 69 of the 75 counties. There were six counties with no deer, and there were also nine counties that had less than 15 deer. Of these, the majority were in Northeast Arkansas. Among those surveyed, it indicated Greene, Lawrence and Mississippi counties had NO deer. Clay, Craighead, Poinsett, Jackson, Lonoke and Woodruff had less than 15 deer per county. It was a tough time for deer in Arkansas, especially in Northeast Arkansas.

Times seemed bleak, but there was hope on the horizon. Through implementation of more stringent regulations and restocking programs, the deer numbers began to rebound.

Once thought to be an animal of the deep forests, white-tailed deer are creatures of the edge and adapt well to broken woodlots and farmland. Once the deer gained a foothold on Crowley's Ridge in the 1960s, the population began to grow. This has continued and the Ridge now has one of the best deer populations in the state.

The farmlands around the Ridge have been deer deserts for as long as I can remember, with deer tracks in a cotton field in the Schugtown area or a deer seen browsing on soybeans in the Stanford area being big news. But that has since changed and deer are being seen all across NEA, from the banks of the St. Francis to the ridges of Scatter Creek.

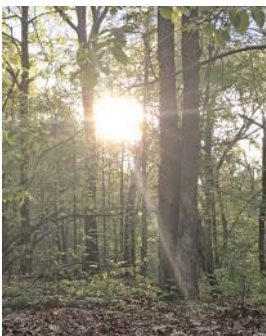


This shift has been a blessing for deer hunters in NEA. In the 1960s, '70s and even the '80s, most deer hunters had to travel outside of NEA to put venison on the table, but that is not the case anymore. Our deer herd provides great hunting opportunities on both public and private land. This area is home to some quality deer, producing some of the nicest bucks in the state.

Though much of the hunting is private, there are some great public options that offer varied types of hunting. WE Brewer Scatter Creek WMA in Greene County offers a little over 5,000 acres of land to hunt on Crowley's Ridge. The hills and "hollers" hold plenty of deer, but that terrain plays in the favor of whitetails' senses, especially the nose, and makes the area a little difficult to hunt.

The bottomland areas of Dave Donaldson along Black River, and the Sunken Lands along the St. Francis offer good hunting in unique environments. The Black River area is prone to flooding, and the best access is by boat, but the oak flats and plentiful persimmon trees offer great places to find deer. The Sunken Lands, with its vast amounts of tupelo and cypress trees may not look like good deer habitat, but the animals are there. It will take some mapwork and scouting, but successful hunts are very possible.

Another unique public area is the Shirey Bay / Rainey Brake WMA area in Lawrence County. Sitting along Black River, the Delta begins the transition to the Ozarks in this area, thus providing a unique blend of habitats.



It might be just a bit out of NEA, but Harold E. Alexander WMA in Sharp County also offers good hunting. The terrain is rocky and mountainous and takes a different approach than a bottomland hardwood forest, but a good population makes it worth the trip.

Arkansas is truly blessed with a wonderful population of deer. Estimates say our population runs somewhere near one million, with a little over 200,000 taken by hunters each year. With this healthy, growing deer population, we need more hunters. Some parts of the state are suffering from overpopulation, leading to high incidences of deer-car collisions or damage to crops.

It is a great time to be a deer hunter in Arkansas. If you are not a deer hunter, it's a great time to start. It is a wonderful way to enjoy the outdoors and gather some wonderful protein for the family. For deer hunting information, regulations and guidance for hunting public lands, please check agfc.com. Good luck this year! As always, if you have any questions, please reach out. I hope to see you out there!

Chuck Long is a lifelong Arkansas outdoorsman. Chuck retired from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission after thirty plus years of service and now enjoys sharing his love of the outdoors through writing, speaking events and social media outlets. Have an outdoor question? Reach out to Chuck at cflong2002@yahoo.com.



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Thriving After Cancer

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

As Savannah Stewart was making plans to graduate from Arkansas State University with her bachelor's degree, the unthinkable happened. A lump under her right armpit, believed by all to be benign, doubled in size in a month starting her on a cancer journey at the age of 22.

A native of Monette, her mom, Kima Stewart, was the principal at Buffalo Island Central Elementary School and her dad, Clay Stewart, was a farmer. She graduated from BIC in 2008, and studied chemistry and biology at A-State.

"My last semester in January is when I was diagnosed with breast cancer," Savannah said. "It was January of 2012 and I had just turned 22."



She had been accepted to dental school at the University of Missouri at Kansas City, but her cancer would require a year's worth of

treatment, including three different types of chemo-therapy and surgery, and also bi-lateral mastectomies and reconstruction.

"I was starting my last semester when I was diagnosed," she said. "I started with surgery. I had the mastectomies and then I had immediate reconstruction at the time of that initial surgery. That was in February and then once I got healed up from that I started chemo."

She had all of her treatments at West Cancer Center in Memphis, including eight rounds of traditional chemo every other week.

"By the time I had graduated I was done with all of my traditional harsh chemo," Savannah said. But, because her tumor was hormone positive and HER2 positive, she did a year's worth of Herceptin, as well, undergoing treatment every three weeks.

"I was really blessed with my chemo that I

didn't have a ton of side effects," she said. "Of course I lost my hair. I had some bone pain and some nausea, but I was able to keep going to classes. My professors were really kind and were lenient with me because I was hospitalized at one point for a few days. I was thankful for the professors that I had because they made sure I was given extra time if I needed it, and I was able to finish it all up."

She said looking back she can see how much the experience impacted her.

"I think that whenever you go through something like that maybe sometimes you don't realize the impact that it's having at the time," Savannah said. "Being a 22-year-old college student, I had my life ahead of me. Maybe I took things for granted a little bit. I didn't realize what a gift time is. That we are not guaranteed time. We are here by the grace of God."

After being diagnosed with cancer, that perspective changed quickly. "I really wanted to make the most out of the time that I had been given," she said. "You also see all the time that lots of people get diagnosed with cancer and they don't get much time, they may live for a few years, but they don't get an abundance of time after that diagnosis. So, I've always felt that I just wanted to make the most of that gift that I was given."

The cancer did cause a slight delay in her plans, which led to some changes, as well.

"My oncologist thought it would be hard for me to go to dental school," she said, so the university deferred her acceptance for a year. During that year, she retook the entrance exam and was accepted to West Virginia, where her boyfriend (now husband), Mark Kingston, was attending.

"I graduated from West Virginia in 2017 with my DDS degree and then I was accepted immediately after dental school into the orthodontic residency program at St. Louis University," she said. That meant two years of orthodontic residency to earn her master's in dentistry from the St. Louis University Center



for Advanced Dental Education at the end of 2019.

"When I got out of school, we moved back here," Savannah said. "I was an associate at a practice here in town until September of 2022, when I decided I wanted to open my own practice. It took me two years for all of this to come to fruition. I worked for corporate orthodontics in those two years and then January 27th we finally opened the doors here and hit the ground running."

Her husband serves patients as a dentist, working across the street, and also helps with the business side of the orthodontic studio. "He helps with management, payroll, hiring and all that stuff," Savannah said. "He's been a big help and a big support."

"It's crazy when I look back on our relationship," she added. "We started dating about six months before I was diagnosed with breast cancer and it's kind of crazy when you think back to God's timing on that. You don't expect to have a major life event like that right after you meet your future husband."

Savannah said her cancer journey also gave her a unique perspective as a caregiver.

"I've had a lot of healthcare appointments myself obviously," she said. "I go religiously still every three months for checkups. Sometimes I think that providers don't understand things from a patient perspective if they've never been a patient themselves. Looking back on that I think that has also

been a blessing to me. It has given me the unique perspective of, okay, I know what's frustrating about dealing with other medical offices and when I open my practice I want to eliminate a lot of those frustrations."

She said she also learned a lot from her oncologist, Dr. Sylvia Richey, who she said has not only been her doctor, but also her mentor.

"Dr. Richey has been an inspiration," Savanah said. "She's encouraged me and has really given me a lot of advice. I've been blessed by her not only as my doctor but also just from her example and just showing me what a good provider is, what they do for their patients. I've never dreaded seeing her. So, I think that's been a big blessing for me too."

While they see patients of all ages, she said most of their patients are kids.

"One of the things that I love about being an orthodontist is that we get to see kids for two years in active treatment," Savanah said. "During that time I think, especially in their teenage years, to where their kind of learning who they are, we get to be encouraging to

Continued ➡



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them ... I really try to stress that with my team, that we want to be a positive light for them."

She said there are also a lot of life lessons that kids can learn through orthodontics.

"They put in the effort keeping their teeth clean, coming to their appointments, wearing their rubber bands and being patient, because a good result takes time, it's not something that is overnight," she said. "We try to teach them that. If you put in this good effort then eventually you're going to have the result of a really nice straight beautiful smile that should last you the rest of your life if you take care of it, so hopefully they understand those lessons that we're trying to teach them."

As a nod to the bell she got to ring at the end of her cancer journey, she is going to have a bell at her studio that patients can ring when they have their braces removed. She said she hopes they leave her studio with that same desire to go out and do the most they can with the time they've been given.

"All of my office is pink and a lot of that is kind of a nod to my breast cancer journey," she said. "Of course I love pink anyway, but that is kind of a visual reminder of the gift of time and the gift of healing that God gave me."

She said while cancer impacted her journey, she never had a set plan like some kids do.

"A lot of people say I had braces as a kid and I knew I wanted to be an orthodontist, but that is not my story," she said. "When I was in high school, I had no idea what I wanted to be."

She started college with an interest in becoming a pharmacist, but after working as a pharmacy tech changed her mind and began to explore dentistry. She visited with a local dentist and ended up working as a receptionist in another dental practice as she completed her undergraduate degree.

"I really liked it, and I got into dental school," she said. "When I got into dental school, I didn't know I wanted to be an orthodontist. I knew I had an interest in orthodontics and I thought, 'Well, I'll apply and if this is for me and I get in then this will just be God saying, 'Okay, here's where you go' and if not I'll just be a general dentist.' And I got into St. Louis right off the bat and it turns out that this is exactly what I was supposed to do. I mean I love my job. I'm thankful, but I had no idea."

She said opening her own practice was also not something she automatically expected to do – or even thought she would want to do. But as she saw patients face struggles with insurance companies, children waiting for needed care and other frustrations she thought she could fix, plans changed once again.

"Whenever I got out of residency, I thought I want to go and be an associate, and I don't want to have to run a business. I'll just go to work and I'll travel," she said. "When I got into that position, it didn't necessarily work out the way I thought it was going to be. There's a lot of things you don't have control over when you're not the owner. I was limited a little bit by space and by some other things that kind of kept me where I felt like this was not where I was called to be. I loved my job, I loved what I was doing, but I just did not feel like I was in the right spot. So I kind of just



took a leap of faith. I saw there was a need, I saw there were patients waiting for a long time so I told my husband that I thought we should open my own office."

She said her first instinct was to open an office under a corporate setting, but her dad encouraged her to go out on her own.

"He said, 'Savanah, you know what you're doing. You know there's a need,'" she said. "He really was the one that really encouraged me. Like, I think you can make this work. You don't have to partner with anyone else and it will be all yours."

In January, Stewart Orthodontic Studio officially opened with Savanah joined by her mother, who had retired from BIC after almost 40 years, and two dental assistants. In the



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PHOTO BY ELAYNA RUSSEL

months since she has added an additional chairside assistant and two treatment coordinators.

"Our practice is completely digital," she said. "Our software is really great where we can communicate with patients by text. Patients can make payments online. If they have an emergency, they text the software and that all gets forwarded to me so I have a really good handle on kind of what's going on at all times."

Savanah said she was able to be very particular as she was setting up the business. "I really tried to eliminate frustrations that I had and my biggest thing is that patients know that whenever they come in they're going to be taken care of. If they need us, they can get to us," she said. "I try to do things very boutique style. To where it's very Southern hospitality. Just little things that we do that we try to make sure that we know that when people come in here they're appreciated and they're loved and that we're so glad that they've chosen us because there's lots of different options in town and there's lots of different great orthodontists."

Gratitude is something else Savanah said her journey has given her.

"I talk about time being the gift, but I think that a lot of times it's really easy to take things for granted, and it's easy to lose sight of what you do have," she said. "And so I think that my journey with breast cancer just really increased my gratitude, not just for the gift of life from God, but also for the things that he has given me every step in my journey and what it has taught me along the way."

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Advice From PREMIERE Experts

My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer, when should I be screened?

This is a question I am asked frequently, and while there is not a set age for those who are predisposed to breast cancer to be screened, the answer is easily determined based on when their family member was diagnosed.

If someone has a first degree relative with breast cancer, they should be screened when they are 10 years younger than their family member was when they were diagnosed. So if mom was 40 when she was diagnosed with cancer, the daughter should start screening at 30.

As with any type of cancer, prevention is key.



Dr. Jodi Turano
Obstetrics & Gynecology

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Does my credit score affect my ability to buy or rent a house?

Yes! Your credit report is your financial report card. It gives the bank or landlord a snapshot of your ability to make payments on time and demonstrates if you are responsible with your money.

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Sandra Kelley

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How will fall weather impact my eczema?

While not everyone's eczema worsens with seasonal change, many experience skin issues, including atopic dermatitis (eczema), as fall and winter begin. The skin barrier is more vulnerable during colder months due to:

- Lower humidity pulling moisture from the skin, causing tightness and flakiness.
- Cooler temperatures constricting blood vessels and reducing oil production.
- Indoor heating stripping additional moisture from both air and skin.
- Wind exposure increasing dryness, redness, and sensitivity.

Tips for easing the transition:

- Keep indoor temperatures steady (ideally 60-67°F) and dress in layers.
- Use humidifiers to counteract the drying effect of central heating.
- Switch to ointments or humectant creams

Eczema
Awareness
Month



Nancy Pemberton
APRN, DCNP

- (glycerin, hyaluronic acid, lactic acid).
- Have topical steroids ready for flares.
- Protect sensitive areas like hands, face, and lips.

And remember: your dermatology provider is only a call away. Some cases require systemic treatments. Let's stop the itch together!

What is ketamine and what is it used for?

Ketamine is an FDA-approved medication that has been used as an anesthetic since the 1960s. It's widely used in hospitals and ERs and is on the World Health Organization's "List of Essential Medicines." It doesn't typically suppress breathing or lower blood pressure and given its excellent safety profile, it's one of the top ten most widely used anesthetics in the world.

Early studies from the seventies suggest that people receiving intravenous ketamine reported improvements in their mental health. In 2000, researchers at Yale University conducted the first randomized, controlled trial on ketamine for depression. Ketamine is now being used "off-label" to treat various mental health conditions



Carrie Tate

such as depression, anxiety, PTSD as well as some chronic pain disorders. As a matter of fact, on August 8th, the FDA approved Ketarx, an intramuscular ketamine for surgical pain. Three days later, they fast-tracked a patented intravenous ketamine toward a possible indication for suicidality in depression.



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Is having good posture really that important?

If you're like most people, you know how important good posture is to your personal appearance. It is also important to your health, and the health of your children.

More than fifty years ago, the White House Conference on Child Health recognized the importance of spinal integrity in the physical development of children. Doctors in all disciplines stress the importance of good posture to health, especially doctors of chiropractic who recognize the importance of good body mechanics to health.

Think of the human body as a machine for a moment. To run smoothly and without problems, it must have good balance. The rhythm and timing of all its parts should be well



Dr. John Bibb

coordinated, fed by a continuous and uninterrupted supply of nerve impulses from the brain and spinal cord.

Good posture helps prevent misalignments of the spine that may interfere with the proper functioning of your nervous system.

What type of ID do I need for different types of travel?

Knowing which type of ID you need can save you a lot of stress at the airport or cruise terminal. Here's a quick guide:

Flying within the U.S. ➡ REAL ID or Passport

Flying outside the U.S. ➡ Passport

Closed-loop cruise (leaves and returns to U.S. port) ➡ Birth Certificate is accepted, but a Passport is strongly recommended

Cruise departing from the U.S. but ending at an international port ➡ Passport required



Stephanie Hancock

Any international flight ➡ Passport required

Pro tip: Even when it's not required, having a passport makes travel smoother and gives you more flexibility if plans change.



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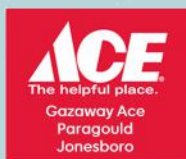
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Health Matters

BY KARAN SUMMITT

SURVIVING CANCER



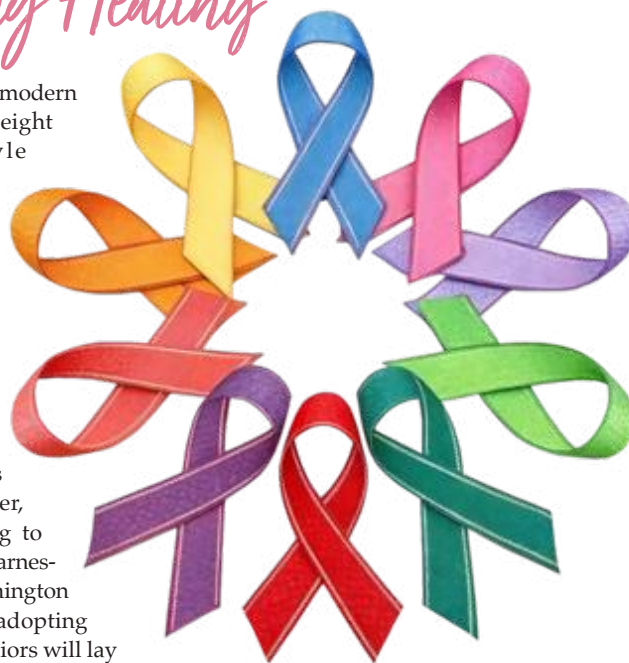
Statistics Show Progress Staying Healthy

There is good news in the fight against cancer. Today, the overall five-year survival rate for all cancers combined is 69%, up from roughly one out of two in the 1970s. The nation's cancer death rate has dropped 18 percent since the early 1990s, reversing decades of increases. According to CancerProgress.net, advances over the last 40 years in cancer prevention, screening, chemotherapy, surgery and radiation contributed to the decline. At the same time, better ways of managing treatment side effects are enabling patients to live better, more fulfilling lives.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. Pink ribbons will focus attention on the importance of preventative screenings and ground-breaking treatment options. Both of these areas are vital in the fight to see all types of cancer death rates continue to drop. Most recently, in addition to early detection

and successful treatment, modern research has identified eight post-cancer lifestyle behaviors that enhance survival.

Cancer is hard. Diagnosis and treatment can be frightening as well as draining, and those that make it past these hurdles now have to learn how to live as a cancer survivor. Millions are not only living longer, but they're also learning to live better. According to Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University of St. Louis, adopting the following eight behaviors will lay a strong foundation for many health-filled years as a cancer survivor.



Eight Ways to Stay Healthy After Cancer

1. Don't smoke. The single best thing you can do as a survivor is stop smoking, no matter how many attempts it may take.
2. Avoid second-hand smoke.
3. Exercise regularly. Try working up to a brisk 30-minute walk each day. After that, more activity is even better. Do what you can to move throughout the day.
4. Avoid weight gain. Next to not smoking, it is the second most important thing you can do to improve your health and survival chances.
5. Eat a healthy diet. Nutritious eating is the same for cancer survivors as it is for everyone else. A healthy diet can help keep weight in check, give your body the nutrients it needs and the energy you need to make it through a busy day.
6. Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all.
7. Stay connected with friends, family and other survivors. Building a network of

 AGE 25-39 Talk with your PCP about:	 AGE 40-49 Talk with your PCP about:	 AGE 50+ Talk with your PCP about:
✓ Cervical cancer screening	✓ Cervical cancer screening ✓ Breast cancer screening ✓ Colorectal cancer screening ✓ Prostate cancer screening	✓ Cervical cancer screening ✓ Breast cancer screening ✓ Colorectal cancer screening ✓ Prostate cancer screening ✓ Lung cancer screening

Cancer Survival Rates

Source: Cancer Control

In year 2022



69%

of survivors have lived 5+ years since their diagnosis



47%

of survivors have lived 10+ years since their diagnosis



18%

of survivors have lived 20+ years since their diagnosis.

67% of survivors are currently 65 or older.

By 2040, 74% of cancer survivors in the United States will be age 65 or older.



As of January 2022, it is estimated that there are **18.1 million cancer survivors in the United States**

This represents approximately 5.4% of the population.

support can improve the quality of life. Cancer can seem isolating, so make special efforts to find those who understand your experiences.

8. Get screening tests and go to your regular check-ups. As a survivor, there is nothing more important than going to post-treatment check-ups. Be open with your doctor about any physical changes and concerns and continue to follow the guidelines for recommended screenings.

If you read this column, you have seen these same eight strategies applied to longevity, heart disease, blood pressure management and almost every other chronic condition. The message of WHAT to do for better health and disease prevention/treatment is clear. The challenge is doing it.

In all the research, there is a message I cannot ignore. Personal health is an area of life that does not follow the adage "if nothing changes, nothing changes." Without lifestyle changes, chronic health conditions tend to worsen over time. Medications have to be increased and complications arise. Life can be threatened.

But with a pro-active approach, we can actually improve our health even though our bodies are aging. We can reduce our dependency on medications, we can see reversals in complications and we can feel, act and live healthier. We can even survive a cancer diagnosis.

Karan Summitt is a retired health educator with 25 years experience educating people of all ages on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. She teaches and writes with a passion for sharing simple, doable strategies that make better health possible for almost everyone.

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THE ADVENTURES OF

BY VICKI McMILLAN



Happy fall, y'all!!! Lester here, grinning from ear to ear over the cooler weather and turning the calendar page to October! Fall is without a doubt my favorite time of the year – rolling in the leaves, lapping up hot cocoa and going to a pumpkin patch all are just the best. Even just a casual walk around the neighborhood to see the changing colors can lighten your mood.

The fall trips with Vicki and Mac usually involve football in some fashion and usually that fashion is the Mississippi State Bulldogs. My favorite SEC fall memory is playing Tennessee at Neyland Stadium. The stadium is situated right on the Tennessee River and the water reflects all the beautiful colors of autumn from the trees.

Of course, when you get inside the stadium, all you can see is orange! It's like 90,000 big pumpkins, especially if you are looking at the chubby fans section! (Sorry, Peyton.)

Once after a Tennessee game, we traveled over to Wolf Laurel, North Carolina, to spend a few nights at the Pointy Cabin. The cabin is adjacent to the Cherokee National Forest and on the slopes of the Walnut Mountains, AND the Appalachian Trail is nearby – the absolute perfect place to peep at some leaves.

Vicki put on my padded Maroon harness and we hit the trail. I was totally in my element. I envisioned myself being the first scrappy ol' dog from the Jonesboro Dog Jail to hike the Appalachian Trail! I would become famous – I would be on a Chewy commercial!! Alas, my legs are short and the trail is long, so back to the cabin I went.

Another fun fall hike is The Dancing Rabbit Trail at Crowley's Ridge State Park. It's close to home and has an abundance of trees with pretty leaves. So, I got harnessed up and off we went. Dancing Rabbit – I envisioned catching a rabbit or two with minimal mess (remember: I had on my Maroon harness) and preparing a delicious Rabbit Stew, just right for fall supper!

It would be so good that it would be on the seasonal menu at Chow at 118. People would come from all around and Michael would have to have two seatings – I would be on the Food Network!! Alas, my legs are short and rabbits are fast, so back home I went.



Some other fall activities that I enjoy are porch decorating and fireside sitting. Get out your scarecrows and corn stalks and go buy some mums and let her rip. More is more, I think, when it comes to porch decorating. I mean, you need a nice fall spot to sit and sip hot cider – am I right? Even more points if you have a firepit close by for the roasting of the traditional S'mores. Or if you want to go all Martha Stewart – a dinner party by the fire.

Grab a few kids (with permission, of course) and head to a pumpkin patch and lose yourself in a corn maze. Make sure you bring home a pumpkin or two for carving or painting later. Find an apple orchard and sample some cider. And fritters, if they have them.

As it gets closer to Halloween, darken up the porch with some creepy decorations. (I personally like hanging an Ole Miss Rebel from the roof, but that's just me.) Plan a binge night of horror movies – real horror stuff like The Conjuring series – nothing where the dog dies, though. Decide on your Halloween costume. I'm either going as Willie Nelson or a hot dog.

Since we are coming upon Thanksgiving in a few weeks, be thinking about your Attitude of Gratitude and make a list of all of your blessings. This might be a good time to make a donation to a local food bank. Both school districts have food banks and are appreciative of any donation. Also animal shelters are always needing food and supplies. REMEMBER ADOPT, DON'T SHOP.

Well, Ol' Lester's got some cider waiting for him on the porch, so I'll say see you next time. Remember, don't get so caught up in the pumpkin/horror movie business that you forget about FOOTBALL. We must keep our priorities in line.

Later,
Lester

October 2025 Premiere | 29

SUPPORT & Shopping

BY GRETCHEN HUNT



While United Breast Cancer Foundation has been supporting patients and survivors across the country for 25 years, its efforts are now a little closer to home. Not only will the organization host its first free Mattress and Pink Bag Event® in Arkansas this month, UBCF has also relocated its headquarters from New York to Jonesboro with a grand opening set for October 28th.

"This October, United Breast Cancer Foundation proudly celebrates 25 years of supporting patients and survivors with

dignity, compassion, and real-life essentials," a social media post from the organization stated. "To mark this milestone during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we're hosting a very special FREE Mattress and Pink Bag Event® in Jonesboro from October 23rd through the 31st."

Aimee Milam, who has worked with UBCF since 2022, said the goal is simple — to provide a day filled with love, laughter, and stress-free shopping — a much-needed respite from the daily challenges cancer can bring. And the best part? It's completely free for all

approved participants.

"Through these events, we aim to offer support, hope and community to those who need it most," Aimee said. "Cancer can cause immense financial strain and take away precious moments — family birthdays, holidays and everyday celebrations that many of us take for granted. Unfortunately, many patients miss out on these moments due to illness or financial troubles. That's where UBCF's Mattress and Pink Bag Events® come in! We invite attendees to shop for whatever they need — whether it's new clothes, holiday

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decorations, beauty products, home goods or everyday essentials."

Like all of UBCF's Pink Bag Events, the Jonesboro event is open to breast cancer patients and survivors from across the U.S., as long as they can attend the event in person. Space is limited, though, and applications are required at ubcf.org/arkansas.



Those who are selected will receive a therapeutic queen-size mattress to support rest and recovery, as well as access to UBCF's signature Pink Bag Shopping experience — clothing, shoes, personal care products, housewares, kids' items and more, all at no cost to them.

And for the UBCF employees and volunteers the most important part is the supportive environment that is fostered throughout the day.

Continued ➡

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“At each event, UBCF creates a joyful and personalized shopping experience,” Aimee said. “Every attendee is paired with a personal shopper who guides them through the event — whether it’s carrying bags, pushing a cart, or simply being a supportive companion. After all, who doesn’t love having a shopping buddy?”



Aimee said for those who have never been a part of a Pink Bag Event, it is easy to think there is no way it can be real as she describes attendees leaving with two to three cart loads of free merchandise. “It seems too good to be true,” she said. “I try to explain it to clients, but until you are there and actually see it, it’s almost hard to believe.”

UBCF, which was founded in 2000 in New York, began holding shopping events on a smaller scale there in 2012. The organization now holds Pink Bag Events® throughout the year in various states. “Besides the Jonesboro event, we are also accepting applications for mattress events in Kentucky and Virginia coming up,” Aimee said.

She said the relationships they build while helping clients register, and then helping them shop in person, is the most rewarding part of the experience. “I still get messages from ladies from three years ago,” she said. “At the end of an event, we’ll be worn out, but I can’t explain how fulfilling it is because of the lives we’ve touched and the connections we’ve made. It’s truly one of a kind.”



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Fair time means food, fun and family and the Greene County Fair in Paragould and the Northeast Arkansas District Fair in Jonesboro offered something for everyone during the month of September. Beyond the midway, attendees could visit commercial

booths, check out educational displays and competitive entries, watch livestock shows and enjoy live entertainment. And, of course, many a funnel cake and corn dog were enjoyed by the residents of Northeast Arkansas!





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Effective Communication

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

A TWO-LANE INTERSTATE



When considering the job of a veterinarian, being an effective communicator is an often overlooked skill amid the scientific and technical tasks that happen throughout the day. Over the years of practice, however, I have found it to be one of the most important tools in the kit when providing the high quality care my patients deserve every day.

As a brief illustration, consider this scenario: You, the client, bring to your veterinarian a pet that is very sick, with the symptoms occurring suddenly. Your veterinarian performs a physical exam, conducts the requisite tests and notes their findings — then tells you very little except delivering the news that there is nothing to be done but euthanize your animal.

Certainly this is devastating news and compounded by the shock and confusion from very little information provided by the doctor. Nobody wants to hear bad news from their doctor about a loved one, especially when the information isn't communicated properly. In this case, the doctor has provided you with bad news and cold disappointment.

Now consider an identical scenario: You, the client, bring to your veterinarian a pet that is very sick, with the symptoms occurring suddenly. Your veterinarian performs a physical exam, conducts the requisite tests and notes their findings — but, during the physical examination the doctor is careful to explain all the findings, what they mean, and provides much more detail around your pet's current health status to help you better understand the situation and what is happening with them.

The doctor takes the time to describe to you the pros and cons of a detailed treatment plan that may save them so that you have a clear



understanding of what is involved, and provides you time to digest all the things you have just been told. In this case, the doctor has delivered bad news, but through caring and effective communication, has armed you with all the information needed to make the best decision for your furry family member.



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The above scenarios aren't to say that your veterinarian has the monopoly on effective communication. Nobody knows a pet like its owner, and you have an important role in the act of communicating effectively with your veterinarian. With each visit, a good doctor will routinely utilize the other tool in the kit of effective communication: *active listening*.

During the visit, this is the golden opportunity for you to describe any changes in your pet's demeanor, dietary preferences, bowel movements, recent injuries, or any other behaviors that seem out of the norm so that your veterinarian can consider these changes when putting together their comprehensive exam picture.

One thing to keep in mind, your veterinarian will only get a brief time with your pet to perform their exam and implement appropriate therapy during visits. Because of this, you the client are your pet's best advocate in communicating with your veterinarian any changes or abnormalities you have observed since your pet's last visit. Often, the information communicated from the client to the veterinarian makes a significant difference in the treatment plan and the health quality of your pet.

Finally, the last part of effective communication between the client and their veterinarian is the *quality* of communication. Consider this a two-lane interstate of information.

On the doctor's side the client should expect the scientific aspects: exam findings, blood work/radiograph findings, other diagnostic results (urinalysis, ultrasound, fecal flotation, etc), pet's prognosis, detailed treatment plan(s) along with cost estimates. All to provide you, the client, with the information needed for the highest quality of life

possible for your pet, communicated thoroughly and with compassion.

On the client's side of the information interstate, the doctor can benefit greatly from the knowledge you have from observing your pet every day. You should always feel free to tell your veterinarian about any health concerns you have for your pet without reservation or fear of judgment. Overall, veterinarians are here to be an advocate to animals and to help educate their clients on care for their pets, not to judge owners because their pet has health concerns.

At my workplace this is a non-negotiable rule: Owners bring their pets into the veterinary hospital because they care about them and want the best possible treatment available; it is our responsibility to help them to the best of our ability. We are here to communicate compassionately, professionally, and effectively without judgment and always in the best interest of the patient and client.

So, keep this in mind as you travel down the interstate of effective communication between you and your veterinarian. I know your pet will be glad you're communicating effectively for them too.

Dr. Kristin Sullivan is a small animal veterinarian practicing since 2012. She owns ARPets Hospital and PAWliday Inn in Brookland, Arkansas, with her husband Michael Sullivan. She strives to provide the highest quality veterinary care, advocating for her patients, and works to educate the public in animal health care and preventive medicine, while promoting the human-animal bond.



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SPIRIT OF *Halloween*

BY MADELYN MCFARLAND

For Drew Copeland and others connected to Jonesboro Overhead Door, Halloween has become something Spook-tacular. It all got started trying to spread some joy in a not so happy time.

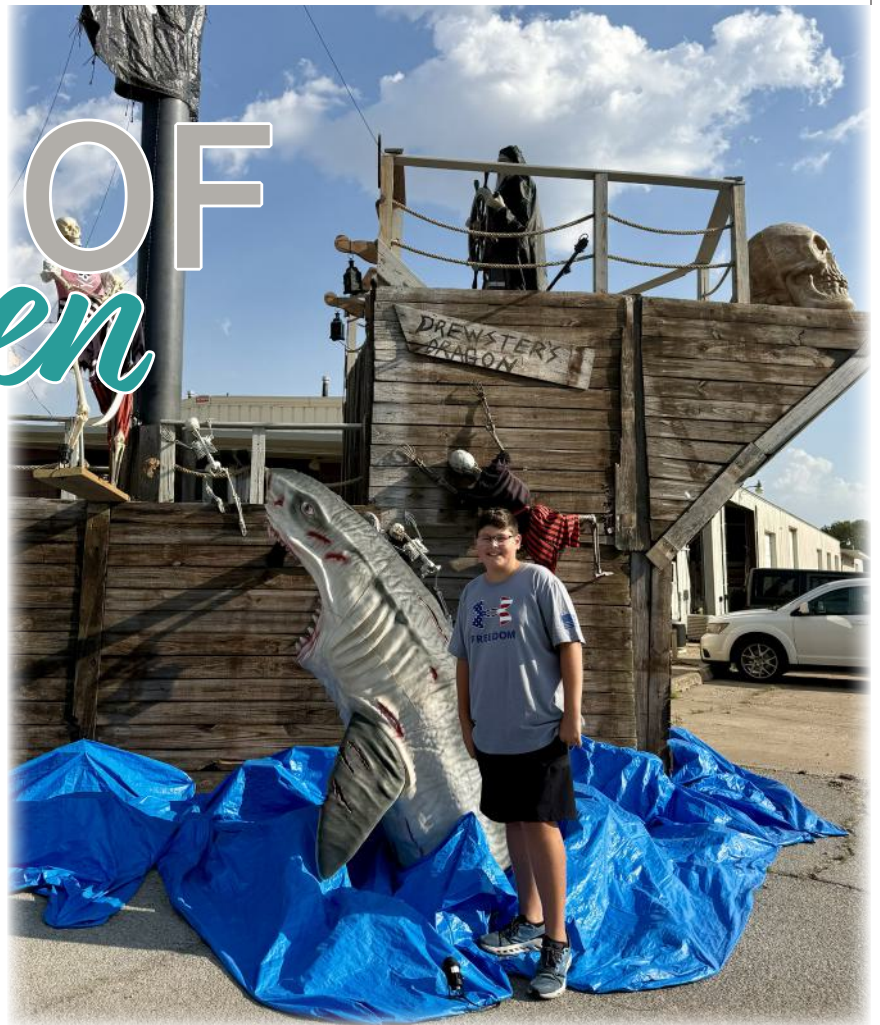
During the pandemic, Drew, and his father, James Copeland, who is longtime manager at the business, along with the Vance family, wanted to keep the Halloween spirit alive while social distancing. They used a PVC pipe to drop candy into trick or treaters cars at Jonesboro Overhead Door — it was a huge hit!

The next year, they gave out pumpkin baskets filled with candy, and the event has continued to grow. Each year, they add something new and exciting. This past year, they gave out over 40,000 pieces of candy to the more than 3,000 kids who attended.

This year, the group will be hosting their 6th annual Halloween Skele-Bration at Jonesboro Overhead Door, located at 925 E Parker Road, starting at 6:30 p.m. on Halloween night.

The crew has had such a fun time with their Halloween display, they have decided to add a Christmas display this year with a gingerbread house theme. But while we wait for that sweet treat, be sure to swing by for some bone chilling fun.

“Drewster’s Dragon” is a sight to see! This haunted pirate ship is 37 feet long and took over 60 man hours to assemble. Beware of the skeleton crew! Oh, and watch out for sharks.





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Monsters and Manners can peacefully coexist during Halloween. 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.

Halloween offers a great opportunity for fun, but there is also a need to be cautious to make sure safety takes precedence, along with good manners.

Double, Double, Toil and Trouble

With all the excitement that Halloween brings there are more dangerous things than the curse from the three witches in Macbeth. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the rate of children hit and killed by cars increases on Halloween night.

Quote of the Day:

“Clothes make a statement.
Costumes tell a story.”
- Mason Cooley

To help avoid accidents:

- Do use caution when driving during Halloween festivities.
- Do watch for children who may dart between cars.
- Do be aware that children can easily trip and fall when wearing costumes.
- Do buckle children in car seats, booster seats and fasten their safety belts.
- Do remove costume elements that interfere with children being properly restrained.

Bow-wow and Meow

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals don't forget about your pets during Halloween. Dogs and cats can scare easily.

If you decide to dress your pet in a Halloween costume:

- Do make sure your pet's costume is free of small pieces that he might chew or swallow.
- Do be sure your pet's costume does not restrict him. The costume should let the pet move, breathe, hear, bark and meow.
- Do keep your pets away from strangers, loud noises and flashing lights.
- Don't let your pet eat your chocolate or any other of your treats.

Halloween Costumes

Since many parents voice safety concerns, costume parties, holiday carnivals, haunted houses and fall festivals have often replaced door to door trick or treating. Halloween costume parties are not only for children, but adults as well. Children's costumes are traditionally witches, ghosts, princesses, pirates, vampires, current cartoon characters or action heroes. Adults also favor traditional costumes along with dressing up as political figures, movie stars, famous or infamous characters or as popular sayings.

According to Matthew Shay, National Retail Federation's president and CEO, Halloween is increasingly being celebrated by adults and children alike “as a welcome break from reality.”

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.





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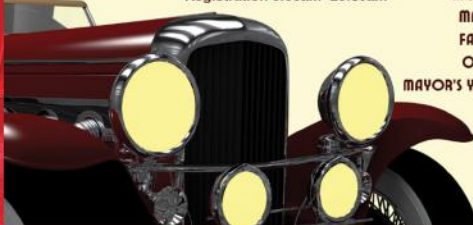
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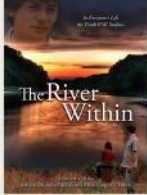
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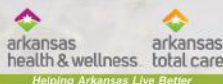
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Derrick Followell

SALVATION MINISTRIES

While Derrick Followell now finds himself following in his father's footsteps in ministry, he said he spent a lot of time running in the opposite direction.

"My dad was a preacher when I was a young boy, and I saw all the difficulty of it, so I focused on the challenges and didn't want any part of it," he said. Instead Derrick found himself living many years in addiction as a functioning alcoholic. "That's how I lived my life. I always felt like there was a greater calling, but for the lack of better words. I just kind of ran from it," he said.

He said it was in 2007 when he finally surrendered and said, "I give up and I'm going to follow the Lord."

"When I decided to surrender, I related to those with addiction and anxiety," Derrick said. "A lot of people want to put their best foot forward, but that is the struggle that led me to the cross. When I found that, I wanted everyone to find it. When I found that, my attitude changed, my life changed. Instead of just existing, I wanted to make a difference."

In 2009 he stepped into ministry, and in 2011 he started a church in what many would say is an unlikely location.

"We started Salvation Ministries in April of 2011 – that is when we opened our church," Derrick said. "I lived in Jonesboro, and I saw a building across from the place I was working and as I felt the calling, I went over and looked at the building. It was a little white shed next to Seductions. We started there with 12 people in April of 2011."

But as those first members invited others, led Bible studies and shared their testimonies, the church continued to grow.

"It wasn't long until we filled it up," Derrick said. "When we left there we had 150-plus people stuffed in that little building. There is a photo at the new church that shows people standing because there wasn't



room to sit down. There was literally one bathroom for 150 people. It was crazy."

Derrick said a friend and neighbor became a big part of the answer to the church's need for more space.

"I actually lived next door to the then pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Jonesboro," he said. "I would meet him in the yard, and he'd ask, 'How many people did y'all have?' And I'd tell him 140 or 150 and he'd say, 'In that tiny little building?' And he'd ask what is next?"

As time passed, the pastor retired at Walnut Street Baptist, but he was still active in the church leadership, and during a meeting there was discussion about a building owned by the church out on Highway 226, that was 11,000 square feet and could accommodate 240 for worship.

"It was kind of out of the way, past Valley View," Derrick said. "They said we'd love for a church to have it."

While they had some others interested in the building for other purposes, they really wanted it to be used by a church. Derrick said he was pretty sure it was his neighbor who brought up Salvation Ministries.

"I can't tell my story without talking about the goodness of Walnut Street Baptist Church," he said. "We went and looked at the building. It was the Taj Mahal to me. I mean I was meeting in a little white shed next to Seductions."

Derrick said they did not have a lot of resources, especially since many of the church's original members came from the drug culture. "Since then that has changed, God has blessed us," he said, but recalled his line of thinking at the time was, "I'd love to have a Rolls Royce, but I have \$10."

He said transitioning to the new location would have been impossible without God and the people in the community.

"We made them an offer that I dare say was insulting," Derrick said. "We had bought five acres in front of Terra Hills and posted a sign there as the future home of Salvation Ministries. We gave them that five acres and a small amount of money and we took that building and five acres out there."

He said the first seven months while the paperwork was being finalized



they were allowed to move into the building rent free and just pay the electric bill.

"We grew from 150 to 240/250," Derrick said. "We also bought the additional 11 acres they had there. It wasn't a few weeks later and some guy wanted to set solar panels. They put solar panels on the back two and a half acres and we have free electricity for 25 years. It was just crazy the things we couldn't afford. Faith just put it in our hands."

While COVID was a difficult time, Derrick said the congregation has continued to grow and they recently built a new sanctuary that seats over 400, and the old sanctuary has been transformed into a family life center.

"It's crazy what's happened," he said. "The people that I have been connected to and helped by. I can't start naming names, the list is just too long. People talk about how bad the world is. I think that's kind of a lie. There's a lot of great people. We've just all believed the lie that the world is bad and people are bad. The community we live in is great. There's a lot of good people out there."

He said he also believes in the fact that God can change lives around and people who weren't so good can have a better life.

"My sole mission for me is I just want to make the world a better place," he said. "I don't want to look at it through the lens of religion or denomination, but just the love of Jesus Christ. I think that's the game changer. At the core that's what it is. The church is a place to come get better. It's a place for healed people to help hurting people."

When he looks back on the road that led him to where he is today, he

recalls that things were not always easy, but said the decisions became easier and easier.

"In this journey, I gave up my career," he said. "We didn't have the ability to do what we needed to do as a church, so I just financed it on my own name. We sold our house. Gave everything away and went all in. I don't regret it. I'd do it again!"



SALVATION *ministries*



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Wednesday: 7 pm

Sunday School
Sunday: 9:30 am

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www.salvationministries.church

Dane Womack

Sarah Ellzey

PARAGOULD FIRST UNITED METHODIST



Rev. Dane Womack has served as Senior Pastor of Paragould FUMC since July 2019. He was previously appointed to Fort Smith FUMC and Plumerville UMC. He holds degrees from the University of Central Arkansas (BS, MS) and Duke Divinity School (M.Div). Dane guides the mission and ministries of FUMC including preaching most Sundays. When not at church, Dane enjoys good music, jogging, and spending time with his wife Jill, daughter Edith, and sons, Holden and Stuart.

First United Methodist Church was the first church in Paragould, with its roots in 1883 with Rev. F.E. Taylor, a circuit rider, and a church lot deeded by W.S. Pruett. That summer Rev. Taylor held an extended meeting, in which he organized the First United Methodist Church with 13 members. FUMC will mark an important milestone in 2026, as the current sanctuary was completed in 1926 and will be 100 years old next year. What started out as a neighborhood church, flanked on every side by private homes has expanded to occupy an entire block in Downtown Paragould.



Pastor Sarah Ellzey joined the staff as Associate Pastor in 2023. She most recently came from Trumann, Marked Tree and Lepanto UMC's where she served as pastor. She is a volunteer advocate with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). She has a Master of Divinity from Baylor University. She is married to Dennis (also a pastor); and they have three children, Bella, Korban and Evie.

THANK YOU PASTORS!

ALL ARE WELCOME:

8am Early Service
(Sanctuary)

9am Contemporary Service
(Worship Center)

11am Traditional Service
(Sanctuary)

Paragould First United Methodist Church

404 W. Main Street, Paragould | 870-239-8541 | info@fumcparagould.org
www.fumcparagould.org

Love God. Serve People. Make a Difference.

Billy Pearson

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD PARAGOULD

Going above and beyond to serve the church and the community is just a way of life for Bro. Billy Pearson, pastor of First Church of God Paragould, and his wife, Lisa, who is employed by the Paragould School District.

Billy was licensed and credentialed in 2013 and has been an ordained pastor with Church of God, General Offices, headquartered in Anderson, Indiana, since 2016. He and his beautiful wife, Lisa, have five children, Steven, Brittany, Cassey, Isaac and Natalie.

His congregation praises him for his spiritual leadership, as well as his boots on the ground work ethic. But perhaps most importantly, this Pastor Appreciation Month, they recognize his faith and trust in God as he consistently shares his favorite saying, "All things happen in God's impeccable timing."

First Church of God Paragould is located at 628 West Locust Street. The church kicks off the week with breakfast at 9 a.m. each Sunday morning, followed by Sunday School at 9:30 and worship at 10:30. Sunday evening the church has Bible study where they study through the Bible at 5 p.m. Wednesday evenings there is a 6 p.m. potluck followed by 6:30 p.m. worship. Everyone is welcome!



First Church of God Paragould

Join us: Sundays

9am Breakfast
9:30am Sunday School
10:30am Worship
5pm Bible Study

Wednesdays

6pm Potluck
6:30pm Worship



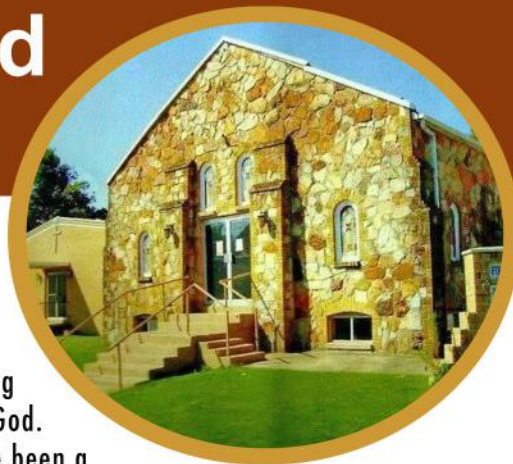
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Paragould
870-236-6112

To Our Pastor:

The First Church of God family wishes to express our profound gratitude for your extraordinary contributions and unwavering commitment to our community of faith in God. Your insightful and inspiring sermons have been a source of profound spiritual enrichment for our congregation, fostering a deeper connection to our shared values and beliefs in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your tireless efforts and exemplary leadership have been instrumental in cultivating a welcoming and vibrant church environment. We deeply appreciate your dedication to nurturing our spiritual growth and fostering a strong sense of community. Your presence has been a true blessing to us all.

The First Church of God is privileged to have you and your family. We look forward to continuing our shared journey of faith alongside you. We love you dearly!



Nettleton Baptist CHURCH



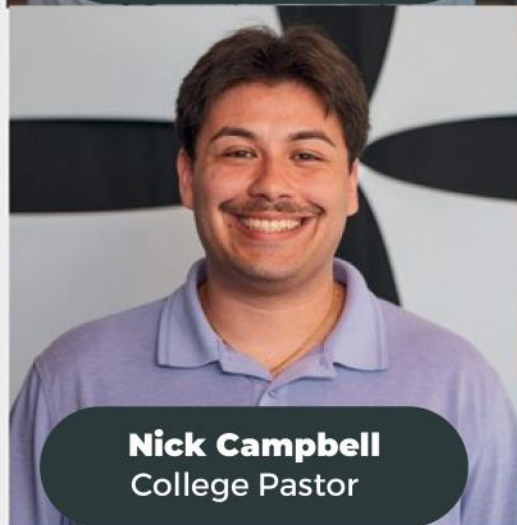
Brady Canright
Senior Pastor



Michael Archer
Children's Pastor



Brad Morgan
Student Pastor



Nick Campbell
College Pastor



Brad Kinsey
Missions Pastor



Ben Brandon
Worship Pastor

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6:30 PM

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NETTLETON BAPTIST CHURCH

For over a hundred years, NBC has been serving the community of Northeastern Arkansas with Christ-like love, and we are very grateful for the role our pastors play in that effort. Our pastors put their ministries before themselves, and thanks to them, NBC is a place that upholds the timeless truth of God's word while being a family for all generations, where people can feel loved, valued, challenged, and changed. This year, our staff includes some familiar faces as well as some brand-new ones, and we'd like to thank them all for their sacrificial service at our church.

Brady Canright
Senior Pastor

Brady became our Senior Pastor in 2019. In what many would consider a courageous and faithful decision, Brady and his wife, Katy, moved to Jonesboro with their infant daughter to serve at our church. Courageous and faithful are accurate words for describing the previous six years with Brady as our senior Pastor. Thanks to Brady's leadership, we are engaging with the community more than ever through non-profit charity efforts, as well as large community events where people from all over NEA and beyond come to hear about the good news of Christ on our campus.

These organizations include Generosity Jonesboro, which has given meals and school supplies to those in need, and Good Tidings, which has provided meals and toys to families in NEA for Christmas since 2022. Maybe you've been to one of our community events like Food Trucks & Fireworks on July 3rd each year, as well as Family Day when the fair comes to town.

The boldness in spreading the word of Christ doesn't end there, however. Brady just wrapped up his "I Am" sermon series, which featured interesting visual aids in service to highlight the seven "I Am" statements in the Gospel of John. These visual aids included street signs, fresh bread for those who attended, and even a live lamb. All of this to say, we are blessed to have Brady as our senior Pastor, and we are excited to see what the future holds.

Michael Archer
Children's Pastor

Michael Archer has served as our Children's Pastor since 2020. He has a heart for spreading the love and joy of Christ, as evident in his 20 years of pastoring in the local area. Michael and his team make church a safe and fun place for kiddos from birth to fifth grade as they learn biblical knowledge, play lots of games, and learn to be kind to one another.

Our children's ministry has experienced significant growth in recent years, necessitating a recent renovation and plans for further expansion. There's nothing like seeing so many kiddos be excited about going to church, and we thank God for the way he has moved our children's ministry through Michael.

Brad Morgan
Student Pastor

Brad is our Student Pastor and joined us in January this year. He has brought lots of energy to our junior high and high school students and has encouraged them to be bold in their faith. Students from Paragould, Brookland, Jonesboro, Valley View, and beyond feel welcomed, make friends, learn biblical teachings, and even get to utilize their talents through service opportunities like leading worship or using high-end audio, visual, and photography equipment. The Students ministry, led by Brad, is empowering these bold young Christians to make a positive impact on their schools, teams, and friends, and it fills our hearts with joy.

Nick Campbell
College & Connections Pastor

Nick has served as our College and Connections Pastor since June of this year, and he has made the absolute most of this summer, to say the least. Thanks to Nick, our college ministry has continued to serve the students of nearby campuses, such as A-State and Williams Baptist, and provide them with a place to worship and feel seen. Our college Wednesday night worship services are packed out, and we couldn't be more excited to see so many college students choose to serve God and spread the love of Christ.

Brad Kinsey
Groups & Missions Pastor

Brad has served as our Groups and Missions Pastor since 2021. Thanks to him, our church partners with missionaries and organizations across the streets, states, and seas to enable Christians to pray, give, and go to the places where the Gospel is not easily accessible. Thanks to Brad, our church can impact God's kingdom even in areas where the Bible isn't printed in the written language yet! And right here at home, our church can provide a variety of quality groups that range from life application to topical studies and more.

Ben Brandon
Worship Pastor

As of July this year, Ben is the newest member of our band, both figuratively and literally. As our Worship Pastor Ben creates services that honor God and bring people together across generations and styles, filling the room with a sense of unity and praise each Sunday. Ben is a true team player who loves serving the community and spreading the word of Christ.

David Poe

LAFE BAPTIST CHURCH

David Poe's preaching style is not unique; it's just effective. He blends superb Biblical knowledge with an occasional touch of humor that results in a down home delivery both pleasing to the ear and touching to the heart and soul, endearing him to his congregation.

As pastor of Lafe Baptist Church since February of 1997, David says he feels his job is to use the talents God gave him in the best way possible and, for him, that is to simply be himself. "One of our members, Chuck Taylor, said one time, 'You don't act like a preacher.' And I took that as a compliment," David said. "God made everyone different. When He uses you, He uses you how He made you. I was not outspoken as a child and that's 'not me' behind the pulpit. I'd rather sit in the pews and listen. I think I knew it when I was the children's pastor ... I'm 73 and I still like playing with the kids. The Father shapes and molds us. He gave me a heart for kids. Make sure the kids are not led in the wrong direction. And if I say something funny, that's just me, that just popped into my head."

A 1970 graduate of Marmaduke High School, David knew in his teenage years he wanted to join the ministry. He attended Southern Baptist College, where he was a basketball and baseball player, and started his preaching journey. There have been several stops along the way in the succeeding 55 years, all recalled fondly. He and his wife Nancy once settled in at a small church outside of Blytheville – Number 9 – and he still refers to it as "a very special congregation to us. It's an old logging community and we were there a little over five years and were there when our kids (Brad and Shaniece) started to school over at Cooter, Missouri." But each stop along the way has helped him grow, he believes, and he loves and appreciates his Lafe church family.

"I want to preach in such a way that you understand it," he said. "A

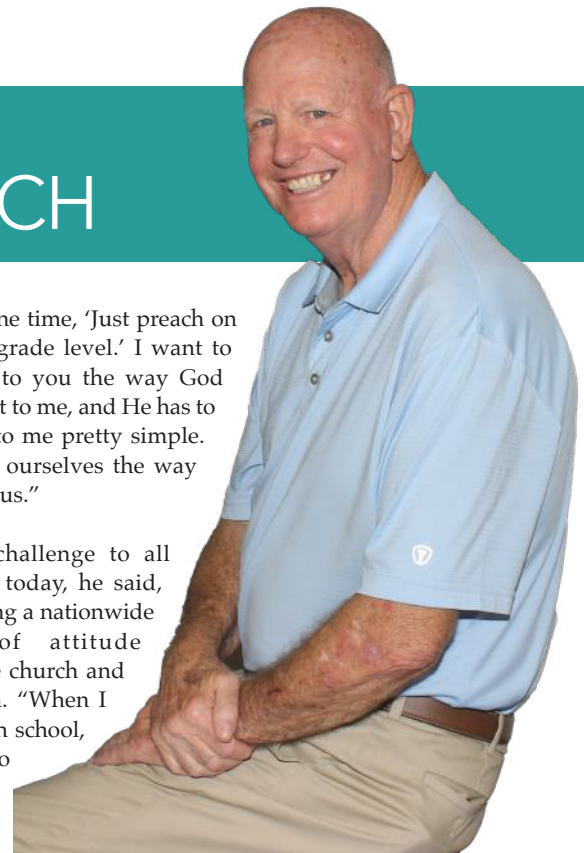
guy said one time, 'Just preach on an eighth-grade level.' I want to express it to you the way God explained it to me, and He has to explain it to me pretty simple. Let us use ourselves the way God made us."

A major challenge to all Christians today, he said, is combating a nationwide change of attitude toward the church and its mission. "When I was in high school, we had to learn five words per week,"

David recalled, "and we had to learn how to spell them and define them. I remember one in particular: apathy. I'd never heard that word until then, and now that's what I see today, that's what we're fighting; we can't get people motivated."

He also said he relates closely to scripture found in the third chapter of 2 Timothy. "It tells us, in the last days perilous times will come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. I really believe we're in the last days. That's where we are, exactly what we're dealing with," he said.

Still, in the difficult times we face, David feels it never hurts to try and put a smile on someone's face. "I like to put a little humor in there if I can," he said, "because we all need to hear something pleasant once in a while. And that's just me. I tell people I used to preach at Nutt's Chapel ... that should have been a warning right there. That's just me."



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11 am Wee Worship &
Childrens Church

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5:30 pm K-6 Bible Study Class

Wednesday

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for our pastor
and ministry
leaders!*

Bro. David Poe - Pastor

Bro. David Dodd - Music Ministry

Bro. Mike Cook - Children's Director

Bro. Louis Lopez - Youth Director



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Terry & Delana Watson

THE ROCK JONESBORO

Terry and Delana Watson are the real deal. They love with compassion, and they lead with dedication. For over 43 years, they have faithfully devoted their lives to preaching the gospel, and this January we celebrate a special milestone, the 20th anniversary of The Rock of Northeast Arkansas.

From the very beginning, God gave Pastor Terry and Delana a clear mission: Exalt Christ, Heal the Hurting, and Mature the Believer. Through their steady leadership, that mission has never wavered. What began as a small gathering of a few dozen people has grown into a vibrant church family with multiple services, all centered on Jesus.

Pastor Terry has modeled transparency and humility. His honesty and down-to-earth spirit are a big reason so many call The Rock home. He is relatable, real, and always points people back to Christ. Delana has been a constant encouragement, speaking truth in love and inspiring countless lives with her faith and grace.

Together, Pastor Terry and Delana are a shining example of what it means to shepherd a church. They don't just preach the gospel, they live it out. On Sundays, you'll find them at the doors greeting people with handshakes and hugs, making sure everyone feels like part of the family.

It hasn't always been easy, but their perseverance has shaped who we are today. They never asked for recognition, but they certainly deserve it.

Pastor Terry and Delana Watson embody humble, servant-hearted leadership, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

This Pastor Appreciation Month, we honor Pastor Terry and Delana for the countless ways they have poured their lives into this church and community. Their example points us to Christ, and their love reminds us what it means to be part of a church family.

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POLO IN NEA

Delta Harvest Classic

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

Each year polo enthusiasts gather in Northeast Arkansas for the Delta Harvest Classic and in a matter of hours raise approximately \$6,000 for the Craighead County 4-H program. This year's event will be held Saturday, October 11th, at Cypress Park in Marked Tree.

Maleigha Cook, Craighead County Extension Agent for 4-H, said the event is the premiere polo benefit in the state of Arkansas and the only 4-H benefit match. "One hundred percent of the money goes directly to fund camps, scholarships, travel and competition fees for the kids," she said. "I never want finances to be a hold back for these kids, so we work hard to raise the money so we can help support them."

For Melissa Lamb of Jonesboro, a member of the Little Egypt Polo Club out of Missouri, helping organize this event was a natural progression.

"Maleigha is one of my best friends," she said. "I have always been up to my eyeballs with her. Any event she is doing, I'm always buying a plate, or bringing things to the auction, helping her set up. I just really enjoy doing it. I like to give back to the kids."

She said they both got started playing polo through their vet in 2019. "The more we found out about things, we thought this is something a lot of people don't know about," Melissa said. "This will be our fourth Delta Harvest Classic this year. The whole team comes and volunteers their time, their weekend, their fuel money. It's something we have all enjoyed doing, getting to bring horses and polo to the community, have a good time and raise money."



56 | October 2025 Premiere

She said the event also raises awareness about polo, which she describes as being like playing golf on horseback. "That's the best way I would explain it," she said. "You have your mallet and you can only swing your mallet with your right hand." She said the sport also offers an even playing field for men and women, and the Classic should have a pretty equal mix of players.

If there are others interested in playing, Melissa said they should definitely give it a try. "If you want to try polo, don't be afraid, just come talk to us. You don't have to know anything, I didn't. And they handed me a mallet and off I went. We are always looking for new members and people to ride with us so please don't be shy. We don't take ourselves too seriously. We like to have fun."

While the polo club's home field is in Cape Girardeau, its members are from across the region including residents of Gosnell, Paragould, Lepanto and Jonesboro, as well as some from Illinois. "Our club comes in and splits into two sections," Melissa said. "Team captains pick teams to balance it out."

Maleigha described what attendees can expect at the Classic.

"The day consists of a beautiful full length polo match, and in between each "Chukker" (think basketball quarter) there is a demo or project reveal by a 4-H member," Maleigha said. "Halftime is a glorious event complete with a Champagne and Mimosa Divot Stomp, Sun Hat Competition, Best Footwear for men and women and Best Tie for men." She noted that this year's Sun Hat Competition will have special meaning as it becomes the Liz Cato Memorial Sun Hat Competition. "She was our sunshine on the team and a true Southern woman."

"It really is a beautiful, fun event full of laughter, support, good food and great conversation," Maleigha said, "and of course nothing supersedes the beauty of the horses running in action!"

Melissa said she really enjoys bringing the horses to the community.

"There are so many people and children who have never seen a real horse up close before or petted a horse before," she said. "I have been crazy about horses since I came out the womb, but I wasn't raised with them, so any time that people let me pet their horses or do chores to be able to ride their horse, I remember those people who were kind to me and I feel like I need to give that back."

The event includes a player meet and greet after the match, and a true highlight, according to Maleigha is the food. "Before and during the match the attendees have a full blown Southern culinary delight featuring rotisserie grilled pork steaks, salad, and all the fixings with





a massive dessert bar and a specialty mimosa bar.”

Tailgating is available, which allows for viewing and bringing your own picnic basket, but for the full experience, purchasing a ticket or a table gets you under the tent.

“There are a lot of ways to be a part of it,” Melissa said. “You can buy a whole table for you and all your friends and family, you can buy a single seat, that includes your dinner and all the desserts. It’s traditional at halftime to have a divot stomp. Horses will scuff up the field. Spectators go out and step on the clumps of dirt and mash them back down.”

Tables are \$500 and seat eight. Limited individual tickets are available ahead of time, and there are various sponsorships for individual awards like MVP and Best Playing Pony and for naming rights for the two teams.



For more information on tickets or sponsorship opportunities, contact Maleigha at 870-933-4565. For updates, follow the Delta Harvest Classic Polo Benefit on Facebook.

“It’s important,” Melissa said. “The things the 4-H kids get to experience that they might not get to do if we didn’t have this extra funding available. Even if you can’t come to the event, you can be a part, but we’d like you to come. It’s a lot of fun.”



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DON'T MISS THESE *Upcoming Events in NEA*



NEA Rescue Run

October 4th

NEA 5K Rescue Run 25 will be held Saturday, October 4th, at Craighead Forest Park in Jonesboro to benefit local rescue groups, Biscuit's Legacy, The Arkansas Pet Savers (TAPS) and Northeast Arkansans for Animals (NAFA).

There is a \$35 registration fee, which can be done online in advance at raceroster.com. On site sign-in begins at 8 a.m., and the awards presentation is set for 10 a.m.

Participants are encouraged to bring their rescue animals to walk/run with them. For more information, contact organizers via email at nea5krescuerun@gmail.com.



Pink Warrior Walk

October 11th

The Pink Warrior 5K Fun Run/Walk will be held Saturday, October 11. The race will begin and end at St. Bernards Health and Wellness, and the race course will take participants through the Arkansas State University Campus.

A Spirit Competition will be held at 8:15 a.m. followed by a Survivor Parade at 8:30 a.m. with the race officially starting at 9 a.m.

Registration for the race is \$40. The race will not be timed. Registrations, Chance to Win items and more are available at GoPinkWarrior.com.



CASA Classic

October 7th

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

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

Teams of four are invited to compete in the tournament, and players of all skill levels are welcome. For more information on sponsorship or to register a team, call 870-273-5415 or email angie.tate@neacasa.org.



DJA Fall Fest

October 11th

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

The Fall Fest will include activities for all ages, including local vendors. There will be live entertainment including Marr Street Band, Delta Canyon, Chieftain Lane Revival, Foundation of Arts and Link Theater.

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



Wild Duck Festival

October 10th-11th

The 42nd annual Trumann Wild Duck Festival offers something for everyone October 10th and 11th at the Trumann Sports Complex.

PBJ Happee Days Shows of Marion will provide amusement rides and attractions throughout the weekend, and charity bingo begins at 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, followed by large fireworks displays each night at 9.

Attendees can enjoy free live concerts on Saturday at the outdoor stage, featuring local favorites Brewster and Company, Griff "The Drifter" Evans and The Holt Band. For full details find the event on Facebook.



Trick or Treat

October 31st

Among options for trick-or-treaters on October 31st will be Boo in the Boro and at the Union Street Park in Downtown Jonesboro and a community trick-or-treat event at the Paragould Community Center.

Boo in the Boro, presented by the Mayor's Youth Advancement Council of Jonesboro, will be from 6-8 p.m. and will include candy, games, crafts, entertainment, face painting, photo booth and more.

Businesses, churches and groups will set up at the Paragould Community Center from 5-8 p.m.

TAKIN' CARA BUSINESS FOUNDATION



REMEMBERING WITH A RACE

The NEA community will continue to remember Cara West with the 5th annual Takin' Cara Business Foundation Race set for Saturday, November 1st, at the Main Street Church of Christ in Walnut Ridge.



Cara West

Registration is open at runsignup.com for the event, which started in 2021 in memory of Cara, who was a devoted Christian, wife, mother and downtown Walnut Ridge business owner.

Cara was diagnosed with Leiomyosarcoma, a very rare form of cancer in December of 2019. After relocating to Houston to take very aggressive cancer treatment at MD Anderson, she passed away just seven short weeks later, on February 8, 2020, at the young age of 54.

During her stay at MD Anderson, despite enduring the sickness from chemotherapy, Cara shared her faith to everyone around her, and her care team became very close to her, and were touched by her positive outlook. She left behind her husband of 35 years, Danny, and four children, Maddison, Victoria, Clancy and Reece.

She was the proprietor of The Dark Side Coffee House, which was located next to Beatles Park in Downtown Walnut Ridge, for nine years. Cara was known for her amazing culinary creations, and her sense of style. She also made amazing bow ties and head scarves that were sold and shipped all over the world, under the name Just Tie One On. Cara was also a Bible school teacher at church for more than 30 years, and worked at CRA in Paragould when her children were young.

This year's race will be run for Legacy of Fighters recipient Tonya Hankins. All proceeds from the event will go directly to Tonya as she continues her fight against pancreatic cancer.

The 2025 event includes some changes including a new location, which means breakfast served indoors, and a new route, which allows for a 10K race that will not double loop. All runners will receive a medal.



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HAPPENINGS

FLYE PROMOTED BY EMPOWER

Empower, Delivered by Craighead Electric, has announced the appointment of Adrian Flye as Chief Broadband Officer. A valued member of the organization since 2022, Flye has served as Vice President of Innovation and Technology for the past three years.

In this new role, he will oversee operations for Empower as the company continues to grow and develop high-speed internet access across rural Northeast Arkansas.



"I'm honored to step into this position and continue working alongside a talented team that's committed to better connecting and serving our communities," said Flye. "Empower's future is rooted in innovation, and I look forward to leading new advancements in technology that will drive our mission forward and deliver transformative solutions for Northeast Arkansas."

Tim Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Empower Board of Directors, said, "We are excited to welcome Adrian into this leadership role. His experience, integrity, and deep understanding of our mission make him the ideal choice to lead Empower's operations into the future."

Flye lives in Jonesboro with his wife, Elizabeth, and their two daughters.

HESTAND EARNS CCE DESIGNATION

Allison Hestand, Director of Economic Development and Chamber CEO for the Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce, has earned the prestigious Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) designation — the highest individual honor in the chamber of commerce profession.

She was awarded alongside 25 newly-certified chamber leaders at the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Annual Conference in Philadelphia. Hestand said this milestone is "a reflection of the growth, challenges and purpose-driven work" that has shaped her journey.



Fewer than 5 percent of chamber executives nationwide hold this certification, which recognizes exceptional leadership, community impact and a deep commitment to advancing the chamber profession.

Allison also holds Professional Community & Economic Developer (PCED) certification, earned through the Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA), and IOM designation, signifying completion of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for Organization Management.

KEATTS NEW DIRECTOR OF GCCF

The Greene County Community Fund (GCCF) has announced the appointment of Candice Keatts as its new executive director.

Candice has led a variety of successful programs focused on serving individuals and organizations in need. Her background in fundraising, program development and strategic partnerships makes her uniquely qualified to lead GCCF into its next chapter.



"I am honored to join the Greene County Community Fund," said Keatts. "I am deeply committed to the work we do to support our neighbors and strengthen our community. I look forward to collaborating with local leaders, organizations and volunteers to create lasting change and continue our mission of building a more vibrant, equitable Greene County."

The Greene County Community Fund is dedicated to improving the lives of residents by supporting nonprofit organizations and initiatives that address critical community needs. Through its grants and strategic partnerships, GCCF has positively impacted thousands of lives across Greene County.

As executive director, Keatts will oversee the day-to-day operations of GCCF, working closely with the Board of Directors and community partners to ensure the Fund's goals are met. For more information about the Greene County Community Fund and its work, please visit gccfund.org or email give@gccfund.org.

KURYLO NEW FAMILIES MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Families, Inc. Counseling Services has announced the appointment of Dr. Pawel Kurylo as medical director. This development marks a new chapter in the company's ongoing mission to provide exceptional mental health care across the communities it serves.



Dr. Kurylo is no stranger to Families, Inc. He has been a vital part of the clinical team for the past seven years, serving as a staff psychiatrist. Throughout his tenure, he has consistently demonstrated clinical excellence, compassionate care and a steadfast commitment to improving the lives of Families' clients.

His leadership, experience, and vision make him exceptionally well-suited to take on this new role. As Medical Director, Dr. Kurylo will oversee the medical aspects of Families, Inc.'s services, guide clinical best practices, and support the continued integration of innovative, evidence-based psychiatric care within the company's programs.

"We are thrilled to have Dr. Kurylo step into this leadership position," said a spokesperson for Families, Inc. "His deep understanding of our organization and the needs of our clients will be invaluable as we continue to grow and enhance our services. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Pawel Kurylo on his new role. We look forward to great things ahead under his medical leadership and are excited about the positive impact his direction will bring to our staff, clients and communities."

BLACK RIVER NAMES HOLOCAUST SPEAKER

Emanuel "Manny" Mandel, Holocaust survivor and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer, will be the Black River Technical College Foundation's 21st Annual Holocaust Survivor Series guest speaker.



Emanuel Mandel

Manny will be giving an in-person, first-hand account of his Holocaust experiences. He will be speaking on Wednesday, October 22nd, at 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., and on Thursday, October 23rd, at 9:30 a.m. The sessions will be held at the Randolph County Development Center on the Black River Technical College Pocahontas campus.

Online registration is available for the event at surveymonkey.com/r/JHM887K.

For more information, contact Shawna Lepard, Development Specialist for Institutional Advancement, at 870-248-4026 or Shawna.lepard@blackrivertech.edu.

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Host & Hunt with a Team of 4 - Friday, Dec. 12
When teams check in after the hunt they are entered in the Hunter Check-In gun drawing.
(You may choose another person to serve as a host on your land for the hunt.)

Be Our Guest at the Banquet - Thursday, Dec. 11
where you will receive a DC swag bag with exclusive gifts.
At the banquet your hunt spot will be randomly paired with a registered hunt team.

Enjoy the Landowner Dinner - Dec. 2
where you will learn more about scoring and the hunt.
Attendees will be entered in the landowner gun drawing.

Winning Teams* Awarded the Coveted Duck Classic Trophy Plus Prizes
1st Place: \$1,000 Prize Package per hunter
2nd Place: \$500 Prize Package per hunter
3rd Place: \$300 Prize Package per hunter
*Teams include the Host

This two-day event is the most anticipated community event of the year.

The Banquet - Thursday - Dec. 11
First National Bank Arena, Jonesboro, AR
Men, women and children from a 10 state region enjoy this fun event for a worthy cause.
100% OF THE MONEY RAISED STAYS LOCAL

The Hunt - Friday - Dec. 12
Hunting teams venture out early for a memorable hunting experience for a good cause.
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or Clint.Parton@simmonsbank.com



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Next Month

20 Under 25



Don't miss our special section recognizing 20 outstanding individuals under 25 who are already making a big impact in their community.

Entrepreneurial Spirit



As part of Entrepreneurial Month we will be shining a spotlight on some local entrepreneurs who are making strides and standing out!

Kids Play



Don't miss the winter Kids Play in our November edition of NEA's Premiere Magazine.



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NEA Baptist Osceola Clinic • 10/7
Crittenden County Cares • 10/9
NEA Baptist Cherokee • 10/14
Village Clinic
G.R.O.W. NEA (Allen Park) • 10/18

NEABaptistClinic.org/MHU
for Schedule.

Funding for the production
of this unit was graciously
provided by Chris Fowler Family.

Powered by Local Tire and Wheel,
NextEra Energy and Resources,
and NEA Baptist Auxiliary

NEA Baptist Mobile Health Capabilities
Delivered to the Community

Women's Health

- Mammography
- Paps/Breast exam
- Birth Control
- HPV Vaccines

Health Screenings

- Diabetes
- Vaccinations
- Flu, Covid,
Pneumonia

Cardiac Screenings

- EKG
- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Scheduling
CT Cardiac
(Calcium) Score

Cancer Screening

- Prostate-PSA
& Physical Exams
- LDCT Screening
& Scheduling
- Tobacco Cessation
- Skin Checks

Behavioral Health/ Mental Health Screenings

- Depression,
Stress, Impact on
Total Health
- Addiction
- Insurance
Enrollment

