

NEA'S **PREMIERE**  
MAGAZINE  
MARCH 2026

**DR. HEIDI BANSE**

**MAKING  
HISTORY  
TODAY**

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ENCORE: LIVING OUR BEST YEARS YET  
HEIDI ROBINSON: BREAKING RECORDS ON THE COURT

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## ON THE COVER -

Dr. Heidi Banse is making history today as the dean of the new College of Veterinary Medicine at Arkansas State University. She said one thing she thinks is important is making sure students have experiences working with both small and large animals while completing their studies.

**MARCH 2026**

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# From Us to You

**M**arch already! March is National Women in History Month, and we always try to come up with a twist to be different than the previous years.

Our team was talking about the fact that there are fewer and fewer professions that are male dominant, so it is harder to find that unique woman making history through her profession. Finding Dr. Heidi Banse as a veterinarian may not be unique but as dean of the new veterinarian school, we feel she fit the bill.

We are excited that ASU is launching this new chapter and look forward to following the progress with them.

As I am not originally from Greene County, I was thinking about the women who helped me make my place in our wonderful community. Starting with Mary Ann Allen - she invited me to her Relay for Life committee and with her mentoring I was presented a Communications Award in 1998 from the American Lung Association, the benefactor of early day Relay For Life.

Sue McGowan brought Leadership Paragould to town, and I was a proud member of the very first class in 1997/98. I have a great picture of Sue and me at graduation and we both have on "nylons."

Amy Lucius asked me to help with a GCT



media campaign in 2007 and the experience helped me feel like I had really made an impact on an important community task. I proudly display the award I was presented, along with several Main Street Paragould awards that Gina Jarrett nominated me for as she and I worked on many projects for Downtown Paragould.

I can only hope that some women will look back and remember my helping them along the way as I fondly remember these and many other ladies from my journey.

Dina Mason  
General Manager & Publisher  
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**M**arch brings Spring Break, which means vacation time for many, but for others work schedules, budgets or other obligations may mean spending the week at home. That doesn't mean the week has to be a bust, though!

My husband and I often discuss how we have "vacation" behavior and "at home" behavior. Things that would be a total splurge at home are just another day on vacation. So, if you are spending Spring Break in NEA, we hope you will check out our StayCation guides for Paragould, Jonesboro and Walnut Ridge and take a day or two this month and have a vacation right here at home!

It is automatic to look up "things to do" when going on vacation, but be sure not to overlook the opportunities that are right under your



nose. So, if like me, you won't be traveling for Spring Break, here's hoping you have the best StayCation ever! Buy the cupcake, tour the museum, find your fun!

Gretchen Hunt  
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# Bananas About These Muffins

BY HATTIE HOLLAND



**B**anana bread is a family favorite at our house. We love making a batch of these muffins on Sunday afternoons to have as a snack or for breakfast through the week.

My mom found this recipe from OhSnapMacros while looking for a healthier version of traditional banana bread. These muffins would also be great as minis, with nuts, or extra cinnamon. Enjoy!

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

## Simple Banana Bread Muffins



**Ingredients:**

- 1 1/2 cups ripe mashed bananas
- 1/2 cup non fat plain Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup mini dark chocolate chips (optional)

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and spray a muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray.

Combine mashed bananas, Greek yogurt, applesauce, honey, brown sugar, egg, and vanilla extract in a large mixing bowl. Add in flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon to the wet mixture. Stir until combined, be sure not to over mix.

Scoop batter into the prepared muffin pan and top with chocolate chips. Bake for 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let the muffins cool for 10 minutes before serving.

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# PET *of the* MONTH

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BY EMALEE KRISTINE GRIFFIN

Meet Cinnamon! She is a Silver Appleyard Duck, - currently classified as a threatened species. Cinnamon came home in April of 2024 at one day old, and was raised with her sister, Waffle. They are still never far from each other - as you can see. She has three other siblings: Butter, Maple and Bacon.

Her name is descriptive of her personality - SPICY! She's the leader of the flock, even though she's one of the youngest. She spends her time foraging, digging holes, looking for grubs and swimming - never missing a nap in the sun in between.

She loves her splash pad on a hot summer day and playing in any mud she can find. Her favorite treats are peas, raspberries and mealworms. Her quacks make every morning sweet.





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# Greene County Spelling Bee



Evalyn Wolfe (from left), a sixth-grader from Marmaduke Elementary School won first place in the 2026 Greene County Spelling Bee to claim county champion honors and advance to the State Spelling Bee March 7th in Little Rock. Harper Caldwell, a sixth-grader from Oak Grove Middle School, was the second-place winner, and third place went to Kyson Rabah, an eighth-grader at Paragould Junior High School. Brian Osborn with MOR Media broadcast the Greene County Spelling Bee live on iRock 103.7.

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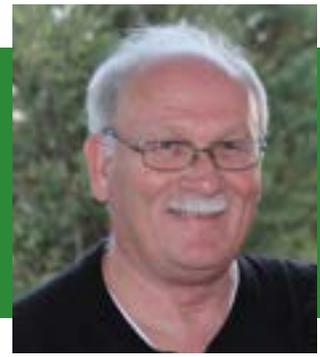
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# Get Rich

## WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



There isn't enough space here for me to list all the reasons I dislike winter. As far as I'm concerned Christmas and basketball season are about the only two positives accompanying the nasty, dreary, cold season. I'm a baseball/softball kind of guy, so seeing the beautiful green grass of the ballparks turn to a dirty brown is most depressing, and replacing the feel of a cool breeze floating across my face with a bitter cold that cuts down to the bottom of my lungs when all I did was step outside to take out the trash hurts my very soul.

A fellow shouldn't be able to actually see his breath in front of him, nor should it feel as if he's trying to suck a Popsicle up his nose just because he went outside to see a child make a snow angel.

As much as I hate most of the trimmings winter brings today, it is a five-word sentence from my past that truly haunts my memories. Throughout my elementary school years, a snowstorm was pretty much a given at some time during the calendar year. Sometimes I watched it develop during the later afternoon hours and sometimes Mother Nature did her thing long after I had gone to sleep, but regardless of how long it snowed or how many inches accumulated, I knew as my mother and sister and I listened to good old KDRS radio early the next morning I was going to hear these words: "Paragould *will* have classes today."

If you weren't alive during those days and didn't attend the "city school," I don't think you can truly relate to the agony and unfairness those words seemed to represent. The majority of my friends at that time went to school at places like Crowley's Ridge Academy, Greene County Tech or Oak Grove. Many were fellow baseball players and we stayed in touch over the winter months in various ways; the CRA guys and I went to church together while several of the others and I played weekend pickup basketball games at their schools' gyms.

But as soon as someone like KDRS' Chuck Campfield read off the list of school closings for the radio audience to digest, I would hang my head and tell Mom how unfair the whole situation was. She was a teacher in the Paragould school system, so if she had to go my sister and I were bound to tag along, but I'm not a good enough wordsmith to explain how devastating this 7:30 a.m. revelation could be:

"Here's today's list of school closings," the announcer would say, then he'd begin reading off those that had called in to cancel classes. "Crowley's Ridge Academy is closed today; Delaplaine is closed; Greene County Tech will not hold classes today; Lafa will not have school today; Marmaduke is closed today ..." and

I would lean up in my chair at the breakfast table, because I was smart enough to have figured out we were going in alphabetical order of the eight schools in the county. "Oak Grove will be out today and Stanford has canceled classes today."

Dang! I knew it. He skipped right over the "P" school, so I braced myself for the final declaration: "Paragould schools WILL HAVE CLASSES TODAY," and my life was ruined in just a few seconds. Mom said we had to have school because we were the "city" school and did not run bus routes. Our parents were expected

to be more adept at maneuvering the icy in-town streets while drivers of monstrous buses could not be expected to manage narrow, curvy county roads.

Safety, or some such nonsense, seemed to be at the forefront, but all I knew was that Kent McDaniel, who lived barely 100 yards from my house, was getting to stay home and so were Kendall Jetton and Rick Watson, who resided less than a mile away, all because CRA had buses and my mom had a Plymouth Fury.

I think if the powers that be had ridden to school with us on some of those mornings they might have reconsidered. We lived on Wirt Street and our path to school took us to the intersection with South 7th Street, where we were expected to make a sharp left turn and continue on our way. But there on Wirt, just as you passed Raymond Meadows' house, the street dipped down at a severe angle right as you approached a stop sign. On a street covered with snow and sometimes a layer of sleet for good measure, trying to stop a vehicle on a downhill slope was next to impossible.

When Mom tapped the brakes the car would glide sideways toward someone's driveway or mailbox, depending on how far we'd made it up to that point, and more than once the rear end of the car decided it wanted to go first and swung around toward who knows where. We never hit anyone's property but we were pulled out of a ditch a few times by Good Samaritans, with Mom determined we were making it to Woodrow Wilson Elementary to get educated on time; I wasn't a fan of either the snow or the education.

Winter, as far as I'm concerned, can just get on its bus and ride on out of here pronto and leave me and my city friends alone.



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

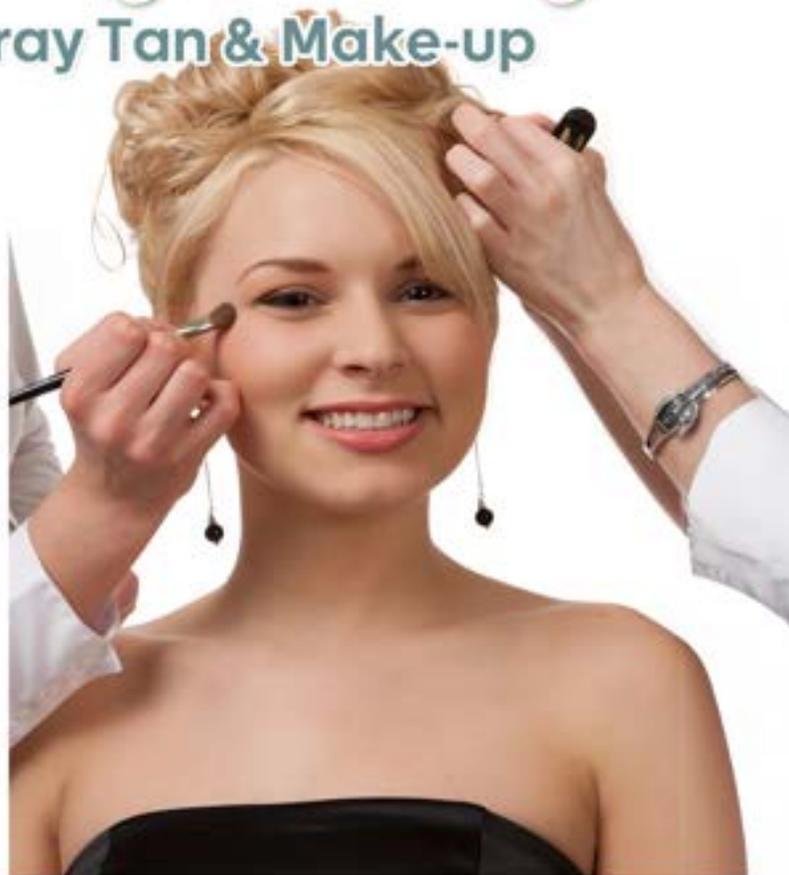
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# HISTORIC *Game in Books*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Heidi Robinson comes from a long line of talented athletes, but she's definitely going to have family bragging rights when the conversation turns to sports for quite a while. In late January, playing for the women's basketball team at Ouachita Baptist University, Heidi scored a school record 48 points against crosstown rival Henderson State to lead the Lady Tigers to an 89-56 win. The 2022 Marmaduke High School graduate was 16 of 27 from the field, 9 of 16 from the 3-point line, and 9 of 10 from the free throw line. She added 5 rebounds and 1 assist in 29 minutes played, and when the smoke cleared she had set the school record for most points in a game, and also tied the conference mark.

For her incredible performance, Heidi was named both the Great American Conference Player of the Week and the National Woman's Player of the Week by the NCAA Division II Conference Information Directors of America.

"All the attention is good ... a little bit overwhelming at first," said the normally demure player, considered for most of her career as a pass-first type guard.

"Now it's over and it's just back to normal."

Only it's not. There was little "normal" about the events surrounding her hot-shooting night, including being the sole owner of the league's single-game scoring record for a few hours. After the game Heidi was originally credited with 50 points, which would have broken the conference single-game scoring mark, but officials later determined a scoring error was made. A layup originally credited to her in the third quarter should have gone to a teammate.

"Definitely not the news you want to hear, but there's nothing we can do about it now," Heidi said of losing her sole claim to the record. "Still doesn't take away from the atmosphere that we had that night! I always loved rival games, like against Rector in high school. This was very similar with that great atmosphere. It really was a lot like playing Rector. When we'd score I could feel it."

Heidi opened the game by scoring 21 of the Tigers' first 25 points, and had 26 by halftime. "Early on I knocked down a few 3s in the first quarter and got my confidence up early,"



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the 5-9 guard recalled. "Everyone picked up on it. At the half someone said, 'How many do you have?' and I looked at the stat sheet and I had like 26 at the half. Oh, okay, I was a little shocked, myself. They picked up on it pretty quick and we just went with it. It was more of 'I want the ball' but I expected them (Henderson) to make adjustments and some changes but they kind of stayed the same and left me open. It was kind of about 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' They kept going under the screen and I was open, so I kept shooting."

When Henderson could manage to take away the 3, Heidi worked her way for close-in shots or earned her way to the free throw line, where she went 9-for-10. Normally about a 15-points-per-game scorer, the magnitude of the performance was not lost on her: "Well, 48 is a big jump, definitely like a dream. I went to bed later and expected to wake up from a dream. Is this for real? After we shake hands at the end of the game we always get together at center court and my teammates jumped all over me. I got to see the students and my folks in the stands and then when I got to the locker room I got the water bottle shower."

Continued ➡



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Her parents, Shane and Nikki Robinson, were there for the magical night as were “my grandma, my aunt, some friends. I got to hug them before I went to the locker room and got drenched with the water bottles. But it was pretty cool.”

Her performance demanded national, statewide and local attention from the media and she relived the night via interviews frequently. “I got to sit down with a person from the Little Rock news and our OBU Sports Network, which is done by students, is putting together sort of a 30 for 30 type thing documenting the night. They actually came up to Marmaduke and talked to my parents and people at the school; it will be a good little video when it comes out.”

But the important part to her is that her team is in contention for a conference title. “We’re right there in the mix,” she said. “You’ve got to be in the top eight to make the tournament and we’re right where we need to be.”

OBU dropped its next game at Southeastern Oklahoma State after Heidi’s big showing, although she led the way with 17 points that night. She admitted there was a different feeling that next time out, not knowing exactly what to expect from the defense or from herself, but she knew she didn’t have to set a record to be a major contributor.

“Oh, no, no, not 48,” she said. “My first shot I was more open than I expected to be, and that threw me off a little, but then it was just getting back to what we do ... what I do ... and trying to get a win.” A double major in kinesiology and education, Heidi said she would like to follow in her parents’ footsteps as a teacher and coach after her graduation in May. Just as someday she will look back on the night of January 22 as a special memory.



“I think as I get older, and even maybe in the next couple of years, it will be a night I will look back on,” she said. “Now it’s something to build on. The team needs me to do my best and 48 isn’t normal. I don’t know if you say once in a lifetime but it was definitely pretty rare. And against our rival, at home, in front of a real good crowd. It was special, I have to admit.”

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# THE ADVENTURES OF

# Lester

BY VICKI McMILLAN



**H**ello, all - O! Lester here! I hope you all had a good night's sleep last night, because today we start a 31 day March!!! (I'll be here all week.) March is one of my favorite months, because I can plan so many outdoor things to do. And then maybe in April when winter is really over, I can do them! But, seriously, March is a good time to get outside and see nature waking up to make her own plans. Spring Break for the kiddos will be coming up, and I know they are ready to get out of the house.

If the weather is still cool, check out Let's Roll to bowl or even try duckpin bowling - which O! Lester is itching to try. There's an arcade and a restaurant there. Or if you are into history, visit the Greene County Museum, located in the former home of Arkansas Governor J. Marion Futrell. The museum probably has some surprises for you. Vicki and I carried her grandson there to see the Paragould Meteorite, and I totally enjoyed it. I wasn't allowed to be there, so I had to be carried by Vicki. Another plus!

If you just have to get outdoors, start with the 8 Mile Creek Trail. You can even take your furry friend (or he can take you, depending on who's Alpha). Then head to Crowley's Ridge State Park to pick up an Arkansas State Park Passport. As you tour a state park you can get your passport stamped. Your collected stamps

can be redeemed for different kinds of rewards. Anyway, while you are at Crowley's Ridge, check out the hiking trails, fishing lake, and the amphitheater. Did you know Crowley's Ridge was one of the first six state parks in Arkansas, built in 1933? Amazing what an old jail dog can pick up on Trivia Night!!

Other state parks in our area that you need to check out:

\*Jacksonport SP: Located near Newport at the confluence of the White and Black rivers, this area saw fighting in the Civil War. This park has a river boardwalk that is just perfect for your canine companion. It also has a swim beach and a playground.

\*Davidsonville Historic SP: Located near Pocahontas, this park has a brand new visitors' center with a replica of an 1820s hunter-trapper flat boat and displays of finds from archaeological digs of Old Davidsonville. The digs continue at the park and are uncovering more streets and foundations, as well as the artifacts. Lester's trivia: Davidsonville was the site of Arkansas' first post office.

\*Powhatan SP: This park, located near Black Rock, has preserved six historic buildings that stand in their original 19th century locations. One of the buildings is a school, so you might just skip that one!!



\*Parkin Archaeological SP: This park preserves a Mississippian Period American Indian village located here from A.D. 1000-1550. Archaeologists also uncovered evidence that Hernando De Soto was here for several months in 1541. A little more trivia: De Soto was the first European to see the Mississippi River. Parkin has a neat museum of found artifacts and some replicas of Indian and Spanish weapons that are totally hands ON!

If you decide you've had enough of the great outdoors, you can always watch basketball and maybe even start a pool. I'm doing this at the dog park this year. We'll see how smart those Shepherds really are.

Enjoy the month, and remember to leash up your pup and take him/her on a big adventure.

Your Pal,  
*Lester*

*Glen Sain*  
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Tasabah was shaped by strong women. Her grandmother, Estelle, was postmaster and worked in the family store in the Black Oak-Caraway area. Then came World War II. While her husband served overseas and with a young son at home, Estelle didn't just wait, she bought a farm, something nearly unheard of for a woman in those days. Her mother, raised alongside three brothers, wasn't any softer. After college, she and Tasabah's father moved over 1,000 miles away to teach on the Navajo reservation. There, her mother had a young woman in her class named Tasabah, which roughly translates to War Woman. That became her daughter's name. With women like that behind her, there was never much doubt she'd live up to it.

Her father influenced the rest. Wherever he went, she went. She'd fall asleep against his leather jacket at cattle auctions with the auctioneer's

chant in the background. It never occurred to her it was something she herself would do one day.

After college, Tasabah went to work at the local Sears store owned by the man who would become her husband, John. But something kept pulling at her. She felt called to build something of her own, and looking back, she'll tell you it was a God thing. As the auction business found its footing, John took notice. He sold the Sears store, earned his auction license, appraiser's license, and real estate license, and joined her. Together they built something neither could have imagined alone.

Being one of the first female auctioneers in Arkansas was not easy. Local established auctioneers wouldn't extend her the same opportunities they offered others, even when she offered to work for free. One pulled her off the auction block mid-call and told the crowd he'd hate to listen to that woman's voice all day. Her son Taylor says she always told him she was going to feel sorry for that man one day.

There's the War Woman.

She and John earned the highest designation in the auction industry, their company was named Marknet Alliance's Auction Company of the Year, Tasabah was honored as a Top Ten Woman Auctioneer in the country, and they received USA Today's Auction Marketing Award. On just

her second auction, a steaming July afternoon in Paragould, in a dress, surrounded by cowboy-hat-wearing ringmen, she made national headlines breaking fine art records previously set by Sotheby's.

Then came farm auctions. A family farm, multiple heirs, a neighbor who had already offered appraised value. The family took it to auction. When the gavel fell, that offer looked like a starting point, not a finish line. They had shifted the entire Greene County land market, and everyone in the room knew exactly what had happened.

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# DR. HEIDI BANSE

## Making History Today

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

The highly anticipated Arkansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine is set to have its first class of students this fall, and Dr. Heidi Banse is excited to be at the helm as dean of the new college.

"I feel very honored to be entrusted with our college of veterinary medicine," Heidi said. "It's a wonderful opportunity to be able to build up a program from the beginning. I couldn't be more excited to have this opportunity to build a program from the ground up."

Class size for the vet school is slated to be 120, with half of those coming from Arkansas. Pending accreditation allowing the first cohort to be in the fall of 2026, the first group would graduate in 2030. "In 2030 alone, that's 60 Arkansas students that we're turning out into our Arkansas community to serve our needs," Heidi said. "So we're really excited about being able to start that process."

Heidi, who grew up in Montana, said she always had hunting dogs and then got into sled dogs when she was in high school. "That just kind of centered my life around animals," she said. "Moving on through my undergraduate degree, veterinary school became the obvious direction for where to go."

In vet school, she developed an appreciation for animals with a purpose, completing her undergraduate degree at Montana State University, her DVM at Washington State University and an internship at the University of Georgia.

"I really did appreciate that working aspect of animals having a job and so that's what kind of transitioned me toward equine medicine, so I did a large animal internship at Georgia and then a residency at Oklahoma State University," Heidi said. "I also did my PhD there at the same time. Those

concurrent programs can be a lot, but it was good – I got it all done."

She went on to be a faculty member at the University of Calgary in Alberta for four and a half years before moving to Louisiana State University for seven years, where she was on faculty and started her transition to educational leadership. "After three years at Louisiana State University, I kind of grew my passion for education and became director of education, then

associate dean for educational strategy, which was my job for two years before I came here."

Heidi said the need for the vet school has been very apparent since her arrival at A-State 18 months ago, as area residents have expressed difficulty finding a large animal vet and needs across the state have been discussed, including 10 counties in Arkansas that as of a year ago had no veterinarian.

"There are counties across our state in multiple areas that are designated as underserved areas from a veterinary health needs perspective," she said. "That's a federal designation. Certainly we're an agricultural state. That's a huge part of our economy, so it's really important that we're able to attend to those animals' needs in the future."

While the vet school will help fill long term needs, there are also plans in the works to start meeting those needs right away. "We're starting up an ambulatory service here in town that will serve our equine and food animal needs," Heidi said. "We've got a double-boarded surgeon and sports medicine specialist for horses that has joined our faculty and then we have a food animal internal medicine specialist or livestock specialist that has also joined our faculty and they will be, hopefully in about the next month, starting up this ambulatory service to help provide for our local community needs today."

Heidi said a teaching mentor along with a research faculty member at the University of Calgary helped guide her path when she was starting her career in education and made sure she understood the value of hard work and collaboration. That collaboration continued at LSU and now at A-State. "Here, I've had a really outstanding team, that I'm so thankful they bought in early to an entrepreneurial venture. You know you've got to have courage to do that," she said.

By this summer the school will have 17 faculty on board, plus at least four staff members. "All of these people have bought into this vision of building this vet school and I think so far, we have a great team spirit and a team that gets whatever needs to get done done," she said.

The leadership team includes Dr. Len Fry, senior associate dean, who has been involved in the development of the vet school since 2019 and was chair of the search committee that selected Heidi as dean. "He makes sure everything runs smoothly and all the processes run through and all the things that I don't know about this university, having just moved in, he just make sure it goes," she said. "So I just say, 'Len, can you get this done?' and he gets it done.

She also offered praise for Dr. Wynne DiGrassie, associate dean for clinical programs; Dr. Sarah Hooper, associate dean for admissions, students and research; and Dr. Phillip Johnson, associate dean for professional education. "Ultimately the beautiful thing about our team is everybody – sometimes I feel like they're all doing 98 percent other duties as assigned – but



everyone's bought in, everyone's part of the team and everyone's lifting this up. And so again, when I reflect back on my experiences, the support I got and the mentorship I got early on I think have enabled me to develop into what I like to think of as a supportive leader of others with the ability to leverage the strengths of the team and build off those," Heidi said. "It's been a journey of a lifetime and it wouldn't be that way without my team."

She said an extension of that is the support she has received from her family.

"My husband homeschools my daughter and shuttles her back and forth to gym and does all of those things that often fall to the role of the mother, but he has taken on all of those responsibilities that have enabled me to do all the things that I need to do as a dean. So the support of that family unit ... you know my daughter being willing to relocate from Louisiana and leave her friends and all of those things to come here and support this goal. That all makes this possible."

Heidi said animals are also a big part of home life for herself, her husband, Caleb, and 10-year-old daughter, Esse.

"We're an animal-centered family," she said. "My husband also grew up with sled dogs. My daughter actually got into goats when we were in Louisiana so now we've got four goats. We've got three hunting dogs, as well, on a small little three and half acre farm. So it's not a big farm, but it does keep us busy and does keep us engaged with the animals."

When Heidi signed her contract in May of 2024, plans were already under way, but she said some adjustments were made prior to construction beginning. With LSU having just built a new clinical skills lab and classrooms undergoing renovations to support newly launched curriculum, Heidi said that background was something she was grateful



she was able to bring with her.

"I had some experience with some educational renovations, so I kind of had a vision of what I thought we needed, building on my experiences with LSU," she said. "About half our building is laboratory."

That lab space, in addition to the 240-acre animal science farm, will provide students with hands-on experiences, especially during their first three years of study. Some upgrades are planned at the farm, including a bovine barn with head gates and a hydraulic chute, as well as an equine facility with eight sets of stocks and three stalls.

Heidi noted it is important for students to get comfortable moving animals in and out of these spaces. "It's one thing if a horse is already sitting in a stocks and you've got to go up and do something, but if you've got to go catch it in a stall or go catch it in a pen and bring it in and put it in a stocks ... all those parts about handling animals is really important to being a veterinarian. You've got to be comfortable with all those aspects."

With a goal to produce day-one ready veterinarians who are ready to meet mixed animal needs in rural practices, the vet school curriculum will expose students to a variety of experiences.

Continued ➡

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# WE BUILD to support our communities

Nabholz is proud to partner with A-State to construct the College of Veterinarian Medicine, the first of its kind in the state.

Dr. Heidi Banse will lead this pioneering program to help train the next generation of veterinarians, just as Nabholz is committed to supporting those making a difference in our communities.

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“Our students need to be comfortable working across the breadth of species so it’s important that they can handle horses and cattle and not just small animals,” Heidi said. “They need to do small animals too, don’t get me wrong, it’s all the species, but one of the things that we’ve seen in



veterinary education over the past decade is that students don’t always come in from a farm background, so what I want to make sure of in our educational program is that students are choosing their scope of practice because that’s what they love and want to do, not choosing away from a scope of practice because they’re afraid to work with cattle. That shouldn’t be a reason not to do that. We need to train them across all species and then choose what you love. You don’t have to love cattle, that’s OK, but you shouldn’t not choose them because you’re scared. So giving them hands on experiences starting in year one and making sure they are comfortable before they go into practice is really important to us.”

The first three years of a student’s studies in A-State’s vet program will be mainly spent on campus using competency-based curriculum. The fourth year is comprised of 48 weeks of clinical rotations. Four weeks will be on campus, overseen by faculty, and each student will also complete two weeks at a local emergency clinic, Allied Animal ER.

“All of the students will rotate through on emergency,” Heidi said, noting that faculty will help staff up the clinic currently being manned by local vets on Friday through Sunday evenings, so that it will be open Monday through Sunday evenings. “Their remaining rotations are all throughout Arkansas, Southern Missouri, Western Tennessee, with the goal being that we want our students to see the common conditions and do the common procedures that they will be doing when they enter practice.”

Heidi said she believes A-State’s model will better prepare students than being in a teaching hospital – where often cases are more difficult and students don’t get as many hands on opportunities. Plus it will expose them to a variety of private practices.

“A lot of these practices are looking for their next associate, so it’s a two-week working interview, rather than a one-day standard interview,” she said. “It also gives opportunity for the student to see where they want to practice, and the practitioner to see ‘will the student work in my practice?’”

Heidi said having everyone on board on campus and in the community has helped them be able to move forward as quickly as they have.

“Everyone is on board with what we are trying to create, so that just makes this process go quickly and smoothly,” she said. “We are very fortunate with the level of support we have and certainly that is true across the Jonesboro community and across the state of Arkansas. There’s just a lot of recognition of the fact that this is coming and just so much support across our practitioners, people doing whatever they can. We are a community-centered model, without the support of our practices, without the support of our institution, we couldn’t do this alone. So that’s been so important to our progress to date and our success to date. It’s an amazing place to be able to build this up.”

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There is no question that back injuries are a major cause of work time loss and disability. Often as not, it hurts a sufferer in the pocketbook, as well as the back.

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If you're suffering from back pain, see your doctor of chiropractic as a FIRST RESORT. If necessary, he or she will not hesitate to refer you to an M.D. If not, treatment without drugs or surgery may get you back on your feet



*Dr. John Bibb*

quickly and painlessly, without a prolonged period of recuperation.

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## Are there changes to the Child Tax Credit and other credits?

Families will see meaningful updates to several tax credits this year, including a larger Child Tax Credit with an increased refundable portion that allows more households to receive money back even if they owe little or no tax.

The Additional Child Tax Credit expands alongside it, helping lower income families benefit more fully.

Inflation adjustments also raise income limits for the Earned Income Tax Credit and education credits, allowing more taxpayers to qualify.

While the Child and Dependent Care Credit



*Chastity Mott & Anita Soltero*

returns to its pre-pandemic structure, it still offers relief for qualifying child care expenses.

Overall, these changes strengthen support for working families and students.



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*Carrie Tate*

Patients rarely report cravings between treatments, and they do not experience physical withdrawal symptoms.

If a patient chooses to stop treatment, they can do so without physiological distress.

## Do I really need a title insurance policy?

Title insurance protects homeowners from problems that happened before they ever purchased the property, and those problems can surface years after closing including: unreleased mortgages or liens from previous owners; unpaid property taxes or contractor bills; boundary or survey disputes; errors in deeds or public records; forgery, fraud, or impersonation; and unknown or missing heirs who later claim ownership.

These issues are rare, but when they happen, they can be devastating – and without an owner's policy, the cost falls entirely on you. Many buyers assume they're covered because the lender requires title insurance. But the lender's policy protects only the lender.

Real estate transactions involve multiple



*Van Winton*

parties, decades of ownership history, and thousands of documents. For a single, one-time premium, you secure peace of mind, legal defense, and financial protection for as long as you own your home. When you consider the potential risks versus the relatively small cost, the real question is: Can you afford not to have title insurance?



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### As a Seller - How can I help make the inspection go well?

As the seller you are in control of putting your best foot forward.

There are several simple things that you can do to avoid problems during the inspection.

If you have a drippy faucet- fix it. A lot of the time it can be as simple as a washer replacement.

If there is a socket for a light bulb make sure it has a working bulb.

If there is an outlet - make sure it works.



*Sandra Kelley*

Problems that have become background noise for you will be noticed by the buyer's home inspector and they will notice them. Addressing them upfront will make the transaction move along smoother.

### We are heading to the beach - what should I know about sun safety before this trip?

UV rays can damage the skin even on cloudy days, and exposure is greater at the beach due to the reflection from sand and water. The CDC and American Academy of Dermatology recommends using a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Creams are ideal to ensure even coverage. Apply sunscreen all over generously at least 15 minutes before going out to the beach, and reapply every 2 hours, or immediately after swimming or sweating. Water-resistant sunscreen is especially important for beach trips. Don't forget to apply to those commonly missed areas like the ears, scalp, neck, top of feet, and lips.



*Courtney Stewart*  
APRN

For the best protection, sunscreen should be combined with other sun-safe habits. Seek shade during peak sun hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), wearing wide-brimmed hats, UV-blocking sunglasses, and/or lightweight protective clothing can significantly reduce UV exposure.

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*Brittany Barnett*

medical Nurse Practitioner at the Methodist Children's Behavioral Hospital and also see patients there during the day.

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### What can I do to grow my business with minimal time?

We all get busy and marketing or planning business strategies get pushed to the back burner. But every growing business must have continuous marketing.

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*Dina Mason*

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# Sounds of Spring

BY CHUCK LONG

## WILD TURKEY GOBBLES



When the seasons of the year are mentioned, certain things immediately come to mind. The heat of summer, the crisp mornings of fall, the snowy days of winter and the freshness of spring are some of the more common thoughts. Thoughts might also drift to certain events, locales or even smells that are common with each season.

One group of things that comes to my mind is the sounds of the outdoors from each segment of the year. Water splashing alongside an aluminum boat or the sizzle of food on the grill are fun summertime sounds. The clatter of falling leaves and the faint sounds of migrating waterfowl fill the fall skies.

The winter is marked by the silence of snowfall or the wail of wind through bare trees. Spring is marked by some of the best sounds of the year. The sound of gloves popping as kids play catch or a distant thunderstorm signify warmer days and a season of rebirth as a world comes back to life. One of the most distinct, iconic sounds of spring thrills the outdoorsman and generates a desire to get out in the woods. That sound is the rolling, echoing gobble of a wild turkey.

Arkansas is home to a good population of Eastern wild turkeys and several hunters who pursue those birds. Much like other game animals in Arkansas, the turkeys of our state have seen their ups and downs. Early records indicate a strong population of turkeys across the state as the first settlers arrived here. But land clearing and market hunting took a toll on the numbers and populations dwindled heading into the twentieth century. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, beginning from its inception in 1915, tried several different techniques to improve turkey numbers. The story of success was lengthy and winding, but regulations and restocking efforts have helped turkeys regain their foothold across the state.

The pursuit of the wild turkey drives the lives of many Natural State hunters throughout the spring season. Early mornings, convenience store food and long drives are often part of the daily pursuit of a gobbling turkey. But those inconveniences are minor obstacles as hunters try to get in front of a gobble. One of my longtime hunting buddies, David Wilcox, pursues gobblers at their farm in the Ozark foothills, as well as in other turkey haunts across the state. I have been fortunate to enjoy some great hunts with David and have learned a lot from him as a turkey hunter. Here are a few things I have picked up from our time in the woods.

Turkeys roost in trees and gobblers often welcome the morning with a gobble while still on the limb. This might be one or two reluctant gobbles, or a gobble with every breath, depending on the mood of the turkey. A vital skill of any turkey hunter is to be able to listen to a gobbling turkey and ascertain his location and his attitude. This skill is developed with time in the woods and David has put in the time. He can often precisely locate and course the possible path of a turkey through a few gobbles. Get too close to a turkey and the game is over, but a careful approach and proper setup can tilt the odds slightly in the hunter's favor.



Once a gobble flies down, usually just as the day is breaking, he may continue to gobble to try to attract a hen. A hunter tries to reverse the game and get the bird to look for them. This is where calling comes into play. David is a very crafty caller who carries several tricks in his bag. But his simplistic and minimalist approach to calling generates more success than a certain type of call.

Much of what I have learned from him can be found in one quick story from one of our hunting experiences. David and I found a vocal gobble on the roost one morning and he told me to position myself a few yards in front of him. We sat down and he clucked a few times, very quietly, and then sat quietly. He then scratched in the leaves a few times to imitate a feeding turkey. The turkey quit gobbling and David whispered, "He is on his way." In just a few minutes a red head appeared in the dim woods and began working our way. I was able to get my gun on the turkey and when he got within about twenty-five yards, I pulled the trigger and put him in the bag.

Contrary to many of the hunters appearing on social media, David is a very quiet caller and hunts very patiently. He says once that turkey hears one sound, he knows your location and if he is interested, he will try to investigate the source of the call.

Many hunters go out and listen at first light and if nothing sounds off, head back to the truck before the day gets very old. David has shown me that patience to stay in the woods is a key to success. I have been fortunate to take several turkeys in the midmorning hours due to this advice.



One other thing that helps with David's success is active land management. Their property is actively managed with prescribed burns, forest management and food plots. These efforts help the turkey population and his knowledge of the habitat helps tip the scales a bit in his favor.

Natural State turkeys offer a great opportunity for hunters who want to enjoy the spring woods. The populations rise and fall based on weather, habitat and other factors, but decent populations can be found across the state on both public and private property. Much of the access to state owned public land is controlled by a permit system, but there are large amounts of public land any hunter can access. The Ozark and Ouachita National forests offer great opportunities. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has taken a very proactive approach to managing turkey populations through seasons and limits. Please check [www.agfc.com](http://www.agfc.com) to find information.

I am looking forward to getting out in the woods and enjoying the blooming dogwoods and the sounds of spring, especially the gobble of a wild turkey. 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](mailto:cflong2002@yahoo.com).

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For some indoor fun and games, check out Hijinx: The Funtivity Spot, which offers bowling, laser tag, an arcade and a ropes course, as well as a traditional snack bar.

The AGFC Forrest L Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center offers a variety of indoor and outdoor activities, including interactive exhibits. Be sure to check their schedule for workshops they may be holding that would fit into your plans.

The Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library also offers a variety of activities, including special StayCation events planned during Spring



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Break. You don't have to wait for Spring Break to take advantage of the library's free services, though.

For a unique shopping experience, be sure to include a trip to Double B Vintage Market, a vendor market with a wide variety of vintage, antique and new items.

A visit to Ultimate Air Trampoline Park is a guaranteed good time with areas for trampoline play, as well as activity areas for games, such as dodge ball.

Arkansas State University offers great opportunities for those who are history buffs or art enthusiasts with the ASU Museum and the Bradbury Art Museum, both of which have free admission. Stop in

and peruse the exhibits in climate-controlled comfort!

Art lovers can also enjoy the many examples of public art scattered throughout Downtown Jonesboro, as well as pocket parks that have been added to the historic area.

A stop at Margaret's From-Scratch Kitchen is sure to be a highlight of the day. Grab a Strawberry Dubai Cup to enjoy while you stroll the downtown area, or dine in to experience any of the breakfast or lunch favorites fresh from the kitchen.

While making plans for your StayCation, don't miss out on a visit to Gamer's Haven, where you can join a game or pick out a game to take home and play with the family!

# StayCation

# Walnut Ridge

**H**istory, nature and small-town charm are all waiting for you in Walnut Ridge.

A stroll through Walnut Ridge's Downtown Historic District is a great place to start your StayCation with lots to explore including eateries, shops and tributes to the area's music history.

Beatles Park offers photo opportunities, along with interactive activities, as the free attraction celebrates the town's unique connection to The Beatles, who made a brief historic stop at the Walnut Ridge Airport.

Just a block away, next to the railroad, you can check out the Guitar Walk at Cavanaugh Park. The 115-foot-long concrete guitar, complete with frets and strings, includes interactive plaques around the edge that pay tribute to the early legends who gave birth to Rock n' Roll at venues along Rock n' Roll Highway 67 that runs through the area.

If the outdoors has your heart, consider a stop at Stewart Park for



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LAWRENCE COUNTY RAIL-TRAIL

a picnic or some time walking or biking on a trail or enjoying the playground. For a longer hike or biking trip be sure to check out the Lawrence County Rail-Trail that stretches through Walnut Ridge, with easy access to start your trek near Williams Baptist University.

After some time outside, you might want to head indoors with a stop at Reflections Flea Market for a one-of-a-kind shopping experience. With over 183 vendors, Reflections has everything from antiques to new items. Reflections was founded on Christian values and is a locally veteran owned business with profits going back to the community to support special events and other local efforts. Their motto is, "Your support allows us to support your communities."

A stop you definitely don't want to miss is a tour of the Wings of Honor Museum, located adjacent to the Walnut Ridge Airport. The highly-rated aviation and military history museum preserves the legacy of the WWII era Walnut Ridge Army Flying School and related aviation history. Admission is free, but donations help the museum continue its efforts.

Just up the road from the Wings of Honor Museum, you will find Williams Corner on Highway 67 near the entrance to the Williams Baptist University campus. Spring break is the perfect time to refresh your home and shop with purpose at Williams Corner. Not only is the store filled with timeless pieces that bring new life to your space, but every purchase supports the Williams Works Program at WBU — helping students who are working their way through college and preparing to be future community leaders.



WINGS OF HONOR MUSEUM

# Wings of Honor Museum



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**HUGE BOOK SALE ENDS MARCH 28th!**

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wingsofhonor.org

# StayCation Paragould

Paragould is known as the Friendly City and is ready to welcome Northeast Arkansas residents who are looking for a StayCation with a mix of historic charm and modern amenities.

A stop into the Greene County Museum will be a delight for antique enthusiasts, as well, but these are just for looking. In addition to traditional exhibits about Paragould and Greene County history, you can also see the famous meteorite that landed in the Paragould area in 1930.

If shopping is on your mind, Gracie's Attic Premium Flea Market and Antique Mall, just south of Paragould on Highway 49, offers a variety of merchandise with something for everyone.

If you are looking for fun and games, there is no better place than Let's Roll with bowling, laser tag, an arcade and more. You can also enjoy a snack or a full meal from Let's Eat, located inside Let's Roll.

A stroll through Downtown Paragould will also offer opportunities to check out the murals that grace many of the historic buildings and snap a photo in Art Alley. While in the downtown area, be sure to pop



GREENE COUNTY MUSEUM

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SOMETHING PAWSITIVE

in at Something Pawsitive to cuddle a cat and maybe even find your fur-ever friend to adopt and take home with you.

Next Level Sports & Play offers contactless batting cages with the ability to pay for your session over the phone and receive a code to enjoy some time practicing your hitting. Next Level also offers party rentals for their bounce house space, but that requires more advance reservations, so plan ahead!

There is no shortage of outdoor fun to be had, such as fishing at Reynolds Park or playing pickleball at Harmon Park. Nearby Crowley's Ridge State Park at Walcott offers a variety of activities, including beautiful hiking trails and the perfect place to enjoy a picnic lunch.



REYNOLDS PARK

The 8 Mile Creek Trail offers a great option for those looking to put some miles behind them, or a fun way to get from one city park to another as it connects many of them.

Be sure to stop into the Juniper Tree Meadery to enjoy a flight of honey wines made from local ingredients and one of their charcuterie boards, or pick up something to take home with you.



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# Community Effort

## MAKING WISHES COME TRUE

Park Maxwell of Paragould continues to defy the odds as he recently celebrated his 10th birthday in January. Living each day to the fullest, his cheerful heart was granted a Wish through Make-A-Wish Mid-south on January 30, 2026.

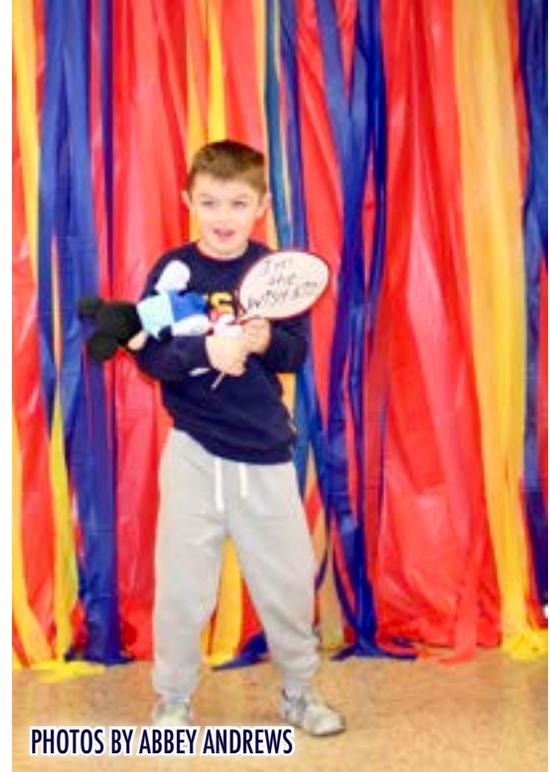
Park was diagnosed with Trisomy-18 at the age of 9 months. Also known as Edwards Syndrome, the severe genetic disorder is

caused by an extra copy of a chromosome 18, leading to significant developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, and in most cases death within the first year of life.

Park has endured countless surgeries, seizures, and continues to have breathing difficulties while he sleeps due to sleep APNEA. He was two and a half years old when he discovered walking; intensive therapies were required to get Park on his feet.



Thanks to Make-A-Wish, Park celebrated a dream of getting to meet some of his favorites, Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, and Simba (just to name a few) with his family, New Haven Baptist church family, teachers, friends, and Make-A-Wish Mid-South as he was granted his wish to go to Disney World.



PHOTOS BY ABBEY ANDREWS

Park's wish was made possible by Northeast Arkansas donations at the Annual Ag for Autism and Make-A-Wish auction that is held annually in Paragould. "We are so excited that Make-A-Wish Midsouth was able to grant Park's wish," Abby Gray said. "He deserved this trip, as the world needs a little Park sprinkled at Disney World."

During the Wish Celebration, Park was over the moon excited when he found out he was going to meet Mickey Mouse. Getting to eat Mickey Mouse cupcakes and cake, corn dogs, popcorn, and nachos with all his favorite people to celebrate his wish being granted just added to the magic.

Park had never flown on an airplane before; so getting off the ground was an adventure he could definitely handle. His absolute favorite part of the trip was meeting Mickey Mouse and Santa Claus at Give Kids the World Village. He loved eating at Cafe Chef Mickey because he got to meet everyone from the Mickey Mouse Club!

Park has an adventurous spirit and is not afraid of much; so he loved the Tea Cup ride at Walt Disney World and riding the trains at Sea World.

Abby encourages the community to continue to support Make-A-Wish and Ag for Autism at this year's dinner auction, set for April 4th at the Paragould Community Center. Doors open at 5, dinner is at 5:30 and the auction starts at 6. For more information on the event, call Cliff Carter at 870-215-5751.

"We are thankful for our community making wishes come true," she said.

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# MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE



## Vacation Tips to Remember this Spring Break

**S**pring has sprung and while many students are considering a staycation, other students are considering traveling for a spring break vacation. Celebrating spring break is exciting. Make sure it is the best of times - not the worst of times. School may be out, but do your homework. Consider these quick tips:

**Once you're there** — You've finally arrived at your spring break destination. Let the party begin! A great party means good memories and using good judgment. Don't forget that actions have consequences. Poor choices and risky behavior can be dangerous.

**Customs** — Check out the customs, laws and rules in the area you are visiting. What

may be considered suitable in one area may not be deemed appropriate in another. Such a response as, "But I didn't know," usually doesn't play very well in certain situations. Find out the rules and regulations before you arrive. This can circumvent problems later. Leave your travel itinerary with friends or family. In case anything happens, good or bad, this type of contact information is critical.

**Two by twos** — Travel in pairs. We're not talking about Noah's Ark. We're talking about safety precautions. Never travel alone. Always have a contact. Whether going to the beach, a club, a party or shopping - go with at least one of your friends. Keeping an eye on each other can range from getting out of an unpleasant or uncomfortable situation, all the way to saving your life. Don't rely only on your cell phone. Cell phones often lose power or service. If you do get separated make sure you have a contact time or meeting place to keep in touch.

**Watch out** — Don't be a target. Don't give out your hotel or hotel room number. Don't wear expensive jewelry. Don't go places with someone you have just met - no matter how charming they may be. Don't be taken advantage of. Don't wear a bull's eye on your back.

**Savvy travelers** — New places mean new faces. Be aware of your surroundings. With the fun and excitement of your spring break destination, it's easy to be lulled into a false sense of security. All these new places seem so fun and all these new faces seem so friendly. It is, however, wise to be cautious when you are in a new environment. Being offered drinks or food by someone you don't know very well can be dangerous. A savvy traveler uses common sense. If you are unfamiliar with your destination don't travel alone. Travel with those who know about the locations, accommodations, rules and regulations. Going to new places and meeting new people is all part of the wonderful travel experience. Make sure you do it right!

### Quote of the Day:

"You may be taking a break from school, but wherever you are, the learning never ends."

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 [lmooreparagould@gmail.com](mailto:lmooreparagould@gmail.com).





# Taking the Plunge

## SUPPORTING SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Valentine's Day was also Polar Plunge day in Greene County as individuals and teams joined together to raise over \$11,000 for Special Olympics with the annual event at Crowley's Ridge State Park. Awards were presented for best costumes and most money raised prior to participants jumping in the ice-cold water.



PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN HUNT

**Scatter Creek Fightin' Toms**

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Paragould Community Center  
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For more information, contact: Kyle Franzen 870.530.2320 or Jarrod Kersey 870.476.2549



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# National Puppy Day

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

A REASON TO CELEBRATE



**M**arch 23rd is National Puppy Day! In honor of that, I'd like to go over some tidbits that are helpful if bringing a new puppy into your family. In addition to vaccinations, I'd like to use this article to focus on the importance of spaying and neutering your pets, proper nutrition and how kennel training helps with house training.

Vaccines are probably the single most important thing you can do for your puppy. I understand we all get busy, but if you get a puppy - this is a must! Vaccinating your puppy stimulates an immune response in its body that helps to fight common infectious diseases found in the environment, especially viral. Parvovirus, oftentimes abbreviated "Parvo", is a common viral disease that causes severe diarrhea, vomiting and lethargy in puppies and can be fatal - however, if your puppy has been properly immunized by a licensed veterinarian, the chances of it contracting this illness are rare, and death is much rarer in vaccinated pets. Like most viruses, there is no cure for Parvo; the doctor can generally only provide supportive care through IV fluids and IV medications. However, there has recently been released a new drug that is a monoclonal antibody for Parvo - this injection, while not super cost effective, is giving so much hope to many puppies that might otherwise have

died without it.

Next up: spaying and neutering. Spaying and neutering prevents unwanted litters, certain diseases and cancers, and it helps to manage overpopulation. I have been asked many times if it is better for the pet to have at least one heat cycle, or to have one litter, or to be bred at least once. The answer is no - it is best for them to be spayed (females) or neutered (males) around the age of 6-9 months. Spaying in females is actually an ovariectomy - which is removal of the ovaries and the uterus. Neutering in males is called orchidectomy and is the removal of the testicles. With females, their incision is made into their abdomen, therefore rest with no running or jumping is a must to ensure they heal completely and minimize their risk for dehiscence of the surgical incision or surgical site infection. The male dog's incision is made onto the skin near the scrotum while the male cat's incision is generally made on the scrotum, and shouldn't require as long of a rest period post-surgery, but still rest for 5-7 days and monitoring of the surgical incision is critical.

Proper nutrition in puppies has been made much easier over the years. It's simple; offer a complete and balanced puppy food. How do you know if it's complete and balanced? It will say it on the bag. If the bag of puppy food does

not say that it is, then it is not. If the puppy food is complete and balanced, then this is all they need to get their nourishment. Puppy vitamin supplements, although very popular, are not widely needed. There are some exceptions to this, of course, but generally healthy puppies that receive a complete diet do not require vitamin supplementation. There have been many advancements in animal nutrition in recent years - some diets are even specific to not only the life stage of the animal but even to the breed of the dog or cat! For more information on a diet that is best for your puppy, call your local veterinarian, as all diets are not equal.

Last up is kennel training and its importance for housetraining. Kennel training takes patience, it's true, but it is the fastest way to housetrain your puppy. House training is all about helping to train them to use the bathroom in the desired location (typically outside in the yard) at the desired times. If they are kenneled, this helps to prevent them from having accidents until they can be taken outside to potty. Taking them outside to potty, as soon as they leave the kennel (not even letting them touch the ground in the house, but carried outside) helps to train them to go where they are supposed to. If they do not go potty, simply put them back in the kennel and try to take them out again a few minutes

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later, repeat this, if needed, until they go potty. Once they go potty, they are free to run and play in the house. After doing this, they learn quickly that they need to potty outside when you take them.

Puppies are work, but they are so much fun and bring such joy to our lives! Puppies are one of the brightest points in my every day. So even though there is a national puppy day, I take joy in celebrating puppies every day! I hope this article is helpful in guiding you in taking the best care possible for your family's puppy!

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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# Snow Filled SNAPSHOTS

Several inches of snow, followed by several inches of sleet, fell across the area at the end of January, with snow lingering into February. The result, a week with no school, and plenty of photo opportunities!

Premiere Magazine put out a call for photos on our Facebook page, and we had hundreds of submissions, a sampling of which we are sharing here.

To see all the submitted photos visit our Facebook page.



SUBMITTED BY LESLIE BENNETT



SUBMITTED BY MADELAYNE COLLINGSWORTH



SUBMITTED BY PATTY JENKINS



SUBMITTED BY GRACEN VALENCIA



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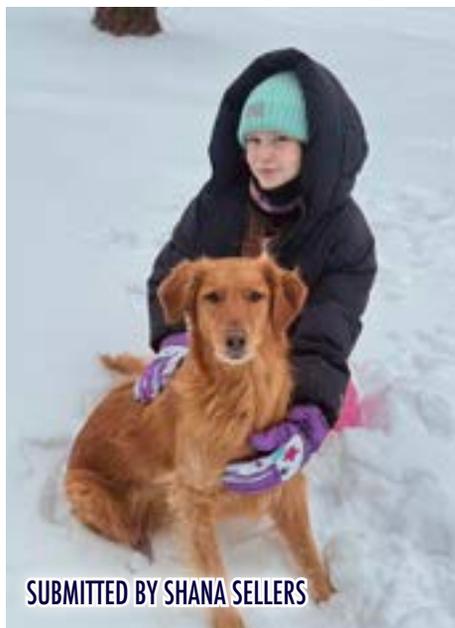
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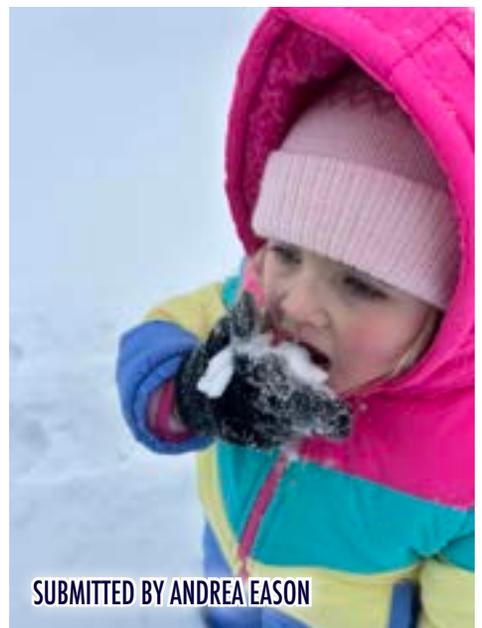
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<i>Sadie Pool &amp; Rex Jernigan</i> March 21, 2026	<i>Zoe Sloan &amp; Bralyn Owens</i> May 23, 2026
<i>Hailey Sparks and Braden Zrell</i> March 21, 2026	<i>Jenna Brittingham &amp; John Brongard</i> May 30, 2026
<i>Megan Holmes &amp; Will Gibson</i> April 11, 2026	<i>Jordan Mays &amp; Dylan Qualls</i> May 30, 2026
<i>Katie Bunch &amp; Jonathan Singleton</i> May 1, 2026	<i>Mallory Poe and Jade Craft</i> June 6, 2026

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# THINGS TO DO

## *In Downtown Paragould:*

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Attend a concert</b>      | <b>Take a yoga class</b>   |
| <b>Learn to dance</b>        | <b>Practice gymnastics</b> |
| <b>Enjoy a meal</b>          | <b>Be creative</b>         |
| <b>Browse the books</b>      | <b>Pet a cat</b>           |
| <b>Meet for drinks</b>       | <b>Admire the murals</b>   |
| <b>Walk your dog</b>         | <b>Host a party</b>        |
| <b>Strike a pose</b>         | <b>Get a massage</b>       |
| <b>Get a facial</b>          | <b>Watch the trains</b>    |
| <b>Shop Farmer's Market</b>  | <b>Attend church</b>       |
| <b>Work out</b>              | <b>Eat outdoors</b>        |
| <b>Participate in events</b> | <b>Share a sweet treat</b> |
| <b>Play games</b>            | <b>Go to the theatre</b>   |
| <b>Get married</b>           | <b>And More ....</b>       |

*More information about Downtown Paragould can be found at [downtownparagould.com](http://downtownparagould.com).*

# SAVE THE DATE UPCOMING EVENTS

## *March 6th-8th*

Fri/Sat 7:00 p.m.; Sat/Sun 2:00 p.m.  
Charlotte's Web  
Presented by Act II Performing Arts  
Downtown Collins Theatre

## *March 21st*

Saturday 1:00-6:00 p.m.  
Come Grow With Us  
Downtown Shopping Event  
Participating Merchants

## *March 21st*

Saturday 7:00 p.m.  
Rockin' The Night Away  
Downtown Collins Theatre

## *March 23rd*

Monday 7:00 p.m.  
KASU Bluegrass Monday  
Featuring The Kevin Prater Band  
Downtown Collins Theatre

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# RISKY vs. RELIABLE IT SERVICE PROVIDER

A reliable IT service provider ensures you can concentrate on growing your business. Knowing if your IT support is suitable can be challenging without expertise. This infographic outlines the expectations from a top-notch IT service provider, whether in-house or outsourced.



## RISKY IT SERVICE PROVIDER

Non-customized service contract

Offers standard packages

Reacts to issues as they arise  
(break-fix service model)

Acts when vulnerabilities are exposed

Provides one-off solutions  
that do not integrate

Aligns your technology with the  
solutions they have available

Responds to your questions or  
concerns according to their availability



## RELIABLE IT SERVICE PROVIDER

Evaluates your current IT environment  
before making any recommendations

Provides a customized solution based  
on your business's needs and budget

Delivers a prioritized plan for addressing  
problems in your IT environment

Proactively identifies technology risks

Centralizes your IT services

Aligns your technology  
with your business goals

Offers reliable and responsive  
customer service

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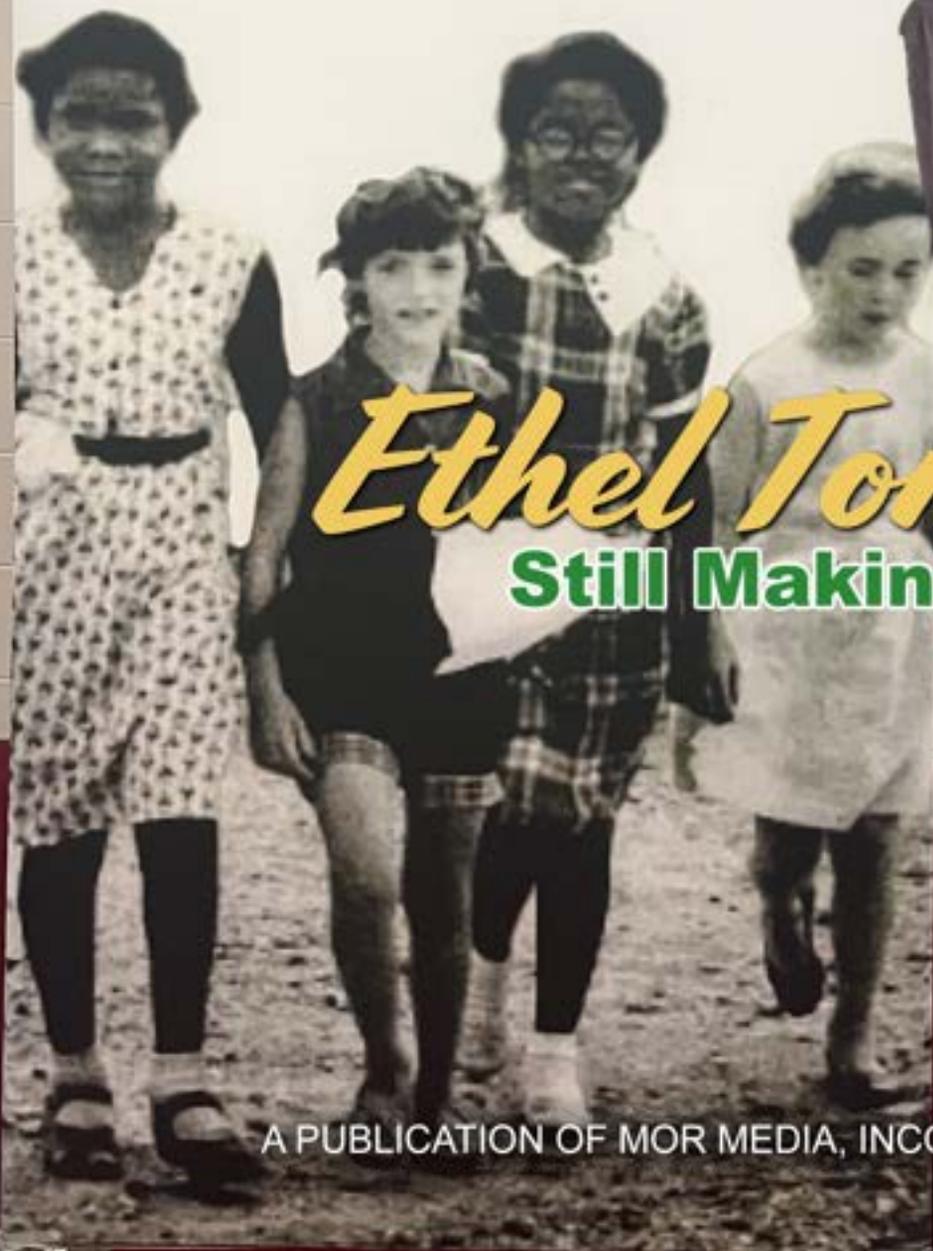
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*Ethel Tompkins*  
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# NIFTY NAILS *Brings Smiles*

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Sometimes sprucing up a bit can brighten a woman's day and when the Nifty Nails group gets finished with business on Monday's at Greene Acres Nursing Home in Paragould everyone leaves with a smile.

According to Activities Director Crystal Turner, volunteer nail



technician Dilma Barnhill has been showing up on campus almost every Monday for the past three years and GANH residents line up to accept her labor of love.

"We'll usually have between ten and fifteen pretty regularly," Crystal said, "but I think she's done as many as twenty. They can hardly wait to get down here. We don't schedule other activities during Nifty Nails; they have to do their nails, no question."

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As for Dilma, her participation gives her as much satisfaction as it does the residents. "I do it because it makes me feel better," she explained, "and everyone is so happy. It is a wonderful feeling to see them smile and be happy."

Residents enter the room and line up, getting any old polish removed, getting nails filed and clipped if necessary and then it just comes down to picking a color and extending hands in order to let Dilma work her magic.

"It's all about the smile," Crystal said. "They can't go out and get their nails done, so this is perfect. It puts this big smile on their faces and really shows the love."

Resident Norma Bowlin said getting her nails done "makes you feel more dignified, you know? It makes you look good and feel good, and kind of makes everything in your day all right. This is a good bunch of girls we have here, and this is something we all look forward to."



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# WOMEN MAKING HISTORY IN NEA EVERY DAY

BY KALIE HUNTZINGER  
DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES  
EAST ARKANSAS AREA AGENCY ON AGING

When we think of “Women in History,” we often picture names from textbooks, women who changed laws, led movements, or the rule breakers.



If you look around our corner of Arkansas, you’ll see that history is being made every single day. It’s happening in the quiet kitchens in Jonesboro and the small living rooms in Paragould. It’s made by the daughter who stops by before work to check on her mom, the neighbor who brings over a warm meal, and the professional caregivers who show up with a smile. It’s happening in senior centers where they can receive a sweet smile, and a warm conversation to help fight loneliness.

The truth is that women have always been at the heart and backbone of caregiving in our towns. They’re often the ones managing doctor’s appointments, the pill organizers, preparing meals, and having the tough conversations about what comes next. It’s hard, heavy work that doesn’t usually make the front page, but it changes lives.

We see these women every day at East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging. They are the former teachers, factory workers, farmers, and businesswomen who helped build this region, and now they’re the ones leaning on us and each other to keep going.

Our job is to make that load a little lighter. Whether it’s through our GUIDE program for dementia support, home care, home delivered meals, or just helping someone figure out the maze of Medicare, we’re here so nobody has to do this alone.

This Women’s History Month, we aren’t just looking back at the past. We’re celebrating the women right here in Northeast Arkansas who are keeping our seniors safe and our families together. It isn’t always glamorous, and it’s rarely easy, but it’s the most important history being written today. It’s written in patience, late nights, and the kind of love that shows up every single day.

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# READING *With Seniors*

BY GRETCHEN HUNT

Third-graders at Greene County Tech Elementary School are improving their reading skills while being a blessing to residents at Chateau on the Ridge thanks to a new program implemented by Assistant Principal Amy Charles called Reading With Seniors.

The students are visiting Chateau on a regular basis, according to Activities



Director Missy Orr. "They read to our seniors twice a month," she said. "Our residents love this time with the littles."



That feeling is mutual, according to Amy. "The kids benefit so much from just talking to these seniors."

"The idea of Reading with Seniors was really born from a need to get our students reading," Amy continued. "In today's time we're competing with so many screens/games that I really wanted to give them a purpose and so this idea came to me and I met with Missy Orr this summer and we were able to work out the logistics and get a plan together."

Amy said with such a low number of students reading on grade level, literacy has become a huge push in Arkansas, specifically in third grade because research says students need to have reading fundamentals by the end of third grade to be successful in grades to come.

"Reading aloud helps children develop fluency and expression in a real world setting," Amy said. "They choose their books weeks ahead so they are practicing long before we go, which is where building fluency comes in. And while giving our students a meaningful reading experience has been great, maybe even better is the conversations and laughter that these students are taking part in."

And so, as often is the case, a good plan has provided for a great

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experience.

"It truly has been magical," Amy said. "I know that sounds dramatic, but it's been better than I could've even imagined. The first time we went in November it brought tears to my eyes."



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# HEARING LOSS AND COGNITIVE DECLINE RESEARCH SHOWS CONNECTION

BY DR. LINDSAY WHITE, Au.D., CCC-A  
HARVEST HEARING CARE

Hearing loss is often thought of as simply an isolated ear problem, but hearing researchers have found a strong connection between untreated hearing loss and cognitive decline. Recent studies have shown that hearing loss, if left untreated, can significantly affect the brain and neurological function. Even mild hearing loss can double the risk of developing dementia, with risk increasing as hearing loss worsens. What is happening in the hearing and neurological systems to cause this association?



When sound input is reduced, the brain has to work harder to interpret information in conversation. A large amount of mental energy is needed in the moment to understand what speakers are saying. This extra cognitive load means fewer mental resources are available for information heard to be comprehended, stored in memory, called upon later for synthesis with other information, or utilized for problem-solving. As a result, a listener may experience mental fatigue and decreased cognitive processing speed.

Because participating in conversation can be frustrating and tiring for someone with hearing loss, many of these individuals frequently decline social invitations or isolate themselves when they do venture

to friend or family gatherings. This leads to fewer opportunities to learn information from one another and fewer opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions with others. Social isolation itself is a well-established risk factor for cognitive decline and dementia. When communication decreases, so does cognitive stimulation, an important component of maintaining good mental health.

As a part of the normal aging process, adults experience a natural loss of neural mass. Imaging of the brains of patients with long-term hearing loss has shown that untreated hearing loss may be associated with faster neurological atrophy, specifically in areas of the brain responsible for memory and language processing. Essentially, reduced auditory stimulation can lead to a weakening of neural pathways, negatively affecting how well the brain can process information.

Research suggests that treating hearing loss with appropriately fitted hearing aids can improve communication, reduce listening effort, and potentially slow cognitive decline in some individuals. Early identification and treatment are key, but it's never too late to address hearing loss and improve cognitive processing.

Research in this area is ongoing, and we are constantly learning more about the complex relationship between hearing and cognitive function. What we know so far is that recognizing and treating hearing loss is not just about hearing better, it's about supporting overall cognitive well-being and ultimately improving quality of life.

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# CONLEY RECEIVES NATIONAL HONOR BEST OF THE NEST

The Bungalows at Jonesboro was thrilled to celebrate one of their own recently after he was part of a company-wide contest through Phoenix Senior Living. Out of thousands of residents living at Phoenix Senior Living communities across the Southeast, Dr. Mark Conley was chosen as one of 10 residents to be awarded the “Best of the Nest” designation.

Mark was born in 1942 in Jonesboro and attended all-Black schools as a child, but was determined to rise beyond the limitations he faced. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, a master’s degree from New Mexico State University and a doctorate from Boston University.

The Bungalows at Jonesboro celebrated in a big way by inviting family, friends and representatives from the Phoenix Senior Living home office to attend the virtual ceremony where all of the PSL communities watched while his and the other nine winners’ stories were read.

Mark, who is known as “Mr. Positivity” at The Bungalows for his kindness, encouragement and unwavering optimism, was presented with a plaque and gifts during the ceremony. Following a special lunch shared with Mark’s special guests, a reception was held in his honor, complete with cake, punch, music provided by KFLO 102.9 FM and a visit from Jonesboro Mayor Harold Copenhaver.





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Dumpster-diving – thieves can rummage through trash, looking for bills or other papers with your personal information on them.

Identity theft – your name, Social Security number, bank account information, or credit card number used without your permission.

Impostor scams – thieves try to convince you to send money by pretending to be someone you know or trust.

Mail fraud – thieves may send letters asking you to send money or personal information.

Phishing - a scammer tries to trick you into giving out your personal information, such as passwords, credit card numbers, or bank account information.

Skimming – thieves can steal credit/debit card numbers by using a special storage device when processing your card.

Spoofing - a caller disguises the information

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### What can I do?

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Protect your Social Security number. Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet or write the number on a check.

Get creative. Don't use obvious passwords like your birth date, your mother's maiden name or your Social Security number.

Use security questions to verify your account. Examples of security questions are: What was your maternal grandmother's first name? What was the name of your first pet?

Set up roadblocks online. Log out of accounts and close browsers. Use firewalls, spyware and anti-virus software. Update frequently.

Allow notifications for log-in alerts. This can help you know if someone else is trying to access your account.

Shop at reputable businesses in-person or online. Keep records/receipts of your transactions.

Limit the cards you carry. If a card-reading

device looks as if it's been tampered with, don't swipe your card.

Hide it. Keep personal information in a secure place at home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help or are having work done in your house. Shred financial documents, paperwork, and mail with personal information before you discard them.

Monitor accounts and your credit report. View account information online and/or sign up for text alerts. Check your credit report at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). Contact the bank, credit union, creditor(s), and/or credit bureau(s) if you notice anything suspicious.

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## • HYDE

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This cottage is named after Wallace & Laura Jackson.

## • MITCHELL

This cottage is named after Dr. Bennie Mitchell.

## • SMALLING

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## • TUBERVILLE

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Residents at The Green House Cottages of Belle Meade in Paragould celebrated Valentine's Day with a variety of activities. From decorating cookies, to passing out Valentines, to enjoying a Valentine's meal together and enjoying flowers brought by friends and family there was plenty of love to share.



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# ETHEL TOMPKINS

## Still Making History

BY KARAN SUMMITT

It is a 70-year old story that remained buried until one woman dedicated herself to making it known. Her enthusiasm for sharing a firsthand experience of pivotal events in the history of Hoxie Schools led to community support and a facility that will continue to tell the story beyond her lifetime.

Ethel Mae Tompkins began her education in the one-room Hoxie Elementary Colored School. The white frame building had no indoor restroom facilities or running water. Textbooks were outdated hand-me-downs from area white schools, and the playground alternated between a dust bowl and a mud pit. Each morning a student toted an empty bucket to the nearest neighbor's house and filled it up with water for students to drink during the school day. All that changed in July of 1955.

On May 17, 1954, in *Brown v. Board of Education* the Supreme Court of the United States declared racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional. Unlike many other southern communities, the administration and leadership of Hoxie School System unanimously determined they would comply, agreeing with school superintendent K. E. Vance's words that it was "Morally right in the sight of God."

During a time when "colored school" parents in the south were suing local white school boards to force integration and white schools were looking for loopholes in the anti-segregation mandate, the Hoxie all-white school board initiated compliance. Initially a handful of parents threatened to boycott, but by the first day when 25 black students came to register, they were accompanied by a normal turnout of white students.

Ethel remembers it to be a mostly peaceful time, especially with the children. Hoxie was a rural school, composed of farm families. Ethel



recalls how black and white children were accustomed to playing with each other outside of school. They often walked to the same bus stop together, each one boarding the bus that delivered them to their respective school.

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Hoxie Schools was the first in Northeast Arkansas to integrate, a full three years before Little Rock Central High School admitted its first black students and 10 years before neighboring Walnut Ridge School system followed suit. The peaceful integration was short-lived. A July 25, 1955, story in LIFE Magazine covering the event brought Hoxie to national attention and along with it attracted agitation and protests from outsider groups such as the White Citizens' Council. The fall school session that same year was dismissed two weeks earlier than originally planned due to their presence.

Eventually Hoxie also became the first school system to be challenged in federal court by segregationists. The case that grew out of this conflict, commonly known as Brewer v. Hoxie, did more than protect integration in Hoxie. It helped establish a legal precedence that would be relied upon again and again in courts across the country.

In 1961, Ethel was the first black student to graduate from Hoxie. During the intervening years since 1955, many of the families left the area to look for employment, others dropped out of school to work. By that time, the 1957 events at Little Rock's Central High School had overshadowed Hoxie's integration, just as it has since then.

That is until Ethel Tomkins returned in 1990 to live in the Hoxie-Walnut Ridge community. A job at the Lawrence County Library led her to seek out articles documenting the historic events she had lived. Stories were sparse making the task difficult, but Ethel persevered, slowly building a portfolio and coming to realize that the people in the local community had little knowledge of Hoxie School System's important role in the history of integration. When students came to the library seeking research help for Central High's story, Ethel steered them to the events that happened in their own back yard. Before long she was being asked to speak to church and civic groups and school classes.



The 2015 PBS documentary Hoxie: The First Stand by David Appleby, a professor at the University of Memphis, helped the story to gain some national interest. In 2017-2018, Ethel's efforts to raise awareness about the Hoxie integration story led to the formation of Hoxie: The First Stand, a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Appleby graciously permitted the group to use the name associated with his documentary. Their first goal was to secure a building that would serve as a museum showcasing documents, stories, photos and

Continued ➡

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other artifacts related to the integration. Fortunately, when the Hoxie Eastern Star Masonic Lodge consolidated with the Walnut Ridge Masonic group, their facility became available. It's proximity near Hoxie Schools made it ideal. Fund-raisers, donations and generous help from the Hoxie Masonic Lodge toward the downpayment made it possible to purchase the building.

As with many things, COVID put museum plans on hold, leaving the board and advisory staff to pause for several years before rebooting their efforts in 2022. Tomkins freely admits the recent successful opening of the museum represents "lots of prayers and lots of begging!" Her passion to preserve Hoxie's role in the Civil Rights integration story stems from not only having lived it, but how deeply the events surrounding it were buried after the Little Rock Central High integration story garnered national attention.

A ribbon cutting for Hoxie: The First Stand Museum was held on February 10th. At that event, local State Representative Bart Schultz had these words to say about the importance of the facility:

"At a time when change was difficult and resistance was strong, this community chose to do what was right ... The courage shown by students, families, educators and school leaders during that time reminds us that history isn't only made in big cities or on national



stages. Sometimes it's made in small towns by ordinary people who decide to stand together.

"This museum ensures that those voices are not forgotten. It gives future generations a place to learn, to reflect and to understand that progress often begins with a single brave decision — a first stand. Your dedication has turned history into something we can walk through, learn from and carry forward."



The museum seeks to be more than a collection of artifacts, but a place where students can learn that history did not happen somewhere else, but in their own home town. Where they can see how meaningful changes come when people unite and are willing to act.

At the ribbon cutting the main hall of the museum was dedicated as the Ethel Tompkins Exhibit Hall. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Chairman Terrence Ward spoke highly of her efforts to preserve the 1955 events with the words, "She represents living courage. As a student during integration and the first Black graduate of Hoxie High School in 1961, her presence reminds us that history is not distant or abstract. It is personal. Because of Mrs. Ethel, the story of Hoxie's first stand will not fade with time. It will continue to teach, challenge."

Despite its challenges, the history of integration in the Hoxie School System is a testament to what can happen when a community determines to do the right thing in a peaceful, non-violent way, when citizens unite to work together with courage and resilience, thus transforming the lives of its children. It is a lesson from the past with tremendous relevance for today.

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# HOXIE INTEGRATION TIMELINE

**May 17, 1957** – In the case of *Brown v Board of Education*, the United States Supreme Court unanimously ruled that racial segregation of school was unconstitutional.

**June 25, 1955** – Hoxie School Superintendent, K. E. Vance, and the Hoxie School Board voted unanimously to integrate School District 46 citing three reasons: 1) It was “right in the sight of God” 2) It complied with the Supreme Court Ruling; and 3) It saved money to have just one school.

**July 11, 1955** – Black children attended the white school at Hoxie for the first time.

**July 25, 1955** – LIFE magazine appeared on newsstands across America with a pictorial essay of the peaceful integration of the Hoxie Schools. Shortly after LIFE hit the newsstands, segregationists expressed displeasure over the integration.

**August 3, 1955** – Segregationists gathered at Hoxie City Hall to protest the desegregation of the Hoxie schools. They passed a resolution vowing not to support the school and planned a boycott for the next day.

**August 13, 1955** – The first outsiders came to Hoxie when the Little Rock chapter of White America sent two representative to a segregationist rally in Hoxie. More than 1000 signatures were presented demanding the resignation of all five members of the Hoxie

School Board. The board members did not resign and voted to stand by their original decision to desegregate.

**August 18, 1955** – A headline in The Times Dispatch, a newspaper in neighboring Walnut Ridge, read “Hoxie Battle Lines Drawn as Both Sides Stand Firm in Integration Dispute.”

**September 8, 1955** – The Times Dispatch published an article titled ‘Hoxie Board Issues Challenge to Segregation Forces Last Night: ‘Let’s Take it to Court!’”

**November 1955** – Federal District Judge Tomas C. Trimble ruled pro-segregationists “planned and conspired’ to prevent integration in Hoxie and issued a temporary restraining order against the segregationists.

**December 1955** – The court ruled that the School Board could have been criminally and civilly liable if it had failed to integrate and that a permanent injunction against the segregationists was in order.

**October 25, 1956** – Following an appeal by segregationists against the injunction in the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, Herbert Brownwell, U.S. Attorney General, supported the School Board’s decision to integrate the Hoxie schools. This was the first time a United States Attorney General supported any school district’s attempt to comply with the *Brown v Board of Education* decision. The court ruled in favor of Hoxie School.

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## ST. BERNARDS EXPANDING STROKE CARE

**S**t. Bernards Healthcare has opened the first neurointerventional care suite in Northeast Arkansas, bringing advanced, life-saving stroke treatment to patients closer to home.

The new suite allows physicians to diagnose and treat certain types of stroke more quickly by restoring blood flow to the brain, a critical factor in saving lives and preventing long-term disability. Until now, many patients in the region had to be transported to larger cities for this level of care.

At the center of the suite is a specialized imaging system known as a biplane, which uses two X-ray cameras to produce highly detailed, real-time images of blood vessels in the brain. This technology helps doctors precisely locate and remove blood clots during emergency stroke procedures.

Cerebrovascular neurosurgeon Dr. Nicolas Khattar, who joined St. Bernards in August 2025, will lead the program.

“When someone has a stroke, every minute matters — time lost is brain lost,” said Dr. Khattar. “In the past, many patients had to be flown hours away for advanced treatment. Now, we can provide that care immediately, right here in Jonesboro.”

One of the most common procedures performed in the suite is a mechanical thrombectomy, during which a physician guides a thin tube through the blood vessels to remove a clot blocking blood flow to the brain. The new imaging system acts as a real-time roadmap, allowing doctors to work faster and more accurately.

Key features of the neurointerventional suite include:

- **Rapid, detailed imaging:** The system can generate a CT-like, three-dimensional scan of the brain in about eight seconds, helping physicians quickly assess damage and plan treatment.
- **Live blood-flow tracking:** Advanced software shows how blood moves through the brain in real time, helping doctors identify areas at risk and evaluate treatment success.
- **All-in-one treatment space:** Imaging and procedures are performed in the same room, reducing delays during critical moments.

St. Bernards marked the opening of the suite with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 2nd, attended by patients, healthcare professionals, community leaders and emergency responders. Capping the event, volunteers with the St. Bernards Auxiliary announced plans to donate \$300,000 to support the suite’s installation.



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# Health Matters

BY KARAN SUMMITT

## Good Nutrition Confusion



### Guidelines Change Over Years

March is designated as National Nutrition Month, a campaign focused on making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. All that sounds good until you try to define what is meant by “sound eating” or “good nutrition.” Recent dietary recommendations introduced by the USDA have revamped (again!) what and how we ought to be eating.

You can probably date yourself by looking at the charts in the center of this column. Baby boomer me remembers elementary and high school home economics and health classes that taught the Basic Four Food Groups. Simple, doable and generally the way Mom and lunchroom ladies put together a meal. The science behind it held up for 36 years.

A little history on nutritional guidelines might help at this point. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s first stab at offering nutrition advice came in 1894, when W.O. Atwater, a chemist and pioneering nutrition investigator for the agency, proposed general considerations for how food should be thought about and consumed. You have to remember that at this time some vitamins and minerals had yet to be identified, and many illnesses were first being traced to a lack of certain nutrients in the diet. The agency took its advice one step further in 1917, when it developed a guidebook for housekeepers. It laid out five food groups: fruits and vegetables, meats and other protein-rich foods, cereals and other starchy foods, sweets, and fatty foods.

During World War II, the USDA helped Americans adjust to food rations by implementing “The Basic

Seven,” a food chart intended to help maintain good nutrition on a national level. As mentioned above in the mid-1950s, the USDA’s food guide was simplified, featuring just four food groups: milk, vegetables and fruits, meats, and bread and cereals.

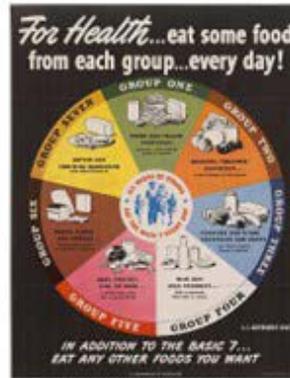
In response to changing research and nutritional information, the USDA introduced a new graphic, the Food Guide Pyramid, in 1992. Obesity rates and chronic diseases were on the rise, so the detail in the food pyramid emphasized not only WHAT to eat, but HOW MUCH to eat. The 2005 update to the 1992 guidelines included stairs to represent the need for physical activity. It had a whopping eight groups — physical activity, grains, vegetables, fruits, oils, milks, and meat and beans.

Evidently eight groups were more than we could handle. Obesity rates were still on the rise, as well as all chronic diseases. The pendulum swung backward in 2011 with MyPlate, a simplified effort to present foods the way most people will consume them. Consumers were presented with a plate of half vegetables and fruit, with smaller portions of grains, protein and dairy.

Most recently, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Agriculture rolled out what was termed as a historic reset of dietary policy, emphasizing a return to “real food.” USDHHS Secretary Robert J. Kennedy described it with the words, “American households must prioritize whole, nutrient-dense foods — protein, dairy, vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and whole grains — and dramatically reduce highly processed foods.”

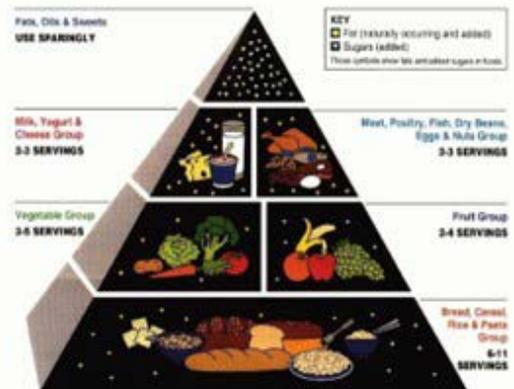
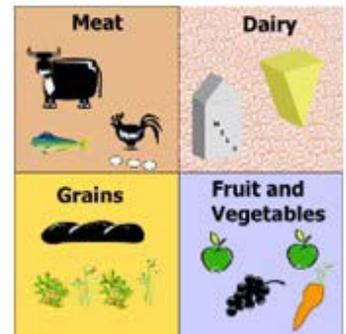
Why so much confusion over the years on what constitutes a healthy

### A History of USDA Healthy Diet Guidelines

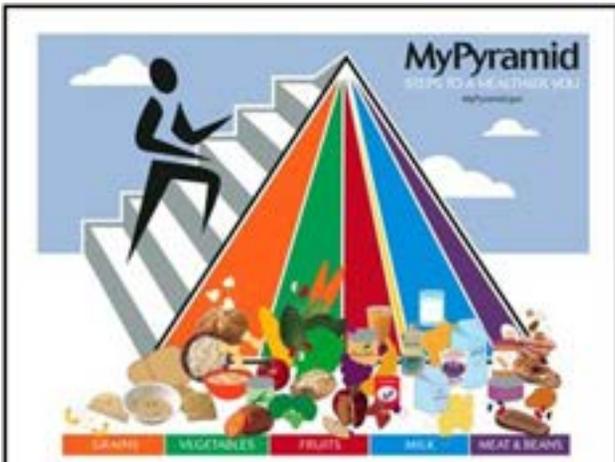


In 1943, World War II rationing guidelines led the USDA to introduce a nutrition guide promoting the “7” food groups.

From 1956 until 1992 the USDA recommended the “Basic Four” food groups.



The USDA's food guide pyramid in 1992 attempted to express the recommended servings of each food group.



In 2005, an effort to push for more daily exercise resulted in MyPyramid. Vertical wedges in varying widths illustrated the servings sizes for each food group.



On June 11, 2011 the USDA published MyPlate, a diagram that featured five food groups on a dinner plate.



In 2025 a push to steer eating away from heavily processed foods resulted in the Real Food Pyramid.

diet? The answer is multi-faceted. Ongoing research and development, the addition of additives and preservatives in food production, increasing amounts of food processing, the rise of growth hormones and modified food varieties in our food supply, changing American lifestyles and efforts to stem the tide of obesity and chronic diseases are just a few of the reasons.

Perhaps a timeline into my own life can help. I grew up with grandparents and parents who planted and preserved foods from a garden. Summer and winter we ate our meals around a family table laden with fresh vegetables, homemade breads and meat dishes stretched with rice, noodles, dumplings and other grains so a minimal amount of meat could feed a family of six. Cereals like corn flakes or Cheerios were sweetened with sugar that we added ourselves and the occasional processed TV dinner was a treat. Restaurant eating was rare for two reasons — very few restaurants existed in our small town and family finances didn't stretch that far. We grew up playing outside during the summer and enjoying multiple recesses at school.

But as I grew, the world of nutrition and physical activity changed. Those boxes of simple cereal expanded to include multiple varieties that teased the palate. Most of them consisted of highly processed flours, sugars and additives that lengthened shelf life. Television stations that once went off the air at midnight morphed into 24 hour cable programming. By the time my children came along, the physical activity that was a natural part of my childhood could easily be replaced with video games, computers and said television programming.

Customer demand led to more and more food products with higher and higher levels of processing. We moved away from garden-raised, home-cooked meals to the limited choices of fast food. Our children's taste buds missed the early — and necessary — introduction to the wide variety of foods common in my generation. And

we sat more.

Researchers studied these changing diets and activity patterns and began to link them to the rise of obesity rates and chronic diseases. Certain foods were labeled as "bad" with a corresponding effort in the food industry to take advantage of that. Here's an example. Early studies on heart disease identified the overconsumption of salt and red meat fats as contributors to high blood pressure and high cholesterol rates. Manufacturers responded with reduced "fat" or "salt" in processed foods. Salt and fats are not particularly tasty by themselves, but when added to a food product they greatly enhance the flavor. (Think about butter on a hot biscuit.) Removing them from a food product removes flavor, so to compensate, many manufacturers increased the amount of sugar/sweetener in the food. It wasn't too many years down the road that we began to see these new "healthier" foods now contributing to weight gain and an increase in diabetic rates.

Galloping side by side with these modified foods was an increase in portion sizes. That baby boomer eight ounce bottle of Coca Cola I traded for empty bottles is now a 20 ounce bottle. McDonald's introduced the Big Mac and before long every fast food drive-through asked us if we wanted to "super-size" our order. Even our plate sizes for the foods we eat at home have gone from a standard eight inch plate to a 10- or 11-inch plate.

As you can probably see, healthy eating can be complicated. We didn't get to this state of national unhealthiness overnight and regaining our health will take some time and changing cherished behaviors. The good news is that it is not impossible. One thread remains constant through all the ups and downs of USDA guidelines. That thread focuses on simple, clean, unprocessed foods. It echoes what you heard your mom say years ago with her home-cooked meals. Eat your vegetables and clean your plate before dessert. Get outside and play or I'll give you some work to do. Those were the good old days in more ways than one.

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.



# Gala Supports Food Pantry Efforts

The Lawrence Memorial Health Foundation has announced plans for its annual Lawrence Healthcare Gala, slated for Saturday, May 16th, at 6 p.m. in the gardens at the Stan Jones Mallard Lodge.

The event will include dinner, silent and live auctions and live entertainment. With a Derby theme, guests are invited to dress in their best Derby attire.

All proceeds from the Gala will benefit the Lawrence Healthcare Community Food Pantry, helping continue the fight against food

insecurity in Lawrence County and surrounding areas. Through the generosity of donors, the Lawrence Healthcare Community Food Pantry has served over 5,000 households and over 13,000 individuals.

In addition to purchasing tickets or a table, sponsorship opportunities are also available for those wanting to support the annual Gala and the efforts of the Lawrence Healthcare Community Food Pantry. The Lawrence Memorial Health Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization, and all donations are tax-deductible.

For more information, contact Lawrence Healthcare at 870-886-1200.

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# Gift Opens Door for Continued Service

Blake Brown, owner of CARSTAR Autocraft Paint & Body Works in Brookland, had the opportunity to make a life-changing presentation to Arkansas National Guardsman Michael Whitley on February 11th with the donation of a refurbished vehicle to help him care for his family and serve his community.

Michael, who is currently serving as a Sergeant in the Arkansas Army National Guard, was presented with a fully-refurbished 2020 Nissan Murano S. He is a decorated combat veteran and a single father of two young sons. He served two deployments in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2013 and completed two active-duty missions in Arkansas responding to natural disasters.

According to a press release from the National Auto Body Council Recycled Rides Program, Michael is the perfect recipient having faced real hardships including homelessness in the past and

a current lack of reliable transportation. The refurbished vehicle will allow him to continue to support his family, fulfill his jobs and show up for his community.

“He currently serves as a squad leader, actively mentoring younger soldiers and leading with integrity and steadiness,” the NABC stated, along with working a full-time job with the Arkansas State Highway Department and doing weekend DJ work. “Whether he’s supporting a community event, mentoring fellow service members or showing up for his sons, he is committed to serving in every way he can.”

For Blake and others who helped make the gift possible, the donation of the vehicle is about helping stabilize Michael’s life while expanding his ability to serve. “This is not about charity,” the NABC said. “It’s about equipping someone who has already earned it — someone who doesn’t ask for help easily but gives it freely.”



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# HAPPENINGS



## WBU, BRTC SIGN PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Black River Technical College and Williams Baptist University formally signed a workforce partnership agreement on February 17th, in a ceremony on the Williams campus to help equip the Northeast Arkansas workforce. The partnership agreement calls for BRTC and WBU to share a variety of resources as they work together for workforce training.

A key goal of the partnership is to support the Arkansas Workforce Strategy, a statewide initiative launched in 2024 by Governor Sarah Sanders and her administration. This strategic initiative focuses on education and workforce training to equip Arkansans for high-demand, well-compensated careers while ensuring that employers have access to a well-prepared, highly qualified workforce.

## FIRST COMMUNITY BANK PROMOTES PARTEE

First Community Bank has promoted Hayden Partee to consumer lender, serving the Jonesboro market. In his new role, Partee will focus on maintaining and growing his lending portfolio while building meaningful, long-term relationships with customers to support local banking needs throughout the Jonesboro community.



Hayden Partee

"This role allows me to continue doing what matters most - working directly with customers to support their financial goals," Partee said. "I'm proud to serve the Jonesboro community and to be part of a bank that values relationships and local decision-making."

Partee will celebrate four years with the bank in March 2026. He earned a bachelor's degree in business management with a minor in entrepreneurship in December 2025.

"Hayden has shown a strong commitment to our customers and a genuine desire to learn and grow within our organization," said Allen Williams, executive vice president, regional president overseeing the Northeast and North Central Arkansas areas as well as Missouri for First Community Bank. "His work ethic and passion for serving others make him a great fit for this role, and we are excited to see the impact he will continue to make in the Jonesboro market."

## RIVERBANK GIVES LEADERSHIP UPDATES

RiverBank has announced leadership updates reflecting the bank's continued growth and strong succession planning.



Jumper

Amy Jumper has been named President of RiverBank. Amy has been a key leader within the organization and brings extensive experience, deep institutional knowledge, and a strong commitment to community banking. In her new role, she will oversee day-to-day operations while continuing to focus on strategic growth.



Guthrie

Gage Guthrie has been appointed Chief Operating Officer. Gage's leadership and operational expertise have played an important role in strengthening internal processes and supporting the bank's continued expansion. As COO, he will focus on operational excellence, efficiency, and supporting RiverBank's long-term strategic goals.



Baltz

Kyle Baltz will continue to serve as Chief Executive Officer and will remain actively involved in the bank's leadership and strategic direction.

"These leadership appointments position RiverBank for continued success," Baltz said. "Amy and Gage are trusted leaders who embody our mission and values, and I look forward to continuing to work alongside them as we serve our customers and communities."



## BLAKE'S WORK FEATURED IN SHOW

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

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

# Engagement Announcement



## Copeland - Trout

Emma Copeland of Paragould and Kayden Trout of Paragould have announced their engagement.

The bride-elect is the daughter of Josh and Holly Copeland.

The prospective groom is the son of Brent and Cindy Trout.

The couple will exchange vows in May of 2027 at James Ranch.

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# DON'T MISS THESE

## Upcoming Events in NEA



Bling O

March 13th

The NEA Children's Advocacy Center will host Bling O: An Evening of Glamour, Giving & Games on Friday, March 13th, at the Hytrol Airplane Hangar in Jonesboro.

Guests will enjoy designer handbag and jewelry prizes, gourmet cuisine, signature cocktails, and a silent auction filled with elegant surprises. For tickets, sponsorships, or more information visit the event website: [secure.qgiv.com/event/blingo2026/](http://secure.qgiv.com/event/blingo2026/).



Barket Market

March 14th

The Arkansas Pet Savers will host their third annual Barket Market on Saturday, March 14th, at the BC Lloyd Building on the Greene County Fairgrounds in Paragould.

The free-admission event will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with craft, food and retail vendors. All vendor fees will go toward the organization's rescue efforts. There will also be dogs available for adoption and entertainment is planned throughout the day.



Angel Run

March 28th

The annual Saints and Sinners Angel Run will be held Saturday, March 28th, in Paragould, starting and ending at the Greene County Fairgrounds.

In addition to the motorcycle run, the event will also include a bike and car show, vendors, a barbecue cook off and live music. All proceeds from the event benefit Arkansas Children's Hospital. For more information, contact any Saints and Sinners member.

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