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From The PUBLISHER... DINA MASON

“
C an you remember a time when 2020 sounded like it was a space-age year that would never be? Well, it is 2019 and we can see 2020 on the horizon!

Our world has taken on a “space-age” look with all the cell phones and other screens in front of us everywhere. I had envisioned flying cars and robots in our everyday lives by 2020. Yes, like the Jetsons!

Those flying cars may be around the corner. I’m told there are “smart highways” with cars that drive themselves and the iRobot vacuum is a start on the Jetsons’ maid. The “order your own” screens and self-checkouts everywhere certainly were not in my image

of “space-age” but all this “Smart” stuff worries me, and that makes me feel ... old ... and not so smart! Maybe the “smart” thing to do is teach our kids “social skills” instead of social media and how to use things like vacuum cleaners. As a society, maybe accept that working for a lower minimum wage and learning customer service and personal interaction skills while they are young is not “the man” taking advantage but simply the “SMART” things we should be teaching the next generation. And maybe we can even learn how to give change and balance a checkbook!

One thing is for sure; I may not be “smart” but I sure sound “old!”

”

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RESTAURANT **Insights**

By Jennifer Delong



Dr. Ben Owens, Jr. and his wife Tracy may work in the medical field, but I promise you haven't recovered fully from whatever "ails" you until you've visited the small little gem they've worked to create in downtown Jonesboro.

I was first introduced to The Recovery Room while working the March of Dimes Chefs Auction event. If you've never been, this event dares the local chefs to bring their A-game, and Chef Jackie Brooks and his team from the Recovery Room did just that. Having sampled a little bit of everything that evening, I was drawn over and over to his table; there was something daring and different there, and the whole room agreed – overwhelmingly crowning him the winner of the evening. We quickly made an appointment to visit Jackie and the Owens to sit down and discuss their accomplishment.

Ben is a skilled musician and physician, and originally played with a band of four doctors in a classic rock band. Tracy brought her talents in the medical field and her background in catering. Jackie brought his world travels and restaurant experience. When the three sat down to see what they could create, a mix of coffeehouse, music house, poetry slam, great glass of wine and exceptional food in a relaxed homey environment was born.

Of the several buildings they own, Dr. Owens felt this was the perfect location. "We often say, 'Historic Main Street Jonesboro is our weekend downtown in-town get away destination!'" The art,

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the community, the family that downtown nurtures and creates - only adds to the modern homey feel of the restaurant.

My husband and I took advantage of the evening without kids to sample quite a few different options, and halfway through the true spirit of the place rubbed off on us, and we called friends to join us. We shared the spring roll appetizer and quickly realized that every other spring roll had been an imitation of these ... perfectly fried, not too greasy, fresh, crisp vegetables with a delicious homemade sauce.

I was warned that fish is easy to cook incorrectly. This, however, was perfectly pan seared salmon served with creamy mashed potatoes and a mix of veggies that will have you and your children begging for seconds. When you can get a group of adults out for the night sitting around snacking on carrots, wondering what the secret ingredient was, you've hit on something.

Finally, we argued over bites of Curry Pork. This was the dish served at the March of Dimes event, and the dish that drew me in. If you're

a current curry fan or a scared newbie, this is the dish to try. Not too spicy, this pulled pork on a beautiful bed of saffron rice melts in your mouth. This is the dish that Jonesboro has been craving without even knowing it.

We stayed long after the restaurant was closed. Even our fantastic waiter, Clayton Crump, joined us in laughing, listening to great music, talking with owners, enjoying our drinks, and fighting for the last of the vegetables. It's almost as if that's what the Owens had dreamed of it becoming all along.

To experience this for yourself visit The Recovery Room at 223 S. Main Street in Downtown Jonesboro. Hours vary: Open Monday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information or to check a menu or calendar of events visit them on Facebook, on their website at therecoveryroomjonesboro.com or call (870) 520-6006.

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VETERANS PINNED

By Richard Brummett



When many soldiers returned home from the Vietnam War they did not receive a friendly reception. Or, as was pointed out in a ceremony arranged by the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs, many got no reception at all.

Making amends for that oversight some 50 years later, the group staged a pinning ceremony at the Paragould Community Center in December, inviting all veterans of the conflict to come forward and be recognized.

"The commemoration ceremony is part of the VA program to help remember the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War," explained Mark Frank, District 5 Veteran Service Officer with the State of Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs. "The lapel pins are presented to our veterans who served, whether in-country or not. The pins are just one of the ways we can say, 'Thank you for your service,' during a time that it was deemed not popular to have served. It is a reminder that we have not forgotten our Vietnam brothers and sisters."

Frank said the VA held a ceremony in Little Rock in March and invited all Vietnam veterans to attend and be recognized but felt "we had not gotten to all of them. Our objective is to recognize all Vietnam veterans with a pin and a certificate, so we are going throughout the state making sure all who are interested in getting a pin get one."

At the Paragould ceremony, pins were presented by attending retired colonels and the honorees also were given a document explaining what the lapel pin and event were all about. In addition, each is to receive a certificate by mail in recognition of their service.

Bill Wussick, Assistant Director of Veterans Cemeteries, pointed out with heartfelt comments how America today views the Vietnam veteran so much differently than before. Our country was in a state of unrest at the time of the war, he said, and as a whole we failed to appreciate the sacrifices made by the men and women of the American military forces in the long, deadly conflict.

"We didn't properly thank you then," Wussick said, "but we certainly want to now. This is a way for us to express our appreciation for all you did."

Frank said any veteran of that war who is interested in having a pin can contact him at 870-253-9767, or by email at Mark.Frank@arkansas.gov. "Or if they have questions about anything else, anything at all," he added, "all they have to do is contact me. We definitely want to thank them for their service, and we want them to know about all the services that are out there for them."

INCREDIBLE KIDS

By Jennifer Delong

We are all taught that looks can be deceiving, but I admit even as a grown adult sometimes I still trip up on some of the basic stereotypes. I was a band geek in high school and never really understood cheerleaders, or I just avoided them all together. They didn't seem the type of kid I would hang out with. Then into my life 30+ years later tumbles Ashlee Taber to totally flip my thought process.

When first introduced to her parents, Jeremy and Tiffany Taber, they constantly talked about their daughter the cheerleader and I would nod politely. Then one day on Facebook they mentioned her martial arts classes. Again, I just nodded. Then they mentioned her first Pankration fight and my head turned a bit.

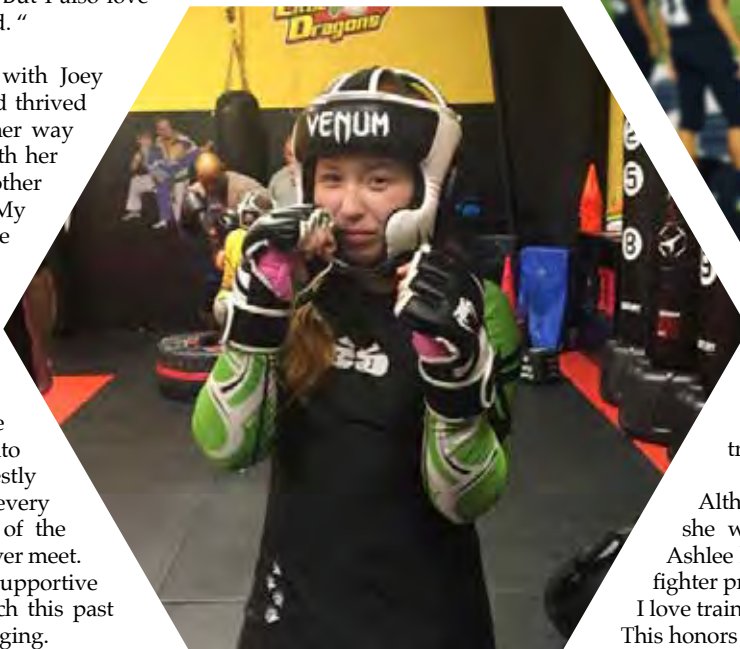
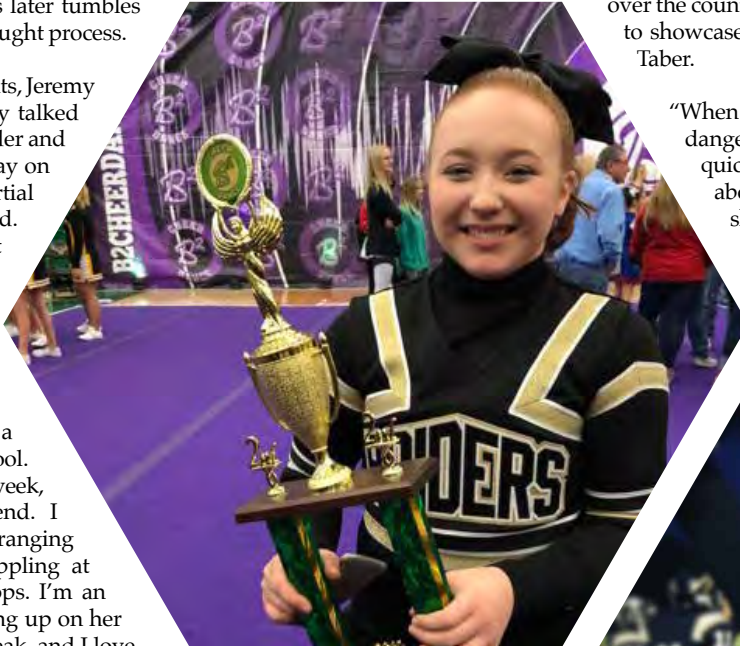
Born in Upland, CA, and raised in Jonesboro, this fifteen-year-old Pankration fighter, Black Belt in martial arts and school cheerleader is a freshman at Nettleton High School. "I train three to four days a week, with competitions every weekend. I have about four practices a day, ranging from cheer at 7:45 a.m., to grappling at 8:00 p.m. My schedule never stops. I'm an all Pre-AP student who is doubling up on her math classes. I don't ever get a break, and I love it. I love the constant go, go, go. But I also love chilling in my pj's on the weekend."

Started as an after-school care with Joey Perry, Ashlee quickly learned and thrived in the martial arts. She fought her way into the adult grappling class with her level of maturity and skills when other teens weren't allowed to train. "My favorite part about fighting is the atmosphere and the people in the fight world. I don't necessarily like getting hit or hitting other people; it's just a part of the game," she said. "I really enjoy walking into fights and watching them and admiring the skill and hard work that is put into each fight. The people are honestly the best, though. In all honesty, every fighter I've ever met are some of the sweetest, best people you could ever meet. Everyone in the fight world is so supportive of each other. At my debut match this past August, everyone was so encouraging.

"I look up to a lot of different people. I look up to my coaches, my teammates, some UFC underdogs, and even some normal people who aren't even related to the fight world. My coach, Mr. Glen Cole, is probably the person I look up to the most. He has a Black Belt in like seven different martial arts, he's been in the military, traveled around the world, he's done pretty much everything. I look up to Mr. Cole for more than just the fact that he's my coach. He's just a great person in general and I am truly thankful for him."

Pankration isn't legalized in every state for children. As of right now, the only two states to have legalized it are California and Florida. Ashlee's team is working with the State Athletic Commissioners in Arkansas and Mississippi to get it legalized in those states. The USFL (United States Fight League) is building kids' programs all over the country. "We as fighters just need a place to showcase our skills and hard work," stated Taber.

"When done correctly, it's no more dangerous than football," Ashlee was quick to mention. There are strict rules about head hits, the amount of body shots you can take and very age specific rules. Doctors are on site, coaches and the athletes are trained in both the dangers of



weight cuts and concussions, and the USFL feels it's completely safe for kids to compete when trained properly.

Although she used to tell her parents she wanted to be like Ronda Rousey, Ashlee has no interest in becoming a UFC fighter professionally: "I love what I do, and I love training, but I don't want a career in it." This honors student wants to continue fighting through college and continue to receive her doctorate and become a surgical oncologist.

Anyone interested in doing so can support Ashlee and the next generation of UFC fighters and Olympians at the Memphis Open on February 15, 2019, in Southaven, Mississippi.

NEEA Artist

By Calli Perkins

Armed with deep musical heritage, Vikki McGee has enjoyed a long and quite diverse musical career. Hailing from the small town of Port Barre', Louisiana, Vikki followed in the musical footsteps of her great-grandfather, the famed Cajun fiddler, Dennis McGee, and her uncle, the highly-acclaimed, and member of the Rock-and-Roll Hall of Fame Gerry McGee. Vikki is a singer-songwriter with a rich voice and an uncanny ability to deliver a song in such a way that, no matter the message, the listener's experience is filled with the intended emotion. Extreme versatility is often used when describing Vikki's style and artistry. During one week in October 2017, Vikki took her band to perform at the Johnny Cash Heritage Festival in Dyess, Arkansas, and then three days later, she performed as the Guest Artist with the Delta Symphony Orchestra at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. She also performed at the Arkansas Roots Festival in the summer of 2017. The four-time winner of the readers' choice award for "Best Musician" (Occasions Magazine), Vikki entertains a wide variety of audiences and wins over fans with her authentic, soulful and effortless sound.

Growing up in South Louisiana, Vikki was exposed to many genres of music and quickly developed an affinity for Bonnie Raitt, Aretha Franklin, Tina Turner, Ray Charles, and Johnny Cash. By the age of 14, she was talking her way into places that were willing to let her sing. She quickly went from weddings and social gatherings to opening shows for artists such as Tanya Tucker, Restless Heart, Little Texas and Tracy Lawrence. After the sudden death of her husband, who was also her lead guitarist, Vikki passed on a pending record deal to raise her then two young children -- a choice she has never once regretted. After the hiatus, Vikki returned to the scene with a renewed perspective and has since been consistently playing shows throughout the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta Region for the past 15 years. She recently commented on her musical career, "I am fortunate to have worked with and been mentored by so many talented musicians, including another Uncle, Randy Latiolais and South Louisiana's Ted Broussard. But I truly believe God gave me this voice and talent, and He has blessed me beyond measure, so none of this career would have been possible without Him."

After the hiatus, she created her first album "Never Knowing", which notes life changes and the search for a new direction.



Whether with her full band on a large stage, or with her guitar in a living room for a House Concert, Vikki delivers her music with the same honesty and humility. As she often says, "Whether for two or 2,000, you give the same show." Such unassuming talent is rare and undoubtedly intended to be heard.

Vikki has hand-picked a group of only the best of local talent as backing musicians. In recent years, that group has included her husband, Sonny Campbell on bass, Jimbo Gramling on drums, Tony Spinner and Matt Pierce on guitar and when available, her son Jacob Brumley on drums. As her career evolves into the next phase of artistic development, Vikki continues to garner critical acclaim from the media and fans alike.

"As I have gotten older the creative process has certainly changed," Vikki says. "The creative process now comes from Sonny and I together as a team; he is more of the lyricist and I will take his ideas and whether right then or in a couple of days, we are able to put something together."



She says her writing process really started coming to life when she met her current husband, Sonny Campbell. They have since created three albums together, the latest being "Two Bottles" which came out in August 2018. Featuring 11 original songs and one cover tune, "Two Bottles" is about the amount of personal loss experienced in 2018 and was a way for them to focus the energy into something great, and to remember that "The Sun Will Shine Again", the title of an original tune on the album. Also featured in the album are Matt Pierce, Tony Spinner, and two of her children, Kierra Forrester and Jacob Brumley.

"I tell all of my students a quote I came across. 'Your life is God's gift to you, and what you do with your life is your gift to him, so make it awesome,' which is to realize where that gift comes from and to share it. I also tell them to never be afraid to put yourself out there, that their gift came from an incredible place and it's meant to be shared."

When asked about her favorite part of all of this, Vikki says, "Well, it's hard to choose, but I think my favorite part is having this gift to be able to play music. I don't know if my life would have been as incredible and adventurous as it is. I am thankful to have the knowledge to know where it comes from and be able to share it, and through that get to meet so many incredible people. I wouldn't have met Sonny!"

To stay aware of Vikki's performance schedule along with new CD release information and delightful stories from her rapidly evolving rise to the top, read her blog, subscribe to her monthly newsletter and follow her on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. She loves to share her musical life on and off stage with her fans on social media. You can also listen to her on iTunes, CD Baby, Spotify, and her website vikkimcgee.com.

Portrait photo by Chelsea Duff Photography
Performance photos by Calli Perkins



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PET OF THE MONTH

By Heath Loggains

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We adopted Buddy on July 24, 2017. He was 13 years old. We don't know his actual birthday so that's the day we celebrate him on. He turned 14 this past July.

My wife found him on Facebook (A Love For Animals Rescue -ALFA) and she said there was just something about him that spoke to her. We certainly didn't need another dog but it was clear he was meant to be with us. We made contact with ALFA and they brought Buddy to us. He was slightly skittish at first but quickly warmed up and instantly became a part of our family.

Buddy has very bad storm anxiety and he has "thunder pills" to help him through them. He often tells us a storm is coming way before a cloud appears in the sky.

Buddy is very attached to his dad, Heath. Heath is his person. Buddy follows him everywhere. Buddy also loves warm weather and loves to roll around in the grass under the sun. His favorite thing to do is go for rides in the truck!

He loves popcorn, treats, being brushed, and sleeping. He's having just a bit of trouble with his back legs so he doesn't get around as quickly as he used to, but when it's warm weather you can catch him trotting outside in small spurts. Buddy is a very gentle and loving old man and he sure has made us happy ... and we know we are making his golden years just as memorable for him!

We sincerely encourage anyone interested in fostering or adopting to please not look over the senior dogs. They are such blessings and still have so much love to give.



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Ingredients:

1 medium head broccoli chopped
1 12- oz package Jones Dairy Farm Little Links cooked and sliced
1 cup shredded Cheddar divided
10 eggs
3/4 cup whipping cream
2 cloves garlic minced
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper

Directions:

1. Grease the ceramic interior of a 6-quart slow cooker well.
2. Layer one half of the broccoli, half of the sausage and half of the cheese into the slow cooker. Repeat with remaining broccoli, sausage and cheese.
3. In a large bowl, whisk eggs, whipping cream, garlic, salt and pepper until well combined. Pour over layered ingredients.
4. Cover and cook on low for 4 to 5 hours or high for 2 to 3 hours, until browned on the edges and set in the center.

Recipe courtesy of alldaydreamaboutfood.com.

CHICKEN CAESAR LETTUCE WRAPS



Ingredients:

3 boneless skinless chicken breasts
1/2 c. Caesar dressing, plus more for garnish
3 tbsp. olive oil, divided
Juice of 1 lemon, divided
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
9 leaves romaine or butterhead lettuce, for cups
1/2 c. quartered cherry tomatoes
4 strips bacon, cooked and crumbled
1/4 c. freshly grated Parmesan, for garnish

Directions:

1. In a medium bowl, toss chicken with dressing, 2 tablespoons olive oil, and half of lemon juice. Season generously with salt and pepper, cover with plastic wrap, and let marinate in fridge for at least 30 minutes.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat remaining oil. Add chicken breasts to skillet and cook until golden and no longer pink, 8 minutes per side. Remove from heat, let rest 5 minutes, then cut into bite sized pieces.
3. Assemble lettuce wraps: Fill each lettuce cup with chicken pieces, tomatoes, and bacon. Top with a squeeze of lemon, more dressing, Parmesan, and a couple extra cranks of black pepper.

Recipe courtesy of delish.com.

ZUCCHINI NOODLES WITH AVOCADO PESTO & SHRIMP



Ingredients:

5-6 medium zucchini (2 1/4-2 1/2 pounds total), trimmed
3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
1 ripe avocado
1 cup packed fresh basil leaves
1/4 cup unsalted shelled pistachios
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil plus 2 tablespoons, divided
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 pound raw shrimp (21-25 count), peeled and deveined, tails left on if desired
1-2 teaspoons Old Bay seasoning

Directions:

1. Using a spiral vegetable slicer or a vegetable peeler, cut zucchini lengthwise into long, thin strands or strips. Stop when you reach the seeds in the middle (seeds make the noodles fall apart). Place the zucchini "noodles" in a colander and toss with 1/2 teaspoon salt. Let drain for 15 to 30 minutes, then gently squeeze to remove any excess water.
2. Meanwhile, combine avocado, basil, pistachios, lemon juice, pepper and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt in a food processor. Pulse until finely chopped. Add 1/4 cup oil and process until smooth.
3. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add shrimp and sprinkle with Old Bay; cook, stirring occasionally, until the shrimp is almost cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl.

Recipe courtesy of eatingwell.com.

PAJAMAS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN FROM *First United Methodist Church*



About 80 pairs of pajamas were given to Kersten and Nate Herget, who will then pass them along to children in foster care. The pajamas were collected during the fall semester by the children at First United Methodist Church in Paragould.

Kersten and Nate, along with their son Barrett, are members at FUMC. Pictured with them is pastor John Fleming, presenting the family with the pajamas.

Children were encouraged to bring either pennies or pajamas. The money that was given was then coupled with the donations received from the youth-led Hanging of the Greens service, a special service where the church sanctuary is decorated and an offering is taken.

The children finished the semester by wearing their own pajamas and watching the Christmas movie, "The Star." Wednesday night programming happens every Wednesday night during the school year from 6-7 p.m., where the children have a time of music, arts and crafts, and a lesson. All children are encouraged to come and be a part.

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PASSION TO **SUCCEED**

How did a boy from Rector who went to school in Marmaduke make it to the GM position in the newest pre-owned car dealership in Paragould? Mason Knight's story may not be typical, but it is our first example in our monthly feature of "Passion to Succeed."

"I was frying up chicken strips at a convenience store in Marmaduke and I talked with Julie Gunn each morning as she stopped for coffee. She said I could talk to people and I deserved a chance to make a better living. She saw something in me," said Knight. After a long-awaited interview with the General Manager at Bayird, Mason was the newest team member of the Bayird Dodge, Chrysler, JEEP & RAM dealership in Paragould. "I think they were testing my patience; you need patience to be good at this."

"It was a life changer. They taught me what I needed to be a successful car salesperson. I was surprised that meant being straight up and honest in the deal process. You know, that is not what I or most people thought of when thinking of car salesmen as a profession."

Knight played baseball at Marmaduke and that is what he wanted to go to college to do, but after he injured his arm, college just wasn't in his plans. He graduated high school and was working at a convenience store. He and his girlfriend since he was 14 both drove clunkers and just made it from week to week.

Now he and his wife, Spring, have had their dream wedding and honeymoon; each drives a nice vehicle and they have bought a house. "This career changed my life," he said.

After 7 years of training and work, Mason Knight was picked to lead the new Car Match Dealership. Car Match is a pre-owned auto dealership in Paragould.

If you know of a "Passion to Succeed" story email a few details and the contact information to graphics@mormediainc.com





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PARAGOULD JOB SHADOW



The Paragould High School Advanced Learning Program held its annual senior job shadowing day Nov. 6. Students who participated in the job shadowing day selected their top three choices for careers and Karen Snyder, the Paragould School District Advanced Placement coordinator, contacted professionals in those fields and made arrangements for students to spend the day with them at their jobs.



PHS senior Berry Dickey, on the right, worked with Dr. John Hines at Hines Family Medical.



PHS senior Nick Widmer, on the right, holds a patient of Dr. Jerry Miller, a veterinarian at Veterinary Healthcare Clinic.



PHS senior Hailey Beliew shelves and straightens books at the Greene County Library.



PHS senior Taylor Copeland, on the left, helps Kristen Townsend, on the right, and Tamara Dutton prepare a dog for surgery at Linwood Animal Hospital.

THE MARKET AT MCCRORY

Farm to Table Dinner

Recently McCrory, Arkansas, held the grand opening of the Market at McCrory farmer's market. Eleven vendors' local produce, food vendors and artisan vendors participated in the one-day fall market. Produce vendors sold out with customers clamoring for more fresh produce. Vendors reported they would be making plans to increase their spring production to accommodate the needs and demands of the market.

In an effort to showcase local foods and to bring awareness to the farmers' market, a Farm to Table dinner for the community was held the evening the market opened. Interns from the University of Central Arkansas' dietetic program -- while doing their community nutrition rotation with the University of Arkansas Division of

Agriculture Woodruff County Extension Service -- were asked to create a delicious healthy menu. Items consisted of fresh locally sourced foods. ARcare's coordinated care team, community volunteers and student volunteers from a neighboring county's university Family and Consumer Sciences department prepared the food. McCrory High School Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) served the dinner. EAST students assisted in setting up the dinner, designing and printing recipe cards of the dishes on the menu. They also photographed and videoed the market and Farm to Table event. A local flower shop provided an opportunity for students to design floral arrangements. Over 100 enjoyed the outdoor event under beautiful garden lights on a crisp fall evening with music Clark Family Trio drifting through the air.



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Cheers for Charity



Junior Auxiliary of Paragould hosted its 4th annual Cheers for Charity event on November 3, 2018. Guests enjoyed the casual event with a great meal, live music by Drive South, and a silent auction. The silent auction consisted of items donated by local businesses and supporters. There was a raffle drawing for a beautiful pearl necklace and earrings donated by Sissy's Log Cabin. The event was a record-breaking success, raising over \$43,000 -- \$13,000 more than the previous year.

The main attraction at Cheers for Charity was the Angel Tree donned with ornaments. Guests were able to choose a child to provide gifts and necessities for to ensure a Merry Christmas. This Angel Tree led to the Christmas Blessing event on December 11. A grand total of 82 children were adopted. Families who had been adopted were able to come and enjoy a true Christmas blessing. Families enjoyed pizza, games and pictures with the special guest from the North Pole. While members of Junior Auxiliary entertained the children, the parents were able to take the presents home for each child to open on Christmas morning. The event is such a blessing, to not only children of Greene County but all involved. In addition to Christmas Blessing, the Junior Auxiliary of Paragould adopted 38 children and three families.

Bundle up for savings



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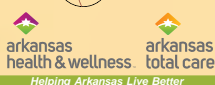
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DUCK CLASSIC BENEFITS OUR COMMUNITY



"For the past 16 years, NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation has hosted the Duck Classic as a way to raise money to benefit the programs of the Foundation.

"Thanks to the overwhelming support of sponsors, landowners, hunters, banquet attendees and volunteers, this event has continued to grow with this year seeing over \$600,000 raised. These funds stay right here in our community to allow our Foundation to meet the needs of families and patients.

"Your support of this event benefits cancer patients, families who have lost babies, and grieving individuals who have lost a loved one and many more. On behalf of every person who will be impacted by your generous and overwhelming support of Duck Classic please accept my sincere thanks."

Sincerely, Robbie Johnson Ex. Director

MORNINGSIDE

Open House



10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.



Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.



Reduce heating by lowering your thermostat setting to 68.



Turn off lights when not in use.



Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.



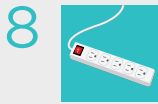
Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.



Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.



Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.



Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.



Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.



Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

ACHIEVE FINANCIAL FITNESS FOR 2019 CHARITABLE GIVING

By Arkansas Community Foundation

It's a New Year. That's a good time to get financially fit – starting with your charitable giving goals. Greene County Community Foundation has tools that help you make smart giving decisions that result in a better quality of life for our community.

What are your passions? To develop a giving plan, it is important to decide what you care about most in the community. Tools like AspireArkansas.org can help serve a compass as you determine where to give back. After identifying the causes you want to support, talk to Greene County Community Foundation to get input on local charities in your field of interest.

Next, consider the type of gift you can make. Did you know? There's more to giving than cash! Your decision may depend on whether you are most interested in honoring a loved one, championing a cause, maximum tax savings or exploring give now / grant later options.

For instance, there are significant tax advantages if you are 70 ½ or over and you direct part or all of your required minimum distribution up to \$100,000 to a qualified charitable organization through an IRA Charitable Rollover. Community Foundation staff can work with you and your financial advisor or IRA account holder to ensure a smooth and successful transfer.

Other donations may include transfers of real estate, securities or other appreciated assets. They can be life income, like charitable trusts or gift annuities, that provide tax advantages while also providing income during your retirement.

Another type of giving is planned through a will that names a nonprofit as beneficiary of a specific property, certain cash amount or percentage of an estate. You can also choose to transfer retirement plan assets or donate an insurance policy to an endowment fund at the Community Foundation to benefit the charities of your choice.

Another popular way to give is through a donor advised fund (DAF), one of the easiest ways to make a charitable impact for the causes you care about most. Think of it like a dedicated account for charitable giving – you can donate to the fund for an immediate tax deduction and recommend grants to the charities of your choice when you're ready. While many commercial companies are capable of handling donor advised funds, the Community Foundation has provided financial tools like DAFs for more than 42 years. The Community Foundation's experience in the charitable landscape in Arkansas can give you an extra hand.

Arkansans have a heart for giving, and our state is consistently at the top of the charts in percentage of giving to charities when compared to others in the U.S. The Community Foundation is here to help generous people like you increase the impact of their giving by sharing knowledge about local needs and helping charitable gifts grow for the long term.

If you're interested in help making sure you achieve financial fitness in your charitable giving, the Foundation is a place where you can come together with others who care about your local community and leave a charitable legacy that forms a connection with our future.

For more information, call 870-236-7718, email greenecounty@arcf.org, or visit arcf.org/greenecounty



Breathe



Take a moment and remember to breathe: a deep inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth. How many times does that deep breathing happen during the day? Odds are, not very often.

According to Headspace, a company and app dedicated to meditation, breathing patterns of humans have shifted over time to react to environmental stressors. Things like pollution and noise contribute to shallow breathing and in turn, chronic stress, panic attacks or even cardiovascular issues.

A simple solution is to just breathe deeper but it can be difficult to remain aware of that all day. Instead, setting up a yoga and meditation routine a few times a week can be extremely beneficial for the mind, body and spirit.

Yoga Journal notes that yoga can take the body from the sympathetic nervous system to the parasympathetic. In other words, the body shifts from an anxious state to a relaxed one, calming the nervous system. In addition, a regular practice creates self-confidence and awareness, which leads to a healthy and balanced ego.

Along with that self awareness comes the recognition of previously unknown qualities, allowing a sense of mindfulness. Staying mindful can circle right back around to that healthy breathing.

Those living with anxiety or depression can also benefit from yoga. A regular practice teaches self-soothing techniques and reduces the impact of exaggerated stress responses, according to Harvard Health Publishing.

Of course, yoga has physical advantages such as increased flexibility and strength. Practitioners can also experience an alignment of the breath with the body's movement.

While it is always best to check with a doctor before beginning a practice, yoga and meditation have endless rewards that bring the body to a state of health and relaxation. All it takes to start is a deep breath.

By Caitlin LaFarlette



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VA TOWN HALL MEETING IMPORTANCE VETERANS' HEALTH

By Richard Brummett

The John J. Pershing VA Medical Center hosted a town hall meeting in Paragould during December and veterans were encouraged to discuss situations and ask questions related to veterans' benefits and issues, explaining a number of ways they can get all areas of their lives "in shape."

Held at the Paragould Community Center, the session began with an informal information booth/refreshments period, followed by the meeting intended to provide information about VA services and enable medical center management to gather feedback from patients, family members and the community. Veterans were invited to fill out forms containing questions they would like to have answered in the group atmosphere and VA personnel addressed them.

"At the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center, our goal is to provide veterans with excellent health care, all of the time," said Medical Center Director and retired Army colonel, Dr. Patricia Hall. "As part of that strategy, we want to work with our veterans and community partners to periodically gather input about how things are going."

She was joined in making opening comments by Angela Smith, Public Affairs Officer and Congressional Liaison. They laid out the framework by which veterans can gain access to any sort of information they need regarding their personal accounts. In fact, one room of the Community Center was set up in stations manned by John J. Pershing VA Medical Center and Little Rock Regional Office staff members ready to talk about benefits for veterans, and VA programs such as the My HealtheVet website that permits veterans to view their VA medical records online. Also, veterans not currently receiving VA healthcare were able to enroll for VA health care services at the meeting, and free flu shots were also available.

Smith, who shared a personal family story with the attendees regarding the importance of signing up for their much-deserved medical benefits, said showing the veterans the respect they deserve and helping them find answers to troubling or confusing situations "is why we're here in the first place. Our job is to make it easier for our veterans to find solutions to problems, and to make sure they are signed up for all the benefits they deserve."

Most questions addressed by VA representatives concerned denial of or delayed payments for medical procedures and they acknowledged that that is an issue they frequently must confront. Learning to go through the proper channels makes the process flow more evenly, and veterans were encouraged to immediately contact the Paragould office when difficulties arise.

The Greene County Veterans Services office is located at 140 Linwood Drive in Paragould, and may be reached by telephone at 870-239-6315. It is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.



SHOP WITH A COP

Paragould



Shop with a Cop 2018 was hosted by Pay It Forward Paragould on December 15th.

Approximately 50 kids were able to take a trip to Walmart with an officer to spend \$100 on anything they wanted.

"It's really something special to watch these kids create bonds with the cops. Seeing them holding hands and taking pictures with Santa together is really awesome to witness."

-Pay It Forward Paragould



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WHERE YOUR SAVINGS ACCOUNT WORKS THE HARDEST

By SmartAsset

Where you live can have a big impact on how much you could potentially earn on a savings account in your area, as well as how easy it is to save money based on several regional factors. Our study aims to find the most suitable places for people to get paid the most on your savings based on average savings account rates, median household income, average living expenses and income tax burden.

First, we calculated the net median income by subtracting the average cost of living for a household with two adults (one working) from the median household income in each county.

To compare income tax burdens across counties, we applied relevant deductions and exemptions before calculating federal, state and local income taxes for a family making \$50,000 annual income in each location. Next, we created an effective tax rate index for each county that reflects the counties with the lowest ratio of income taxes to the assumed \$50,000 annual income. We subtracted the taxes you would have to pay on the net median income in each county and assumed you would put this amount into a savings account for the next five years.

Next, we applied the average savings account rate in each county to this amount and calculated how much interest you would earn over the next five years. When there was no county-level savings account rate data, we applied the state average to that county.

To understand where it pays the most to save, we then divided the total amount of interest earned by the median household income to get a savings return rate for each county. The counties with the highest savings return rates are the places where it pays the most to save.

Rank	County	Net Median Income	Effective Tax Rate	Average Savings Account Rate	Interest Earned	Savings Rate Return	Savings Return Rate Index
1	Lonoke, AR	\$24,359	14.86%	0.44%	\$463	0.82%	28.67
2	Greene, AR	\$12,650	14.86%	0.49%	\$265	0.62%	21.53
3	Cleburne, AR	\$12,032	14.86%	0.40%	\$207	0.50%	17.22
4	Benton, AR	\$28,359	14.86%	0.22%	\$265	0.45%	15.63
5	Sevier, AR	\$9,715	14.86%	0.35%	\$146	0.37%	13.01
6	Union, AR	\$9,479	14.86%	0.36%	\$147	0.37%	12.86
7	Crawford, AR	\$11,939	14.86%	0.25%	\$128	0.31%	10.63
8	Grant, AR	\$19,006	14.86%	0.18%	\$145	0.29%	10.23
9	Saline, AR	\$25,835	14.86%	0.15%	\$165	0.29%	9.99
10	Fulton, AR	\$6,352	14.86%	0.35%	\$95	0.27%	9.31



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- Be realistic with your goals. Do not make your goal something that isn't attainable or you will fall short and get discouraged early on. Slow progress is still progress.

- PEAK Fitness offers an 8-week Fit Challenge multiple times a year but January is always the biggest one. On day 1, write down on a sticky note why you started, and stick them all over the place; fridge doors, food pantries, car visors, office desks, anywhere you may need a little more motivation to not skip a workout or make that unhealthy choice. Everyone loses motivation at times and those notes are there to help remind them there is an end goal in sight. We all have stress, we all have busy lives, but we all have time to do something to benefit our health. Not everyone can make the hours in a day work to make it to the gym but they can choose healthier meals, take a walk during the kids' practices, or even have the kids join in for a workout at home! Everyone likes different things, so find a healthy activity you enjoy and stay consistent with it! Consistency is key for achieving a long-term fitness goal.

- Sit down with your family and friends and tell them your goals for this year. Tell them why you want to do this and what you need from them to help achieve your goal. If they understand your reasons then they will be able to help push you on the days you aren't as motivated and realize we all need a push some days and they can do just that to keep you on track!



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Keeping Your Voice Fit

By Richard Brummett

According to Tasha Cook, her singing voice betrays her true personality. She occasionally sings specials in front of the congregation at Life Baptist Church and her powerful, enchanting voice paints a picture not only of beauty, but of confidence.

Not true, she says.

"I'm a very timid person. I'm still so nervous every time I sing at church," she revealed. "Someone will ask me to sing something and, oh, gosh! I'm so nervous. If I don't have the words right there with me, I go blank."

Still, a near-lifetime of singing has helped her perfect a craft not everyone is destined to master. She said lots of family members play instruments, so she was around music from an early age, and when she "was 9 or 10 my mom got us into church and Grandma played the piano. They got me and my sisters to sing at church. People would say 'more' and just about every Sunday someone would ask me if I was going to sing. Not until I was older did I really enjoy singing and doing more with my voice ... in high school and at church. My teacher taught me to control my voice."

While she didn't necessarily picture herself as a choir member, she knew singing was something she enjoyed, even if just cutting loose by herself. "I knew once I got into choir I had a good voice," Tasha said, "and I tried out for and made All-Region Choir in high school. Our music teacher picked certain ones she wanted to try out, so I went and did pretty well, I guess, but I wasn't really thinking that much about doing anything more than that as far as singing went."

"Oh, when you're kids, you have those dreams of being a professional singer. I went to Paragould to a thing like Star Search and I got

something in the mail that said I could pay so much money and make a CD. Not what you're hoping for, you know. And a lot of family and friends say I should try to get on *American Idol* or *The Voice*. I like to sing, but I would be way too nervous to do anything like that. Church

and karaoke and doing it with family and friends ... that's about it for me."

Experts recommend several ways to keep one's singing voice in shape, including warming up and cooling down, hydrating your voice, practicing appropriately and resting the vocal chords as opposed to overworking them. Tasha said she follows much of that routine by rote.

"I sing all the time -- in the car, in the shower," she said, "I sing goofy tunes. I just go around singing all the time. It builds the range I have. Anytime I know I am going to sing at church, I still want to practice it all week. Some days I can't hit the high notes. If I can't, I won't try it that day. I drink a lot of water and when I'm going to sing at church I drink lemon water. My kids and my husband will sometimes sing and then next thing you know I have taken over their songs."

Her husband, Mike, is a teacher in the Marmaduke School District and used to play drums at a church they attended. Daughter Gracie enjoys singing along with Mom, but she said of their son Gabe, "Basketball is his thing."

Tasha remembers her grandmother's encouraging her to use her special voice every day -- "She would always say, 'Use it or you're gonna lose it.' So I use it. Someone at church will say, 'I need to hear that song' and I know I need to get up and sing it, to share it. I know it's a gift. So many people have said those words to me, so I get it. But I just love to sing songs that mean something to me; I can feel the words, I can feel what I'm singing. That's when it's special to me."



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2019
*Wedding
Planning*
101

Bridal INSIDER

By Caitlin LaFarlette

When the excitement of an engagement has died down and it comes time for wedding planning, it might seem to be a streamlined process. In some cases this is true but there are many hidden details that will pop up along the way.

The first, and perhaps most important, step in the journey to "I do" is finding a venue. If a specific date for the wedding isn't important, don't set a date until a venue is found. Many venues tend to book out a year or even two years in advance. Other details to think about include any noise restrictions after a certain time, if alcohol is allowed, and don't forget about how the music will be played. According to Kimberly Hall at Houston's Venue, wedding parties can bring their own alcohol to be served by someone 21 or older, there are no noise restrictions and a basic sound system is available for use.

A highlight of wedding receptions is the cake. Research plenty of bakers and schedule tastings to ensure both bride and groom find their perfect flavor and design. Tracy Mothershed, owner of Something Sweet, includes six flavor tastings for brides and grooms and will waive the tasting fee if a cake is booked on the same day. It is also important to arrive with an estimated guest count.

"An average three-tiered cake will serve about 100 guests," Mothershed said. "We have some people that come in wanting a five-tiered cake but only have 50 guests."

Most bakers will deliver cakes and other desserts to the wedding venue but think about whether there will be extra charges for this.

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"We offer delivery and set up services for all wedding and groom cakes within a 60-mile radius," Mothershed said. "There is a fee based on the mileage and time needed to decorate the cake. We typically do not recommend these cakes being picked up."

Photography is also an essential part of any wedding and it is crucial to research photographers and read contracts before setting down a deposit. Some things to think about when booking include whether there will be a second shooter, how many hours of photography are included and turnaround time for edited images. Photographer

Amy Reeves offers free consultations to create a timeline for brides in 30-minute increments.

"Most of the time I arrive two hours prior but each bride may choose their own schedule," she said, adding, "Proofs are posted within 24 hours. You will get your retouched product back within 8-10 weeks."

Planning a wedding can be a stressful time but by laying out a plan with some of the more intricate details noted, it can turn into a fun event for bride and groom as they walk into marriage.



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SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING New, SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING BLUETOOTH.

By K13 Cartridge Express

You're getting married! Congrats. Online registrations now allow you to ask for all sorts of cool and helpful new gadgets, rather than just the old gravy boat. Here's a list of our favorites we suggest you include on your wedding wish list.



1. A smart speaker (or two, or three) such as Amazon Echo, or Google home. These items are speakers with Artificial Intelligence built into them. They allow you to voice control several items throughout your house, order thank you cards, set a timer while you bake a cake, change the music, or even turn on a light when you enter a room. Basically, these are digital butlers. Who wouldn't want a few of those around the house?



2. Smart Plugs. Such as TP-LINK KASA SMART WI-FI PLUG, 2-OUTLETS AVAILABLE ON AMAZON FOR UNDER \$20. THESE ALLOW YOU TO TAKE BASIC HOME APPLIANCES and control them without needing to be in the room, or even the country.



3. Smart Light bulbs. Try bulbs like Phillips Hue White A19 LED 60W Equivalent Dimmable Smart Wireless Lighting Starter Kit. Automate your home with soft white

lights and smooth dimming capabilities and control them with your voice or smart device anywhere in the world.



4. Why not register to control the temperature in your house? Smart thermostats such as Ecobee allow you to program your house and remotely control with your phone or voice commands.



5. Finally, we all know how important smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are, but take it a step further. Products like Nest Protect Smoke + CO Alarm. These will speak to you, alert your phone and the best part, should they be going off accidentally, you can quiet them from your smart device or phone. A big plus if you've ever searched your house for a beeping smoke detector.

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After the Wedding: BUYING YOUR FIRST HOME

You've dreamed of getting married for years. The dress, the flowers, the people cheering as you leave the venue. You know what centerpieces are on the table and what accents go with them, but have you given as much attention to what comes next? Are you and your spouse dreaming of owning a home?

It's time to try out those newlywed skills and work together to make this happen. Here are steps to consider.

1. Sit down and assess where you are now. Don't start looking at houses just yet, figure out finances. How much do you owe, how much debt does your spouse have? Are you co-mingling your money, or do you continue to keep things separate? How much do you think you can afford each month?
2. What are your goals? Sit down and write them down. Are you saving for a trip, are you investing a certain amount for retirement? What is more important to you? Having a big house, or having money left over to go do things. It's a phenomenon called "house poor". You're lender will always approve you for more than you should afford. Remember to budget for a "life" outside of your home, when you start looking at prices.
3. What's your credit score? And how do you improve it, if you need to? Know your number, know your spouse's number. The higher the number the better interest rate you'll get. If it's not good now, start working with someone to help fix it. Make payments on time, pay off balances as fast as you can. Did you know there are often errors on credit reports you can fix? Contact the credit bureaus and file a petition to have it changed or ask your mortgage officer to help you remove items that are not yours.
4. Once you hit 600 or greater on your credit score, get pre-approved for a mortgage. This helps your real estate agent know that you are serious and how much you have in mind for a budget.
5. Find out what's on your wish list. Your idea of a new home may have a large garage and a small back yard, while your spouse wants room for a garden and doesn't care about the garage. Make a list of "must haves" for each of you, and then a list of items you're willing to bend on a little. What town do you want to live in? Will school systems play a factor in your decision? How much work do you want to put into your new home, or do you want a new-built?
6. Find an agent! Don't be afraid to use an agent. Yes, you can buy a house on your own, but why would you want to? Anything can and sometimes will go wrong. Most agent fees are reimbursed partially by the sellers, so ask what the cost will be and decide if it's worth having an expert help you purchase your biggest asset. Statistics state that most people go with the first agent they speak with. Instead make appointments and consider this a job interview. Ask around, look them up on the internet, read reviews, ask lots of questions. Find someone that matches your personality and can speak in a way you understand and trust. You're the boss here and they are working for you. Find the right person.
7. Shop around for a mortgage. Just because the online source is free and easy to apply for, doesn't mean it's the best price. Your preapproval doesn't lock you into anything. Try banks, credit unions, and mortgage brokers. Remember, this person is working to get the best price for you, not them. Make sure you understand the type of home loans, and new home owner programs that are out there. If you don't know, ask questions until you understand.

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8. Don't forget to save up. Down payments are required for every loan. Yes, there are grants and loans available, but most will require you to put a "little bit of skin in the game." The average conventional loan requires 20 percent down. FHA and other loans require much less, more like 3 and a half. Either way, have an ample amount put aside. Any amount you can put down will help lower your monthly cost. Don't forget closing costs. These are separate from your down payment. Appraisal fees, underwriting fees, uncovered realtor costs, escrow deposits, it all adds up fast.

9. Don't forget about additional costs through the year. Home maintenance, repairs, home owners' association dues, the new rug you want, plus, plus, plus... there's always something.

10. Finally, don't forget the old wives' tale, "nothing stresses a new marriage faster than a new home or a new baby." Remember, you're in this for the long haul. Compromise on your first purchase and be as reasonable as you can be. You can always upgrade later.

Disclosure statement: Jennifer Delong is a Buyers agent with Burch and Co. Real Estate in Jonesboro. License number SA00083187 and a reoccurring writer with Paragould Premiere.

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THE BRIDE'S

Spa Day Prep List

BACHELORETTE'S DAY OUT

1-6 Months prior to Wedding day

Enjoy a relaxing day among all of the stressful wedding planning at the spa. The bride and her favorite girls should enjoy a day out including a combination of pampering services such as massage, facial, waxing, eyelash extensions, body wraps, and more. This level of pampering is sure to relax any bride-to-be.

SKIN PREP

3 Months Prior to wedding day

For brighter, healthy looking skin, you should be making regular visits to your esthetician for facial treatments at least 3 months before the wedding. Customized Facial treatments and peels will help address any skin concerns you may have such as acne, or add life and vitality back to the skin for a glowing complexion on the day of your wedding and all the events leading up to it! Your last treatment should be a brightening treatment 5-7 days before your wedding day.

MASSAGE PREP

Any bride-to-be knows the stress that comes with planning a wedding. With that stress, comes painful knots and tense muscles. Relieve that tension with regular massages with a Licensed Massage Therapist. And every bride deserves a massage the week of her wedding!

30 DAYS PRIOR TO WEDDING DAY

30 days before the BIG DAY is a great time to meet with your stylist and esthetician for a trial run of hair and makeup. This is so important to ensure you and your team of experts are all on the same page for your ultimate bridal vision. This is also a great time to meet with your lash technician to discuss what to expect for eyelash extensions.

5-7 DAYS PRIOR TO WEDDING

Along with the well-deserved facial and massage, the bride-to-be will want to indulge in eyelash extensions (if she doesn't already). A Lash expert can help you customize a lash look that will be perfect for your big day.

BRIDE'S REHEARSAL DAY

(Typically 1 day prior to wedding)

The day before the wedding, and before the rehearsal, the bride should enjoy a manicure and pedicure, along with a blow-dry and style and customized makeup application to have her looking her best for the rehearsal dinner!

BRIDE'S WEDDING DAY

The morning of your wedding should be as stress free as possible. Because of your trial run with your beauty team 30 days before, you will just be recreating the look that you have already fallen in love with at the salon. Many brides will come to the salon to get wedding day ready but many stylists and estheticians will travel on location to have you looking your best!

By Brittany Murray, Licensed Esthetician/Owner
Rouge Spa and Salon

Steiner's PLANNING TIPS

What do you get when you hire SEG as your wedding planner?

Steiner Event Group will be responsible for locating, scheduling appointments, and helping client* secure the following: ceremony site, reception site, musicians for the ceremony and reception, caterer, bakery, stationer, florists, transportation, rental supplies and any other vendors the wedding couple and Steiner Event Group agree upon. The above mentioned, each with their own particular areas of expertise, have demonstrated professionalism and talent contributing to the development of a superb working relationship with Steiner Event Group and our clients. This factor guarantees a secure timeline in scheduling all matters for the event while keeping the client within his/her particular budget.

Wedding/Reception Coordination: On site wedding/events/reception coordination will be provided by Steiner Event Group Coordination Staff. This is required from date of booking through completion of events. Attendance of the wedding coordinator at the wedding rehearsal, ceremony and reception is required.

SEG does not do just the day of coordinating for any client. There are too many outside factors that come into play that SEG has no control over, so that is a service we don't offer.

SEG's BUDGET BREAKDOWN*

Venue, Catering, Cake & Rentals	50%
Photography & Videography	13%
Wedding Attire/Hair & MakeUp	9%
Flowers/Lighting/Décor	8%
Officiant/All Music	7%
Invitations/Stationary	3%
Planner	10%

*These %'s are based on the experience gathered over the years of working with various brides. There are always adjustments to the %'s above, just depending on the style of the particular bride, and the size of the wedding.

By Rick Steiner
SEG Event Group

SEG'S 5 RECOMMENDED TIPS

1 - KNOW your budget.

Be realistic about your budget. Knowing the budget is key for every bride getting married. There is a blur sometimes between Pinterest ideas and real budget allowances. If you are hiring a planner, you are allowing the planner to help you plan your special day within the budget allowed. The planner's responsibility is to help assist you in keeping your options within the specified budget. It is not the planner's fault when the budget is met, but the expectations have exceeded the budget. On the other hand, if a real budget is not presented and the planner has met the requirements of the specified budget, but there are more funds that can be allocated, then you have limited the abilities of the planner. It is key to have a realistic budget, but you have to know your budget.

2 - PREPARE GUEST LIST

Write down everyone you can think of from the bride and groom, then begin to eliminate people from the list. Once the reduced number is determined, if anyone can be removed, that will help determine your budget, as well as the venue desired.

3 - SECURE YOUR VENUE

The venue will need to be large enough to accommodate your guests, reflect the style of your wedding, and fit within the desired budget. Does the venue include any rentals like tables, chairs, linens, etc? This can also help you with your budgeted items, and allow money to be used elsewhere, if items are provided.

4 - HIRE A PLANNER

A planner does not have to cost you a fortune. The main purpose for a planner is to take the stress off of the bride and her mother, so that their focus can be on being the bride and mother of the bride. Also, a qualified planner will meet with vendors, based on budget, and help provide options that are best suited for the bride.

5 - ENJOY THE PROCESS

This may be the most important tip. Enjoy each step of the process. This is your special day, and it is a time to be enjoyed and cherished. Don't allow small things to become obstacles. Enjoy the process.



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What is the Bridal Expo?

By Rick Steiner
SEG Event Group

SEG Bridal Expos were designed so the bride could plan her day while at one of our bridal expos. Our goal, from the beginning, has been to target a limited number of vendors who are the better vendors in the area. This allows vendors at the expo who have the experience and knowledge to assist a bride in making her plans. Many brides will attend the expo as their first step in the planning process, while other brides come looking for a specific vendor type needed to complete their process. Either way, SEG Bridal Expos can accommodate their wishes.

SEG hosts many events for clients in the Northeast Arkansas area and across the country, along with weddings, so SEG is very familiar with all of the vendors that participate in the bridal expo. Even if SEG is not a particular bride's planner, SEG will still assist the bride in referring brides to vendors that are best suited for their budget, taste, and/or theme.

The main fact that every bride should know, is that Northeast Arkansas has some of the most creative and talented vendors (florists, bakers, caterers, photographers, etc.) that can do the work comparable to, and above, those in the larger cities. There is never a need to go outside the area to find qualified people in various fields – we have them locally.

So, from the very beginning planning stages to completing the last detail, SEG Bridal Expos can help the bride and groom make the planning process much more enjoyable.

HOW DID SEG BRIDAL EXPOS BEGIN?

I have always loved being outside the norm, and to bring my ideas to life. I wanted to bring to Jonesboro an upscale boutique style expo that targeted more on the brides who were serious, as well as vendors whose businesses were more targeted to a bride in planning her special day.

It begins with the venue. SEG always hosts its bridal expos in venues that are upscale, because we provide an open concept. Black pipe and drape is not used, because we want the vendors and attendees

to be able to interact. Ideally, it is about having a higher degree of interaction between the attendee and the vendors, so that if a bride chooses, she can book most of her vendors at the expo, rather than having to make appointments and attempts to follow up with vendors. Once this concept was understood, it has been received very well.

SEG also provides a floor show throughout the expo, rather than a fashion show at the end. This was something I saw at a GQ VIP Party at the beginning of New York Fashion Week several years ago. There were five areas set up, with 10 models on different height cubes, and every 30 minutes the models were replaced with other models featuring various designers participating in fashion week. So, I brought that concept to Jonesboro. Every 20-30 minutes, the models are replaced with other models featuring a different look. There may be 30 minutes of bridal gowns, then 30 minutes of tuxedos, 30 minutes of formal wear, etc. This gives the audience a chance to look more closely at the items being showcased, as well as more attention on the vendor being featured. I have been very pleased with how this has been accepted in the Jonesboro area.

The SEG Spring Bridal expo will feature two new items this year. First, the registered brides will be able to vote on the Best Vendor Booth at the expo. The winner will receive a free booth at the SEG Fall Bridal Expo, or a 50% discount on the fall sponsorships. Secondly, there will be a Vendor Meet & Greet, 45 minutes prior to the beginning of the expo. I have so many vendors that enjoy meeting the other vendors and great working relationships, as well as friendships, are established at the expos.

SEG SPRING BRIDAL EXPO

Sunday, February 24, 2019

12:00pm – 4:00pm

Cooper Alumni Center / Arkansas State University

Tickets \$10.00 in advance by emailing steinereventgroup@gmail.com, or \$15.00 at the door.

Vendor information can be obtained by emailing steinereventgroup@gmail.com

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For The
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Meggie Hodge & Sean Farmer

By Meggie Farmer

We met at a mutual friend's birthday party in December of 2016 in Austin, Texas, where we now live. I got caught staring at Sean from across the room and met him briefly as I was leaving. He found me on Facebook the next morning, and after three attempts he finally got me to go on our first date in March of 2017. We attended the Dell Match Play Golf Tournament at Austin Country Club.

We have the same sense of humor and very similar families. We all just kind of fit together like a puzzle. At the same time, I love vegetables and Sean hates them. He loves movies and TV shows and me, not so much.

We got engaged December 23, 2017, on my mom's birthday at The Capitol Hotel in Little Rock. I was in Arkansas for Christmas and thought that Sean was still in Austin at a family friend's ranch. We went to breakfast at The Capitol Hotel for Mom's birthday and were taking family photos in front of the Christmas tree. My parents told me to take a picture with my niece in front of the tree and when I did, someone came from behind the tree and put an arm around me. It was Sean! I was so confused that he was in Arkansas that I couldn't even process what was happening. He asked me to marry him and I, of course, said yes! We celebrated with a huge breakfast and then Sean and I spent the day at the Little Rock Zoo to soak it all in.

The whole wedding was a complete blast and absolute dream come true. I loved that we were able to get married in my parents' back yard and that we were able to incorporate so many special details. I was able to design and make my dress with my mom and our dear friend Mika Bailey. We had pony rides, an Elvis impersonator, a pie eating contest, all of our favorite food, and a fireworks display put together by my dad! It was so fun to have such a casual wedding because we were able to be completely comfortable and nothing about it felt stuffy. It was totally us. It was awesome being able to use so many local businesses to make our day perfect. The Tiny Twig made most

of our party favors, my mom's quilting crew served the food, Nancy Hoke, Iron Horse BBQ, and Fox Hills Country Club made all of our food, and we were able to have little food vendor stands run by the Paragould High School volleyball team and Larry's Cup O' Cream. Our band, Everyday Life, is a local Paragould band and was the best wedding band I've ever experienced, by far. Some of the members comprised a Barber Shop Quartet along with some other guys. We also had Doug Compton MC'ing for us. Our invitations were made locally by McCarroll Printing, the furniture was from Vintage Rental Depot, and our cakes were made by Something Sweet, all local downtown businesses. Flowers were done by Ballard's Flowers in Paragould and hair and nails were done by Salon 55 Forty. James Bickham of Jonesboro was our videographer and our photographer was Tyler Schmitt of The Mill Photography Studio from Austin, Texas. Alice Miles was our wedding coordinator and kept us all on track. It was so special to me to be able to use people I've known my whole life to put this day together. Since I grew up in Paragould and live in Austin now, it was awesome to really get back to my roots.

We chose a county fair theme because we knew we could make it super fun. The theme allowed us to play games and get people really involved in our day. I think the theme and unique content of our wedding made it worth the 10 ½ hour trip to Paragould for our friends in Austin. The whole day was awesome. All of the help that we got from our community to pull this day together made it very special. The morning following up to the wedding, my mom's friend Karin Dudley put together a brunch for all of the bridesmaids and all of the groomsmen were lucky enough to spend their morning at Jack and Jean Cox's house swimming and shooting skeet. We even got to drive away in cool old pickup truck that was loaned to us by Dr. McGarity of Smile Designs. We are so thankful for all of our friends and the community that helped us put all of this together, but most of all, we are so thankful for our parents for making this happen. Mine sacrificed their entire summer to put this together for us, and boy did it pay off in the end.



GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



Living through the holiday season pretty much forces one to interact with others ... shopping, dinner dates, returning gifts ... and my skin crawls when I listen to someone use words incorrectly or submit to a publication copy containing all sorts of misspellings and misuses. For instance, I close my eyes and slowly shake my head from side to side when someone says we should have our pets "spaded." You don't spade your pets, you spay them, and all you would have to do to know better is to have watched *The Price Is Right* on television any time within the last 30 years because each episode ends with first Bob Barker, and now Drew Carey, issuing an admonition to spay and neuter our pets.

It has been brought to my attention that I am supposed to make resolutions for the new year, that the turning of the calendar page to 2019 should contain not only a new month but a "new you" as we all strive to be better people in the coming days and months ahead.

That's fine, I guess, though I've never been one to write down a set list of must-dos for myself. I know my faults as well as anyone, although I have a wife and two daughters charged with the task of pointing them out to me, lest I forget, and they're very good at it. That being said, in the coming year I am going to try to not let people's misuse of the English language confound me as it has in the past.

Try, I said.

Try.

Spay or spayed, not spade or spaded. To spade something means to dig it up with a spade. I love animals, especially dogs and cats, and I don't mind playing with one that has been fixed, or spayed, as intelligent people call it. I would be less than enthusiastic about playing with your pet if it has been spaded, or exhumed from the grave. Maybe that's just me.

While we're on the subject of pets, during the Christmas shopping rush I heard a woman tell another that her dog was limping because he "hurt his pawl." According to her, the dog had a wounded foot only she has gone through life -- and she looked to be about my age, so she's been here a long time -- referring to it as a pawl.

It's a paw, and if you add an "L" to the end of it, you ruin a really good joke about a dog in the Old West walking into a bar with a bandaged foot, telling the bartender, "I'm looking for the man who shot my pawl."

That doesn't work if it's a pall, because a pall is a cloth spread over a coffin or a hearse, or a dark cloud or covering of smoke or dust. It sort of ruins the joke for the dog to be looking for a guy who shot a cloud or a piece of material. Maybe that's just me.

I think it would be a good idea to learn our language, not a good "ideal" to learn it. I can't tell you how many times I've heard someone say, "I have a good ideal," then they proceed to lay out an "idea."

An idea is a thought or suggestion as to a possible course of action. It can be the aim or purpose of something intended. An ideal is a person's conception of something regarded as perfect, so the very meaning of the word should let you know that you don't use the word "good" in front of it. There is no such thing as a "good perfect" anything nor can you have a "bad ideal," but I've had plenty of bad ideas, like the time I thought I could jump a wide ditch on my bicycle or the time I decided to burn some brush and set my yard on fire and burned up part of my neighbor's bean patch.

Those were bad ideas; the results were not ideal. There's a big difference, but maybe that's just me.

Each time I stray to one of these word issues I am reminded of my great-grandmother Etta Higgins' fondness for the phrase, "It don't make no never-mind." I suppose in the long run it don't, but in an ideal world we would spay our pets before it's time for them to be spaded, especially if they have hurt paws. That's my idea, but maybe that's just me.

An advertisement for Glen Sain Chevrolet. At the top left, the name 'Glen Sain' is written in a white cursive font next to the Chevrolet bowtie logo. To the right, the words 'BEST PRICE' and 'BEST SERVICE' are stacked in a bold, red, outlined font. The central image shows a red Chevrolet pickup truck driving on a winding road next to a body of water. At the bottom, a black banner contains the phone number '870.565.4352', the address '6345 US 49', and the website 'GLENSAINPARAGOULD.COM' in white text.

2019 Kids' Events

January

3

Children's Bingo

When: Thursday at 10:00 AM
Where: Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library
315 W Oak Ave, Jonesboro
Info: libraryinjonesboro.org

5

St. Bernards Stories in the Forest

When: First Saturday each month
11 AM
Where: Mall at Turtle Creek
3000 East Highland Dr., Jonesboro
Info: mallatturtlecreek.com

9

Jody Reeves Book Signing

When: Wednesday at 10 AM-12 PM
Where: Greene County Public Library
120 North 12th Street, Paragould
Info: mylibrarynow.org



Sadie Poteet, 5, wasn't trying to figure out the Arkansas weather when she visited Harmon Park on a recent afternoon, taking advantage of sunny skies and warmer temperatures. Sadie is the daughter of Amanda Warner and Zach Poteet of Paragould.

TRAVEL WITH US *Open House*



ST. BERNARDS FOUNDATION *Gives Back*

St. Bernards Advocates presented the proceeds of the 2018 Triple Swing fundraiser at its quarterly meeting. Rob Lance, 2018 Triple Swing Chair, thanked everyone for their volunteerism and announced a \$200,000 net proceed contribution to the new surgical and ICU Tower project.

Kevin Hodges, SVP Administrative Services, updated the Advocates on construction projects. The surgical and ICU Tower will be the new "Front Door" on the Downtown campus with a projected completion date of Fall 2019. The project is phase three of a four-phase plan and will expand the ICU to 46 beds and consolidate surgical suites. A new Community Room will also be a feature with 100 to 125 seating capacity. Completion of the 250,000 square feet project will make the

campus over 1 million square feet total, with five floors.

Hodges was asked about challenges and reported that the fact that the project planning started two years ago and technology changes quickly, it has been a challenge to keep up with changes with the goal of having the very newest available technology when the doors open. The site was also a bit of a challenge with infrastructure updates and excavating 4,000 tons of dirt. But an interesting construction tidbit is that it includes 3,000 tons of structural steel that was manufactured at the NUCOR steel mill in Blytheville.

For more information contact St. Bernard's Foundation at 870-207-2500 or visit stbernards.info



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Sepio Technology, LLC is a full service information technology (IT) services company specializing in medical office IT. We can set up any size network to allow businesses to easily expand their system as business grows. Our backup and disaster recovery services have proven performance advantages, and we are the only IT company in Jonesboro with an FBI clearance, as well as HIPAA certification.

The company was born from the idea that Jonesboro needed a local IT company providing concierge level services. Ken Reese, along with Frank Hofsteden and Adam Browning, founded Sepio on that very premise. With more than 60 years of combined experience in the information technology field, Sepio can address the most complex and demanding IT business needs.

Sepio's white glove service is unique -- unlike any other IT service provider in the region -- offering a single point of contact for all of a company's information technology requirements, tailoring IT solutions to a client's specific needs and actively monitoring a company's network. Issues are addressed and resolved BEFORE they become a problem, giving business owners peace of mind that their data and networks are fully protected.

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HAPPENINGS



HOLLY WINSLOW CNA INSTRUCTOR

Holly Winslow of Pocahontas has accepted the position of Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Instructor for the Paragould site of Black River Technical College.

Winslow is a 2006 graduate of Pocahontas High School. She attended BRTC for her nursing prerequisites and Practical Nurse License (LPN) which she received in 2016. Winslow became a Registered Nurse (RN) in 2017 through the LPN to RN Bridge Program through Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC) at BRTC.

Winslow has worked at Randolph County Home Health since 2010, starting as a CNA, and is continuing part-time as an RN.



ASTATE INNOVATION SYSTEM WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Winners of the Arkansas State University Innovation System elevator pitch competition have been announced from more than 30 students who pitched their business ideas in 90 seconds or less to a panel of judges. The elevator pitch is a part of the fall competition presented by the Neil Griffin College of Business and the Arkansas State University Innovation System.

The winning idea, "Little India," is a gourmet Indian restaurant for the Jonesboro market with the goals of supporting diversity, introducing local people to authentic cuisine, and fostering a welcoming atmosphere for international students. This idea is the brainchild of Atin Suri, an international student from Kuwait City, Kuwait.

The second-place winner is Madalyn Toler of Benton, who pitched "Turnrow Acres," a rustic-chic wedding venue that would cater to the local community and feature a "glam squad" to aid the bridal party on their day-of preparations.

Brandon Day of Jonesboro finished in third place with "Helping Hands Home Solutions," a service-based business focused on helping the elderly and those convalescing from recent illness or injury with household tasks and repairs that don't require a professional.

The award for most innovative idea and the fourth-place finisher went to the "Lucky Cricket Snack Factory," pitched by Adam Al-Dhanki of Jonesboro, with support from his team, Samantha Brainard of Collierville, Tenn., and Emily Richard of Austin. The proposed snack factory is a snack manufacturer using cricket powder as a staple ingredient as a way to offer great tasting and healthier alternatives to meat-derived protein sources and reduce methane emissions from livestock.

The elevator pitch competition awarded \$1,200 in cash prizes and a one-year membership to A-State Innovate valued at over \$300. The prizes were funded by A-State winnings from previous years' Governor's Cups.



PARAGOULD'S RICH HISTORY

Third and fourth grade ALP students in the PSD spent time learning about the history of Paragould. Students took a field trip to downtown Paragould on Nov. 12. They started the tour at the old courthouse, where Bob Branch shared about the history of the courthouse and how Paragould was named. Then, the students went on a walking tour led by Amy Milligan from Arkansas Heritage in Little Rock. As the students walked down the streets of Paragould, Ms. Milligan shared history about buildings along the way. They traveled to the Collins Theatre as they listened to Joe Wessell share about the rich history of this landmark in Paragould. The next stop was the railroad car located in downtown. Students had the opportunity to look inside the rail car which now serves as an office for those who work with Mainstreet Paragould. Last, but not least, students went to Something Sweet to have a quick snack before returning to school.



1ST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF POCAHONTAS DONATES TO BRTC

On December 4, the Pocahontas First United Methodist Church of Pocahontas made a donation to the BRTC Season of Sharing for the BRTC Food Pantry. All funds will be used to purchase food for the pantry.

Pictured: Church member Debbie Steimel and BRTC's Neal Harwell.

January

EVENTS CALENDAR

Dec. 28&29

What: The Ultimate Oldies Show

When: Friday, December 28th & Saturday, December 29th at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Collins Theatre (120 West Emerson Street, Paragould)

Info: Featuring a journey back to the golden age of the '50s, '60s, '70s, and '80s performed by local musicians. Admission \$20 for Main Floor, \$15 for balcony. Call 870-215-2253 for tickets.

1

What: Strut Your Mutt: First Day Hike

When: Tuesday, January 1st 10:00 A.M. to 10:45 A.M.

Where: Lake Ponder Trail, Crowley's Ridge State Park

Info: Free of charge and no pre-registration is required. Bring your furbaby on a leash to walk the walk, while we talk the talk. While talking around the trail, we will cover the history of the CCC, Lake Ponder, and talk about dog friendly activities for you and your furbaby to do at the park. After all, a walk a day keeps the vet away! For more information, contact the park at 870-573-6751 or email crowleysridge@arkansas.com

10

What: Certified Dementia Practitioner

When: Thursday, January 10th at 7:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Where: Tech Center Chamber of Commerce 1790 Falls Blvd N #2, Wynne, AR

Info: In partnership with Legacy Hospice, UAMS Schmieding Caregiver Training Program will present an overview of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Each student during training receives resources in the areas of Alzheimer's and Dementia. These resources include key aspects of dementia care including communication techniques, disruptive behaviors interventions and tools for addressing concerns such as wandering,

aggressive behaviors, poor nutrition and sexuality. Please RSVP by January 4. LSWilley@uams.edu or calling 870-207-7600

11&12

What: Eagle Awareness Weekend

When: Friday, January 11th and Saturday, January 12th

Where: Bull Shoals-White River State Park

Info: The Bald Eagle is not only our national symbol, it is also symbolic of our ability to save and preserve species. The Ozarks plays host to over 100 bald eagles migrating to and through this prime eagle wintering ground. Bull Shoals-White River State Park annually celebrates their arrival with our Eagle Awareness Event. This will be your chance to get out and see eagles, various other birds of prey, and migratory birds in the wild as expert Rangers, Naturalists, and Park Interpreters take you within viewing distance. This year's guest speakers will include Tim Ernst, a local Nature Photographer and Author who will be highlighting his work, Arkansas - Ten Years of Nature Photography in the Natural State; Howard Davis, a Master Falconer; Bird Rehabilitators from the Raptor Rehab of Central Arkansas; and the Little Rock Zoo, who will showcase a live mature Bald Eagle and other birds of prey, all within arm's reach. For more information contact the park at (870) 445-3629, e-mail bullshoalswhiteriver@arkansas.gov, or visit us on the web at ArkansasStateParks.com/bullshoalswhiteriver

12

What: Paper Cutting: Create your own image using different cutting techniques

When: Saturday, January 12th 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Where: Arkansas State University Fine Arts Center, Room 107

Info: For ages 12 and above. The Department of Art+Design at Arkansas State University invites adults and children to experiment

with different paper cutting techniques to create their own artwork! Interested individuals can drop by Room 107 of the Fine Arts Center anytime between 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. Admission is free, and alumni are especially welcomed, according to Dr. Temma Balducci, professor of art history and department chair.

22

What: Exercise Classes: Mind and Body Fitness

When: Tuesday, January 22nd at 5:30 P.M.

Where: Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library Genealogy Area

Info: The Public Library offers free exercise classes three days a week! You can attend Mind and Body with Eastern Livity. This hour-long class features Yoga, Pilates and Gyrokinesis as part of the workout at different times in the year. All of the classes are taught by licensed instructors and are free to attend.

30

What: UAMS Center on Aging Northeast: Family Caregiver Workshop

When: Wednesday, January 30th at 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Where: St. Bernards Villa 2217 W Parker Rd, Jonesboro, AR

Info: This workshop is for family members who are caring for someone in the home with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or Dementia. Taught by Linda Willey RN, CADDCT, & Certified Dementia Practitioner. Registration is necessary by calling 870-207-7600. For more information, call 870-207-7595

To have your calendar items included in Premiere Magazine, email information to:

graphics@mormediainc.com



LIVING A *Better Story*

By Jared Pickney

Why is it that so many Christians make for such lousy human beings? In other words, why are so many of us judgmental, defensive, unapproachable, and touchy?

From a pastor's perspective, here are my top ten reasons.

1. Compartmentalizing faith. True life is found in a full surrender to God. Things fall apart when we divide our lives into the "sacred" and "secular", giving Jesus our Sunday without our Monday - Saturday.

2. Ignoring emotions. To feel is to be human. To minimize or deny what we feel is a distortion of what it means to be created in the image of God.

3. Dying to the wrong things. Some believe that the more miserable you are, the more you suffer, the more God loves you. However, we are not called to die to the "good" parts of who we are, to the healthy desires and pleasure of life.

4. Denying the past's impact on the present. To become healthy we need to go back in order to break free from any unhealthy or destructive patterns that prevent us from loving God, ourselves and others.

5. Using God to run from God. In other words, we engage in "God activity" for the purpose of ignoring difficult areas in our life.

6. Doing for God instead of being with God. We cannot give what we do not possess. Doing for God should always flow from being with God.

7. Spiritualizing away conflict. Nobody likes conflict. Yet it is everywhere. Sweeping conflict under the rug never works. Healthy people engage conflict in a healthy way.

8. Pretending to be perfect. There is a strong pressure in our society to present ourselves as having it all together. We feel shame for not measuring up to others' expectations. Nobody is perfect. True freedom begins when pretending ends.

9. Living without limits. Many people carry around guilt for never doing enough. This guilt gives way to frustration and exhaustion.

10. Judging other people's spiritual journey. We are quick to judge people who sin differently than we do. Jesus said to take the log out of our own eye before focusing on the speck in our neighbor's eye.

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BIRTHS



Brentlee Brown

Proud parents Amber and Kevin Brown of Paragould welcomed their newborn, Brentlee Brown, into the world on August 30th, 2018.

Brentlee was delivered at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, weighed 14 pounds, 2 ounces and measured 24 inches long.



Emma MaryJo Rowe

William Rowe and Lauren Taylor of Paragould announce the birth of their daughter, Emma MaryJo Rowe. She is welcomed by grandparents Kelly and Lenia Rowe, Allen and Bess Parker, and Daniel and Jean Peterm.

Born November 28th, 2018, at St. Bernards Medical Center, Emma weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Photo by Bess Parker



Hiatt Knox Burlison

Hiatt Knox Burlison was born November 13th, 2018, to parents Justin and Brittany Burlison of Paragould. Hiatt was born at St. Bernards Medical Center weighing 7 pounds, 14 ounces and was 21 inches long.

He is welcomed by grandparents Bruce and Misty Drope of Paragould, Keith and Michelle Adams of Springfield, Missouri, and Chuck and Sheila Burlison of Martin, Tennessee.

Photography by Amaris Pyland



Eleanor Ivy Methvin

New parents Luke and Steffanie Methvin of Little Rock announce the birth of their daughter, Eleanor Ivy Methvin.

Eleanor was born November 17th, 2018, at University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She weighed 7 pounds and was 20 inches long.

Photo by Steffanie Methvin



Levi Matthew McClelland

Jeremy and Kimberly McClelland of Paragould announce the birth of their son, Levi Matthew McClelland. He is also welcomed by grandparents Dean and Beverly Wooldridge, Bob and Renea McClelland, and Ray and Charlotte Ashcraft.

Levi was born November 5th, 2018, at St. Bernards Medical Center. He weighed 3 pounds, 7 ounces and was 16 1/4 inches long.

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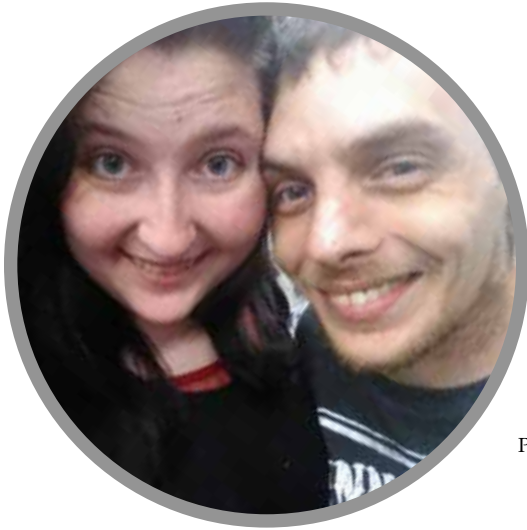
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ENGAGEMENTS



Breanna Younger & Chris Norman

Breanna Younger of Paragould and Chris Norman of Harrisburg have announced their engagement and plans to be married.

The bride's parents are Randy and Rhonda Clinton. The groom's parents are David and Gloria Norman.

Photography by Breanna Younger



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CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education
Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

The tracks in the powdery snow cut a winding path through the cotton stalks. They meandered down and across rows and would stop and linger around any green plant that stuck through the snow. I followed quietly looking for the rabbit that had left the prints. Finally I could see the prints ended at a depression melted into the snow. I eased closer to the shallow den, hoping I was behind the bedded rabbit. Once close enough, I made a lunge, trying to cover the rabbit with my body. He tried to get away but I was able to get a grip on him and the prize was mine. I carried him home and showed him to my granddad and then took him out to some likely looking cover and turned him loose, hoping to bring the beagles back later and get a good race.

It was a snow day and I was enjoying it by being outside as any ten-year-old should. Snow days are meant to be spent in the great outdoors playing in the snow, sledding, hunting, gathering snow for snow cream or just enjoying the beauty and uniqueness of each snow and snowflake.

The anticipation leading up to a snow day provided excitement and tense moments to a youngster. When the five-day forecast mentioned "snow," it produced talk at school and a trip to the grocery store to stock up on essentials like bread, milk and sweetened condensed milk. It was always suspenseful waiting on the first snowflake and hoping it would remain cold enough to stick.

Once the snow started, the anticipation of school being closed became even more intense. With great attention I would watch the names slowly crawl across the bottom of the television screen hoping to see Crowley's Ridge Academy. The monotony of watching the bottom line was broken by quick glances out the door to check the streets and hope they were getting snow covered. Finally, the name would trod across the bottom of the screen and the rejoicing and planning would begin.

As a youngster, rabbit hunting was one of my favorite things to do on a snow day. I would spend some days trying to hone my tracking skills and catch the rabbits, while other days were spent with the .22 or shotgun and our pack of beagles in search of rabbit for supper. Even though these days started as rabbit hunts, they often turned into days of hunting whatever could be found, whether it was fowl or fur. Though hunting was always on my mind, many days were spent in the snow enjoying other types of fun it could provide. I was never very good at building a snowman, but I would make an attempt with most every snowfall. When my friends and I were together, much of our time was spent building snow forts and stockpiling snowballs in preparation for planned battles. Many of us had some type of sled or snow saucer and we would try to find hills to make a run like the luge racers competing in the Olympics.

The late teen years would bring fun times on three-wheelers pulling all types of sleds



and other various pieces of small snow-worthy equipment. We also used trucks to pull larger sleds and car hoods that could haul many people.

These days, most of our snow days are spent enjoying time with our friends, family and neighbors riding on various ATVs or UTVs. We also like to pull sleds, other snow vehicles or even johnboats around the fields near our home. We like to provide plenty of warm food and have a warm place to get out of the cold as we gather. One of my favorite things is snow cream, which we make by mixing equal parts of milk and sweetened condensed milk along with a good helping of snow. I like to add a little peanut butter to up the flavor just a bit.

Snow days were very special to me as a kid and may be even more important now as it means time with family and friends. Next time it snows, get outside and enjoy the intricate beauty God provides as He sends us one beautiful flake at a time. I hope to see you out there!

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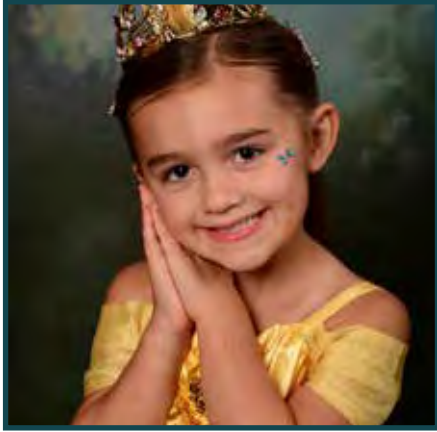
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Wee Miss 7-12 months

Baby Miss 13-23 months

Toddler Miss 24-35 months

Tiny Miss 3 Year Old

Tiny Miss 4 Year Old

Petite Miss AMMC Pre-K

Petite Miss AMMC Kindergarten

Little Miss AMMC 1st grade

Little Miss AMMC 2nd grade

Afternoon Pageant Categories:

Young Miss AMMC 3rd grade

Young Miss AMMC 4th grade

Pre-Teen Miss AMMC 5th grade

Pre-Teen Miss AMMC 6th grade

Teen Miss AMMC 7th grade

Teen Miss AMMC 8th grade

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