

PREMIERE

April
2020

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& the ASU Environmental Club

LOCAL GARDENS

Community members taking care of their little pieces of Earth

PREMIERE ONLINE

Many of our stories are continued online, read the full issue: premiere-magazine.com

20 TWENTY-SOMETHINGS

Special section highlighting young professionals



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A man wearing a blue t-shirt with a logo on the back, dark shorts, and a blue cap is walking away from the camera on a wooden bridge with red railings. The bridge spans a river, and the background is filled with lush green trees under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

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From The PUBLISHER... DINA MASON

“

I do not even know where to start ... I usually fill the role of eternal optimist, sometimes to my own demise, but it is a role I am comfortable with. I tell people I do Premiere because it is an opportunity to shine a light on the good, so I hope this issue and the next issues that follow do just that.

You will notice a few differences – some of these stories will say -- read more on-line. Please go to premiere-magazine.com and see all the content we gathered for this edition. We will also be limited on where we can distribute, so if you are reading a printed copy please share it with someone (we use premium paper, so it should hold up to a few sprays of disinfectant). And help others by telling them to sign up for Premiere delivered to your email every month at premiere-magazine.com/ email.

We want to congratulate all of our 20/20 Somethings and thank them for participating. We wanted to take the opportunity to demystify millennial myths. These twenty-somethings defy stereotypes: they are leading our community to a brighter future.

April is always our Green, Spring, all things new and fresh theme so you will read lots of the “Good News and the People Making it Happen” in our world of “Green.” Let this be a reminder that we will get through this national crisis and we WILL all be “OK” ... likely even better than OK.

Let us know what you see and hear of Acts of Kindness during these trying times ... as we all look forward to reading them in the May edition of Premiere!

”



Glen Sain 

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Clarification from March issue in NEA
Women: Brookshield Laurent story



Rather than a feasibility study: County Health Rankings revealed that multiple health outcomes, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer, are extremely poor in the Delta region.

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COVID-19 KEEPING YOU IN?

Dear NEA Community,

In the wake of COVID-19, events have been postponed nationwide and local businesses are bracing for the impact this global pandemic will have.

We are hyper-aware of affects we will see here in NEA and are currently reminded of two things: What a blessing it is to live in this supportive community and what an honor it is to serve this community with good news and important information.

In the coming weeks, we know how crucial it is for us to stand together (metaphorically, maybe not physically!). Many people will be impacted in a variety of ways.

We want to remind our audiences that ALL of our platforms are accessible at home.

Jack, Jill and iRock radio stations can be streamed online:

neajackfm.com

neajillradio.com

irocknea.com

Premiere can be read online:

premieremagazine.com

Premiere also delivers a newsletter. Sign up at:

premiere-magazine.com/email

And our new digital platform, Explore MOR, has adjusted by adding a whole new page to the site with ideas about how to continue supporting local businesses during this time, and information on event changes and postponements:

exploremornea.com/currently

If you have any information to share with us or any questions to ask, please don't hesitate to call a MOR Media Specialist (contacts listed on Page 7.)

As we move forward, we want to assure you we will continue to serve our community and we thank you for making that possible.

Stay healthy, keep smiling, and keep supporting each other, NEA.

- The MOR Media Inc. Team

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LIVING A Better Story

BY JARED PICKNEY

One of the things I enjoyed most about my childhood was eating together with my family. Every night, no matter what was going on, we would push pause on the busyness of life, sit down together at the table and share a meal. Even when I was a teen I looked at our family dinners as one of the happiest parts of my day.

Sadly, Americans rarely eat together anymore. With the rise of the fast food industry that caters to our fast paced, overly busy culture, many of us have limited food to a product that fuels our individual pursuits, rather than as a sacred element that strengthens our bonds as family. The average American eats one in every five meals in the car, one in four Americans eats at least one fast food meal every single day, and the majority of

American families report eating a single meal together less than five days a week. Sadly, many Americans are missing out on what could be meaningful time with their loved ones, but it's even more than that. Not eating together also has quantifiably negative effects both physically and psychologically.

According to the OECD, children of families that don't regularly eat together are 40 percent more likely to be obese, as well as, at a higher risk for teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, depression and anxiety. Whereas children who eat together with their families have lower rates in all the above, along with higher graduation rates and a better relationship with their parents. As a result, mental health professionals are now going as far as saying that the solution for well being is simple -- eat together.

Eating joins people to each other, and to God through forms of "natural communion" too complex to fathom. It introduces us to a graced world of hospitality, a creation that from the beginning (and constantly through its soil) absorbs death and makes room for newness of life. Eating involves us in a daily life and death drama in which, beyond all comprehension, some life is sacrificed so that other life can thrive. It establishes a membership that confirms all creatures as profoundly in need of each other and upon God to provide life's nutrition and vitality. Eating demonstrates that we cannot live alone, that there is no human fellowship without a table, no table without a kitchen, no kitchen without a garden, no garden without the forces productive of life, and no life without its source in God.

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College Tips by a College Student

BY SARA BROWN



If you're a freshman or a sophomore (or maybe even a junior!), you've probably got a pretty good idea of what your major consists of in terms of coursework, additional schooling after receiving your Bachelor's degree, and possible careers. You've also probably got a pretty good idea as to whether or not those things interest you. If by chance you aren't loving the idea of taking all those courses on a certain subject and/or you just can't see yourself having a career in that field for the rest of your life, you may need to change your major. Don't worry, that's totally normal; students do that all the time. It can, however, be a stressful process, especially considering the fact that many universities have gone completely online for the remainder of the semester, but don't fret! Here are some tips to help you through it.

Tip one: Talk to your academic advisors. I know it may seem intimidating to talk to them, especially if you're really considering changing your major, but remember: Their job is to help you. They don't want you to continue in a program you don't enjoy or you aren't interested in. Chances are, they'll support you in your decision and help you figure out what's best for you. Plenty of professors will be available on campus during the rest of this semester, assuming nothing changes and everyone is required to self-quarantine at home, so you can arrange for in-person meetings, or you can always email. Now more than ever, professors should be checking their email, so reach out!

Tip two: Talk to other professors you've taken courses with that you've liked, especially if you don't feel comfortable talking to your advisors (although you will have to talk to them at some point to actually change your major). It doesn't matter what course they taught. If you liked them,

they probably liked you, and they'll more than likely be willing to help you figure out your best course of action. Again, you can try to arrange for in-person meetings, or you can send an email. Don't be shy – many professors would love a distraction from the craziness of going completely online.

Tip three: Talk to other students on campus. If you're involved in any groups or clubs that utilize some kind of messaging platform like GroupMe or you tend to hang out with people outside of your major area, talk to them. Someone is bound to be able to help you figure out what it is you're wanting to do and how to do it. They may even suggest something you'd never even thought of that you want to give a try.

Tip four: Look at the list of departments and courses the university offers. Sometimes that's the best way to find things you're interested in. You can find new departments to look further into and you can find courses that interest you to take just to test the waters and see how you like a major before you dive in head-first. Don't be afraid to take a chance with courses you may be interested in. The worst thing that happens is that you don't like it, and then you just keep looking until you find something you do like.

Tip five: Take some time. Choosing a major is a big decision; most students aren't lucky enough to get it right the first time, and that's okay! Just slow down when trying to pick a new one. Take some time to really think about what you want to do with that major and if it's going to be a good fit for you. What's important is that the major you stick with is one you're going to be happy and successful in.

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DOULA



BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

In ancient Greek, the term “doula” means “a woman who serves.” And while in the past female family members and friends supported those who gave birth in addition to a midwife, the professional doula arose in the 1960s and 1970s.

According to NPR, doulas are an addition to birth teams that might be made up of midwives, doctors and nurses. Jessica Muse, a doula with the Arkansas Family Doulas organization, said her job is that of a trained professional who provides physical, emotional and mental support to women who are pregnant, in labor or in postpartum.

“Their purpose is to help women have a safe, memorable and empowering birthing experience,” Muse said.

Muse joined the profession one and a half years ago and became interested after having a doula for the birth of her second child.

“I realized the need for them,” she added.

Muse said that according to “Mothering the Mother,” the continual support doulas provide during labor can decrease the chances of needing a C-section by 51 percent, decrease the length of labor by 25 percent, decrease epidural anesthesia use by 60 percent and even decrease the use of forceps and vacuum by 30 percent.

YOU CAN CONTINUE READING THIS STORY
ONLINE AT PREMIERE-MAGAZINE.COM
PAGE 50 IN FLIPBOOK

LAST BANDOLEROS



BY SARA BROWN

Foreigner was in Jonesboro earlier in February, playing at First National Bank Arena. It was a great show, and I had the pleasure of interviewing the opening act, The Last Bandoleros! Comprised of Diego and Emilio Navaira, and Jerry Fuentes of San Antonio, Texas, and Derek James of New York, this band has been making waves with its unique blend of rock, country, pop, and Tejano music. In addition to releasing music regularly, they have a weekly web series on Facebook Live called “Around A Neon Cactus” airing Wednesday nights at 7:30, where they play a new song every week, and they’ve worked with Sting, both on the road and in the studio.

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An advertisement for The Greenbrier Companies. The background is a dark, industrial setting with a welder in a blue protective suit and a white helmet, working on a piece of machinery. The text is overlaid on the image. In the top left corner, it says "THE GREENBRIER COMPANIES". In the center, there is a large green banner with the text "NOW HIRING" in white. Below the banner, it says "apply online www.careers.gbrx.com". At the bottom, it lists the locations: "Kennett, MO | Marmaduke, AR | Paragould, AR".

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BY LINDSEY MILLS

Walking down a beautiful trail on a lovely day sets my mind at ease. Running early in the morning, just as the sun peaks over the horizon and before cars start their raucous noise as their drivers rush to get wherever they're going, makes me feel more prepared for the day. Watching my dog run after her Frisbee or plunge into the water after her "lunker" puts a smile on my face. Being outside makes me happy.

Seeing trash on the trail, on the side of the road, or littered across a local park makes my blood boil.

It's only in recent years I've become more environmentally conscious. I take my own bags to the grocery store, try to buy more food that doesn't come out of a package, and almost always deny a bag when purchasing anything. If I carried it to the register, I can carry it out of the store. My fiancé purchased biodegradable plates, napkins, silverware and cups for our wedding. I try to remember to take my own cup when getting coffee to go, and recently bought bamboo toothbrushes because, why use plastic if you don't have to?

Still, there's plenty of waste in my life. Waste. That's the word that made me begin to think more about what I use and how it affects the world I live in. Trash isn't a lovely word, but waste implies something is unnecessary -- and still we use it. We WASTE so

much. We use it for a moment, and then we toss it out. It's quite disheartening what our excessive use-it-toss-it routine is doing to our planet, and while thinking about the impact on a much larger scale can be hard to imagine, seeing waste/trash/garbage littered across the spaces we all use stares many of us in the face every day. It's not happening somewhere else – it's happening in our yards.

Planet Earth is a home we all share, just like our neighborhoods. When will we start acting like it? Being environmentally conscious is not a trend, nor is it overrated: It's simply human decency. Picking up after ourselves the same way our mom expected us to clean our rooms when we were kids should be expected – because it wasn't our house. We were sharing it with other people and we had to act like it. But what if we did one better and tried to keep it clean to begin with? So instead of having to clean up these giant messes, what if we tried to simply not make a mess?

Perhaps the lofty goal of not making a mess (not producing waste) lies in a very distant future. Perhaps I should focus on one step at a time. So, the next time I go for a hike or a run or to play with my dog, I guess I'll simply pick up the piece of trash that makes my blood run hot. I'll put it where it belongs. I'll continue to do my part: the little acts, the bigger acts, and everything in-between.

Capturing the moments that mean the most to you.

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One day I was hunting with my grandson, David, and I was trying to impress upon him the importance of becoming familiar with his surroundings. I quizzed him, asking if he recognized anything we had passed on the way to the woods ... a particular house or store, a highway, a road, a landmark of any sort.

He said, "Not really" so I built a scenario in which I handed the cell phone to him and it was imperative that he be able to direct people to where we were. I told him to imagine the situation as being really important and he said, "Just one question, Pappaw. If it was important, why would you give the phone to me?"

Touche.

Having shared that story with family members you would think they would, in turn, know better than to send *me* on an important mission. Yet, my wife and I were in the house one afternoon when I said I was going to the store. "Get the baby some milk," she said, referring to the scheduled arrival of our young granddaughter later in the evening. "And remember to get real milk." I'm good with milk; I know real from 2%, white from chocolate, almond from buttermilk. I was about to head out, confident of my abilities to complete said mission until Cindy added, "And why don't you get her a potty chair while you're there?"

Why would anyone send Grandpa to buy a potty chair? I've been in the Baby section about twice in my life and both times I was following my wife when she was supposed to be looking for something like a hammer or cheese dip, yet still wound up holding little lacy socks and outfits. Both times I faded out and landed in Sporting Goods, and she knew where to find me. But now, my job was walk right into Babyland and act as if I knew what to do.

I know what some are thinking: Why not just ask for help? Because when a fellow my age is wandering around looking lost and says, "I need a potty chair" chances are good the young person on duty will think he's senile and will escort him to the men's room with a

sweet, "Here we are." No, sir, this time I was on my own.

I found the diapers, figuring potty chairs had to be somewhere close, considering. First I had to maneuver past car seats and strollers and playpens and some things I didn't recognize before finding Potty Chair Lane. To my dismay there were about eight different kinds and I briefly panicked. I don't know anything about sizes unless they pertain to men and boys. Once when we were just past newlywed status, I was going to buy Cindy a real nice dress for some special occasion and bumped into the Women's section of the department store. I told the nice lady what I wanted and she said, "What do you think your wife is?"

"Pardon?" I said.

"What do you think your wife is? A 2, maybe a 4?"

"Oh, no," I said, shaking my head, "my wife's a 10." I said that because I meant it; my wife was a real hottie. Guy's clothes were Small, Medium and Large so when the saleslady started throwing out numbers I assumed women's attire must be linked to their attractiveness. Made sense to me; your grandma would probably be a 1 or a 2 just because of the age thing and the young pretty

women like Cindy would easily be 9s and 10s.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she said, and started showing me dresses that looked like Aunt Bertha's muumuu, the one she wore early in the morning when she walked down the driveway to pick up the morning paper and kept on wearing through all the game shows and soap operas on TV, the ones she watched while doing the ironing. I didn't know what to say, so I again faded away and bought Cindy a Dustbuster.

Recalling that disaster I wasn't about to ask for help and have the salesperson say, "Well, of course. What size is your granddaughter's bottom?"

I don't know, but I can tell you it's not a 10. It's tiny, like her, and she just needs something to encourage the potty training process. I settled on one that looks like a real commode, not because it was the most expensive but because it has a handle and when you push it down it sounds like a real toilet flushing. For some reason I assumed that was important and the most advanced pottiers were probably using the deluxe model, sound effects and all. Later that evening we sprung the new device on Roxie Jo and she refused to sit on it, although she was delighted to "flush" it and giggle. I can't wait until I get to buy her a dress.

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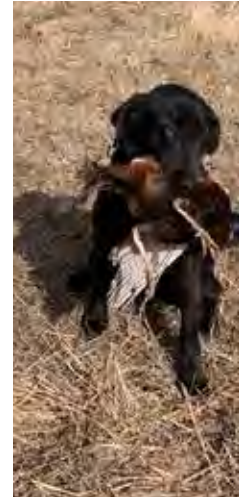
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PHILIP BRASHER PHEASANT HUNT

The first-ever Philip Brasher Pheasant Hunt was held February 22 at Liberty Hill Outfitters in Rector. Twenty-five different groups participated in the European-style hunt and over 43 sponsors supported the event. The first of what will become an annual event raised \$21,000 for the ALS Association of Tennessee.

The hunt is named for Philip Brasher of Paragould who is battling ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis), or Lou Gehrig's disease. The ALS Association of Tennessee has done so much for Philip and his family, and without them they would not have the support and assistance needed to handle the disease. Without donations from fundraisers the association would not be able to offer the support classes and research needed to find a cure.

For more info on this event and details on how to get involved, visit: [ALSPheasantHunt](#) on Facebook.



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I made the walk to the top of “gravel hill” on our farm and stopped just as I had for the past few mornings to listen for the gobble of a turkey. As the light eased out the darkness, things looked different. The hardwood bottom that fell down below the steep hill seemed to shine as the day started to break. It looked as if a bomb had been dropped in the bottom as white had taken over the drabness of winter.

The dogwoods had broken out of their slumber and filled the bottom with beautiful splotches of white that provided an awesome array in the morning light. I enjoyed the landscape for a minute, but a distant gobble put me back in hunting mode and off I went to chase my quarry.

Spring and the renewing of the growth of our land is such a unique thing to behold. Each year the woods and landscapes lay dormant through the cold months as they wait for the warm temperatures to rejuvenate them.

The dogwood is thought of by many as the ultimate sign of spring because of the vibrant white color and unique shape of the flowers. It, along with the redbud, are perhaps the most recognized native flowering trees of our state. There have been many others introduced to Arkansas that flower but, in my opinion, none can hold a candle to our native trees.

As the blooms from our trees break open, they are often the most recognizable plants on our landscape due to their color



and size. Even though the trees are the most obvious, there will be lots going on at ground level to brighten the spring world. One of my favorite spring plants is the mayapple.

It grows in colonies in shady places, often off the beaten path and only grows to a height of about a foot. This seemingly nondescript plant covers a beautiful bloom underneath an umbrella of dark green leaves. Usually sharing the same habitat will be some very small violets that add purple to the landscape.

These shady areas can also hold a true delicacy for those who know where and when to look. Morel mushrooms are found throughout Arkansas and are prized for the table by many. They can be difficult to find at first, but once likely haunts are identified, they become easier to find and can appear in the same locales year after year. Fiddleheads, which are young fern sprouts, also make good table fare and can be found in the shady areas as well.

Most of those species can only be found with a thorough search of an area as they are often hard to see and prefer areas with little disturbance. Other wildflowers, however, flourish along roads and around well-traveled areas. One of the most common along our roadways is the primrose. Its white-to-pink flowers can be seen in many areas as they can grow and even thrive in dry, open areas. Other plants such as coneflowers, flax, clovers, rose mallow and many others are usually very obvious. These plants provide a bounty of colors to our landscape.

Due to our wide range of habitats, we are blessed with a wide assortment of wildflowers and trees. There are many programs in Arkansas that promote our wildflowers, including the Arkansas Department of Transportation’s Wildflower Program. According to arkansashighways.com, approximately 1,000 miles of highways throughout the Natural State are maintained by ARDOT in a way to promote wildflower



CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

growth. Some of these are Interstate 40 in Faulkner County that includes baby blue eyes, Highway 123 in Newton County that features black-eyed Susans and purple coneflowers, or Indian paintbrush along Interstate 40 in Johnson County. Local organizations also work to beautify intersections, disturbed areas and other natural areas throughout our state.

The flowers of small plants, bushes and trees provide natural beauty, but they also play a vital role in the ecology of Arkansas as they feed many species of insects and birds. I would encourage you to take a little time this year and plan to include a few wildflowers in your plantings. Yes, these plants can often look “weedy” when not in bloom, but they are a vital part of the ecosystem of Arkansas.

Information on native plants can be found at your local nursery or at many sources online. The local extension office or someone in the Arkansas Master Gardener program can be a great resource as well. There are also many books on the market, with my favorite being “Wildflowers of Arkansas,” by Carl G. Hunter.

I hope you will take some time as the temperatures warm to get out and enjoy some of the natural beauty of Northeast Arkansas. I may be chasing turkeys or trying to catch crappie, but Earth always amazes me with the beautiful colors it grows each year. I hope to see you out there!



Sounds Like April Showers

BY SARA BROWN

A playlist for April.

1. Mandolin Rain – Bruce Hornsby & The Range

a. This song is painfully beautiful. It's about a lost love, and it features heavy use of, you guessed it, a mandolin. The sound of the mandolin takes on the role of musical rain – it gives the song a rainy feel – and it's a really cool sound. This song demonstrates really well a sadness associated with rain.

2. I Love a Rainy Night – Eddie Rabbitt

a. This song is a happy take on rain – that's obvious with lyrics like, "Puts a song in this heart of mine / Puts a smile on my face every time." It's got such a fun, bouncy beat to it, and that combined with his description of how the rain makes him feel makes you want to go outside and just dance in the rain.

3. Purple Rain – Prince & The Revolution

a. No list of songs about rain would be complete without this classic. Prince himself described the song as being about wanting to be with the one you love until the end of the world. The song itself sounds like a thunderstorm in a way. The verses and first chorus function as a light rain, and when the second chorus comes in, it hits like a crack of thunder. It truly is rain turned into music.

4. Have You Ever Seen The Rain? – Creedence Clearwater Revival

a. This song isn't really a happy one, but the sound of it alone would have you believing otherwise. The overall message is that even when you seem to have it all, it's still possible to not be happy – the song was written during the height of CCR's success

and during a time of tension for the band, and that's what I think they're saying with the lyric, "Have you ever seen the rain / coming down on a sunny day?" Funny enough, I have in fact seen rain come down on what looked like a plenty sunny day, and I think that just proves their point perfectly.

5. Louisiana Rain – Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers

a. This isn't the classic Tom Petty sound you're probably used to. Don't let the intro throw you; it's a little weird, but it's a really cool lead-in to a sound you might not expect from Tom Petty. The song has a country feel to it and was written when Tom was in the band he fronted before joining up with the Heartbreakers. It's an interesting take on the rain theme, but I think it works really well.

6. Rhythm of the Rain – The Cascades

a. This song takes the rain theme very seriously. It opens with a crack of thunder and features the sound of rain falling. This is another sad song about a lost love, which seems to quite often be associated with rain. The song uses a celesta, which looks like a piano, but sounds a little like a xylophone. It combined with the percussion on the track give the song a rainy feel.

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PET OF THE MONTH

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BY LINDSEY GREENE

I came across a Facebook post from a local veterinary clinic regarding a black kitty that needed to be adopted, but wasn't getting much notice because of his coloring. His previous family took him there for boarding while they were on vacation and never came back to get him. I adopted him, and he has been my world since July of 2012!

He has been my, and my significant other's, constant through so many good times and bad. He just turned eight at the end of January and I've had him nearly that long. He is the only animal we have and he loves it that way; he's the "Prince of the Palace." We don't have children, so he is our fur-child. His daddy is his favorite person, he loves Greenies catnip flavor treats, and his favorite toy is a shoe string (although he has 15 others). Maine Coon is in his lineage. He absolutely loves sleeping, cuddling, lying in laps and all the attention you can give.

Tex is super laid back and very loyal. Anyone who meets him wants to "catnap" him and take him home. He loves getting

and opening Christmas presents. He has a sense of humor and can get a catitude with his facial expressions.

Although I could never understand why someone left this AMAZING kitty behind, it has given me the opportunity to give him the life he deserves and love him unconditionally. He's my miniature majestic lion. I know I saved him, but he saved me, too. We love this soft, warm, cuddly, smart, sleepy, 13 -pound fluff-but to the moon and back.



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PET FIRST AID

BY DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

With all the recent happenings with the Coronavirus, quarantines, scares of an economic collapse, and hysteria last month, prepping has been on the forefront of most people's minds. April is National Pet First Aid Awareness month and with prepping being on the mind, I'd like to discuss steps that you can take that can best prepare you to care for your pet should a disaster occur. Start with a Pet First Aid Kit. This kit should include the following: Pet's Paperwork: This includes Rabies vaccination certificate, medical records including other vaccines and any medications the pet may be taking.

- Phone Numbers: A number to call in case of emergency, your veterinarian's phone number, as well as your own phone number(s).

- Hydrogen Peroxide: ALWAYS contact your veterinarian before attempting this, but Hydrogen Peroxide is very useful to help an animal vomit if it has ingested something it shouldn't have. The hydrogen peroxide, when ingested, creates a very dense foam in the stomach, that when

an animal cannot belch it up, stimulates a vomit response. Again, never do this unless instructed by a veterinarian, as they can tell you how much to administer and when to do it. There are some toxins that will cause more harm if they are vomited and call for another action.

- Bandage Material: This includes gauze, wrapping material, and bandage tape. Again, always use this under the direction of a veterinarian to ensure the bandage is placed correctly.

- Antibiotic ointment: This can be applied to small scratches or abrasions, never to the eyes. Always clean the wound first.

- Saline flush: Can be used to thoroughly flush wounds, if needed.

- Flashlight with back-up batteries: Can be very useful in times when the electricity goes out or when you are outside at night.

- Leash/Collar/Halter: just in case the one you have becomes broken or if you happen upon an injured stray animal.

- Medications: If your pet is on lifelong medications, it is always good to have a back-up supply.

- Food and Water: A small supply to get you by should a disaster occur, with collapsible bowls.

- Towel or Blanket: These can be used in a number of ways. They can comfort the animal, help to move/lift the animal, or be useful in restraining an animal that may be trying to bite because he is injured. After you have your Pet First Aid Kit together, be sure everyone in your household knows where it is and what to do should an emergency occur. I hope this helps to better prepare for any situation. Remember, always best to be prepared for everything and not use it, than to prepare for nothing and be in need of it. For any questions related to pet safety, pet first aid kits, or what you should do for your pet should a disaster occur, call ARPets Hospital anytime or your local veterinarian to best answer your questions.

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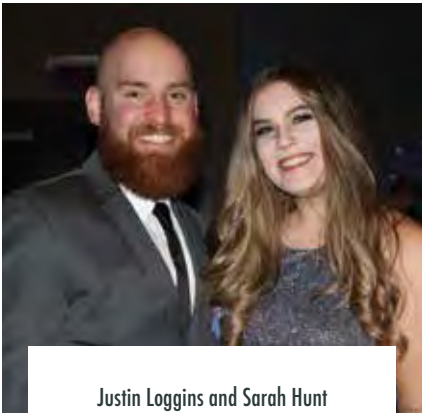
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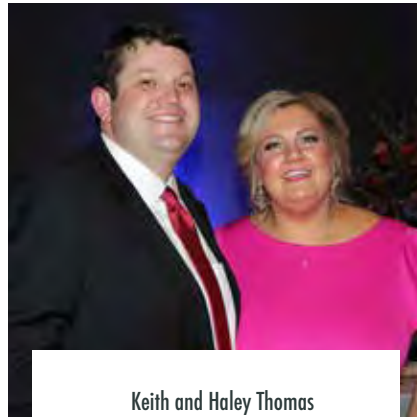
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49TH ANNUAL CHARITY BALL



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On February 29 the Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro hosted “Deep Sea Soirée,” the 49th Annual Charity Ball at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Red Wolf Convention Center. The venue was transformed as the estimated 630 guests were transported under the sea. The event raised more than \$150,000, every bit of which they will need to fund their 12 community service projects throughout the year, said Charity Ball Chair, Amanda Fahlberg.

“The added gaming by Purple Heart Poker provided a new energy to the event and also enhanced the entertainment,” Amanda shared following the ball. “I was thrilled with the outcome and thought our decorations committee did a phenomenal job bringing the true ambiance of an underwater oasis to the Convention Center. We are so thankful for our donors and attendees who helped make the night what it was. We also appreciated the staff of Embassy Suites Red Wolf Convention Center for their professionalism and accommodations, as well as Empire Transportation for helping us problem solve the parking situation on such a busy night in Jonesboro.”



See more photos from this event in our digital issue at premiere-magazine.com and on Premiere’s Facebook page.

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BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

The Arkansas Methodist Medical Center Auxiliary celebrates 70 years of existence this July, and what started as just 12 women raising money to keep the hospital doors open has since evolved into various volunteer programs.

Shirl Kersey, auxiliary president, said the AMMC Auxiliary was instrumental in creating a state auxiliary program in 1955 and has gone on to win many 5-star awards. In 1966, AMMC branched out even more by creating its first volunteer program.

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DRESS FOR LIFE

BY LINDSEY MILLS

Dress for Life began as a class a few years ago when founder Ian Buchanan was asked to speak at a male conference about how to tie a tie. Ian, who had worked at Men's Warehouse previously and has a passion for dressing for success, realized properly tying a tie is something that so often isn't taught to young people and when they reach a point of needing to know that information, they may not know how to access learning it.

"It's so easy to get it wrong, and it's also so easy to get it right," Ian said. Helping people distinguish that difference has led to Ian's non-profit: Dress for Life.



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CASA CARNIVAL

The 4th Annual CASA Carnival was held on Saturday, March 7. Over 330 people attended the event and enjoyed carnival games, bounce houses, face painting, music and delicious carnival foods. A total of \$32,795 was raised at this year's event.

All proceeds benefit CASA of the 2nd Judicial District. CASA advocates become friends, mentors and ultimately someone a child in foster care can trust to make sure their needs are met and their voices heard. To learn more about CASA visit neacasa.org



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MOVING FORWARD, BY GIVING BACK

BY LINDSEY MILLS



April may be National Volunteer Month but at least one company in NEA is working hard to make volunteer efforts a contribution they make to the community every month. Recently, Anchor Packaging amped up its giving, and the increase in donations of goods and time stems from a mission to make a mark in NEA beyond the doors, windows and walls.

“If we’re not helping to make things better, if we’re not investing in our people and in the community we all live in, then what’s the point?” said Richard Gassaway, Safety Coordinator at Anchor Packaging. Gassaway is an important part of the

Anchor team and one of many who believes wholeheartedly in investing back into the places the business and its employees call home. Developing ways for people to serve, encouraging them to do so, and providing tangible benefits for NEA residents is the goal of Anchor’s outreach programs.

“The community outreach is an amazing project for Anchor employees,” said Eric Neeley, Warehouse Support Specialist. “Each committee is able to select projects that our employees feel passionately about. This empowers the employees to take full ownership of the projects knowing they have complete support from Anchor Packaging.”

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MASTER GARDENERS HANGING TIGHT

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Like most Americans forced to put their planned activities on hold due to the Corona virus, the Greene County Master Gardeners are just waiting for the official word to get out and resume working on numerous projects.

"There's not a lot we can do, as you can imagine," said President Sue Gilmartin. "We hoped to have our plant sale at the end of April when the Farmer's Market opened, but as far as we can tell it won't be opening. And we have several projects around town that we do to keep the city looking beautiful."

Flower beds at two Paragould city limits signs, one in front of the Greene County Courthouse, a Butterfly Garden at the county fairgrounds and the Rainbow Garden at the Paragould Children's Home are some of the works undertaken by the club members, all designed to improve the looks of the area and put smiles on people's faces.

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NEA Artist

BLOOMING GARDEN



BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Jonesboro native Debbie Johnson started her own business in 2014 and two years ago she retired, now using that extra spending money for travel.

Johnson and her daughter, Lisa Vaughn, created Blooming Home and Garden and came together with their crafts to serve many needs in Northeast Arkansas.

"We have a wide variety of crafts we do and often refer to ourselves as the general store of crafts," Johnson said.

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WHOLE HEART FARMING

BY BETHANY GALLIMORE

Small-scale farming is more than a hobby for Laci Burton: It's a passion. The entrepreneur manages Whole Hearts Mini Farm, a small business that allows pairing a passion for growing with the love for helping others access fresh, nutritious foods.

The New Orleans native grows everything from lettuce and kale to eggplants, cantaloupes, peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, corn and more across garden plots in Bay and Jonesboro. Through years of small-batch farming experience, Burton has developed a love for connecting with the earth through sustainable farming practices.

"I'm so passionate about what I do, it's a joy to do it," Burton says. "The whole way that I farm is looking at the health of the soil, the health of the plant, and the health of me — it's a whole ecosystem."

Burton believes the best farming is responsive to the earth. As a small-scale farmer, the focus is on holistic growing: Building an environment that nourishes the ecosystem while still creating nutritious, flavorful yields.

Part of this means farming without pesticides or weed killers, transporting only to local customers, and planting in rotations that allow the soil to rest. Burton plants a variety of crops

throughout the growing season, with special emphasis on salad crops and nutrition-rich vegetables. She knows veggie-heavy meals may not be everyone's initial passion, but believes there's a real difference in quality and flavor when food is grown locally.

"I actually get it when people say they don't like vegetables," Burton said, explaining that the fresh foods people find in most grocery stores have had to have been harvested before the produce is fully ripe, and these varieties have likely been chosen for their heartiness and ability to ship well, rather than their flavor. "Things that can ripen naturally are just completely different to me," Burton said. The ability to choose varieties for their taste and texture — rather than their transportability — gives Burton another reason to love the freedom and flavor that comes with small-scale farming.

Burton first began farming in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. After it wiped out many of the grocery stores in their neighborhood, they started growing vegetables to help combat the food insecurity faced by many of their friends and family. Ultimately, Burton fell in love with being able to practice sustainable farming practices and offer healthy foods for people who needed it most.

When Burton moved to Arkansas in 2014, the passion came along. Today, the small-scale farming plots in Bay and Jonesboro contribute to Whole Hearts' summer crop of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and grains.

Once the warm weather returns, Burton plants throughout the season to allow a continual harvest during the spring and summer. Normally, Burton grows for family and a close group of customers, hoping this year to branch out and have Whole Hearts' crops featured in local restaurants, too.

As a small-scale farmer in an agriculture-heavy state, Burton does face challenges. The plots in Bay are relatively close to commercial cotton and soybean crops, and the chemical pest and weed controls sprayed over those can drift to the smaller farm.

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SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

BY LINDSEY MLLS

The Nobles family has a deep love and respect for planet Earth, and their actions speak volumes of their intentions to create sustainable lives, personally and professionally.

Jen Nobles, owner of Plant Cartel in Jonesboro, says her affection for nature has always been there, more a part of her than something she's developed. Jen has worked with plants for years in greenhouses, in science labs, doing field work, in flower shops, at produce stands and for natural grocery stores; you can sense the common theme there. The California native spent her teen years in Jonesboro and has lived all over, but she kept feeling pulled back to Northeast Arkansas where she now owns her own plant and herb store.

"It's the community. It's so wonderful," Jen said with a smile. "It pulls you back in. You never quite have the same community, family, and support as here."

Family for Jen includes The Edge Coffeehouse and Eatery owners, Brian and Sarah Nobles. The married couple has been in the restaurant industry for years, working every aspect from bussing tables to managing the business side of things. Working together since the age of 21 helped the duo develop a good business relationship in conjunction with their personal lives. It also helped prime them for when the opportunity arose for



them to take a leap toward owning their own business, together.

Today, Jen, Brian and Sarah are working to pool their resources and passions to create more sustainable business models; no easy feat, but rewarding.

"It's really tough to do," Brian said. "It's not necessarily easy for a business. It's expensive to get these things and some of them are hard to find and rare."

Brian and Sarah are making the switch to biodegradable to-go ware, all their cups are recyclable, and they do their

own composting and use the results for their garden. One of the things that makes this possible, Brian shared, is working with suppliers that are already serving larger businesses like the new Embassy Suites by Hilton and Red Wolf Convention Center. While The Edge is a small business purchasing relatively small quantities, suppliers allow them to purchase in those small quantities since they're already writing large orders for the Embassy Suites.

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An advertisement for Glen Sain Ford. The top left features the name "Glen Sain" in a cursive font next to the Ford logo. To the right, the slogan "BEST PRICE BEST SERVICE" is written in a bold, blocky font. Below this, a white Ford SUV is shown driving on a paved road that curves through a desert landscape with mountains in the background. On the left side of the ad, there is a graphic of an American flag with the quote "We Will get Through this Together" and the signature "Danny Ford". At the bottom, the contact information "870.236.8546 | 1301 US 49 | GLENSAINFORD.NET" is displayed in a white font on a dark background.

LOCAL TASTES SWEETER

BY BETHANY GALLIMORE



For Mrs. Angie, farming good honey is all in the family.

Angie Mason, owner and operator of Mrs. Angie's Farm Fresh Products, started beekeeping with her husband in 2014 with just 15 hives. Now, Angie and Archie work together to maintain

a spread of over 450 hives and supply Northeast Arkansans with the raw, unfiltered honey the local farmers are known for.

"We're still considered small," Angie explains. "There are a lot of commercial beekeepers around."

Now, Mrs. Angie's is able to fill a unique health food and agricultural niche in Northeast Arkansas by helping local shoppers access natural honey and helping local farmers pollinate their crops.

On the health food front, Mrs. Angie's methods net raw, unfiltered honey that provides important benefits for consumers.

"There's a difference between raw and processed honey you find in a store," she explains. "Processed honey has been heated and cooked; it's really more just a syrup. It doesn't have the health benefits of raw, unfiltered honey. Raw honey still has the pollen in it, it's still medicinal, and it still has good things in it."

From her beginnings in selling to local restaurants and through local farmer's markets, Angie has seen firsthand how natural honey offers sweetness with a smile. "Raw honey costs a little more, but it has more of the health benefits," she finishes.

Part of the Masons' contribution to agriculture is in the spring and summer placement of their beehives. In addition to placing hives near the clover found in plenty throughout NEA, the pair also seeks out local soybean and cotton farmers who would be interested in having bee houses placed on or near their land.

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RAINBOW GARDEN



BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

One of the main attractions on the Paragould Children's Homes campus is its Rainbow Garden, a beautiful display centrally located for the enjoyment of employees, residents and visitors alike.

David Wood, Director of Finance for the Children's Homes today, is one of the people who was in on the original design, construction and upkeep for the wonderful, eye-pleasing display. "I remember when we started it," Wood said, recalling when former administrator James Balcom returned to the campus in 1986. "Sometime in the late '80s he said we needed a new logo, which at that time was a rainbow," he said. "And he said he needed some kind of flower bed and we came up with the idea of a rainbow-shaped flower bed. I told him it was

going to have to have a little size to it to make it look like a rainbow, and I think it got a lot bigger than he envisioned."

It took lots of man hours and plenty of volunteers to put the project in motion -- efforts Wood recalls fondly today but remembers as toilsome at the time -- before the centerpiece took shape. "A guy came with a backhoe and started digging it out," Wood remembers, "and James' wife, Charlene, ... well her parents had a farm at Mt. View and we got a trailer and loaded up a van full of kids and went over there and gathered up rocks to build the walls and foundation. We loaded that trailer up full and when we unloaded it, it was just a drop in the bucket of what we needed.

"Hayden Carter came up here to see what we were doing -- he lived over there by the (Crowley's Ridge) Academy -- and

he asked James all about it and he loved the idea and he wound up coming up with just about all the cost of finishing it. And he had all these connections with these construction people because that's what he did, and he got his sons involved and found someone to lay the stone and we were able to get it done. We put pea gravel by the sidewalks and brought in sandy loam from Missouri so it would drain right."

Upon completion, the garden was dedicated to the memory of Carter's wife, Nora, the first Secretary/Treasurer of the Children's Homes. "I was kind of the coordinator," Wood said, "but Hayden might have done more coordinating than I did. Since James said he wanted it to look like a rainbow and he liked chrysanthemums, I planted them in the back in different colors to kind of do a rainbow effect. They were perennials, so they would come back every year. Early in the year I planted periwinkles. After a while, Gary Clayton took over and eventually put part of his expertise on it, and now the Master Gardeners do most of it, so it's a little more low-maintenance for us."

Today, visitors seem to migrate to the gorgeous display that can be seen almost immediately upon entering the grounds from Walcott Road. "It's hard to imagine our campus without it today," Wood said. "They've put swings there now for people to sit in and visitors just seem to congregate at the flowers lots of times. We're really proud of it."

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- Marti Bunch & Casey Hook: August 1st
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A complete listing of all Downtown events can be found under "Events" at downtownparagould.com or facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events.

SAVE THE DATE DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD EVENTS



April Events

In the light of current circumstances many events have been canceled and postponed. Please visit exploremornea.com for an update on events around NEA as MOR Media Inc. is working to keep the content there updated daily. Visit the community calendar or check out exploremornea.com/currently for ideas on how to support local businesses during this time.

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RIPPLE TURNS INTO A WAVE

BY LINDSEY MILLS

One action does matter. One person does matter. And one movement can cause a tidal wave.

Just ask Sara Saucedo. Sara is from Los Angeles but for the time being Northeast Arkansas is her home base. Shortly after moving here, Sara noticed there weren't many – hardly any – environmental initiatives at Arkansas State University. Sara is just one person with just one idea, but her simple actions have caused a chain reaction she hopes will leave lasting effects for students, and generations, to come.

The ASU Environmental Club was founded in March of 2018 by Sara. Her early efforts were not leaps and bounds, but rather baby steps. After noticing there weren't recycling bins in all resident halls, she set out on a mission to get them there. But a proposal to the university asking for them was met with "no" on multiple occasions.

"I would go through trash and pull out recycling items, and count it," Sara recalled. She then purchased her own recycling bins and placed them in the residence hall where she worked at the time. She counted recycling items again and found that the amount had doubled when there were options. Items that had been going to the trash via students' living quarters or elsewhere were now going into the recycling. Sara rewrote her proposal and included the waste audit.



Photo Credit: Amy Reeves Photography

Still no approval.

It would take several more attempts and reaching out to different people in the administration before Sara's request for recycling bins would be approved. Since then, the club has only grown and small successes have been won, though a zero-waste campus might still lie in a distant future.

For now, the more than 250 members of the ASU Environmental Club channel their efforts into community outreach, student education, and campus cleanups. Campus cleanups take place every other weekend and students regularly visit classes to give lectures about how to live sustainably and why it matters.

Sara says when presenting in front

of classes or any kind of group, they try to explain to listeners why being environmentally conscious matters to them. Speakers gauge their different audiences and adapt to help show that environmentalism isn't for one kind of person.

"We try to make the argument specific to the person listening," Sara said. "So, in front of classes, we try to adapt the presentation to that class, major or field. We try to relate why it's important to them, their work and their future work."

The club also had big plans for this Earth Day: events aimed at engaging Arkansas State students and the Northeast Arkansas community at large. Sara hoped these events and many more like them in the future will help people understand

there are many ways people can make a difference whether it be through living sustainably or advocating for policy change; the little things and the big things all matter. She also hopes events such as these will help educate people on how their actions affect their own lives, and also the lives of many others.

“It’s hard to conceptualize the effect of climate change right here, in Northeast Arkansas,” Sara said. “When you don’t think about something because it is so much bigger than yourself, and outside the scale of your day to day, it’s really easy to not think about it at all. I ask people to challenge themselves, do some research, and look at how your actions affect others.”

Earth Day plans and the month-long celebration the club had prepared for were derailed by the COVID-19 outbreak, but with students like Sara and more that will follow in her footsteps, the impact this club will have on the school and the community will last for years to come.

Sara’s actions have certainly affected many – for the better. What a legacy she is sure to leave behind for the Arkansas State Environmental Club, and when it comes time to pass the torch, if the club can keep its momentum and work toward bigger and broader goals, Sara will have proved that one person with one idea can create a movement that really will make a difference.

Photos credit: Melissa Palumbo



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HAPPENINGS



Paragould Board of Realtors Awards for Excellence were presented by the Arkansas Realtors Association to: Amber Gill, Linda Dickinson, Pat Chesser, Sandra Kelley, Carolyn Hurley Block, Delaine Landrum, Laura King, Beth Cupp, Kristen Grimes, Lori Dowdy, Jenny Payne, Diana Jackson, Angelic Davis, Tammy Farmer, Jerry Jett.



Black River Technical College and the Greene County Industrial Training Center (GCITS) received a grant from Arkansas Career Education (ACE), a department of the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, to purchase a state-of-the-art hydraulic trainer.

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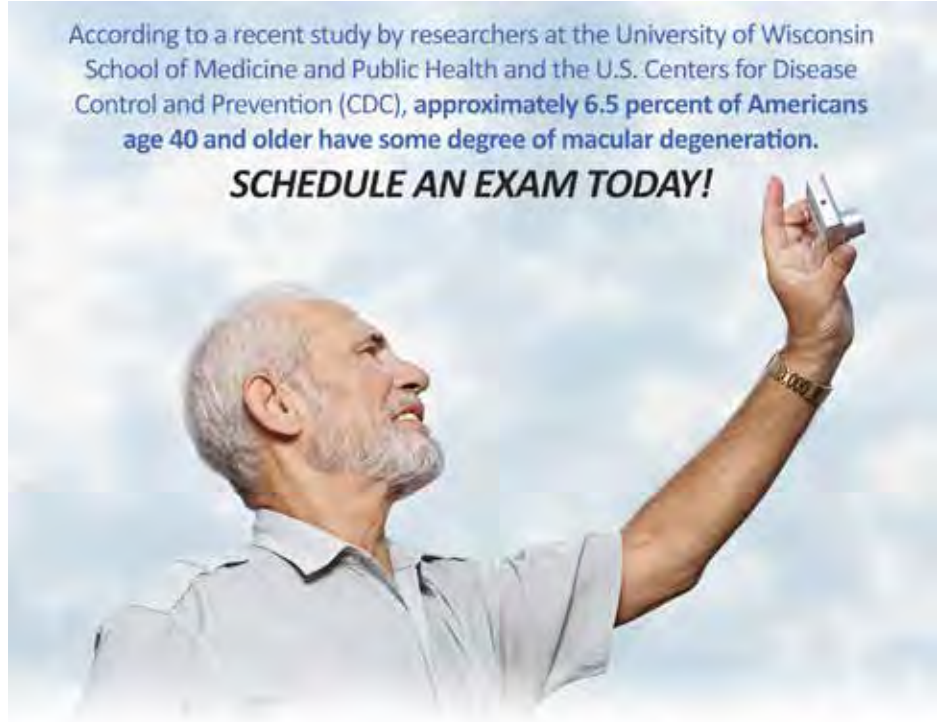
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On Monday, February 24, Beth Stewart, senior software support specialist with the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE), visited BRTC to discuss the Arkansas higher education funding formula.

SEE MORE HAPPENINGS ONLINE
AT PREMIERE-MAGAZINE.COM
PAGE 59 IN FLIPBOOK



According to a recent study by researchers at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 6.5 percent of Americans age 40 and older have some degree of macular degeneration.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS:

Matt Fowler	Grant Weaver	Gabe Roberts	Logan Sapp
Elizabeth Kimble	Nathan Knight	Audrey Guinn	Bailey Hyde
John Gay Jr.	Alex Newboles	Lindsey Wingo	James Collier
Corie Scott	Abbie Dickson	Shawnda Weaver	Buddy Lee
Allison McDaniel	Brittany Murray	Ryan Baldwin	Carrie Lee

These young community members are business owners, leaders, community servants and so much more. Enjoy reading the profiles of these committed citizens who work hard to make NEA a better place to live, work, and play.



Photo Credit: Natalie Cox

MATT FOWLER

Matt Fowler is a 25-year-old Jonesboro native who spent some time in the Marine Corps before returning to his home state four months ago. A graduate of Tulane University with a degree in international relations and business, he served as an Academics Officer in Quantico, CA, as well as the Marine Action Group (MAG) representative. Matt coordinated volunteer opportunities and completed 650 hours of community service.

After his time in the Marine Corps, Matt returned home to Arkansas to help with the family business. He is currently co-owner and Director of Operations for HomeIroniX of Arkansas, LLC, where he oversees the daily management of the company and is tasked with discovering future growth areas and executing the plans to leverage them. Matt says something that has stuck with him throughout his life and into the early stages of his career are the words his grandmother spoke to him when he was 17.

“When I told her I was going to attend Tulane rather than the U of A, she said, ‘Make a decision then make it work for you.’ I still think about it whenever I face a decision,” Matt shared. “I credit this simple piece of advice for my desire to always progress and my belief that stagnation kills. Even when I make a wrong decision, rather than hesitate and settle with the outcome, I learn, leverage it to the best of my ability, and continue to move forward.”

Matt enjoys reading, working out, and spontaneous travel.

ELIZABETH KIMBLE

Elizabeth Kimble’s passion for the outdoors is clear in her smile when she talks about her job. A park interpreter at Crowley’s Ridge State Park at age 29, Elizabeth coordinates special events for the park and is responsible for providing programs that explain the value of the natural, cultural, and historic resources inside the park.

Originally from Clover Bend and a graduate of Hoxie High

School, Elizabeth attended Arkansas State University to earn a degree in wildlife ecology and management. Elizabeth said her love for the outdoors bloomed early as her dad was an avid hunter and professional taxidermist. She grew up loving and having a great respect for the outdoors.

Elizabeth says her main job is to help people better understand the park’s resources and spark the connection that brings them

back time and time again.

“It’s all about the ‘Aha!’ moment,” Elizabeth said.

Elizabeth also serves as the volunteer coordinator for the park but when she’s not busy working she enjoys hanging out with her husband, Jacob, and their 2-year-old son, Samuel. She also loves hunting, back-riding, spending time with family, and exploring the Natural State.



Photo credit: Lauren Tyler Photography

JOHN GAY JR.

John Gay Jr. graduated from Harding University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting in addition to receiving All-Conference, All-Region, and All-America honors in football. After starting his career with Stephens Headquarters in Little Rock as an analyst, he returned to his hometown of Jonesboro and joined his partner and father, John Gay Sr.

John is now a financial consultant with Stephens Inc.,

providing financial planning and investment management to high-net-worth individuals and families. Outside of work, John is a member of the Northeast Arkansas Society of CPAs, and alumni judge for Harding Business School’s Capstone Course presentations, and gives private kicking lessons to football players of any age.

John says his college coach inspired much of his drive to succeed. “My college football coach, Ronnie Huckeba (Coach

Huck), regularly said, ‘I Will Persist Without Exception’ during my freshman year when we were transitioning from a spread offense to the triple option,” John shared. “Coach Huck had a special talent to be able to make men out of his players and taught us to persevere through any obstacle that may come our way. Coach Huck and IWPWE are what inspire me today.”

John loves to hunt, fish, golf and travel.



Photo Credit: Cindy Momchilov



CORIE SCOTT

Corie Scott, 27, was born in Jonesboro and raised in Paragould. After graduating from Paragould High, Corie enlisted in the Arkansas Army National Guard where she developed a relationship with her now husband. Corie spent six years in the Guard before deciding it was best to have at least one parent at home with their four kids in case of deployment.

“Girl Scouting is a family affair,” Corie said. “My mother

was a troop leader when I was younger. I have fond memories of camping at Camp Crossed Arrows, selling cookies, and troop meetings where we completed badges to fill up my vest. I knew I wanted my daughters to get to experience these things as well. I signed her up in 2018 and have been an active part of our troop ever since. I am a Co-Troop leader with several other amazing women and as of 2019, Service Unit Director for Girl Scouts of Greene County.”

Her Girl Scout troop sent in this about their leader: “Corie is a veteran, mom, volunteer and so much more. She has donated several hours to her community through Girl Scouts as a troop leader helping build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.”

Corie is the general manager at Marco’s Pizza in Paragould and outside of scouting, she enjoys swimming, camping, singing, and spending time with family.

Photo Credit: Hailey + Alan Photography

ALLISON MCDANIEL

Allison McDaniel, 29, grew up in Northeast Arkansas. She attended Arkansas State University where she obtained a Bachelor of Science in Radio/TV with an emphasis in broadcast journalism, though she is now in the banking field.

Her early career began at KAIT where she worked behind the scenes during college and as an on-air anchor and reporter following graduation. After nearly a decade working in news, she left

the industry for a position as a Business Development Officer with First National Bank, where she also assists with marketing. Allison is also involved in the Rotary Club of Jonesboro, is the Board Secretary for CASA of the 2nd Judicial District, is on the advisory board for Arkansas State University Creative Media Production, is a Goodwill Ambassador for the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce, and serves as a board member for Leadership Link.

Allison says her role model is her mom. “She really instilled in me the importance of a good work ethic, and giving back to others, even when it isn’t easy,” Allison shared.

Allison loves spending time outdoors; she and her husband spend nearly every summer weekend at the lake or river. She enjoys gardening, running, hiking, arts and crafts, shopping and napping.

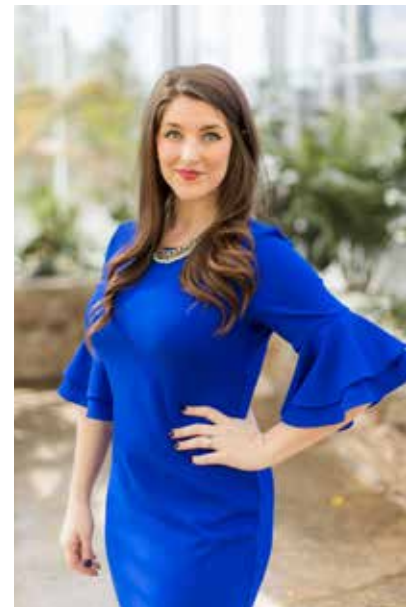


Photo Credit: Lauren Tyler Photography



GRANT WEAVER

Grant Weaver, 29, was born and raised in Paragould. After graduating from Arkansas State University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Exercise Science, Grant became a certified personal trainer with a specialty in group training from the National Academy of Sports Medicine.

Since then, Grant has taken numerous continuing

education courses to further his knowledge and be able to provide the safest and most effective workouts possible for his clients.

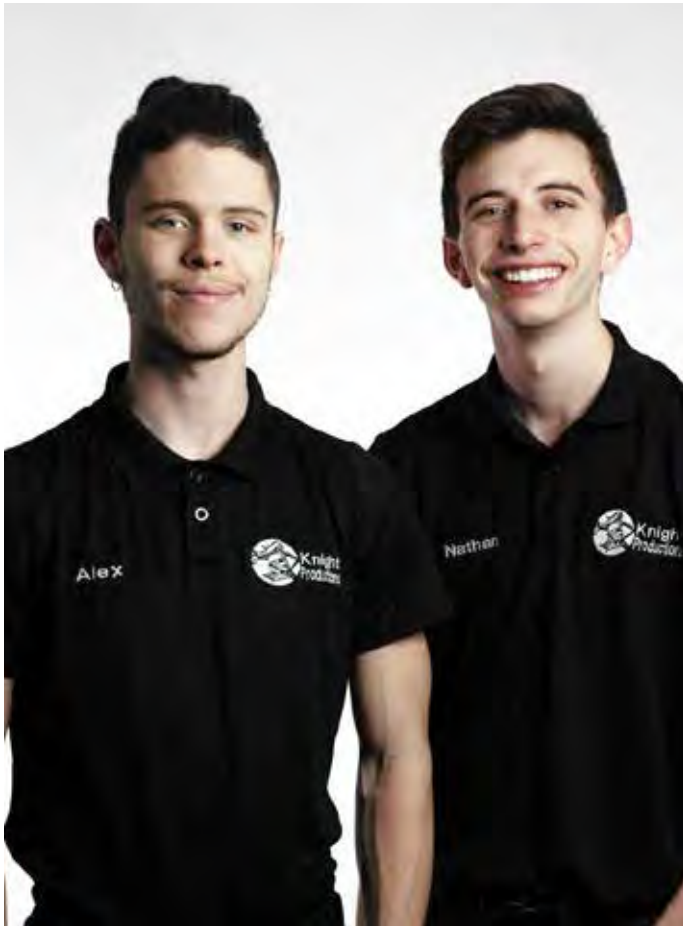
Grant often works with groups that need special care, whether that’s physical, medical, or mental.

In 2019, Grant was rushed to the emergency room where he shortly fell into a coma. When

he woke up, his only question before falling back asleep was if his wife Shawnda had contacted his clients for the day because he didn’t want them to miss their sessions or compromise their day.

When he’s not working, Grant is probably busy with his puppy, Hopper, or playing or watching sports (especially Notre Dame).

Photo Credit: Amy Reeves Photography



ALEX NEWBOLES

Alex Newboles is a Paragould native and is currently attending Arkansas State University studying business. Currently the Director of Photography at Knight Productions, Alex has been involved with the business since it came into being.

When not working on the business, Alex enjoys spending time with family and focusing on school.

Knight Productions often uses its equipment and skills to help capture events that raise money and awareness for the community.

“We started with one camera, a laptop, and two friends trying to create something,” Alex said. “Then in 2018 it was clear that we found our passion, a carrier that allows us to do what we love.”

They videoed and photographed the Annual Philip Brasher Pheasant Hunt that raises money for ALS, and in April they will film and take photos for the Special Olympics in Paragould.

NATHAN KNIGHT

Nathan Knight, 21, was born on an Air Force Base in South Carolina and has since lived in Italy and Michigan, but his family moved to Arkansas when he was still young and he’s called it home ever since.

Nathan’s camera and editing skills are mostly self-taught, but since starting Knight Productions in high school he has been working toward a bachelor’s degree in digital cinematography through Full Sail University. Early on Nathan worked mostly on developing his skills playing around with skits and music videos with friends. He was occasionally hired for a wedding or commercial, but in 2018 he decided to pursue videography as a career.

Knight Productions now offers videography, photography, graphic design, and digital media for commercial businesses and events. As of April 1, 2020, the business opened its doors on Main Street in Paragould as a production studio.

“I aspire to be the best I can be at what I do and that’s what I build my business from,” Nathan said. “I try to be the person that dreams something up and works hard enough endlessly to make that dream a reality, as cheesy as that may sound.”

Nathan loves adventure, hiking and attending music festivals with his friends, and experiencing as much of the world as possible.



Photo Credit: Whitney Vassar

BRITTANY MURRAY

Brittany Murray, 29, is from Paragould and attended Cosmetology School of the Designing Arts in Jonesboro where she earned her esthetics license. Since then, Brittany has taken many classes to continue her education.

Today, Brittany is an owner of Rouge Spa and Salon. Outside of work she is a member of

St. John's Lutheran Church in Lafe and a member and former president of the Rotary Club of Paragould.

Brittany says her role models are her parents, Terry and Angela James, who opened the Bar-B-Q Shack in Paragould when Brittany was young.

"They recently sold after almost

30 years in business, but I value all that I learned from them about running a business," said Brittany.

When she's not working or continuing her education in her field, Brittany enjoys reading, binge watching Netflix with her husband Jake, spending time with her two kids, and going to church.

GABE ROBERTS

Gabe Roberts, 27, was born and raised in Jonesboro. A graduate of Jonesboro High School, Gabe received a degree in finance after attending college locally and will go on to graduate from the Barret Graduate School of Banking in May of 2020. Gabe is a Loan Officer with First Community Bank who worked his way up from part-time teller. He credits his success to the

great mentors and a support system that have lifted him up. In addition to his work, Gabe enjoys being an active member of his community by serving and contributing to Friends of NEA Baptist, St. Bernards Advocates, United Way of NEA, Jonesboro High School and the City of Jonesboro on various boards and committees. "I would not be where I am today without constant advice and leadership

from current bankers, retired bankers, family members, friends and mentors," Gabe said. "These individuals have set me up for success. One thing that all of my mentors possess is integrity."

Gabe enjoys riding around the Jonesboro Country Club playing golf with his son and traveling, especially around the state, with his family.



Photo Credit: ThinkDero and Kombine Media

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AUDREY GUINN

Audrey Guinn, 26, is from Jonesboro and is happy to still call NEA home. Audrey graduated from Jonesboro High School in 2011 and from Arkansas State in 2015 with a BS in Journalism. The majority of her professional experience was learned in the workforce, though, as she took an internship with KAIT and transitioned from journalism to digital sales.

For some time she was the youngest member in the

company, and she credits her time there with the tools to succeed. "I met so many great people that opened the door of opportunity for me and I am forever grateful for that," Audrey said. Today, Audrey is the Director of Marketing and Sales for The Gardens at Harmony, a full event venue in Jonesboro. It's her job to plan and strategize marketing efforts as well as book the venue for events.

Outside of work, Audrey is a

member of the Rotary Club of Jonesboro, a board member for United Way of NEA, member of the Friends of NEA Baptist, and a Good Will Ambassador for the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce. When not in NEA, Audrey enjoys cruising – preferably on a cruise ship. She also enjoys making wreaths, going to the lake, shopping, and cheering on her favorite sports teams: the Memphis Grizzlies, the St. Louis Cardinals, and the Arkansas State Red Wolves.

Lindsey Wingo, 24, is originally from Rector but now calls Jonesboro home. Lindsey attended Arkansas State University where she received a degree in strategic communications with an emphasis in public relations. Lindsey said her working experience began early, at the young age of 10, answering phones on Saturdays at her family's business. In college, a few opportunities interning

and working with St. Bernards Healthcare and Coca-Cola gave her the tools she needed to move into her current position as Executive Director of the Downtown Jonesboro Alliance.

Lindsey currently serves on the St. Bernards Advocate Board and on the board for CASA, enjoys volunteering with her church and with United Cerebral Palsy, is a member of Jonesboro Young Professionals

Network and is a Goodwill Ambassador for the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce.

Lindsey said her role model and mentor is Mr. John Freeman because he is truly a servant leader and true professional. "He's graciously volunteered many hours of his time to guide me through my first couple of years in the professional realm," Lindsey shared.



Photo Credit: Michelle Cheesman

LINDSEY WINGO



Photo Credit: Amy Reeves Photography

SHAWNDA WEAVER

Shawnda Weaver, 25, has called Paragould home from day one. After graduating from Paragould High School, she attended Northeast Arkansas School of Massage where she studied anatomy, physiology, pathology, business, marketing, and massage. Upon graduating, Shawnda took the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam and passed on her first try. Since then, she has taken hundreds of hours in continuing education from all

over the nation and is currently working on getting her masters in massage therapy.

Today, she owns and operates Rouge Spa and Salon in Downtown Paragould. Shawnda is an active member in Paragould's Junior Auxiliary, the Kids Kraze Chair, and remains active in the alumni chapter of Zeta Tau Alpha.

Shawnda's role model is her dad, Terry James. She shared, "Not only has he been a small

business owner for almost 30 years, taking every punch that life throws at him with a stride, but it also takes an extremely special man to raise two daughters to be as strong willed and independent as my sister and I, while being compassionate enough to open your doors to any stranger or person in need at all of your holidays."

Shawnda loves her job and enjoys learning as much as she possibly can about it.

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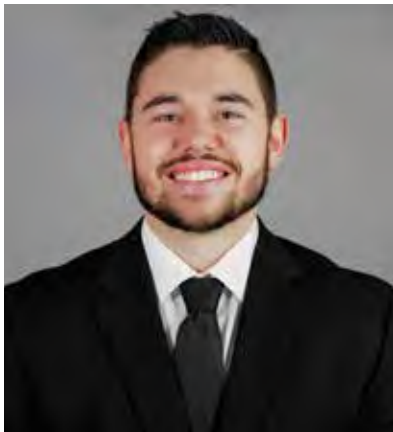
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RYAN BALDWIN

Ryan Baldwin, 21, was born and raised in Paragould and moved to Jonesboro for college. A junior at Arkansas State University, he is a double major in music performance and strategic communication. In 2019, Ryan and a group of friends started a brass quintet: Novus Brass. The group aims to entertain and educate the public as they play a wide range of music from classical to pop and anything in between. Ryan volunteered

with Team Jonesboro last year, is an intern with the Democratic Party of Arkansas, and recently started a student organization devoted to registering, informing, and motivating the student body and citizens of Jonesboro to be active in local government: Vote A-State. "Government works best when it has an active constituency," Ryan said. "Our group promotes voting in the purest of forms. Each vote really does matter. Local government plays

an especially important role in the lives of the people it serves. My dream for the organization is that we are able to create a more inviting atmosphere for the discussion of politics. I think we can all agree that things are pretty messed up at the moment, but the first step to fixing that is to start a conversation." Ryan enjoys planning the perfect vacation, and watching political and sci-fi oriented shows.



LOGAN SAPP

Logan Sapp, 21, attended Greene County Tech High School. Real estate has always been a part of Logan's life. His work ethic and property knowledge were developed during his youth through helping his father with both commercial and residential properties.

At 16, Logan said he had the opportunity to build spec homes for his dad and during

the listing and sales of homes he was introduced to what realtors do. He realized he enjoyed the part a realtor plays in the process and decided to get his license. Logan is currently a realtor at Image Realty where he enjoys educating people about the process of buying and selling property. "To build a relationship with a client to the point they trust you enough to help them in what is usually the largest purchase of their

lives is very rewarding," Logan shared. Logan is also building residential homes in Paragould and believes it is the knowledge of building that enables him to guide his clients to make educated choices. Outside of work, Logan enjoys sports, fitness and outdoor activities.

He also has his private pilot's license and said that flying is his greatest passion.

Photo Credit: Knight Productions



Congratulations Lindsey Wingo!

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ABBIE DICKSON

PhotoCredit: Amy Reeves Photography

Abbie Dickson, 20, attended esthetics school at ASUN in Marked Tree before beginning her profession at Blonde Ambition in Jonesboro where she says it's surreal to her, waking up each day to go to a job she truly loves. The salon provides services such as facials/facial treatments, waxings, makeup, lash lifts and more.

Abbie said something that has inspired her and remains on her

mind is Oprah Winfrey's, "Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is another stepping stone to greatness."

Outside of work, Abbie's passion still remains in the same realm as her job. You can often find her experimenting with makeup, trying different looks and combining new color combos. She also enjoys searching flea markets, yard sales and thrift stores for hidden gems.



BAILEY HYDE

Bailey Hyde, 25, owns her own successful business operating as Bailey Hyde Brow. Bailey's family moved to Paragould when she was in the 9th grade. She moved to Jonesboro for college and continues to call the city home today.

While attending Arkansas State, Bailey was on track to become a teacher when she

changed her mind and decided to go to esthetic school. A passion for makeup and desire to become a makeup artist and skin therapist led her to school where she fell in love with eyebrows. After graduating from Arkansas Academy of Hair Design with her esthetic license, she launched and now runs Bailey Hyde Brows (BHB) Brow Bar inside Sola Salon Studios.

Bailey says she draws inspiration from leading industry artists Kelley Baker and Giselle Soto because they helped her realize the potential in the brow industry and because they are strong, powerful women.

Outside of work Bailey enjoys reading psychology books, traveling, and being around animals.

Photo Credit: James Bickham

James Collier, 27, is originally from Indio, CA, but he's called NEA home for many years. A Greene County Tech grad, he attended Black River Technical college for a year before leaving school to work for ARI as a production welder to provide for his young family. After a year, he went back to school and earned his AA degree, but continued his education by transferring to Southern

New Hampshire University (SNHU) where he spent the next year and a half working on a double major in Applied Mathematics and Psychology. Following this, he continued for another year and a half to receive his Master of Business Administration. Before leaving ARI, he received Class-A/Level-3 welding qualifications he used to transfer to Trinity Rail in Jonesboro. James is currently enrolled in another

JAMES COLLIER

master's program to earn a Master of Science in Project Management and Operations and is the Senior Analyst of Operations at Trinity Rail.

Outside of work, James teaches children's church at The Crossing in Paragould and is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success. He is also a former Tae Kwon-do instructor, a 2nd degree black belt and enjoys gun-smithing.



Photo Credit: Robert Piercy



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BUDDY & CARRIE LEE



Photo Credit: U Count Photography

Buddy, 28, and Carrie, 29, Lee are partners in life and in business. The couple owns Natural State Fitness in Manila.

Buddy is from Blytheville and received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in kinesiology from the University of Central Arkansas. His love of fitness began early in life after his mom passed away. Initially Buddy took comfort in food, but after seeing his weight reach a number he was uncomfortable with, he decided something needed to change. Because he was already

working out for football, he focused his attention on his diet and being active in his daily life. Over time, he became a healthier version of himself, physically and mentally.

"It was at that point that I knew what I wanted to do with my life," Buddy said.

Buddy enjoys hiking and exploring nature with his family, as well as gaming that includes playing board games, card games, and video games with old friends.

Together, Buddy and Carrie run Natural

State Fitness. Being part of a community is one of the things Buddy loves most about living and owning a business in a small town. "We are made up of small, local businesses where you can go in and bring your son or daughter to ask for a donation for their T-ball team or rally around and support a community member in their time of need," Buddy shared.

Growing up, Carrie loved watching cheerleading and gymnastics, especially Olympic gymnastics.

After graduating with a degree in early childhood education and special education, Carrie spent four years teaching students with special needs in public schools. When her husband Buddy launched the gym, Carrie began teaching tumbling lessons on the side. One lesson turned into two which turned into a few classes. Now, she works full-time and teaches more than 150 kids in NEA.

"I grow every day with the students and staff in my building," Carrie said. When she's not at the gym, you can likely find Carrie playing with her doodles or exploring the outdoors. Carrie and Buddy can often be found scheming up a new business plan while hiking trails.

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ENGAGEMENTS

April Ridenhower and Stacy Harmon

April Ridenhower and Stacy Harmon have announced their plans to be married on July 11, 2020, in Eureka Springs.

April is the daughter of Joe and Martha Reed and Stacy is the son of Dale Harmon and Kathy White.



BIRTHS

McKinley Kate Heritage

John and Amy Heritage welcomed their newborn, McKinley Kate Heritage, into the world on February 13, 2020.

McKinley was delivered at St. Bernards Medical Center, weighed 5 pounds, 12 ounces, and measured 19.5 inches long.

McKinley is also welcomed by grandparents Johnny and Linda Heritage, Dee and Tim Tippitt, and Terry Blevins.

Photo by Amy Heritage





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Lauren & Chad

In May of 2019 Lauren Hodge and Chad McClain were scheduled to spend a week vacationing with Lauren's family in Washington, D.C. One day, Lauren's mother, Christy, and sister, Ellie, worked tirelessly to convince Lauren to wear an outfit less casual than the shorts and tank top befitting of the day's trip to Mount Vernon. Ultimately, neither could come up with a compelling reason for the need to wear anything different without tipping Lauren off to the meticulous plan Chad had crafted for the day's end. At the end of the day, Chad asked for the family to return to the embankment behind the house for a family picture overlooking the Potomac River. It was there he knelt and asked Lauren to marry him.

Shortly after the engagement the couple decided on a fall 2020 wedding date, but soon both decided a wedding in late 2019 – ultimately November 9 – could be achieved.

The couple agreed an intimate wedding and a small wedding party were ideal. After a little research, the Cooper Alumni Center at Arkansas State University was chosen as the venue, given its picturesque setting across from the lake – perfect for the ceremony – and its grand ballroom which

would accommodate the reception requirements. "Most people thought I was a little crazy for rolling the dice on an outdoor November wedding," Lauren said, "but I had a good feeling it would work out. Our backup plan was to get married on the stage in the ballroom, which could be converted as late as the day before the wedding if it looked like the weather wasn't going to cooperate." Lauren also said she knew she wanted the wedding to have a classic look, ultimately settling on black and ivory for the colors.

A special family friend graciously offered her help in coordinating the floral designs. Together with the bride and bride's mother, the family friend designed all arrangements and helped coordinate everything from the seating plan to the smallest ceremony and reception details.

"There are absolutely too many friends and family members to thank for the help they provided in making mine and Chad's day nothing less than perfect," Lauren said. "All I can say is we are very blessed to have such a wonderful group of family and friends who helped make the wedding a reality. Thank you to all of you who are such an important part of our lives and were a part of our special day!"



DOULA CONTINUED



When a mother begins her labor the doula is on-call. She offers positions that help labor pains, coaches partners in how to support the mother and can also provide breastfeeding and other postpartum care.

Arkansas Family Doulas offers childbirth classes, postpartum and infant care, lactation support and even birth photography.

Anything can happen during the birth process and Muse said that even though she hasn't had anything crazy happen to her yet, she did have a mother who forgot to call her when she went into labor and gave birth.

"We both laughed in the end about it," Muse said.

However, she added a personal favorite story from doula Nyra Zaracho. Zaracho attended a birth where the mother was extremely anxious about labor and when she arrived at the hospital, the mother was in excruciating pain. Zaracho suggested the patient and her husband dance the bachata, a couple's dance that originated in the Dominican Republic. Staying in motion can act as a natural pain reliever for contractions and the patient was soon on her way to a healthy birth.

The methods might not seem conventional to some, but those who work with a doula report greater satisfaction with childbirth, decreased postpartum depression, increased self-esteem and better mother-infant interactions. It is this better experience that women have that Muse said is the most rewarding part of her job.

For more information on doulas or the Arkansas Family Doulas, visit www.arkansasfamilydoulas.com.

All photos were taken by Wandering Oaks Birth Stories.

LAST BANDOLEROS CONTINUED



Photo Credit: Cherrytree Music Company

Check out some of my interview with the guys here:

SB: Would you guys mind to explain how you came together to form The Last Bandoleros?

Jerry: We started initially, Emilio, myself, and Diego are all from San Antonio, Texas, and I moved to New York many years back where I met Derek, who's a native New Yorker. Derek and I started working together in New York and when I'd go back to San Antonio, I connected with Diego and Emilio at a recording studio. It was sort of fast after that, that we started a writing project. Derek and I would go to San Antonio and Diego and Emilio would come to New York and we would be writing back and forth. After several months of writing and coming up with songs, we were like – this sounds like a band, maybe we should just start playing live. That's kind of the Cliff Notes version of it, but that's essentially what happened over the course of about a year.

SB: The reason you guys are here is to open for Foreigner. How do you guys feel about that?

Emilio: I like Foreigner a lot.

Diego: We're so excited. We were actually talking about it on the way over here, you forget how many hits those dudes had.

Jerry: It's ridiculous.

Diego: The whole night is just hits, so we're very excited. It's our first time playing with Foreigner. It's the first time I've ever actually gotten the chance to see Foreigner, so I'm looking

forward to singing all the lyrics to Jukebox Hero at the top of my lungs.

SB: Foreigner isn't the only rock and roll legend you've worked with; you've also worked with Sting. Can you talk a little about how that happened and what that experience was like for you?

Jerry: We wrote him a bunch of letters (everyone laughs). We actually are fortunate enough to share a management company, and through our management company, Sting got introduced to our music. We got asked to go to the studio with him, and for the record he did, 57th and 9th, we were lucky enough to be guest artists on it. [We] played some guitar on it and we sang, and turns out the song we sang on was the lead single from that album, so he invited us, he was like – hey, why don't you guys come out and open for me in the United States – so we were just freaking out. We did a couple shows and then he extended the offer to span out to the rest of the world, which was unbelievable for us. It was a "pinch me" kind of thing. We didn't know what we were getting into, but we started playing some of the most amazing venues in front of people we never thought we would be playing in front of. It was amazing.

SB: Personally, who would you say has influenced you guys as musicians the most?

Diego: We can't really pick one because one thing that's really special about this band is sometimes it may be a tug of war, but it's great, though, because we all have different influences, you know? We were all doing our own thing before we all came together, so that's really one thing that's special about it. I'll just say, I'll say The Beatles. I think that's a huge influence on our music.

Derek: I'll say Tom Petty.

Jerry: Probably for me, growing up, from a guitar playing perspective, Stevie Ray Vaughn. Blues, Texas blues.

Emilio: I'm gonna go with my father, Emilio [Navaira] was a huge influence on me, and it seeps into our music all the time.

SB: If you guys could work with any artist, alive or dead, who would you pick?

Diego: I'd like to work with Post Malone 'cuz he's a Texas dude, and I feel like – I saw him on some Instagram clip singing "A Thousand Miles From Nowhere" by Dwight Yoakam.

Emilio: With Dwight!

Diego: Yeah, with Dwight, that's right. I feel like he would dig a lot of the Texas sound that we have in our music. Plus he'd just be so weird, I like weird (everyone laughs).

Derek: It just came into my mind, it'd be fun to write a song with Chuck Berry and just have him take some solos over our songs, that'd be fun.

Emilio: Chuck Berry would totally just be like – no, this is what I'm telling you, this is the song – (everyone laughs) and we'd be like – you're right.

Jerry: Alive or dead, huh? You know what would be awesome? It'd be [cool] to do something with Dave Grohl. I think that would be a lot of fun. I think Dave would like what we do in the rock sense.

Emilio: I still don't know, it's too hard. I'm gonna have to pass.

SB: The songs that you guys play every week [on your weekly web series], can we expect them on an album or anything anytime soon?

Emilio: Yes.

Jerry: Yeah, I don't know when we can officially say, as of right now, but yeah, we're working on something. One thing that's cool, that's part of the reason we're doing it on [Around A Neon] Cactus, is that all these episodes are on YouTube and Facebook so people can hear them sort of first, raw, unplugged. A lot of it too is that depending on what people comment, that's how we make our set list sometimes, so we're adding a lot of these new songs in the set, too, to kind of field test them.

It was so great getting to talk with those guys and they put on a fantastic show. I personally hope they come back to Jonesboro very soon. If you want to learn more about The Last Bandoleros, check them out on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, or go to thelastbandoleros.com.

EVERY LITTLE BIT COUNTS CONTINUED

"Lottie Brown was the first Volunteer Director whose post was included in the hospital staff," Kersey said. "It was in 1966 that our Candy Striper program began."

That program is still going strong, Kersey added. Last year AMMC saw 31 students participate as candy strippers and perform duties such as providing patients with menus, filling water jugs, transporting patients for discharge and answering admissions calls.

"It is important to the Auxiliary and the hospital to let students volunteer within the hospital," Kersey said. "It may be the deciding factor in their decision to go into the medical field."

Kersey stressed that the AMMC Auxiliary does so much more than just the candy striping program. The department has developed several other avenues of volunteer work for the community to participate in. Members can volunteer at the information desk, floor and ambulatory care and the gift shop that opened in 1974.

"It is small but inside its door you will find many unique gift items," Kersey said.

Funds from the gift shop are used to purchase equipment and other items for the hospital, such as Music Glove Hand Therapy for occupational therapy, simulation dolls for education, AccuVein Technology and infant incubators.

DRESS FOR LIFE CONTINUED



Dress For Life Founder, Ian Buchanan speaks to a group of kids at City Youth Ministries.



On the education side of things, Ian and the Dress for Life program go to schools, colleges, and sometimes private corporate events to teach groups about dressing for the professional world. Beyond that though, Ian realized it's not enough just to educate if those learning don't have access to what they need to exercise what they've learned.

"It's no good to know how to tie a tie," Ian explains, "if you don't have one."

This is why he pursued becoming a non-profit. Dress for Life now has a couple of different programs under its belt including a men's clothing closet, called

Suitable Fashions, is set to open on April 1.

"If you don't have clothes to wear to an interview, you can come grab clothes from the closet," Ian shared. "Once you secure a job that requires you to wear those types of clothes, you can come back and get up to three days' worth of work clothes for free – totally free."

Ian understands many people seeking to improve themselves and work toward a career may not come from the means to dress the part and he believes this should not be a limiting factor for them. Knowledge, skill, attitude and work ethic

should be reasons for getting hired, and while Ian knows how you look is very important to appeal for earning said job, he knows many people don't have the means of acquiring proper attire prior for landing the job. The closet is filled through donations of clothes and money to purchase clothes.

Ian works with local schools – like Earle High School to provide shirt and tie to graduating seniors – but aims to never turn anyone away who reaches out to Dress for Life with a need. For more information you can visit Dress for Life Inc. on Facebook or email dressforlifelessons@yahoo.com.

MOVING FORWARD, BY GIVING BACK CONTINUED

Each Anchor Packaging location has its own program that allows employees to participate to whatever degree they can whether that's donation of resources or time.

"It feels absolutely fantastic to work for a company that truly empowers their employees to be involved in the community outreach program," said Neeley. "Anchor Packaging looks beyond the fiscal bottom line and provides not only financial support, but also the work time spent to accomplish the projects."

In recent months, Anchor Packaging has collected 288 backpacks, 613 cases of food and more than 500 pounds of miscellaneous food items for those in need. The company donated an Arizona Vortex High Directional System to the Paragould Fire Department in September of 2019. In November, the Anchor Packaging Jonesboro Community Outreach Committee joined with the Jonesboro HUB to cook and serve a Holiday Friendsgiving meal (hot dogs, hamburgers and fixings) to 115 citizens. The Paragould committee prepared and served a spaghetti supper holiday meal for the Mission Outreach and served more than 85 meals over the course of the November day, leaving enough prepared food to feed another 50 people the following day.

"The Mission Outreach project has been the most special project to me so far," Neeley shared. "We were able to not only financially provide the meal, but the committee members prepared, served the meal and cleaned up afterwards. This gave us an opportunity to personally show our support to those who were in need."

"I feel that by participating in the activities from this program I am able to help those in need and I am able to do something wonderful for our community," Danielle Darney, Anchor Packaging Auditor, added. "This program has put me out of my comfort zone and made me realize that helping others is something I would love to do anytime I have the chance."

The Anchor Packaging Paragould Coat and Toy Drive collected 107 toys and over 50 children's coats that were donated through Holy Smokes Ministry to be distributed through Brad's Development (an organization that helps children

below the poverty level in NEA). Another drive collected food for kids in the area.

"I loved the food drive for the children," Trainer Kathryn Westerlund shared. "I think it was such a huge success and it went so smoothly. We had the chance to feed many children and that in itself is a blessing."

During the 2019 holiday season the Jonesboro Anchor Community Outreach team collected hats, scarves, gloves and coats to be donated to the Jonesboro HUB. More than 75 adult and children's coats, 200 pairs of gloves and multiple hats and blankets were donated. The Anchor Auto Pack and Distribution Center Outreach Committee collected over \$600 worth of personal hygiene items and puzzle books for the Greene Acres Nursing Home.

Gassaway hopes through Anchor and its employees giving back to the community, they will see long-term results in the place they call home. And as their community outreach programs grow, the company hopes it will continue to help meet the needs of the area through monetary contributions and volunteer efforts.



MASTER GARDENERS HANGING TIGHT CONTINUED

"We are also about to start a community garden with the 4-H kids at the fairgrounds," Gilmartin added. "They have given us a piece of ground and the kids will be doing most of the work and we'll be overseeing. We hope to teach these children how to grow their own food, how good it can taste and get them excited about other gardening projects."

The local gardening group operates under the umbrella of the Greene County Extension Office and is designed to promote and share the individuals' knowledge of horticulture. The Master Gardener program is a twofold educational and volunteer operation conducted by the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Research & Extension, designed to help the volunteers improve the quality of life for area residents.

The program can help interested parties learn more about maintaining plant life, or allows others to share their knowledge and experience. An extensive training program is a precursor to becoming a Master Gardener, and then continuing education and service hours are required to maintain one's status. "We are always looking for new members," Gilmartin said, "especially young members and men. Those interested should call the Greene County Extension Office and they will give them all the details and put them in touch with the right people to get started. We have a presentation at the end of the year and recognize those who have put in the most hours of manual labor and done the most hours of education, and some other small rewards as well."

As for what's next for the local gardeners, Gilmartin said, "At the moment we're trying to figure out where this virus will let us go. And the weather ... the ground has been too wet for us to do anything. We're in limbo right now."

She did want to emphasize the scholarship program supported by Master Gardeners. Local high school students involved in gardening are asked to submit an essay detailing how they became interested, what their future plans are and other aspects of their involvement. Group members go over the submissions and choose winners based on "students planning to go on to do horticulture. We contact the schools at the beginning of the last semester and ask for candidates and then decide from there. One winner has

already set up their own business."

Those seeking more information are asked to contact County Extension Agent Dave Freeze at 870-236-6921.



NEEA Artist

BLOOMING GARDEN CONTINUED

Vaughn crafts wreaths, hair bows with interchangeable decorations, badge reels and painted porch planks. Johnson makes crochet items, glass wind chimes and lighted bottles. The pair's Facebook page is adorned with photos of sparkly hair accessories fit for any pageant contestant, crochet coffee cup cozies decorated with patches for nurses or teachers, and recycled lighted bottles decked out in both Arkansas State University and University of Arkansas mascots.

Johnson said since starting up six years ago, she and Vaughn have sold at the ASU Farmers Market with a special setup they call the "Gypsy Wagon," a tiny wooden shed on wheels that boasts their various door hangings, wall decor and wind chimes from its walls. Their journey from the farmers market has since taken them to events such as the Fiesta Holiday Goodies and Gifts at St. Bernards, the Sugar Plum Market in West Memphis, and most recently, to a booth at the Local Artisan Emporium in Jonesboro.

Johnson said every year she and Vaughn try to bring new crafts to the table depending on what is popular and in season, but they typically don't stick to a guideline.

"We love to explore new crafts and don't really have favorites," Johnson said.

To view creations by Johnson and Vaughn and to catch them at upcoming local events, visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/blooming.garden.9/>.



WHOLE HEART FARMING CONTINUED



"There's quite a bit of pollution that no one talks about," Burton noted. Nonetheless, Burton is persistent in working toward the goal of growing clean, natural food for the community. "People always tell me it's impossible for me to grow clean food in this area. Even if it hasn't been done, I'm going to figure it out."

Burton's dedication to clean farming is much appreciated by Whole Hearts' customers. Jim Shewmaker, a local retiree and long-time customer of Whole Hearts, believes shopping local is part of a larger commitment to health, agricultural sustainability, and environmental responsibility. "Healthy soils mean quality produce, which means healthy people," he explained.

Jackson Spencer, a local home renovator and newcomer to Whole Hearts' produce, sees the same benefits Shewmaker does in buying food locally. "It gets down to knowing where the food comes from," he said. Spencer sees many advantages to shopping locally for produce: It cuts down on carbon emissions through lower transportation distance, reduces plastic waste in packaging, and ultimately leads to fresher, more flavorful fruits and vegetables. "There's a huge difference in taste when it's grown local," he said.

Burton believes the hard work put into Whole Hearts is ultimately worth it for both the earth and the community. "It can be stressful in the moment; there is that daily stress," Burton said, looking serious for a moment. "But I'm proud of what I do, and I'm proud that people can eat the food that I've grown. It's a good feeling."



SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES CONTINUED



As a business, this makes it financially feasible to pursue more environmentally friendly products

Jen's permaculture design firm takes care of the garden where the family has planted kale, arugula, peas, fennel, cauliflower and much more. The product of the garden planted back in October is just coming to life, and the results will help make up the very dishes The Edge serves its customers.

Using food straight out of their own garden is not only healthier than food that has had to travel, it's also environmentally conscious as these resources have not had to burn any fuel to arrive on the consumer's plate. This is just one way the Nobles are working to cut down their impact on the planet.

Sarah also shared that using up their resources in the kitchen by turning excessive vegetables into veggie stock or soup has helped make her process nearly zero-waste (which is quite unheard of in restaurants).

Photo Credit: Andrew Brown Photography



Sarah, Brian and Jen encourage everyone to think about their own waste and use of products, and they work hard to implement strategies to cut down their use at work as well as at home.

"When we say we throw it away, where do we throw it?" Jen questioned. "Where is 'away'?"

That's a good question, as landfills in the U.S. are piling up literally in truckloads. According to an article in National Geographic, the world produces more than three million TONS of trash in a single day. When we throw things "away" it may be out of sight, but we shouldn't let ourselves push it out of mind. It's still out there, and it's affecting our planet.

Jen mentioned that more than simply taking vows and resolutions to cut down on waste, our culture needs to see a mindset change and a shift in our awareness, perhaps businesses especially. Businesses have a great responsibility because the higher you go in scale of people served, the more waste there is.

Photo Credit: Andrew Brown Photography



There are many ways for individuals and businesses to cut down on their waste and re-use or re-purpose materials before throwing them away. For more info you can contact Jonesboro's Green Business Committee for information and ideas on how to save resources, money, and planet Earth.

LOCAL TASTES SWEETER CONTINUED

"It's rewarding to have the farmers come back and tell me that their yields are good, having seen that different crops are growing better because of the bees," Angie says. These good reviews help give her confidence that distributing the bee colonies is best for the business, and for the region.

Through their first six years in business, the wife-husband duo has developed a partnership that trusts each person's strengths and ensures each can contribute to their larger goal.

"Archie helps with a lot of the manual work," Angie offers. "I handle more of the product design and sales."

Since Angie retired from teaching at Valley View in 2019, she's been able to invest more time continuing to develop the growing business. The sales aspect of the business started out by selling to local restaurants and at farmer's markets; now, Angie has begun taking her honey to natural food stores throughout the region — even expanding to health food and natural food stores in Memphis and Little Rock.

"I think people are looking at women in farming a little differently now. They're starting to see that we can do the jobs too," she comments. "We bring a different perspective. Not only do I want the honey to taste good, I also want it to look good."

Beekeeping is a year-round endeavor for Angie and Archie. With each hive holding upward of 60,000 bees, the beekeeping duo takes on a lot of responsibility. From December to mid-March, the Masons rent out many of their hives to almond farmers in California. This process helps California farmers work around the bee shortage currently faced by the state while allowing the Masons' bees to avoid the finicky winters of Arkansas.

When the bees arrive back in Jonesboro in March and April, Angie and Archie work to "split" potentially overcrowded hives: They'll move a queen and some of the honey from one existing hive to a previously empty new one. This process encourages bees in particularly strong hives to expand their colony while still sticking around the farm.

Once the bees are ready to pollinate and produce honey back in Arkansas, the



Masons distribute the hives within a loose one-hour radius of Jonesboro. In the spring and summer months, they find 10-12 locations between Cash, Wynne, and Marked Tree that offer adequate water and pollination opportunities for their colonies, then begin distributing the hives.

"You want to only have so many hives in a certain area," Angie explains. "If you have too many in one spot, they may not have enough to pollinate off of."

While the Masons are busy with beekeeping year-round, honey collection time only comes once a year. The end of September brings honey collection season: The extractors are lifted from the hives, then spun by a machine to release the honey into drums. This honey, up to 50 pounds per hive, can then be securely stored before being bottled and distributed.

The demand for natural honey is strong and growing. On an annual cycle, the Christmas rush starts soon after the first bottling of a new crop. Then, New Year's resolutions send health-conscious folk looking for natural products, like raw honey, to integrate into their improved diet. Spring months also see a boost in demand as people search out natural, healthful remedies for allergies.

Though her bees are a business, it's clear Angie has a real empathy for them as well.

"You have to treat the bees like you do other animals: Check on them, make sure they're healthy, make sure they're doing good," she says. "For me, the most challenging is when you go out to

your bee yard and you find a dead hive, something has happened to the queen and the box of bees is dead. I know it is part of nature and all of them aren't always going to be healthy, but still, I don't want this to happen."

Yet when everything goes right, seeing the business and the bees thrive keeps Angie passionate about her product.

"It's rewarding to see the bees' growth," she smiles. "Every bee has a different job: Foragers, nurses, workers, every bee in the hive has a certain job, and it's unique to see that all of them have to work together. The queen can't do it by herself. If you don't have all the bees in there, you're not going to see them produce honey."

In mirror image of the bees' teamwork, the Masons are working together to build their business for future years. In late 2019, they completed a new shop on their Harrisburg-area farm that is allowing them to bottle more efficiently and fill the increasing number of wholesale orders.

Their next project is an online ordering platform, an expansion on their current website that will allow contacts from trade shows — as well as local customers — to interact with the business on a regular and flexible basis.

For the long-term, Angie's goal is to leave a legacy for her grandchildren — now just 14 months and four months old.

"My hope is to make a business and grow that business so that when they get older, I can turn it over to them and give them something to do, to give them something to work towards," she concludes. "It's a family business, that's what it is."

MORE HAPPENINGS



On Monday, February 17, Dr. Dianna Fraley, history instructor at BRTC, welcomed writer, folklorist, fiddler, textile artist, and community organizer Rachel Reynolds as a guest lecturer in her Arkansas History class.



Black River Technical College president Dr. Martin Eggenesperger signed an agreement with Arkansas State University (ASU) president Dr. Kelly Damphousse to offer the Bachelor of Applied Science to BRTC students without students having to ever leave Pocahontas or Paragould. ASU is the third university to sign to be a part of the BRTC University Center. The BRTC University Center will provide advisement and enrollment advice to students interested in pursuing a bachelor degree.



Daniel Lizenbee of Doniphan, MO, has been awarded the AgHeritage Farm Credit Services Scholarship made possible by funding from AgHeritage Farm Credit Services. Lizenbee is a 2019 graduate of Doniphan High School and is seeking certification in welding. He is the son of Chad Dye and Erin Lizenbee.



Steiner Event Group held its Spring Bridal Expo on February 23 at the Cooper Alumni Center. Brides-to-be and bride tribes were able to visit with local vendors, sample food, view styling ideas and much more at the annual event (SEG also hosts a Fall Bridal Expo).

April 2020 Kids' Events

In the wake of COVID-19, many local parks and libraries have postponed or canceled events, or closed altogether. But they're still here for you! And we are too. We decided to share some info on how these local resources can be used during this time until scheduled programming can resume safely.

Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library

CCJPL is sharing information regularly on Facebook including storytime videos, ideas for keeping kids entertained while they're out of school, and information on how to read books digitally.

Local Parks

As long as you practice social distancing (keep a six foot distance from other people) you are safe to be outside and practice outdoor activities like walking, running, hiking or biking.

Greene County Library

If you need a library card to use e-book, e-magazine or e-audio services, call (870) 236-8711 or email mike@mylibrarynow.org. There are also two free apps (Libby and RBDigital) that will allow you to still borrow materials.

Caleigh Lindsey was the picture of relaxation while watching her older brother practice soccer in Paragould. Caleigh, 2, is the daughter of Chani Dortch and Jonathan Lindsey.



Athlete Spotlights



May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. We'll be highlighting athletes of varying ages and sports.

Farmer's Market



As area farmer's markets open we'll look at what to shop for early in the season and how to support local farmers.

Quarantine Coping



Pictured: Ryker blows her Grandpa, Troy, a kiss through the window of his cottage at Belle Meade.

Contact us through Facebook or on premiere-magazine.com to tell us about how the community is coping during quarantine.

On The Cover: Sara Saucedo
Photo By: Amy Reeves Photography



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