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February
2020

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LEGACY OF LOVE

Henry Wrinkles and the hearts that will hold him dear (fur)-ever

PASSION FOR THEIR CRAFTS

Community members who love what they do

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From The PUBLISHER... DINA MASON

“

Love can take on many different forms. We can experience love, or at least intense feelings, for someone or something. We thought talking about community members' love for theatre would be a great feature and found many times it is the "someones" who participate in the theatre group who often ignite and fuel a love in many others. Sometimes the passion to perform ends up creating a familial love between all involved; the actors, the production team, and the audience.

We wanted to show that even in our small corner of the world, Northeast Arkansas has so many opportunities to participate in the performing arts, even if, like me, only as a spectator. I love to see performances of almost any kind, musical or drama, concerts or plays. I am in awe of the abundance of talent in our area. And I think it is

a shame so many are not exposed to it. Though I myself can only play the radio, my contribution to the arts in Northeast Arkansas is to be in the audience cheering them on. One of my favorite things is to convince someone who has not experienced local, live theatre to come with me. If everyone took someone, just imagine the impact!

So, here is my challenge: if you have experienced local live performances, invite someone who has not to go with you. If you have not, go to our new site, exploremornea.com, to see what is scheduled and how to get tickets. I promise you will ignite a love of theatre at your first performance. If you ever thought you would like to participate, I hope you find information in this issue on the groups in our area, and I am sure each of them would LOVE to talk to you about getting involved. I'll be over here, playing my radio.

”



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LIVING A Better Story

BY JARED PICKNEY

I believe in love at first sight, or at least I did on that October morning in 2003 when Meagan Hawley walked into The Buckle.

Like all couples, when we first started dating we found ourselves to be “in love.” We never fought. We talked on the phone for hours. We both believed that we were perfect for one another.

However, the longer we dated the more we realized just how different we were. I move quickly. She takes her time. I process things externally, she internally. I want the bottom line. She likes details. The list goes on and on.

On top of our obvious differences, we also began to notice our obvious flaws. She said I was anxious, negative, uptight and cut people off. I said she was lazy, sensitive and unable to express her emotions clearly.

Needless to say, our relationship has not always been easy! However, some of the best moments of my life have Meagan at the center. If I were to edit her out of my story it would become flat, shallow and anemic.

That being said, 10 years into our marriage, I now know what true love is. True love begins when the “in love” stage

ends. True love says, “I see your flaws. I see your issues. And I am choosing to stay anyway. Whether rich or poor, young or old, sagging or not sagging, I am not going anywhere. I am committed to you.”

Despite what our culture will tell us, true love is not primarily a feeling. It is a choice. A choice to weather the storms of life together rather than abandon ship as soon as the seas begin to rage.

This is the love that we all need. It is the love Jesus has shown to us. And it is the love he calls us to extend to others, from our spouse all the way over to our enemies.

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College Tips by a College Student



BY SARA BROWN

We're about half a month into the spring semester, and we should be starting to get the hang of things at this point. We know what we can expect from the semester for the most part, and now we're working to get into a groove. You may find yourself feeling a bit disconnected from your major and from others in your major. This can happen to anyone, no matter what their major is, whether they live on campus or not, or whether they're extroverted or introverted.

Tip number one: Go to class. This may seem like a silly or obvious tip to some, but this is really important. You're not going to meet or connect with other students and professors in your major if you're never there. Not only that, but you also won't learn what you need to in order to do well in the class, which definitely won't impress your professor or instructor.

Tip Two: Start a study group. Starting study groups with a few people from each of your classes gives you the opportunity to network with other students in your major, and it can help you make friends and do well in your classes. You never know, one of those people you meet might be a really important friend to have down the line.

Tip Three: Talk to your professors and instructors.

Be involved in class, that is, actually show up and maybe answer a few questions every now and then. Be engaged in the course material. Complete your course work to the best of your ability and don't be afraid to ask questions when you need to. Professors and instructors take notice of this, and they often have the power to open doors otherwise unavailable to you through honor society nominations, TA positions, or other similar opportunities.

Tip Four: Join clubs. Many majors have a club, and some even have multiple. These clubs are a great way for you to meet new people in your major, learn more about your major and what all you can do with your degree, and complete projects that will not only look good on your resume, but will also impress your professors and instructors.

And finally, Tip Five: Just talk to the people around you. They may invite you to join their study group or a club they're involved in, they may know about some clubs or organizations related to your major that you aren't aware of, or they may just be a good people to exchange notes with every now and then. Regardless of the outcome, it's important to connect with others in your major. After all, those are the people you'll be spending the majority of your class time with until you graduate. Make the most of it!



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An Axe-ellent Time

A team that slays together ... stays together. But while some members of our team did slay (my fiance included), I didn't have much success at the new attraction located in Downtown Jonesboro. Little success in sticking the axe in the boards, but a whole lot of fun.

Civil Axe has a pretty simple business model: lanes, wooden targets, and high-energy hosts/instructors.

Our team here at MOR Media visited Civil Axe for our Christmas party and while some were naturals, some of us struggled to find the right combo to stick the target. We laughed and smack-talked our way into the evening, and highly recommend checking out this new, unique pastime for a team bonding experience.

Located at 316 South Main Street in Downtown Jonesboro, if booking for a group visit civilaxethrowing.com.



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IN BETWEEN

BY LINDSEY MILLS

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In this day and age, it seems we put a lot of emphasis on independence and courage to do things on our own.

Don't get me wrong, being brave enough to chase your dreams without a cheerleader or moving across the country without help or travel on your own is inspiring.

I think it's important to nurture your own confidence and step out of your comfort zone. But I also wonder why we all seem hesitant to admit that sometimes we need to be pushed off our metaphorical ledge toward our dream.

Sometimes we don't quite have it in us to apply for our dream job, or buy the plane ticket, or sign up for the race or WHATEVER it is.

If any of that feels familiar, hear me loud and clear: There is absolutely no shame in having someone by your side willing to hold your hand and pull you forward.

Actually, I'll go as far as to say you should surround yourself with those kinds of people!

If you don't have it in you to jump off into the unknown but you know you WANT to, please be with, and surround yourself with, the kind of person/people willing to walk you over to the ledge and jump with you. And be proud of it.

That's as good as taking the leap; being brave enough to ask for, and then accepting, help.

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Spelling Bee



Congratulations to Mathewe Woodson from Greene County Tech Intermediate, the Top Speller of the 2020 Greene County Spelling Bee! His winning word? Permafrost!

2nd place went to Avery Willis, also of GCT Intermediate and 3rd place to Rhys Beccera from Crowley's Ridge Academy Elementary.

The Spelling Bee was sponsored by Broken Spoke Tire, and First National Bank sponsored live word-by-word coverage on MOR Media's Jack FM 107.1 and partner station, 1490 KDRS AM.

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GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



One of my duties as a committee member for our high school class' 50-year reunion is to come up with old photographs that will remind us what Paragould was like way back in the late 1960s and early '70s.

It is an assignment I relish because I love old photos and the times and places they represent. While trying to find appropriate photographic images to use at next fall's gathering I have also been looking through back issues of the local newspaper and I don't mind saying, the trip down memory lane has been wonderful.

For starters, I found a picture of Marmaduke Elementary School just as I remember it from my first-grade year. That's where Marie Butler was forced to try and make me sit still while I learned all about readin', writin' and 'rithmetic, and all I wanted to do was make it to recess or run down the sidewalk to the school store for a snack. It all worked out pretty well; today I can read, I can write, can almost do math and am an expert snack eater.

That school building is long gone, as are some others I attended. The "new" building I frequented as a second-grader at Woodrow Wilson is still in use but the old three-story building and the long, narrow fifth- and sixth-grade buildings are now parts of history and clouded memories. I missed some recesses in each of those structures, thanks to forgetting about homework assignments, talking too loudly when the teacher left the room, or possibly participating in some unacceptable shenanigans when unsupervised. My elementary teachers -- Dickson, Oliver, Lassiter, Eubanks, Medsker and Hill -- are gone, but I can recall a story specific to each as they guided me down the educational path.

Our old Junior High School building -- which sat at the corner of Seventh and Court streets and was once Paragould High School -- has also disappeared, but its destruction didn't take with it all the stories we former students recall. We had to learn -- sometimes the hard way -- not to go up the "down" stairs or down the "up" stairs, we often found upperclassmen to be bullies and we can still hear a paddling administered to some poor soul by Coach Crowder echoing down the hallways.

The old gym was our first gym, a Hoosiers-like building complete with all the sights and sounds and smells of a small town basketball facility.

Our high school campus has grown into something unrecognizable for folks who left town and haven't been back for a while. When we were there, the main academic building, cafeteria and gymnasium were

popped down in the middle of an open field and, other than the parking lot, there wasn't much else there. Today there is a first-class football arena sitting there beside baseball and softball fields, and buildings of all sorts occupy the spaces some of our crowd used for sneaking a smoke break, skipping class or smooching with their love interest back in the day.

I can't tell you about all the academic opportunities that existed in 1970 because I was just trying to make As and Bs while studying as little as possible; I can tell you that our football field was across town at Harmon Field, there were no baseball/softball facilities because we didn't have those sports and there was the one gymnasium -- home to the 1963 State Champion Bulldogs -- where, today, there are at least three gyms and maybe even four on the grounds.

Teenage hangouts we loved no longer exist, many of the more profitable downtown businesses are merely memories and community leaders have passed on and handed the torch to younger, more vigorous individuals in order to keep our community thriving. Those young people who assumed the mantel of leadership roles are now Paragould's older people ... my crowd, a generation nearing the point of handing off civic responsibilities to our children and their friends.

Time continues that march around our lifetimes and changes take place, mostly for the better. Thankfully, we have the old pictures and newspaper articles to remind us of many forgotten people, places and things that shaped our existence.

An advertisement for The Greenbrier Companies. On the left, a person is wearing a full-body blue hazmat suit with a white hood and a respirator mask. The background is a dark, industrial setting with blue and green lighting. In the top left corner, the text "THE GREENBRIER COMPANIES" is written in a stylized font. A large green banner across the middle contains the text "NOW HIRING" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below the banner, the text "apply online www.careers.gbrx.com" is displayed. At the bottom, the text "Kennett, MO | Marmaduke, AR | Paragould, AR" is written in white.

PREVENTION BEFORE TREATMENT

BY DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN

Did you know Arkansas is one of the top three states in the nation for dogs that test positive for Heartworm Disease? It's true! And it is the number one reason why veterinarians in this area always recommend keeping your dog (and cat) on year-round heartworm preventative. Heartworm disease is transmitted by mosquitoes, and, as you already know, we have plenty of those around here. Though there are many efforts to control the burdensome mosquito population, the best method to prevent your pet from contracting this nasty and difficult-to-treat disease is year-round heartworm preventative.

Many clients ask: "Why does my dog need year-round preventative? We don't have mosquitoes all year and they don't spend much time outside." The reason we recommend year-round coverage is due in part to our temperate weather here in Arkansas and in part to the extremely high population of mosquitoes. I'm sure most of you saw during our "winter heat waves" that some mosquitoes started to come out. If your pet is protected year-round then

you generally have no worries, but for those pets that have a break in coverage, then they are at risk of exposure.

Unlike intestinal parasites which can be eradicated by means of an oral dewormer or other oral medication, heartworm treatment in dogs requires following strict guidelines and injectable medication to be administered by a licensed veterinarian. Heartworms do just that; they live in the hearts of dogs and treatment (though it has been fine-tuned over the years) can still be difficult for some.

Another question I often receive as a vet is: "Can cats get heartworms? Do they need to be on preventative?" Yes! Cats can get heartworms, but the disease process in cats is much different than that of dogs. Cats are termed as "dead end hosts." This means a parasite can survive in the host, but it cannot thrive and cannot reproduce. Heartworm disease in cats causes bronchitis, oftentimes severe and with a cough. The cough is typically present as the heartworms are developing into adults and then again as they die off in the cat's lungs.

The worst part, however, is what they do to the cat's lungs. Heartworms, because they live in cats' lungs, cause extreme inflammation of the airways, often leading to heavy scarring and fibrosis. Cats cannot be treated for heartworms; unfortunately, only the cough can be treated. Testing cats for heartworms is also difficult since they cannot potentiate the disease. You can understand now why it is difficult to explain that a cat has heartworms when you cannot reliably test for it and you cannot very well treat for it. Always best to keep them on a preventative that will prevent the disease, then you will not have to watch your pet suffer from the harsh symptoms of a disease that can last for a lifetime.

I've discussed some of the high points of heartworm transmission and the disease process in cats and dogs, but if you have additional questions or would like anything explained or to go into more depth, you can always contact me at ARPets Hospital or call your local veterinarian. Remember, it is always easier and more cost effective to prevent the disease than to treat it!

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"I climbed up near the top of the hill and then lay down and wriggled the last few yards. As I peeped over from behind a slab of rock to see what the other side had to offer I was looking right at the biggest mountain sheep I had ever seen. He was standing just a few yards over the ridge, intently watching something below him on the mountainside. I looked where he was looking and saw a large black bear feeding up the slope. This bear had certainly been my friend.

"Cautiously I pulled my rifle up alongside, eased a cartridge into the chamber, looked the sights over carefully and raised it to my shoulder. Just as I cheeked the stock the ram swung his head around to see what was going on behind him. I know I didn't make a sound until the rifle cracked. The ram spun around, falling in a heap, but he jumped to his feet and came bounding toward me as though he hadn't been touched. I never saw a sheep run faster or steadier. I jumped up and fired point-blank into his body, driving him into a heap literally at my feet."

These words were by famed hunting author Jack O'Connor, written in the mid-1940s and from the March 1981 copy of *Field and Stream*, which celebrated the 85th anniversary of the magazine with a wide range of previously run stories. O'Connor was one of many authors who filled my childhood with adventure as I read their writings. Ted Trueblood, Patrick McManus, Ed Zern, "Tap" Tapply, and Bob Brister were among those who wrote eloquent stories that took me to places far away. I watched the mail diligently each month for issues of *Outdoor Life*, *Field and*

Stream, and *Fur-Fish-Game*. I then read each one from cover to cover and I was able to experience living life in Alaska, on the plains of Africa or in the Rocky Mountains. The words transported me to the best fishing holes, the hottest hunting locations and the wildest places. Ducks descended into the decoys by the hundreds, brown trout sucked down minute dry flies on every cast and bighorn sheep roamed the hillsides.

Books by authors like Ernest Hemingway, Robert Ruark, and Gene Hill helped fill the time between magazines and also took my mind to faraway places in search of fish, fowl and fur. The written word provided a gateway to many things I hoped to experience and spurred my imagination, dreams and even helped me find my career.

The words were only one side of the story as the artwork, photography and illustrations provided a stunning visual of remote vistas, difficult situations and world class catches. The covers of the early magazines were truly works of art that were rendered to transport the subscriber to places and situations that only a few might see. Inside the magazines, pictures and diagrams were used to show lures, describe decoy placement, and help in patterning a fishing lake.

The advertisements in the magazines were also there to catch an outdoorsman's attention through photographs and enticing words for products ranging from tools to cigarettes as well as all kinds of hunting and fishing paraphernalia. The back of each magazine was filled with smaller classified ads that sold dog supplies, how-to taxidermy manuals, and gun repair classes as well as hunting and fishing trips around the world.

Each magazine, book and article provided a thrill to my senses as a young outdoorsman. Unfortunately, times have changed and the written word seems to be falling out of favor. It has been replaced by YouTube videos, quick moving headlines on websites and Twitter and Snapchat posts that seem to come and go



CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

as quickly as a hummingbird to a feeder. Other than leafing through a stack of magazines at the doctor's office or car repair place, most of us very rarely read the printed word.

Information now comes at us at such a fast pace I am not sure we can digest all of it, yet I don't feel like today's information sinks in like the information from the tattered pages of an old magazine. Even though it seems out of place in today's society, the written word will be valuable to our future generations. Some of our greatest family treasures are handwritten recipes and notes from our family members.

Mom has always told me I need to write down things that I have experienced and that has proven to be very rewarding. One thing I often hear in regard to this column is that it brings back memories for many folks. That statement thrills me greatly.

I would encourage you to take some time and write down some of your life experiences. Keep a log of outdoor adventures and make a few notes so those wonderful times can be passed along in full detail. It's a great way to remember that big fish, that big bunch of ducks or that day you had motor trouble and nothing went right.

I hope you will take a little time to make a few outdoor memories, record them and pass them along to others. I hope to see you out there!



Sounds Like Love ... or lack thereof

A playlist for February.

BY SARA BROWN

1. Angel Dream (No. 2) – Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

The metaphorical imagery and gentle instrumentation are what make this such a beautiful love song. "Over mountains, I floated away / across an ocean, I dreamed her name" creates a gorgeous picture in your mind of just how big the singer's love for the woman in question is. The soft guitar combined with those sweet lyrics is bound to get you into that lovey-dovey mood we associate with Valentine's Day.

2. Everybody's Got Somebody But Me – Hunter Hayes

It may be the month of love, but some of us may find ourselves lonely or brokenhearted and feeling bitter about the whole love thing. Turns out there's a song for that! Lyrics like "I'd love to take a pin to a heart-shaped balloon" capture those feelings, and the upbeat, peppy nature of the song make it a fun way to tell love how you really feel.

3. Love Somebody – Rick Springfield

This song seems to be a message to a lost love that they better find someone before it's too late rather than seek the absolute perfection they've been looking for. Absolute perfection in a partner is impossible to find, so find someone you can love and love them. This is a deep message, but it's delivered in such a fun way. With a classic '80s beat and rocking guitars, it's a perfect song to dance around the room to.

4. I Hate Myself For Loving You – Joan Jett and the Blackhearts

Loud guitars, a heavy drum beat, and a fierce vocal aren't what you think of when you think of love songs, and this track is no exception. This isn't a love song, it's one of those songs about being done wrong, but you just can't walk away. We've all been through it in some form or fashion, and we know we should just walk away, but if you can't, at least you can belt out this rocker in the car on your way home.

5. All My Life – Jeff Lynne's ELO

This is a song about having finally found the perfect love after a lifelong search. It's a relatively simple song, not too fast, not too wordy, but it's a perfect love song. With pleasant harmonies and sweet lyrics like, "I'm so glad I found you / I just wanna be around you / all my life," the song just makes you want to find someone who makes you feel that happy.

6. House of Cards – Breaking Grass

A house of cards is very fragile and easy to knock down, and the more confident you get in your ability to build it higher and higher, the more likely it is to fall. Love can be like that sometimes, and that's the kind of story this song tells. The song evokes the idea of a lost love through the melancholy mandolin and fiddle it uses, and you're sure to feel for the singer by the end of the whole thing.

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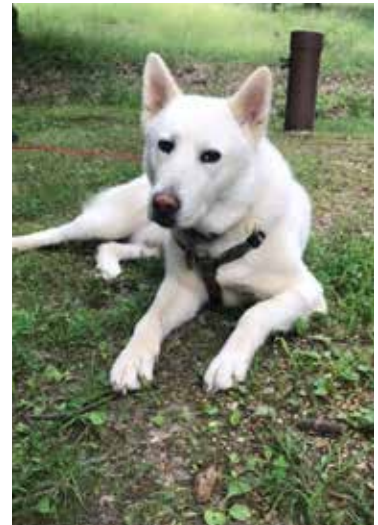
BY SHAINA HARVEY

Charlie is a 4-year-old, beautiful white Husky/Lab mix.

My roommate and I got him after moving to Jonesboro from California four years ago. He was only eight weeks old when we got him and he was a big fluffy ball of sweetness. We lived in an apartment at the time and he outgrew it quickly. I bought a house with a nice yard when he was about a year and a half, and he has loved being able to run around and play.

Even though Charlie is four years old, he has a puppy sister, so most of the time he is a big lazy boy who loves to cuddle, but every so often he gets the “zoomies” and loves to run, play and chase. His favorite toy has always been this little raccoon; he has had one since we got him.

I have epilepsy and he has learned my warning signs so he will alert me if he can tell I am about to have a seizure. He has gotten me out of the shower to safety, away from the stove, and alerted family by barking when I was out of sight and having a seizure. He is such a protective, loving dog. He has always been a mama’s boy and any time I am home he is my shadow. If Charlie could talk, I think he’d say, “Uhh, hey Mama treats???”





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Legacy of Love

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Henry Wrinkles and the hearts that will hold him dear [fur]-ever.



In a single word, Susan Boyd described friend and family member Henry Wrinkles as “love.” In 15 ½ years Henry lived up to that all-encompassing term by providing therapy, literacy education, low cost spay and neuter clinics and foster care aid to the community.

What might come as a surprise to some, is the fact that Henry Wrinkles was a dog.

When it came down to it, however, Boyd said he was more than just a dog. “He was a very special spirit sent here, stuck in a dog’s body,” she said.

Nearly 16 years ago Boyd took a trip to P.A.W.S. and came upon a kennel with

two puppies. One was bouncing around the way a typical puppy would, while the other sat still and looked up at Boyd with an expression of, “Can we hurry up and get out of here?”

“I picked him up and never put him down,” Boyd remembered of that day.

Boyd took Henry with her nearly everywhere she went, including community events. She first noticed something special about Henry at a Girl Scouts meeting where he met every child at the door and escorted them to their seats.

“Any time you took him out, something weird happened,” she added.

At another event, Henry chose one child out of hundreds to gently pin down and cuddle with. Boyd was occupied with wrangling a horse but when she attempted to pull Henry off, a nearby teacher told her to stop. The teacher said out of all the children present, the one Henry picked had potentially the most troubling life and needed the love.

“He gave people doses of good energy,” Boyd said.

Henry’s special personality continued to affect Northeast Arkansas and when he was 10 years old, he became officially certified as a therapy dog through the University of North Texas. His natural talent for sniffing



out hidden problems led him to engaging a child to speak for the first time, as well as alerting Boyd of her onset of multiple sclerosis.

Henry's gift of service inspired Boyd to create the Henry Wrinkles Foundation, a non-profit that promotes the relationship between humans and animals as a way of healing. Animal assisted learning and therapy, a literacy program, adoption bootcamp, enrichment classes and summer camps are all available through HWF.

"He literally had his paws in everything," Boyd said.

The organization that came about thanks

to Henry will continue to leave a lasting legacy in the community. On December 28, 2019, Henry crossed the rainbow bridge surrounded by his human and fur family. Boyd's hope is that Henry will continue to positively influence others even though he is no longer physically here.

"He was brought into this world to make a difference," she said. "He did not come here just to start this. I would have never started this. It would have never dawned on me how to do it. He literally showed me the way."

At the news of Henry's passing, support from the community poured in for Boyd and her family.

"Henry made such an incredible mark on the community and lived up to 'man's best friend' in every sense," one said on Facebook, while another commented, "Your name will carry on."

"I loved doing yoga with Henry. He had such a calming and soothing presence," Pam Beach said.

"I didn't realize what an impact that dog has made," Boyd said. "My life that I lead now all ties back to him. Most people never have anything or anyone that influences them like that."

For more information on HWF or to make a donation visit www.henrywrinkles.org.

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Love That Old Building

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



When Bobby Rickard posted an old photograph to a high school social media page, he never expected the reaction it generated. His picture of The Lions Den from Oak Grove High School stirred up fond memories from

former students now scattered all over the map.

"I did not expect the response," Rickard said after reading comments from so many Oak Grove graduates. "It was just the place

to be, not a care in the world. You wanted to hurry up and be old enough to go to 'the Soda Room.' If you skipped class, that's where you would go. Those posts from other people ranged from all years ... 1960s to '70s to '80s. It brought back good

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memories for a lot of people, obviously.” The small, white structure sat on campus behind the main school building and housed a candy store, tables and seats, and served as a meeting place for students during the lunch hour, sometimes in between classes and occasionally during class times. “I remember the old bus seats in it and some church pews in it,” said Deanna Smith Hudson, a 1982 OGHs graduate. “One day I fell asleep on a church pew and slept through Home Ec. No one came to get me and I just slept through the whole class. But we sure loved that building.”

Beverly Hurt Wilson, a member of the Class of 1969, agreed. “Oh, we really did,” she recalled. “I guess because it was our place away from class. I just remember talking and giggling. The gatherings were great. Mr. (Walt) Smothers was always working behind the counter and selling us cokes and chips. It was a big part of ‘us.’ I hadn’t thought about it, either, for a long time. Oh, wow! It was our place. We just spent so much time out there.”

Rickard graduated in 1985 and was on the yearbook staff, leading to his having the original copy of the photo he shared. He said he remembers being in elementary

school and getting to make infrequent trips to the building on special occasions, and most of the younger ones longed for the day when they reached junior high and were allowed to visit daily. “I guess every school has a hangout whether it’s a soda room or somewhere. For us, at lunchtime, it was either go to the cafeteria or directly to the Lions Den and you’d still have 30-35 minutes to hang out.

“What I’ve been told is maybe it was built about 1960; after I graduated, I don’t know how many years it stood. I think in 1986 is when the consolidation happened. All I know is, it was just our hangout. Sodas were 25 cents and candy was 25 cents. It’s a place everyone has memories of ... hang out with friends ... didn’t matter if you were junior high or senior high, you were all mixed together.

“There was a gas furnace in the wintertime and there was a pecking order there: The upperclassmen got to stand by the heater. There were old bus seats to sit on and a couple of round tables. But it’s all about the memories, I think. I remember in the ninth grade a kid got his arm stuck in the Coke machine and they had to come from Jonesboro to open it up and get him out.”

Hudson’s mind also quickly drums up memories. “At one time there was a jukebox in there,” she said. “That’s where I learned all the words to *Paradise* by the Dashboard Light. I remember the little wax soda bottle candy and Chick-O-Sticks. I actually worked behind the counter some with Walt Smothers. Man, it was something when I was finally old enough to go to the Soda Room and get chips and a soda. You always got to see who was dating who and who wanted to date who, and just cutting up. It was the place to be part of the school family.

“It brings back fond memories. It certainly does. I, for one, enjoyed school. It was the best thing to have that old rock building and the Soda Room. I think everyone remembers that. You just couldn’t wait to be old enough to get to go there. Lots of homework was copied, lots of romances started and ended.”

Rickard, who now lives in Bentonville, said he certainly enjoyed reading the comments his old photo inspired. “Made a lot of people think about a happy time,” he said. “Win or lose, all the basketball games were replayed out there. Anything a teen’s world revolved around, it took place or was discussed in that building. It was just our place.”

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Love for His Craft

BY LINDSEY MILLS

Two similar houses are nestled in the same neighborhood in the West End area of Jonesboro. One house lies vacant. To the naked eye, it looks like nothing more than a shell of a home that used to be. It appears to be past its prime, useless, forgotten, awaiting its date of destruction.

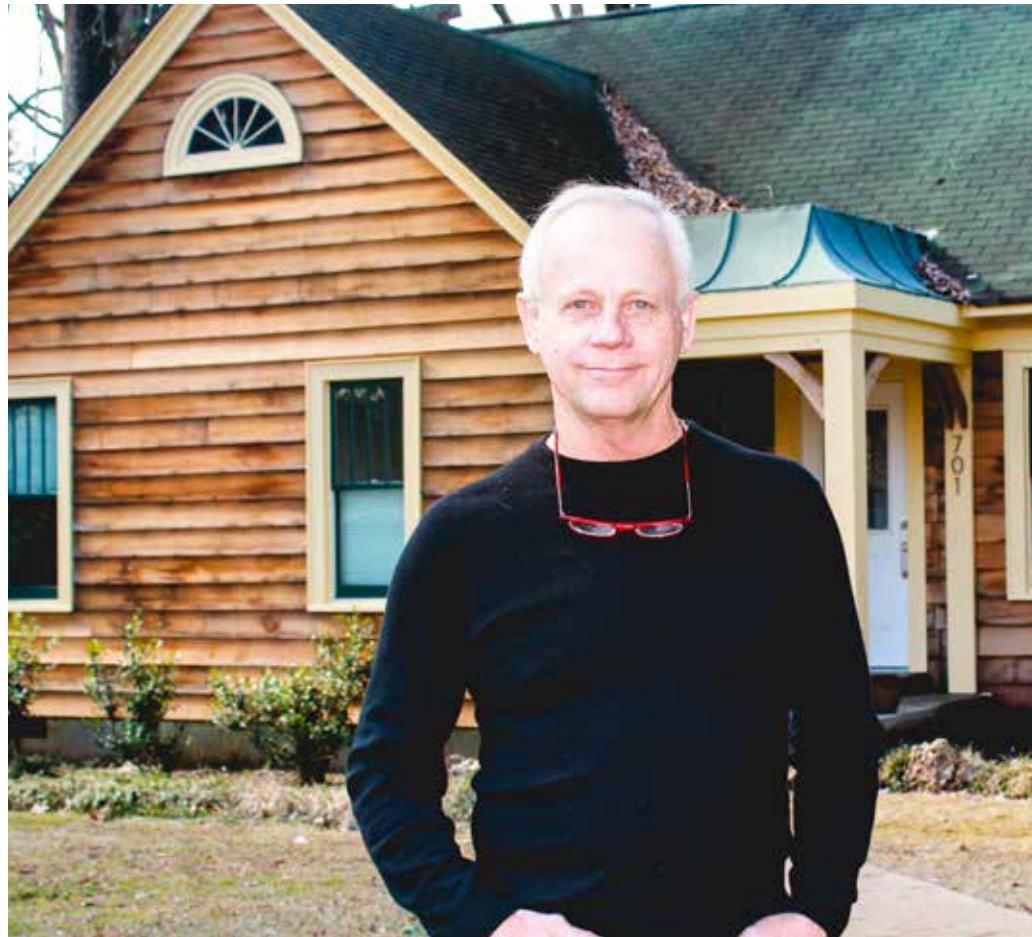
Another, only a few doors down, stands proud. It is sturdy. It is strong. It is old and yet it is new. It invites neighbors to admire it and welcomes the tenants home. It retains its character, and yet it is still developing its personality. Its beauty lies simultaneously in its history and the new possibilities for its future. This house used to be just like the first. Some would have torn the structure down to make room for something new, but someone decided the house had another life left in it.

For many years Jeb Spencer has taken note of beautiful buildings that were capturing his attention. "I wondered what it was I found so intriguing," Jeb said when asked how he got into the business of restoring old homes. "I realized, whatever it is, the older houses have it."

"It" he would later discover, was the beauty of traditional architecture. He did his homework. Jeb learned that traditional architecture is based on human proportions. This means that, similar to humans, it has a base, a body, and a cap. This style made it look natural, stable, sturdy and pleasing to the eyes.

He also began to realize that in older homes, everything you could see with the naked eye was there for a reason. Everything served a purpose. There were no added decorations or fancy additions "just because." Each piece of a building had a job to do and that made it beautiful in its simplicity.

Older buildings also tend to be built with higher quality materials than many houses today. "They don't make 'em like they used," seems to ring true in the industry as more and more people seek to



dip into the market and make money from those seeking a living space, and fewer and fewer people know what to look for in a house that will stand the test of time.

"Bigger is better" seems to be another philosophy for some builders, and many seek to construct the project as quickly as

possible rather than giving the kind of time necessary to build a better structure. All of these things combined lead to more homes that look the same (a time saver) and fewer homes with their own personalities.

What also seems to be lacking as more

Jeb Spencer's admiration for architecture led to a passion for restoring it.



homes are built and fewer are saved, is that some try to imitate traditional architecture without taking into account what makes a building "traditional." For example, adding pillars to the front of a building does not make sense when the base, the body, and the cap are not natural proportions. Adding too much

to the roof without placing the beam properly gives the sense the structure might collapse.

Attempting to replicate traditional architecture simply for the sake of style does not make sense when you drop the principles of why such practices were used to begin with: because they had a function, a purpose.

Older homes certainly emit a charm that few would deny, but even fewer are willing to pay the price: the price of labor, the price of time, the price of patience. While it is true older homes are special and treasures to be cherished, they also take a lot of work to be whipped back into shape.

This is what Jeb has fallen in love with.

"When you see an old building restored," Jeb explains, "usually the first thing that was done was rip away all the changes that were made over time in order to get the structure back to its original state."

The raw structure of an older building is what many people appreciate, and it's also what has been covered up over time. The first thing to do is tear away the things that cover the building's natural frame. As the layers peel away, it becomes easier to imagine the history the building has witnessed.

What kind of stories have unfolded under its roof? What kind of lives have called this place home? How many kids have played in the yard? How much laughter has been shared in that living room? How many meals have been cooked in that kitchen?

It's hard work pouring time and energy into a structure that has likely seen misuse and abuse over its lifetime. It requires long hours to correct damage done. It takes skill to address issues and to maintain a house's architectural integrity. It demands patience to pay attention to the details that determine the difference between quality craftsmanship

and a box with windows.

So why bother? Because the difference between a house and a home lies in those details. The difference between a temporary living space and the kind of place you want to live forever rests in a space that you are proud to call home.

That kind of space is both beautiful and functional. It has history and yet it is timeless. The amount of work, effort, attention, and love given is what defines the difference between a house and a home.



The Glove

One item. Many memories.

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



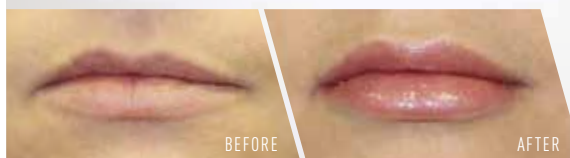
While seeking people interested in sharing some love stories for this month, my question to them was turned around and pointed back at me almost every time: What is one place or one activity or one thing you genuinely love?

Each time, my answer was the same: My first baseball glove. It would be easy to misinterpret that emotion, thinking my obvious love for the game would be what ties me so emotionally to the glove; but that's not it. That silly-looking little piece of time-worn leather transported my life in so many directions.

For one, when I see it I immediately think of my dad. He came home from work one day in 1956 with this little kid's glove, showed a 4-year-old boy the proper way to put it on and my love affair with the sport began. Dad would hit a rubber baseball to me and my job was to learn to haul it in with the help of this flat, stiff glove he had toted home from somewhere. It was the subject of much laughter years later when I would show it to him and ask, "What kind of father would give his kid this?" and he would say, "I don't know, but I wish you would get rid of it."

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It's not just learning the basics of the game that I recall, but the times in the yard with Dad. He would hit a ground ball that would bounce over my head -- and it didn't have to bounce too high to accomplish that back in the day -- and the ball would find the weed patch behind me and I would venture in to find it, only to be swallowed by my surroundings. That's when Dad would say, "It's right there by that weed."

"Which one?"

"The tall green one," he would say before joining me in the hunt, stomping around a minute and picking up the ball to add, "See, I said it was right here by this tall green one."

Those are the initial memories but they only led to more joy tied to that glove. I made it to Little League baseball -- now, with a real glove -- and hit my first home run when I was nine. I played on All-Star teams with Larry Elmore and Kendal Hurt and James Thomas and got to win a lot of games over the years because of them. I was a part of the American Legion team that saw both Hurt and Elmore hit dramatic home runs

to keep us alive in the State Tournament championship game, a contest that went 13 innings before Blytheville edged us out for the title. During that three-year Legion stretch I played shortstop as Thomas pitched multiple no-hitters and Elmore struck out hundreds of batters with his blazing fastball and Hurt amazed everyone with his incredible arm and unbelievable power for a little guy and Ted Cunningham patrolled the outfield as if on cruise control, making the game look so simple.

Because Dad brought that glove home I was able to earn a baseball scholarship, drive 13 hours away to Ranger, Texas, and meet the guy who fills the role of Best Friend almost 50 years later. Hardly a week goes by that Robert Burg and I don't converse via telephone, and we have hooked up to go to ball games in Arkansas, Texas and Georgia, just enjoying each other's company. Once the baseball career came to an end, I picked up softball and played on a traveling team based in Little Rock and made lifelong friends all over the Southeast and Southwest United States. And when I put those extensive traveling days behind me, I played close to home

and inherited teammates from places like Kennett and Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and points dotting the map in all four corners of Arkansas and most points in between.

I got to play with and against some of the greatest players Arkansas had to offer -- Tommy Fowler, Tommy Reed, Dennis Manley, Steve Hudson from our area and others who built softball Hall of Fame careers from other parts of the state. I marveled at their abilities and their way of coming through in the clutch, sometimes getting to win because I was their teammate and sometimes getting to lose because I wasn't -- but getting to be there because when I was four, Dad bought me a glove.

I followed my dream of becoming a sports writer and got to sit in the dugout and conduct interviews with people like Pete Rose and Lou Brock and Whitey Herzog and Ted Williams and many more, and that's what comes to mind when I see that old beat up glove sitting in my room. I love it, and I love all it has brought to my life.

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The Link

New professional theatre company aims to connect Northeast Arkansas and surrounding area art communities by seeking local, regional, and professional talent.

BY LINDSEY MILLS



A love for theatre, a love for community, and a desire to connect – or link – those loves is the driving force behind the new professional theatre company in Northeast Arkansas: The Link.

Matt Cavanaugh and Jenny Powers each have a love for theatre that began in different states and developed in different ways, but their similar love for this particular art form led them first together, and to where they are now.

Jenny's love sparked in childhood, preparing for auditions in her room for local theatre productions in her hometown of Andover, Massachusetts. "Ever since I was a little girl, I've loved diving into my imagination," Jenny said. "There's something really safe about being in a spotlight and everything is dark around you. You get to share your boundless imagination, and also bare your soul."

Jenny's passion and her take when approaching her craft is to focus on the character and tell her own piece of the story. She shared that sometimes she doesn't watch other scenes, but rather pays attention to the details in the hopes of sharing a special part of the bigger story. "I love being a part of telling a story that will hopefully impact an audience, to move them, whether it's to laughter or tears," Jenny explained.

Matt is the opposite of his wife, and his strengths lie in a different approach. "I always felt I had more of the perspective



of wanting to see the bigger picture,” Matt shared. “I’ve always enjoyed that aspect of it and that’s why I believe this new venture will be very fulfilling. I like creating things.”

The new project, The Link, is a professional theatre company that will see its debut production in early March. Matt will direct the show, and both he and Jenny are eager to see how the production will touch the community and lead to more opportunities to serve the region.

“It’s designed on some theatres that both Jenny and I have worked at,” Matt said of how the idea for The Link came about and grew. “It’s set up to have a mix of local talent in conjunction with university talent in conjunction with professional talent.”

“This is an opportunity to engage the larger arts community, to connect us, to link us to the Memphis arts scene, Little Rock, maybe even St. Louis, and Fayetteville,” Jenny added.

The Broadway power couple has the experience necessary to unite local, regional, and national talent. Matt was born and raised here in Jonesboro, and the duo along with their three kids now calls Northeast Arkansas home, but between the two they have starred in many Broadway productions and traveled the country performing.

Matt studied theatre in upstate New

York before moving to New York City and landing a starring role in *The Urban Cowboy* almost immediately upon arrival. He also starred in *Grey Gardens*, *Catered Affair*, and *Westside Story* before making a career shift that led him back home to work for his family business after earning his MBA.

Jenny continues to be involved with professional theatre around the country but is now based in Arkansas after nearly 15 years in New York. Jenny studied vocal performance and theatre at Northwestern and has a lot of experience originating roles pre-Broadway. Jenny continued working steadily after she and Matt had their first child, and when opportunities arrive she still goes to work doing what she loves, though she spends more time in Arkansas now.

“It’s easy to do when you just have one child,” Jenny said. “You’re an actress, who happens to have a kid. But when you have two children, there’s no bones about it, you’re a mom who happens to play pretend on the side.”

Both Matt and Jenny boast impressive resumes, and now that their family of five is planted here they look forward to creating something that will serve the community they call home.

“We hope this theatre company drives economic growth, increases tourism, and helps with cultural advancement, art appreciation and increases community

connectivity and brings us together,” Jenny said.

The first production for The Link, *The Fantasticks*, is just the beginning for what Matt and Jenny hope to bring to the area, but it’s a great starting point.

“It’s a beautiful fable, a love story,” Matt said of the show. “It’s the longest running musical ever. It’s a charming, smart, simple but very creative show. It has a beautiful score. And I think the cast, the characters fit our mandate for the kind of talent we’re drawing on.”

In the future, they hope the company will produce more shows that will continue to draw attention to the area, and if the community supports it, there is hope the company might one day have its very own home.

“We want to make sure people come, and that they want more,” Matt said, and Jenny added they do hope they earn a space that will mean more shows and more education for artists and performers right here in Jonesboro. “If we see that this is desired and supported by the community,” Matt continued, “then we can look at it and say, ‘Okay, let’s build a home.’”

The Fantasticks will debut on March 6 at 7:30 p.m. and run through March 8. The production will take place at the Glass Factory in Jonesboro and tickets can be purchased online at thelinktheatre.org



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For the Love of Theatre

A passion to perform, a love for the theatre, and a mission to serve the community.

BY LINDSEY MILLS

Joy Robinson's love for the theatre, and one theatre in particular, came from a passion to perform.

"I have always loved to perform," Joy said. "I was an only child so I was constantly looking for different ways to entertain myself."

Joy would take a cassette player outside and do "carport concerts" for her dog. She'd play Madonna, Debbie Gibson, etc. She was in her first play in the third grade, but the first time she performed solo on stage she was 15.

"I sang 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' in a Broadway Revue Show at the Collins Theatre," Joy recalled.

She said her love for the theatre really bloomed several years later as an adult when she started performing there more regularly. Camelot, It's A Wonderful Life, and various other musical revue shows are among the many performances Joy has taken part in.

"For a teen/young adult who never knew exactly where she fit in, I felt like I had found my people," Joy shared. "Many of the wonderful individuals I shared the stage with have become close friends of mine through the years."

What does Joy love most about the theatre? Community.

"You could never imagine a group of people who, without question, are willing to help another even if it sacrifices their own time," Joy said. "Seeing people smiling and laughing and working together backstage or onstage, or behind the scenes such as set construction or technical work, each passionate about what they're doing, is a feeling I can't explain. It doesn't matter if you've been in one show or 50 shows. If you've been a part of a production, you just understand. My favorite aspect is definitely how people from all different walks of life with different skill sets can come together to create something amazing."



Joy's love for the theatre, and especially for the one she's performed at so many times, brought her to her current role as manager of the Historic Collins Theatre in Paragould.

"I served as a member of the Collins Foundation Board of Directors for a little over a year before taking the role as interim manager after Rick Lane passed away," Joy explained of how she landed in her position. "At first, I don't even know that I thought much about the decision. It was just something I did. When the position became permanent, I was still just completely in shock. It is the craziest feeling to have such a relationship with a building and an organization, and then all of a sudden, everything changes and it's now your responsibility. Some of my first moments alone in the theatre were spent just sitting and taking it all in. Ninety-four years of history was now under my watch ... talk about pressure!"

But Joy has thrived in her role, caring for the space that means a great deal to the performing arts and to the community as a whole.

"The Collins Theatre means everything to our community. It's part in the history of our town," Joy said. "One thing I hear a lot now is how lucky we are to have an

operational theatre like we do. I guess I never thought about it like that ... 94 years of memories for all who have attended. And it needs to be treasured because it IS a treasure. Paragould has been so fortunate that so many people throughout the years have taken the initiative to keep it operational."

Joy and everyone at the Collins Theatre invite you to experience the history of the building, the magic of the performances held there, and the people who make it all happen this season. This summer, The Collins Foundation Board, KASU Radio, and the Paragould Advertising and Promotion Commission are proud to bring the first-ever Big Grass Bluegrass Festival to the stage on July 24 and 25. For more shows happening at the Collins, visit their Facebook page or collinstheatre.com.



For more information on theatre across Northeast Arkansas visit exploremornea.com



**WHY I SUPPORT KIM BOLING BIBB
FOR CIRCUIT JUDGE
DIVISION 8**



I have been a licensed attorney in Arkansas since August 1976.

I have had the honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Arkansas in a judicial capacity for approximately 33 of those 43 years.

Since my retirement as an active Circuit Judge in 2005, I have worked throughout the state as a Retired Circuit Judge by Assignment of the Chief Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court. I have presided in all five Divisions of Circuit Court-Civil, Criminal, Domestic Relations, Juvenile and Probate as both an active and retired Circuit Judge.

I have known Kimberly Boling Bibb since she was a teenager.

Kimberly (Kim) has appeared before me as an attorney throughout her legal career. I have seen her progress and mature from a newly licensed attorney to become an accomplished, confident, well prepared, courteous but also tenacious attorney and advocate for her Client.

I have seen her honest concern and compassion while representing minor children and adults who lacked the mental capacity to protect themselves from exploitation or harm. I have seen Kim represent the interests and protect the rights of individuals charged with criminal offenses. I have seen her being a strong advocate for her clients' interests.

Kim has appeared in all 6 counties and all 9 Courthouses which comprise the Second Judicial Circuit. Kim has appeared in all five Divisions in Circuit Court.

I believe my experience equips me with the ability to observe which attorneys could become fair, impartial and effective Judges.

Based upon my observation, I am confident Kim has the requisite qualities to become an outstanding Circuit Judge for Arkansas. She is polite and courteous to attorneys, parties, witnesses and Court support staff. Kim is even tempered. Kim understands the importance for a Judge being fair, impartial, ethical and compassionate. Kim has the requisite demeanor to be an effective and respected Judge. Kim can be trusted to decide each case based upon the evidence presented as applied to the law-nothing more, but nothing less!

For all the above reasons, I fully endorse and support Kimberly Boling Bibb for Circuit Judge, Division 8, Second Judicial Circuit of the State of Arkansas. I urge you to join with me by voting to elect her to this important position!

Citizens registered to vote in Clay, Greene, Craighead, Poinsett and most of Mississippi and Crittenden counties get to vote to elect the next Circuit Judge for this important position.

Judge Goodson

Election Day is on Tuesday, March 3, 2020.

Early voting begins on Tuesday, February 18, 2020.

Elect **Kimberly**

BOLING BIBB

CIRCUIT JUDGE

★ 8th Division ★

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The Foundation of Arts Presents: *The Newsies*

BY BECCA JENNESS



The well-loved musical, *The Newsies*, will be hitting The Foundation of Arts' main stage this February. Many people may be familiar with Disney's 1992 work by the same name, but the stage production was produced after the film. The musical first debuted on Broadway in 2012 and ran through 2014. It was largely successful due to well-loved dances to the major theme of the musical, which is the importance of standing up for what is right.

The story, which is very loosely based on newsboy labor strikes at the turn of the century, seems to be known by everyone involved in theatre. Kristi Pulliam, The FOA's Executive Director and director of

The Newsies, believes the loosely based concept combined with musical theatre is what makes the show such a success.

Though the musical is fun-filled, it offers some challenges for the FOA. Initially, casting seemed to be an obstacle. However, the theatre chose to cast both males and females in a musical dominated by male characters, because it seems to work in favor of the show as well as the theatre overall. The ease into this practice has added more depth to the FOA's shows, according to Pulliam who stated, "The mix of boys and girls is such a perfect thing in our culture."

Now that casting is done, the current

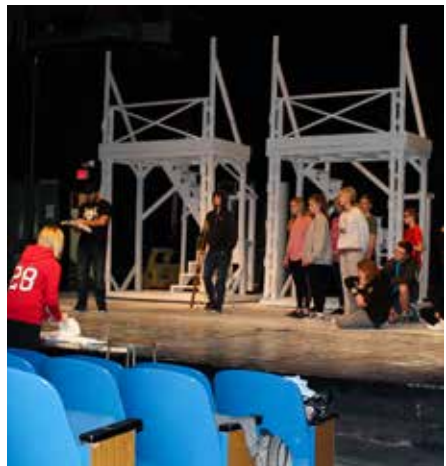
obstacle the cast and crew are facing is mastering the choreography. The cast has roughly 70 members, with the youngest being roughly 12 years old. Therefore, working together to master each dance and sync the choreography has tested both cast and crew. Despite this challenge, Pulliam expressed that they are already proud of their progress, and she believes LeeAnn King, the choreographer of the musical, is leading the cast beautifully in mastering each dance number. Pulliam put it best, "We are going to meet that challenge [choreography] head-on."

The FOA's reach goes beyond Jonesboro. It brings people of all ages, backgrounds, and beliefs through its doors to experience and appreciate the arts, and *The Newsies* will be no exception. The professional talent leading the show blended with talented, young artists brings something beautifully unique to the community, showcasing that art is, in fact, for everyone. Because of this, a message of hope is spread through the engagement, diversity, and power of storytelling. "[This show is] yet another time when the community will see the caliber of talent we have," said Pulliam. Whether that be professional or amateur talent, the FOA welcomes all with open arms.

The show will run for five nights: February 21-24 and the 28th, so be sure to snag tickets for the upbeat family-friendly musical, which will have you tapping your foot as you sing along.



For more information on theatre across Northeast Arkansas visit exploremornea.com



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-Between the Dashes-

Rick Lane

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

The Collins Theatre marquee has hosted many big names and important tributes over the years, but perhaps its most significant yet read, "Theatre has lost a titan. But heaven has gained a giant."

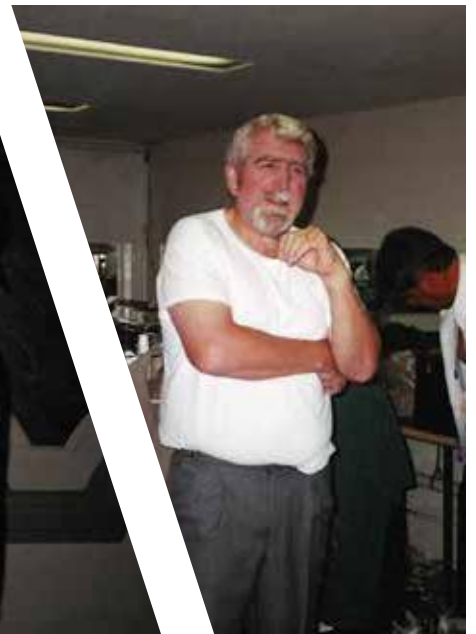
Tommy Lane, afraid of heights according

to a *Paragould Daily Press* article, climbed up to the marquee in the summer of 2019 to place each letter of the tribute for his father, Rick Lane, who passed away June 17. And to members of the local theatre community, they truly had lost a legend.

"For about two decades, or close to it,

there wasn't a show he didn't touch," Tommy said of his father.

The total number of shows added up to over 50 according to his wife Brenda, whether he acted, directed or designed them.



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"The theatre was our passion," she said. "Rick was creative in all aspects of theatre. Managing, directing, acting, singing, writing, set design and construction."

His passion for theater dates back to the 1970s when he traveled to various towns with cabaret shows. In 1976 he appeared in his first major production, *1776*, and from that point on, he had his hands in anything involving the theatre.

Rick and Brenda, who married in 1982, served together on the Fine Arts Council for over 20 years and in 2006, the pair became the managers of the Collins Theatre.

"He did everything," Tommy said. "If it was a small job, a big job ... they cleaned the theatre, he fixed the pipes. He built the stage out. Joe [Wessell] and him, and a few other people, did the downstairs. They redid all the dressing rooms and stuff."

Aside from building up the Collins, Rick also built up those around him. Longtime friend Vicki Bishop met Rick in the mid 1980s when she was a student at Paragould High School, and she began working with him on productions after 1995.

"Rick had a way of looking at you on stage beyond the lines and directions, but his eyes could have a conversation with your soul," Bishop said. "Working with him on stage, whether he was directing or actually interacting, became my choice and ideal situation."

She added that Rick accomplished things for the community at the Collins that some still may not realize.

"He loved to see kids start out there in a show and see them come back as adults," she said. "He did his best to make sure that the Collins remained a home to those of us who grew up doing theatre there. He would shovel snow. He would climb up on the ladder, and almost kill himself doing it, changing the marquee. He would pick up trash. He would pass out posters. He took care of little things with a smile and a twinkle in his eye."

It was evident in the loving way Rick took care of the Collins that it was more than just a theatre to him.

"He considered the theatre his home away from home," Brenda said, adding that he "took great pride in its upkeep, as well as his personal commitment to its actors and theatre-goers."

No job was beneath Rick, Brenda explained. He worked in the concession stand when the doors opened, greeted guests, cleaned the bathrooms, and most importantly, made the actors and audience members feel at home.

"Everybody that came in that place, he touched in some way," Tommy said. "I don't think there's anybody that has a bad memory of him."

Brenda described Rick as having a servant's heart, made clear by his dedication to the Collins and all who walked through its doors. That serving,

humbling attitude remained even after he passed. Brenda said Rick was an organ donor, and she has since received a letter from one of his recipients who said he could see again thanks to Rick's donation.

Though the Collins feels different without Rick behind the concession stand or upgrading the paint job on the stage, his enthusiastic love for theatre remains throughout the aisles of the building. From *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Night of the Living Dead*, to *Cats* and *Les Miserables*, Rick was never afraid to step out of his comfort zone for producing and directing. Brenda remembered a favorite saying of his: "If Broadway can do it, so can we."

"And we did," she said.



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**MARY LILE
BROADWAY**
CIRCUIT JUDGE - DIVISION 7

"I'm familiar with the hardships and sacrifices faced by residents of Northeast Arkansas, and I believe that I can put my vast experience in the legal field, as a working mother, as the parent of a child with a significant disability and as a leader in the state legislature, to work as Circuit Judge to improve the lives of our citizens."

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MARY LILE BROADWAY FOR CIRCUIT JUDGE
Paid for by Mary Broadway for Circuit Judge

A Touch of Magic

BY LINDSEY MILLS



You're never too young to start something new. Seth Harmon and Maci England are teens in high school, Seth a sophomore at Valley View and Maci a junior in Trumann, who started their own theatre company. A Touch of Magic Productions has brought two scripts to life on local stages, and has its sights set on more.

The idea came to the high school sweethearts one evening before they headed to a show at the Orpheum in Memphis. While hanging out at Maci's home in Trumann, where there's not many opportunities for theatre outreach outside of school, the duo saw a spot they imagined would be perfect for a local theater production.

"We noticed the pavilion stage that's part of the sports complex," Seth shared, "and we thought, 'Wouldn't it be cool if someone did shows out there?'"

They wasted no time: On the car ride they began to look up royalty-free shows, found one they liked, and applied for the rights. Seth talked nonchalantly about the process of casting, finding sponsors, and setting up rehearsals, and the process of pulling together such a project is quite the undertaking for anyone, nonetheless students on their first go.

While both shows proved to be a success, the young theatre company saw its share of difficulties. While working to put on their second show, a few locations fell through. "We had to change our location five times," Seth said with a laugh at the memory. "We were going to have it at the school, but summer hours are hard. A week before the show we realized we needed to find somewhere else. We were using First United Methodist as a practice space and one of the cast members said, 'Why don't we just use here?' So, we scrambled, set up the chairs, and made it work."

This year, both Seth's and Maci's travels mean putting A Touch of Magic's shows on a break, but that doesn't mean they don't have big plans for the future. In 2021, they hope to bring another show to the Trumann area, in addition to a theatre camp for younger actors.

Support these young producers/actors/artists and keep up with what's next by visiting them on social media. Find them on Facebook at A Touch of Magic Productions or on Instagram @atouhofmagicproductions. Visit them online at atouhofmagicproductions.org



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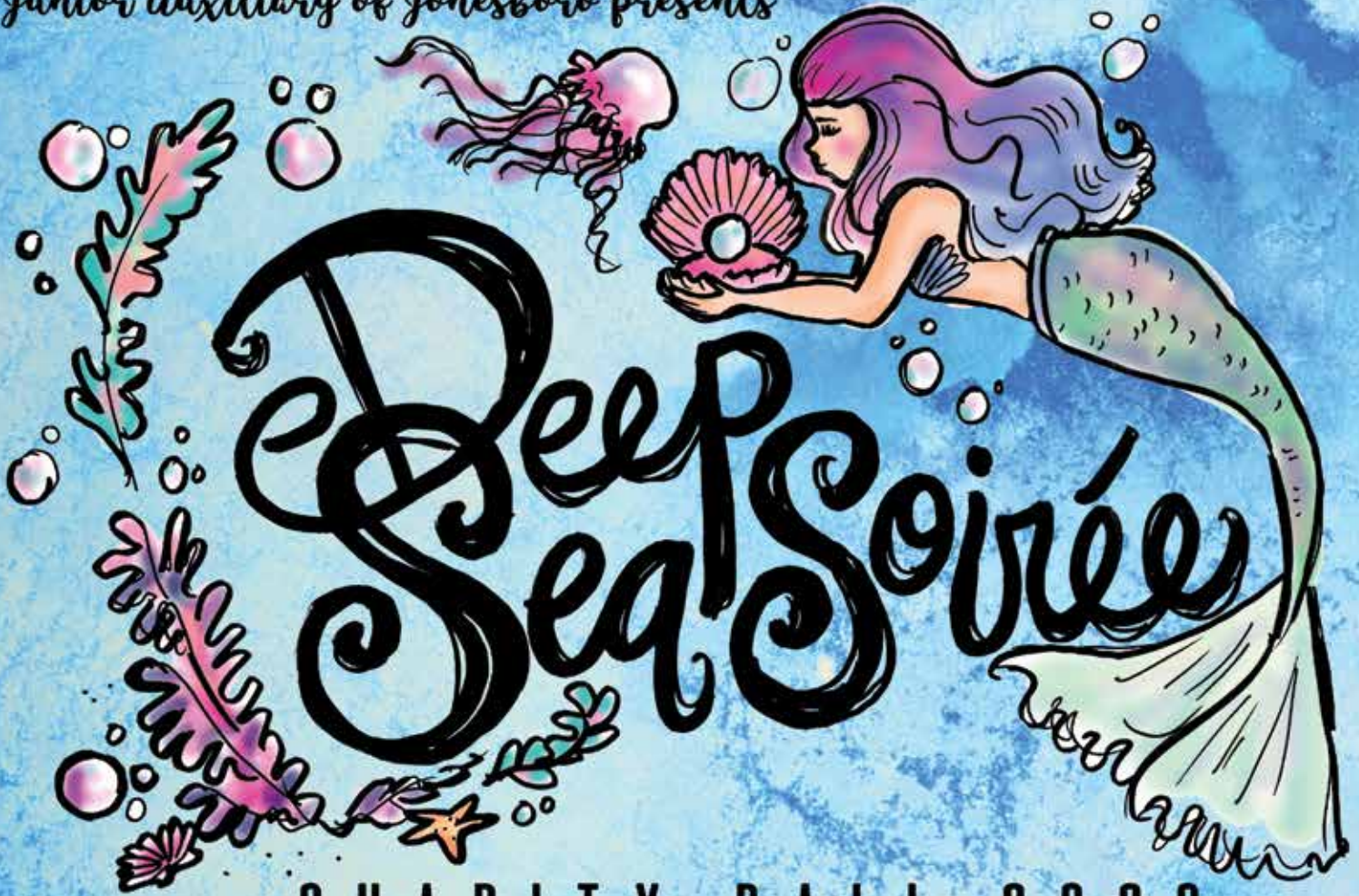
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Wedding Planning

Whether you're in the thick of it or just getting started, we've gathered tips and advice from *Premiere* readers, vendors, and "the Google" to put together a guide to help your plans and special day come together smoothly.

DRESS • RING • FLOWERS • VENUE • CAKE • CATERING • DECOR • PHOTOGRAPHER • HONEYMOON

Photo by Emilee Gill Photography

Let's do this.

The not-at-all expert but totally accurate guide to pulling the details of a wedding together.

BY LINDSEY MILLS



Photo by Rey Alpízar Photography

If I had a dollar for every time someone asked me how wedding planning was going ... well, you know the saying. Family, friends, and polite acquaintances are asking me this question and it's usually just a nice way to spark conversation. It's also a good way to make me a tad bit nervous and a wee bit on edge. Because it's not really going, honestly.

Jackson and I got engaged on the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland mid-August 2019. Walking back along the trail, he asked me questions about the wedding I hadn't really thought of.

Since those initial musings as we hiked along the coast, many more questions have been asked and very few answers have been given. Where? When? What are the colors? What kind of food? Etc. The only thing I really worked on was a playlist.

I walked into Dina's office one day and she announced we would have a special section for wedding planning in February. "I'll get right on it!" I said, enthusiastically because I always love starting on a new story. I looked down at the papers she passed me that read: "Section will include advice on picking out the perfect ring, dress, hair, makeup, venue, flowers, décor, catering, cake, photographer, and honeymoon."

Dang. My playlist wasn't even on the checklist and I hadn't thought of most of the things that were on it. I swallowed, and looked up at Dina. "This is good. I should probably think about some of this anyway, I guess."

She smiled and said, "I suspect some people are concerned about the progress of your wedding plans. Me included."

I nodded. "Right. Here we go!"

Consider this a not-at-all expert but totally accurate guide to pulling the details of a wedding together, and quickly, because we get married in May but this article needs to be ready mid-January.

Commentary is based on my own wedding planning process, but remember to think about what's most important to you and give that aspect of planning the most attention. Spend your money on the things that will make you smile and treasure this perfect day, and don't sweat anything that only causes you grief. You do not have to do things the traditional way. You can leave out what you want and add something different. But also, you don't have to strive to be different.

Throw a big wedding or plan something very small, have a traditional dinner or do it potluck style, get married in a church or in your own back yard, go all out on decorations or do none at all, serve a cake or ice cream, spend a lot of money on a dress or spend hardly anything at all, book an expensive photographer or have a friend take them; whatever you do, just do it your way, because it's your day.

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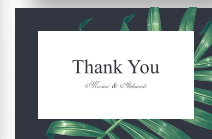
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Getting Started

My future sister-in-law and my wedding expert, Elizabeth Hoke, while helping me plan this shin-dig said to me, "Ask yourself: How do you want your wedding to feel? Make decisions based on creating that feeling."

Choose your color scheme, set your budget, and select your vendors based on creating a wedding that feels how you want it to. Spend your money on the things that matter most. Don't worry about the things that don't fit your style (you don't have to do everything that's part of a traditional wedding, but you can do them all if you want, too). Think about what your perfect day looks like: what you're eating, who's there, what kind of decorations are around, what music is playing.

Next, prioritize. Of the details that are important to you, what's most important? Start there. Then, take one step at a time and take some deep breaths. Everything will get done and your day will be special. What matters most of all is that when it does, you are standing across from your favorite person in the world and that you celebrate that blessing together.



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Dress Shopping

I had mixed feelings about dress shopping. Our goal is not to spend too much money on anything regarding this wedding, but dresses seem to be a high-ticketed item. On the one hand: I wanted the perfect dress. On the other: I'm only going to wear it once!

Arriving at Lowe's Bridal in Brinkley, the information sheet said dresses that need to be ordered needed at least four-and-a-half to five months to come in ... I was shopping exactly four months out from the big day. Thankfully, we were there for the semi-annual sale and I found my perfect dress 50% off.



Photo by Amy Reeves Photography

💰 Average Cost: \$1,000, but you can, of course, find options well above or well below this price.

* Top Tip: Try some things on. Whether planning a whole day to shop for a wedding dress or hoping to wear something quite non-traditional, try some options on for the outfit that you not only want to look good, but you also want to feel good in it as you'll be in it all day and maybe night!

→ Planning Ahead: Plan to look for a dress at least six-seven months out in case the dress needs to be ordered and/or alterations need to be made.

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the Ring

According to a study done by The Knot in 2019, the average cost of an engagement ring is just shy of \$6,000. Not to mention the actual wedding bands.

Personally, this was an item I told Jackson a long time ago that I didn't really want. I thought I might get a tattoo, instead. I was wrong, and it turns out I did want an actual ring, but I still balked at the idea of spending so much money on a piece of jewelry because we like to spend most of our extra funds on travel. I ended up asking my aunt for a ring that belonged to my Nana, and now have a special token that holds both sentimental value and represents my love for Jackson.

For our wedding bands, we're probably going to stick to the Qalo bands that cost around \$25 and are fit for any adventure.

Remember, do what's right for you. If you don't like the idea of spending too much money on these particular items, but still want the traditional token, consider asking for a family heirloom that you could have resized or even remade into rings that are perfect for your own preferences.

Northeast Arkansas has some very talented jewelers who would be happy to help you stay in a budget and still have something that's truly special.

If the rings are very important to you, then spend some time talking about what you both like. Plan to go see a jeweler together and spend some time working out what you want to wear on your ring fingers for years to come. Think about your own personal styles and make a purchase that makes you smile, not anxious about the payments.



\$ Average Cost: \$5,900 for engagement ring and \$1,900 for both wedding bands

* Top Tip: Shop local. Visit a local jeweler and let them help you figure out what's going to look beautiful and timeless for years to come.

→ Planning Ahead: Shop for this item at least three-four months before the wedding. This will give some time for them to be resized and still have them in hand a month or so before the wedding.



Photo by Amy Reeves Photography

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Readers' Advice

Photo by April Ruple, Ruple Photography

Tiffany Jackson

Our wedding was 13 years ago, December 16, 2006. It was important to me to have a unique setting for the wedding, and I love Paragould so much that we decided on the Collins Theatre. There have been several weddings there since, but I'm honored ours was the first. My advice for anyone engaged is to think outside the box! Don't be afraid to try something new.



Jenny Falk

If you have an idea of what you are wanting, get it now! Don't wait until the last minute to get everything because then you will get overwhelmed and frustrated and you don't need that on your special day. I got most of my little things knocked out within the first couple of months and then the bigger stuff came when I had time to save up.

We had a destination wedding so we were limited on funds. So, after we set our date, I started putting back money every week. Like even if it was just \$20. If I ever had any "extra" cash in my pocket, I put it back. I also got a change jar. Anytime me or my husband came home we threw our change in and every month I would take it to the bank to exchange it for bills.

Photo by Laura Johnson, Sudio 33 Photography



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Flowers

My future sister-in-law is a wildly talented florist and owner of Generations Floral Company. We told her we were engaged by asking, "Will you do flowers for our wedding?"

Elizabeth is also my source for all things wedding planning, the one who told me early on, "Weddings take a lot of work and are often expensive, but they don't have to be."

Her work is exceptional, and I do not just say that because she's nearly family, so in this area I intend to simply give Elizabeth a few ideas about what I like and a budget, then let her be the artist she is.

"I want your flowers to speak to you and for you," Elizabeth said and this explains a lot about why her clients rave about her. Her work is stunning and it truly speaks for each bride she works with about who they are.



💰 Average Cost: \$1,500

* Top Tip: Think about how you want your wedding to feel and be sure to communicate this with your florist.

→ Planning Ahead: Find and talk with a florist between six and nine months before the wedding so they can put you on their calendar and plan for your big day.



Photo by Emilee Gill Photography

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Venue

Finding a venue is one reason people plan their weddings so far out. Depending on where you want to get married and in what season, dates can fill up quickly.

My wedding is coming up fast and we don't have a venue, but that's because we are planning to get married on property we or someone we know owns. Even if you're fairly certain your location will be available because it's family or friend owned, or your small home church, still plan to get your date on the venue's calendar as soon as possible.

A venue can be the most expensive part of a wedding and if you'd rather get married somewhere that has special significance to you it can be away to keep your costs low. However, booking with a venue can help save a lot of worries as most are set up just for this type of occasion, meaning plenty of space and proper amenities to host a party.



\$ Average Cost: Dependent on place, but average in the US is \$6,000

***** Top Tip: Get married in a place important to you and/or where will make the best backdrop for photos and setting for this special day.

→ Planning Ahead: This is completely dependent on the place, but you should plan to book a venue at least nine months out from your wedding.



Photo by Amy Reeves Photography

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Cake

Our friends at Something Sweet recommend scheduling ordering your cake at least three months in advance, but six months is optional for ensuring you get on the schedule. Owner of Something Sweet, Tracy Mothershed, also likes to remind brides that it's their wedding day and no one else's.

"It's your day and you should get what you want," Tracy emphasized. She meets with a lot of brides to discuss flavors and design, and has seen too often clients trying to please mother of the bride, mother of the groom, bridesmaids, etc. "At the end of the day you're going to be married to your love, so the little things don't really matter. Just make decisions that make you both happy and don't worry about anything else."

I asked my grandmother to make a cake for us and we'll use the flowers to dress it up. Having my grandma make the cake is a unique way to involve her in our day, but because I don't want her to feel overwhelmed, we've ordered cupcakes from Something Sweet to make sure there's plenty of dessert to go around.

Cupcakes are a great way to make cake easy to serve; they allow you to offer multiple flavors, and they look beautiful, too!




If you want something more intricate done with your cake, hiring a professional is certainly the way to go. Making beautiful, delicious cakes is an art form and finding someone who can pull it off is important so that your cake not only looks great for the pictures, but tastes sweet too!


\$ Average Cost: \$500

* Top Tip: Do what suits you. If you love cake, go big. If you'd rather deviate, work to figure out something that is more ideal for you.


→ Planning Ahead: Bakeries only have so many hands and so much time! To make sure they are prepared to make your cake, order your cake about six months in advance.






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Catering

We had planned to pull all the food together ourselves when Elizabeth gently encouraged me to at least ask around for a few quotes, then imagine how much we'd spend if we were to attempt to do it ourselves. The fact is, the numbers aren't so different.

If you're bent on pulling the food together yourself and saving the money in doing so, you can totally make that happen. I believe in you, as I did in us. But the size of the wedding should play a huge factor in making that attempt or not.

If there's not much difference in cost, what a weight lifted to let someone else make sure food is ready just as the reception is beginning.

The decision about what kind of food also depends on the size of the wedding, as well as the type of venue. A sit-down meal can be a great way to cherish time with loved ones, but sometimes appetizers make more sense as they allow guests to eat throughout the night rather than be seated and served.

\$ Average Cost: Dependent on size of wedding, but plan for \$10-15 per guest.

* Top Tip: If your wedding is small, this might be a place to save some money and have family and friends help you pull the food together yourself!

→ Planning Ahead: If you want to book a caterer, reserve them 10 months ahead of time.



Photo by Emilee Gill Photography



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Decor

A lot of your wedding décor is connected to your flowers, but so many additional ideas can be found in a quick Pinterest search. Lights, candles, ribbon, and photos are just a few ways you can bring an extra flair of personality to your wedding.

We're using photos both from our adventures and our engagement session to decorate, which means we won't throw them away at the end, but use them in our home after the wedding. Since I want our wedding to feel as natural as possible, like we're surrounded by nature, candles will be used to light the space as the natural light of day fades.



Photo by Amy Reeves Photography



\$ Average Cost: \$600

* Top Tip: A Premiere reader pointed out that if you focus on decorating a few areas and making them the focal point, you can save a lot by not trying to decorate every inch of the space.

→ Planning Ahead: Since this goes hand and hand with your flowers, plan decorations between six and nine months in advance.




Photo by Emilee Gill Photography

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Photographer

For us, this is where we're willing to spend more money. I really, really love photos. I take photos when light catches the trees a certain way, when my dog rolls on her back and sticks her feet in the air, and when Jackson sets a beautifully made meal down on our kitchen table ... so you better believe I want to invest in photos for such a memorable occasion.

A few things to think about when selecting a photographer: style, personality, cost.

Photography is an art form and the style of your photographer should fit the style you're going for with your wedding. Look through portfolios and communicate your vision to whomever you trust with this task.

You're going to spend a lot of time on a day you're, hopefully, very much looking forward to, so consider the personality of the person who you'll be hanging out with on this very important day.

And finally, cost. A good photographer is expensive but remember that you're not just paying for the photos. You're paying for all the time this person spent learning their craft and building their skills. They've also invested in equipment and software to help create beautiful, unique images. So, if photos are important to you, be prepared to spend the money on someone who can capture memories that really will last a lifetime.

\$ Average Cost: \$2,000

* Top Tip: Book with a photographer whose style you love and who you think will capture what's most important to you at your wedding.

→ Planning Ahead: Unlike other things your wedding is the only one the photographer can facilitate at that time. This means you need to book them a year in advance if you want to reserve them for your specific date.



Photos by Amy Reeves Photography

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Honeymoon

This is one of the most fun parts about getting married, right?! After the wedding day has wrapped up and you've celebrated with your loved ones, you and your special someone can escape for a vacation, just the two of you.

Honeymoons can be long and grand, or they can be short and simple. Whether you head back just down the road for a quiet night in the next town over or spend weeks exploring new places, remember that this time is about celebrating love with the person you love most.



Photos by Amy Reeves Photography

💰 Average Cost: Completely dependent on where and how long your trip is.

* Top Tip: If travel is important to you, I recommend cutting costs everywhere else and splurging on this time together. If the wedding itself is going to be all out, consider taking a laid-back, closer-to-home option for your honeymoon.

→ Planning Ahead: This depends on where you're going. If planning to road trip or visit a place nearby, no need to think about it too much: Let the breeze carry you. If intending to leave the country make sure to plan several months out (plane tickets are usually their lowest two – two and a half months out from travel dates.)

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f



Lindsey Adams

My main goal was to strive for uniqueness. We made sure Holly Cox was in charge of the cake! Hailey Crader and her husband Alan were a MUST-have for photos and video. Splurge on the photographer 110% because memories may not last forever. Also, thank your mom and dad for the hard work they have done. Try not to freak over the little things and ENJOY your day!

Photo by Hailey and Alan Crader

Megan Renihan

Have a videographer! We go back and watch that video ALL the time! Best thing we spent money on for ourselves. We have been able to share with family who couldn't make it, friends, and can one day share it with our children. It was perfect! Decorating on a budget: Concentrate on decorating specific areas so they are a focal point instead of trying to do it all; you don't have to prom it out. People are there for YOU so let the little things go. I highly recommend writing your own vows. It was a breathtaking surprise for both of us and made the ceremony so emotional and different.



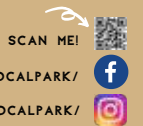
Photo by Brandi Schulz, Key Moments Photography



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ENGAGEMENTS

Sarah Parks & Hunter Caples

Sarah Parks and Hunter Caples have announced their plans to be married on October 4, 2020, at The Silos.

Sarah is the daughter of Pat Jones and Brett Parks, and Jackson is the son of Natalie McNeely and Dennis Caples.

Photography by Hailey + Alan Photography.



WEDDINGS

Beverly DePew & Coty Britt

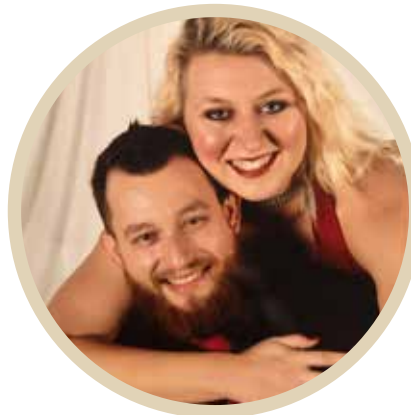
Beverly DePew and Coty Britt were wed on Dec 5, 2019.

Beverly is the daughter of the late Randy and Pamela Myatt of Paragould.

Coty is the son of Tim Britt in Brookland.

They were married by Rob McMillwain of Transformed Church, at their home in a log cabin in the woods surrounded by immediate family.

Photography by Dreams Studio





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Spring Productions Around Northeast Arkansas

BY DEBBIE SPENCER HAAS



Spring is right around the corner. It's a wonderful time to get out and appreciate our local talent. Here's what some of the area schools will be doing for their spring productions:

Westside High School will be performing the musical *We Will Rock You*. The musical is based on the songs of the famous British rock band, Queen. Catch the show at the Westside Fine Arts Center between April 23-25.

Valley View High School will be

performing a musical inspired by the music of Elvis Presley and the works of William Shakespeare. You can watch *All Shook Up* April 16-18 at the Valley View Fine Arts Center.

Greene County Tech High School will also be performing a musical at the high school auditorium April 9-11. *Li'l Abner* is based on the Li'l Abner comic strip written by Al Capp.

Paragould High School just performed *Is There a Comic in the House?* on January 17-18. It will be

doing a spring musical on April 24-25 in collaboration with the choir and band. Planning is still in progress.

Arkansas State University's Theater Department has two upcoming productions. On February 21-23 and February 28-29, it will be performing *God of Carnage* at the Simpson Theater. The comedy was written by Yasmina Reza. It does contain some adult themes that may not be suitable for younger viewers.

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NEA Baptist Expands Physical Therapy in Paragould

NEA Baptist announced an expansion project to Outpatient Physical Therapy at its clinic location in Paragould. In cooperation with Haag Brown Commercial Real Estate and Stonebridge Construction, NEA Baptist will expand the physical therapy portion of the building, adding over 2,200 square feet. This additional space will provide treatment and traction rooms, waiting area, and gym space.

Jeff Ramsey, Physical Therapist at NEA Baptist said, "Eight years ago when the doors to our Paragould PT department opened, we committed to building the best therapy team in Paragould, focusing on patient-centered physical therapy services. Through the exceptional care and hard work of our therapists and staff, we have seen our therapy department grow, exceeding the limits of our current facility. This added space will allow more patients from Paragould and surrounding areas access to quality physical therapy care."

The groundbreaking ceremony was scheduled for Friday, January 24 at NEA Baptist Clinic, 4700 W. Kingshighway in Paragould.



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Happenings ▶▶▶



The AMMC Baby New Year is a girl! Congratulations to Archer Mae Paddock on being the first baby born this new year! Archer was born January 2, 2020, at 8:17 a.m. weighing 7 lbs., 5 oz. She was delivered by Dr. Charles Cesare, and proud parents are Emily Stahl and Jacob Paddock. Baby Archer received a basket of diapers, wipes and gifts from the AMMC Auxiliary, AMMC Wellness Center, First National Bank, Walmart, City Drug, Ashley Burk Photography, Paragould Daily Press and MOR Media/Premiere Magazine. Flowers and ribbon were provided by Ballard's Flowers and Alvin Taylor's Flowers and Gifts.



Diego Ranch, a nonprofit that strives "to empower people with physical and developmental challenges to discover their greatest strengths through the special relationship with a horse" is currently fundraising for a permanent facility. First Community Bank's Horse Sponsorship of \$2,500, equivalent to the funds needed to supply food for a horse for one year, will help them move toward that goal.

Scatter Creek Fightin' Toms
NWTF Banquet

February 20, 2020
Paragould Community Center
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For more information, contact: Kyle Franzen 870.530.2320



The Greene County Chapter of Master Gardeners' newly elected board members for 2020-2021 met recently at the GC Extension Office. From left, Richard Yeazel, member at large; Angela Loveless, secretary; Jessica Beard, treasurer; Susan Youngblood, member at large; Vicki Griggs, vice president and Susan Gilmartin, President.



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The annual Polar Plunge to benefit Special Olympics took place in Jonesboro on January 18 with many more happening throughout the state in January and February. Plungers raised more than \$5,000 at the Jonesboro event alone.

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Get In Gear Fitness Series:

February is American Heart Month and what better way to aid a healthy heart than participating in a community fun run? Yes, running can be fun.

Run for a healthy heart with the Get In Gear Fitness Series presented by Gearhead Outfitters, St. Bernards, and Arkansas State University.

The Healthy Heart 2-Mile will take place on February 8, 2020, at 9 a.m. at the First National Bank Arena in Jonesboro. The annual race has partnered with the Arkansas Sport Show and will start and finish at the arena. Runners will receive free admission to the sport show with visible runner number. Entry is \$35.

Visit the Get In Gear Fitness Series on Facebook and find the Healthy Heart 2-mile event for more info and a link to registration. Or, simply show up and sign up to run on the morning of!

Healthy Heart 2-Mile



Photo by Sam Hummelstein

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2020 Kids' Events

February

8

Family Storytime

When: Saturday at 3:00 p.m.

Where: Craighead County Library in Jonesboro

315 W Oak Ave, Jonesboro

Info: libraryinjonesboro.org

Each Monday & Wednesday Storytime

When: Each Monday & Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.

Where: Greene County Public Library
120 North 12th Street, Paragould

Info: (870) 236-8711

22

Creature Feature

When: Saturday at 10:00 a.m.

Where: Forrest L. Wood Crowley's Ridge Nature Center

Info: hagfc.com

There won't be many sunny days left, so when one comes along you'd better make the most of it. That's what 3-year-old Evan Lupine did on a recent afternoon at the playground. Evan is the son of Julie and Lawrence Lupine of Paragould.



February

EVENTS CALENDAR

7

What: First Fridays at the Forum

When: Friday, February 7 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: The Foundation of Arts - Forum Theatre (115 E Monroe Ave. in Jonesboro)

Info: Grant Camp and Tanja McKay are a Jonesboro-based duo that has been a part of the local music scene for almost a decade. Tickets \$7 for adults, \$5 for children/seniors/students/military. Purchase tickets online or by calling (870)935-2726.

8

What: Healthy Heart 2-Mile

When: Saturday, February 8 at 9:00 a.m.

Where: First National Bank Arena (217 Olympic Dr. in Jonesboro)

Info: The annual race has partnered with the Arkansas Sport Show and will start and finish at the arena. Runners will receive free admission to the sport show with visible runner number. Entry is \$35.

13

What: Going Above and Beyond

When: Thursday, February 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Where: The Glass Factory (313 W. Huntington Ave. in Jonesboro)

Info: Jonesboro Young Professionals is hosting a conference that welcomes special guests SJ Tuohy and David Alan Bubbus, Jr. Tickets are \$50. Call 870.932.6691 for more info.

14

What: The Strand Movie Series: 50 First Dates

When: Friday, February 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: The Foundation of Arts - Forum Theatre (115 E Monroe Ave. in Jonesboro)

Info: Free.

14

What: Valentine's Day Date Night

When: Friday, February 14 at 6:30 p.m.

Where: The Silos (1743 County Road 380 in Bono)

Info: Enjoy an evening of delicious food and great music in one of the most romantic settings in Northeast Arkansas. Entertainment will be provided by Terry Carter and Tony Spinner. **Tickets must be preordered and are available for purchase at thesilosbarn.com.

22

What: Cory Jackson

When: Saturday, February 22 at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Collins Theatre (120 W. Emerson St. in Paragould)

Info: Cory Jackson is an independent singer, songwriter, musician, and all-around entertainer that is making the quest to bridge the gap between today's modern country and the classic sounds of the past with his compositions and performance, both in the studio and on stage. Admission is \$15.

25

What: University Choir Singers Concert

When: Tuesday, February 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: The Fowler Center (201 Olympic Dr. in Jonesboro)

Info: Concert will take place in Riceland Hall. Admission is \$5.

28 & 29

What: Rockin' the Night Away with the Paragould PRIDE Band

When: Friday and Saturday, February 28 and 29 at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Collins Theatre (120 W. Emerson St. in Paragould)

Info: Admission is \$15 and available by calling Richie Williams at 870-926-6225 or email rwilliams@paragouldschools.net, or also available at PostNet and Ignited Gifts.

29

What: Basket Weaving

When: Saturday, February 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where: Crowley's Ridge State Park

Info: Experts and beginners: all welcome! Bring a sack lunch. Registration required. To register, call 870.573.6751 or email crowleysridge@arkansas.com.



For more NEA events visit
ExploreMORnea.com

Stay Tuned

NEA Women



March is Women's History Month and in honor of women who have paved the way for the women of today, we'll be highlighting women leaders from around NEA.

Spring is Near



We hope sunny, warm days are heading our way in abundance. Local event and activity highlights for enjoying spring weather.

Special Section: NEA Seniors



The good news in the NEA Senior community.

On The Cover: The Link Founders
(Matt Cavenaugh and Jenny Powers)
Photo By: Amy Reeves Photography

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