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From The PUBLISHER... DINA MASON

“

Premiere Awards always make a great edition of Premiere. I am asked constantly who to use for what service or where to buy such and such locally, and I refer to these editions constantly! Who knows better than the local Premiere readers who are loyal enough to vote for their favorite “Everything!”

Thank you readers for voting, and local businesses for providing great goods and services, and especially Thank You to those who advertise with Premiere to keep the “Good News and the People who make it Happen” in the hands of readers across Northeast Arkansas.

July is always our Patriotic edition and this year the timing could not have been better. The Wall That Heals made its appearance in Paragould and we were lucky enough to connect with a few of the honorable Vietnam veterans to get their reactions and thoughts on the events.

On the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, we took a road trip to Walnut Ridge to hear a World War II veteran tell his story ... he was on Omaha Beach, and what a story he told.

I love an image I have seen several times on social media: “Honor all the veterans by being an American citizen worth their sacrifice.” Just think of the world we could create if we all did that!

”

Glen Sain Ford

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I N B E T W E E N

By Lindsey Mills

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“**I**’m supposed to...” You finish the sentence. At one point or another we’ve all thought this. It might have been in relation to a career, a social obligation, a belief system, a task, or something else.

Whether it was pressure from society as a whole or from an individual we dearly love: someone made us think there was a correct next step. Expectations were laid across our shoulders. A plan was set out for us.

Somewhere along that path of fulfilling what we’re “supposed to do,” we begin to wonder: Is this something I want to do? This thought then prompts the question, “What else would I do?”

We get so used to being who we are “supposed to be” that we lose touch with figuring out who we want to be. Of course, the reality of figuring out who we want to be is a lifelong process. You will never realize, all of a sudden, “OH. Everything makes sense now. I get it.”

You will constantly be learning about yourself. You will constantly be battling the difference between living into someone else’s expectations, and living into your own identity. You will, until the day you die, be trying to figure out who you are. And that’s okay. Just make sure you keep looking for yourself rather than living for someone else.



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COMMUNITY INNOVATION: FARM CREDIT MIDSOUTH

By Caitlin LaFarlette

Farm Credit Midsouth marked a new beginning June 13 with the grand opening of its new facility in Paragould.

The official groundbreaking of the branch was June 28, 2018, and the new location at the intersection of highways 49 and 135 will give customers from Greene and Clay counties better accessibility.

“The facility is state of the art in technology, audio and video, that can be used by our customers,” Patrick Lenderman, vice president and branch manager, said. “The building has 15 offices, two conference rooms and a large training room that will be used by the board of directors, customers and the agriculture community.”

According to Lenderman, no other facility in Greene County has a training room specifically designed with the agriculture community’s use in mind. CEO James McJunkins said in a press release that the building was intentionally designed to be twice as large as other branches to ensure there was space to accommodate current and future growth.

Customers of FCM are both owners and operators and Lenderman said some are even fifth generation row crop or cattle operations.

“We pride ourselves in being the only lender that specifically provides capital to the agriculture community in the form of operating, equipment and real estate loans,” he said.

FCM developed in 1917 when the Jonesboro Federal Land Bank was chartered. In 1933, the organization applied for a portion of Greene County. Lenderman added that the Jonesboro PCA was chartered in 1933 and began making loans in Greene County but there was no “owned location” until 1965.

“Some of the first PCA loans in Greene County were made in a local feed store,” Lenderman said.

Today, FCM is a \$1 billion local, farmer-owned Agricultural Finance Cooperative that serves more than 3,200 farmers and rural homeowners in Clay, Greene, Craighead, Mississippi, Poinsett, Cross, Crittenden, St. Francis, Lee and Phillips counties in Arkansas. Headquarters are based in Jonesboro with branches in Corning, Paragould, Jonesboro, Osceola, Marion, Wynne and Barton.



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Left to Right: Top left: Kirk Brinkley- Commercial Loan Officer, NMLS# 539769; Mike Weaver — Market President, NMLS# 1142609; Shawna Boggs — Branch Manager, NMLS# 1656578; Bottom Left: Charitti Garner- Mortgage Originator, NMLS# 1051962; Kelly Roswell — Commercial Loan Officer, NMLS# 1162196; Crete Rhodes — Branch Manager, Crystal Carter — Branch Manager

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LOCAL FESTIVAL

On June 14 and 15, Gamble Home Furnishings, Hijinx Family Entertainment Center, Suspense Entertainment, and Back Beat Music came together to create "Local Festival" at Shop Local Park. The event was created to showcase Northeast Arkansas' artists, artisans, businesses, and musicians while inspiring, motivating, and bringing the community together. Musicians were featured all day at multiple event stages, and activities were planned throughout the day including sunrise/sunset yoga with Hailie Allen, a poetry slam hosted by Nicole Sylvia, a Kids' Zone with games and a bouncy house, vendor booths and food trucks. The event was a celebration of community, and there are plans for another in 2020.



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GCHGC HERITAGE FAIR

The 2019 Greene County Historical and Geneological Society Heritage Fair was both a successful and informative event. After a welcome from President Jim Burgess, Kim Richardson, from Southern Heritage Genealogy, led off with explaining how to use collateral research to solve genealogy problems and then followed with Mind Mapping for genealogy research. Kim is from Oxford, Mississippi. Callie Williams spoke with information on the National Register of Historic Places: records, research and careful reading. Callie

works with individuals and groups across the state to identify, research and nominate historic structures to the National and Arkansas Register of Historic Places. Russell Henry concluded the event by discussing the Sloan Cemetery of Greene County. It is a Paleoindian Dalton cemetery dating back approximately 12,000 years. Russell did volunteer work for Dr. Dan Morse, who excavated and assists Dr. Julie Morrow, ASU Station Archaeologist, and her staff on different projects.



Kim Richardson



Russell Henry



Callie Williams

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Keeping Your Pets Cool in the Summer

By: Dr. Kristin Sullivan

Summer weather is wonderful, whether you are lying poolside or splashing in the sprinklers out in the yard. However, with the heat comes its many dangers. Here are just a few tips to keep your pet cool and avoid common dangers during these hot and humid Southern summers.

First, and foremost, never leave your pet in a parked car! This cannot be overstated. It is best for them to stay home in the air conditioning. Even a few minutes in a hot car can be deadly to any animal.

When playing outside it is important to be mindful of the humidity. It may not seem too warm out, but if the humidity is high then this can quickly become dangerous. Dogs pant to cool themselves – done through a process of the moisture from their lungs evaporating into the environmental air; however, if the air is saturated (high humidity), then they are unable to adequately “blow off steam” and can very quickly overheat.

It is so important to provide plenty of fresh, cool water and shade when your pet is outside. A great option would even be a kiddie pool filled with cool water for your pet to lie in in a shady part of your yard — just be sure to change the water out at least daily.

Pupsicles! Frozen, dog-friendly treats and snacks can be great to cool off your critters. Best to talk to your veterinarian for safe and healthy recipes.

Excessive heat can lead to heatstroke. Heatstroke can be fatal very quickly. Watching and being mindful of these common signs can save your pet’s life. These signs include: heavy panting, profuse salivation, incoordination, lethargy, purple gum and tongue color, rapid heart beat, high body temperature (normal is 99 – 102.5 F), seizure and unconsciousness. If your pet is showing any of these signs, take them to your vet immediately! Heatstroke is often fatal, but the earlier it is detected and treatment implemented, then the better your pet’s chances of survival.

If you have any additional questions, contact your vet or Dr. Kristin Sullivan at ARPets Hospital in Brookland.



skin cancer is the most common form of cancer

Now is the perfect time to start practicing sun-safe behaviors and get your skin checked for suspicious moles and lesions. A typical visit to Paragould Plastic Surgery for a skin examination, is about 15 minutes. This examination could detect skin cancer in its early stages.



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PET OF THE MONTH

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By Christi Young Speer

“Presley is a 9-year-old English Bulldog. My son got her while he was in high school; when he went to college she became my dog. Presley loves to be in the kitchen while I’m cooking. If I happen to drop something she’s right there to snatch it up so I don’t have to. Eating is her number one thing to do, with sleeping a close second. Soccer balls are her favorite toys and she enjoys car rides in the front seat only. Backseat car rides are not enjoyable for her; if you put her in the back she protests loudly!

Presley also likes to grab golf balls as her boy knocks them around in the back yard. Unfortunately, she doesn’t get to keep those. Although Presley is a big girl, she loves to find a sunny spot or get as close to the fireplace as she can to soak up the warmth until her family ruins it all by making her move to cool off. Presley’s family consists of her boy and his wife, Seth and Alexis Dearing; her human sister, Kamryn Dearing; a dog sister and brother, Olive and Walter; and her mom and dad, Christi and James Speer.”

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Allen Davis:

CELEBRATING RETIREMENT

By Caitlin LaFarlette

Allen Davis has spent more than 30 years at the Greene County Extension Office but after July 2, his schedule will consist mostly of farm work and lake life.

Davis is celebrating retirement after two years at the Cooperative Extension Office in Poinsett County and an impressive 36 years at the Greene County Extension Office. July 1, 1981, marked the beginning of his career as a county agent in Poinsett County before transferring to Greene County on July 1, 1983.

"The last 36 years of my career has been serving Greene County clientele," he said. "On August 1, 2003, I was promoted to the Greene County Extension Agent Staff Chair position that I presently hold."

Every day held something new for Davis, who said phone calls and office visits never end but one day could be spent making crop calls while another would send him on farm visits.

"We even get several requests for assistance with lawns, trees and horticulture problems," he said.

Davis also enjoyed assisting livestock producers with management needs and provided services such as bull evaluation clinics, calf vaccination schedules and even sheep shearing days for the Northeast Arkansas area. Yet the Greene County 4-H Livestock Program is a special part of Davis' job he cultivated in his time at the extension office.



"It has been very rewarding to see those youth grow and excel in their livestock project areas," Davis said. "Now I have several new 4-Hers involved that are children of many of my first 4-H youth."

Davis added the program grew from six participants in 1983 to over 100 youth exhibiting livestock projects nationwide.

When retirement kicks in, however, Davis plans to work on his farm and check off a list of things he has wanted to do for years. There are always fences to repair and everyday maintenance that becomes hard to do with a full-time job. There will also be time for relaxation; Davis plans to take more trips to Lake Norfolk with his family.

"After I get caught up I may consider working part-time if the right job opportunity comes around," he added.



Outside of work, Davis raises beef cattle, a business he started working in while still in high school in 1971. He raised his four children on his farm and introduced them to the benefits of the 4-H and FFA programs. After retirement he plans to help his family with the grandchildren but the outstanding staff he worked with and opportunities to learn something new will always be with him.

"The thing I'll miss most about my job is the people," Davis said. "Working in Greene County for 36 years has allowed me to develop so many lifelong friendships that I will cherish forever."



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VA COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will launch its new and improved community care program June 6, 2019, implementing portions of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (the MISSION Act), which both ends the Veterans Choice Program and establishes a new Veterans Community Care Program.

The MISSION Act will strengthen the nationwide VA Health Care System by empowering veterans to have more options in their health care decisions.

Under the new and improved Veterans Community Care Program, veterans can now work with their VA health care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care. Eligibility for community care does not require a veteran to receive that care in the community; veterans can still choose to have VA provide their care. Veterans are eligible to choose to receive care in the community if they meet any of the following six eligibility criteria:

1. A veteran needs a service not available at any VA medical facility.
2. A veteran lives in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

3. A veteran qualifies under the “grandfather” provision related to distance eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program.

4. VA cannot furnish care in a manner that complies within certain designated access standards. The specific access standards are described below. (Important: Access standards are proposed and not yet final.)

- Average drive time to a specific VA medical facility
 - 30-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health and noninstitutional extended care services.
 - Sixty-minute average drive time for specialty care.

Note: Average drive times are calculated by VA using geo-mapping software.

- Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility
 - Twenty days for primary care, mental health care and noninstitutional extended care services, unless the veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
 - Twenty-eight days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.

5. The veteran and the referring clinician agree it is in the best medical interest of the veteran to receive community care based on defined factors.

6. VA has determined that a VA medical service line is not providing care in a manner

that complies with VA’s standards for quality.

To help employees prepare for this transformation and others under the MISSION Act, the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center is dedicating the month of May to readiness.

“We are honored to reaffirm our commitment to America’s veterans,” said Dr. Patricia Hall, John J. Pershing VA Medical Center Director. “Our staff is steadfast in providing health care that meets the needs of our veterans at the right time and place.”

The VA MISSION Act:

- Strengthens VA’s ability to recruit and retain clinicians.
- Statutorily authorizes “Anywhere to Anywhere” telehealth provision across state lines.
- Empowers veterans with increased access to community care.
- Establishes a new, urgent-care benefit that eligible veterans can access in the community.

“We understand any transformation of this size and on such a rapid timeline is not without risk,” said Hall. “We are aiming for excellence in this effort, and we will continue to tweak and improve the process.”

The John J. Pershing VA Medical Center serves approximately 22,000 local veterans every year.

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RIVERS OF RECOVERY REACHES NEA:

Levi Crawford

By: Richard Brummett

Levi Crawford certainly knows life on both sides of the coin. As Marketing Director for Rivers of Recovery he understands the importance of helping walk injured combat veterans down the road to healing. As a former attendee of the program, he can witness first-hand as to the rewards to be gained.

Rivers of Recovery (ROR) provides wounded veterans a chance to “get off the couch and get outdoors,” Crawford said. It specializes in the rehabilitation of combat veterans suffering with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), minor Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI), stress, anxiety and depression. It combines outdoor recreational activities with instruction on the self-treatment of symptoms and proves to veterans that life is not restricted by psychological or physical disabilities.

“From an outside perspective or a quick glance,” Crawford said, “it just looks like a fishing trip. But a lot of research has been done to put the program together and the results are amazing.”

Through Rivers of Recovery, veterans are taken in small groups -- usually six to eight people -- and given an all-expenses-paid getaway for a fly fishing trip. Not only is it an enjoyable experience for the guests, it has shown to be excellent treatment for the wounded soldiers.

“We do fly fishing because a lot of people have never done that,” Crawford said. “Take me, for instance. I was a participant. I almost lost an arm but when you put someone like me out there they do a lot of movements and before long their mind is thinking about learning a new skill, about accomplishment. They might spend an hour or two learning a new skill and then think, ‘If I can do this, what else can I do?’ It’s about reprogramming the brain because it’s easy for someone with serious injuries to just retire and rarely get out, and to clam up. Bottling anything up is not good at all. That leads to depression, and also it’s physically bad to not get out.”

As for his own recruitment into the program, Crawford said his lifelong dream of being in the military led to his eventual involvement. At the age of 17 he joined the U.S. Army National Guard as a Combat Engineer, beginning his training as he finished high school. After graduation from Valley View he went to Fort Leonard Wood for basic training and AIT, and his unit was then deployed to Iraq in 2006-2007 with the mission of finding roadside explosives.

“I worked on route clearance,” Crawford explained. “We went out and found IEDs and roadside bombs. When I got back to the states I did some advanced training with weapons systems and then in ‘09 I was deployed in Afghanistan and then ... May 20th of 2010 ... I got hit by

a rocket propelled grenade. I was in an RG, a specialty vehicle, but I was blinded in both eyes, had shrapnel from the knees up, and burns, and it blasted the left side of my face. It’s all reconstructed now but I’m still blind on the left side.

“I almost lost my right arm, but they decided not to take it off while I was over there, and then I came back and spent right at a year in Walter Reed. I was 23 or 24 at the time and I never wanted to do anything else. I was military all the way and didn’t really have what you would call a Plan B.”



He said it was his good fortune to have ROR reach out to him. “I went on a trip with them and it did me a lot of good,” he recalled. “I came back and then just fell back into retirement. I was 25 and restless. I had never really done anything else. What was I going to tell someone I was good at in a job interview? ‘I’m good at shooting weapons and finding bombs and detonating them.’ There’s not much of a job market for that, especially not in Jonesboro. So I thought, ‘That trip did me so much good, why don’t I try to help others?’ And here I am.”

As a non-profit organization, Rivers of Recovery relies on philanthropic contributions to sustain its unique program to our country’s veterans and their families. Because of financial restraints, ROR can only fund one Arkansas outing per year right now. A trip consists of four full days of fishing, with guests housed at an accompanying lodge. A professional cook is hired to provide meals and a qualified guide -- one for every two veterans -- leads the way. Each participant is given a “beginner’s pack” fly rod, a fishing license for the particular state and is “pampered the whole way through,” Crawford said. “The national average for a trip is \$2,500 (per person) and I think the last one I did was about \$11,000. So you can see, we need and welcome donations. The non-profit world can be pretty cutthroat.” Rivers of Recovery is a 501(c)(3) organization, making donations tax deductible. Donations can range

from something as simple as paying \$35 for one fishing license to contributing enough to fund an entire trip for a veteran. Crawford said many people ask if their donation will be sent out of state, and he said one can emphasize they want their money to stay “right here in Northeast Arkansas, if that’s what they want.”

He is available by phone at 678-294-7104 to discuss all the particulars of being involved with the program or in making a donation, and can also be reached at levi@riversofrecovery.org. The program’s web page is www.riversofrecovery.org.

“It’s a great program,” Crawford said. “A four-day trip turns into a lifetime of friends. And that’s important to anyone who needs this program.”

RESPECT FOR OUR VETERANS: Leroy Green

By: Richard Brummett

Leroy Green made the drive from Jonesboro to Paragould to see The Wall That Heals for one simple reason. "I'm just a veteran who cares about the men who lost their lives over there. If I get a chance to go again, I'll probably go again," he said.

The Wall, a miniature version of the Vietnam Veterans memorial in Washington, D.C., was erected at the Greene County Fairgrounds during the last days of May and into early June. Green, who was drafted into the Army in 1967, was in the 25th Division Infantry "looking for the man for a year. I was lucky; I never got wounded," he said. He was in Vietnam from October of 1967 to October of 1968, and was discharged from the military in 1969.

A study of the history of the area where he served -- Cu Chi, north of Saigon -- emphasizes his thoughts about his good fortune. The area was known for the enemy's habit of building tunnels for use to combat better-supplied American and South Vietnamese forces. Communist guerrilla troops dug tens of thousands of miles of tunnels, including an extensive network running underneath the Cu Chi district. Soldiers used these underground routes to house troops, transport communications and supplies, lay booby traps and mount surprise attacks, after which they could disappear underground to safety. To combat these guerrilla tactics, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces trained soldiers known as "tunnel rats" to navigate the tunnels in order to detect booby traps and enemy troop presence.

"It's an experience I wouldn't wish on anyone," Green said of his Vietnam tour. "It's an experience I never want to go through again. I was going to serve my country; I wasn't going to run to Canada or anything, but it's not something I would necessarily want to live through again."



This was not Green's first time to see The Wall. He has visited it in Kennett, Mo., and in Marked Tree, and has seen the actual Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. "It's a very, very moving experience," he said. "Thirty-five men died just from my company. I really can't describe what it feels like other than just very, very moving. In just one year, 35 men and in just one company. It's just a shame so many young men had to die to get their names on that wall. And for nothing.

"When you look at it and see all those names ... well, there's a story behind every name," Green added. "You'll get some tears, you really will. Each time is different. You get some different memories and feelings. But I'll always go if I can."

Green, now 72, made a living in the electrical supply business upon returning home from the Army before retiring and "enjoying every minute of it. I waited until I was 70 years old to treat myself to something I'd always wanted. I bought a Corvette ... black interior ... and in a little over a year I've put 19,000 miles on it. I've kept it busy.

"But as for The Wall, I imagine we all feel something different when we see it. I just know I go out of respect. A lot of people didn't come back from over there. I was one of the lucky ones."



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WALL THAT HEALS:



They came for any number of reasons ... curiosity, duty, respect, remembrance. But the important thing is that they came, and came by the thousands to visit The Wall That Heals during its brief stay in the city of Paragould.

The miniature version of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in the nation's capitol was situated at the Greene County Fairgrounds from May 29 to June 2 and event organizers estimate that more than 10,000 visitors came through the gates to see The Wall and accompanying displays. Included on The Wall are the names of the more than 58,000 men and women who died during the Vietnam War and countless guests took time to find those they knew and maybe make a "rubbing" of their names. Others came to see the majesty of The Wall, still more to learn a bit about the history of the times, a most difficult era for Americans.

Don Foster of Paragould was a member of the United States Marine Corps, serving a tour in Vietnam from September of 1965 to October of the following year. He is also a member of the Veterans Support Association which was instrumental in getting the display to Paragould and in lining up the many volunteers needed to put it together, man the educational stations and provide security. Because of that, Foster spent as much time as anyone at the fairgrounds during the exhibition interacting with guests.

"Two or three different people thanked us for bringing it here," he said, "because they said they never would have gotten to see it otherwise. When you get old like me, you can't go to Washington, D.C., that easy. For a lot of people who will never get to go to the real wall, I think maybe it brought some closure or relief. The fact is, a lot of them knew friends who got killed over there and it meant something to them.



VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

By: Richard Brummett



"I even had a couple tell me they couldn't go," Foster added, "just couldn't do it. One said he sat in the parking lot and just couldn't go in and I said, 'I understand.' For some of us, you almost feel obligated to go because I had friends who got killed, but I didn't."

He said it would be next to impossible to thank everyone who volunteered -- and all help was appreciated -- but the efforts of the VFW to work security three of the four nights certainly stood out as noteworthy, as did the jobs done by the Independents Riding Club and the Christian Motorcycle Association, and the feeding of the workers by Marco's Pizza and the Greene County Republican Women.

Foster said his own emotions are difficult to put into words. "It's hard to describe," he said. "My granddaughter said, 'There's one on the wall who you were with when he got killed?' And I said I was, and it made me remember Operation Texas. Twelve of us left out on platoon and 10 got killed. I had to tell her, 'That's just part of war.' But you can't go to that wall without putting your finger on a name and seeing a face that goes with it."

He told the story of a fellow soldier whose wife was pregnant when they left out and learned when they were in Okinawa that he had a son. "He was real excited, you could see it in his face," Foster recalled. "Then he said, 'I'll probably get killed and never see him.' His name's on the wall. I could go on and on."

Foster said the Veterans Support Association does work year-round to recognize local and area veterans, spending a lot of time in nursing homes and assisted living centers. "When we do those things I always have good vibes, feeling good about what we did," he said. "This was good, too. This helped a lot of people deal with a lot of feelings."





RESPECT FOR OUR VETERANS:

Larry King

By: Richard Brummett

Like countless others who visited The Wall That Heals during its stay in Paragould, Larry King experienced mixed emotions. By his own admission he was impressed by the magnitude of the display, thankful for its arrival and the educational opportunities it provided, and pensive when recalling the feelings surrounding his time in the Vietnam War.

The Wall That Heals is a three quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veteran Memorial that is designed to travel to communities throughout the United States. It has been displayed in nearly 600 communities throughout the nation, spreading the memorial's healing legacy to millions and while it was situated at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Paragould, King and thousands of others walked the grounds for a variety of reasons.

The 73-year-old King is a veteran of the United States Navy and said his time in Vietnam "wasn't right in the middle of the worst of it. I was in the Navy from January of 1966 to October of 1969. I went to boot camp, then to Great Lakes for three months, then to Vietnam for a year."

A resident of Greene County, King said he spent most of his time on a Landing Craft Mechanical (LCM), a craft designed for carrying vehicles. They were used to land troops or transport machinery and equipment connected to amphibious maneuvers. "We hauled people, cargo, trucks," he said. "I was in Da Nang, in the harbor most of the time. About the last two months I was in the DMZ just before I got out. I didn't see a lot of action. We got shot at a couple of times. Mortars, but they missed us."

During the war, Da Nang was home to a major air base that was used by both the South Vietnamese and United States air forces. The base was considered one of the world's busiest airports during that time, reaching an average of 2,595 air traffic operations daily. For most U.S. troops the approach to Da Nang airfield formed their first impression of Vietnam, and it was here they came to take a break from the war at the famous China Beach.

But trips up and down the waterways were anything but restful. The enemy was known to take cover along river banks and fire at vessels, like the ones King helped man, frequently. "We got shot at a time or two when we were going up and down the river but they missed," King recalled. "It was not every day."

However, something that is "every day" is the fact that King is more reflective and possibly more grateful for the outcome of his experience today than he was as a 21-year-old sailor. When asked if he ever thinks about his good fortune to come home he said, "Yes, yes, I do. In '66, I guess, is when it really ramped up. You kind of still think about it a lot. Something like that happens, it stays on your mind.

"Different things will sometimes bring it back. Songs ... CCR, *Bad Moon Rising* and a couple of more. But it just is what it is. I hope we did a little good. Everyone had a job to do to make sure you didn't get stuck out there. It takes a lot of people to figure out logistics and to keep things going. Sometimes that doesn't show. It took us all to see that any of us got back."

Upon returning to the Stanford area after his discharge from the military, King worked at Emerson Electric for six years before deciding to start farming in 1975. He had married his wife, Glenda, just before leaving for Vietnam and today they've been married for 53 years. He is still farming today and said, "I probably will 'til the day I die, I guess."

The impact of the impressive memorial display was not lost on King. "It's the first time I've seen it. It's pretty impressive. Like I say, I've never been to Washington to see the big one," he said, "but there's a bunch of guys I kind of know. Names ring a bell. Some were killed and you know where they are on it. It's sad, really.

"We weren't much welcomed when we came back home and landed in Los Angeles. From there I went to Memphis and it wasn't so bad there. A lot of people had to stay in L.A. and I think they had it pretty rough. Kind of looks like maybe people have changed their minds about what we did. This is a nice turnout. Like I say, I hope we did a little good. There's a bunch of names on there that fought for everyone here."

Deloy Lawson: *D-Day Remembrance*

By: Richard Brummett

For today's 17-year-olds, stories about the D-Day invasion of Normandy in World War II are just that ... stories handed down by relatives or collected via books and movies. But for 17-year-old Deloy Lawson of Paragould, the action transpiring on Omaha Beach 75 years ago was very real.

Now 92 years old, Lawson was only 17 when he and thousands of other U.S. forces faced heavy resistance while trying to make it ashore at Omaha Beach, a day on which there were over 2,000 American casualties as Allied troops attempted a daring mission to rout German forces. By day's end, approximately 156,000 Allied troops had successfully stormed Normandy's beaches with more than 4,000 losing their lives in the invasion. Thousands more were wounded or missing.

On June 6 of this year, the 75th anniversary of the fateful day, Lawson was the featured speaker at Walnut Ridge's Wings of Honor Museum as those in attendance paid honor to the military men who stormed the beaches

in efforts to secure and maintain freedom. The Normandy Invasion -- or D-Day -- has been referred to as the beginning of the end of World War II in Europe.

Deloy J. Lawson was a Seaman 2nd Class in the United States Navy when he was "charged with operating, or assisting in operating, a landing craft depositing soldiers on the beach. They told us when they first interviewed us about the invasion you never use the words 'you might' or 'you may' do it. You MUST do it. The last thing he told us was, 'You get this boat on that beach, PERIOD.' And we did."

He said he thought he was prepared for battle, even though he was "just a kid and didn't know as much as I thought I did. I go back to the time I graduated up in Chicago and they asked me, 'Would you like to go to a service school or combat?' I said, 'Combat, that's what I come for.'"



He spent five days training at an amphibious base in Maryland and eight days in the Navy yard at Philadelphia before heading to New York City preparing to be shipped out to war. Just a few weeks later he and the others were stationed in England, learning some more of the finer points of operating a vessel, all the while knowing that the Germans were bombing the area at the time. The next thing he knew, they were on their way to Normandy.

"The operation was so huge we couldn't believe it," Lawson recalled. "Everywhere you looked there was boats of all kinds. In fact, there was a total of 5,000 boats of all kinds, but you're talking about five beachheads. And when we started, we started on June the 5th,

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at night. We ate breakfast about 3:30 in the morning and for some of them, that was their last meal."

With ships firing their large guns away on either side of him, Lawson said the time marched on to 6:30 when the first wave of soldiers tried going ashore. "We couldn't even see them, we were back behind," Lawson said. "I don't think any of the first wave survived. In fact, the first two or three waves. And finally, when they got down to the 25th wave the machine guns were gone and we didn't have to contend with that battery of artillery.

"We were carrying men from the 1st Division, real experienced men that had been over there for four years. And I remember one, and he called me 'Son,' he was probably 30 years old and I couldn't keep from gawking and looking and watching these shells, and he said, 'Son, I know what you're doing enjoying watching those shells and feeling the water splash your face, but one of those has got your name on it.' So I got down, and I didn't do that anymore."

When it finally came time for Lawson's ship to make its charge, he said it was suddenly given orders to stop. "We wondered why we were just sitting there," he said, "and we found out later why. Of the first wave, there was so many of them killed -- I think 2,500 -- they had to get them buried because we didn't have any room to lower the ramps. That was a day of reckoning. It was hard for us to imagine that that much death is laying around here in front of you."

After the initial bombing, Lawson was at Omaha Beach for five months. "And there was no 8-to-5 hours," he remembered. "We hauled materials, men and ammunition. We hauled as long as we could see. We couldn't burn any lights much at night on account of the air raids, but I could back up in a corner and sleep if I had the chance. We didn't change our clothes and we didn't have water to shower. That sounds awful, but that's the way we lived. We had no choice."

Less than a week after the surge, on June 11, the beaches were fully secured and over 326,000 troops, more than 50,000 vehicles and some 100,000 tons of equipment had landed at Normandy.

Later, when crews were being cut back, Lawson was sent back toward the states. He spent a few days guarding German prisoners aboard ship before returning to America. After a short leave, Lawson was assigned to an amphibious landing ship in Chicago, eventually sailing across the Pacific. His ship would dock a night in Honolulu before going on to Okinawa and Tinian Island, from where pilots carrying the atomic bombs took off.

He was 18 when he finally got back home and began a career with Clay County Electric as a lineman and then a construction and maintenance supervisor. He lived most of his life in Corning before moving to Paragould. "I've had a great life," Lawson said. "I can't complain. I'm glad I'm here to tell about it. When I think back, I think about hour to hour the constant pressure. Will that next one be for me? When we left the English Channel for that fight, several of us thought on that trip that night, 'This will probably be our last day on this earth.' For some, it was. But I'm proud I was part of what we did, and lived to tell you about it."

Museum volunteer Randy Story introduced Lawson and set the stage for the magnitude of D-Day. The Normandy Invasion involved 132,000 Allied soldiers, 25,000 Allied sailors, 15 nations, 200 war ships, 6,939 vessels, 4,126 landing boats and 47 convoys.

The invasion resulted in an estimated 10,500 Allied injuries or deaths, with 6,000 of those being U.S. military, and approximately 10,000 German injuries or deaths.

"I've had a great life," Lawson said. "I'm proud I was part of it and that I'm able to sit here and talk about it." Lawson's family noted that he just recently began sharing about his



D-Day experiences when speaking to some young students.

"It would be good if every 18-year-old boy would serve a year in the military," Lawson said, adding that it would teach them respect and how to take orders and obey. "I think what helped me during those times was that we had some pretty strict parents. We followed orders. We had a strict father, but he was fair."

Upon his release from the service, Lawson didn't seek immediate employment but said instead "I put in a wasted year. I was never a drinker, except at that time."

Then, he woke up and said, "I've got to do something different."

Lawson said he lived most of his life in Corning before moving to Paragould.

"I was a marathon runner for 25 years," he said, adding that he and members of his family had been active in sports.

Several of Lawson's family members, including his younger brother, attended the D-Day anniversary event with him.





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Keep this edition around as your guide to highly recommended businesses in our area! As you can see, most are locally owned or have locals who care enough to give their customers the kind of service that earns them this much-deserved recognition.

Please shop these Award Winning businesses! Let them know that you saw their names in this section and that they have been recommended by our readers.

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- July 22 | 7:00 PM | Bluegrass Monday with The Kody Norris Show
- July 27 | 7:00 PM | A Time to Dance presents "Noah's Ark"
- August 3 | 7:30 PM | Reba Russell
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A few weeks ago I attended a softball banquet in Benton. It was the annual Hall of Fame induction ceremonies and it gives us old-timers a chance to tell and retell stories from our playing days while witnessing the addition of the newest members to the club.

One of this year's inductees, a fellow around my age, walked swiftly and steadily to the front to receive his ring and one of my longtime friends and teammates observed, "Really, if you're our age and you don't limp, did you really even play?"

We laughed but also related. After decades of playing sports there are numerous body parts that no longer work or, if they do, they have most likely been surgically repaired. I was going down a mental list the other day, starting near the top of my head and reeled off ... six stitches above my left eye (basketball); broken nose (basketball); shoulder surgery (football); torn rotator cuff (baseball/softball); broken rib (basketball); two broken fingers (basketball); broken wrist (softball); two ruined knees (mostly basketball); broken ankle, stress fracture in foot and broken toe (all basketball). So, some may ask, why in the world would a person play? The answer: Because it's fun.

Injuries aside, those of us who have spent a lifetime on the fields and the courts would without question do it all again, given the chance. However, my best friend, who was my roommate when we played basketball together in college, agreed recently that neither of us could pass a field sobriety test. He wasn't sure he was following my train of thought since I've yet to take my first drink, but then I said, "Have you seen what they make those guys do? No way either of us could stand on one leg."

Then he got it; too many sprains, strains and breaks for a longtime player to stand steadily for very long. That got me to thinking about how my interaction with a state trooper might

go if I should be pulled over.

Officer: "I pulled you over, Mr. Brummett, because you swerved across the center line back there."

Me: "Yes, I know and I'm sorry. But this is my wife's vehicle and I was trying to change the radio station but when you look over there it's like a NASA launch screen and I was trying to find some classic rock and roll without sending missiles toward North Korea by mistake. I apologize."

Officer: "Would you mind stepping out of the vehicle and standing on one leg for me while extending both arms parallel to the ground?"

Me: "Sorry, can't do that."

Officer: "Because you've been drinking?"

Me: "No, sir, because one ankle is so permanently damaged that I had to wear corrective shoes for a year to try and get it back to its original factory setting, and the knee on the other side has incurred so many torn and strained ligaments that standing there like the Karate Kid is simply out of the question."

Officer: "I don't suppose you can extend your arms and touch your finger tip to your nose?"

Me: "No way. I am experiencing what they call frozen shoulder on the left side and I have a torn rotator cuff on the right. However, I can

tie my shoes if you'll let me sit down."

Officer: "Have you taken any drugs today?"

Me: "Yes, I have, but I have a prescription for them."

Officer: "And exactly what have you taken?"

Me: "No idea. One starts with an A and other one starts with an S. That's all I know."

Officer: "Because you've taken too many, perhaps?"

Me: "No, because I take one for blood pressure and one for something else, but they don't name them Blood Pressure Medicine and Something Else Medicine, they name them Alammarammamammaoxin or Slappyitybappitytenocine, so I just take them like they tell me to and go on about my business."

Officer: "May I ask how you got in such bad shape?"

Me: "Too many years as a point guard and an infielder."

Officer: "Why didn't you tell me you were a ballplayer? That explains everything. You change that radio station while we're stopped here, and then you go on and have a nice evening."

Me: "I will, as long as you don't try to make me move anything."



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The team at Anchor Packaging understands this well, so they have committed to taking all precautions and following all proper steps to ensure they go home at the end of every shift. "Safety is about going home to family," Richard Gassaway stated before the presentation of the Five Million Hour Award.

"When we walk in, along the wall, there are a bunch of hand prints about two feet tall," Jeff Wolff, the President and CEO of Anchor Packaging explained to the guests attending the award celebration on June 10th. These handprints, he went on to say, are those of the children of each employee on the job. What better reminder of why it's important to take every single safety precaution?

In the years that have passed since the Million Hour Award's conception in 1989, only thirty five companies have received the recognition five consecutive times. Anchor Packaging intends to continue to six million, seven million, and beyond.

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SHOCK AND AWE ME

By Anthony Childress



If I closed my eyes, the setting could have easily been a late 1970s spring night at home, playing the air guitar to some of iconic rock band KISS' riffs by founding member and lead guitarist Ace Frehley. In reality, I was seated next to the Space Man (Frehley's vaunted character as part of the group's glam image) at just past midnight in a backstage loft at Nashville's Marathon Music Works.

The opportunity to spend a few timeless minutes with Ace had presented itself about two months before his May 3 performance in the Music City. I had ordered a ticket to the concert, but decided to price the VIP package, thinking it would be far out of my budget range. Call it an impulsive mid-life reaction, but I entered the required information, clicked on "yes" to complete the transaction and did not think twice about whether I had made a purchase that might take months or longer to fully pay off. How could I let this chance float by while I remained safely ashore? Sometimes in life, you have to listen to your gut and ignore what your brain is desperately trying to say.

I kept thinking about the night I discovered KISS and how Ace was the member I gravitated to from the start. It was the winter of 1976 and the band's performance of the anthem "Shout It Out Loud" appeared on the American Music Awards. My parents, themselves barely older than 30 at the time, seemed more than a bit disturbed at the spectacle

of four larger than life characters adorned in face paint and elaborate costumes churning out an ear-splitting tune that was literally driving fans wild and crazy (borrowing from another classic tune, "Rock and Roll All Night"). I was mesmerized and started begging them to let me buy a KISS record. I suppose their kneejerk reaction just added to the allure for an eight-year-old boy.

Over the next three decades, I bought a pile of albums, singles, cassettes, eight-track tapes, and CDs, not to mention posters, trading cards, shirts, and the like. I guess Mom and Dad figured there was no point in trying to dissuade me. They were right. I joined KISS lip sync "bands" at school and even church. Eventually, I became the drummer in a KISS tribute band in Jonesboro, Exciter. The one thing my parents steadfastly refused to let me partake in was seeing KISS on stage. The summer I turned 12 was just after the album *Dynasty* came out and my heart was set on being at the Memphis concert that same month. I foolishly thought my folks would give me a ticket as a birthday present. I did receive the new album, but alas, no ticket to see my heroes in person. It would be another 17 years before I joined the loyal foot soldiers in the KISS Army, on July 10, 1996, one day before I turned 29.

After that magical night, I saw KISS live 14 times, including the band's late February show in Memphis. Seeing Ace as a solo act and meeting him, though, stands far above virtually all of the group's performances. Why? His stage persona, unique solo stylings, and authenticity since leaving KISS a second time have made Ace the face of not just his former band, but of rock and roll more broadly. He's a survivor, recovering alcoholic, and making some of his best music here and now.

The concert had long since ended when I stood in line with other VIPers. He had treated us to a buffet of solo hits, like "Rock Soldiers" and "New York Groove," along with KISS classics "Detroit Rock City," "Deuce," and "Cold Gin." I was exhausted mentally and physically, but when the door opened and I stepped over to sit down with Ace for him to sign his autobiography *No Regrets* and a couple of other items for me, it was as if time had taken me back to that night in 1976. I smiled broadly and shared a couple of stories with him. The guitar legend reminded me that folks in the Bible Belt used to burn KISS records before and after concerts throughout the South. I assured him that mine had been in safe keeping all along.

Ace grinned, let out one of his vintage cackles, and we posed for a couple of pictures. I had rocked and rolled all night with my favorite musician.





DAY TRIP FOR ALL: Saddler Falls

By: Lindsey Mills

Just about an hour and a half northwest of Jonesboro along the beautiful Spring River sits a scattering of cabins and the perfect spot to access the water in the heat of summer. As temperatures ramp up, the water calls to those seeking to cool off and relax, or play and explore the area.

Every Thursday between two hundred and five hundred trout are released into the river on the Saddler Falls property, making the destination perfect for fishing Friday through Sunday. Fish right off the bank or wade into the refreshing waters to cool off. After a long work week, kick back in a lawn chair with a cold drink and dip your toes in the chilly water. Pack a picnic lunch to enjoy along the riverbank. Sunbathe on a warm summer day, then wade into the emerald waters to cool off. Bring the whole family or make it a solo trip to unwind.

The property, pet friendly to responsible pet owners, is easily accessible and open for overnight visitors and day guests alike. Make a day trip out of the visit for just a \$6 day pass or stay the weekend in one of the cabins that go for \$55 a night. If bringing your four-legged family members, be respectful of other visitors and always clean up after your pet. Other rules to keep in mind are: no glass allowed, campfires must be contained within the designated areas, and clean up all trash in addition to pet waste.

Take Highway 63 West towards Mammoth Springs. About eight and a half miles after passing through Hardy, turn left on Many Islands Road. Follow the signs for Saddler Falls Resort: right down River Oaks Trail and right again on Saddler Falls Road. You can find out more about Saddler Falls on Facebook.

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Info: libraryinjonesboro.org

9

Blast Off! STEAM Projects

When: Tuesday at 3 PM

Where: West Poinsett County Public Library in Weiner
240 Greenwood Avenue

Info: libraryinjonesboro.org

18

Tommy Terrific's Wacky Magic

When: Monday at 3 PM

Where: Marked Tree Public Library
102 Locust St.

Info: libraryinjonesboro.org



Amelia Kisner sported a patriotic look while visiting The Wall That Heals during its Paragould visit. Amelia, 3, is the daughter of Robert and Heather Kisner of Manila.



Haley & Tyler

By: Haley Jewell

“Tyler and I went to the same school in fifth and sixth grade, but I guess you can say we actually met at Hays Grocery where we both worked. We worked together for a year before we even spoke to each other. He eventually started showing me attention and giving me ‘the look.’

“Our first date was at the Osceola Christmas Parade; my little brother and sister were in it. Everything was going good until my crazy step-aunt and uncles spotted me. I was so embarrassed and thought he’d never talk to me again, but did, as you can see. After the parade we rode in a horse and carriage which was pretty fun, although I was too shy and didn’t say a word the whole time we rode.

“Funny moments always happen in our house. We have many stories, but my most favorite story has our two pups in it, Kujo and Khloe. Tyler works 12 hours a day and when he gets home I’m ready for some sugarr. One day he gave me a longer kiss than usual and the dogs were not happy that Daddy wasn’t giving them attention. In mid-kiss we both felt something wet on our cheeks and it was the dogs licking us, wanting all the attention. We both just laughed and gave our dogs all the love.

“Tyler and I are meant for each other. We have so many things in common and the main one is independence. Neither of us like others helping us; we like to go and get for ourselves. We both have a love for animals, fishing, and just having fun. Every day spent together is a good day.

“Although we are meant for each other, we have quite a few opposites. One major thing I love is sports. Duke basketball and Cardinal baseball

are my favorites. Tyler thinks both sports are boring, but watches them with me anyway. What Tyler likes -- and I don’t as much -- is his taste in music. I’m more country and sometimes rap, he’s more pop and R&B. We take turns choosing songs.

“Our most memorable moment and engagement story run together. Tyler did an awesome job when he proposed. We went on a double date to Memphis with good friends of ours. We spent the day at my favorite place eating my favorite food, Graceland and BBQ. Later that day we went to Bass Pro Shop to see how beautiful Memphis is at night. Going up the elevator wasn’t the problem; my walking on clear glass seeing straight through was a problem. It literally took 30 minutes to get me to the edge so Tyler could propose. I felt so bad for being such a hassle when he was trying to better our future. I said YES and on our way home he played Elvis’ (my favorite) song *Can’t Help Falling In Love*, and that’s what I walked out to on March 16, 2019.

“Our wedding colors were red and white. We chose those colors because it was so easy to match and red is a symbol of love. We got married at Cedar Ridge Venue in Paragould and it was honestly the best. I couldn’t have asked for a better place for my special day.

“March 16, 2019, was by far the best day of my life. I married my best friend, spent the day with family, and ended the night with my new hubby and our friends. My parents, Paul and Darla Atchley, made my day amazing and I felt so special the entire day. That night was probably my favorite of all. All of our friends stayed and we had a good time together playing games and talking. It is definitely a day to remember and always will be!”



Photography By Amy Reeves Photography

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HAPPENINGS

CHIEF OF STAFF SELECTED



Mike Downing, who led one of the nation's elite economic development organizations at the Missouri state capitol, has been hired by Mayor Harold Perrin as the City of Jonesboro's chief of staff.

"There are precious few people with his type of background, and I am thrilled to have him join our administration."



This drawing presented to Dr. Ziegler is a copy of a drawing by BRTC student Crystal Andrew who was in the Fall 2011 drawing class taught by Dr. Sandy Davis-Baltz. The framed drawing also had a plaque on it, which read as follows:

This artwork commemorates the service and dedication of Dr. Jan Ziegler to Black River Technical College and on June 13, 2019, promulgates the Dr. Jan Ziegler Pay Back to Go Forward Scholarship

A replica of the framed art with a plaque will be on display in the Project REACH center on the site of the Rice/Upshaw House at Dalton. In addition, individuals may purchase a copy of the print with the inscription to Dr. Ziegler on the back.

A small reception of BRTC employees and BRTC officials wished Dr. Zeigler well. She plans to spend time with her family and continue her travels abroad. Dr. Ziegler will also teach a Holocaust class for BRTC in the fall and lead the monthly reading club Serendipity in the upcoming academic year.



B.E.E.S. SENIOR CITIZENS AWARDED \$2,000 DONATION FROM SAFECO INSURANCE® CHANGE AGENTS PROGRAM

Partnering together for nearly 20 years, Block Insurance has volunteered with B.E.E.S. in various avenues including hosting donation drives for games that help keep senior's minds stimulated like crossword puzzles and word searches, and sock drives for B.E.E.S. to deliver to homebound seniors with their Meals on Wheels program. The awarded \$2,000 funds will assist with their weekday meal program and their transportation services driving seniors to and from doctor's visits and every day errands. Based on the social media attention their charitable efforts garnered related to education, Whitney Thompson of Block Insurance was one of two winners selected nationwide for a Change Agent award.

COMMISSION APPROVES DISCOUNTED LICENSES FOR DISABLED VETERANS, PROPOSES RELAXED SEASONS ON PREDATOR SPECIES



Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
2 Natural Resources Drive • Little Rock, AR 72205 • www.agfc.com

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission voted unanimously to create a new Disabled Veteran Lifetime Combination License that would be available at a reduced rate for resident military veterans meeting certain criteria.

The new license will cost \$52.50 and will give full hunting and fishing privileges to any disabled veteran who has a service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or higher or a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or higher and is a recipient of the Purple Heart medal.

A video of the meeting is available at www.youtube.com/user/ArkansasGameandFish.

TUGA'S PROJECT SURPASSES GOAL

The final results for the first year with the Tuga's Project showed a total of over \$35,600 was raised in the month of May in support of the services of the NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief. A special thank you to all of the businesses who participated by hosting Tuga donation sites and to all who donated, as well as the planning committee.





LIVING A Better Story

By Jared Pickney

Let it be known to you therefore, that through this man [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything... Acts 18v38-39

A few weeks ago, I visited my Grandfathers' graves. James Presson and George Pickney were both WWII veterans who fought hard for the freedom we enjoy. Standing at their graves, I was prompted to give thanks for their life and legacy.

More than that, as I fix my eyes on the headstones bearing the names of my Grandfathers, I am reminded that the bodies of these men are, well, still in a grave. Despite the fact both of my Grandfathers survived the war, death, like it will for all of us, eventually caught up with them. And now, a decade after their final breath on earth, their lifeless bodies remain six feet under ground.

I thank God for Grandpa IB (James) and Grandpa George, but visiting their graves reminds me how limited even their legacy can be in the grand scheme of trillions of years of cosmic time. It also reminds me of

the contrast with a Middle Eastern blue collar worker whose monument isn't a house or a temple made with hands, or even a simple grave-marker. It's instead a borrowed tomb that isn't filled anymore.

This empty tomb is, itself, a declaration of independence. By raising Jesus from the dead, God declared him (and all who are in him) to be free from death, free from the curse, free from Satan's accusation. I suppose you could say that Jesus was endowed by his Father with certain unalienable rights, among these life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness... except that these blessings don't end in a graveyard.

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CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education
Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

It was late 1983 and I carefully looked at the possibilities of classes at Crowley's Ridge College for the spring semester. The typical classes of English, math and history dotted the schedule, but the offering of a Buffalo River float trip as an elective stood out as a course that would fit my interests. David Goff, who also taught other courses at CRC, would be leading the trip and guiding us down the Buffalo.

Late in the semester several CRC students headed across the Ozarks to the Buffalo. We arrived at the river and carefully loaded our gear into the rental canoes and began our three day journey. We had carefully packed our gear, including extra clothes and sleeping pads and bags, into green pickle buckets we had gotten from the cafeteria. These buckets would hopefully keep our gear dry should we swamp our canoes.

Johnboats were very prominent in my youth, but canoes and the techniques involved in guiding a canoe were much different than sculling an aluminum flatbottom through cypress trees. A classmate named Jena was my canoeing partner and the first day went well as we navigated mild rapids and waterfalls. We made it to a spot in the river Mr. Goff called Jim's Bluff and set up camp. Thankfully, most everyone's gear was still dry but there were scattered articles hanging on limbs trying to soak up heat from our fire.

We enjoyed a peaceful night on the riverbank and a few of us were up early the next morning for fishing. We then enjoyed a good shore breakfast and headed out on a hike to see some

of the area. The spring landscape was beautiful and the day hike made the supper of Hobo Dinner foil-wrapped steak feel wonderful to the stomach.

Another peaceful night of sleep left us well rested for the final day of floating. Though Jena and I had fared pretty well in the canoe, our abilities were put to the test as we rounded a curve in strong current and quickly approached two large rocks. A little panic set in and the canoe began to spin in the current and I knew a 15-foot canoe would not fit between rocks 12 feet apart. The current drove us into the rocks and the canoe tilted. I went over one side while Jena exited on the other. The water was cold, but luckily it was only about waist deep and we were able to quickly get back to our craft and get it righted. We waded the canoe to shore, dumped the water, reboarded and made the rest of the trip with no other mishaps. We were all dried out but tired by the time we reached the takeout point but it had been a wonderful weekend on the river.

The Buffalo River starts its life in Newton County and winds for approximately 150 miles through Searcy, Marion and Baxter counties before dumping into the White River near Buffalo City. The river almost met the fate of becoming a lake, but in 1972 it was designated as the Buffalo National River. Approximately 135 miles of the river flow through banks that are protected on each side by the National River status of the area. The remoteness, beauty and thrill of exploration draw thousands of visitors to the Buffalo each year.

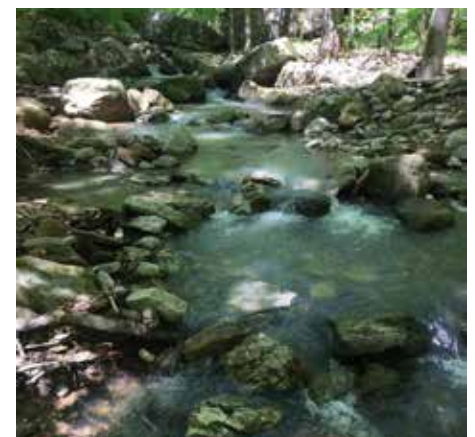
There are commercial operations permitted by the National Park Service that operate

along the river that provide canoes, kayaks or tubes and can also help with the logistics of floating the river. There are also many public access points that can be utilized for launch or takeout. Hiking is popular in the Buffalo River area and there are many designated trails that provide great opportunities to explore what the area has to offer.

Nature calls many to the river, but there are also other destinations that draw people to the area. Hawksbill Crag, Hemmed-in-Hollow, Glory Hole and Boxley Valley are just a few of those. Several different kinds of wildlife inhabit the area, including the possibility of seeing elk, bear, deer and many species of birds. Other destinations could include the Ponca Elk Education Center or any of the shops or restaurants in the small towns along the river basin.

Whether it be for an overnight trip on the river, a hike, or just a drive in the area, the Buffalo National River area has lots to offer. It would be a great destination for an Arkansas vacation.

By the way, I got an A in the class, as I think everyone else did. That was another step in my path to an outdoor related career that inspires me to get out and enjoy what this wonderful state has to offer. I hope to see you out there!



July

EVENTS CALENDAR

1

What: Learn How to Shop Healthy on a Budget

When: Monday, July 1st from 10 AM-2 PM

Where: Harp's Grocery (1609 N Thomasville St. Pocahontas, AR 72455)

Info: Learn how to shop healthy on a budget with a free quick tour and \$10 grocery card (while supplies last). Sponsored by UAMS, Harp's, and Alpha Gamma Delta Foundation.

19

What: Hope for the Future: A Caregiver Workshop

When: Friday, July 19th from 8:30 AM-2:30 PM

Where: St. Bernards Auditorium (505 E. Washington Ave. Jonesboro, AR 72401)

Info: Free event hosted by Alzheimer's Arkansas with information on caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's.

19-20

What: The Ultimate Oldies Show at the Collins

When: Friday, July 19th and Saturday July 20th at 7:00 PM

Where: Collins Theatre of Paragould (120 W. Emerson St., Paragould, AR 72450)

Info: The Ultimate Oldies Show at the Collins, 7:00pm

The Ultimate Oldies Show featuring music of the '50s, '60s, and '70s, 7:00pm at the Collins. General Admission: \$15.00 (Balcony Only) Reserved Seating: \$20.00

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

graphics@mormediainc.com

23-25

What: Adventure Day Camp at Crowley's Ridge State Park

When: Tuesday-Thursday, July 23rd-25th, 2019 from 9am-4pm daily

Where: Crowley's Ridge State Park (Highway 168N in Walcott)

Info: This three-day camp is available to children ages 13-15. During this adventure camp, the children will join a park interpreter to make nature and historic crafts, learn about local wildlife, work on primitive survival skills, kayak, swim and ride pedal boats at the beach, and much more! Due to limited space, reservations are required and must be made before July 15th. For more information or to register, call (870) 573-6751 ext. 2 or email the park interpreter at elizabeth.kimble@arkansas.gov.

27

What: A Time to Dance presents "Noah's Ark"

When: Saturday, July 27th at 7:00 PM

Where: Collins Theatre of Paragould (120 W. Emerson St., Paragould, AR 72450)

Info: A Time To Dance presents "Noah's Ark"

An original dance program written and choreographed by Elizabeth Miller.

29-Aug. 1

What: Black River Tech 2019 Youth Technology Camp

When: July 29th to August 1st from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

Where: Black River Tech

Info: This FREE 4-day Youth Academy is open to all students entering grades 9-12 and will focus on the technologies in our local industries. The participants will be exposed to plant tours, hands-on workshops, and classroom activities all focusing on

the specific industry and technology. Participants will explore how manufacturing has changed over the years to the lean, clean, high skill, high-tech industry it is today with hands-on activities. Apply now! Space is limited to 20 students, application deadline is July 19th.

30-Aug. 1

What: Discovery Day Camp at Crowley's

Ridge State Park

When: Tuesday-Thursday, July 30th-August 1st, 2019 from 9am-4pm daily

Where: Crowley's Ridge State Park (Highway 168N in Walcott)

Info: During this fun-filled camp, the children will join a park interpreter to make nature and historic crafts, learn about local wildlife, travel to and explore Lake Charles State Park, swim and ride pedal boats at the beach, and much more. They will also be traveling to the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum and Educational Center for more fun-filled and historical activities. Due to limited space, reservations are required and must be made before July 15th. For more information or to register, call (870)573-6751 ext. 2 or email the park interpreter at elizabeth.kimble@arkansas.gov

Aug. 1

What: Phi Mu Fashion Show

When: Thursday, August 1st at 11:30 AM

Where: Arkansas State University Cooper Alumni Center

Info: All proceeds go to Arkansas Children's Hospital. Tickets are \$30, corporate sponsors are \$350 for a table of 8. For tickets, call (870) 932-5125. Tickets will not be sold at the door due to limited seating.

Stay Tuned

What's in store next month?

National Wellness



Celebrating National Wellness Month.

Back to School



Getting prepared for the next step.

Local Football



Local football teams and their supporters.

On The Cover: Leroy Green
Photo By: Dina Mason



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