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*Ann Phillips*

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# From The PUBLISHER... DINA MASON

“

2020. The New Year is here and those of us who have gone through the scare of the 2000 doomsday may be a little disappointed in the lack of hype associated with this space age-sounding turn of the decade, but now is the time to make it a great one.

MOR MEDIA, Inc., will start 2020 with a new platform -- ExploreMOR NEA -- and we are so excited to share! This site will be where we gather all the information on events, products and places you will want to Explore! We get phone calls and emails and are asked at remotes and events for our “references,” or the questioning person assumes we

know what is going on in the Northeast Arkansas communities we serve all the time. So, ExploreMOR is where we will be compiling information and creating a brand of “The place to go to find what to EAT, Where to SHOP, and what to do — PLAY.”

Of course, we will use all MOR MEDIA sources to drive traffic there -- just as we can to drive traffic to your Facebook, website or other digital platform -- as well as drive them to your door!

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”

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We want to thank you, Premiere readers and advertisers, for making it possible for us to continue to share the good news and stories about the people making it happen. Here's to another year of growth and to finding new ways to share good news.





# LIVING A Better Story

BY JARED PICKNEY

Around the New Year, everyone is talking about starting over, taking hold of their lives, setting new goals and getting “back on track.”

There is actually something beautiful about that. We all know we’re not quite right, and we long to start over. There is a common grace to the calendar that allows us to do that, and for that reason I actually enjoy this time of year very much.

But there’s also a dark side. We waste our God-given desire to be made new on resolutions that have no power to change us. We make ambitious, sweeping resolutions; and in less than a month our hopes for change are quietly discarded.

So here’s the challenge for 2020. Don’t make resolutions -- make habits.

Unlike resolutions, we actually become our habits. There are no changed lives outside of changed habits. And if we want to actually change, we need to take a sober look at where our habits are leading us. This is why the great Aristotle once said, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

With that in mind, I have listed some healthy habits, both daily and weekly, that can help form you more into the man or woman you long to be.

Healthy Daily Habits: Kneel in prayer

three times a day, eat one meal with others, start your day with Scripture rather than checking your phone, turn your phone off for at least one hour.

Healthy Weekly Habits: Spend one hour in face-to-face conversation with a friend, keep media consumption to four hours or less, fast from something for 24 hours, rest from your work for 24 hours.

That being said, researchers tell us it takes 66 days for a new behavior to become a habit. So start now. Stay with it. And don’t grow weary in doing good. Like an acorn to an oak tree, your little habits, over time, will grow into something bigger and more beautiful than you can imagine.

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# IN BETWEEN

BY LINDSEY MILLS

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It's that time of year again: Goal setting and resolution making are filling up social feeds and personal journals. Many of us are looking back at what 2019 held and forward to what 2020 will bring.

Sights are set high, resolve is made firm, and motivation is turned up to 10. But in a few weeks the hubbub from the holidays will die down and we'll be in the thick of the winter season, which always seems to make our couch the only reasonable place to be.

I'm thinking a lot about how to overcome the post-New-Year-excitement and keep that enthusiasm burning into February, March, and beyond. As I ponder, I'm reminded that standing at the finish line of our goals requires a lot of hill-climbing, a lot of teeth-grinding, a lot of mini successes and a lot of downright failure. Looking back at previous endeavors, I also think it takes a good bit of coaching, encouragement, and butt-kicking from those we trust most.

I once interviewed someone for the blog and asked her what it took for her to take the leap toward her dream of traveling.

Her response was that it was actually her boyfriend who pushed her into the experience of a lifetime.

I think mentors come in a lot of different forms; they're our friends, our significant others, our parents, our coaches, our teachers, and our co-workers. They are the people who see what we're capable of and who we want to be and then they cheer for us, support us, challenge us and push us to be that kind of person.

As we set our goals this year, I hope we will consider the kind of people we want to surround ourselves with. I hope we find mentors who will help us reach our greatest heights. I hope we find people willing to push us off our ledges or climb the mountains with us. Because life is not lived on that starting line full of promises and pledges of what we WANT to do, it is lived in the baby steps, the moments of doubt, the days of triumph and also the giant setbacks. It's the walking in-between, and I hope we can all find the kind of people willing to walk with us through the good, the bad, and the very best.

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BY LINDSEY MILLS

Kitchen, culture, and community are what new Downtown Jonesboro restaurant, Roots, is all about.

"Kitchen; we want it to be a modern dining experience. Culture; a blend of the places that we both come from. And community; we shop as local as possible for the freshest ingredients possible," said husband and wife duo Karl and Paula Lowe.

The Lowe duo has ample experience in the restaurant industry, both in management and in curating cuisine. They met in Paula's home country of Ecuador and were spending time visiting Karl's family in Arkansas when he proposed. It was when the couple found out they were pregnant that they decided to stay in the Jonesboro area and open their own restaurant.

Roots is a blend of cultures, an idea sparked by the realization that both Ecuadorian and American cuisine use a lot of the same ingredients (hominy, pork, corn and rice to name just a few) but use very different techniques to prepare them.

"Funny story," Paula shared. "We actually went to a buffet and hominy was being served and I thought, 'Interesting. That's such a traditional dish in Ecuador.' Then I realized there are so many things like that. What is used for grits here, we use to make dough for empanadas. So, we just thought, 'Hmm, okay, there's a lot that could be done here.' We mix the cultures and blend the techniques."

The restaurant is also very environmentally conscious, making specific choices – like no paper napkins and biodegradable to-go boxes – with sustainability in mind. "Restaurants' impact on society is very big, so little things make a big difference," said Paula. "It's worth it. As a restaurant we have the power to make a change, and so, why not?"

While not, by definition, a farm-to-table restaurant, the business does pride itself on gathering as much food as possible from local resources and adapting its menu to reflect the seasons. So, the big question is: What's on the menu for January?

"Lots of seafood," Karl said. "The winter seafood in Ecuador is amazing. The Gulf

# Restaurant Insight: Roots



Stream comes closer to the coast and the fish, the shrimp, the crab ... the flavor is intense and there's such an abundance."

For the U.S. side of things, the menu will offer more comfort foods: fried chicken, mashed potatoes and green beans. "Lots of pickles and canned items," Karl added. "Things we canned ourselves and are saving for the winter months."

Everything served at Roots, including drinks from the bar, is made from scratch. "I think the challenges you face when making everything from scratch makes you more creative," Paula shared.

"We make our own juices, syrups and bitters, which is a lot of work. Each batch of bitters takes up to a month to make. But the end result is worth it. We take pride in what we do."

Check out the restaurant and its ever-changing menu this month, next, or both. One thing is certain, and that's whenever you visit you can expect the experience to change with the season. Roots is located at 303 S. Main St. in Downtown Jonesboro. Visit [rootsrestaurant303.com](http://rootsrestaurant303.com) for more info.

# "You got me."

## Overbay named Grand Marshal

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

By his own admission, Omer Overbay was a bit nervous after being summoned to a mandatory meeting at the office of Greene County Sheriff Steve Franks.

Overbay is a reserve deputy with the department and had no idea the meeting was actually a cover to get him to the office on time to be named Grand Marshal of the 2019 Paragould Christmas Parade, a secret kept by family, friends and co-workers. "Blown away," Overbay said more than once, testifying to the success of the surprise.

Main Street Paragould Executive Director Gina Jarrett, who presented Overbay with a commemorative plaque, said she received numerous emails nominating him for the honor and when the selection committee met, Overbay was the clear choice.

One who prefers to remain behind the scenes, Overbay is well-known for his work efforts with the Department of Human Services and his many hours of volunteering to help with various projects in and around Greene County, most of them centered on making life better for young people.

"You all got me," he said, joining well-wishers for cake and snacks provided for the event. "You got me."

The Christmas Parade with the theme "An Old Fashioned Christmas" was set for December 10 in Downtown Paragould.



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# College Tips by a College Student



BY SARA BROWN



Another semester has come and gone, and the time is coming up fast for the next one to start. By now, you've probably gotten your final grades back for the semester, and you may find that you didn't do as well as you'd have liked, or maybe you did! If you didn't, don't fret. With a little time to go before the semester starts, now is the perfect time to start enhancing your study skills for the semester ahead.

Tip number one: Schedule time to study into your daily routine, almost as though it's another class you're taking. This will make studying a commitment, and you'll be more likely to do it, but only if you take it seriously. If you've scheduled studying for a specific time every day, you have to stick to it, otherwise, it won't make a difference.

Tip two: Don't wait until the last minute to start studying for exams. Research has shown that you learn best when you study your notes starting on the day you took them. It can be a bit time-consuming and feel a bit excessive, but it'll save you a lot of time in the long run because you won't be cramming for exams at the last minute. Not only that, but you'll also be more prepared when it comes time for your exams.

Tip three: Try a study app. I personally use Quizlet, a make-your-own flashcard app/website to study for quizzes and exams, and it works well for me. There are lots of other apps out there, both free and paid. Find one that works well for you and use it to your advantage.

Tip four: Organize a study group. For some, studying with others is the best way to learn. By working with others to study, you're being held accountable for knowing some of the information before you come into the group. If you think this type of studying would work best for you, don't be afraid to reach out to your classmates. Chances are good that your classmates will be eager to meet up to study, and you may even make some new friends along the way.

And finally, tip number five: Don't be too hard on yourself. College is difficult, and the fact that you're still toughing it out and doing your best says a lot about you. Just stay focused and do the best that you can, and you'll be fine.

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## Family First

Jake McMillon is a family man – that is, he has a family, but he's also decided to make a career out of helping other families.

A Greene County Tech alum who completed his undergrad work at A-state, Jake later attended medical school at UAMS before returning home for his family medicine residency. "This is home," Jake said. "We were always going to come back home."

Jake decided to take the route of family medicine because the field is so broad and he enjoys the scope of getting to see a bit of everything. "I appreciate the opportunity to establish a patient when they're young and then follow their care throughout their life," Jake said. "You really get to establish a connection with the patients."

Jake and his wife Katelyn have been married eight years and have two young boys, Ezra and Slate. When he's not at the office, Dr. McMillon is probably hanging out with his boys, fishing or simply watching the animals on their property in the country.

*"I'm just here to help, however I can," Jake said. "I work hard to do what's right by the patient, and not just what's easy. I'm here to listen, and here to help."*

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Premiere contributors spent a lot of time talking to people others in the community consider mentors for this month's issue, prompting me to consider some of my own.

The dictionary tells us a mentor is an experienced teacher or adviser or, when using the word as a verb, it means to advise or train ... especially a younger colleague. When I consider those guidelines I think of my parents, who used my love of sports to push me down the avenues I needed to take.

One summer day when I was 10, I checked the family mailbox and found the normal envelopes with little windows on the front, advertising circulars and other miscellaneous items but my eyes were snared by an issue of *Sport Magazine*, addressed to me. I sprinted down the sidewalk and back to the house, shouting as I shared the good news with others. "Mom!" I yelled, "Look! And it's addressed to me!"

I thought the Miracle of the Magazine ranked right up there with Moses and the burning bush or the Virgin Birth, but Mom told me she had subscribed for me because she thought I might enjoy reading the feature stories. It didn't occur to me she had been trying for weeks to get me to take a more active interest in reading, knowing that doing so would lead to many more opportunities for academic excellence. She did not have to point out to me that while I started every summer morning -- and I do mean every morning -- by grabbing my baseball glove and a tennis ball to throw against the concrete block wall at the back of the house, my sister chose to curl up on

the couch and read. Sometimes I would come back inside after a couple of hours of imaginary baseball games, hot and sweaty and ready to lie in the floor in front of the box fan, and I would ask my sister what she was reading.

"The encyclopedia," she would answer.

"Why?"

"Because I want to know things," she said, and I regretted that we had not yet invented words like "nerd" and "dork" because that is precisely when I would have tossed one out. But now, with the personalized copy of *Sport* in my hands, I, too, was an avid reader. I took in every baseball and basketball story between the covers and read them start to finish but the key thing was that by reading, I was learning a lot about sentence structure, proper use of words and phrases, and increasing my vocabulary. When I didn't know how to pronounce a word I would go to Mom and seek her help, and she would say, "You try it first."

Sometimes I was right, sometimes I was wrong but by making me sound it out for myself, she knew the correct pronunciation would most likely stick with me. The same held true for definitions; when I came across a new word and asked her what it meant she would direct me to the dictionary to look it up, again knowing I would probably remember it if I researched it myself.

When I was entering high school Mom said it was time to give serious thought to what I wanted to do for a living when I grew up. I was sort of taken aback; I assumed she and everyone else in town knew I was going to be a professional baseball player. When I reminded her of that, she said she hoped I could but it was always wise to have a Plan B, and maybe even a Plan C and a Plan D. I said if I couldn't play baseball I supposed I would want to write about it, and that's when she guided me toward classes that would enhance my writing and speaking skills. It turned out she had a better idea of what I would be suited for

than I did, and at the first chance I took a job as a sportswriter and have been writing ever since.

Like many sons, I considered my father my hero. Mine was a traveling salesman and was often gone from home Monday-through-Thursday nights. Because of his work routine he missed many of my sporting events over the years but I recall a specific incident when he helped direct my path without my even knowing. I was nine and it was a Monday, and my Little League baseball team had a game at 6 p.m., which meant I had probably had my uniform on since about 10:30 that morning. Not long before it was time to go to the park, I saw Dad's car pull into the driveway. He hadn't made it very far that day and decided to come home and see my game. When he entered the house he asked if I wanted to go out back and play catch for a few minutes. Did I ever! Playing catch with Dad and a game, all in the same day? Heaven!

Dad was a big-time smoker back then and our routine that evening went like this: I would throw the ball to him, and he would pull it in with his catcher's mitt. He would throw it back to me, then with his right hand remove his cigarette from his mouth and exhale a cloud of smoke; I'd throw the ball back, he'd catch it one-handed, reinsert the unfiltered Camel cigarette between his lips, and make his return throw. It was after one of these interactions that I said, "How old do I have to be before I can smoke?"

Without hesitation Dad flicked the cigarette to the ground, rubbed it out with his shoe and said, "Well Rich, if you want to be a ballplayer, don't ever pick one of these things up. They'll kill you. And don't ever drink alcohol; that'll ruin a ballplayer."

Point taken. I still haven't smoked a cigarette, have never taken a drink of alcohol and it's not because I still think some major league team might draft me; it's because my dad said those weren't ways I needed to go. I had a couple of expert mentors, even if I didn't know it.

# NEA Artist



BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Greg Garrison's interest in creating began as a child when he and his sister crafted dirt tunnels, forts, environments for turtles and crawdads, and even an award-winning snow sculpture blue whale with a functioning water spout. Today, Garrison is in his 27th year of teaching, with over a decade of passing on his knowledge of art to students.

"I still love to explore and art is a byproduct of that," he said.

Garrison actually began his teaching journey as a coach. He said both of his parents are retired educators and he followed his father into the coaching side of it for nine years. After that he tried remodeling for a year and during that time he took a Tony Couch Watercolor Class through the Fine Arts Council of Paragould.

"I was pretty horrible at it but I learned a lot about the process, and really enjoyed

the way Tony Couch presented the materials," Garrison said. "I wanted to learn more, so my young daughter Rachel and I started a weekly class with local artist Connie Tedder."

In the class with varying skill and age levels, each student was allowed to progress at his or her own speed -- a method Garrison still uses with his students today. He studied for and passed his Praxis, and added Art to his teaching certificate. He taught K-12 Art at Biggers-Reyno for two years before moving on to Paragould Junior High School for nine years.

"When Joyce Bland retired about five years ago I moved to Paragould High School and continued teaching art to 9th-12th graders," he added.

When Garrison isn't teaching he still uses art for enjoyment. His sketchbook, camera and sometimes even carving knives go with him when he travels. At

the beach he sketches, carves or crafts sand castles and even in the duck blind he takes photos or sketches.

"Creating art is not my ultimate goal when I go on an adventure," Garrison said. "Instead, it enhances the experience and allows me to become more in tune to my surroundings."

Back in the classroom, Garrison's most important job is not necessarily teaching mechanical skills, but creative problem solving skills that can be employed throughout life.

"I can give one assignment to an entire class and each student can approach that assignment in a different way," he said. "The most rewarding part of my job is when a student discovers that he or she is really good at something and they continue to build and develop that skill into an amazing piece of art. The next best thing is when students just enjoy making art no matter their skill level."



# PET OF THE MONTH

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BY TRACI COLLINS CRAFT



If I could describe Maggie in three words it would be sweet, calm, and laid back. She never gets too excited over much ... she is her same calm, lovable, collective self all the time. The only thing that gets to her is when it storms outside; she becomes very nervous, fidgety, and paces.

We have learned to let her inside with us when the weather is stormy because she seems to try to "outrun" the storm, which has resulted in her getting lost a few times. But this hasn't happened since we started bringing her inside during bad weather.

We adopted her from Mountain Home after her owner passed away around three years ago. We've had many dogs, but Maggie has one of the sweetest dispositions of any we have ever had. We can have a stressful day, come home, look at her and she instantly has a calming effect on us.

She loves to shake hands and loves affection.



During crowd situations, she will go off to be by herself in a calm place – she doesn't prefer crowds. My kids are crazy about her, especially my girls!

Maggie has a routine once a week of going to her grandma's house with my daughter, Bailey. They spend the night every week like clockwork. She has definitely added a lot of joy and great memories to our family. If she could talk, I believe she would quote the Taylor Swift song, "You need to calm down, you're being too loud!" I also think she would thank us for letting her in the house during storms.

  
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# What Goes Around Comes Around

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Caroline Schenk's mother always told her she would be a teacher because of her neat handwriting, but Schenk knew what she was destined for thanks to her love for children, babysitting and tutoring.

Even though she knew she would end up in the classroom one day, Schenk's own teachers served as mentors to guide her into her career path.

"My second grade teacher, Mrs. Spector, was definitely one of them," she said. "She made learning fun and created hands-on, real world learning experiences, such as a classroom store. She was funny and I knew she liked me and cared about me. I wanted to be a teacher just like her."

Schenk actually began her teaching career in 1989 and over the years served as the Remedial Reading teacher and a first-grade teacher at Rector; third-, fourth- and sixth-grade teacher in the Paragould School District; Paragould School District Literacy Specialist; Oak Grove Middle School Principal and now as the Baldwin Elementary School Principal. At the beginning of this was Kay Huggins, Schenk's mentor in Rector.

"She was the teacher I watched and observed every chance I got," Schenk said. "When my class went to music, I went to Mrs. Kay's room. When my kids went to P.E., I went to Mrs. Kay's room. I watched her teach reading groups and took notes on how she managed her classroom. She was the teacher I wanted to become one day."

Huggins was there for Schenk when she began her career but at the true beginning, way back in that second grade classroom, was Spector, someone Schenk hadn't seen since 1974 in Wisconsin. But in 2014 at the Council Leadership Academy in Tampa, Florida, Schenk had a surprise waiting for her.

While seated next to a woman coincidentally from Wisconsin, Schenk happily talked about her memories of growing up at Algonquin Elementary in Brown Deer. Within moments, Schenk's new friend asked if she remembered Sue Spector.

"Of course I did," Schenk said, remembering the meeting. "Mrs. Sue Spector was the reason I wanted to become a teacher."

Soon thereafter, the Wisconsin native was texting away and pulling up Schenk's second-grade photo on her phone. Spector was, it turned out, her best friend.



Schenk and Spector were finally reconnected after 45 years through texts and emails.

"She warms my heart with every message she sends," Schenk said.

Schenk recalled a day in September of 2019 that was particularly rough for her. Spector sent her a message detailing how proud she was of Schenk for promoting and supporting literacy learning. Spector followed the Baldwin Elementary Facebook page and also mentioned how she loved what Schenk did for her staff and students. Before signing off, she asked Schenk for her school address.

Ten days later Schenk received a handwritten letter from Spector and a check to use as she saw fit.

"The work you and your staff do for kids and the future is heartwarming. Innovation and joy are evident under your leadership," Spector's letter read.

Spector knew how often Schenk had to think, "If only I had some extra money in the budget, I could do this or that."

Schenk put the check toward the purchase of a book vending machine. Students will earn gold tokens through acts of kindness, outstanding behavior and excellent attendance to use at the vending machine.

"Once the remaining funds are raised, the book vending machine will be purchased and will be placed in the main hall at the front of the building," Schenk said. "I can't wait to see my students purchase books to keep. I know they will be excited to have new books of their own."



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# our future community will be a reflection

BY LINDSEY MILLS

Everyone needs someone to look up to, especially children going through difficult times in some of their most formative years. City Youth Ministries in Jonesboro recognizes, and responds to, this need.

“We provide a place for kids to come after school and we help to aid their academic needs,” said executive director Denise Snider. “But more than that, we also dive into other aspects of their life: spiritual, fine arts, athletics, and nutritional needs.”

City Youth offers programs like yoga, tennis, kickboxing and more in an effort to help students try new things. The staff supports, encourages, and mentors the students in grades 1-12 who come to them after school.

The organization that has been located in Downtown Jonesboro for nearly 20 years runs on donations that allow the office staff of three to keep the doors open.

It takes \$20,000 to keep City Youth running, but the funds go to so much more than just paying the bills. Thirteen group leaders, often students at

ASU, are hired to help mentor the kids to be young people who will be positive influences in their community.



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# of the generation we lead today

“Everyone that works here sees it as a ministry,” Denise shared. “The kids adore their group leaders. The leaders love on these children because they are ready to serve. When you have a work force that encompasses that mindset, everyone is blessed.”

Denise praised the Jonesboro community for everything it has done to support the organization and its work, but she also believes there are still plenty of people unaware of how important City Youth’s ministry really is.

“In our culture, the way things are, so many kids just need a place to go. They need to know that God loves them and has a plan for them,” Denise said. “Kids have got to be busy with something positive. We all grow, and as our children grow, as they progress or don’t progress, we will see that reflected in our city and in our world.”

Board member Taylor Mitchell added, “It just blows my mind how many kids are in need in our own community and there really is an opportunity to help them.” We hope to see the work of City Youth reflected in our city and our world as they mentor kids to grow and be strong, positive, impactful contributors, leaders, and perhaps mentors themselves.

“In the times that we’re living in, the need for every aspect of City YM to be available is so great,” Denise said. “And it can only be available with community funding.”

If you’d like to contribute, send donations via PO Box 627, 72403, Jonesboro.

Or, donate on Facebook via PayPal. You can also donate clothes and food; simply reach out to Denise Snider: 870-932-9398 or email [denisecym21@gmail.com](mailto:denisecym21@gmail.com)



# - Between the Dashes -

## Tom Kirk

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Generally, the mental picture we paint when hearing the word “mentor” is one of an older, wiser person looking over the shoulder of the one being guided. For many in the area right now, their mentor will be looking down from above.

Tom Kirk, one of Paragould’s most beloved and active community members, passed away in November after a battle with cancer. His influence was far-reaching and his benevolence widespread, as witnessed by the number of people readily recounting his accomplishments in the days immediately following his death. City leaders, lifelong friends, fellow church members, business men and women -- so many poured out thoughts of love for Kirk and sympathy for his family after his recent death.

He became President of the family business Kirk Equipment Company, a John Deere dealership, in 1976 and five years later acquired a General Motors franchise -- Tom Kirk Chevrolet-Olds, Inc. He was President of that firm for almost 30 years. Most recently, he served as Chairman of the Board and Chief Financial Officer of Legacy Equipment, LLC, the result of a merger of seven John Deere dealerships in Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri that Kirk helped bring to fruition, but he had already been a major player in the business world for many years. The list of boards and panels on which he served, both locally and statewide, is lengthy and his love for his home town and a desire to see it progress was apparent.

To many he was the consummate leader, to just as many more a dear friend respected at all stops. For MOR Media’s Brian Osborn, Kirk was both -- someone he could turn to for business and career

advice, but also a fellow he could count on for conversation and laughs. The two of them traded jibes on “The Morning Report” radio show hosted by KDXY, and Osborn said that is when their friendship blossomed. “We started that show along with Trey (Stafford) and Tom just made it work,” Osborn said. “We would talk about community events or anything that came to mind, and his personality came through. We became great friends.

“The biggest thing about him, I would have to say, is that he always had time for me ... or for just about anyone,” Osborn added. “He was a truly good friend and any time I made one of my stops by the dealership he would say, ‘O, step into my office and tell me what’s going on.’ If I was in another office he would stick his head in and say, ‘Once you’re done here, come over’ and we would enjoy listening to each other’s viewpoints. You can’t help but gain some knowledge from being a friend of Tom Kirk. He was always ready to listen to new ideas and explore them. He may not agree with you, but always listened. Tom Kirk ... that smile and twinkle in the eye.”

Some of his accomplishments include President of the Paragould-Greene County Chamber of Commerce, one of the founders of the Paragould Economic Development Corporation, two terms on the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Chairman of the Mid-South Farm Equipment Association and the Arkansas Auto Dealers Association, more than 30 years on the board of the local hospital (now Arkansas Methodist Medical Center), numerous Rotary Club honors and countless hours dedicated to the mission of First United Methodist Church ... and that’s just scratching the surface. The list would go on for pages and pages.

“He genuinely cared about everything he volunteered for,” said his daughter Kristin Kirk. “He wanted to make a difference in our community and in people’s lives. That’s the one thing he instilled in me: Service for your community.

“My whole life, since I was about eight, it seems like I’ve been going to Chamber of Commerce banquets or hospital board functions. He always told me how important it is to help your community. And he really, really did care about every person he met.”

Paragould Mayor Mike Gaskill described Kirk as “community-minded. He and I served on a couple of boards together. He was on the hospital board for about 30 years and did so many things over time ... I mean, he was just good for the city of Paragould. Several people have been that way and he was certainly one of them. He was good for the county also, not just the city. He was just always very, very active in projects that would make our area a better place to live.

“I know he will be missed greatly by those who knew and loved him. He did a lot of good.”

He is survived by his wife, Theresa, of the home; his son, David Kirk, and his wife, Michelle, of McKinney, Texas; his daughter, Jodie Horton, and her husband, John, of Paragould; his daughter, Kristin Ann Kirk of the home; grandchildren, Nicholas, Claire, Jonathan, Cameron and Maria Kirk; Caleb, Timothy, Luke, Seth, Julia and Andrey Dills; and Kirkley Ann Garner of the home; his sisters, Gloria Merrill, and her husband, Clint, of Forrest City; Donna Brazil and her husband, Charles, of Paragould; and Sara Donaldson and her husband, Chris, of Paragould.



# ADJUST THE Crown



BY LINDSEY MILLS

Quiandrea Borders knows how important it is to have a mentor. Her mentoring program named after her book, *The Adjusted Crown*, is designed to encourage and support young girls through everyday and big life struggles. *The Adjusted Crown* book, which is Quiandrea's journal kept over many years, was released in 2017 and the program was launched in early 2018.

"I wanted to turn it into more than a book," said Quiandrea. "I wanted to reach out to young ladies and help them."

The program services schools with Jonesboro Public Schools, Micro Society Schools, and the Success Academy. Quiandrea and those helping her facilitate the program visit the schools once a week to take the girls through a ten-week program that addresses self-esteem, peer pressure, budgeting and much more. Each topic is paired with a scripture, and each week Quiandrea sits with the girls to talk about some real-life education.

Quiandrea said the main reason for writing the journal that became her book, and later beginning a mentoring program, is that she had two people who pushed her to become the kind of person she wanted to be. "I've had two extraordinary mentors: Carla Lee and Kesha Haggans. I wanted to give others what they gave me," Quiandrea said. "They saw my potential and pulled it out of me."

The program, run and funded by a single mom, continues to grow and Quiandrea hopes to move it into more schools in time. The original graduating class included four girls but now a class will graduate more than 30 members.

Sixty-five girls have been through the program in all, and many more will have the opportunity, but for those who don't, Quiandrea has the same advice: "I tell everyone to pick the positive out of their situation, focus on that, and keep going. Don't stay stagnant. Don't stop moving. Keep pressing forward. That's my message with the book. 'Boss up' is my favorite saying. Boss up and keep moving."

Whatever you're going through and however hard your circumstances are right now, pull the positive out of it and adjust your crown.

Support Quiandrea and the work she's doing by purchasing her book online or at Barnes & Noble. To buy directly from the author, find Quiandrea Borders on Facebook and reach out personally.





# NEA Baptist's New Joint Replacement Program

NEA Baptist's Joint Replacement Program makes it easier than ever for patients to transition from surgery back into their routines.

"Our orthopedic clinic has four surgeons all participating in our joint replacement program," said Katie Gilmore, the Care Coordinator for the program. Once someone decides to have a joint replacement, they visit Katie for a pre-op class. The goal is for every patient to know exactly what to expect from the surgery.

"We really want them to understand what happens during their surgery, and also help them prepare for the time in recovery after," Katie said. "We make sure their home is ready and that they have help at home after they leave the hospital."

Immediately following surgery, patients are taken to group therapy that helps them become stronger and regain their range of motion. The group setting also helps provide socialization with others going through the same, or at least a very similar, recovery.

"It's a small group but it just helps people to be around people that are going to face the same obstacles they will," said Stephanie Privett. A coach or family member that will ultimately help the patient when they return home is also present for therapy.

According to Stephanie, having Katie lead the new program has helped bridge the gap between nursing and therapy in a way that ultimately serves patients better.



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# More Than You Think

BY LINDSEY MILLS

Ann Phillips had an idea a few years ago that would grow into something that is now bigger and more impactful than she could have imagined.



"I wanted to offer a yoga class, and that wasn't something Peak Fitness currently offered, but Jordan and Ronnie (Richardson) supported my vision," said Ann, when asked about the starting point for her journey as a yoga teacher.

Ann trained to become a teacher but she didn't stop there; she received her 200-hour certification, then went through further training to teach tailored classes for kids, seniors, and for pregnant women.

"Ann is so patient with us," said Charlotte Thompson, a student in Ann's senior yoga class. "I tend to get mixed up when she says 'face left' or 'use your right arm' because as we face her, her right arm is going in the opposite direction of mine, of course. I invariably get mixed up and use the wrong arm or face the wrong direction. As a mentor, she's quite patient with me." Charlotte was looking for an adjusted yoga class when she heard about the one Ann has. She's now been a part of the class for more than four months and said she appreciates the value it adds to the rest of her day.



Andrea Spence, who has known Ann for many years and became one of her first yoga students, said Ann's kindness and positivity are what make her classes so special and so welcoming to all. Andrea also takes her 8-year-old son to one of Ann's classes designed especially for kids. The activity is one they can do together, and Andrea says she believes it's just one way to encourage physical and mental strength that can impact other areas of life.

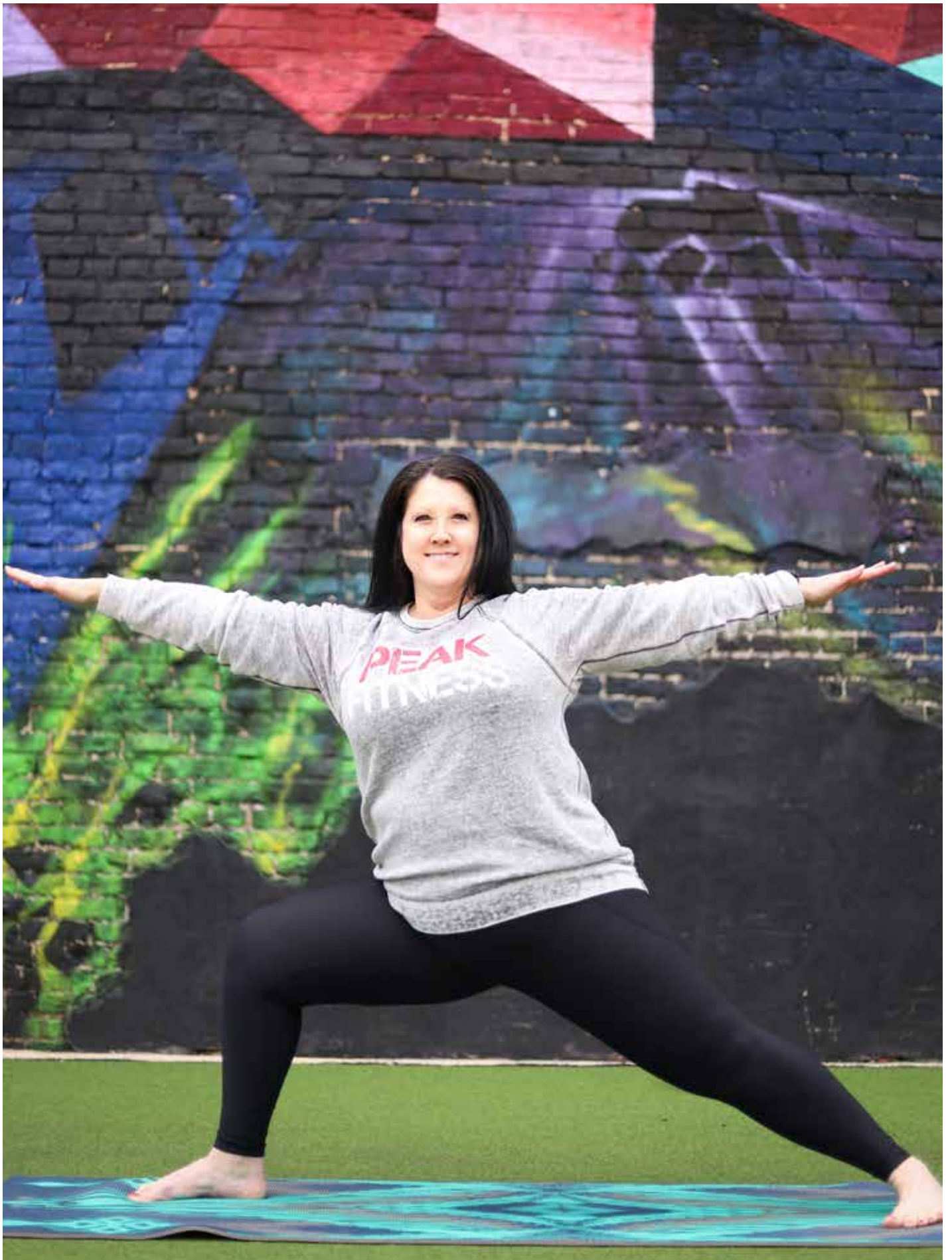
Whatever class Ann is teaching – kids, seniors, or those in between – she has a way of making everyone feel good.

"She makes everyone feel comfortable," Andrea said of her friend and instructor. "She's encouraging. She is a great teacher for all levels because she'll push you to try new things but never pushes too hard." Ann strives to make her classes as accessible as possible, too. "She'll sometimes message a group and offer a pop-up class to make it easier to practice around different schedules," Andrea shared.

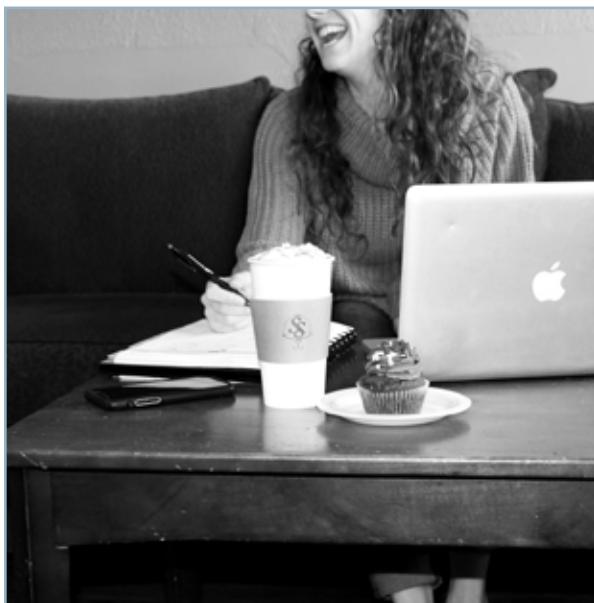
For anyone who hasn't tried a yoga class or perhaps thought about it and then backed out, Andrea encourages them to give Ann's class a try. Ann supports and encourages her students through anything they might be uneasy about.

"It's important to surround yourself with positive and motivated people," said Ronnie Richardson, owner of Peak Fitness. "Meeting resolutions and goals will fall into place on their own when you have the right support."

With a mentor like Ann Phillips by your side to help encourage, support, and challenge you to reach your physical or mental health goals, you'll likely find you can do so much more than you think.



# Explore MOR(e) of NEA



MOR Media Inc.'s new digital platform released.

BY LINDSEY MILLS

**M**OR Media Inc. is excited to announce we are growing: by a whole platform!

Since its inception in 2002, MOR Media has striven to bring quality entertainment and good news to the Northeast Arkansas community. Through three radio stations, Jack, Jill and iRock, and its print publication, Premiere Magazine, MOR Media brings good news and good music to NEA, and now we want to help you Explore MOR(e) of it.

Explore MOR is your local guide to where to eat, shop and play in NEA.



## Eat.

Local restaurants, food trucks, bakeries, sweet shops and so much MOR: Know where to go, and equally important, what to order. We've got your back for locating the best grub in town.



## Shop.

Whether shopping for yourself or selecting the perfect gift for someone else, we highlight local shops that will help you get the job done while also making it fun.



## Play.

Fun for the family, special events, and year-round things to do: See what's happening across Northeast Arkansas via our monthly update or our community calendar.



# Stay in the know



## exploremornea.com

Explore MOR's website (live on January 1, 2020) is designed to give our audience up-close looks at local businesses. We want to help you know where to eat, shop and play in NEA, whether you're a local or a visitor. Every month we share four articles on the site: One is the upcoming month at a glance, one is about places to eat (or drink), one is shopping-centric, and one encourages you to get out and play.

For January, our articles are all about keeping you warm this winter. For that reason – and because you might call us addicts to this particular beverage – our eat (drink) article is all about coffee shops. We took it upon ourselves to visit coffee shops all over NEA and pick a top-notch recommendation for you. Some places we visited on more than one occasion. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it.

In the shop category, we're talking about winter styles to keep you toasty and fashionable. And in the play department, we covered new movies, and where and when you should go see them.

Explore MOR's social media went live on December 1, 2019, with regular updates for local events shared on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. We want to remind you what's happening right down the road or in the next town over so you can make last minute plans on a whim.

## Explore MOR News

The first Explore MOR newsletter will be sent on February 1, 2020 (so you haven't missed out on anything yet!). Explore MOR News keeps you in the know heading into the month so you can make your plans accordingly.

We hope this new platform helps local businesses that are doing MOR(e) for their community succeed in doing so. We aim to challenge our cities, both members and leaders, to do MOR(e) events, build MOR(e) parks, give MOR(e) back, and spend MOR(e) time together. And we will strive, above all, to help you explore MOR of NEA.

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**January 3rd**  
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3rd: 7:00 p.m. 4th: 7:00 p.m.



**January 10th & 11th**  
Greene County Fine Arts Council  
Sleeping Beauty Auditions  
206 S Pruett Street  
10th: 6:00 p.m. 11th: 12:00 p.m.

The Greene County Fine Arts Council presents

**Sleeping Beauty: The Hundred Year Adventure**

AUDITIONS:  
January 10, 6:00-8:00 PM  
January 11, 12:00-2:00 PM

SHOW DATES:  
March 13-15, 2020

Greene Co. Fine Arts Council Building  
206 S. Pruett Street, Downtown Paragould

**January 11th**  
Celebration of Elvis' 85th Birthday  
Collins Theatre  
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.



*A complete listing of all Downtown events can be found under "Events" at [downtownparagould.com](http://downtownparagould.com) or [facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events](https://facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events).*

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# Ready to Read

BY LINDSEY MILLS

The Paragould Kiwanis Club donated 4,000 books to more than 600 third graders in the month of November. Third graders at schools across the Paragould area received six books each as the result of funding granted to Kiwanis from the Greene County Foundation.

“We want to make sure they have something to read, because if they can’t get their hands on books, they can’t read,” said Robby Young, Paragould’s Kiwanis 2019 President.

Young said the goal was to make sure kids in the third grade, a pivotal age group for young readers, have access to stories that very well might ignite a love for books that will stay with them the rest of their lives.

At the presentations, Kiwanis members read a chapter from *Humphrey*, a book all children received so that they might have book clubs or read together in classes, before the books were distributed.

The Paragould Kiwanis Club meets every Tuesday at noon at Grecian Steakhouse in Paragould. Join them to talk about how you can help them on their mission to “develop resources that transform the goodwill and vision of Kiwanians into programs that serve the children of the world.”



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The advertisement features a red Ford pickup truck driving through water, splashing. The Ford logo is prominently displayed on the truck's grille. The text 'Glen Sain Ford' is written in a stylized font at the top left, and 'BEST PRICE BEST SERVICE' is written in a bold, outlined font at the top right. At the bottom, the contact information '870.236.8546 | 1301 US 49 | GLENSAINFORD.NET' is displayed in a white, bold font.



# St. Bernards Opens New Tower

St. Bernards Medical Center officially opened its new state-of-the-art tower, which now serves as the hub of all surgical and intensive care services for the hospital. Patient care in the new 245,000-square-foot tower was to begin on Friday, Dec. 13.

“St. Bernards has seen tremendous growth throughout its 119-year history and that progress continues with the opening of the new tower,” said Chris Barber, president and CEO of St. Bernards Healthcare. “This is an exciting time for the entire St. Bernards organization as this tower helps provide us the additional

capacity to care for even more patients in Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri.”

Visitors and patients to the new tower enter a ground-level atrium with access to visitor-friendly amenities such as a community/education room, a chapel, improved wayfinding and support services for surgery and critical care areas, including sterile processing. The tower also includes the 1900 Market, a café and coffee shop serving Northeast Arkansas’ own Shadrachs coffee.

The new tower is a \$103 million project

and is the third phase of St. Bernards’ master facility plan, which includes the completed Cancer Center, updates to the Emergency Department and Heartcare Center. The fourth phase is extensive renovations to patient and family areas inside the Medical Center. Together, all of the projects are a \$137.5 million investment.

The project was developed in conjunction with HKS, Inc., and Nabholz Construction is serving as contractor. For the construction of the tower, St. Bernards sourced as many local products as possible.



See more photos from this event on Premiere Magazine’s Facebook page.

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# Passing the Torch

BY DEBBIE SPENCER HAAS

Walking through the halls on my way to the Agri Building at Westside High School brought back fond memories of the 27 years I had spent in the district. I was welcomed into the classroom by a full body mount of a standing doe. "Frisky" had been a fixture in my own classroom in the Middle School for many years. It did my heart good to see that the beautiful deer had been passed along to another teacher.

When I walked into the shop building, I saw several students using different tools and cutting wood. A young man was in the midst, walking from group to group inspecting work and conversing with the students.

"Okay, it's time to clean up your areas and get ready for your next class." Students grabbed brooms and put up tools. They were working together and seemed to be enjoying their lesson.

"Bye, Mr. Poe. See you later, Mr. Poe," students called out as they left.

I could see the respect the students had for the young man. He took off his safety goggles and extended his hand in greeting. "Hi, I'm Jackson Poe," he said. I could tell right away this young man was going to be an asset to the teaching profession. He had the heart of a teacher.

Poe, a Valley View High School graduate, is doing his student internship at Westside in the agriculture department under the supervision of Josh Parks, Agri teacher, FFA advisor and bus driver.

He said his mother and maternal grandparents were teachers and he loved seeing the impact they had on their students' lives, prompting him to follow their lead. As he got older, he tutored students after school and enjoyed seeing the thought process of how they worked and comprehended the information.

Being mentored by a veteran teacher is a great opportunity to see firsthand how to put all the pieces together. Jackson said one of his biggest challenges was time management. Parks, his mentor teacher, modeled how to get everything completed in the allotted time. Between preparing four pages of lesson plans weekly, plus class handouts, and power points, along with keeping students on task, and diversifying his teaching styles to the needs of his students, Jackson said working with Josh helped.



Jackson said he was most surprised by the amount of paperwork it took to do his job and the amount of work necessary to get ready for field trips or FFA trips. He said Josh's calm demeanor and the way he handled things took some of the stress out of a stressful situation.

Jackson said the greatest things have been gaining the respect of his students and seeing them get excited about projects and seeing them comprehend the information he taught.

Parks said he gives his interns more information than he was given as a student intern in order to give them a head start in the right direction. He enjoys teaching his subject and wants it to prosper in the future, so he wants to pass the torch of knowledge to the next generation of teachers.



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# Teaching *Life* Lessons

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

**B**etty Gatlin didn't have in mind being considered a mentor; she had in mind helping shape young lives the best way she knew how.

As a school teacher at Crowley's Ridge Academy for 40 years and at Paragould's Children's Homes now for another 22, Gatlin's umbrella of influence has sheltered countless individuals from the storms of everyday life and her words have become the building blocks former students have used to construct healthy, happy families.

She has relied on four basic ideas that form her approach to teaching, and they seem

to have meshed to prove successful in her quest to become a positive influence on all around her while performing the duties of classroom teacher. "I try to build self-esteem in a student. I want them to feel better about themselves," Gatlin said. "I want to make learning interesting, if possible. Third is, the love. I use the Bible's principles any time I can to get a point across. And I try to teach them to respect authority; anyone in charge is in authority and they should recognize that."

Those lessons hit home for Terry Austin, Development Director at Crowley's Ridge Academy and a member of Gatlin's initial

first-grade class at CRA. "I remember her teaching not just the three Rs but teaching us to be polite to adults and to each other," Austin said. "I remember her teaching us how to answer the telephone, and teaching us to be citizens, not just students."

Currently, Gatlin teaches English to 6th-8th graders at the Children's Home and adds reading and math instruction to the youngest group of students as well. "It's a God-sent job, that's my description of it," she said. "At 86, I still look forward to school each day. God has been good to me; He has taken care of me. This is my calling."

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Kisha Clayton, a case worker and fellow teacher at The Children's Home, said she marvels at the ease with which Gatlin seems to perform her duties on a daily basis. "I learn something new from her almost every day," Clayton said. "Sometimes I will stop my class -- our classes are small, so we can hear what she is saying -- and I will stop my teaching so my class can learn from her wisdom. She speaks the truth, and she speaks it in love, always preaching the truth. If I turn out to be half as good a teacher as she is, I'll be okay with that."

Gatlin said it is most gratifying when former students see her in public and come over to give and get a big hug, and she takes great joy in seeing them become responsible adults. "I hope everyone thinks they were my favorite student," she said with a smile. "It's very humbling because

sometimes you just don't realize you've made an impression on a lot of them until you see them as grownups; it feels so good. It feels good to know maybe I had a little part in shaping their lives. CRA is still very dear to me, and I guess I sort of want 'my kids' to always stop and think before they do something, to consider if Ms. Betty would be disappointed. But I'm rarely disappointed."

Her presence continues to be a comfort to those who know and love her. Clayton said her good friend and workmate is "just so loving, and so wise. If I might be having kind of a bad day, Ms. Betty will have a hug or a kind word that just makes my day. I look forward to my hugs. I try to learn from her. She gets her point across, not in a negative or condescending way ... in a loving way."

Austin has the same sentiments. "For all my life up to this point, any time I see her she is funny, and sweet and always encouraging to me," he said. "She taught who-knows-how-many kids during that amount of time here at school, and at church and at the Children's Home, but she also taught other teachers. I don't think she stood over them and told them what to do, but she was there for them and influenced them. She knows how to do it right."

There is a piece of artwork in one of the CRA hallways featuring four individuals who played key roles in making the school a successful venture from the very beginning. Gatlin's image is one of those featured in the quartet. "She's on our Mount Rushmore," Austin said. "She means more to this school than she will ever know."



# Helping You See YOU

BY LINDSEY MILLS

Courtney Griffin has a presence about her.

“When I met her,” Liz Tong, a friend and teacher at Courtney’s studio, Griffin Power Yoga, said of their first interaction, “I can’t explain it, but I just had this feeling: This is someone who’s going to be an important part of my life.”

Student and future teacher at the studio, Jenna Sullivan, had a similar experience with the yoga instructor. “When I met Courtney, I showed up at her studio and she just had this look on her face. I had never met her and yet she had this look of recognition and shock on her face,” Jenna said. “It turns out she had heard of me and she had just been talking about wanting to meet me that very day.”

Jenna is the only female Baptist preacher in the state of Arkansas and when Courtney heard of her through the grapevine, she knew she wanted to meet her. Jenna might not have believed her, but Courtney insisted on showing Jenna text messages that made her point.

“I met Courtney for a reason,” Jenna said with conviction. “It was a huge affirmation for me, especially at that specific point in time. It was a divine affirmation that I was where I needed to be.”

The female preacher happened to have been going through a difficult time, doubting her own strength and current position, but Courtney’s insistence that she believes Northeast Arkansas needs Jenna as a leader was the affirmation she needed to carry on.

“She always calls me a ‘leader’ and that is just so important because I never see myself that way. I’ve always thought of myself as a student, a new minister, but she used the word ‘leader’ and that helped me to see my own power,” Jenna



said with admiration of the woman who saw her real potential, even when she couldn’t. “It’s powerful to have someone believe in you and for them to see your potential. It means so much for them to say, ‘I see your potential. I see where you can go.’ It gives you the confidence to believe it, too.”

Courtney’s ability to see people’s strength, ability, and purpose is perhaps one of her own greatest strengths.

“A mentor is someone who guides you,” Liz said when speaking on why she believes it’s important to have someone to look up to and why Courtney has made such an impact in her life. “Mentors can’t give you the answers to all of your questions; you have to come up with those yourself. But, they’re able to hold a mirror up to you and say, ‘Alright, this is what I see and this is what the world sees. What do you want to see?’”

Courtney’s ability to hold up a mirror to those around her and show them who they can be is part of what makes her a great friend, a great yoga instructor, and a great mentor.

You can find Griffin Power Yoga at 1115 S Caraway Rd, Jonesboro, AR 72401

Visit them online at [griffinpoweryoga.com](http://griffinpoweryoga.com) to learn more or find them on social media: [@griffinpoweryoga](https://www.instagram.com/griffinpoweryoga) on Instagram and Facebook.



# Jonesboro Chamber Banquet

The Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce held its annual banquet and despite the delay due to some construction setbacks at the new Embassy Suites hotel and convention center, the night was a success and certainly an evening of celebration. Awards were given to outstanding chamber members and Christmas tunes filled the night. After receiving the gavel passed from Selena Barber, new Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce Chair, Kevin Hodges, said he is looking forward to the future of Jonesboro and hopes the chamber will continue to mentor future leaders as the community grows.



See more photos from this event on Premiere Magazine's Facebook page.



Pictured:  
Mike and Tracy Stinnett, Donna and Rick Jackson



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Jon David and Leah Carmack

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2020. Really??? Is the calendar correct? Where did the time go? It seems like it was only a short time ago my biggest worries were whether to fish Eight Mile or Locust Ditch. Whether to rabbit hunt or squirrel hunt. But, most importantly, who would provide a ride to my destination of choice. That was a long time ago, yet here it is, 2020, and time continues to march on, day by day, hour by hour.

As I have gotten older it has become more evident I would not be where I am without the many folks who poured so much into me throughout my 54-plus years on Earth. From my parents to my grandparents to the many, many adult mentors and friends who helped guide me on my way, I am now thankful. They say hindsight is 20/20 and for many years it seems I took these folks for granted, but the investment they made is becoming boldly clear as I look back.

We recently did a youth duck hunt and the importance of mentors, friends and family was brought to the forefront by the actions of many during that hunt. We have been fortunate to partner with Don Farmer and Claybird Outfitters out of Brookings for many years to help young hunters. The program has provided great opportunities for youth hunting, but it has also provided chances for these young folks to grow into responsible sportsmen who want to pass along their love of the outdoors to the future generations of outdoorsmen and outdoorswomen.

We met at Claybird on Friday evening for supper and from that point on the sounds of duck calls, laughter and conversation filled the cabin as we practiced calling and got the youth ready for the morning hunt. Spending time with the young folks on the eve of the hunt always provides great entertainment and memories.

This year we had several young men step up and assist with the hunt. I have watched these young men grow as hunters, outdoorsmen and individuals and just want to thank them for taking the time to pass on their love for the outdoors. Colton Eastep, Derrick Donnell, Elijah Carter, Jackson Lewallen and Garrett Hensley attended the hunt this year knowing they could not hunt, but they wanted to be a part of introducing others to the outdoors.

Not only did they assist, Derrick and Elijah each reached out to young family members and brought them along to participate. Derrick brought along Victoria, while Elijah was accompanied by Charlie. Garrett's younger brother, Isaac, and his friend, Jack, were there as well as Joe Turner with Keaton. Dustin Bennett came from Kentucky with his son, Colson, and he also brought Caden and Ethan.

Even though we stayed up past midnight, all participants were up and ready to roll by 5:15 a.m. on Saturday. We had groups that went to pits operated by Claybird Outfitters and also had a group go to the public timber of Dave Donaldson WMA. Each group took a bird or two and all saw plenty of fowl for the morning. We gathered back at the cabin about 10 and the hunters swapped stories of their morning in the outdoors.

I guess this looks like just another hunting story, but I hope as you read it you will understand this is much more than that. It is an example of what we must do to pass on our traditions, ethics and love for the outdoors to future generations.



## CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

The young men stepping up to help were there because someone had helped them. Whether it be hunting, fishing, kayaking, hiking, outdoor photography, bird watching, or any other pursuit, we must take the initiative to foster this love in our youth.

As I said earlier, it is easy to look back with a clear vision and see the impact others made on your life. It is easy to identify those who encouraged you, spent time with you and made sure you had opportunities. As we go into 2020, I encourage you to develop a forward-looking vision of how to do that for someone else. I encourage you to find a way to pass on your heart for the outdoors, your love for Arkansas and your hopes for Greene County.

Proverbs 29:18 tells us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." As you look forward, truly give some thought to what you can do to encourage and lift up a friend, co-worker or family member. Life seems much tougher now than it was as I was sitting on the banks of Locust Ditch, and everyone could use a hand, a friend, or a kind word.

I wish each of you a Happy New Year and I hope as you enjoy hog jowl, black-eyed peas, cornbread and football on New Year's Day, your thoughts for 2020 will include a resolution to take the time to get outside and take someone with you. I hope to see you out there!



# Like Father

# Like Son

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

They have almost 1,500 high school coaching victories between them, but together they have something more important than scoreboards and numbers -- the relationships nurtured as teacher and student, master and apprentice, father and son.

Scott Bowlin is the new boys basketball coach at Melbourne, returning to Northeast Arkansas after six years as the head man at Springdale's Har-Ber High School. He's much closer to his home town of Paragould, where he found immense success as both a player and a coach, but home was never more than a phone call away ... especially when many of those calls were to his dad, Jim.

"I still call him three or four times a week," Scott, now 59, said. "It's like coming home from college. You bet, I look at him as a mentor. I have always valued his opinion. I think he's wiser right now than when he was younger. The things he tells me now, he never repeats himself. He knows things change."

The younger Bowlin has 36 years of high school coaching under his belt with more than 640 wins to his credit. In a 10-year stint at Greene County Tech, he led the Eagles to their first-ever boys' basketball state championship in 2007, was runner-up the following year, and won it all again in 2009. While at Har-Ber he coached teams there to several school "firsts," including two conference titles and three 20-win seasons. Like any other coach, Bowlin takes bits and pieces of coaching styles from those he has played for or coached with -- and against -- and molds them into a philosophy and technique all his own, but he knows where his basic approach to coaching practices originated and he knows where to turn when advice is needed.

"That's not hard, I don't even have to think about it," he said. "My dad ... his wisdom about situations ... not about the game, it's about situations 99 percent of

the time. He coached a long time. I will never forget this. Before my first game at Knobel I only had six players and he said, 'Remember this: You're going to see the craziest ways to win a game, and you're going to see the craziest ways to lose a game, and you're going to see things you never thought you'd see.' And he was so spot on. You know, it's the same game from the time he started coaching up to today. It may look different, but it's the same game. My core beliefs on how you run a team and treat players -- that has not changed. My dad has given me guidance, though, so I've been able to change and instill things I need for today's kids to be successful."

Jim, now 82, coached for almost 40 years and wound up with an 814-275 record; 372 of those victories came in his 14 years at Marmaduke and in 2009 he was inducted into the Arkansas High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame. He said being considered a mentor by those he coached is both satisfying and a responsibility.

"Especially for young coaches, especially boys I coached," Jim said, "I think it's important to share what you've learned along the way with them. It's good to know that the kids have that much confidence to call me. I try to give advice if they ask. I think that's what we're supposed to do."

He said it would be more difficult for him to coach today because young people are so different regarding their own expectations and parental interference is at an all-time high. "When I coached, they just knew they were supposed to do what I said," he recalled, "and if they wanted to play, they'd better be ready to get after it every day. I was known for pressing -- Get 'em! Let's get on 'em, boys! -- and at the half one time at the Batesville tournament we hadn't pressed and we weren't that far ahead, maybe six or eight points, against a team I didn't really think was that good. I had

a real quiet boy, he didn't ever say much, Russell Miller. And at halftime, old Russell, he says, 'Coach, are you sick?' And I said, 'No, Russell, I'm not sick but you're going to think you're sick when we get back out there and get after them.' And we put on that press and we really whipped 'em.

"I was asked this question as much as any: 'Coach, how do you get so many good shooters like that every year?' And I would always say, 'I let them shoot.' I wanted to score 100 points. Now, Scott, he wants those boys of his to play that defense and not even let you dribble."

Scott said one of the important things he learned from his father was the need to listen when expert advice is being offered, and it might not always come from an expected source. Just as Jim heard his player's confusion over not pressing decades ago, his son also heard words that hit home with him recently.

"I had an assistant, Kyle Pennington, at Har-Ber," Scott recalled, "and I'm still coaching old style. We blew a game one night and Kyle is 28 and he's mad. We're in my office after the game and he slaps the table and says, 'I didn't come here to lose! You've got to change! It's not the way it used to be!' So I get on the phone with my dad and he says something has been on his mind, and he says, 'You need to change your style of coaching.'

"First a guy 28 tells me that, now he's 78 and he's telling me the same thing, that I have to get to know the guys now. It's about the moment for them, not what they represent. To make them a team, you've got to get to know them and they've got to get to know you. I think I've been able to do that as I got older, to listen. So I changed that about me; not about what I think makes you win, but what I had to do to relate to today's kids."

Jim was known as a coach kids would do



anything for; Scott said it took him a while to realize some of his dad's beliefs had rubbed off on him. "One thing me and him have in common is a coaching style," he said. "We are able to make ordinary guys do extraordinary things. Not just Xs and Os but because they believe in what we're telling them. I do things now and didn't even realize just how much he taught me. I see a lot of his teaching in what I do."

While Jim said serving as a mentor to others is an honor, he knows not to get

caught up in the moment. "Sometimes we aren't as smart as we think we are," he said, recalling a time when the school principal came to his office and pointed to a new student and said, 'That boy over there is a new player and I bet he's a good one.' I looked at him and he was the most bow-legged kid I ever saw and I told him, 'If that bow-legged boy's a player, I'm an airline pilot.' Well, it was old Clifton Rogers and he was a dandy, and I had to go back to the principal and say, 'Well, I guess I'm a pilot.' But that didn't happen too much.

"I think the big thing is to make kids like playing for you, and to teach them along the way but do it in a way that they'll always remember you and have respect for you. There's a lot of coaches who win, but their kids don't even enjoy it like they should because the coach takes all the fun out of the game. I think you're supposed to be tough when it's time to be tough, but you have to pat them on the back, too. You're supposed to help them learn to play a game they love. You do that, they'll respect you and remember you."

# Santa for Seniors

BY LINDSEY MILLS



Santa, or at least his giving spirit, visited Lexington Place Nursing & Rehabilitation to provide gifts for the residents in long-term care and short-term rehabilitation this holiday season.

Oldham Law Firm and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Center on Aging-Northeast partnered with Lexington Place Nursing & Rehabilitation for an event called "Santa for Seniors," only Santa looked more like his happy, jolly elves as kindergartners from Valley View were around to help distribute the presents.

"The interaction between the kids and the seniors is what made the event truly special," said Samantha Hollis, marketing director for Oldham Law Firm. The intent was to provide an intergenerational experience between the children and the senior adults and the success was apparent as children eagerly helped pass out the gifts.

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The original idea stemmed from the immense need for community awareness regarding senior citizens residing in such facilities over the holidays. Many basic needs and simple pleasures are unmet, but community members stepped up and filled the gifts for every resident.

Nettleton volleyball teams, Mrs. Williams and many more willing to give helped gather items such as soaps, lotions, socks and other favorite items to give to residents. One resident requested treats for his cat, another wanted honey buns.

“Their requests are so simple,” Samantha said. “And it’s so incredible to see our community rise to answer them.”

Santa for Seniors has taken place for three years now, at multiple facilities. To get involved next year, contact Oldham Law Firm to learn more.

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# One Person at a Time

BY LINDSEY MILLS



On a mission to help keep more community members warm through the winter season, Project Warm rallies to spread coats around Northeast Arkansas, and beyond. Bethany Davis, founder of the organization that is now officially a non-profit, said the idea came one night when she tried to imagine spending long hours outside or even sleeping in the chilly temperatures winter brings.

"I'm cold all the time. I couldn't imagine it, and I realized there's something I can do to make a difference," Bethany shared. Bethany volunteered for

during the months of December, January, and February to gather coats from anyone willing to give. At the event, community members are also asked to write notes that are attached to the coats spread about the area. This means if you get involved, you're spreading more than physical warmth: you're spreading the warmth of happiness, too.

"Community is everything. If we're not working to make our community and our world a better place, then what are we doing here?" Bethany said.



Jonesboro's the HUB (Helping the Under-served Belong) as part of a requirement for a class, but wasn't content to give her time out of necessity for a grade. She understood the bigger picture, and knew she wanted to do more to make a difference.

"I realized that many people can't make it to the places that have the resources to help them," Bethany explained, "so I came up with a plan to take the resources to the people that need them." Bethany had heard of coats being tied around tree trunks, light poles, and street signs in other cities and decided that course of action was perfect for what she wanted to accomplish in her own community. Project Warm was born.

It's more than just getting coats to those who need them, too. Project Warm's ultimate mission may be to keep people cozy during frigid weather, but they're also working hard to spread a positive message to everyone involved. The organization meets once a month

Project Warm began in December of 2018 and now that it is recognized as a non-profit, leaders expect their reach to grow as well. Bethany has friends helping move the project to Madison, Wisconsin, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The first event to gather coats for the 2019-2020 season of Project Warm's activity took place at Old Pine in Downtown Jonesboro, where those who brought coats or wrote a note received a free coffee from Old Pine or a free muffin from The Parsonage. Coats are always distributed the week after collection.

The next event is scheduled for January 18 and will take place at Gearhead Outfitters in Downtown Jonesboro.

Visit @projectwarm on Instagram, @projectwarmnonprofit on Facebook, or [projectwarmnonprofit.com](http://projectwarmnonprofit.com) for more info.





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# Paragould Chamber Open House



Before the Paragould Christmas Parade was under way the Paragould Chamber of Commerce was getting the party started with its Christmas Open House held downtown at the historic courthouse. Santa was in attendance along with Mrs. Clause, a balloon artist, and Frosty the Snowman. Refreshments included cookies and hot cocoa to warm guests on the bitterly cold evening.



See more photos from this event on Premiere Magazine's Facebook page.

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# bluegrass monday

On November 25 the Collins Theatre in Paragould was packed with music lovers for Bluegrass Monday. No Time Flatt performed a foot-tapping set at the historic venue and during intermission the Collins Theatre Foundation Board announced the lineup of acts that will perform at the Big Grass Bluegrass Festival on July 24-25, 2020. Don't miss the next Bluegrass Monday or details on Big Grass Bluegrass: Visit [exploreMORnea.com](http://exploreMORnea.com) for details on upcoming events around Northeast Arkansas.



In the photo above, from left to right:  
 Joe Wessell, The Collins Theatre Foundation Board President  
 Neely Camp  
 Joy Robinson, Collins manager  
 Carol Fleszar  
 Gina Jarrett, Vice-President  
 Andy Fulkerson, Chairman of Board  
 Patty Sue Camp, Secretary-Treasurer



See more photos from this event on Premiere Magazine's Facebook page.

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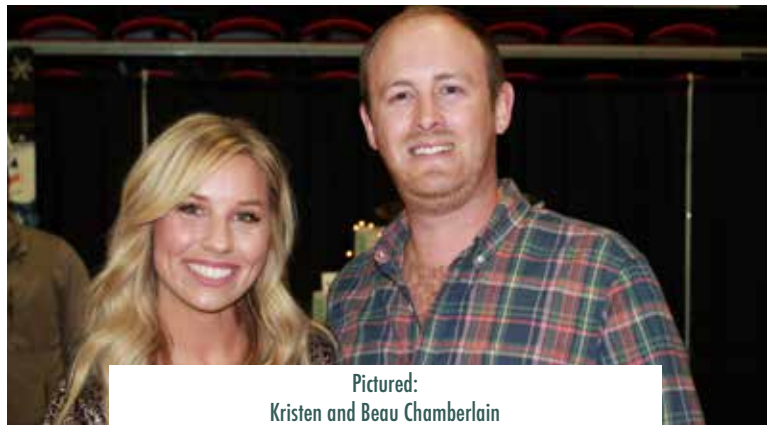
# 17th Annual Duck Classic

The NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation hosted the 17th annual Duck Classic Banquet in December at the First National Bank Arena at Arkansas State University. The Duck Classic continues to draw thousands from a 10-state radius and has garnered national attention and support – all to benefit the six free programs of the NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation.

In addition to the dinner, banquet attendees had the opportunity to participate in various raffles and both silent and live auctions. Items this year included hunting trips, a lab puppy, jewelry, gift baskets, duck blinds, a four-wheeler and much more.



See more photos from this event on Premiere Magazine's Facebook page.



Pictured:  
Kristen and Beau Chamberlain



Pictured:  
Callie Marquis, Jenna Marquis, Ashlin Austin, Kara Allen



Pictured:  
Dillon Osment, Zach Owens, Ron McEntire



Pictured:  
Jia Yu, Amy Dement



# DUCK CLASSIC

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# 20 Twenty Somethings



There are quite a few stereotypes associated with millennials and while there are always those who fit into a stereotype perfectly, there are many more who outright defy it. This year we want to highlight 20 twenty-something members of our community who are killing it: Young people who are building businesses, running non-profits, leading volunteer efforts, and serving Northeast Arkansas.

And we want YOU to nominate them. Share with us who you think deserves to be highlighted in the special section of Premiere Magazine:  
20 Twenty-Somethings in 2020.

*Send your nominations to [lindsey@mormediainc.com](mailto:lindsey@mormediainc.com) by January 31, 2020.*

The advertisement banner for Griffin Power Yoga features a central logo with the text 'GRIFFIN POWER YOGA' and a tagline: 'A diverse yoga community committed to having fun and providing powerful classes that inspire everyone to live their best life.' The banner is flanked by two photos: on the left, a person performing a yoga pose on a mat; on the right, a group of five women in athletic wear standing together. Below the logo, a dark banner contains the text: 'Join us in the new year for our 28 day challenge! New Students: 30 days for \$39'. At the bottom, contact information is provided: '(870) 336-0349 • griffinpoweryoga.com • 1115 S. Caraway Road Jonesboro, AR 72401', along with Facebook and Instagram social media icons.

# ENGAGEMENTS

## *Lindsey Mills & Jackson Spencer*

Lindsey Mills and Jackson Spencer have announced their plans to be married on May 2nd, 2020.

Lindsey is the daughter of James and the late Lisa Mills, and Jackson is the son of Jeb Spencer and Debbie Haas.

Photography by Reiner Alpizar Photography.



# BIRTHS

## *Berklee Blayke Dixon*

Allison and Joshua Dixon of Paragould welcomed their newborn, Berklee Blayke Dixon, into the world on November 21, 2019.

Berklee was delivered at St. Bernards Medical Center, weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and measured 20 inches long.

Berklee is also welcomed by siblings Carsyn, Marlee, Jacksyn, and Rynlee, and grandparents LeaAnn Stidham and Chip Vanaman and Amanda Mullins and Douglas Dixon.

Photo by Melissa Donner Photography



## *Paisley Violet Gibson*

Joseph and Breanna Gibson of Paragould welcomed their newborn, Paisley Violet Gibson, into the world on December 8, 2019.

Paisley was delivered at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, weighed 6 pounds, 10 ounces and measured 19 inches long.

Paisley is also welcomed by grandparents Brad and Donna Boyd and Randy and Rhonda Clinton.



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# Breanna & Joseph

**B**reanna Younger and Joseph Gibson met on the school bus 10 years ago and quickly became best friends.

"He's always been the one I can go to about any issue I'm having, whether it be big or small," said Breanna. "I brought a zip lock bag of Fruit Loops almost every morning and we shared those on the way to school. There was always some kind of feelings between both of us, but he was so shy and I didn't want to take chances on ruining such a great friendship if it didn't work out, so we remained friends for a long time."

Joseph officially asked Breanna to be his girlfriend on April 5, 2019. His face turned bright red.

"There's an unconditional love between the two of us. Something that you don't find just anywhere," Breanna shared. "I like to believe that we have one of the best relationships around. We both try way too hard to be funny and are always laughing at each other's stupid jokes. But at the end of the day, if there are issues, we can talk it out."

The proposal was simple and sweet Breanna said of the evening Joseph popped the question

"We were lying in bed, just finished watching a movie, and he had his arms wrapped around my waist and said, 'Hey, I love you.' To which I replied, 'I love you too' and then he said, 'Hey, will you marry me?'"

Breanna said that may have caught her off guard, but she knew where her heart stood so there was absolutely no hesitation to her answer, "Yes."

The wedding was small with only their closest family and friends in attendance. The decorations featured a royal blue and silver color scheme.

"My grandma and his mom helped decorate the venue and he helped with some of the higher decorations," Breanna said of prepping for the important day. "His little siblings blew up the balloons. All of that was done the day before the wedding. The day of the wedding was pretty hectic. It started off with my hair and makeup lady (my best friend Katlyn) having something come up and she wasn't able to get to my house on time to start helping me get ready. Joseph's brother Jacob was a huge help in multiple ways, he took Joseph everywhere he needed to go and when they got back from their trip, I broke the news of having no hair and makeup help. So, Jacob stepped in and called their step-sister Sierah and she came to my rescue. Once we got to the church, Donna, Joseph's mom, and Katlyn helped me get into my dress. I was very pregnant so the corset was hilarious watching them trying to lace it up. And our photographer, Kim, made our day so special by capturing memories we get to cherish for a lifetime."

The wedding took place at Center Hill First Baptist Church inside the fellowship hall and was photographed by Kimberly Carrey.

"Our day was as perfect as everything could have been," Breanna said. "We had a few bumps along the way but Joseph kept reminding me, even with the pregnancy hormones, everything would be perfect. And it was."



Photography By Kimberly Carrey

# Happeni



The Greene County Master Gardeners held a tree planting ceremony in December at the Sheriff's Office and Greene County Jail grounds. The young native tree was provided by the Arkansas Forestry Commission in honor of the completion of the "Healthy Trees, Healthy Lives" class earlier in the year.



The Hillcrest High School chapter of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) recently completed its Second Annual Paper Drive to benefit the Ronald McDonald House of Memphis. The school district, located in Strawberry, Arkansas, collected a record-setting 3,800 cartons of toilet paper, paper towels, and tissues for the families who stay as guests at the Ronald McDonald House.

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Kathryn Hutchison was the lucky winner of a \$3,000 shopping spree with Gamble Home Furnishings through Jill's Christmas Cash Giveaway.



The Foundation of Arts in Jonesboro hosted a ribbon cutting and tours on December 12th to show off new construction and redesigns.

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Coming Up

# Ice Fishing for Fosters

HOping to reel in a catch, the Division of Family and Children Services is taking the usual summer event and giving its title a winter spin by adding another opportunity for community members to learn more about becoming a foster parent.

"Fishing for Fosters" has taken place three times in Paragould, and the addition of "Ice Fishing for Fosters" to the calendar is simply another chance to promote becoming foster parents and/or adoptive families for the children in care in Northeast Arkansas.

interested in volunteering, can come to the event and get more information, or begin the paperwork process.

The event will take place on January 25, 2020, from 1-4 p.m. at the ARKids Pediatric Day Centers in Jonesboro. Vendors that offer a variety of services will be on hand, as well as experienced foster parents.

Anyone interested in becoming foster parents, adoptive parents, or simply



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## 2019 Kids' Events

# January

### 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

1

### "Namaste in Nature" First Day Hike

**When:** Wednesday at 9:00 a.m.  
**Where:** Crowley's Ridge State Park  
2092 Hwy. 168 North Paragould  
**Info:** arkansasstateparks.com

23

### Lapsit Story Time

**When:** Thursday at 10:00 a.m.  
**Where:** Craighead County Library in Jonesboro  
315 W Oak Ave, Jonesboro  
**Info:** libraryinjonesboro.org



It's that time of year when sports and schoolwork have to coexist, as kindergartner Owen Foshee exhibits. Owen, 5, is the son of Chris and Randal Foshee and is a student at Crowley's Ridge Academy in Paragould.

# January

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### 3 & 4

**What:** Ultimate Oldies Show at the Collins  
**When:** Friday, January 3rd & Saturday the 4th at 7:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Collins Theatre (120 W Emerson St. in Paragould)

**Info:** Featuring music of the '50s, '60s and '70s. General admission tickets are for the balcony only. Reserved seating is on the floor. For ticket information and reservations, call Joe Wessell at 870-215-2253.

### 3

**What:** Live Animals with Animology  
**When:** Friday, January 3rd at 11:00 a.m.  
**Where:** Craighead County Library in Jonesboro (315 W Oak Avenue)

**Info:** Bob Tarter and the animals of Animology (previously known as the Natural History Educational Company of the Midsouth) will be at the library. More info at [libraryinjonesboro.org](http://libraryinjonesboro.org)

### 11

**What:** Celebration of Elvis' 85th Birthday  
**When:** Saturday, January 11th at 7:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Collins Theatre (120 W Emerson St. in Paragould)

**Info:** Country crooner T. G. Sheppard joins the legendary Ronnie McDowell and Amber Hayes at the Collins Theatre to celebrate the 85th anniversary of Elvis Presley's birth. Find more information on Facebook.

### 19

**What:** Workshop: Poetry & Prose  
**When:** Sunday, January 19th at 6:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Cregeen's Irish Pub (201 South Main Street in Jonesboro)

**Info:** Here is an opportunity for the characters of the local writing community to come together and have other writers read

and critique their work. Organizers will hold the first of many round table-like workshops at Cregeen's in the library and plan to do them once per month and hope to have other locations like the Edge and Recovery in the rotation. Find more information on Facebook.

### 25

**What:** Paragould Polar Plunge  
**When:** Saturday, January 25th at 11:00 a.m.  
**Where:** Crowley's Ridge State Park (2092 Hwy. 168 North in Paragould)

**Info:** Polar Plunge® is a fundraiser in which individuals and teams take the plunge into various bodies of water...typically cold water to raise money and awareness for Special Olympics Arkansas. Plungers can register at [www.firstgiving.com/soar](http://www.firstgiving.com/soar)

### 25

**What:** Northeast Arkansas Bridal Expo 2020  
**When:** Saturday, January 25th at 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Embassy Suites by Hilton Jonesboro Red Wolf Convention Center (223 Red Wolf Blvd. in Jonesboro)

**Info:** Plan the wedding of your dreams at the Northeast Arkansas Bridal Expo! Top wedding experts from across the region will be gathered to showcase their products, services and beautiful fashions. Plus, you'll have the opportunity to win fantastic prizes and take home free gifts from vendors. If you have a wedding coming up, don't miss out on the Northeast Arkansas Bridal Expo! Event admission for brides and guests: \$5 at the door

### 25

**What:** The Foundation of Arts' "Cabin Fever"  
**When:** Saturday, January 25th at 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.  
**Where:** Arkansas State University Centennial

Hall (101 N. Caraway Road in Jonesboro)  
**Info:** Group's first-ever comedy gala - including a live comedy show, gourmet meal, drinks, silent auction, gaming, and dancing. The event is the FOA's annual primary fundraiser. 100% of the profits are donated to The Foundation of Arts outreach programs. Visit [foajonesboro.org](http://foajonesboro.org) for more information.

### 27

**What:** Bluegrass Monday  
**When:** Monday, January 27th at 7:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Collins Theatre (120 W Emerson St. in Paragould)

**Info:** On the fourth Monday night of each month, KASU presents the "Bluegrass Monday." This month's presents Monroe Crossing. KASU will "pass the hat," collecting money to pay the musicians. The suggested donation is \$5 per person. The Bluegrass Monday concert series is made possible thanks to support from Bibb Chiropractic, the Posey Peddler, and Holiday Inn Express and Suites of Paragould. For more information, contact KASU Program Director Marty Scarbrough at 870-972-2367 or [mscarbro@astate.edu](mailto:mscarbro@astate.edu).



For more NEA events visit  
[ExploreMORNea.com](http://ExploreMORNea.com)

# Stay Tuned

## Theatre



An insider scoop with Northeast Arkansas' new theatre company: The Link. Talking "Living on a Prayer," an original show in the works for the Greene County Fine Arts Council, with its creators. And a look at what's showing all across NEA.

## Love Stories



We're talking about love, but maybe not the romantic kind you think of during this time of year. Our community members' love for what they do, love for family, and love for friends will be highlighted in the season of chocolates, flowers, and date nights.

## Special Section: Weddings



Whether prepping for your own or helping a loved one get ready for theirs, our special section will touch on everything you need to know while planning a big day.

On The Cover: Ann Phillips  
Photo By: Amy Reeves Photography

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