

NEA'S

# PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

APRIL 2024



# Alex Cole: IT'S WORTH THE WOPKE

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN NEA  
YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD FARMER  
SPECIAL SECTION: KIDS PLAY

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

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ON THE COVER - Alex Cole - Williams Works Student at Williams Baptist University Pages 20-21

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# From the Publisher



Dina Mason  
General Manager & Publisher  
[dina@mormediainc.com](mailto:dina@mormediainc.com)

Hello, SUNSHINE! Well, except for the minutes we all are anticipating during the Total Eclipse of the Sun on April 8th. If you have not heard — I'm not sure how you could not have, but just in case — there will be a once in a lifetime event this month and if you are anywhere near NEA you should be able to experience the Eclipse.

There are so many activities planned to entertain the tourists expected to descend upon our area, from Festivals to Free music concerts to Arts & Crafts shows and Food Trucks everywhere. If you want to plan, you can start on our [ExploreMORnea.com](http://ExploreMORnea.com) site and get MOR information.

If you will be at work on Monday, April 8th, you might take along your Solar Eclipse Glasses and plan your break based on your location — the total experience is at specific times for each area but only lasts from 2 to 4 minutes.

There has been a lot of talk about traffic and “what might” happen and I think we should all be as prepared as we can, but also I hope you do not let the naysayers ruin this once in a lifetime opportunity for you and your family to experience — get your gear and stay home if that is what you want to do. Or join enthusiastic watchers from no telling where and meet new people — it might be fun.

Here's to a bright day on April 8th — and all the other April days, too, please.



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## UPCOMING INAUGURAL EVENT

# DELTA CRAWFISH FESTIVAL

Jonesboro is set to sizzle with excitement as the first-ever Delta Crawfish Festival takes center stage on Saturday, April 13, from 12 noon to 11 p.m. at Gamble's Home Furnishings Courtyard (24 County Road 912) in the Farville Curve. This mouthwatering extravaganza, presented by Jonesboro Business Association, promises a day of feasting, music and community spirit — all aimed at supporting initiatives empowering students of Jonesboro and Northeast Arkansas.

"This festival is going to be a blast," said Henry Burrell, president and founder of Jonesboro Business Association. "Not only can you enjoy music all day long, an abundance of beverage choices, all the crawfish you can eat, and retail booths featuring local vendors, but you can also feel great about supporting a cause that's helping young people in this community."

The Delta Crawfish Festival invites the public to savor the finest crawfish delights, provided by The Cajun Café, expertly prepared for this occasion. All-day admission is only \$25 per person, which covers all musical performances, a variety of refreshments and festivities galore. Dining opportunities are a la carte, featuring the full crawfish boil experience, as well as other food trucks and eatery vendors.

"It all adds up to a perfect fundraising day filled with fun and flavor," Burrell said. "Everyone can groove to the rhythm of local talent as this festival brings together an eclectic mix of musicians to grace the stage for a whopping 11 hours of live entertainment." Many local artists are slated for main stage performances, including Tye Stevens, Elle Eaves, Maestro3000 & The Time Machine, Greasy Tree and the Funk Donors. From soulful tunes to foot-tapping beats, the Delta Crawfish Festival is designed to deliver a music-filled journey that mirrors the vibrant spirit of Jonesboro.

Beyond the entertainment, the Delta Crawfish Festival is a cause-driven event, with all proceeds benefiting the Jonesboro Business Association. This non-profit organization is dedicated to empowering children in Jonesboro and Northeast Arkansas to be community-minded, involved

in economic development and proactive in finding ways to give back through mentorship and teaching programs.

"Our mission at JBA is to envision a thriving future, where every young citizen is equipped with the skills and confidence to achieve their dreams," said Burrell. "We achieve that by creating partnerships with local school districts, matching caring adult volunteers with referred youth, inspiring pro-social friendships and strong interpersonal skills and instilling a sense of hope in the future."

Instrumental in JBA's progress has been its board of directors and dedicated business partners in the community. Board vice president Lynette Hirsch and Treasurer/Secretary Reginald Prunty, along with many local businesses throughout Jonesboro, have made it their mission to make this important organization a success from the very beginning.

Get Your Tickets now by visiting Jonesboro Business Association's website: [jonesborobusinessassociation.com/delta-crawfish-festival](http://jonesborobusinessassociation.com/delta-crawfish-festival). Hurry, as tickets are selling fast for this one-of-a-kind event that promises to be the highlight of the season!



# STAYING PREPARED *For Any Emergency*

BY KARAN SUMMITT

The old saying “great minds think alike” could have its roots in emergency preparedness. Talking separately with Anthony Coy, Craighead County Director of Emergency Preparedness, and Erik Wright, Greene County’s Director in the same role, revealed a good bit of overlap. Their passion for making sure our area stays ready for a wide variety of potential disasters left me with the reassurance we have the right people in the right places should one land on our doorstep.

That wide variety of potential disasters is so much more than a weather event. In addition to the floods, tornadoes and ice storms that periodically come our way, emergency preparedness includes school threats and child abductions, cyber-attacks and Internet disruptions, multi-car accidents, train derailments and catastrophic fires. Added to these are HAZMAT industrial events and the ever-present threat of an earthquake. Most recently, the COVID pandemic and planning for upcoming eclipse traffic came under their umbrella. Anthony and Erik both emphasized their role is not to take charge during a disaster. Emergencies of varying degrees occur every hour of every day. When these events exceed the capacity of first responders, the local Office of Emergency Management (OEM) steps in to become a conduit for contacting and bringing in assistance from other agencies -- those within the county, as well as surrounding counties.

For Anthony and Erik, the responsibility to reach out carries with it a vital task -- that of relationship building and an awareness of each entity’s strengths and resources. These entities include first responders, utility companies, healthcare facilities, the media, law enforcement, educators, banks, elected officials, faith-based organizations, local food banks, industries and even retail establishments. When a disaster occurs there is no room for a silo mentality.

The relationships grow through periodic meetings to discuss strategies, needs, updated information and what can be learned from recent experiences. Both men mentioned we are still learning from the COVID pandemic shutdown. Erik called it the “most widespread disaster” any modern person has seen, comparing it to the Twin Towers 9/11

event on a national level. “In effect,” Erik commented, “the pandemic changed the course of everyone’s life due to things we had no control over.” That, in a nutshell, is a good definition for a disaster.

The men praised the excellent cooperation among key players in NEA. Shared training among law enforcement and EMTs is standard for our area. While no one is ever fully prepared, in the past all these organizations have worked well together, each one providing a much-needed piece of the puzzle. It may seem strange to think we need to prepare for the very things we have no control over, but a few common sense steps can help minimize the emotional effect and the physical losses we associate with disasters. This is true on the personal level in our homes but also necessary for businesses. Everyone needs a plan for potential disruptions to money and food supplies, electricity, Internet and phone service and the protection of valuables, especially things that are not easily replaced or cannot be replaced at all. A good rule of thumb for home or business is to think about what you would need if you had to be on your own without any kind of services for up to a week.

Anthony and Erik mentioned the tendency of our area to be numb to the possibility of a devastating earthquake. The early 1980s’ prediction of an earthquake on the New Madrid Fault and then its failure to materialize left most of us with a skepticism that borders on apathy. When considering disasters with widespread impact, both men rated an earthquake high on the list.

April is a good month for emergency preparedness and taking some time for personal preparations. Children are used to disaster drills at school — talk with them about what to do at home. If you own a business have a similar conversation with your employees and urge church leaders to discuss with congregants what to do during a corporate assembly. If you need help, sharing education and practical strategies is another part of the OEM director’s job. I think Anthony and Erik would agree, it’s much easier helping folks prepare than it is to help them pick up the pieces afterward.



Anthony Coy’s path began in law enforcement, first as a deputy with the sheriff’s department and later as an Arkansas State Trooper. Eventually, he took a position as NEA OEM Coordinator, followed by a state supervisory position before becoming Craighead County’s OEM director. For Anthony, his passion for the job comes with a firm belief in relationship building and how essential this is during a disaster. Knowing who to call for what is needed saves time, lives and property damage.



In 2012 Erik Wright and his wife moved from Tucson, Arizona, to Paragould. Erik’s Arizona background in safety management for a large geophysical consulting firm was a good foundation for the Greene County OEM director position. The COVID pandemic brought home to Erik the ever-present reality that disasters can happen without warning. His message for us is to avoid being driven by fear or anxiety by tapping into awareness, preparation and local trusted resources.

# GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT

All of my life I've heard the older folks caution the younger ones to "never say never." It's really pretty good advice because just as sure as you declare you'll never do something circumstances dictate that you do it and then there you are, wondering about a lot of other statements you've made.

That being said, I can safely assure you there are some things you will never catch me doing. Never.

For one, I will never refer to a fellow human being as Bro, Bruh or Dude. That seems to be a popular practice among the younger crowd but comes off as somewhat disrespectful to an old dude like me. If you know the other guy's name, use it. If you don't, fake it the way we old geezers do. When a person we don't know comes face to face with us, we just skip over the personal greeting and get right to, "Hey, how you doin'? How have ya'll been?"

I can say with great certainty I will never find myself looking at someone I should know but obviously don't and say, "Dude, good to see you." Or, "Bruh, looking good." And you can take that to the bank, Bro.

I can also tell you without a doubt you will never see me wearing a baseball cap with a flat bill. All you have to do is look at baseball cards from the 1960s to see how a bill should be shaped, slightly bowed with a neat, professional look. They aren't supposed to look like your grandpa didn't know you left your cap in the driveway and he backed his truck over it.

If anyone shows up at my house wearing a cap in such a manner, he will be greeted by the immediate closing of the front door, followed closely by the sound of the deadbolt locking into place. My friends know better. If I should receive such a cap as a gift you can rest assured I will say "thanks" to the giver, then send the flat-billed aberration out with the next day's garbage.

And I can positively say to you that you will never -- NEVER -- see me strolling up in front of my church audience to sing a solo. Not just never, but never never. I've heard myself sing and it is not a pretty utterance in anyone's estimation, not even when the car radio is helping to drown me out.

Years ago we attended a church where practically every Sunday morning someone strode up to the podium, grabbed the microphone and announced, "The Lord just told me He

wanted me to sing this song today." My first thought was always, "Man, the Lord is talking to these people a lot more than He is to me and my friends. I guess He doesn't hang out in the dugout all that much."

Then they would start in and sometimes the singer did have a Heavenly voice but sometimes I'm not certain he or she understood the Lord's conversation correctly. I know if I took the stage at my church and said the Lord told me to cut loose with a song as soon as I got home and checked my phone there would be a voicemail message saying, "Richard, this is the Lord. Don't ever do that again."

Even back when I was young -- and that was a long time ago -- I told my mother I couldn't understand why I was forced to read so many things in my high school English classes that held absolutely no interest for me. She said something like their being necessary for me to have a well-rounded education, or some such nonsense, but I remember telling her I would never accept a job where I was expected to have conversations about my teacher's choices of literature.

At that time, I planned on being either a ballplayer or a coach when it came time to choose a profession, and if I opted for the latter I could not picture myself calling a timeout in an all-important basketball game and saying to my players, "All right, guys, we need one more stop and we've got a good chance to win this thing. Jimmy, you take that good shooter and force him to his left; Bob, you keep their big guy off the boards.

"And Timmy, you tell me what you think the deeper meaning of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* really is. Do you think it captures the existential disillusionment characteristic of the Lost Generation.

I mean, its main characters -- Jake, Brett, and their acquaintances -- are mentally, emotionally, and morally lost, don't you think? Their lives lack meaningful foundations and their romantic attachments are fleeting, I would say. But what do you think? And hurry, we've only got a few more seconds here. Go team!"

If I had ever interviewed for a position and the person on the important side of the desk told me I would be expected to do a lot of math or discuss the classics, I would have politely said, "I'm not sure I'm the right person for this job" and then would have politely excused myself.

There are just some things I am certain I will never do, and I have no problem saying it and backing it up, Bro.





UPCOMING 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**BLAZIN' BBQ  
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Get ready to experience the sizzle and flavor of the Blazin' BBQ Festival! This event is a celebration of all things BBQ, from mouth-watering ribs to juicy brisket and everything in between. Join us for a day filled with delicious food, live music, and family-friendly activities in Downtown Manila on April 20th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m!

The festival will take place in a spacious outdoor venue, where you can enjoy the beautiful weather while feasting on some of the best BBQ in town. You'll have the chance to sample a variety of BBQ styles, from classic Texas-style BBQ to tangy Carolina-style, and everything in between. And for those who prefer something other than BBQ, there will be plenty of other food options available as well.

In addition to the food, there will be live music throughout the day, featuring local bands and musicians playing everything from blues to country to rock. Some highlights of the day include Zach Childers, Shotgun Billy's, and Marybeth Byrd! You can kick back and relax with your friends and family, enjoying the music and the atmosphere. Additionally, there will be a car show, eating competition, and Glow Fun Run the night before!

For the kids, there will be a variety of activities to keep them entertained, including a bounce house, face painting, and games.

So mark your calendars for the Blazin' BBQ Festival on April 20th and get ready to indulge in some of the best BBQ around. It's sure to be a day filled with fun, food, and great company!

All proceeds will benefit the Manila Fire Department. For more information, visit [blazinbbqfestival.com](http://blazinbbqfestival.com).



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WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN



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Some of you may be wondering what sets us apart from other pet boarding and daycare facilities. Some of the major differences include having a veterinarian on staff. Have you ever dropped your pet off for daycare or boarding only to find out that they were overdue for their vaccines, parasite testing, and or preventatives? When that happened, did you have to rush to find the nearest and open veterinary facility that could get you worked in, in order to update what they needed? Did it ever put a huge kink in your plans or even mess up your vacation itinerary? Well, have no fear, ARPets is here. With ARPets hospital on campus with the PAWLiday Inn, your pets can have their vaccines, parasite tests, and preventatives updated at the PAWLiday Inn facility if you find that they are due at time of drop off. This way, you can go on your vacation or with your plans for the day and know that your pet will be taken care of.

Have you ever been called when your pet was at daycare to find out that there was an incident and that they were transferring them to the nearest vet clinic for care? This can be scary. I hope that this has never happened to anyone reading this article, but sometimes dogs can play a little too roughly and injuries can occur. With ARPets being on campus, should any injury occur, then there is a doctor that is ready to examine them and treat them accordingly.

Did you get a puppy and are wanting to ensure that it gets plenty of

socialization, stays up-to-date on its vaccination booster schedule, and

maybe need some help with training? Great news! PAWLiday Inn is here for you! The general manager for ARPets hospital and the PAWLiday Inn, Debbie Phillips, is a Certified Canine Behavior Counselor and professional dog trainer! Our PAWLiday Inn staff has also been highly trained in animal behavior, training techniques, and animal safety, including animal CPR!

What's more? Well, let me just tell you! There is a reason that we are a pet hotel, and not just a boarding facility. We will offer curbside check in, which will allow you to check your pets in remotely, and we can come out to your vehicle under our newly constructed hotel portico and pick your pets up! If you are in a rush, this will be the best way to allow us to ensure that your pet gets the attention and care that it needs so that you may get on with your day!

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Corning Welcome Center

The Explore MOR 2024 print guide is out NOW! Just in time to show off Northeast Arkansas to eclipse guests, we've been busy distributing these prints throughout Arkansas! You can find a copy at any of the 14 Arkansas Welcome Centers, various NEA tourist destinations, local hotels, and select Premiere Magazine racks throughout Jonesboro and Paragould. So whether you are staying here in NEA or traveling as far as Texarkana, you can find a copy of Explore MOR!

The Explore MOR print guide highlights some of the best places to EAT, SHOP, and PLAY in the area, but there was no way to include them all! Be sure to visit [exploremornea.com](http://exploremornea.com) to keep up with the latest NEA fun!



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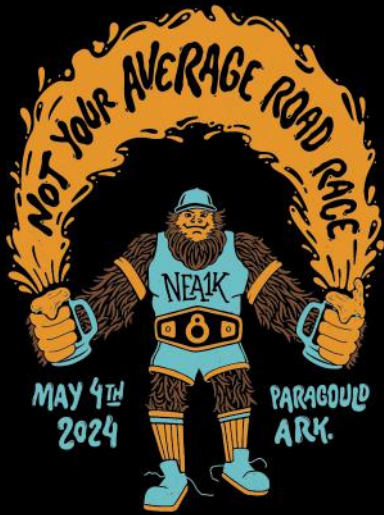
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Photo from the 2023 NEA 1K, taken by Rey Alpizer

The NEA 1K is coming back to the Paragould Community Pavilion at Power Plant Park on May 4, 2024, with all proceeds benefiting Habitat for Humanity of Northeast Arkansas. Though the event takes place in Paragould, it is open to runners, friends, and families from across Northeast Arkansas. The inaugural event in 2023 brought in 150 participants, and even more are expected this year to make it even bigger and better.

Festivities will include the Beer K (with Native Brew Works beer), DJ King Vick, family fun, costume and dog heats, race prizes, food trucks, and more! The streets of Downtown Paragould will be filled with some “not so average” fun, so come be a part of this “not so average” road race.

Join us on Saturday, May 4th. Early registration is open now at [nea1k.com](http://nea1k.com)!

# THE ADVENTURES OF

BY VICKI McMILLAN



# Lester



Hello, it's Lester here, with a moon pie in one hand and a glass of Tang in the other. I'm counting down the days to the Solar Eclipse April 8, 2024!! I know you've probably heard of this big event: ARDOT has a plan to handle the extra cars on the roads, everyone is selling t-shirts and viewing glasses, schools are closing for the day and now we are being told to buy gas and groceries in advance! This eclipse is expected to outdo the one in August of 2017 as the earth will be closer to the sun.

Mac, Vicki and I went to St. Genevieve, Missouri, to view the 2017 Eclipse and it was worth the drive up there, I must say. The sky started to darken, the wind picked up, insects started buzzing, and the smartest animals on the planet (some with viewing glasses, some without) looked straight at the sun!! I said "smartest animals on the planet" with sarcasm. The doggies just took in the scene and didn't risk frying their retinas.

One positive thing about the 2024 Eclipse is that Paragould is in the path of totality, so you won't have to travel very far to view -- just to

your back yard! The Eclipse in Paragould will last 2 minutes and 46 seconds, according to NASA. That will either seem like 2 seconds or 2 hours, depending on your interest! Also Downtown Paragould is having some great music 4/5 through 4/8. So, my advice is to take lots of photos and have fun! The next Eclipse won't happen until 2045!

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# 2024 ARKANSAS *Governor's Conference on Tourism*

Jonesboro hosted the 50th Annual Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism on February 25-27. This gave the town the chance to show off the great attractions Jonesboro has to offer and to learn from tourism leaders from throughout the state. Let's breeze through the highlights of the event.

## *Day One*

Sunday, February 25th, kicked off GovCon when guests began to arrive at the Embassy Suites in Jonesboro. The guests, such as Jeff Nichols (filmmaker, writer, director), Sarah Heer (Arkie Travels), Emily Manasco (Somewhere in Arkansas), and countless other tourism leaders from the state, settled in to await the upcoming reception and concert. John Carter Cash and Ana Cristina Cash performed in Riceland Hall at the Fowler Center on Arkansas State University's campus. The events were just a soft launch into what Jonesboro and Northeast Arkansas have to offer.

## *Day Two*

Monday kicked off with sessions centered around tourism strategies, communication, and growth. Some of the topics covered included the upcoming eclipse, telling the story of the Natural State, rural economic growth, and more.

Governor Sarah Huckabee-Sanders attended the Hall of Fame Luncheon, where Karen Trevino and Marcel Hanzlik were honored, to say a few words on Arkansas tourism, the growth it's had, and the future of the state.

Monday afternoon was when the exploring fun started! People from around the state received a Taste of Downtown Jonesboro for dinner fun. They began at The Lounge at Huntington Square to see NEA talent and cuisine at its best. Then they strolled the streets of downtown to eat, shop, and play! Some stops included Brickhouse Grill, Ben Yay's, Bamboo, Dragon City, Rice Box, Ichya, The Parsonage, Omar's, Lemonade House Grille, Skinny J's, Creegan's, and The Recovery Room.

## *Day Three*

While the wind was raging, the 70+ degree weather was perfect for the excursions planned to show off Jonesboro activities. Guests visited the Jonesboro Shooting Sports Complex, Craighead Forest Park, and Arkansas State University.

At these destinations, shotgun shooters, bike riders, and NEA first timers experienced some of the best the region has to offer. They walked away not only with a great experience, but also with relationships with those who love this area.

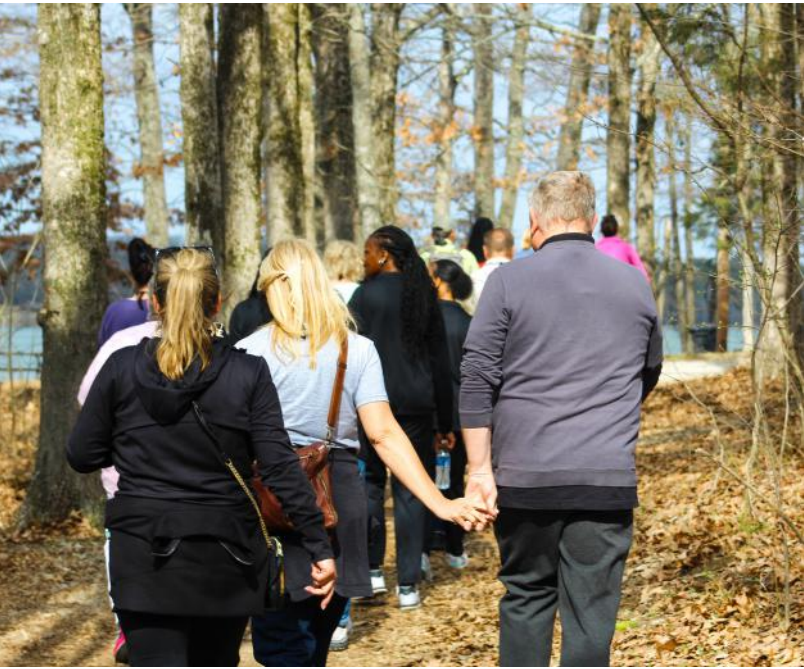


Never miss out on what's happening in NEA. Keep up with local events like this and find MOR(e) places to explore at [neapremiere.com](http://neapremiere.com)



Vikki McGee





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# Your Friendly Neighborhood Farmer

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



When Kevin Hurt's dad, Harold, started a family garden decades ago it was pretty much out of necessity. "Mostly to feed five kids," said Kevin, who today continues the practice of growing and sharing fresh vegetables. "When we sat down to eat every meal, he had grown everything except the meat. And sometimes we even killed the chicken for Sunday dinner. He and Mom put up corn and beans and just about everything, and once we were gone, he would take buckets full of green beans to give to people at church or over to the Mini Rise for the seniors to have. He loved to share."

Kevin is keeping the Hurt tradition alive today, farming the same spot Harold did in a similar fashion and sharing the produce with family, friends and neighbors. "Out of all us kids, I was the only one who did it without having to be told to," he said, referring to spending time in the garden with his father. "I liked it. I was 8 or 9 years old when I started and did whatever I was told he needed me to do, which wasn't really a lot. Back then, Dad was like me now. It's hard to tell someone how you want it done, you're better off just to do it. I got to hear when I was younger that when you're gardening you have time to think. Dad did a lot of thinking out loud ... and sometimes it was aimed at me."

While Harold's garden plot was larger, Kevin has found ways to produce just as much -- possibly more -- in his 50x50 plot. He turns out corn, tomatoes, squash, asparagus, okra, garlic, bell peppers and hot peppers, green onions and much more, helping feed his family and loved ones, with plenty to spare for others.

"It's unreal how much we gave just one girl last year and I give some to Kim (his sister) and just people I know," he said, and his wife Susan added, "and to the girl who cuts my hair." Kevin said Susan canned 50 to 55 quarts of tomatoes and 60 to 70 more of cucumbers and with a process he devised on his own they once "had fresh tomatoes all the way to Christmas."

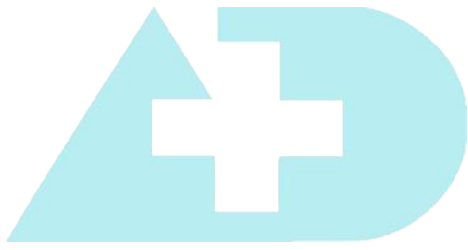
"And the taste was still awesome," Susan added.

Kevin said now the practice is not too time consuming since he retired a few years ago after spending 40 years as a school teacher. Last year some of the gardening had to share time with the remodeling of his parents' home, which took seven months to complete, before he and Susan moved in. "Once I get everything going, it's only one or two hours a day that I spend on it," he said. "Getting everything started it's more. It's going to be more now because I'm not limited to 'spare seconds' like I was when we were working on the house. Now I can go at my own pace."

So now, thanks to Kevin's love of the art of gardening, lots of people see the benefits. He said it isn't really a chore in his estimation, because, "I love garden food, first of all. Once it gets in your blood it kind of becomes your thing. You've got to have it. And I give a lot to people when I find the right kind of people to give it to. I guess I'm like Dad that way; I enjoy sharing with others."







## A NIGHT DOWNTOWN *Art & Design*

Spending the night in Downtown Jonesboro with the Arkansas State University Art + Design Department was just what the soul needed for a good refresh. The newly renovated Lounge on Huntington Square played host and provided the perfect ambiance.

The first 50 guests received a complimentary Art + Design custom bag with items from event sponsors inside. They then could browse the venue to bid on items in the silent auction or converse with other attendees in the stylish lounge furniture. Be sure to follow the A-State Department of Art + Design on Facebook and Instagram to keep up with the amazing creations and upcoming events.

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# MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE



Spring has sprung, and with it comes the beginning of the wedding season. When planning a wedding, a frequent topic of discussion is whether or not to invite very young children. Some feel a wedding would not be complete without young children while others feel that even the best behaved young children can become restless and disruptive during a long formal ceremony. So, should very young children be included in the guest list?

## The Wedding Guest List Framework

Deciding upon the guest list can be tricky. Many wedding experts suggest that the wedding guest list be considered a framework for the event.

The framework for the guest list usually consists of the following:

- The size of the wedding.
- The style of the wedding
- The cost of the wedding.
- The location of the wedding.
- The formality of the wedding.

Using this framework can help to determine whether or not the wedding will be child friendly.

A guest list that includes young children or a guest list for adults-only may be a difficult choice. Couples should consider how they feel about their wedding ceremony by considering the pros and cons of inviting young children. Here are some guidelines. You may think of many more based on your circumstances.

## Inviting Young Children

Consider inviting young children if you:

- Want them to be a part of the wedding event.
- Feel they are an important part of your family.
- Would like the wedding to also serve as a reunion for family and friends

Linda Lou Moore is a certified etiquette consultant. She offers business professionalism and dining seminars for adults, and etiquette and dining programs for children and teens. Contact via Post Office Box 726, Paragould 72451 or at [manners@paragould.net](mailto:manners@paragould.net).

## Inviting Adults

Consider inviting only adults if you:

- Think young children may be disruptive during the wedding.
- Have selected a location that may not be child friendly.
- Are planning a long, formal, solemn ceremony.
- Want to limit the number of guests.

## Who's Invited?

The first impression guests may have of the wedding is the style of the invitation. Is the wedding formal or casual? Will the wedding be held indoors or outdoors? The invitation often sets the tone of the wedding celebration.

The invitation indicates who is invited. If children are invited then the parents' names are on the outer envelope and then on the inner envelope the parents' names and children's names are listed. If children are not invited then only the parents' names are listed on the outer and inner envelope. If using only one envelope, list the names of those invited.

## Help for Parents and the Wedding Party

Providing a nursery or hiring babysitters to watch very young children during the wedding ceremony and the reception is greatly appreciated by parents, guests and the members of the wedding party. Often a separate card is enclosed in the invitation notifying guests that a nursery or babysitting services will be provided. This service gives the parents an opportunity to attend a wedding and reception that may not be conducive to very young children. Parents and guests can relax and enjoy the ceremony without worrying about a crying child. And, the wedding party can concentrate on the event and not have to be concerned about tired and fidgety young children.

## Quote of the Day:

"A happy marriage is a long conversation which always seems too short."

~ Andre Maurois, French Writer



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# It's Worth the WORK

BY GABBY POWELL



For the past four years, Alex Cole has lived and breathed agriculture and Christian higher education. As a member of the inaugural Williams Works class, Alex will graduate from Williams Baptist University with a degree in Secondary Social Studies Education in May of this year (debt-free), but this opportunity has given him much more than just the degree. The Williams Works Program has advanced Alex's management skills, agricultural knowledge, and hands-on experience working with others. These are all things that the traditional college experience would not have given him, had he taken another route.

Alex's time spent in the Williams Works program was served on Eagle Farms, one of the various work opportunities available to Works students. Eagle Farms plays the foundational role of the program. There, students grow produce on the university-owned fields and in two greenhouses. From there, it is sold at the Williams Corner Store on Highway 67, used to prepare meals at the campus cafeteria, sold to local businesses, and utilized in various other ways. Alex was chosen early on for his leadership qualities and green thumb to be the Farm Manager, where he oversaw other students who worked on the farm and helped teach others the skills he had gathered.

When asked where his green thumb came from, Alex will most likely tell you of his time spent with his grandfather in Manila. "In high school, I worked with my grandpa on his 2-acre garden – you name it, we probably grew it!" This is where Alex became familiar with growing produce such as squash, cucumber, zucchini, okra, tomatoes. All of which you can also find seasonally from Eagle Farms!

"It was about senior year, and I didn't know where I was going to college," Cole said. Luckily for him, he scrolled upon Williams Baptist University's live announcement on Facebook of the works programs and that a farm would be a major part of it. This seemed to be a sign for the wandering soon-to-be graduate. "I hopped on the opportunity, and I was blessed to be a part of it." In fact, he would be the first signee, for he signed up before that live video had ended!

Between time spent studying for his midterms and final exams, Alex is also a part of the Williams Bluegrass Band, president of the WBU Bancroft Society, and a member of the Phi Alpha Theta Honors group, along with various other extracurriculars. He has been a vital player in sharing the good news of the Williams Works Program. Some stages where he has been allowed to share his works story include the



Arkansas Baptist Association Banquet, various university Preview Days, and even to Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders when she recently made a visit to campus to see what this booming program was all about. However, managing his academic, social, and work lives did not come without its challenges.

“Just finding that get up and go each morning ...” That was one of the biggest hurdles for Alex, as well as almost every other college student. But it was the works program that pushed him to find motivation. Knowing the goal of graduation was just around the corner, every morning got just a bit easier to find the drive to work hard in every aspect.

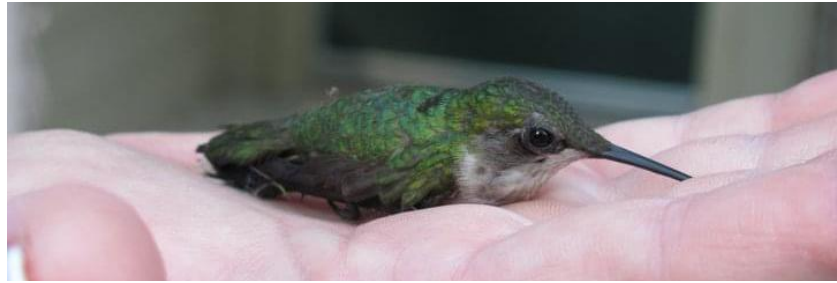
And while his experiences at Williams Baptist University and on Eagle Farms have taught him countless lessons, this was not where he learned what career he was called to: “I always knew I wanted to teach, history specifically.” Some may wonder what farm life and teaching have in common, but Alex is quick to point out the similarities for you.

He said, “I am learning essential managing skills here. Both scenarios include managing groups of people!” So, whether it is in the field or in the classroom, Alex knows his skills are being fine-tuned for whatever lies ahead.

Alex is currently in his final student internship, where he is stationed at Valley View High School. There he is able to use the culmination of real-world experience from the farm and content curriculum knowledge from the classroom. Alex believes it was divine timing that he was able to scroll upon the Williams Works announcement post, and he would urge anyone interested in the program to go for it. “It has changed my life for the better,” he said.

Students who are accepted into the Williams Works program agree to work 16 hours per week throughout the fall and spring semesters. This labor will fully cover their tuition and student service fees. Select students will then have the option to work 40 hours per week throughout the summer months to cover their upcoming room and board fees. Job options include working on Eagle Farms, in the Williams Corner Store, at The Hotel Rhea, in the new meat processing plant, or with various local industries.

# LET THE WILD *Stay Wild!*



Throughout my career in conservation education, and now in retirement, I receive a bevy of calls each spring regarding critters. As the weather warms and animals become more active, human interactions are likely to occur. This heightened activity, along with nature's mommas having their babies, leads to some interesting encounters. It might be an "abandoned" baby animal, a snake in someone's personal space, or an unidentified animal intruder.

Calls about baby animals that have been displaced are some of the most common and are often the most difficult in which to explain the proper course of action. I understand that most any baby animal exudes cuteness. I also understand people that are concerned and want to help. But I also know how nature works and sometimes it is best to let her do her duty.

Some years ago, we had family friends that lived in the Hardy area. The wife called one day, concerned about a fawn deer that had appeared near their house. She had not seen the mother and was worried about the young animal's safety and survival. We talked through the issue and I assured her the mother deer was close by and was taking care of the baby. A couple of days later she called again. The fawn had moved to another area of the yard, but still seemed to be unattended. I once again assured her the doe was nearby, nursing the baby and taking care of its needs. A couple of days later she called again with a different report. Excitedly she explained how the mother deer had shown up and the healthy fawn left with her, heading off into the forest.

When we think of caring for babies, we think in human terms. We had a grandbaby a couple of years ago and I am not sure if Hallie Ruth was outside arm's reach of a parent or grandparent for the first few months of her life. But animals are very different. A white-tailed doe, for example, will have her fawns and then stay somewhat away from them for the first few days of their life, only returning to nurse and nurture for short periods of time. This is done to alleviate the scent in

the area and minimize the possibilities of the fawn being sniffed out by predators.

The killdeer bird is a good example of other mannerisms exhibited by animals to deter predators from locating their nests or babies. The killdeer is a ground nester and if their nest is approached, they will perform their "injured" act to try to draw the perceived predator's interest away from the nest. Though this action might work to ward off a predator, these actions often invite investigation and concern by humans that pass by.

If you encounter any baby wild animal ... bird, rabbit, squirrel, etc., the best thing to do is leave it alone. But that is not in human nature and we have had many animals pass through our household, from baby deer to coyote pups to infant squirrels and rabbits, most of the time after a call from a concerned citizen. I always tried to care for the animal the best I could in the short term, and then get it to a trained professional for long term care. Sometimes this worked for the animal, sometimes it did not. Please contact a trained animal rehabilitator to handle any baby animal.

Do not take in any of these wild animals as pets. I realize there are occasional success stories with a raccoon or a squirrel or some other animal being raised in captivity, but most of the time the outcome is not good for the animal. There are also very stringent rules on wild animals in captivity, so please check [agfc.com](http://agfc.com) for details before consideration.

Some of the more interesting calls over the years were about encounters with wildlife around the home. The most frequent animal folks had encounters with? As Indiana Jones said, "It always had to be snakes!" Snake questions continue to be very common by call, text or message. Before the advent of cell phones and pictures, the description was always a "big and black, six-foot-long viper that's trying to get me!" While that may be a little dramatic, that very call happened more than

## CHUCK LONG

Avid Outdoorsman  
Retired Outdoor Educator



once. Most often now, I get a picture and a “what is it” and “is it deadly” question.

Arkansas is home to about forty species of snakes. Most snake encounters will be with nonvenomous snakes. Knowing that fact and having the experience of handling and studying snakes, I still have that quick gasp/jump reaction that snakes incite. I understand the fear but, for the most part, it is misguided. Many snake species are very beneficial. The various rat snake species, the various king snake species and even the garter snakes provide great control of rodents, insects and other vermin. But even though they are often “good” snakes, these animals still cause dramatic reactions among most people.

One of the most interesting calls about snakes came from a friend who had a snake encounter in his shop. He was raising the garage door and something bit him on the head. He looked up and was face to face with a black rat snake. As you might imagine, he had that typical gasp/jump reaction with that snake.

As far as other animal questions might go, coons in the yard, squirrels in the attic and skunks under the house tend to happen quite often. Rabbits in the garden, deer in the crops and birds roosting on the eaves of the porch are also common. As folks move into these animals’ habitats and populations of these animals increase, these interactions will continue.

The best thing we can do is become more informed about the animals around us. Take the time to learn about their habits and habitats. Take the time to understand they are out there making a living just like we are.

If you have any questions about wild animals, the Forrest L. Wood Crowley’s Ridge Nature Center in Jonesboro can provide some answers. I will be glad to help as well. Get out and enjoy the beauty of spring and I hope to see you out there!

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 4/8 - Monday at 7:00pm, Nightwing [showpass.com/nightwing](http://showpass.com/nightwing)  
 4/12-13 - Friday & Saturday at 7:00pm, Ultimate Oldies  
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 4/22 - Monday at 7:00pm, Bluegrass Monday [kasu.org/tickets](http://kasu.org/tickets)  
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# SAVE THE DATE

## DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD EVENTS



*April 5th*

6:00 p.m.

Singo Bingo at the Community Pavilion (The Main Dish)  
Main Street Paragould Event



*April 5th-8th*

Eclipse Art Show

Open during showtimes. Visit [collinstheatre.com](http://collinstheatre.com)  
Downtown Collins Theatre



*April 6th*

7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Solar Eclipse --  
Downtown After Hours  
EVE  
Main Street Paragould Event



*April 6th*

7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Downtown After Hours  
Everyday Life  
Main Street Paragould Event



*April 8th*

7:00 p.m.

Nightwing  
[showpass.com/nightwing](http://showpass.com/nightwing)  
Downtown Collins Theatre



*April 22nd*

7:00 p.m.

Bluegrass Monday  
[kasu.org/tickets](http://kasu.org/tickets)  
Downtown Collins Theatre

*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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# PET

# of the MONTH

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BY KERRI STOREY SPEARS



**C**hief Spears (also known as Doug) is a year-and-a-half-old miniature Sheepadoodle. He is chocolate merle in color and has green eyes. His family is Kevin, Kerri, and Walker Spears of Jonesboro. The Spears family welcomed sweet baby Chief into their lives October 11, 2022, and instantly fell head over heels for their new floofy puppy!

Chief loves to take long walks around the neighborhood with Kevin, practice his "circus tricks" with Walker, and hang out in the kitchen with Kerri as she cooks dinner. He also likes to sit on the back deck and

watch the golfers and geese on the golf course. But his favorite activity is knocking all of the throw pillows off the couch multiple times a day! His favorite napping spots are in the recliner with Kevin or on the back of the couch (after he has knocked all of the pillows onto the floor).

He enjoys his regular dog food but loves a peanut butter flavored treat and crunching on ice cubes. Even though he can be bossy at times (that's the sheep dog part), he has the best temperament and loves to meet people. The Spears family could not imagine life without Chief. He's the "goodest" boy!



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Jennifer Rollings

# DON'T MISS THE SECOND ANNUAL



The Oasis Film & Digital Media Fest, a vibrant showcase of regional and international filmmaking talent, is set to captivate audiences on April 26 and 27 in Jonesboro at The Foundation of Arts. Born out of a visionary desire to spotlight the best filmmakers in Northeast Arkansas, the festival places a special emphasis on nurturing and celebrating the emerging talents of film students.

With the goal of providing a platform for storytellers to share their narratives with a broader audience, the Oasis Film Festival is committed to fostering creativity and collaboration within the filmmaking community. The festival's primary focus is on celebrating films created in and around the Northeast Arkansas (NEA) region. However, the organizers extend a warm welcome to filmmakers from across Arkansas and the globe, recognizing the abundance of talent that flourishes outside the confines of the Hollywood system.

The Oasis Film Festival promises an eclectic mix of cinematic experiences, featuring a diverse range of genres and styles. Attendees can expect an immersive journey through the world of film, with screenings of thought-provoking features, engaging documentaries, and innovative short films. The festival also features a variety of workshops tailored for both students and adults, providing valuable

insights and hands-on experiences to enhance their skills and understanding of the filmmaking process.

In addition to screenings, the festival will host panel discussions, Q&A sessions with filmmakers, and special events designed to enrich the overall experience for attendees.

"We are thrilled to bring the Oasis Film Festival to Jonesboro, creating a space where filmmakers from Northeast Arkansas and beyond can come together to showcase their talent and connect with a wider audience," said Kirstyn Salehi, Marketing and Partnership Director for the event. "Our commitment to fostering creativity and inclusivity reflects the diverse and dynamic landscape of filmmaking, both locally and globally."

For more information about the Oasis Film Festival, including ticket details, the festival schedule, and workshop registration, please visit online at [facebook.com/oasisfilmfest/](https://facebook.com/oasisfilmfest/) or check out their website at [oasisfest.org/film](https://oasisfest.org/film). For other inquiries, please email them at [oasisfest@foajonesboro.org](mailto:oasisfest@foajonesboro.org)

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# Backyard PEST CONTROL

BY GABBY POWELL

Longer days, higher temperatures, flowers blooming ... Spring is here! But the coming of spring also brings those pesky backyard pests. We want you to enjoy your back yard this spring, so we've put together a pest control tips list to help you prepare.

1. Spring clean your yard: Get rid of any waste you can find. Old leaves, fallen sticks, old landscaping, etc. Do this regularly throughout the season to prevent shelters for unwanted pests.
2. Get rid of standing water: Clear out your gutters, old planters, fill in divots in your yard, and check anywhere you can think of to prevent standing water. This will take away the breeding ground of those pesky mosquitoes!
3. Water your lawn properly: Overwatering and underwatering your lawn can lead to pest infestations. Irrigation and sprinkler systems are the best way to go to keep your lawn looking good and feeling good.
4. Keep your landscaping in check: Regularly trim and tidy your shrubs, bushes, and trees. Not only does this keep your yard looking great, but it also takes away hiding places for ticks, fleas, mosquitoes, and more.
5. Mow your lawn regularly: Along with regularly tidying your landscaping, you should do the same with your grass. We suggest mowing at least once a week. Insects will have fewer places to hide and you will be able to spot an infestation brewing quicker.
6. Incorporate insect-repellant plants into your landscaping: Certain plants help repel certain pests, so this is a natural way to keep the pests away! Some of these include marigolds, lemongrass, basil, lavender, catnip, and more.
7. Properly store your firewood: While you may want to keep your leftover winter firewood for upcoming bonfires and cookouts, it is essential to store it properly. Stack it on a platform to keep it away from pests that live in the soil – like termites and ants. Also, keep it stacked away from your home and cover it to protect it from moisture. But be sure not to trap the moisture in!
8. Keep waste bins covered: Not only will this keep the smell at bay, but covering your waste bins will help keep insects, like cockroaches, away. Also, avoid keeping your waste bins directly by your house. Insects can smell the trash, so they will be hanging around nearby!
9. Invest in a professional: While you can always go to your local lawn care store and buy insect spray for lawns, this will not be as effective as hiring a professional pest control specialist. Not only will they be able to better protect your lawn and home from pesky pests, but they will also be able to spot a problem before it gets out of hand.



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**PREMIERE**  
MAGAZINE

# Kids Play

in NEA



**PARKS & RECREATION**

APRIL 2024

# HEALTH Matters



**KARAN SUMMITT**  
Retired Health Educator  
25 years educating people of all ages on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. She teaches and writes with a passion for sharing simple, doable strategies that make better health possible for almost everyone.

A healthy eating plan emphasizes the benefits of a mostly plant-food diet high in fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. For maximum good health, these nutrient-dense foods should be in every diet, every day. Go ahead, say it — “IF you can afford them.” There is a widely held perception that the cost of healthy foods is tough on a family’s budget.

Well, maybe ... or maybe not. A healthy diet can be cost-saving. With good planning, money can be saved today when you purchase the food, and vast sums of money can be saved tomorrow, when you are spared the costs associated with preventable diseases. It may not seem like it when you shop, but healthy foods actually save money.

So where do you start? According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average American family spends 11% of its budget on food. Of that amount, for every dollar spent on food, 34.1% was spent on food eaten away from home — restaurants, fast food meals, convenience store snacks and entertainment. When calculating what your family spends for food, don’t forget to add in the cost of eating out. How much are you really spending on food each month?

Now do the comparisons. Most fresh fruits and vegetables, when bought in season, cost less than 50 cents per cup, well under the price

of a candy bar or bag of chips, not to mention an order of French fries. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables tend to cost even less, due to longer shelf life.

Homemade sandwiches and burgers still can be made less expensively, healthier and tastier than their restaurant versions. A premium slice of whole grain wheat bread costs less than 20 cents. That leaves plenty of room to make a hearty sandwich and come in cheaper than a \$5 foot-long sub.

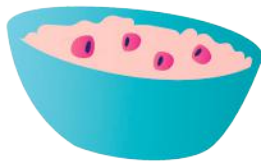
Adopt the habits of a bygone era — shop according to the sale ads. Stock up on the specials that have a long shelf life or can be frozen and build your weekly menus around the foods that are perishable. Cook in bulk several times each week so tomorrow’s meals can be dished up quickly, avoiding the tendency to eat out too often. Sidestep the prepared foods when possible. Not only do they tend to be more expensive, but also they can be less healthy. Processed foods are often higher in fat, salt and sugar than those made at home.

Here are a few other shopping tips that are just good common sense:

- Be willing to do some prep yourself. Fresh cut-up pineapple and watermelon, already-chopped vegetables and fresh fruit cups ARE expensive -- but not because the food cost is high. You are paying someone else to do simple prep plus the cost of the container.







- Don't go hungry.
- Take a list and try to get everything you need in one or two trips each week. The more often you shop, the more likely you will be exceed your budget.
- Buy the largest size packaging you can use without waste and try store brands.

- Increase in cost of insurance co-pays and deductibles due to frequent doctor visits

But the deal breaker for driving home the overall savings of healthy eating may be what you save in healthcare, not in what you spend on food. Try fitting these into your family food budget:

A survey by the National Institutes of Health put a dollar amount on Americans' bad eating habits, estimating our poor diets lead to \$50 billion a year in health care costs. If you've wondered why health insurance rates seem to be going up each year, take an honest look at the foods in your pantry and what they might be doing to your family's health.

- Average out-of-pocket expenses for diabetes is \$3,300-\$4,600 per year
- Hospital, physician and lab costs for a coronary artery bypass in Arkansas is \$53,000
- Monthly medications for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, acid reflux, etc ... ???

In the long run, the best savings plan for retirement might be a healthy lifestyle. The most solid foundation for family finances could be well-nourished kids. A healthy diet pays big dividends today and puts the ball in our court for better health in the future. Invest in yours today with healthy food choices!

# KEEPING KIDS SAFE DURING VEHICLE COLLISIONS

## LE BONHEUR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



As the region's only American College of Surgeons (ACS) Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center, Le Bonheur's Trauma Team treated 329 patients who had been in a motor vehicle collision (MVC) in 2022 and 46% of the patients were not restrained or were improperly restrained. The top injuries they treated were brain injuries, skull fractures, lung and liver injuries and spinal fractures. "Most caregivers understand that infants and toddlers need to be properly restrained in age-appropriate car seats," said Jennifer Taylor, manager of Safe Kids Mid-South and Injury Prevention at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. "However, we find that many are unclear about when it is appropriate to transition growing children between types. We are here to help." Here are tips from Taylor on ensuring children's safety when traveling in a motor vehicle.

Check the car seat label. It will help you make sure it is the right seat for your child's age, weight, height and level of development. As you review your options, select one that is appropriate for your child. Reputable manufacturers should have a detailed label that includes the manufacturer's name, contact information and the date of manufacture. Make sure the car seat has not expired. In general, car seats expire between 6 and 10 years from the date of manufacture.

Check for recalls and expiration dates. A car seat is considered safe, as long as it:

- » meets the latest federal motor vehicle safety standards.
- » is not missing any parts.
- » is not expired.
- » has not been recalled or in a car crash.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Read the car seat manual and follow instructions carefully. Contact Safe Kids Mid-South with

questions about use or use our online [safekids.org](http://safekids.org) to find their Ultimate Car Seat Guide to find an appropriate model for your child's age and weight.

Infants and toddlers should be rear facing. Infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing child safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow children to ride rear facing for two years or more.

Use a harness car seat for as long as possible. Until they reach the height and weight limit allowed by their seat, children should be secured in a harness car seat. Many seats can accommodate children up to 65 pounds or more.

Know when to use a booster seat. When children exceed the harness limits, they should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's lap and shoulder seat belt fits properly. This is often when they have reached at least 4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8 to 12 years old.

Use lap and shoulder belts appropriately. When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use lap and shoulder seat belts for optimal protection.

Children under 13 should ride in the back seat. All children younger than 13 years should be restrained in the rear seats of vehicles for optimal protection.

For more tips and resources to keep kids safe from injuries, please visit [www.lebonheur.org/safekids](http://www.lebonheur.org/safekids).

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ARKANSAS SCHOOL CHOICE

2024 welcomes a new school year of opportunities and resources, and parents now have more options than ever before when it comes to their child's K-12 education. The Arkansas School Choice program opened applications for the 2024-2025 school year on January 1st, and the deadline is fast approaching! May 1st is the deadline for Arkansas School Choice applications.

In 2023, state officials passed the Arkansas LEARNS Act which opened more educational opportunities to Arkansas children. One aspect of the LEARNS Act grants \$6,600 per student per year to pay for educational expenses (the Educational Freedom Accounts). The program is being implemented in increments, but by 2025 this opportunity will be available to all Arkansas families. This gives Arkansas children better access to educational options in the terms of what institution their education is given, whether that be public, private, or at home.

This portion of the LEARNS Act may be available to your family. For more information on Arkansas School Choice, the Arkansas LEARNS Act, or the Educational Freedom Accounts, visit the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education's School Choice and Parent Empowerment page. ([dese.ade.arkansas.gov](https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov))

Contact your local school district or find a form on the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education website by May 1st to complete the School Choice Transfer Form.



## ... Childhood Diabetes, Obesity and Thyroid Conditions Have Something in Common

Arkansas Children's excels at treating them all.

Disruptions to a child's endocrine system, which regulates hormones, can lead to diabetes, obesity, stunted growth or other related conditions. The nationally-ranked pediatric Diabetes and Endocrinology team of experts addresses the physical conditions as well as the mental and emotional issues triggered by those conditions. The care provided by Arkansas Children's supports the whole child and the family or caregivers to make children better today and healthier tomorrow.



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# Parks & Recreation



## Jonesboro Parks & Recreation

Big things are coming for the community in the realm of Jonesboro Parks and Recreation! At Parker Park, construction has begun for a state-of-the-art pool to give you another option to cool off during those hot summer months. Joe Mack Campbell Park has also undergone construction with the addition of two turf fields. Updates on these projects and more can be found on the Jonesboro Parks and Recreation Facebook and Instagram pages.

The month of April also brings in the beginning of spring sports and activities at a variety of Jonesboro parks. The AG for Autism Softball Tournament and the Red Wolf Spring Fling Tournament will both take place at the Southside Softball Complex. The Miracle League season will be in full swing, so stay connected on when you can go support their great cause!

Registering for current activities at Jonesboro Parks and Recreation is easy. Simply visit [jonesboro.org](http://jonesboro.org) and navigate to the Parks and Recreation tab to view active registrations. Whether you're interested in joining sports programs or exploring other recreational activities, registering is just a click away. Reminders of registration openings and deadlines are regularly posted on the parks and recreation social media pages.

## Paragould Parks & Recreation

Paragould Parks and Recreation always has an activity going for you and your kids! A new offering this month is the Cardboard Boat Regatta. Those who sign up will build a boat according to the rules and be judged on most creative design, costumes, team spirit, and most spectacular sinking of their boat (Titanic Award). A stryder bike will also be available for kids to learn to use. This will teach riding basics to the littlest riders to help develop balance, coordination, and all other riding skills. This will take place on Saturday, April 27th, at 10 a.m. Go to the Paragould Community Center and sign up for this event and see what else is currently open.

During the long-awaited eclipse weekend, the Parks and Recreation Department plans to fill up the calendar with fun activities for the whole family. There will be a movie in the park, games, vendors, and educational opportunities. Camping sites are also available, so contact them for more information or visit [cityofparagould.com](http://cityofparagould.com) and click the parks tab.

Paragould Parks and Recreation sports leagues include volleyball, softball, basketball, kickball, and more. Water Aerobics, line dancing, and step aerobics are also offered. Follow them on Facebook as "Paragould Arkansas Parks" to stay up to date on registration deadlines and upcoming events.





**Faith**



**Fun**



**Family**



# It's Summer Camp Season!

Crowley's Ridge Youth Camp (CRYC) has been a part of the Northeast Arkansas landscape for decades. Whether attending day camp or an overnight camp session, children enjoy days filled with high-energy, exciting fun. From wild themes and crazy games to pool time and adventure-based challenge activities, children have an experience they won't soon forget. CRYC is located at The Ridge Retreat and Adventure Center outside Walcott, Ark.

## Summer 2024 Camp Sessions

| Camp Name      | Dates      | Ages  | Cost  |
|----------------|------------|-------|-------|
| Day Camp       | June 3-6   | 5-9   | \$100 |
| Camp Discovery | June 9-14  | 9-12  | \$200 |
| Camp Adventure | June 23-28 | 9-16  | \$200 |
| Teen Week      | July 7-12  | 13-18 | \$200 |

— *Early Bird Discount of \$10 Off Ends May 17th for ALL Sessions* —

For information about CRYC summer camp sessions at The Ridge Retreat and Adventure Center, visit [www.theridgecenter.org](http://www.theridgecenter.org) or contact Gary Money at 870.573.6766 or [theridge@childrenshomes.org](mailto:theridge@childrenshomes.org).

**Crowley's Ridge Youth Camp @**



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The Ridge Retreat and Adventure Center is owned and operated by Children's Homes, Inc.



BY KAROLINE RISIKER

# Jennifer Harper

## Enthusiasm QUEEN!

Everyone can always *get better* and *be better*. We want to *get better* and *BE better!*



It's really great to talk to someone about their job and their sentences are full of exclamation points. Jennifer Harper, principal at Baldwin Elementary, is that person who bursts with enthusiasm. She is a cheerleader to both students and staff and says quickly the best part of her job is the kids. "They are so funny ... and so honest!" she said. "I love seeing them grow and seeing that spark when they learn something new, or finally understand something they have been struggling with."

Jennifer is on her fourth year as an administrator and her third year at Baldwin Elementary. She has a Bachelor of Science in Education in English, a Masters in Educational Leadership, and a Specialist in Educational Leadership with a focus in Superintendency. She taught high school English, math and drama for 22 years before becoming an administrator. Jennifer, a self-proclaimed "doer" and worker bee, leads by example, pointing to the fact she always has to be doing something all of the time. She also considers herself to still be a teacher, just in a different role in the building. But her greatest motivators are the people. "I love the people I work with. We have a ball at Baldwin! I love the kids. At first, I was not sure I would be able to do elementary after so many years in high school," she said. "But, kids are kids. They want to feel safe, loved, and cared for. That is all age groups!"

Jennifer loves working with the elementary kids because "they aren't worried about being cool or not cool yet," she said. "You can walk around in a crown. You can wear silly costumes. You can go out and swing with them during recess." She knows this from experience. "When we had to wear masks back during Covid, I got a huge crown at a flea market and I would go around the school as the Mask Queen looking for MasKINGs. If the kids were wearing their masks appropriately, they would get extra recess for the class. It was something that wasn't fun, but we turned it into something fun." Other things she does to help the school reach its goals include having drawings for toys on Fridays for perfect attendance when they needed to raise attendance rates. Or when they needed a certain attendance rate building-wide, she

promised the kids she would camp out in a tent on the school roof top if they made it, a goal they came close to, but didn't make. So, the fun is a tool she uses, but she emphasizes she tries to have the fun geared toward reaching the goal.

Maybe one of the biggest reasons Jennifer is so successful is because she tries so hard to help the kids be successful. "Every decision I make is guided by 'what is best for the kids?' Once we decide what is best for the kids, everything else just falls into place," she said. She also adds: "I just do what needs to be done. If there is a need, I try to fill it."

Kayla Sherlin, Library Media Specialist at Baldwin Elementary, emphasizes what an outstanding administrator Jennifer is. "To say being an educator in 2024 is challenging is nothing short of an understatement, but Mrs. Harper works with such determination to make every day count for both her students and staff," she said. "(She is) just what our small school needed."

Jennifer wants people to know that school administrators need "the public to trust and understand that we are working our hardest and to the best of our abilities to make sure their child has the best life they can possibly live. We love your children and want the best for them, too," she said. She adds that the biggest need for children is for them to just be kids. "There are so many things competing for their attention. Too many kids are having to make grown up decisions (or they think they have to make grown up decisions) at a younger and younger age. They just need to be kids," she said.

Jennifer is also a busy mom of four girls. "One is grown with her own family, one is in college, and two are still in school. The two still in school keep us very busy!" she said. "They play multiple sports. I spend most of my time on a field or in a gym. But I do love to read. I read as much as I can."

Where does Jennifer want to go from here? "We are going UP!! Everyone can always get better and be better. We want to get better and BE better!" said Jennifer.

# WHAT DO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS DO FOR YOU?

STEWART PEDIATRIC THERAPY BY JILL STEWART, MSPT

In April we celebrate the lovely professionals of Occupational Therapy. In honor of this, we would like to let you know what these great therapists can do for you.

Occupational therapists use everyday activities to help people of all ages develop necessary fine motor skills. In pediatrics, this looks like assisting children establish the abilities that will help them later in life. Therapists work with the children to diagnose any underlying variables that impair their social or cognitive development, which varies from child to child. Then, therapists explore potential solutions and create a unique treatment plan to meet their patients' needs.

Occupational therapists work with children in the following areas:

- improving fine motor skills so they can grasp and release toys and develop good handwriting skills
- addressing hand-eye coordination to improve kids' play and school skills
- maintaining positive behaviors in all environments
- evaluating the need for specialized equipment, such as wheelchairs, splints, bathing equipment, dressing devices, or communication aids
- improving attention and social skills to allow development of interpersonal relationships.

Oftentimes, games, puzzles, songs, and physical exercises are used to reduce potential anxieties about therapy. This play allows children to explore the world around them and learn to interact with the things around them. Through play and other therapeutic tactics, children develop integral abilities and increase their self-esteem.

If your child is having trouble mastering skills such as gross motor skills, sensory processing, visual-perceptual skills, and other abilities that will allow them to investigate and navigate their environment on their own, then they might benefit from Occupational Therapy Services.



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# Four Generations of 4-H

BY STEPHANIE COOPER

At the heart of Paragould High School lies a humble, motivated, and gifted student named Andrea Pillow. Andi, or so we call her, is an energetic sweetheart who spends a lot of time studying, extra time catching softballs, and the rest on her home farm. That dirt road she calls The Pillow Farm has a history deeply rooted in NEA that most are unaware of, as her family is home to four or more generations of 4-H members.

4-H is a youth development program present throughout all of the United States. Here in Arkansas, the program is conducted by the University of Arkansas System, Division of Agriculture, and Cooperative Extension Service. 4-H's symbol, a four-leaf clover, emphasizes: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. This symbol emphasizes the importance of youth in communities and how their leadership and growth can impact the world around them. 4-H believes its recruits can develop valuable skills that last a lifetime and provide them with a program that has access to challenges and the tools to problem solve. The core elements of the program are youth leadership, youth-adult partnerships, life skills learning, and community service. The 4-H program believes kinesthetic education can break the barrier between completing a task for a test vs. retaining useful tools that last through adulthood. This requires hands-on learning, and studies show this type of learning can reach students on different academic and personal levels. Almost all 4-H time that students invest is strictly volunteer and outside of school hours, although schools do allow "school activity" passes to those on official 4-H business representing their districts.

Andi represents hers, the Paragould Rams, at events where she has to get her hands dirty in local gardens. Still, she also travels to places like Atlanta, Georgia, for formal 4-H events. There, she socializes with other 4-H students in the U.S. in formal wear, representing Arkansas, NEA, and Paragould High School. Andi is well versed in conversation because she was raised knowing 4-H from birth, and the story is the same for her mother, Amanda Pillow, and her mother, Paula Norman.



Andi Pillow with other 4-H students  
in Atlanta, GA



Victoria Hickman, Madeline Prater,  
& Andi Pillow





Paula Norman, Maddie Pillow, Madeline Prater, Charley "Poppy" Prater

"My grandma, Paula Norman, has been my biggest inspiration as she pushes me to do almost everything 4-H offers. As a result, I have gotten to travel all over the nation and meet all kinds of wonderful people. I have participated in and won many events at the local, regional, state, and national levels. I have also gotten to participate in many different community service events, which have not only impacted me but have changed the lives of countless others across the nation. If it hadn't been for my grandma, I wouldn't have so many 4-H memories and friends."

Personally, as Andi's teacher for a couple of years, I remember her resilience as she showed up with bruises after a game or tread marks from a cow after livestock work gone wrong. The Pillow family told me a sweet story of Laura Henson, three years old at the time and now a PHS math teacher, who would sleep on a two-thousand-pound bull named Herc during county shows. Passersby didn't really understand how it was safe or how their family dynamic worked, but that's okay. She was always safe, and everyone knew it, especially big ole Herc. This leadership initiative and love for all things Southern is a characteristic rooted deep in Andi's family, as her mother Amanda was a 4-H officer and is just as strong and tenacious as her ancestors who settled here in 1964 from Alabama. Andi says generations of life on the farm, family meals at the dinner table, and funny stories have brought her lots of joy here in NEA.

Life on the farm can be challenging, and it takes a particular family to get up early for livestock, work a regular shift, dedicate time to

athletics, volunteer work, and livestock again at the end of the day. However, nothing can compare to the love of helping others and the love of animals. I think the best way to do this family's story justice is to let Miss Andi close us out with her Southern twang:

"All of my life, my family has helped others in our community. My great grandfather had a community garden for many years and when it was harvest or planting time our 4-H group would go and help. The food was given out for free to anyone who wanted or needed it. He was a man who would help anyone in need. Poppy passed down this way of living through the generations. Earlier this year when he passed, we saw just how impactful his spirit was to many people in our community. See, in 4-H the people you meet are not just strangers but are friends that will become family and they will be willing to help whenever they can. 4-H has allowed me to become a part of the community by helping others around me. This long history of heavy community involvement has allowed my family to meet a ton of people and connect with them so that anywhere we go there will always be someone that we know. This has made me never meet a stranger as most of the time they know me through my family. My great grandmother started out being a 4-H leader. Then my grandmother followed in her footsteps. Now my great-aunt and my mom are 4-H leaders. As a proud female 4-H member, I know they have touched the lives of many and pushed them to 'make the best better,' our 4-H motto. I can only hope to make such a lasting impact like what my family has."

# GET INVOLVED *with Greene County 4-H*

BY BLAKE DAVIS, U OF A DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE GREENE COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT- 4H



Greene County 4-H BB Practice



4-H Day at the Capitol



Greene County 4-H Day Camp

**4**-H is the youth development program conducted by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service and is conducted in cooperation with county governments and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Greene County 4-H Youth Development Program's mission is to provide opportunities for youth to acquire knowledge, develop life skills, form attitudes, and practice behavior that will enable them to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society. 4-H teaches leadership, citizenship, and life skills children will use throughout their lives.

4-H, the nation's largest youth development and empowerment organization, is known for teaching these life skills through project

work, public speaking, record keeping, service learning, and other educational activities. There are more than 50 projects to choose from such as: fishing, gardening and horticulture, livestock, performing arts, photography, sewing, shooting sports, and much more. Volunteer leaders are the backbone of the 4-H program. County extension agents provide training for leaders and they, in turn, teach youth groups. The 4-H program is family-oriented and is for all youth between ages 5-19, from all racial, cultural, economic, and social backgrounds.

For additional information on the Greene County 4-H program, please contact the Greene County Cooperative Extension Service. The Greene County Cooperative Extension Service is located at 4410 Fairview Road in Paragould and can be reached by telephone at 870-236-6921.

**Stewart Pediatric Therapy**

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The banner features a blue background with colorful bunting at the top. It includes a cartoon illustration of a boy and a girl holding hands. On the right side, there is a photograph of a woman with blonde hair interacting with a young boy who is sitting on a blue ball. The woman is holding a pink piggy bank. The text is in various fonts and colors, including red, white, and green.

# Lessons LEARNED IN Motherhood

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE



Imaginary play is one of my top struggles as a parent. Eva loves to play ice cream parlor, princesses, find the monsters, and all sorts of other made-up worlds I truly love seeing her create. But I find it hard to get myself into that childlike mindset. Instead, I try to find other ways for us to spend meaningful time together.

Luckily, I have included her in all of my gardening endeavors since she was a baby, and this has bloomed into a wonderful way for us to play together. We would browse Adams Nursery and Lowe's on sunny days, and The Tiny Twig if it was dreary. It got to the point where she would request to go plant shopping.

At first she would dig in the dirt next to me, pick up leaves and sticks. As she got older I gave her her own gardening tools. She helped me pull weeds. Eventually she was able to help me plant vegetable seeds and I could show her how each plant grew, and how to harvest.

We recently planted six trays of starter seeds. It was honestly so much fun watching her carefully fill each pod with dirt, poke a hole in it, and carefully add each seed. Eva was invested in every single step, even labeling the trays so we know what is what. When the seeds finally sprouted, she was so excited. She has already started talking about planting her own flowers in our garden this year, and she spends sunny days bringing me daffodils and nettles.

I'm a firm believer in children spending as much time as possible in nature. There is so much to learn and enjoy, so watching my daughter love the outdoors and growing as a gardener has brought me so much joy. Imaginary play is my husband's forte, but Eva and I have found our special moments in the plants and dirt.

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# COLLINS THEATRE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN KICKOFF ROAST OF MAYOR AGEE

The Collins Theatre has been a central part of Paragould's social and civic life since its opening in 1925 as the Capitol Theatre. It has hosted events as far ranging as Broadway shows such as "George White's Scandals," the world premiere of "The Man Who Came to Dinner" starring Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan, and Paragould's own Richard Travis, humorist Will Rogers, World War II war bond drives, Hospital Auxiliary "Belles & Beaux" shows, countless Greene County Fine Arts productions, the Ultimate Oldies show, filming of a music video by the Kentucky Headhunters, school shows, actor-comedian Jon Lovitz, rock and country concerts, magic shows, and much more.

All changes to The Collins Theatre over the last 99 years have been made to maintain the beauty and historic charm of the original theatre while enhancing the experience of the viewing public. The Collins Theatre Foundation, Inc. (a not-for-profit corporation created in 1990 to transform the Collins Theatre into a modern community center for the performing arts) has proposed improvements to move into the next hundred years with the same goal. How can you help? \$500,000 in local commitments and private and public grants to accomplish the board's set goals. Pledges can be spread over three to five years. Donors can choose

to direct their gift to either capital improvements, debt, or at the discretion of the foundation. The Collins Theatre Foundation, Inc. is a recognized non-profit organization and donations are tax deductible.

"The Capitol Theatre is yours and we are going to make you proud of it," founder John A. Collins said at the theatre's grand opening on October 15, 1925. Help us continue to make you proud.

To kick off the Capital Campaign, Collins Theatre presented the "Roast of Mayor Josh Agee." Local roasters, including "Big O" Brian Osborn, Kimberly Dale, Judge Rusty McMillon, and Jared Pickney, teamed with Roastmaster and Comedian Mitch Fatel to lay in their best roasts on the mayor. With all proceeds from the event benefiting the Collins Theatre Foundation, guests enjoyed the show and VIPs were treated to hors d'oeuvres provided by CHOW at 118.

To support the Collins Theatre Foundation Capital Campaign, call 870-236-6252 for more details.



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# 53RD ANNUAL JUNIOR AUXILIARY CHARITY BALL A NIGHT OUT OF THIS WORLD

**M**embers and guests of the 53rd Annual Junior Auxiliary Charity Ball experienced a night that was truly Out of this World! It wasn't the throwback dinner, auction items, live band, games, or anything else that made the night special—though these things were all amazing – it was the dedication of the Junior Auxiliary members, sponsors, and guests to our Craighead County children that made the night Out of this World.

The night's festivities included a neon cocktail hour, a delicious, themed dinner, galactic dancing and games, and speakers such as City of Jonesboro Mayor Harold Copenhaver, Diana Davis, Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro President Haley Thomas, and more. A live and silent auction also took place, including items such as a Disney Getaway Vacation, Exotic Dove Hunting Expedition, Sissy's Shopping Trip, and more!

The annual charity ball supports Junior Auxiliary's mission to improve the lives of children emotionally, physically, and educationally by developing and implementing programs to meet their needs. Junior Auxiliary's 95 volunteers volunteer roughly 3,000 hours a year to serve Craighead County youth – more than 5,000 young lives are impacted through the program's 12 service projects. All proceeds from the charity ball go back to supporting these projects and initiatives.

Projects of the Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro include their Community Outreach Programs, Consolidated Youth Services, Crown Club, Girl's Enrichment for Junior and Senior High, Growing Healthy, Kick Start Kindergarten, Literacy programs, Scholarships, Share & Wear, The Learning Center, and Molly the Megabody. For more information on these initiatives or Junior Auxiliary as a whole, visit [jajonesboro.org](http://jajonesboro.org) and follow them on Facebook.

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# Coco for Coconut!

BY KATIE COLLINS

## Coconut Pecan Cookies

### Ingredients:

1 ¼ cup all-purpose flour  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1 stick unsalted butter  
*room temperature*  
½ cup brown sugar, packed  
½ cup granulated sugar  
1 large egg  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 1/3 cup coconut flakes  
1 cup chopped pecans

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugars together until smooth. Add the egg and vanilla and mix until smooth.



Gradually add in the flour mixture until it's all combined. Stir in the coconut and pecans. Drop balls of dough about 3 inches apart on a parchment lined cookie sheet. Bake until lightly browned, about 8-12 minutes. Move to a wire rack to cool.

It seems like most people have strong opinions about coconut – coconut lovers really love it, and the haters really hate it. I've always been a fan of coconut, so I was more than ready to try these cookies this month. The MOR Media staff is quite often my group of taste testers, and they declared them delicious!

The pecans are optional, but I think they add a pleasant crunch. You could use other nuts, like almonds or macadamia if you prefer those. Toast your coconut first or mix toasted and untoasted for varying textures. Enjoy these Coconut Pecan Cookies!

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# CELEBRATING 100 YEARS BURL LANGSTON

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

**B**url Langston was not only the guest of honor, he was the life of the party ... the long life of the party as friends and loved ones helped celebrate his 100th birthday at the Chateau On The Ridge in Paragould during March.

Decked out in a shirt that said, "It took me 100 years to look this good," Burl sang, danced and kept the crowd laughing with his humorous answers to questions posed by The Chateau's Activity Director, Missy Orr. His serious admonitions regarding keys to a long life included "Love the Lord" and "Take care of yourself," but it was his fun-loving remarks that kept everyone tuned in.

As local law enforcement honored him with a drive-through featuring flashing lights atop their vehicles, Burl let slip a long-held family secret that opened the eyes of his daughter, Cindy Herren. When Missy asked him if he'd ever been arrested, he admitted once in his younger days he was the passenger in a vehicle when the driver was pulled over for being drunk. "I wasn't drinking," he assured her, "but I wouldn't take their test" for sobriety and ended up spending the night in jail, much to the surprise of his adult daughter.

Using that bit of information as a catalyst, a deputy soon approached Burl and flashed his handcuffs at him, telling him he was going to have to take him in. Everyone -- especially Burl -- got a good laugh out of it, just as they did most of the proceedings of the afternoon filled with storytelling, picture taking and spirited celebration.



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The advertisement features three women modeling different styles of medical scrubs: light green, pink, and dark blue. The background is a mix of purple and white with decorative swirls. Logos for Jonesboro Premiere (March 2023), URA, and Jonesboro Regional (Member of Commerce) are displayed. The text promotes healthWear inc. as a one-stop shop for uniforms and medical supplies, providing the address, phone number, and website.

# 2024 RED DRESS GALA A NIGHT OF DIAMONDS & PEARLS



Randy & Tara Burcham, Mark & Wendy McHale



Adalai Weeks



The 2024 Red Dress Gala, hosted by the volunteers of the Community Health Education Foundation (CHEF), was held on the last Saturday evening in February at Centennial Hall on the campus of Arkansas State University. Community members came dressed in their diamonds and pearls to raise funds and awareness for CHEF and celebrate the 2024 honorees. The honorees included Connie Hill, former Mayor Harold Perrin, Amy Crain, Farmers & Merchants Bank, and Tim and Rhonda Kincade (owners of Pakmail). These individuals and businesses were chosen based on their dedication and support to the mission of CHEF, which is to be “a premiere health non-profit health organization that annually provides health education and chronic disease prevention programs, through a wide array of education, conferences, screenings, AED placements and health partnerships in Northeast Arkansas and around the nation.” Guests enjoyed a lovely dinner complete with a champagne fountain

and delicious food, décor filled with diamond sparkles, live and silent auctions, and live music from The Sexton Connection of Memphis.

The Community Health Education Foundation is composed of volunteers from within the community with the sole purpose of serving their community in Northeast Arkansas. They host several events throughout the year such as the Red Dress Gala, Women’s Health Conference, and the Corporate Olympics. Money raised at CHEF’s fundraising events supports their community health education initiatives to spread awareness of heart disease and grow their AED Placement Program.

For more information on the Community Health Education Foundation, visit them online at [chefjonesboro.org](http://chefjonesboro.org).

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# DON'T MISS THESE Upcoming Events in NEA

## 2024 Solar Eclipse

The 2024 Solar Eclipse is upon us! We cannot wait to see all the ways you experience the eclipse, but we've put together a quick list of options for you. Be sure to visit [exploremornea.com](http://exploremornea.com) for a complete list.

### Saturday, April 6th

Downtown Paragould  
Afterhours Concert Series  
EVE  
7:30pm

### Sunday, April 7th

Downtown Paragould  
Afterhours Concert Series  
Everyday Life  
7:30pm

### Sunday, April 7th

Oasis Arts & Eats Fest  
12:00pm-4:00pm

### Monday, April 8th

Scots in the Dark  
Lyon College  
11:00am-4:00pm

### Monday, April 8th

2024 Solar Eclipse at the  
Crowley's Ridge Nature Center  
9:00am-4:00pm

## 3rd Annual Art With Heart Student Showcase

CityYouth Ministries is gearing up for the 3rd Annual Art With Heart Student Showcase. The student art show and auction will take place on April 11, 2024, at Wildflower Event Venue. The Showcase will begin at 5:00 p.m. and last until 7:30 p.m. with refreshments, art displays and an art auction of both student pieces and pieces created by local artists. This event shines a light on the efforts made by CityYouth to encourage the development of fine art skills as a part of their after school program.

CityYouth's main focus is to provide life-changing opportunities that will transform the lives of youth and the Jonesboro community. At CityYouth they provide essential needs for students and families in inner city Jonesboro through their after school and summer programs. Join us at Art With Heart to make a difference in the lives of children in our community. Tickets are \$25.00 and can be purchased at [www.cityyouthnea.org](http://www.cityyouthnea.org)

## St. Bernards Triple Swing

Pack your bags and get ready for your best vacation yet! The 2024 St. Bernards Triple Swing will take you on a trip to Margaritaville.

Three events encompass the 2024 Triple Swing festivities: a Dinner Dance, Pickleball Tournament, and Golf Scramble. The Dinner Dance will take place on Friday, June 21, from 6:00 pm - 11:00 pm at the St. Bernards Auditorium, located at 505 East Washington Avenue. The Pickleball Tournament will take place on Tuesday, June 25th, at the Ridgepoint Country Club, located at 2510 Ridgepoint Drive in Jonesboro. This event will be in tournament format and is open to all ages and levels. The St. Bernards Advocates Triple Swing Golf Scramble will take place on Monday, June 24th and Tuesday, June 25th at the Ridgepoint Country Club, located at 2510 Ridgepoint Drive in Jonesboro. The tournament features four flights with a four-player scramble format.

This year, funds raised will be used to purchase equipment for the St. Bernards Cancer Center. For more information on each Triple Swing event, visit [tripleswing.org](http://tripleswing.org).

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# HAPPENINGS

## BRTC CTC STUDENTS ATTEND WELD-A-THON

Black River Technical College's BRTC @ The Armory Career and Technical Center (CTC) students recently attended Weld-A-Thon on the ASUN-Jonesboro campus.

Students visited with several employers including Greenbrier, Best Manufacturing, and Trinity Rail. They also observed other students welding during the competition, enjoyed lunch on campus, and cheered on each team during the awards program.

"The students learned to bring their 'A' game, practice print reading, pay attention to details, bring their tools, wear their protective equipment, and always work safely," said BRTC Welding Instructor Steven Kiker. "The judges watch and deduct scores for unsafe actions, lack of teamwork, and not wearing PPE during the competition. The rest of their scores came from judging their project."

"The students are looking forward to participating in a welding competition themselves very soon," said Director of Career and Technical Education Darenda Kersey.



## LYNETTE WEST NAMED 2024 SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR



Lynette West, owner of Healthwear Inc. in Paragould, has recently been named the 2024 Small Business Person of the Year for Arkansas as part of National Small Business Week. Honorees were chosen for their ability to "demonstrate the resiliency, tenacity and commitment to excellence that has helped fuel America's post-pandemic recovery, making it the quickest and strongest economic recovery in the world."

For over 60 years, the President has issued a proclamation in observance of National Small Business Week – recognizing that small businesses are the engines of our economy, employing nearly half of the private workforce, creating two in three net new jobs, and generating over 40 percent of America's economic productivity.

West has an invitation to attend the National Small Business Week award ceremonies in Washington, D.C., at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. There, one of the state winners will be announced as the overall 2024 National Small Business Person of the Year.

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# ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT-LED NEWSPAPER WINS BIG

Editors of Arkansas State University's student-run newspaper, *The Herald*, won six awards in Best of the South and on-site competitions at the Southeast Journalism Conference (SEJC) at Troy University. This is the second consecutive year *The Herald* has won awards at SEJC. SEJC is a yearly conference where schools from across the Southeast compete in Best of the South categories and on-site competitions. Students also attend seminars to learn more about journalism and hear from working professionals.

"I'm very proud of my staff for coming to this conference and doing so well," said *Herald* editor-in-chief Rachel Rudd of Beebe, a junior creative media production major. "To see us go up against much bigger schools and staff and do so great was such a rewarding experience."

The winners in the Best of the South categories were:

- First Place Best Opinion Writer: Elijah Templeton
- Second Place Best Page Designer: Rebecca Robinson, former *Herald* editor-in-chief
- Third Place Best News Writer: Rachel Rudd
- Fifth Place Best Photographer: Rachel Rudd

The winners in on-site competitions were:

- First Place Opinion Writing: Elijah Templeton
- Second Place Page Design: Anna Cox

Anna Cox of Paragould, sports editor and a junior English major, said the SEJC speakers helped her learn more about sports journalism.

"They provided so much valuable feedback such as how to make better connections with coaches, players, sports information directors and how those connections will help me when I need to cover something quickly," Cox said.



Herald staffers attending the Southeast Journalism Conference were (from left) Anna Cox, sports editor; Jerry Don Burton, news editor; Elijah Templeton, opinion editor; Caroline Averitt, life editor; and Rachel Rudd, editor-in-chief.



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# Next Month

## Celebrate Culture



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## Mother's Day



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## Jonesboro Premiere Awards



THE WAIT IS ALMOST OVER! The Jonesboro Premiere Awards will be published for all to see in the May edition. Who will be the winners??



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- Nose bleeds
- Inability to urinate or painful urination with or without bleeding
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- Persistent headache
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