

NEA'S

PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

October
2021

REAL MEN WEAR

Pink

Chris Fowler

HONOR THE
PINK
Breast Cancer
Awareness Month

SPOOKY FUN
Fall Fun & Halloween
Festivities

NATIONAL MENTAL
HEALTH WEEK
Contributions from
Professionals

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

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Cover Photo: Lindsey Spencer

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From the Manager



Two years ago I shot my first cover photo. It was the October 2019 edition of Premiere Magazine and at the time I was still part-time at MOR Media. Something fell through with the photographer and the subject of the story I'd written, who was to be on the cover. So, I texted Heather Carter and set up a day to take photos.

A breast cancer patient, Heather was still going through her chemo treatment, so her head was bald. She stood proudly in tree pose for the cover shot.

A few weeks before putting this edition together I was tending bar at my husband's newly opened business when a familiar voice made me do a double take.

"Lindsey, the last time I saw you, I was bald and skinny as a rail," the woman in front of me said. I felt my eyes grow wide and my hand raised to cover my mouth.

Heather stood in front of me. As I stepped around the bar, she pulled a ponytail out of her now full, long head of hair. She looked healthy, happy, alive.

I gave her a hug and I imagine my smile mirrored hers.

A lot can change in two years. It is not lost on me that when we published Heather's story, she was in the battle for her life, and that two years later I had the honor to look this warrior in the face and tell her she won. There are many fighting battles, big and small, every day, and while we may not be able to make anyone's fight any easier, I hope we can still cheer for them, support them, and root for them. I hope this edition of Premiere celebrates the battles won, honors the ones lost.

As always, I hope it's a reminder that good news is everywhere and inspires us to continue to fight to make more of it.

Lindsey Spencer

Manager of Creative Content

Glen Sain



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GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT



When I mentioned to family and friends that I was on the committee to plan my high school graduating class' 50-year reunion, many responded with, "Wow, I'm surprised you volunteered for that." My answer was, "Yes, so am I," because I volunteered the same way you do in the military: "I need three volunteers ... you, you and you."

More than a year ago I attended one of the frequent dinners my classmates stage and enjoy, and the announcement was made that anyone wishing to serve on the reunion committee should stay afterward and start working out details. As the dinner began to wind down I found myself deep into a story with former basketball teammate Bruce Dickey, and the conversation sort of went into overtime. When reunion person-in-charge Robin Newby stood and said, "Thank you all for staying and volunteering," I explained to her I was not actually planning to participate, that I just took too long to finish a tall tale. As I rose to make my exit, she said, "Sit down, you're volunteering now" and before you could shout, "Go, Dogs! Sic 'em!," I was in charge of programs and name tags. Drill Sgt. Newby has, however, proven to be delightful to work alongside.

The whole reunion thing was supposed to happen last year but Covid stuff got in the way and we were forced to push it back to the

end of this month when, hopefully, a bunch of old Paragould High School Bulldogs and their spouses can assemble at Reynolds Park and try to remember what it was like to be young and full of energy. Adding an extra year to the planning procedure has brought about challenges because some things change over the course of time, but I have to say these committee people -- even those drafted into service -- have worked hard to provide an evening of entertainment for classmates.

Grabbing my 1970 yearbook and filtering through the photographs compiling our class roster I was struck by the sad realization that my teenage years were obviously very self-centered. I have always justified my lack of participation in things during those years as being a baseball guy in a non-baseball school, sort of that "square peg, round hole" philosophy, but that's taking the easy way out. I walked the same hallways 119 other seniors did, but I learned very little about most of them. This was emphasized when I separated the photos into those who might attend the reunion and need a name tag and those who would appear in the memorial to the deceased, the latter category containing 25 teenagers who made it to graduation day with us -- and the names of five or six more who were in our class at some point but are no longer around. There were close friends like Bobby Vaughn, Cindy Ford and Kenny McCoy, and people I sort of knew and had some interaction with ... and at least 10 I never said so much as one word to.

That's sort of disheartening, especially now that this reunion committee has helped me sit alongside others I treated in much the same manner; during those high school days I never took the time to learn who could sing and who could dance, who spent the summers water skiing on the lake and who painted or wrote poetry, who went to work immediately and missed out on being a kid.

The good news is I can make up for lost time with fellow committee members; the bad news is, there are many on the deceased list I will never know much of anything about because 50 years ago I didn't take the time to say, "Tell me about yourself."

I wasn't the most outgoing person in those days, finding comfort in groups of guys containing fellow baseball players or my longtime friend Tim Rand, and admiring from afar the number of pretty girls in the class. I had no idea what to say to a girl, which explains my lack of conversation with many in the Class of 1970; about half of them had the audacity to be girls, so right away they were in the no contact zone.

As for guys, I simply didn't know what to talk about if they didn't frequent the baseball scene. I wasn't a car guy or an outdoorsman, so I sidled over to my safety zone and just co-existed in guarded silence. Today, I wish I had spoken up and at least tried to learn a little about the people I shared classrooms with.

The committee has been good for me. I have been introduced to the wonderful senses of humor some of the people have, personality traits I was oblivious to as a 17-year-old senior. I listen with modest envy as some of them relate teenage antics in which they participated as a group back in the day, and I was off in my own comfortable baseball world. For instance, when the subject of dances at the Legion Hut was broached, I could visualize the outside of the building that sat right there close to PHS, but I never once set foot inside; I didn't go to dances, I didn't go to parties, and for the longest I didn't go to football games.

And today I know I missed out not on the going, but on the opportunity to harvest more relationships that would have added some joy to the growing years.



LIVING A Better Story

BY JARED PICKNEY

None of us will make it through this life without experiencing grief. We grieve when we experience the loss of something that gave us delight, pleasure and fulfillment. We grieve when a marriage comes to an end. We grieve when we hoped to have children but experience a miscarriage. We grieve when we get cut from a team or fired from a job. We grieve when we make bad decisions that lead to bad consequences. We grieve the death of a loved one. We grieve because this life is not the way it was supposed to be. And we grieve because we are humans, created in the image of a God who also grieves (John 11v35). The question is, how do we learn to grieve well? How do we go from trying to stuff our pain with pills, shopping, weightlifting, work or media, to grieving our pain in a healthy way? Let me offer six

tips.

Feel Your Pain. If you cannot feel you cannot heal. The first step to dealing with your grief is admitting you have it.

Identify What Was Lost. Your grief is telling you something. Next time you feel sad ask yourself this question: "What have I lost?" Security? Comfort? Purpose? Love? In order to grieve well you must first discover what was lost.

Take Your Pain To God. God is not afraid of your emotions. Just read Psalm 13 for confirmation. Be real with God about how you feel. Remember that prayer is not a place to be good. It's a place to be honest.

Take Your Pain To Others. David Kessler

once said, "Grief needs a witness." To grieve well we need the presence of others to grieve alongside us and comfort us.

Be Patient. Pain isn't a disease you get over as much as it's something you learn to live with. The fact you are still grieving your loss after three months doesn't make you crazy, it makes you human. Death sucks. Pain is real. Give yourself time to grieve.

Keep Perspective. When suffering first hits we are tempted to believe the aftershocks will last forever. We try to tell ourselves things will get better, but we hear a louder voice that says you will never experience joy again. The truth is, for those who trust in Jesus, one day He will make all sad things come untrue (1 Cor 15:51-57; 1 Thess 4:13; Rev 21:5).

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PET *of the* MONTH

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BY JASON STEPHENS



Archie was found in a church parking lot where we attended, and a member told us he was a stray, so we watched and no one took him home. We were looking for a pet and he was hungry. We brought him home, where he now happily enjoys playing on the deck and in kitty forts.

He chases lizards and spends many days outside but sleeps inside. He loves to play with a stuffed groundhog. Maybe one day we will get him some playmates!



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October is a grand month. The opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast are almost endless. Hunting opportunities in the Natural State range across a wide spectrum from squirrels and rabbits to deer and even bear. Though the thoughts of many drift away from fishing, the feeding frenzy of fish packing on pounds before the winter offers anglers a great chance to fill a cooler. But the options do not end with these consumptive activities. There are many other great ways to enjoy Arkansas on a crisp fall day.

One of the best ways to leisurely enjoy the natural beauty our state has to offer is to pack a lunch, get in the car and hit the road. There are many routes that offer great views and scenic surroundings and opportunities to get out and enjoy some fresh air.

Locally, the drive up or down the section of Highway 141 from Jonesboro to Hooker can offer some great views of both Crowley's Ridge and the farmland just to the west of the Ridge. This drive is really nice in the late fall afternoons as the sun begins to set. Another great option along Crowley's Ridge is south of Jonesboro on Hwy 163 to Wynne. This route also follows the Ridge and offers great views of the uplands and also the croplands to the east.

These routes are both part of the Crowley's Ridge Parkway National Scenic Byway, which was designated in 1998 and was Arkansas' first national scenic byway. A little research can reveal many wonderful stops along this route including state parks, unique restaurants and unique history sites.



Many folks like to head west toward Hardy or Mountain View and these routes can offer great scenery as the Ozarks rise from the Delta. The foothills of the Ozarks can be a day trip, but for those looking for a longer drive or an overnight trip, going deeper into the Ozarks can offer some wonderful vistas. Routes like the Boston Mountain Scenic Loop, the Pig Trail Scenic Byway and Highway 7 are some of the more well-known, though most any highway through the Ozark Mountains can provide opportunities to see some wonderful country.

If mountains and trees are not your thing, a trip across the Delta during the fall can provide great insight into the agriculture industry of Arkansas. A gleaming field of cotton or a shimmering field of rice waving in the breeze is not only beautiful, but it is a part of the story of the agri industry that is the backbone of Arkansas. To get an up close view, take a few back roads but drive cautiously and be on the lookout for farm equipment as it moves across the landscape to complete the harvest.

A drive can be relaxing but it is definitely not the only option to enjoy the fall weather and beauty of the outdoors of Arkansas. Many of the state or city parks have hiking trails that provide a great opportunity to get outside and get some exercise, take in some fresh air and enjoy the colors of fall. Crowley's Ridge State Park and Lake Frierson State Park offer hiking opportunities. Craighead Forest in Jonesboro is also a great place to enjoy a walk. For a full list of hiking opportunities at the state parks of Arkansas check out arkansasstateparks.com.

A very unique and often overlooked way to enjoy the fall colors is from a boat. Most boat owners are very active on the water during the summer months, but the watercraft are often put away as the temperatures cool. But there is something about a waterway in the fall that makes it more inviting. The water may be too cool for watersports, but a lack of people, a cool breeze and beautiful colors along the shore can make for a very relaxing day in the boat.



CHUCK LONG

Regional Education Coordinator Northeast Education
Division Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

The shores along large lakes like Bull Shoals, Norfolk or Greers Ferry can offer great scenery for those who might want to venture to a bigger body of water. Local rivers like the Black, St. Francis and Spring and Current can also provide some relaxing waters to explore. Local oxbows like Shirey Bay or Hill Slough are also great choices, especially for smaller watercraft like a kayak. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Lakes such as Charles, Frierson and the newly renovated Lake Poinsett are also great for small watercraft. For an opportunity to see an abundance of waterfowl and maybe even a bald eagle, check out Lake Ashbaugh. There are also many farm ponds tucked away along Crowley's Ridge that are great for a small craft, but most are private so secure permission before accessing these little jewels.

Author L. M. Montgomery said, "I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers" and I could not agree more. Fall is truly a wonderful time of the year and there a vast array of opportunities to get out and enjoy what Arkansas has to offer. The leaves will begin to change and paint the landscape in a vast array of colors beginning in late September and the fall colors typically peak in mid to late October across much of Arkansas. Timing can vary, but there are fall foliage forecasts available via the web that provide great info. One such resource can be found at arkansasstateparks.com and searching for fall foliage report.

I hope you will make it a point to get out and spend at least a little time on the highways, side roads, waterways or hiking trails of Arkansas this fall. Get out and enjoy fall, y'all, and I hope to see you out there.





HEALTH & THE CITY

WITH DR. BETHANY DAVIS

The practice of yoga has been documented in ancient texts that date back at least 5,000 years, and some historians believe it to be up to 10,000 years. Without diving too deeply into its history, yoga was first documented in Northern India in a text called the Rig Veda, which is the first collection of a group of four ancient sacred texts known as the Vedas. Yoga is said to have been developed by sages in India who documented the practice in these texts. Yoga is not a religious doctrine, but does serve as a major part of Buddhism and Hinduism practices. Yoga traveled west only around 1883, and thus, westernized yoga and Lululemon was born.

The word yoga is derived of the Sanskrit word Yuj, and means to join, to yoke, or to unite. The practice of yoga encompasses physical movements, breathing techniques, relaxation, meditation, and for some people who practice yoga, a diet specific to your body type, also known as Ayurveda. Together, all of these aspects make yoga unlike any other form of exercise. Yoga is a practice of uniting the mind (our thoughts and reactions) with our body (our movements, daily actions, and physical well-being). It's not just about stepping onto a yoga mat for an hour and then going about your day the same as you did before – yoga is a practice of patterns, a simple commitment to strive to be present, and truly live life not wrapped up in our autopiloted, continuous, ever-moving thoughts. It's a commitment to further understand ourselves and who we truly are, and not just live life going through the motions. You are simply practicing controlling your thoughts while on the yoga mat, and then you carry this skill in your daily life to improve the quality of your life. Yoga terminology can be very confusing, especially when Sanskrit terms are tossed around, but it is all actually very simple.

Physical movements in yoga, also called asana, are just the poses completed in a

class. You've probably heard of tree pose or warrior poses, which are just two examples of safe postures held for physical benefits. There are also several different types of yoga, all of which will incorporate different poses for different reasons. For example, a restorative yoga class will hold a pose for 4-5 minutes to allow certain muscles to release fully, while a vinyasa styled yoga will hold poses, but flow quicker and have more of a transition between the poses. Yoga can provide relief to several physical conditions, such as arthritis, poor circulatory health, decreased strength and flexibility, low back pain, and much more – but the physical movements are only one fragment of the overall yoga practice.

The breathwork in yoga is also called pranayama, but you can definitely just call it breathing! In a yoga class, a teacher might guide you to stay in a physical pose for a certain number of breaths. Depending on the type of yoga, the teacher might guide you to breathe in a particular way, such as alternate nostril breathing or a breath called breath of fire, which focuses on building heat and awareness in certain parts of the body. Regardless of the technique, the focus on the breath in yoga brings your mind to focus on the sensations of your breath, which is only in the present moment. Since our wandering minds are habitually focused on the future and the past, the practice of concentrating on our breathing allows you to sharpen your focus to become aware of what is around you right now. You can practice it now – simply stop reading this, look around, and notice what is around you. Now, scan your body, and simply notice tension, imbalances, or even just sensations that you are feeling. This simple exercise brings your focus on right now, and the practice of repeatedly focusing on our breath makes it more of a habit to be focused on the present.

Focus on the breath for an extended period of time is called meditation. There are several

different types of meditation, all of which have the goal to bring us into the present moment. This can be through the focus on our breath like previously stated, or it could be focusing on a phrase you repeat over and over again, also called a mantra. Meditation can be focused on a feeling, such as kindness, gratitude, or releasing anxiety, or can even be done through a simple body scan.

Maybe you already knew all of the above, but practically, why practice yoga? To gain inner peace, be zen all the time, or tone your body, right? I am here to de-stigmatize the “woo-woo” and “complete peace” that people think yoga is. There are several mental and physical benefits to the practice of yoga, but the practical gift of yoga is this: You truly increase the quality of your life by practicing being present – over, and over, and over again. I've seen the biggest of skeptics truly transform their mindsets – it truly does change the way you move through life.

Think about how many times a day you focus on something, only to become quickly distracted and not even remember when your mind wandered to that distracted thought. You increase your quality of life because you become aware of what is right in front of you. When you become present, which is what is repeatedly practiced in yoga, your physical senses are sharpened. You are able to connect with who you are and it allows you to overcome bad patterns you have, to overcome obstacles in your life, and to become more creative and be less stressed. You don't react as quickly to a situation as you once did, and you react in a way that isn't out of old patterns but out of a place of integrity and true to who you are. Your concentration increases, your gratitude deepens, and you slow down, getting out of the super busy mindset that you've been trained to be in since you were born. Every time you step onto your yoga mat, you have the ability to connect with who you are, your goals, and hit the reset button on your mindset.

It may seem overwhelming, intimidating, or even phony. But in fact, every single time you are present and connected with yourself, you are practicing yoga. Every single time you choose to snap out of the autopilot of your thoughts, you are practicing yoga. Yoga is not about having a certain body, extreme flexibility, a certain pair of leggings, or getting into a certain pose. It's not about meditating for 20 minutes every day and being perfect – because we never will be. Practicing yoga just makes life easier, better, brighter, and less stressful – and every person can do it. Simply bring your awareness back to the present moment, right now, and every time you catch yourself not being present.



MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE

DOS FOR PARENTS

- Do review basic safety rules before going out to trick or treat.
- Do have an adult accompany small children.
- Do remember to keep costumes and disguises appropriate for the child's age.
- Do know where your children are going and with whom.
- Do remind your children to bring home candy and other treats for your inspection.
- Do provide adequate lighting for trick or treaters.
- Do keep the porch or your designated area safe, so that visiting trick or treaters don't get hurt.
- Do explain the consequences of vandalism to your children.

BOO HOO! - DON'T S FOR TRICK OR TREATERS

- Don't forget to use the words "please" and "thank you."
- Don't grab candy.
- Don't whine if you get something you don't like.
- Don't go to unfamiliar places, unaccompanied.
- Don't wear ill fitting clothes that obstruct your vision or can cause you to trip or fall.
- Don't go to a house that does not have on the porch light.
- Don't run through flower beds or other carefully tended areas.
- Don't touch decorations, when visiting houses, unless you have permission.
- Don't litter the yard with candy wrappers.

- Don't forget about your pets. Dogs and cats can scare easily.

During the Halloween festivities keep your pets away from strangers, loud noises, and flashing lights. And, of course, don't let them eat chocolate or your other treats.

"DOUBLE, DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE"

With all the excitement that Halloween brings there are more dangerous things than the curse from the three witches in Macbeth. Since many parents have voiced safety concerns, costume parties, holiday carnivals, haunted houses and fall festivals have often replaced door to door trick or treating. Halloween costume parties are not only for children, but adults as well. Children's costumes are traditionally witches, ghosts, princesses, pirates, vampires, current cartoon characters or action heroes. Adults also favor traditional costumes along with dressing up as political figures, movie stars, famous or infamous characters or as popular sayings.

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.


Monsters and Manners can peacefully coexist during Halloween. Premiere Magazine provides information concerning numerous activities during this time of year. Whether attending a fall festival, a holiday carnival or a costume party, when saying "trick or treat," the accompanying words "please" and "thank you" can work wonders as ghosts and goblins fill their sacks with Halloween goodies.

With the emphasis on "BOO!," Not "BOO HOO!" here are some quick tips to make sure the evening is safe and fun:

BOO - DOS FOR TRICK OR TREATERS

- Do say "Trick or Treat" or "Happy Halloween."
- Do say "Thank You" when someone gives you candy or a treat.
- Do wear flame resistant costumes.
- Do wear light reflective clothes.
- Do take along a flashlight or a glow stick.
- Do wear reflective tape on costumes to increase visibility.
- Do travel with friends.
- Do look both ways before crossing the street.


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Do you want to "dress to the nines"? We are so excited to partner with our sister, Jill @ 99.3 to host a Red re-release party at Native in Jonesboro. There will be red wine, red cupcakes from Something Sweet, a red carpet with paparazzi (Knight Productions) and red flowers by Generations Floral Company. Ticket sales will benefit musical opportunities in our community: The Foundation of Arts and the Greene County Fine Arts Council. Be sure to follow Jill and Explore on social media for ticket release date!

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Greene County Fair



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The Greene County Fair took place September 6 through September 11 and included rides, livestock show, local vendors, rodeo, and demolition derby.

More photos from this event can be found on Premiere's Facebook page.



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Lessons LEARNED IN Motherhood

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

I am not the type of person to take it easy. It’s hard for me to sit still. As I write this, I have at least three crochet projects in the works, I’m trying to read a fall cleaning challenge, drink a cup of coffee, and schedule interviews ... all while attempting to entertain a toddler.

My brain works best when under pressure, working on multiple things at once. Focusing on one task at a time just doesn’t do it for me. And this is where my daughter and I butt heads. Naturally, Eva is constantly on the go and begging me to go with her. But multitasking while being alone at home with her is impossible. Most days my poor little monkey brain can’t handle it.

As the months have passed, however, and Eva has grown and demanded more of my attention, I have slowly learned to, well, take it slow. I used to make her wait until I could get to a good stopping point in my crochet. Now, when she pulls on my hand to go outside, I put down my yarn and follow. When she brings me a book, I put away my laptop and share my love of reading with her.

Eva plays outside in the garden and all I see are weeds, but she is teaching me to, almost literally, stop and smell the roses.

I see her deep concentration on leaves, rocks and flowers and I notice now how I am doing the same.

My daughter, who is so full of energy that most days I can’t keep up, has given me a new appreciation for the world around me. My to-do list will never be complete and I will still prefer to frantically run from one job to the next. But how lucky I am to have my sweet Eva showing me that it’s okay to slow it down, take it all in and just breathe.



Somnioplexic Resonance - JooYoung Choi



The System - Peter Kupur



Scribbles - Sarah Andersen



Artist Sean Fitzgibbon

The Bradbury Art Museum kicked off its new exhibit, "LEGENDS: An Exploration of Contemporary Storytelling from Frame to Experience" on September 15th at Arkansas State University.

The exhibition utilizes comics as a jumping off point for a dialogue about storytelling through contemporary art-making processes. Featuring both legends in the field as well as popular legends from contemporary culture, Legends seeks to explore storytelling and image making as an art form. For the installation, BAM is collaborating with Dr. Randy Duncan of Henderson State University, the Director of The Center for Comics Studies and author of *The Power of Comics*.

"The installation aims to attract new first-time museum visitors because it will showcase the intersection between the museum and comics," said Garry Holstein, BAM Director. "The program provides an amazing outreach opportunity making art accessible and approachable. Everyone connects with comic books, and this installation will feed outreach to regional schools for our annual Inspired exhibition in January."

The exhibit will conclude on December 8th.



BRADBURY ART MUSEUM



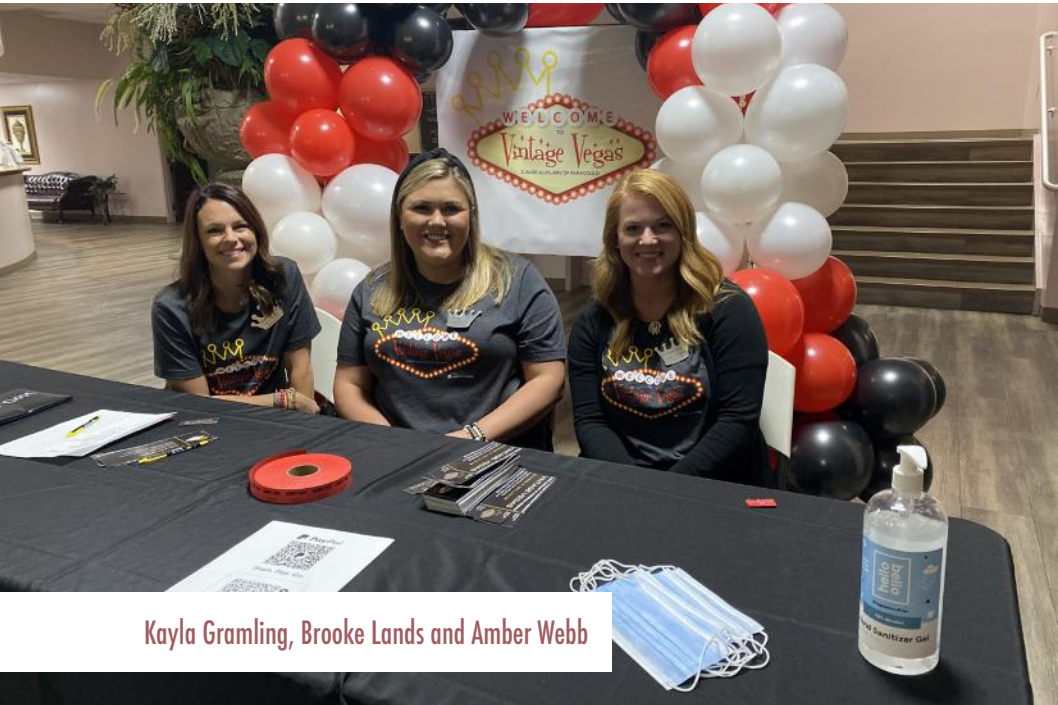
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Cheers for Charity



Kayla Gramling, Brooke Lands and Amber Webb



Tim and Shannon Lamb



More photos from this event can be found on Premiere's Facebook page.

Junior Auxiliary of Paragould hosted its annual "Cheers for Charity" fundraising event on Saturday, September 18th, at the Paragould Community Center. The event included refreshments by Lisa Carlile, Tonia Kiestler, and Geo's Espresso, live entertainment by Almost Famous, and casino games by Purple Heart Poker out of Memphis. In all, \$43,000 was raised at Cheers for Charity to better the lives of children of Greene County.



Desi Penkunas, Stephanie Elmore and Jessica Hunt

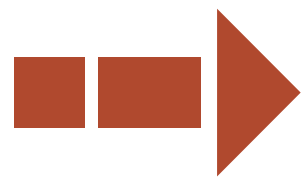


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The City of Wilson hosted a Wine Dinner on September 18. Prior to the dinner, Norbert Mede, VP of Operations, and Cyndi Detty, Director of Marketing, led media and guests on a tour.

The tour started at the Wilson Café and Tavern with a special “Bubble Gum Martini,” perfect as we think of “Pink October” and very much a bubble gum flavor to make you feel youthful.

Construction crews have begun working on a magnificent Boutique Hotel: The Hotel Louis. The option to stay overnight will be a tremendous addition to a growing town that is hosting many events like Wilson Wine Dinner.

Keep up with Wilson’s progress at the new website wilsonarkansas.com.



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Paint the Town Red



Paint the Town Red Week, put on by the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce, kicked off on August 30th when businesses announced their featured "red" items.

Party with the Pack, a pep rally at Nettleton STEAM, took place on August 31st and included a proclamation from the mayor of Jonesboro, an appearance from Red Wolf spirit squads, band and football team, and a visit from the Arkansas State University Chancellor. According to the Nettleton STEAM Principal, Cathelene Gray, A-State Chancellor Dr. Kelly Dampousse called the school beforehand and purchased shirts for every student because he didn't want a single child not to have one. Howl yeah!

Paint the Town Red Week concluded when the A-State Red Wolves beat UCA on Saturday, September 4th, but the final rally for the week took place the evening prior. The Back the Pack Rally provided a place for kids to play and families to enjoy an evening prior to the big game.



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Chamber Expo

The Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual business expo on September 15th at First National Bank Arena with a comic book theme.



Hannah Caddy and Briana Richards of City Youth Ministries

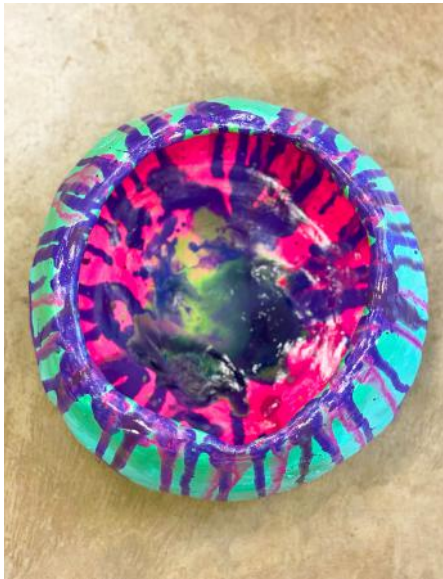
More photos from this event can be found on Premiere's Facebook page.



DeeDee Austin, Tequila Mardis, Tasha Hirby and Dave Baker



Erin Calhoun and Jenny Keller



Empty Bowls

The Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas hosted its third annual Empty Bowls event on September 23 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Ticket holders collected their meals via a drive-thru operation where they were served soup and salad along with a handcrafted ceramic bowl. Each bowl was painted differently by area schools and other volunteers and served as a reminder that somewhere, someone's bowl is empty. The event helped to raise 140,000 meals for the Food Bank and its mission to build hunger-free communities in Northeast Arkansas.

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PARAGOULD
PROGRESS



Juniper Tree Meadery

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Paragould takes another step forward in offering unique experiences to its community with the opening of Juniper Tree Meadery.

Lynn and Deondra Childers crafted the space, located at 2112 Highway 358, to fill an empty niche in Northeast Arkansas.

“We don’t have anything like that,” Lynn said.

With a masters in biology, research for Arkansas State University under his belt and a concern for the honeybee population, Lynn said the process of making mead appeals greatly to him.

“I have made homemade wine and other beverages for over 30 years, so it’s been a hobby, a passion of mine,” he said.

Deondra, who acts as CEO of Juniper Tree, suggested Lynn go professional with the hobby. The closest winery is in Hot Springs, and the closest meadery in Tupelo, Mississippi, so the business was the perfect way for Lynn to scratch a number of different itches.

Mead, a drink made of fermented honey, is rising up in the way of craft beer. The Childers said around 2000, only 40 meaderies were licensed in the U.S. As of 2020, that number jumped to 400.

Lynn and Deondra source their honey locally, and hope to invite a local beekeeper to keep a hive on their six acres of property.

“If we create a market that relies on bee products, then we give the bees a job to do,” Lynn said. “It’s a small thing that we’re doing, but in a way we got some satisfaction around it.”

Juniper Tree Meadery includes a tasting room, as well as bottles and growlers for customers to take home. Live music, food truck weekends and a dock overseeing a one-acre pond are also all in the works. To stay up to date on hours and events, follow Juniper Tree Meadery on Instagram and Facebook.





Amber Vanaman and April Biggs

we **WPR** beating cancer

Most people think of breast cancer as one big disease. It's really 20 diseases that appear and respond differently to treatment. UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute patients, **April Biggs**, and her sister, **Amber Vanaman** of Paragould, learned they had two very different forms of breast cancer — April had Stage IV Metastatic Breast Cancer that spread to the bone, and Amber had early stage Ductal Carcinoma in Situ. April and Amber's UAMS Breast Center Team understood the complexities of both diseases and how to treat them. April is feeling good after a year of chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation. Amber is winding down her treatment and looks forward to life returning to normal. With an army of UAMS oncologists, cancer surgeons, chemotherapy, radiation, and cancer research experts behind them, April and Amber are surviving breast cancer.

"I've always said if my diagnosis could save at least one life, it would all be worth it. I saved my sister's life, and my two younger sisters now get screens every six months, and it will save their lives as well. Early detection is critical."
- April Biggs, Paragould

The fight against cancer got even stronger Sept. 8 when Arkansans across the state joined together to "Be a Part of the Cure."

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Kim Scutero


MOVING FORWARD

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE



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Get Better.

June 29, 2017, was the day Kim Scutero's breast cancer story began. Four years later she is healthy and feeling more like herself.

Scutero, an administrative assistant at Arkansas State University, received the call that day that her biopsies were malignant.

"After taking a few days to digest being told that I have breast cancer, I wanted to get a plan in place," she said. "I am a wife, mom of two boys and work full time with schedules all over the place. I thought, 'Life is already crazy, we don't have time to deal with this now.'"

But Scutero did deal with it. She scheduled appointments quickly to get everything done so she could simply move forward with her life.

Scutero was diagnosed with Stage IIb and had two different tumors, a triple negative and Her2+. Her treatment plan included four rounds

of Adriamycin, known to some as the "red devil," and four rounds of Herceptin and Taxotere.

On July 18, less than a month after that first phone call, Scutero had her port placed and began chemotherapy the next day. She finished treatment on November 21. That wasn't the end of her journey, however. Scutero tested positive for the BRCA 1 gene and decided to undergo a double mastectomy with reconstruction. That surgery happened December 6, and on February 5, 2018, she began her first of 28 rounds of radiation. She was also estrogen positive, requiring her ovaries to be removed. On June 26 she opted for a complete hysterectomy.

"I know this process seems like I did everything pretty quick. I just took on the approach 'it is what it is, and it's out of my control,'" she said. "I tried to remain as positive as I could."

Scutero noted that, of course, she had her fair share of bad days.

It took the help of family and friends to get her through it all.

"My sister was able to move in with us to help out," she added. "Without her help it would have been very difficult for my husband and I to continue working while getting our boys to all their activities."

Scutero is originally from Orlando, Florida, but made her way to Jonesboro due to her husband's job coaching college men's basketball.

"The Jonesboro community has been great to my family," she said. "We truly appreciated all the support from all around more than you will ever know." And for others, Scutero has a simple message.

"I encourage women to get their mammograms and strongly encourage having the BRCA gene testing done," she said. "By knowing early on, there are prophylactic options out there for you."

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October 18
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Downtown Paragould
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A complete listing of all Downtown events can be found under "Events" at downtownparagould.com or [facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events](https://www.facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events).






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REAL MEN WEAR

Pink

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Even though Chris Fowler battled throat cancer in 2012, his story begins in 1985.

That was when his father, Wallace Fowler, was diagnosed with breast cancer. Fowler said he brought his oldest daughter home from the hospital one day, and turned around to take his father in for surgery.

"In 1985 he kept everything a secret," Fowler said of his father. "A lot of people probably didn't know he had it. We came together as a family and he never slowed down."

At that time, there were no treatment options such as chemotherapy or radiation. Fowler said the doctor removed all of the cancer with that one surgery.

But it wasn't the end of the family's breast cancer journey. Just a few months after Fowler was diagnosed with throat cancer, his brother Wally also received a breast cancer diagnosis.

"My family can attest to it: breast cancer doesn't only affect women," Fowler said. "Just because you're a male doesn't mean you can't get breast cancer."

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is 100 times less common in white men than white women, and 70 times less common in black men than black women. But there will still be diagnoses: In 2021, ACS estimates 2,650 new cases of invasive breast cancer will occur.

In 2020, Fowler was named an honorary survivor by the ACS. It was during this time he learned of a friend involved in the Real Men Wear Pink campaign. Fowler said he bet his friend he could raise more money in 2021.

Aside from just fundraising, Fowler was asked to chair the statewide campaign.

"It's hard for me to say no, especially if I care about something," he said.

As of the end of September, he has raised over \$37,000.

Fowler and his wife, Kim, hosted a fundraiser in May and have a Halloween themed fundraiser planned for October.

"We're really hoping that becomes an annual event that gets bigger and bigger every year," he said.

Fowler said for the time being, that fundraiser is the only in-person event currently scheduled, with others going virtual. He added some might feel scared to get involved with such events because they have bad stories or memories with cancer.

"But even with those stories we can all work together to find a cure," he said.

Fowler said it's important for others to know that Arkansas runs nearly last in awareness and screening for breast cancer.

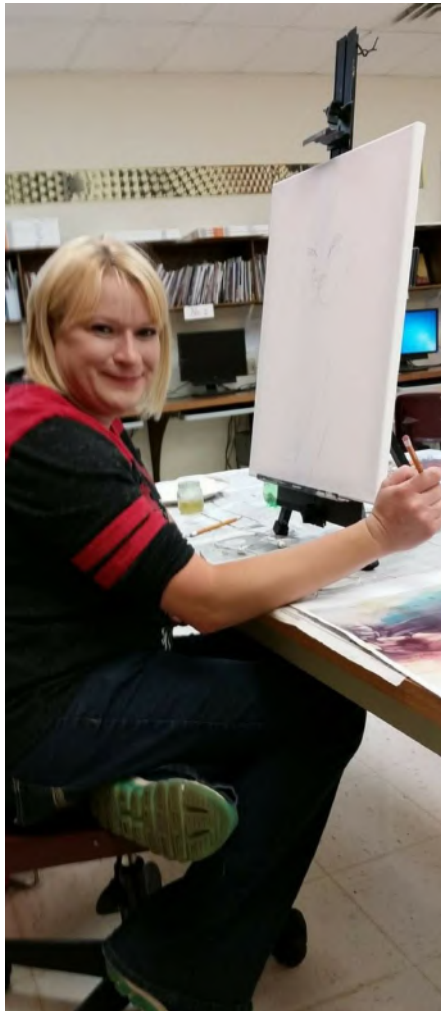
"We all hate to say it but we need to say it," he said. "That's all we can hope for, is to raise awareness, raise money and find the cure and eradicate this crazy, terrible disease."





Brushes With Cancer

Artist Amy Morris is creating a piece inspired by cancer patient's journey.



BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

Next March, Amy Morris will be one of only 36 artists from around the world to unveil artwork inspired by something very special: cancer survivors. Twist Out Cancer, a nonprofit organization that offers support to cancer survivors, developed the Brushes With Cancer program in 2011 to match artists with those affected by the disease. Each artist creates a piece inspired by a patient's journey.

"I didn't think I had a shot because I'm just a small town artist," Morris said.

Morris speaks with her match, who has metastatic breast cancer, around once a month, serving as a support person.

As the match tells Morris her story, she gets inspiration for the piece of art. Morris said her match is currently tumor free but has treatments every three weeks for the rest of her life so the tumors don't come back.

"It's very traumatic for her," Morris added. "Having these treatments every three weeks is just throwing it back up in her face."

The self-taught artist said her match's story is one of an everyday fight and struggle.

"She is a very strong woman, and she is very brave. It's amazing how much she goes through," she said.



Morris is a stay at home mom but started various arts and crafts as a side job. When she began making money from it, she said she knew she needed to “step it up.” She opened her own LLC and got insurance on her paintings when her work was displayed in museums and galleries.

“Mostly what I’m known for is my portrait drawings,” Morris said. “Everybody knows my portraits with my graphite pencils.”

Last year, her artwork was chosen to be displayed on the side of waterfront buildings in Little Rock. The display toured around the state, hitting Fayetteville, Texarkana and Blytheville. She has also shown

her work in various museums, art shows, and even donated to local hospitals.

“I’ve always done any charity that I can do,” she said.

Brushes With Cancer isn’t Morris’ first run-in with cancer. Her father was diagnosed and she said it rocked her to her core. He is now cancer free, but Morris said he went through a time where he wouldn’t smile or laugh.

“He was going through so much,” she said.

She added she thought if she could be part of the art program, she could make somebody’s day better, as some of the patients don’t have any support system at all.

“I feel like it’s my obligation as a person to try to make life better for other people,” she said. “I just feel so blessed to be part of this program.”



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SEARCH

Project SEARCH, a program through St. Bernards, assists individuals with disabilities through an internship program that allows them to gain experience and skills needed for independent employment in the workplace. In its four years, the program has helped many individuals get a drivers license, live on their own, and more.

“We help develop the skills and assist interns with identifying their strengths, so that by the end of the program they are prepared to obtain competitive, integrated employment within the community of their choice,” said Caleb Nealy, a case manager with Project SEARCH. “With only 17.9% of individuals with disabilities working in the United States, we are forever thankful to the Northeast Arkansas communities for embracing Project SEARCH and the opportunities it is providing. We know that none of this would even be possible without the communities we serve and our program partners. Each partner brings a unique aspect, whether that is through funding, accessibility, experience or curriculum; each of these are key to the success of the program and each of these wouldn’t be possible without our partnership with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, ACCESS®, St. Bernards and Project SEARCH.”



Erica

“When Project SEARCH started, I struggled with communication and staying focused. The longer I was in the program, I learned how to use accommodations to do my tasks correctly. Project SEARCH really helped me get my job, but it also helped me with how to be a good teammate. If someone wanted to apply for Project SEARCH, I would tell them to make sure to listen to directions and trust your Skills Trainers. They are there to help you.”

- Erica Jo Rook, Class Aide Float at Miracle Kids Academy

Erica Jo is now a great communicator and teammate, and she juggles several classes every day with a smile on her face.



Beau

“When I started Project SEARCH, I had a hard time fitting in with others and finding what worked for me in life. The program really helped me with my social skills, and I was given great encouragement and guidance. Now, I can perform tasks quickly and in a timely manner. Here is a word of advice for anyone like me: If you are having trouble with something, don’t stress. Ask for help. You will find help.”

- Beau Doty, Page at Jonesboro Public Library

Beau is considered one of the greatest storytellers for the Children’s Library.



Josh

“At the beginning of Project SEARCH, I struggled to talk very much. It was hard for me to meet new people. They helped me a lot to understand how to talk more and how to do my tasks. I have a full-time job now, and I have the skills I needed to be here. I would tell anyone that Project SEARCH will teach you all you need to know to be a good worker and how to use your skills.”

- Josh Cerda, Laundry Technician at St. Bernards Medical Center

Josh overcame his struggles and uses visual accommodations every day to put in hard work and get the job done.

Landon

“At the start of Project SEARCH, I worried a lot and had bad anxiety. I got to talk with my Skills Trainer about my struggles, and they helped me to overcome. Because of the time they took in Project SEARCH to help me, I have a good job now. I would tell people to apply for the program because it was worth it for me to learn new skills, and now, I am independent.”

- Landon Green, Street Maintenance for the City of Jonesboro

Landon got his permit and license during Project SEARCH. He has purchased his own vehicle now and drives to work.



Alisyn

“Going into Project SEARCH, I struggled with anxiety and advocating for myself. They helped me overcome my struggles by pushing me out of my comfort zone. I gained skills to get employment by working hard to achieve the goals they help me set. I would tell others to come to Project SEARCH with confidence that they can achieve their goals and get a job.”

- Alisyn Loggins, Store Associate at Walmart Neighborhood Market

With an accommodation, Ali is working a cash register, independently.

Applications for the Project SEARCH 2022-2023 year open on October 1st. If interested in applying, applicants can visit projectsearcharkansas.org and/or contact our Instructor/Coordinator, Mary Housewright, for more information @ 501-414-9381.

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NEARBY HAUNTS

BY KAROLINE RISKER



Obviously, the way to do October is to experience something spooky sometime during those 31 days. Here are a few haunts to check off this month.

If you like to keep your fears close to home, wander over to the Collins Theatre, so named for its former owners, Frances and Orris Collins. The venue, host to silent films, vaudeville, and war bond rallies is full of chandeliers, ornate designs, and apparently, from time to time, Frances and Orris, who can be seen during rehearsals and performances.

Head down the road to find maybe the most famous haunting spot in the area: the Senath Light. Legend has it that if you go down County Road 602 where Hangman's Tree used to be and turn your car around, you can see the lantern light held by a woman whose family member went missing years ago. If you wait until the light hits you, supposedly you won't be able to start your car. So, might want to keep the engine running for this one.

Let's head over to Jonesboro for this next one. Cemeteries are already creepy, especially at night, so at least one needs to make the list. Find Keller's Chapel Cemetery, and knock on the chapel door. It is said that someone (something?) will knock back. If you wander over the graveyard, you might be able to hear humming or see a swinging light. This is another one where you don't want to turn off your car, as it is not supposed to start again for several hours.

Next, drive to the intersection of Union and Washington streets. Sometimes a blue mist can be seen in the center. It is said to take on the form of August Ellison, the only Confederate soldier killed during a Southern raid, who will then march around the courthouse.

Let's take a road trip to Nashville and check in to the still-in-use Union Station Hotel. It is said to be the most haunted hotel in Nashville. The hotel was once Union Station, a spot where thousands of WW2 soldiers were shipped out.

According to legend, the old train station is haunted by Abigail, a woman who said goodbye to her boyfriend as he boarded a train, and who promised she would stay in the same spot until he returned. When he did not come back at the end of the war, she threw herself in front of a train. To enhance your experience, ask for room 711. Past guests report they have heard strange noises and the sound of someone walking on the floor above, even though it is the top floor. While you're in Nashville, check out these sites that also house apparitions: The Hermitage, The Opryland Resort Hotel, and The Ryman Auditorium, perhaps the best chance at seeing the spirit of Hank Williams, Sr.

Since you're so close anyway, let's head to Franklin, Tennessee, a town only about 25 minutes away, and go to the Carnton Plantation to check out the largest Confederate graveyard in the entire South. More than 1,700 Confederate soldiers are buried there, so you know there are going to be some hauntings! Built in 1926, the plantation was site to Franklin's Battle where the Confederate Army of Tennessee fought the Federal army in what was one of the bloodiest hours of the Civil War, resulting in 9,500 soldiers being killed, wounded, captured, or counted as MIA. Visitors say they have seen these men moving about the grounds and even riding away on horses. Spirits have been reported in the bedrooms, the back porch, and on the grounds surrounding the home.

There it is, a list of sites just perfect for October. Happy hauntings!



September is..

Suicide Prevention Month

Reaching out is a sign of strength! It is always okay to ask for help.

Remember that..

You are brave.

You are enough.

You are strong.

You are loved.

If you or a loved one suffer from suicidal thoughts or just need someone to talk to, please do not hesitate to reach out for help.

For emergencies, please contact your local hospital or 911.

To reach the Suicide LifeLine, please call 1-800-273-TALK(8255).

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You ARE THE DIFFERENCE

Ridgecrest Health and Rehabilitation Center would like to honor several of its employees – people who make a positive difference in the lives of residents and families on a regular basis.



Heather Landers

Heather Landers, a physical therapist, was honored earlier this year in KAIT's Gr8 Acts of Kindness. Nominated by Debbie Pilgrim, the award honored Heather's dedication to making sure a father and daughter stayed connected during the pandemic. Heather dutifully took photos of Debbie's father, JB Darnell, and would regularly set up the duo on a Facetime call. Debbie shared that her father always said Heather made his day, and she is equally grateful for the woman who connected her to her father during a time she couldn't be with him face to face.

"I am an only child and he is my heart and soul," Debbie said in the KAIT feature. For a father and daughter, Heather made a difference.



Tomeka Woods

Environmental Services Manager, Tomeka Woods, was recognized as the 2020 Environmental Services Team Member of the Year by the Arkansas Health Care Association. At Ridgecrest and in the state of Arkansas, Tomeka makes a difference.



Kristen Bohr

Ridgecrest is excited to announce its new Director of Nursing, Kristen Bohr, RN.

Kristen, who is originally from Steele, Missouri, has a background ranging from ER/urgent care to behavioral health, and geriatrics.

"I am excited about becoming the new DON," Kristen said of her new role with Ridgecrest. "I have seen first-hand how much the staff cares for the residents here. I am completely amazed. When you have an administrator who is willing to hit the floor running and do whatever is needed, it speaks volumes. I hope to be an asset to the amazing team already in place!"

In her new role at Ridgecrest, Kristen will make a difference.

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Vaccinated!

The COVID-19 vaccination was recently offered to all staff and residents. We are excited to announce the majority were vaccinated.

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Honoring a Great One

BY JOEL PHILHOURS

I believe it's important to share memories about family and friends we have lost to cancer and who have passed on before us. I think it's important because this keeps our loved ones in our thoughts and minds and it's an opportunity for others to meet some of the "Great Ones" we've lost and miss dearly. Thank you, Chuck and David Dudley, for helping me to pin down some of the details in this article.

We lost a Great One - a great Bulldog, and a great friend.

I moved to Paragould, Arkansas, during the last nine weeks of my sophomore year of high school in the spring of 1974. The timing of the move was selected for two reasons: In taking over the family farm, my dad, Franklin Philhours, needed to get the crops planted. I needed to participate in spring football practice to learn the system and to meet those involved in American Legion baseball.

One of the first people I met was a 6-foot, many inches tall guy by the name of Todd Dudley. Todd was introduced to me as a great, four-sport superstar athlete, All-World in basketball, football, track and baseball. I found out later he possessed All-World character, as well. He was and remains a superstar friend. No, the sport introduction was not exaggerated, and his character and friendship were AAA+. I had the honor and opportunity to work with Todd in football and baseball and as a great friend. I would like to honor Todd and tell a few stories in the areas where I know him best.

Bulldog football, 1974 and 1975. Todd was a great football player and loved being a Bulldog! Todd and his brothers, Chuck and David, even owned a bulldog named George. Todd was instrumental in the '74 and '75 Region 3-AA undefeated teams. In '74 he was our strong safety. He wasn't afraid to stick his face into the chest of an offensive running back and he was certainly hard to throw over late in the game when the opponents were down by

three touchdowns, as they often were. In '75 Todd was our quarterback and safety. He was an excellent option-style QB – he could see over the top of the defense allowing for a great "read of the defense" as he determined whether to hand the ball to Tim Higgins up the middle, keep it himself and sprint for 20+ yards, or pitch the ball to me or Billy Williams for 30+ yards. Yes, those were two unforgettable Paragould High football teams and Todd was a great leader on both.

I also got to enjoy playing with Todd for three years on the Dr Pepper-sponsored American Legion baseball team. I remember Todd's playing third and first base, and pitching whenever we needed a spot-starter. He was great at all three positions. The thing I remember the most was his hitting. He could hit the ball hard and far – very far. One Sunday afternoon while playing a team in Memphis he hit a home run that sailed over 450 feet.

The field didn't have a fence but the ball landed in the back yard of a house that sat on a 10-foot tall hill! Todd was busting it around second base, covering a lot of dirt with each stride. Our dugout "rudely" failed to tell Todd to "slow up" and he continued to run like the devil was after him! He crossed home about the time the ball was retrieved by the guy sitting in his back yard.

This was our 18-year-old season. Todd and I led the team in home runs that year. Yes, I was up there in the stats with Todd Dudley! Further details do show that Todd didn't play the last 10-15 games, as he was touring the South in various High School All-Star Football games and camps. We came in third in the Arkansas State Baseball Tournament that year. Who knows how far we could have gone if Todd wasn't so good at football?

Finally, Todd was a great friend. He was funny, quick-witted, kind, fair, and a great teammate. We had a lot of fun times and got away with most of them. There is a rumor that after the Monday practice

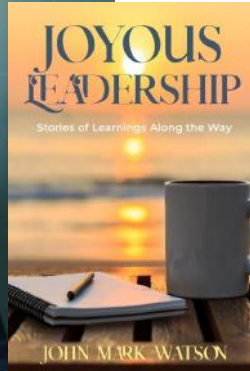


following the 1975 Homecoming game, Coach Bill Keedy had the entire team run fifteen 100-yard sprints to honor the five of us for the "fun time" we had over that weekend.

Todd was a great student too. He gave it everything he had in everything he did. His work ethic was never less than 100%, setting the standard for the rest of the team. He is the one you wanted on your team and in your circle of friends. He had your back and he supported his friends and teammates. And, oh yeah, he drove a beautiful 1976 "pimped-out" red Grand Prix with gangster whitewall tires, custom grill, spare tire rack on the back, and a T-top. Todd fit the car and the car fit him. He was a very Cool Dude!

Todd and I stayed in touch through his college career as he played football and basketball at ASU, later transferring to the University of Central Arkansas to play basketball, leading the Bears to the NAIA Championships. He went on to be a college basketball coach and businessman. We talked a lot over the years - telephone conversations, reunions, weddings, and we enjoyed meals together as we did our career thing. I remember having dinner with Todd when I lived in Birmingham, Alabama, back in 2008. As we were "catching up" he mentioned "having a thing removed" from the back of his neck that "the doctor sent off for testing. It'll be a few days until we know what's up ...". For the next three years Todd and his wonderful wife, Brenda, gave it all they had to kill this devil called Melanoma. His dad, C.R., his mom, "Jackie", and big brothers all prayed and supported Todd and Brenda in this fight. Many of us prayed hard and encouraged Todd over this time frame. But at 8:40 p.m. on Thursday, April 12, 2012, Todd passed way at his residence in Lafayette, Louisiana. He was 54 years old.

Yep. We lost a Great One.



Joyous Leadership

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Many times when Mark Watson finished addressing an audience, someone would stop him and suggest he write a book. “Yeah, that’s not happening,” he usually said to himself, because, “I’m a talker, not a writer.”

So, he’s written a book.

Scheduled for release very soon, *Joyous Leadership* is Mark’s attempt to “share lessons learned along the way. These are stories of family, integrity, teamwork ... words that shaped me. Things that changed me and made an impact on me.”

Now living in Springfield, Illinois, and an Executive Vice President and COO for the BUNN Corporation, the former Paragould resident readily accepts the many challenges presented by the business world. But his biggest trial comes from his personal life, where in 2015 he was diagnosed with a terminal disease known as Amyloidosis. Survival rate for his particular form (ATTR) of Amyloidosis varies between 3 and 15 years. Since June of 2015, he has been on an experimental drug known as Onpatro.

“It’s a hereditary condition,” he shared. “The body will not ingest its own protein. It steps up the heart, kidneys and liver. I got to where I couldn’t do my crossfit stuff one day; the next day, I couldn’t do squats. When I went to the doctor, at first they said I was just getting older, or maybe had a pinched nerve, or carpal tunnel ... by Christmas my body was

still shutting down and I was told, ‘You won’t be here in a year.’ By February of ‘15 I had no digestion, I was throwing up constantly.”

A frequent visitor to the Mayo Clinic, Mark now endures chemotherapy treatment every 21 days, as he has for the last six years. “Just part of your life,” he summarized, admitting that being relegated for a while to a lifestyle consisting of sitting around the house, he was compelled to reconsider the book idea. “I really had nothing to do but write. I wasn’t going to sit at home and think about dying all day. I had actually toyed with the book before. In 2014 I spoke at sort of a career day, and that was the first time I ever kept my notes. So I started trying to write a book and it was terrible. I didn’t want to read it. This was not me.

“So I started the book again and it was just as bad as the first time. I mean, horrible. I even took a class, and it was still bad. Then I found an online course and it helped. I had seven chapters before that, and then I wrote 12 more. I showed it to my wife and she was in tears. I shared it with a few people who said to go for it, but I’m thinking I still have no idea how long I will have to live with this. They said I needed to get an agent ... I don’t know if I’ve got that long. I don’t know the impact of the drug. But I’m giving it a shot anyway.”

Having graduated from both Crowley’s Ridge Academy and Crowley’s Ridge

College, Mark’s recollections have a definite Paragould flavor. Some of his stories of life contain names like Raymond Meadows, Vern Williams, Ethan Busby ... well-known and respected residents who helped Mark take his journey in the right direction.

“*Joyous Leadership* is just about what I have learned through the years,” he said. “What will you do, just spend all your time at work and be unhappy? You need to enjoy your choices. I’m 62 now; I was 56 when I got my diagnosis and I was kind of mad at God. I have a kid with Down syndrome; my wife has to take care of him alone because this is going to happen to me? I was miserable; I had lost all my joy. I was pretty angry. I had to make a big change in me.”

He and his wife, Stacie, have two sons, Jared and Tate. “I hope they look at this some day and maybe realize we can all find joy in about anything if we try,” Mark said. “I hope the book inspires people and maybe makes them laugh a little. I had to rethink where my life was headed. So we don’t have forever ... we have *now*. I knew I had to change. Live or die, I told myself, I’m going to show something different.”

Mark said the best way to make sure of the latest information on his launch date and book updates is to send an email to johnmarkwatson@gmail.com.

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MORE THAN *Baby Blues*

BY MORGANNE BROWN, LCSW, PMH-C

“I thought it was the Baby Blues. I thought it was normal and would go away.” I hear similar comments followed by “nobody told me it could be like this” in my office with each new mother I see. They describe expectations of a picture-perfect motherhood being shattered during pregnancy, birth, and/or postpartum.

The joy and fulfillment of a newborn has become overshadowed by feelings of overwhelming sadness, fear, shame, and sometimes guilt intensified by fatigue, sleep deprivation, and emotional rollercoasters. For some, it is a dark period that feels endless. Most express feelings of loneliness, embarrassment, and fear of talking about it. Fear of being labeled as a “bad” or “unfit” mother keeps them from reaching out for help and support.

Each new parent that walks into my office has a unique journey to becoming a parent with their own needs and experiences. Some seek validation for feelings of “needing more than just being a mom.” Others need to hear the fears and anxieties do not make them “unfit.” At times they need to process the frustrations of undergoing fertility treatments with their partner. But all of them want to know and feel they are not alone.

Lack of education and awareness contributes to this loneliness. Most do not know 1 in 5 new mothers experience symptoms of a perinatal mood and

anxiety disorder (PMADs). For black mothers, this number increases to 1 in 3. These numbers are rising with the chaos of COVID-19.

Attending routine appointments alone, online follow-up appointments, fears of being separated from their baby after birth, delayed fertility treatments, and limited support during delivery are causing rates to rise. Studies indicate reports of birth trauma have increased from 4% (pre-covid) to 30% and postpartum depression rates have increased from 14% (pre-covid) to 31%.

Mothers of every culture, ethnicity, income level, and age are at risk for experiencing an unprecedented mental health crisis. Strong support is key to a healthy perinatal period. Listening, supporting, and encouraging can help lessen the darkness occurring.

The person who found the courage to reach out for help and is sitting with me, recalling their journey to becoming a parent, could be a loved one, neighbor, or coworker. Maybe they have not reached out yet. Opening the conversation and providing the safe place for them to express feelings and needs is the start to helping them find the support they need. Maybe you are that new mother trying to find the courage to reach out. Your feelings are valid. The thoughts and experiences do not make you a bad mother. Help is available. We are not meant to fight these battles alone.

Coming Up

▶▶ SPIKE OUT CANCER

▶ The NEA volleyball group meets each week to play and socialize. One member – MOR Media’s own, Justin Hetler – is putting together a volleyball tournament to benefit the American Cancer Society. This is a co-ed volleyball tournament. Team Registration Deadline is October 10. Team registration is \$75 and public admission is \$3. T-shirts will be provided by Unique Ink. First place will receive a trophy and cash prize, 2nd place will receive a trophy. Volunteers are needed – contact Justin Hetler.

Sponsored by MOR Media Inc., Smoothie King, Connie Leonard (Compass Rose Realty), Greenway Equipment, Reddick Grant and Marble, Empower and Unique Ink.

Allen Park Community Center

October 23

Registration Deadline
October 10th

Spike out CANCER

Co-Ed Volleyball Tournament
October 23rd - Allen Park Community Center

HOW TO REGISTER

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Coming Up
▶▶ **RENT**

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Musical Arrangements: Steve Skinner
Music Supervision and Add. Arrangements: Eric Hail
Original Concept/ Add. Lyrics: Billy Aronson
Dramaturgy: Lynn Thomson

RENT was originally produced in New York by New York Theatre Workshop and was developed by Jeffrey Seller, Kevin McCollum, Allan S. Dorfman and New York Theatre Workshop.

Is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mti-show.com

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Coming Up

►► Pink Warrior Walk



► In light of the number of COVID cases in our area, organizers are making a few changes to the event. Rather than a traditional start/finish line at the race, there will be a race course participants can enter and end at any point. The course, which will be throughout downtown Jonesboro from 9 - 11 a.m. that day, will feature various sponsor tents and booths, including water stops, entertainment, a photo booth, a survivor tent and others. The aim is to prevent too many individuals from gathering in one area, but still offer the race experience, all for a great cause. More details about the event can be found via gopinkwarrior.com/register.

📍 Downtown Jonesboro

🕒 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

A close-up photograph of a gold ring with a large, vibrant emerald gemstone set in a bezel. The ring is encrusted with smaller diamonds along the band and the shoulders. The background is dark, making the ring stand out.

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A photograph of a young woman with long blonde hair smiling. She is wearing a grey t-shirt with a circular graphic that says "fall SWEET FALL" and lists various items like "LEAVES", "HARVEST", "ROOTS", "APPLE COBBLER", "FLANNELS", "CANDLES", "HANDMADE", "PUMPKIN SPICE".

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Taking Care of Your Mental Health



BY DR. DANA WATSON

I'll be honest, it's tough to squeeze into just a few paragraphs my passion and desire for each person to create and maintain a wellness journey. I have so much I want to be sure everyone knows – to affirm those who are doing well (keep working, every day! Be intentional on finding new ways to create space for your feelings, find joy and gratitude in small things, and pour into others by volunteering on a small or even large scale) and to encourage those who are struggling - you do not have to struggle alone! There are real, proven ways professionals can help, and many of us have dedicated our lives to being supports and guides for you.

Being emotionally and mentally healthy is a top priority for most people. We are aware that when we are “in a good place,” we can better connect with others, be more cognitively flexible when we need to change course, and we have more energy and enthusiasm with which to enjoy our daily lives. Overall, even with the normal amount of doubt and stress humans will endure, when we are healthy, we feel competent and hopeful about our futures. We know that even though one of life's sneaky “gut punches” may knock the wind out of us, we believe in time we will get back to a better – albeit, sometimes different – place.

But sometimes, we don't feel emotionally well or see the world in a hopeful way. Whether we receive an emotional blow from which we are having difficulty finding our way back or whether we are predisposed to genetic illnesses or a chemical imbalance in the brain, understanding our emotional and mental health – and available treatments – can help us take charge of our health and find the care we need to get on track to becoming well.

Thankfully, there are very effective treatments (typically talk therapy and for some conditions, medication) which help most people successfully manage or even eliminate symptoms and lead a much more fulfilling life. And I really want to stress that, because I know if you're reading this right now and feeling unwell, you're probably also feeling very skeptical about treatment. That's okay, that's part of not feeling well. But please don't get stuck there. More than ever before, therapy services are easier to access – whether in person or via telehealth from their own homes! Talking about your thoughts and feelings, processing aloud with a skilled therapist who is trained to guide you through the process of understanding your thoughts, emotions and behaviors and clarifying goals, creates a shift in your brain and in brain chemicals that ruminating about your problems in your own head will not accomplish.

Think about it like this: One person wants to get physically fit and starts doing sit ups and push ups at home while another person goes to the gym and works with an experienced trainer who teaches and coaches people how to get fit all day every day. While working alone may be a start, working with a professional helps to identify and understand faulty training methods, clarifies goals, and educates the person on a more efficient and effective routine. It is truly amazing how life-changing therapy can be. And I'll give you a tip – some of the best therapy doesn't even feel like therapy.

Good mental health is as important as good physical health. It's no surprise both are helped by a healthy lifestyle – ensuring we get enough sleep and eat nourishing food, trying to keep stress to a reasonable level, and relaxing regularly, especially through physical exercise, and – very importantly – staying connected to family and friends.

Whether you are struggling right now or feel pretty good but know there is more you can do to promote improved health and wellness, please reach out to a mental health professional in your community. Tell them you are ready to develop your own course of wellness!

Sharing your concerns. Supporting your needs.

Life can be difficult to manage under normal circumstances, but with social distancing, financial uncertainties and health concerns due to COVID-19, depression and anxiety levels for many are higher than ever. If you feel overwhelmed by current events or recent headlines, don't hesitate to give us a call. Our team is here for you, as we always are, scheduling appointments via telemedicine as well as face-to-face office visits.

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Happenings



Dr. Robert Warner, General Surgeon at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center, was recently awarded the Preceptor of the Year award from NYITCOM at A-State. Each year, NYITCOM at A-State recognizes a Preceptor of the Year for each of the regions in which its students train. The award is based on a vote of students in each specific region and gives the students an opportunity to recognize a physician who has been particularly influential and helpful in their education.



The NEA Baptist Charitable Foundation announced that Kim Provost has been named Executive Director. In her new role, Kim will oversee the six programs of the foundation, spearhead fundraising efforts with key stakeholders, as well as assist with Duck Classic, the largest fundraising event in Northeast Arkansas.

BIRTHS



Oakleigh Fay Crawford

Proud parents Christopher and Mikaela Crawford welcomed their newborn daughter, Oakleigh Fay Crawford, on September 8th, 2021.

Oakleigh was born at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center weighing 8 pounds and 11 ounces and measured 20 inches long.

Oakleigh is also welcomed by sister Caroline Crawford and grandparents Judy and Roger Darnell, Fay and Jared Rowland, and great-grandparents Wilma and Scotty Mallard and Darrel Rowland.

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Amy & Caleb

Caleb and I met at our mutual friend's wedding in 2019 and hit it off right off the bat, making wagers on Game of Thrones conspiracies and references to The Office.

Honestly, we weren't sure how we had never managed to meet before then, as I'm from Paragould and he's from just down the road at Leachville. We went to church in Paragould and we had multiple friends in common, but we think now that it was just divine timing. We dated long distance for about a year before he proposed, thus ensuring my moving back to Arkansas for good after my pediatric residency training in Louisville, Kentucky, was finished this summer.

When we were planning our wedding, we knew we wanted to do some sort of getaway because we both love to travel and had even made arrangements for a ceremony in Scotland ... buuut ... Covid-19 changed our plans at the last minute, so with six weeks before our original date we frantically tried to find a place in the U.S. that had scenic views and the romantic mountain vibe we had dreamed of, and then we found Glacier! The park was unbelievably gorgeous and picturesque, and it felt like it was meant to be.

Our parents and most of our immediate family were able to make it, and his grandpa Bob even officiated, making it even more special. We did our ceremony in West Glacier in a little private spot called Ryan Meadows before we did some hiking to Avalanche Gorge to get some other photos, which turned out to be quite the adventure in a wedding dress and suit!

Overall, we had a dream ceremony surrounded by the people we love most and breathtaking scenery, but I was most excited about the person standing across from me.

Our photographer was Grace Cady and she was amazing! She was bubbly and fun and made sure we were comfortable the whole time. She also literally climbed boulders to take some incredible pictures that we were are in love with.



2021 Kids' Events

October

Ongoing - October 6

Scarecrow Shuffle

When: Continuing through October 6

Where: Downtown Paragould

Info:

Downtown Paragould's Facebook Page

October 16

Bono Harvest Festival

When: October 16

Where: Legacy Park

Info:

City of Bono on Facebook

October 30

Trunk or Treat

When: October 30

Where: Paragould Community Center

Info:

870-239-7530

For more kids activities please
visit exploremornea.com/kids

For Alexis and Jade Burns, Armband Day at the Greene County Fair was a good time to put on some makeup and ride the rides. They are the daughters of Carlos and Ashley Burns of Paragould.



Next Month

Entrepreneurs



Highlighting entrepreneurs in NEA and how their efforts improve our community.

Locally Owned



Locally-owned businesses and why they are vital to vibrant, culturally-rich cities.

2021 Gift Guide



Need help shopping? Suggestions for the perfect gifts to give your loved ones this holiday season.

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