

Scenes from
MLK brunch
hosted by local
NAACP Chapter
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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2023



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Successful UAM Ag Alumni Society dinner continues growth

By: LON TEGELS
College of Forestry, Agriculture and Natural Resources - University of Arkansas at Monticello

Last year, the UAM Ag Alumni Society planted the seeds for annual get-togethers of UAM's agriculture alumni with the Inaugural Aggie Comeback weekend. The special homecoming for UAM Ag Alumni and friends has grown like wild weeds. The UAM Aggie Comeback weekend was so successful that the UAM Ag Alumni Society is hosting multiple events this year.

This year's 2023 Ag Alumni Scholarship Dinner will be held Saturday, January 21, at the McGehee Men's Club. Last year the Ag Alumni Scholarship and Auction dinner surprised everyone when it sold out. The turnout maxed out the facility's seating capacity, which was held at an outdoor venue, The Ridge on Wilson Mill in Monticello. While it was covered, the sides of the facility were open to weather elements. With this year's dinner being held in January, UAM Ag Alumni Society Secretary Chris Bryant said an indoor covered facility was necessary.

The primary reason for holding the 2023 Ag Alumni Scholarship Dinner in January instead of April is to accommodate the row crop farmers who are normally in the middle of planting season in April. In addition to the dinner, earlier

that day there will be a Row Crop Symposium that will take place from 9 am to noon at the newly renovated UAM Agriculture Building's auditorium. Speakers include University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture professors Dr. Hunter Biram, who will speak about the "Market Outlook for Row Crops and Risk Management Strategies," and Dr. Brian Deaton, who will present on "Hedging and Marketing Plans", and Dr. Kishan Mahmud, who will present on "Soil Health and Soil Microbiology".

"In 2022, we maxed out our venue with about 140 people, and we're looking to keep growing this thing every year," said Bryant. "We are shooting for a goal of 200 sold tickets", said Bryant.

"By holding the dinner in McGehee Men's Club, not only is the event allowed to grow due to the size of the venue," said Bryant, "its tenants will be fully enclosed and offer suitable parking."

"Money raised from the event will go toward the Dr. Kelly J. Bryant Memorial Scholarship. Bryant said, "the money will go toward an endowment to help students with finances or equipment. Whatever we see that the need is that year," said Bryant. He said the money goes toward scholarships or the advancement of the agriculture program at

See UAM AG Page 3A

Local NAACP holds MLK celebration at New Life



Ashley Hogg/Advance Monticellonian

By: ASHLEY HOGG
editor@monticellonews.net

The local chapter #6042 of the NAACP and youth chapter #67AJ, hosted a lively MLK celebration Monday, January 16 at New Life Assembly of God church in Monticello.

The program began with Rev. Daryl Daniels and Toccarra Daniels welcoming the crowd and reminding everyone of the purpose of the gathering.

The special MLK community choir opened the program with "We Shall Overcome" which

brought the crowd to their feet and set the tone for the evening.

NAACP Secretary Miyoshi Smith addressed the group and thanked local sponsors of the event.

Oak Grove Assembly of God pastors Brandon and Amanda Laudell read scripture and said the opening prayer.

The crowd and the choir were then lead in song to "Lift Every Voice."

Monticello Mayor Jason Akers and Drew County Judge Jessie Griffin were present, along with Judge Bruce Anderson, Quorum

Court member Zachary Hill and City Council members Cedric Leonard and Clarissa Pace.

Akers and Griffin thanked the crowd for the opportunity to speak and reiterated the night's theme of "Tear Down Walls."

Meygan Bivens, a local high school student, gave a youth perspective and call to action to the crowd.

An offering was taken and another selection from the choir was performed.

The keynote speaker for the night was Veronica Smith Creer, former Mayor of El Dorado and

author.

Freedom Fund Chair Peggy Orr, recognized the 2022 Freedom Fund Honorees that included several individuals, Union Bank and Monticello Youth Cheer League.

The mission of the local NAACP chapter is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate well-being, education and economic security of black people and all persons of color.

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund accepting Summer 2023 scholarship applications

SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

Eligible single parents are invited to apply for Summer 2023 scholarships at aspsf.org/apply-now. The deadline to apply is March 15.

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund (ASPSF) awards scholarships up to \$1,200 to eligible single parents who are attending college or obtaining technical training. A full list of eligibility guidelines is available at aspsf.org/eligibility.

"ASPSF has helped me and my son with bills and savings for expenses in case of emergencies! The ASPSF family also has motivated me to keep my grades

up," said recipient Lajodeci Simpson, who's studying health information management at the University of Arkansas at Monticello

If awarded, recipients can use the funds for any combination of school and/or household expenses that remove a financial burden and help the student stay in school.

Scholarships are combined with wraparound services, including workshops, mentorships, and tutoring, to create a support system helping single parents along their higher education journey to graduation and professional employment.

If a single parent is not at-

tending summer school, he or she can apply later for another semester. Here are upcoming ASPSF scholarship application openings and deadlines:

- Fall 2023 Semester: Apply between April 15-June 15, 2023
- Spring 2024 Semester: Apply between Aug. 15-Oct. 15, 2023

For more information about Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund — which has awarded more than \$30 million in scholarships across the state to single parents since 1990 — contact ASPSF Program Manager Keron Simpson at ksimpson@aspsf.org or (870) 498-8650.

About Arkansas Single Parent

Scholarship Fund: Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund works to create stronger, more educated, and more self-sufficient families. Through scholarships and services, ASPSF opens doors for low-income single parents, helping them pursue education, secure employment, and transform the future for their families. With the help of volunteers and community support, ASPSF creates multigenerational change, transforming lives for both single parents and their children. For information about scholarships, volunteer opportunities, and ways to give, visit www.aspsf.org.

Louisiana Purchase Plein Air: ASU-Beebe and UAM student exhibition

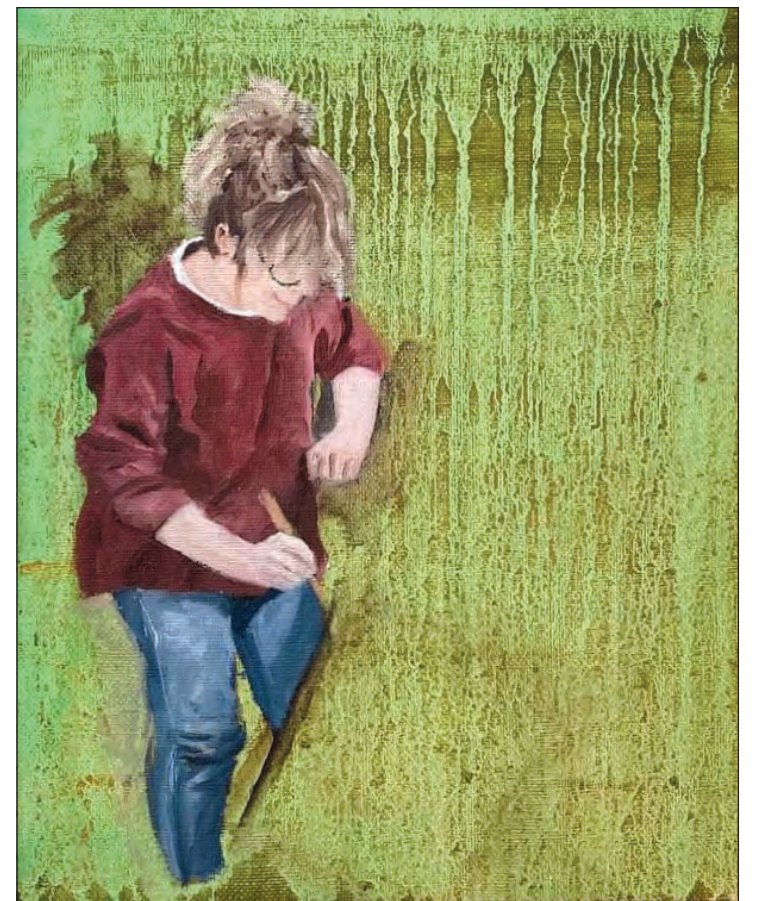
SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

A closing reception will be held on Monday, January 23, from 1-2 p.m. in the Glassblock Gallery in the Fred J. Taylor Library and Technology Center at the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) for the exhibition of paintings, drawings and

photographs that Arkansas State University-Beebe (ASU-Beebe) and UAM students made during a visit to the Louisiana Purchase State Park in October. The public is invited to attend and meet the participating students.

Participating artists from

See UAM ART Page 3A



Courtesy photo

2022 a near-record year for Ark. soybean, cotton production; rice, peanut acreage fall significantly

By: RYAN MCGEENEY
U of A System Division of Agriculture

Despite a second consecutive year with more than 40 percent of the contiguous United States toiling under drought conditions, Arkansas soybean and cotton growers managed to tie or improve their lot in 2022.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Crop Production 2022 Survey, published Jan. 12, U.S. growers

planted about 312 million acres of crops, a 1.6 percent decrease from the previous season. They harvested approximately 286 million acres, a drop of 4.2 percent from 2021 year-end numbers. Arkansas production dropped slightly in 2022, with overall planted acres falling just 28,000 to about 6.99 million acres, and harvested acres falling by 27,000 to about 6.8 million acres.

The USDA surveyed more than 72,000 farming operations in December 2022, including more than 1,800 operations in Arkansas alone.

Soybeans

While overall soybean production across the country fell nearly 5 percent, USDA reported both Arkansas and Mississippi enjoying record-tying and record-setting average yields, respectively.

Arkansas planted soybean acreage rose more than 4 percent in 2022, to nearly 3.2 million acres, with about 3.15 million of those acres being harvested. The state average yield remained the same year over year at 52 bushels per acre for an overall production increase of 7.8 million bushels in 2022. Nationally, soybean production fell from 4.47 billion

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

UPCOMING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

Common Ground AR to speak at Rotary Club

The Monticello Rotary Club meets at noon on Thursdays in the Gibson Center at UAM. Thursday, January 26, representatives from Common Ground AR will address the club. The public is invited to attend.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Ballot Magnificent

SEARK Concert Association will present Ballot Magnificent beginning at 7 p.m. Thursday, February 2 at the Fine Arts Center at UAM. Tickets may be purchased at www.searkconcert.org.

ONGOING

Free community yoga class

Every third Thursday, from November to March, a free community yoga class will be offered from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Monticello Coffee Company. Props and mats are available for use. Everyone is invited to attend and enjoy yoga, hot tea and coffee sponsored by Woodside Medical, hosted by MoCoCo and led by Maci Edwards.

City recycling guidelines

Each Wednesday, barring a catastrophe, the city of Monticello is accepting recyclable items at the Transfer Station within the following guidelines: 1) Cardboard—must be flattened. Not accepted are cereal boxes, drink can boxes or egg cartons; 2) Plastic bottles—lids must be removed and the bottles must be bagged. Only No. 1 and No. 2 bottles are accepted (the number is located on the bottom of the bottle). No wide-mouthed bottles can be accepted; 3) Newspapers—bagged or boxed; 4) Aluminum cans—must be bagged. No tin cans or pet food cans can be accepted; and 5) Shredded office paper—must be bagged. To have recycled items picked up, contact City Hall at 870-367-4400. Note: Electronics (E-Waste) are accepted at the city transfer station, 1466 Old Warren Road, but are not eligible for pick up. The city reminds all citizens to not mix household trash with recyclable items. The city does not accept glass or any item not listed above at this time.

Drew County Quorum Court Meeting

The Drew County Quorum Court meets the second Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Monticello District Court, 107 East Jackson Avenue in Monticello. The public is encouraged to attend.

Monticello City Council Meeting

The Monticello City Council meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 707 U.S. Highway 278 East in Monticello. The public is encouraged to attend.

Support for local schools

Show support for local schools by purchasing a school mascot yard sign for only \$20. All three (University of Arkansas at Monticello Boll Weevils, Drew Central Pirates and Monticello Billies) may be purchased for \$50. For more information, contact the Monticello-Drew County Chamber of Commerce at 870-367-6741 or stop by the chamber office at 335 East Gaines Street.

Borrow a book and hours

The Southeast Arkansas Regional Library, Monticello Branch, 114 West Jefferson Avenue, is open from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Masks are required while entering, exiting or walking around the library. Masks may be removed while seated. Social distancing of 6 feet between individuals. Hand sanitizer is available upon entering the building and at the front desk. Call the library at 870-367-8583. Fax, copying and printing services are available. Public WiFi is available inside and from the parking lot. The password is books2015.

Information and referral outreach office now open

Southeast Arkansas Delta Solutions Community Development Organization announces the opening of its Information and Referral Outreach Office, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The office will be open Tuesdays only. Services will include but are not limited to, COVID-19 relief information, pharmacy assistance referrals for free and reduced prescription medications, help with disability applications and other health and human services needs.

Delta Solutions is a non-profit organization, serving residents in Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Desha and Drew counties. It's primary focus is Education, Housing, Health and Wellness, Economic Development, Community Development, Housing, Food Insecurity, and Financial Literacy.

The office is located at Revival Center Church's Business office complex. For service, please use the front entrance at 311 South Pine in Monticello. For questions or to schedule an appointment, one may call Mrs. Linda Austin at (870) 740-1093.

AA meetings

The Monticello Winner's Group of Alcoholics Anonymous meets at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, located at 836 N. Hyatt St. in Monticello at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays and 12 noon on Tuesdays and Fridays. The meetings are open. There are no dues or fees.

Andrews Chapel Cemetery

To all concerned that have family or cemetery plots in the Andrews Chapel Cemetery, please send any updated contact information to: Andrews Chapel Cemetery Association, C/O Cindy Ferrell, Secretary/Treasurer, 2968 Barkada Road, Wilmar, AR 71675.

VFW Auxiliary

Anyone interested in joining the VFW Auxiliary is asked to contact Wanda or Melvin Veasey, VFW Commander, at mlvini.veasey@yahoo.com or 870-723-4993.

Any relative of a veteran who served overseas in a foreign war is eligible for membership. Any past members who are still interested in the Auxiliary are also asked to contact Wanda or Melvin if they are still interested in being a member.

Local martial arts student competes at national competition



Photo courtesy of Rufus Henson

Jadon Henson was invited to compete in the ProMac Martial Arts National Championship in Destin, Fla., in November. Competitors from 18 states attended the two day competition.

Henson, 16, of Drew County, competed in three black belt events winning first place in Point Sparring, second place in Traditional Weapons and third place in Traditional Firms.

The end of this competition resulted in Henson being nationally ranked in two regions.

Jadon is the son of Rufus and Tanya Henson.

Senior Center lunch menu: January 18-25

Wednesday: Herbed baked chicken, rice pilaf, green beans, pumpkin cake, roll

w/gravy, glazed carrots, cake, roll

Thursday: Roasted pork w/gravy, mashed potatoes, turnip greens, cornbread, lemon icebox pie

Menu is subject to change. All lunches have a

choice of sweet tea and milk. The Senior Center

serves lunch for citizens 60 and older for \$4;

under 60, \$5, Monday through Friday from 10

a.m. to 12 p.m., first come, first served. If you

need any information on our senior center,

please call 367-2434.

Friday: Chili cheese dogs, tots, cookie bar

Monday: Ravioli bake, Italian green beans, fruit, garlic toast

Tuesday: Sweet & sour pork, rice, egg rolls, pineapple

Wednesday: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes

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Monticello library to hold annual membership meeting

SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

The Southeast Arkansas Regional library Monticello branch thanks the public for their support in the last year.

The library had a busy year in 2022 as the board transitioned into the new normal.

One way they celebrated was to co-sponsor a community concert with South Arkansas Rehabilitation. The concert was in June and featured Arkansas native Ryan Harmon. The library also sponsored a community poetry contest as well as speaking events with poets Dr. Judy Bynum and Poet Ashley J. Each of these events assisted in promoting literacy in Southeast Arkansas.

In addition to community events, the board worked to update the Bylaws clarifying some passages and adding language to authorize virtual meetings. A copy of the revised bylaws will be posted at the library.

Fund raising activities included a booth at the First United Methodist Church Women's Holiday Bazaar, drawing for the handcrafted quilt donated by the Town and Country Quilters Extension Homemakers Club, and the sale of T-shirts. Because of the generosity of the community, the library was



able to give \$2,500 in support of this year's summer reading program.

All donations through the Friends of the Library are 501c tax deductible and allows the library to fund not only the summer reading program, but to put books into the hands of children throughout the year.

Accordingly, the board invites you to the Annual Membership Meeting, at 6 p.m., Monday, January 23. This meeting will feature a presentation and discussion regarding the Sorosis Club which was the women's literary club organized in 1902 from which the Friends of the Library evolved. This presentation is a result of newly found minutes from 1989-1990. Family names included in the text include Anders, Anderson, Curry, Garrett, Garvey, Giessen, Hamblen, Handley, Hicks, Leonard, McKenney, Mettetal, Millen, and Ross.

UAM AG

Continued from Page 1A

UAM. Bryant said of the dinner, "it's the same kind of agenda as last year. It's a steak dinner, \$40 a ticket, all the trimmings, dessert." He said there will be an introduction of new UAM agriculture professors and a review of where the agriculture program is

now and heading for the future. The night wraps up with a silent, live auction."

In the spring, the UAM agriculture program will host more events. The UAM Stampede Rodeo will be held on April 6th-April 8th. The UAM Field Day/Cattle Production Auction will be held Saturday, April 22, at the UAM Agriculture Building auditorium.

UAM ART

Continued from Page 1A

ASU-Beebe include Aidan Cockrell, Lisa Florysnak, Jordyn Keown and Emma Wilborn. Participating artists from UAM include Laurel Brown, Alexia Lams, Montzerrat Leija, Kai Morphis, Tom Richard

and Alexis Rodriguez.

Also on view in the upstairs gallery are drawings from nature by students who were enrolled in UAM's Drawing I course during the fall semester. Students include Levi Duke, Ashlynn Ebarb, Montzerrat Leija, Keaton McIntosh, Devier Pettit, Jacey Wallace and JaVunta Woodall.

Town and Country Quilters EHC start a productive year



Photo courtesy of Joy Graham

Town and Country Quilters EHC display their 2022 Christmas Blocks: (L to R standing) Melissa Burchfield, Judy Murphy, Dr Kay Walter, Evelyn Lawson, Claudia Horton, Joy Graham, (L to R seated) Malinda Godwin, Louise Godwin, Bettye Kellum, Julie LaFleur, and Peggy Moffatt; members not pictured: Susie Chadwick, Judy Person, and Constance Burch.

By DR. KAY J. WALTER

The Town and Country Quilters Extension Homemakers Club is beginning the new year with an active schedule. Their first meeting of 2023 was held Saturday, 14 January during the monthly workday at the Monticello United Methodist Church Old Fellowship Hall. Club members worked on individual projects, shared a potluck lunch, and learned to make a House quilt block. Claudia Horton, club Vice-President, presented the program of directions for the new block, which is number seven in the Sampler Quilt project the club is currently constructing. Other blocks in the series include the Shoofly Block, the Maple Leaf

Block, the Drunkard's Path Block, the Pinwheel Block, the Flower Basket Block, and the Courthouse Steps Block.

In December 2022, instead of learning about a new block, the club enjoyed gathering with visitors for their annual Christmas party and quilt block exchange. Each year club members create individual blocks inspired by a seasonal theme and exchange them with other club members in a random draw. Members who continue in the club eventually collect sufficient Christmas blocks to make their own Christmas quilt. Last year also saw the quilters hosting their inaugural quilt show, claiming a purple Best of Show ribbon in the Drew County Fair for their educational booth about

t-shirt quilts, and donating a Showering Stars Quilt which raised over \$1,000 for the Monticello Branch of the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library. They anticipate exciting results from their work as an Extension Homemakers Club in 2023.

Town and Country Quilters EHC meets regularly on the second Saturday of each month at First United Methodist Church and welcomes visitors to join them, from expert seamstresses to those who are interested in beginning to learn stitching techniques. For more information about the club, its projects, or upcoming meetings, please phone club Secretary Joy Graham at 870-723-1372 or email club President, Dr Kay Walter at walter@uamont.edu.

Southern Arkansas University announces Fall semester honors

SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

Jeremy Tyler Smith earned a 4.0 GPA in the fall 2022 semester, securing a reputable position on Southern Arkansas University's President's list.

Smith is a junior Engineering major from Monticello. A total of 415 students were honored on this semester's President's List.

SAU also announced that 581 students earned a 3.5 GPA or higher for the fall 2022 semester and have been named to its Dean's List.

Students to receive this honor from Monticello were Shelby Davidson, a senior Biology major, Hannah Diffie, a freshman Mass Media major, Mallie Mullins, a senior Public Health

major, Logan Owens, a junior Accounting major, and Mikaela Smart, a senior University Studies major.

A total of 581 students were honored on this semester's Dean's List.

Southern Arkansas University provides students the complete college experience in a caring environment of service,

innovation, and community. With more than 100 degrees in four distinct colleges and the School of Graduate Studies, SAU initiates new degree programs to fit the needs of career and professional trends of today.

To learn more about SAU, visit www.saumag.edu.

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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION
Notice of Availability

To all landowners within the boundaries of the Drew County Conservation District, notice is hereby given that petitions for securing a ballot position for the election of conservation district directors are available at the Drew County Conservation District located at 419 West Gaines St., Monticello, Ar 71655, phone: 870-224-7296, email DrewCountyConservationDistrict@gmail.com.

*Submit a nominating petition by: **February 1, 2023.**

or by writing to:
 Natural Resources Division
 Attn: Elections
 10421 West Markham Street
 Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

To be eligible for election, you must be an owner of land within the district and registered to vote under the election laws of Arkansas.

Natural Resources Division

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OPINION

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Piece of Arkansas history earns national designation

More than four years ago I used this space to share the ongoing efforts to preserve the Butterfield Overland Trail, a piece of Arkansas's history that helped shape westward expansion. Now there is more to celebrate as legislation I championed to designate this landmark pathway as a national historic trail has been signed into law.

During the mid-19th century, U.S. Mail contracted the Butterfield Overland Mail Company to transport mail and passengers between St. Louis and Memphis to San Francisco on the Butterfield Overland Trail, which was more commonly referred to as the "Ox-Bow Route" due to its curved path that ran approximately 3,553 miles. It was the first overland transcontinental route by stagecoach.

The stagecoaches traveled through much of Arkansas, making stops in St. Francis, Prairie, Lonoke, Faulkner, Conway, Pope, Yell, Logan and Franklin counties. The northwestern route included stops in Benton, Washington and Crawford counties. The routes merged in Fort Smith before continuing all the way to the Pacific coast.

From 1858 through 1861, the Butterfield Overland Trail served as the connector between the East and West, providing reliable mail service, transportation of goods and a route for settlers to the western frontier. Its significance is evident today. Four segments of the trail in Arkansas have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places in addition to the Potts Inn in Pottsville and the Fitzgerald Station barn in Springdale—two of the original buildings along the trail that are still standing.

Arkansas is blessed to have been the setting for something of such historical significance and now, as a result of the Butterfield Overland Trail's national designation, many others will learn about its important role in the growth and development of our country.

"We thought it would be a slam dunk," advocate Marilyn Heifner with Heritage Trail Partners recently told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette about the idea she first brought to my office in 2004 when I was serving as the Third Congressional District's Congressman.

It took several years due in part to a required analysis by the National Park Service (NPS), but we remained patient and persistent. When the study was completed in 2018 and NPS determined the Butterfield Overland Trail met the requirements to be a national historic trail, we pushed ahead.

With the support of groups such as the Heritage Trail Partners and Potts Inn Museum, I introduced legislation to finalize the long-overdue recognition. Just before Christmas, Congress approved this designation then early this year the president signed it into law.

I'm pleased we finally achieved the goal of formally classifying and preserving the trail since it is such an important symbol that has deep roots in Arkansas. It is a piece of history that connects us to our past and, just as importantly, opportunities for the future. Not only will this serve as a tool for educating the next generation, it will help attract tourists interested in learning more about the settlement and growth of our country and the role our state played in its development.

The Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail will continue to tell this story, only now with the distinction and visibility it deserves.

Hope for the next generation

"If we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - 1967

It is sometimes hard for me to remember that I am not the center of the universe. I have to regularly check myself to make sure I am not being self centered or not considering others.

Since I have to work so hard to maintain the right head space, I started teaching Fred from birth that while she is loved and her family thinks she is the best thing since sliced bread, she is not the only person that matters in the world.

Thankfully, her kind spirit is naturally helpful and considerate of other people.

On the way to school a week or so ago, she asked me, "Mom, was Martin Luther King a good king or a mean king?"

I had to take a hard pause before I answered

her question. It was fascinating to me that her mighty mind had resolved that he was a "king".

I did not want to miss the opportunity to express to her the gravity of the situation regarding that time in our country and explain that King is a semi-common last name.

To Fred, racism was a foreign concept until this series of conversations.

All her life she has been taught to treat people with kindness until they treat her differently, then, treat them accordingly.

While having these talks with her, I was careful to tailor them to what I thought the appropriate amount of information her seven year old brain could handle while still holding on to the truth.

I could see in her eyes that the wheels were spinning because she could not understand how a group of people could think they are better than another group of people because of their skin color. She simply did not understand so I explained to her that Martin Luther King, Jr. was not a king but a civil rights activist and much more. She was more surprised to learn that his last name wasn't Junior.

I was proud to know that she so easily understood that we are all people, no matter what

shade our skin color is.

Could we be raising a generation of children that, from a young age, see absolutely zero value in racism? Have we made it to the point that kids just want to have fun with other kids that are nice to them? Are they hearing less hatred in their homes and therefore not taking ignorant attitudes to school? Could we be there? Have we made it?

I hope so and I have seen with my own eyes, children of all beautiful skin colors running together on the playground, smiling and laughing as children should.

I have always felt like with each generation, we get a little better as a society. While it has taken us far too long to squelch racism, I do believe that we are moving greatly in the right direction.

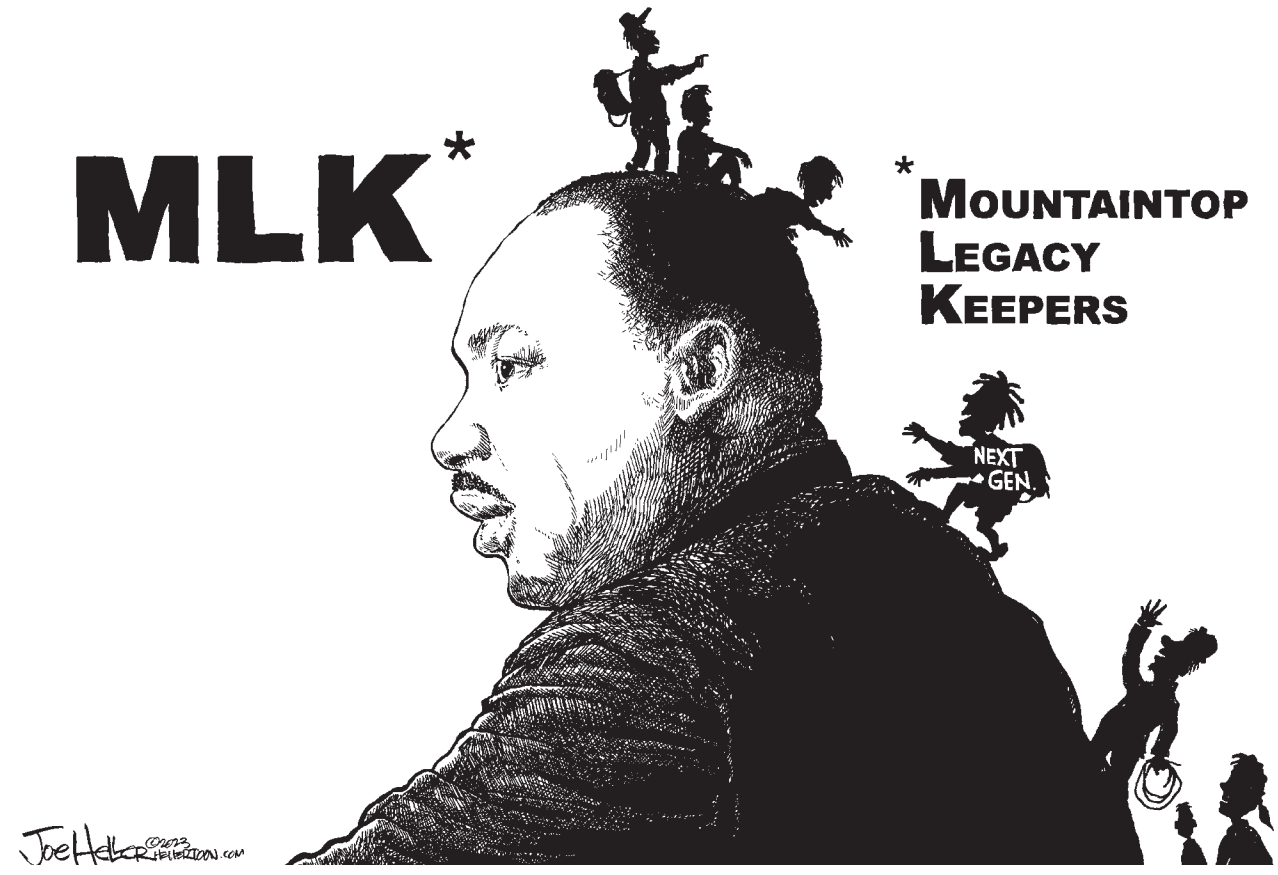
As for me and my household, we will continue to treat you with kindness until you give us a reason not to, regardless of your exterior color. And while I understand there are still people in this world that are ignorant and will spew hateful words, I feel confident saying those people are the minority and their population shrinks daily.



JOHN BOOZMAN
 U.S. SENATE REPORT



ASHLEY HOGG
 EDITOR



U.S. Congress now in full swing

As you've seen in the news, the past couple of weeks in Washington, D.C. have been a whirlwind of excitement. After a long first week back in the Chamber, we elected Rep. Kevin McCarthy as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and now the real work has begun.

The 118th Congress is in full swing, and I'm optimistic about what the next two years have in store for us. House Republicans are fired up, and we came into the new year ready to get to work. We hit the ground running.

This week alone, my colleagues and I have delivered on three main promises in our Commitment to America from last year.

On Monday night, we voted to re-

scind funding for 87,000 new IRS agents who were authorized by the Biden Administration's incorrectly named Inflation Reduction Act. Americans, especially our small business owners, deserve a government that works FOR them, not AGAINST them. Sadly, the Biden Administration wants to spend over \$80 billion hiring new IRS agents to audit taxpayers, yet it only plans on spending \$3 billion on fixing the IRS's antiquated computer systems, answering citizens' tax questions, and providing casework services. That's backward and utterly ridiculous. We should be investing ways to make the income tax code and the IRS experience easier. For the 2022 filing season, the IRS only answered about 10 percent of its phone calls. That's a complete failure! An ounce of prevention in the form of better systems and better services can eliminate the need for the pound of cure in the form of additional audits. The government be-

longs to you, and it should serve you every day. This legislation would start fixing that problem. I'm glad we were able to fulfill this promise to rein in Government overreach and reduce unnecessary spending.

Next, we established a bipartisan Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). House Republicans promised the American people that we would defend our nation's national security and intellectual property rights, and we delivered on Tuesday. The Select Committee on China will make significant strides in protecting Americans from the CCP and will hold the Chinese government accountable for its malign actions. Make no mistake, China is laser-focused on competing with the United States and overtaking us as the world's foremost economic

See **WESTERMAN** Page 5A



BRUCE WESTERMAN
 U.S. HOUSE REPORT



BEN GILMORE
 ARKANSAS SENATE REPORT

2023 legislative session off to a smooth start

The full Senate confirmed the governor's secretarial nominations, and Senate committees got their initial organizational meetings out of the way.

The governor had named 14 of a possible 15 cabinet nominees, and the Senate quickly confirmed her selections. The head of the Department of Finance and Administration, the Department of Labor and Licensing and the Department of Agriculture will continue in the positions they held under the previous administration.

The other appointees are new. The new secretaries of three large and important agencies, Education, Corrections and Human Services, have many years of experience in their fields but are new to Arkansas government.

Also during the first week of the session, the legislature approved the General Appropriation Bill. Under the state Constitution, it must be approved before any other spending measures are approved.

Appropriations generally don't garner the same amount of public attention as other bills, but it is the legislature's constitutional duty to approve budgets for state government. The Joint Budget Committee and its sub-

committees will meet more often than any other committees.

Legislators will prioritize spending levels in the state's \$6.3 billion general revenue fund. State agency budgets will reflect the political values of Arkansas as much as bills related to so-called "hot button" issues.

State agency budgets reflect our political priorities because they determine how much state government will spend on public schools, health care, law enforcement, welfare and food stamps, higher education, job training, promoting our tourism industry, equipping our National Guard units and protecting the environment.

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2023 Regular Session is now underway

The session began on Monday, January 9 when members of the 94th General Assembly took the oath of office.

The House then elected Matthew J. Shepherd of El Dorado as the Speaker for the 94th General Assembly. He is the first person in state history to be elected Speaker for a third term.

Speaker Shepherd announced the chairs and vice chairs for committees. You can find the committee rosters at arkansashouse.org.

On the second day of the session, the House and Senate convened for a Joint Session. All constitutional officers took the oath of office and upon swearing-in, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders gave an address outlining her legislative priorities. The priorities mentioned include tax cuts, improving literacy, and improving public safety.

This week, the full House passed HB1001, an appropriation to pay for the expenses of the 94th General Assembly. The House also passed HB1051, the General Appropriation Act for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year.

The House also adopted the rules for the 94th General Assembly. Changes in the rules from the previous year include adding language that incorporates bill filing deadlines and fiscal impact statement requirements for legislation related to state sponsored health benefits and scholarships. The deadline to file scope of practice legislation is January 23. The deadline to file retirement legislation and employee health benefits plans legislation is January 27.

The deadline to file constitutional amendments is February 8. And the deadline to file legislation impacting scholarships funded by the lottery or the Higher Education Grants Fund is February 13.

Another change to the rules specifies that once a bill is assigned to a committee it will then be listed on that committee's agenda. Previous rules for the 93rd General Assembly directed committee chairs to set the agenda.

The legislature will not convene on Monday, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The House will reconvene on Tuesday, January 17 at 1:30 p.m.

You can watch all committees and House floor proceedings at arkansashouse.org.



JEFF WARDLAW
 ARKANSAS HOUSE REPORT

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HISTORY MINUTE

Arkansas blues legend was pioneer for modern music

By: **KENNETH BRIDGES**

Few people today outside fans of Rhythm and Blues may remember Albert King, but no one can listen for long to the great music acts since the 1950s without hearing his influence.

Albert King was born Albert King Nelson in Indianola, Mississippi, in 1923 to a family of migrant farm workers. He was one of thirteen children. When he was still very young, the family moved near Forrest City, Arkansas, where he would grow up and develop his musical talents.

Like many other southern musicians, he got his greatest musical education at church. Growing up in the 1930s, his family would perform as part of a gospel group at their local church and some neighboring ones. His father enjoyed playing the guitar, and the future blues artist soon taught himself how to play the instrument. According to one story, he bought his first guitar for \$1.25. As he was left-handed, he learned to play the right-handed instrument

upside-down, eventually becoming one of his trademarks.

In the 1940s, he began playing in Osceola and soon joined a band called In the Groove Boys. As his career developed, he would soon go by "Albert King" as a stage name. In the early 1950s, he was playing in small clubs and with bands in the Chicago area, occasionally recording. He returned to St. Louis in the latter part of the 1950s, recording "I'm A Lonely Man" in 1959, and his most popular hit, "Don't Throw Your Love on Me Too Strong," which hit #14 on the R&B charts in 1961. The Big Blues, one of his best-selling albums, was released in 1962.

When he came to Memphis in 1966, he signed with Staxx Records, which gave him an even wider audience. In 1967, Born Under a Bad Sign was released, and Bill Graham, owner and promoter of the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco, invited him to perform. King would

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Worried about inflation? Consider these moves

As you know, inflation was big news throughout 2022. But will it continue in 2023? And looking even further ahead, how should you account for inflation in your long-term plans?

In regard to the first question, many experts predict that inflation will cool off this year, though there are no guarantees. The high inflation of last year is thought to have been caused by some unusual factors, such as a spike in the demand for consumer goods as the world came out of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to supply chain issues. Also, the war in Ukraine drove up oil prices, increasing the cost of manufacturing and shipping and driving up the price of wheat and other commodities.

In any case, last year reminded us that inflation needs to be reckoned with as you work toward your financial goals. But how you respond to inflation will depend somewhat on your stage of life. So, here are some sug-

gestions to consider:

If you're still working...

- Contribute more to your retirement plans. If you can afford to put more money away in your IRA and 401(k), you may want to do so. The more resources you'll eventually have available in retirement, the better protected you are against the rising cost of living.

- Adjust your portfolio objectives with your financial professional. Using tools such as "hypothetical" illustrations, a financial professional can show you some different paths you might take with your investments, given different rates of inflation. So, for example, if you feel that inflation may be higher for a longer period than you once thought, you could request a hypothetical showing how you might need to adjust your investment mix to achieve your long-term goals, given your risk tolerance and time horizon.

If you're already retired...

- Consider part-time work or consulting. Once you retire from your career, it doesn't mean you can never do any paid work again. If you've accumulated years of experience and expertise, you could use your skills as a consultant. Also, many part-time jobs are available for retirees. With the added income from employment, you may be able to delay taking withdrawals from your retirement accounts and other investments, possibly extending their longevity. (Once you turn 72, though, you will need to begin taking money from your 401(k) and traditional IRA.)

- Delay taking Social Security. You can begin taking Social Security when you're 62, but your monthly checks will be substantially bigger if you wait until your full retirement age, which will likely be between 66 and 67. (You could even wait until 70, at which point your monthly benefits will max out.) Of course, the ability to delay taking Social Security de-

pends on whether you can afford it, but it may be possible if you work longer than you once planned or if you work part time in retirement. But even if you do need to take Social Security before your full retirement age, your payments will be adjusted annually for inflation — in fact, for 2023, benefit checks will rise 8.7% over 2022.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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GILMORE

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Last year the legislature enacted about 220 separate appropriations for state agency budgets.

The general revenue fund is the state's largest discretionary

fund. The major sources of revenue are sales taxes, individual income taxes and corporate income taxes.

Highway construction and maintenance are the responsibility of the state Transportation Department, which gets revenue from gasoline and diesel taxes and registration fees paid

by heavy vehicles. Those are called special revenues because they are dedicated to maintaining highways and bridges, and are not considered during legislative debates about how to spend general revenue.

Arkansas operates under a balanced budget law known as the Revenue Stabilization Act. It

will be one of the last bills considered toward the end of the session, probably in mid to late March or early April.

It prioritizes the state's budget in the event of an economic downturn that slows or reduces the collection of state taxes. If tax revenue drops, spending will be reduced accordingly.

Fiscal decisions are different for Congress in Washington, D.C. because the federal government can deficit spend, which means it can borrow money for annual operations. The state legislature must balance its annual operating budget, so it sometimes has to make difficult choices about which programs

are funded and which ones are not.

About 42 percent of the state's general revenue budget goes for public schools and 13 percent goes for higher education. Health and human services account for about 31 percent. Public safety and prisons account for about 10 percent.

WESTERMAN

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and military power. And as we have seen, the CCP doesn't play by the rules. China uses forced labor, it supports stealing intellectual property, and it regularly cracks down on any government dissident. China is an adversary, and I'm proud to say that the bill

passed with a huge bipartisan vote. Standing up for America's security is in everyone's best interest.

Last, but certainly not least, we voted to pass the Born-Alive Abortion Services Act. Every life is precious, no matter the age or circumstance. This key legislation ensures that infants born-alive after an attempted abortion will receive the same level of high-quality health care

and protection under the law as any newborn child. The bill will require health care professionals who are present at the time of birth to practice the same level of skill and diligence to care for the health and life of the child that they would provide to any other child born prematurely or at the same gestational stage. Additionally, this bill penalizes the intentional murder of a born-alive child through fines or

prison time — ensuring that individuals who choose to neglect the life of a newborn child pay for their crimes. Unfortunately, there are still regions in our country where late-term abortions are available, and legal, for some women — increasing the chances of a born-alive child from an attempted abortion.

This bill will protect the life of the child and ensure that his or her right to a prosperous life is preserved.

This is only the beginning. As we work through the next few months, you will see House Republicans bring myriad bills to the floor that will unleash America's economic might and put our

nation back on a path to success. I am optimistic about the future of the 118th Congress, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop common-sense, forward-thinking solutions to help every resident of the 4th Congressional District for all of you back home

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Research team earns NSF entrepreneurship grant for consumer-savvy AI-guided imaging

By **FRED MILLER**
U of A System Division of Agriculture

The National Science Foundation awarded an Innovation Corps entrepreneurship grant to an Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station research team for a machine vision system developed using artificial intelligence-guided imaging.

The \$50,000 grant supports participation in the NSF's I-Corps Program. It is designed to help technology developers translate promising ideas and technologies from the laboratory to the marketplace, increase the United States's economic competitiveness and encourage collaboration between academia and industry, according to the NSF's I-Corp website.

The team in the biological and agricultural engineering department includes Dongyi Wang, assistant professor, as principal investigator; Swarna Sethu, a post-doctoral researcher, as entrepreneurial lead; graduate student Yihong Feng as technical lead; and Wale Obadimu, a site reliability engineer at LinkedIn, as industry lead.

Sethu said the NSF I-Corps program uses experiential education to help researchers gain

valuable insight into entrepreneurship, starting a business or industry requirements and challenges. Participants learn practical skills in connecting with customers, asking the right questions, and how to find partners to help get startup ideas off the ground.

As part of the I-Corps program, Sethu participated in a seven-week cohort program, a training seminar to develop entrepreneurship skills. She conducted interviews with industry advisors and consumers to help determine the most promising markets for the technology.

Funded by an NSF seed grant, Wang developed the idea of teaching an AI program to discern human responses to digital images of food products. The team used machine learning technology to teach an AI-guided digital imaging system to predict whether or not consumers would find food products acceptable.

Sethu photographed the products under variable color lights to change the appearance of the foods.

The team collaborated with Han-Seok Seo, associate professor of sensory science in the experiment station's department of

food science, to correlate the machine's predictions with a consumer panel of people trained to evaluate food products in his lab. Sethu said 75 panelists participated in the study.

Wang said the AI-guided system now has a high reliability rate in predicting consumer acceptance. "It can give hard data to support its predictions," he said.

The system can also help consumers who shop on retailers' mobile apps by accurately presenting product images in the most appealing lighting, Wang said. "It can create an enhanced visual experience for consumers."

The predictive technology is almost ready, Wang said, but they have to develop a marketable app for it. He said the team may also investigate ways to adapt the technology to other retail products.

To learn more about Division of Agriculture research, visit the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station website: <https://aes.uada.edu/>. Follow us on Twitter at @ArkAgResearch and on Instagram at @ArkAgResearch. To learn more about the Division of Agriculture, vis-

it <https://uada.edu/>. Follow us on Twitter at @AgInArk.

About the Division of Agriculture

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture's mission is to strengthen agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices. Through the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension Service, the Division of Agriculture conducts research and extension work within the nation's historic land grant education system.

The Division of Agriculture is one of 20 entities within the University of Arkansas System. It has offices in all 75 counties in Arkansas and faculty on five system campuses.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Blue & You Fitness Challenge celebrates 20th year with \$20,000 in prizes

SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

Taking part in the 2023 Blue & You Fitness Challenge is more rewarding than ever before. In honor of the Challenge's 20th year, teams could win one of multiple prizes totaling \$20,000; individuals could win one of multiple prizes totaling \$10,000.

The annual wellness event is hosted each year by Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Department of Human Services. The goal is to encourage participants to become more active and invested in their whole health.

"The Blue & You Fitness Challenge gets bigger and better every year," said Challenge Administrator Kristen Lippencott. "What better way to kick off the new year and get ready for spring than to focus on our wellness? We often find ourselves so busy and focused on day-to-day life that we neglect to take care of ourselves - body, mind and soul. In 2023, we want to change that."

The Challenge is a team event. Businesses, civic groups, friends and families, and organizations are encouraged to register a team by January 25 at blueandyoufitnesschallenge-ark.com. February 1-28, these groups

recruit people to join their teams. The Challenge kicks off March 1 and lasts through May 31.

"The Blue & You Fitness Challenge is about improving your wellbeing, whatever your fitness level. This is something everyone can do," Lippencott added.

Participating is easy. Team members log their daily activity and healthy behaviors into Wellable, the Challenge's convenient online platform. Participants can earn points for their team by exercising, taking part in healthy behaviors like getting a good night's sleep and meditating, or even watching one of the free wellness webinars. Participants also have the option to sync their wearable fitness device or manually log their physical activity via mobile app or desktop.

Also available to participants - free through Wellable - are on-demand fitness and wellness classes, recipes and meal planning guides, and a chat feature to cheer on teammates.

Over the three-month Challenge, 10 prizes of \$2,000 each will be awarded to teams by Arkansas Blue Cross for accomplishing goals such as logging activities and participating in on-demand class-

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January 2023 Drew Central Middle School Students of the Month

Fifth Grade
Abigail Mondragon
Woodrow Groce

Sixth Grade
Jaci Hammil
Blayne Pevey

Seventh Grade
Anely Jean-Francois
Zach Ellis

Eighth Grade
Samarika Henry
Johnathan Taylor

HISTORY

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routinely outplay some of the most famous musicians of the day appearing on the stage at the same time, including Jimi

Hendrix.

In 1969, he performed with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the first time blues and classical music had been mixed together in an event King called an "87-piece Blues band." In 1970, he played with

The Doors at a performance in Vancouver, British Columbia. This concert would be released as an album in 2010 as The Doors Live in Vancouver 1970. Along with B.B. King and Freddie King, he began to be known as one of the Three Kings of

Blues Guitar and the "Velvet Bulldozer."

King was revered by fellow musicians. Eric Clapton was quick to point to his influence with his own album, *Disraeli Gears* (1967). Eagles guitarist Joe Walsh long himself as an

admirer. Texas blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan cited King as his lifelong inspiration. Many artists him for being a part of the development of soul music by the early 1970s.

Albert King would die just a few months shy of his seventi-

eth birthday in late 1992, just two days after his last concert. He would be inducted into the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame in Pine Bluff in 2010 and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland in 2013.

CROPS

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bushels to 4.28 billion bushels.

Jeremy Ross, extension soybean agronomist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, said the final numbers were a pleasant surprise after a challenging year.

"Our average yield was reduced by 1 bushel per acre from the earlier estimates," Ross said. "I was expecting the state average yield to be reduced from the 53 bushels-per-acre fall estimate, but I thought it would be lower than 52. From conversations I had with many soybean growers, they all said their farm soybean averages were average at best."

"I was expecting yields to be much lower due to the drought and high temperatures we had during June and July. 2021 had a much better environment for high soybean yields than we saw in 2022. Looking at yields from other states, all surrounding states, other than Mississippi, had lower average soybean yields in 2022 than was reported 2021."

Cotton

Planted cotton acreage in Ar-

kansas increased substantially in 2022, jumping by more than a third, from 480,000 acres in 2021 to 640,000 acres in 2022. Harvested acres increased substantially as well, from 475,000 acres to 630,000 acres. Average yield fell slightly, however, from the state record of 1,248 lbs. per acre in 2021 to 1,196 lbs. in 2022 - the second-best yield on record - resulting in an overall production increase of just over 27 percent at 1.57 million bales.

Bill Robertson, extension cotton agronomist for the Division of Agriculture, said the state's current five-year average for cotton yield is 1,188 pounds of lint per acre.

"Good cotton usually picks very good, especially when little rainfall occurs after boll opening," Robertson said. "We saw few weather-related losses across most of the state, giving us the opportunity to get almost everything the plant produced in the module."

"Our yield-per-acre values were expected to be higher than estimated during the fall," he said. "This is good news, especially in our current economic situation."

Robertson said that the most

challenging issue for many Arkansas growers in 2022 was the increased percentage of the state's crop receiving discounts for high micronaire - an indication of cotton's fiber fineness and maturity.

"The wonderful weather we had basically the whole month of September matured our top crop more so than we may have ever experienced in Arkansas," he said. "Between the more mature bolls and delays in initiation of our harvest aid programs, some varieties were falling in the discount range for 'high mic' more than others."

Grains

Arkansas winter wheat acres, planted in the fall of 2022, fell about 14 percent from the previous year to 190,000 acres. Average yield, harvested earlier in the year, fell from 58 bushels per acre in 2021 to 53 bushels in 2022. Jason Kelley, extension wheat and feed grains agronomist for the Division of Agriculture, said the crop was likely impacted by rainfall in April 2022.

"The decrease in acres was a little surprising given the dry fall that gave wheat farmers the opportunity to plant," Kelley said, noting that wet weather

often limits opportunities to plant wheat. High market prices would have also incentivized higher acreage, he said, although high fertilizer prices provided an economic disincentive.

After a substantial jump in planted corn acreage in 2021, vaulting from 2020's 620,000 acres to 850,000 acres in 2021, Arkansas growers relinquished some of that ground in 2022, with corn acreage falling to 710,000 acres, according to the USDA report.

Growers managed to harvest 695,000 of those acres, with a lower yield than the previous year, falling from 184 bushels per acre to 173 bushels.

The result was "not surprising, given the heat and dry weather that occurred during the critical pollination and grain fill times," Kelley said. "Even with approximately 95 percent of our corn acres being irrigated, heat and lack of rain are still hard to overcome."

Peanuts

Arkansas planted peanut acreage fell about 8 percent in 2022, from about 36,000 acres to about 33,000. This was the second straight year of declining acreage for the crop in Arkansas,

which reached 39,000 planted acres in 2021.

Harvested peanut acreage fell as well in 2022, from 35,000 acres to 32,000. Average yield increased, however, from about 5,000 pounds per acre to about 5,200.

Rice

As extension rice agronomist Jarrod Hardke put it, the 2023 rice-growing season was "erratic and difficult." A wet spring - the fourth or fifth in a row for many of the state's growers - followed by a hot, dry summer challenged growers on several fronts, from irrigation to nutrient inputs.

Arkansas' planted rice acreage fell by more than 9 percent in 2022 to about 1.1 million acres. Harvested acres fell as well, from nearly 1.2 million acres to about 1.08 million. Average yield across all rice varieties fell as well in Arkansas, from about 7,630 pounds per acre to about 7,410 pounds, a decrease of about 3 percent.

"The acreage decrease was expected given the major increase in input costs, particularly fertilizer and fuel," Hardke said. "However, it is the first time Arkansas has had two consecutive years of rice acreage decline

since 2006-2007. It is also the first time the state has had two years with harvested acreage below 1.2 million acres since 1988-1989.

"The drought and summer heat made every task more difficult during the season, which can have an impact on yields while the heat itself can do damage," he said. "A significant drop in yield from last season's record was again anticipated, but in a stroke of luck, most of the rice missed the worst heat at what could have been the worst timing. That is to say, it wasn't great - but it could've been worse."

To learn about extension programs in Arkansas, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service agent or visit www.uaex.uada.edu. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @AR_Extension. To learn more about Division of Agriculture research, visit the Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station website: <https://aes.uada.edu/>. Follow on Twitter at @ArkAgResearch. To learn more about the Division of Agriculture, visit <https://uada.edu/>. Follow us on Twitter at @AgInArk.

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OBITUARIES

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Decabrin Jamare Binns, Jr.

Decabrin Jamare Binns, Jr. was born January 10, 2023, in Crossett, to Taylor Mooney and the late Decabrin Jamare Binns, Sr. who passed away on January 3, 2023. Decabrin, Jr. passed away on January 13, 2023 and was deeply loved and admired by his mother and the entire family. He was also to be the joy of his father's life.

He is survived by his mother, Taylor Mooney; maternal grandparents, Timothy and Galena Mooney of Hamburg; paternal grandparents, Cecily Binns of Monticello and Harvey Lawson of Warren; great grandparents, Cloten James and Oliver Caldwell of Hamburg, Pearlene Binns and Rose Mary Childs; along with a host of uncles, aunts, cousins and other relatives.

Funeral services were at 11 a.m. Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at Stephenson-Dearman Funeral Chapel with Rev. Mozell Hawkins presiding. Burial will be in Mt. Zion Cemetery in Monticello. You can sign Decabrin, Jr.'s guestbook page at www.stephensondearman.com.

George Ernest Lindsey

George Ernest Lindsey, 81, of Monticello, passed away Friday, January 13, 2023, at his home. He was born September 28, 1941, in Shuqualak, Miss. to the late George Milton Lindsey and Mattie Locke Lindsey.

He was a retired Computer Programmer and Manager, a United States Army Veteran and was a member of the A.M.E. Church. George was a member and treasurer of the NAACP, a long-time member of Toastmasters and loved to play chess, poker, and bid whist.

In addition to his parents, he was also preceded in death by his first wife, Betty Lindsey; and a brother, Gene Lindsey.

Survivors include his current wife, Rugenal Lindsey of Monticello; his two children, Kevin Lindsey and Natascha Lindsey-Acker; his brothers, Jimmy Lindsey, Willie Lindsey, and Stevie Lindsey; his four grandsons, Aaron Lindsey, Noah Lindsey, Isaiah Acker and Elliott Lindsey; and his stepdaughter and grandson, Nina Scaife and Evan Scaife.

Funeral services will be at 1 p.m. Saturday, January 21, 2023, at Pilgrim Rest A.M.E. Church with Rev. Chris Goodman presiding. Burial will be in Oakland Cemetery.

You can sign George's guestbook page at www.stephensondearman.com.

(Paid obituary)

Mildred Estelle Lindsay Manuel

Mildred Estelle Lindsay Manuel, 96, also known to her family and friends as Millie, Honey, Mrs. Manuel, Mama, Mom, Mammaw or Grand-Mammaw, peacefully passed away at home

in Dallas, on Friday, January 13, 2023 after a very brief illness-still with all of her "cognitive abilities" and most of her mobility until very nearly the end. The family misses her terribly and can't imagine how they will find their purses, car keys or cell phones without her!

Mildred was born on May 26, 1926 in the Watson Chapel community, the youngest child of E.C. Lindsay and Floy Ragan Lindsay. She graduated from Watson Chapel High School and thereafter attended Little Rock Business School before marrying John E. Manuel at Good Faith Methodist Church in Watson Chapel in 1947. Together they founded a number of businesses in the sawmill, hardwood flooring and timber industries in Southeast Arkansas.

Mildred and John were married for 57 years when he preceded her in death in 2004. They had four daughters: Rebecca Manuel of Dallas, Tamra Gullede (Jim) of Melissa, Texas, and Alisa Manuel and Carrie Carter of Port Charlotte, Fla.; a grandson J.J. McClain (Christy) and great-grandsons Trey and Kellan of Carrollton, Texas; and a granddaughter Bethany Echols (Will) and great-grandsons Miles and Knox of Melissa, Texas; as well as five nieces and nephews and scores of friends both old and new.

Mildred remained involved in the lives and activities of her daughters, grandchildren and

great-grandchildren. She attended virtually all of the entire family's birthday parties, basketball games, softball games, tennis tournaments, golf matches, 4-H events, piano recitals and band concerts, drove untold numbers of kids untold miles to untold activities, accepted every room-mother opportunity and welcomed all kids to the Manuel house all the time.

Mildred was a life-long Methodist, long-time PEO sister and 70+ year member of the Order of the Eastern Star. She was an avid all-sports fan and particularly followed the Arkansas Razorbacks and all women's college and professional basketball teams. She also loved to fish (or rather to catch) and later loved to watch the birds and sunsets from the deck of the family lake house at Hideaway, Texas.

Along with her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by three siblings: Harry Lindsey (Mimi), John W. Lindsey (Shirley), and Minnie Ruth "Sis" Lindsey. She was the last remaining family member of her generation.

Funeral services will be held at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, January 20, 2023 in the Chapel of Ralph Robinson & Son in Pine Bluff, with Reverend Carlton Cross officiating. Interment will follow in Graceland Cemetery. Visitation will be Friday afternoon from 1:30 p.m. until service time at Robinson's.

Memorials may be made to the donor's favorite charity.

Online register: www.RalphRobinsonandSon.com.

(Paid obituary)

James Speed Thomas

James Speed Thomas, 61, of Monticello, died Friday, January 13 at UAMS in Little Rock.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Ann L. Speed Thomas.

Jim was a truck driver and of the Baptist faith.

Jim enjoyed hunting, fishing, and spending time with family.

He is survived by one daughter, Natalie Danelle Thomas of Russellville, he father, R.C. Thomas (Peggy) of Monticello; one brother, Curt Thomas (LeaAnn) of Monticello; two sisters, Sheri Thomas Elam (Bruce) of Hensley and Teresa Gothright (Mick) of Alpena; four nephews, two nieces, six great nephews and four great nieces.

A memorial service is scheduled for noon, Saturday, Jan. 28 at Wilmar Baptist Church.

(Paid obituary)

Marianne Robinson-Veasey

Marianne Robinson-Veasey, 61, of Monticello, passed away Sunday, January 8, 2023, at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock. She was born August 1, 1961, in Monticello, to the late T.B. Robinson and Virginia Franklin Robinson.

She was the widow of Shannon Veasey, a Certified Nurses Aid for the Area Agency and Drew Central Schools Cafeteria Cook and a member of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Fountain Hill.

Marianne enjoyed spending time with her family and friends and was a very generous person who loved to cook and keep

things in tip-top-shape.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was also preceded in death by her daughter, Christi Veasey Berry; two sisters, Jacqueline Manning and Patsy Hatchett; and a brother, Oliver

"Pete" Robinson.

Survivors include her son, Jonathan Robinson; three grandchildren, Ziyah Robinson, Justin Berry and DeMarcus Berry; nieces, Regina Hawkins-Jones, Donna Whitaker, Deborah Robinson and Renea Robinson; a special great niece, Ceyda Hawkins; nephews, Ramon Manning, Frederick Williams, Tony Robinson and Eric Robinson; and a sister-in-law, Betty Robinson.

Funeral services were at 11 a.m. Saturday, January 14, 2023, at Stephenson-Dearman Funeral Chapel. You can sign Marianne's guestbook page at www.stephensondearman.com.

(Paid obituary)

Kevin Clark Stewart

Kevin Clark Stewart, 61, died January 2, 2023.

He was born December 27, 1961 to Rodney Clark Stewart and Evelyn Stewart of Monticello.

Survivors include his wife of 26 years, Deborah; four brothers; one son; two step sons; five grandchildren and one great grandchild and many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins and close friends.



BINNS



VETERAN



MANUEL

BLUE

Continued from Page 6A

es. All teams are eligible for up to \$2,000 in prizes. Individual participants are eligible to win one of 20 prizes of \$500 each. All qualifying participants — individuals and groups — will be entered into a drawing to determine the winner of each prize.

The Blue & You Fitness Challenge is a free three-month competition in which participants are encouraged to exercise, make healthy choices and log their activities to earn points. The Challenge is held from March 1 through

May 31. Companies and organizations participate in the event as part of their wellness programs, while friends and family use the contest to focus on health goals, infuse new energy into their routines, remain connected and have fun! Points gained from logging activity leads to contest recognition and rewards, but the best bonuses are better health and fitness. The Challenge was founded in 2004 and is hosted by Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

UAM and NPC to announce new partnership with two Jan. 24 events

SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

The University of Arkansas at Monticello and National Park College (NPC) will hold two events on Tuesday, Jan. 24, to announce an innovative new partnership that will give Hot Springs students an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree on NPC's campus at one of the state's lowest tuition rates.

UAM and NPC have reached

an agreement for a strategic partnership that will integrate their business programs to offer an affordable, accessible bachelor's degree. The institutions will leverage their collective resources to improve college completion rates in Arkansas, creating a model partnership for higher education in the state.

Media and the public are invited to both a press conference

featuring leaders from UAM, NPC, University of Arkansas System and its Board of Trustees at the University of Arkansas System — Cammack Campus in

Little Rock at 10:30 a.m., while a public announcement is planned to celebrate the news with the NPC campus community at 2:30 p.m.

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To apply please come by the Police Department in person to pick-up an application. Monday through Friday from 8:00 - 4:30PM. For more information, please contact the Police Department at 870-367-3411. Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

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FREE CLASSIFIEDS: To individuals for all ads with items priced at \$50 and under. All free ads must be for a single item, and be of a noncommercial nature. Lost and Found ads and Give away ads will also qualify as free ads. All other classified ads will be charged at the rates listed above. Free ads will run for two weeks.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Drew County Historical Museum is back. Opened each Saturday from 10am till 4pm. Come on by and visit with us and see some of Monticello's treasures. We're located at 404 South Main Street. See you soon

Hope Place in Monticello is in need of newborn and size 6 diapers. We are open to receive donations Tuesday - Wednesday - Thursday from 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. TFN f

Hope Place of Monticello invites our community to drop off non-perishable food donations. We are open to receive donations Tuesday - Wednesday - Thursday from 9:30am-4:30pm. Suggested items: Pasta, Peanut Butter, Rice, Beans, Soup, Canned Meats, Canned Fruits & Vegetables, Mac&Cheese, Cereal, Juice and Boxed Meals. 224 South Main, Monticello. TFN

Funds are needed for the maintenance of Enon's 2-room schoolhouse located at 2474 Highway 35E outside of Monticello. Any donation amount will be greatly appreciated to keep the legacy alive and well. For more information on how to help preserve Enon's schoolhouse or to make a donation contact, Laura Whitaker, 870-460-5690. TFN

CASA of the 10th Judicial District is seeking volunteer advocates and board members. To find out how you can help a child in need, please contact (870) 367-9449. TFN

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Legals continued on Page 9A

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SPORTS

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Blossoms improve to 3-5 in GAC with two consecutive wins

BY: JEFF YOUNG
Advance Correspondent

The University of Arkansas at Monticello Blossoms came into Thursday's Great American Conference contest against Southeastern Oklahoma State University having lost two consecutive conference contests.

Southeastern would begin the contest by going on a 9-0 run before UAM's Cyarah Kensmil put the Blossoms on the board on a layup.

UAM would tie the contest at 9, after going on a 9-0 run on their own, with 2:50 remaining in the first quarter.

Each team would hold the lead before the end of the quarter with Southeastern taking a three-point advantage, 19-16, at the buzzer.

Southeastern would extend their lead to six points with 7:22 remaining in the half.

UAM would battle back to cut the deficit, and take a two-point lead to hold a 32-30 lead on a Taylor East jumper to end the half.

The Blossoms would continue to lead throughout the third quarter, extending the lead to the largest of the contest to that point with an 11-point, 50-39, advantage with 3:44 remaining in the quarter on a three-pointer by Azaria Hulbert.

Southeastern would cut the deficit to seven points on a pair of free throws with UAM taking a 50-43 lead into the fourth quarter.



CYARAH KENS MIL (right) scored 14 points in each Great American contests the Blossoms played this week at Steelman Fieldhouse. **BAILEY HARRIS (left)** led the Blossoms in each of their victories this past week. Harris scored 23 points against Southeastern Oklahoma and 21 against East Central.

In the fourth quarter, the Blossoms would extend their lead to the largest of the contest, with a 13-point, 67-54, lead with 1:09 remaining in the contest.

The Blossoms would go on to take an 11-point, 67-56, victory.

Bailey Harris led the Blossoms in scoring with 23 points followed by Cyarah Kensmil with 14.

Alindsey Long added nine points, Aeryn Hawkins scored five points with Joi Montgomery and Laia Balcells adding four points each.

Azaria Hulbert and Shea Goodwin each scored three points with Taylor East rounding out the scoring with two points.

Returning to Steelman Field-



Jeff Young/Advance Monticellonian

house on Saturday, January 14, hosting East Central University, with the Lady Tigers scoring the first point of the quarter to open the contest shooting a technical foul before the opening tip.

The Blossoms would score the first points after the tip to begin the contest and would lead for the rest of the quarter with their

biggest lead being five points with 2:50 remaining in the quarter.

East Central would score the final three points of the quarter to cut the UAM lead to two points, 11-9.

The Blossoms continued to lead throughout the second quarter, holding a 14-point lead twice in the quarter including a 35-21

lead to end the half.

The Blossoms continued to control the contest in the third quarter, extending the lead to 20 points, taking a 58-38 lead into the fourth quarter.

The Blossoms continued to hold a double-digit lead throughout the fourth quarter with the largest lead of the contest being 23 points coming with 1:20 left in the contest before closing the game with a 20-point, 73-53, victory.

Bailey Harris led the Blossoms for the second straight game with 21 points followed by Cyarah Kensmil's second consecutive 14 point performance.

Azaria Hulbert added 11 points, Joi Montgomery with seven, Alexys Grice with six, and Alindsey Long with five.

Taylor East added four, Laia Balcells with three, and Nyah Banks scoring two.

With the wins, the Blossoms improve to 6-8 overall and 3-5 in GAC play.

UAM will return to Steelman Fieldhouse on Thursday, January 19, hosting Arkansas Tech with a 5:30 pm tip and will travel to Henderson State with a 1 pm tip on Saturday before returning home on Monday, January 23, hosting Southern Arkansas University with a 5:30 pm tip scheduled.

The Weevils will follow the Blossoms in each game.

Watson Chapel hands Monticello Billies first conference loss



Jeff Young/Advance Monticellonian

LUKE JONES led the Billies in scoring against Watson Chapel with 18 points. Jones scored 14 of the Billies 24 points through the third quarter.

BY: JEFF YOUNG
Advance Correspondent

Coming into Friday nights contest, the Watson Chapel Wildcats and the Monticello Billies were tied at the top of the 8-4A Conference with 3-0 records in conference play, but at the end of the contest it would be Watson Chapel that left Dan Coston Fieldhouse in sole possession of the top spot in the conference.

Watson Chapel controlled the opening tip, but it would be Monticello that got on the scoreboard first, scoring the first four points of the game, going on to outscore Watson Chapel 6-5 in the first quarter.

Monticello would score eight points in the second quarter with Luke Jones scoring all of Monticello's second quarter points.

Watson Chapel would double up on the Billies in the quarter, outscoring Monticello 16-8 in the second quarter to hold a 21-14 lead at the half.

Returning from the break. Watson Chapel would score the first two points of the second half, with Jones answering the score to keep Monticello within eight points.

Watson Chapel would extend

their lead to 13 points, 29-16, with 5:59 remaining in the quarter.

Jones connected on a pair of free throws followed by Quay Rhodes getting three points the old fashioned way with a two and one from the charity stripe to cut the lead to eight points.

Watson Chapel would extend the lead to 36-21 before Tejon Tensley connected on a three-pointer to close the quarter with the Wildcats leading 36-24.

Tensley's three-pointer would spark a comeback by Monticello with Tensley scoring the first four points of the quarter.

Monticello would go on to outscore Watson Chapel 21-18 in the quarter, but Watson chapel was able to close out the game leading 54-45 to move to first place in conference play.

Luke Jones would lead the Billies with 18 points with Tejon Tensley scoring 14.

Quay Rhodes added nine points with Jemar Matthews and Jeremiah Daniels rounding out the scoring with two points each.

Monticello will travel to Little Rock Mills on Friday to face the Comets and will host Stuttgart on Tuesday.



Jeff Young/Advance Monticellonian

TEJON TENSLEY scored seven straight points to spark the Billies comeback attempt to close the third quarter and into the fourth.

Lady Billies fall at home to Watson Chapel 48-18 in conference contest

BY: JEFF YOUNG
Advance Correspondent

The Monticello Lady Billies struggled to get very much going offensively on Friday night at home against the Watson Chapel lady Wildcats.

Watson Chapel would control the tip to begin the contest and would get things started by going on a 9-0 before Genesis Freeman got the Lady Billies on the board at 3:08, connecting on the backside of a two-shot foul.

The one-point would be the only points the Lady Billies would score in the first quarter.

The Lady Billies had more scoring opportunities from the free throw line in the first quarter but would go one for six from the line.

Watson Chapel would outscore the Lady Billies 17-1 in the quarter.

Things did not get any better for the Lady Billies offensively in the second quarter.

Aunesti Jackson would get the first points of the quarter for the Lady Billies, connecting on a two-point shot, but unfortunately for

the Lady Billies it would be the only points the ladies would score in the quarter.

Watson Chapel would outscore the Lady Billies 10-2 in the quarter to take a 27-3 advantage at the half.

Monticello's scoring increased in the third quarter, scoring eight points behind two three-pointers by Zakayla Sanders.

Watson Chapel would take the quarter 10-8 in the quarter to hold a 37-11 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

In the fourth, the Lady Wildcats would outscore the Lady Billies 11-7 to take the 30-point, 48-18, victory.

Leading the way for the Lady Billies was Zakayla Sanders with six points followed by Cadence McCray with four. LeAja Gardner added three, Aunesti Jackson with two, and Genesis Freeman rounding out the scoring with one point.

Monticello will be on the road on Friday, January 20, traveling to Little Rock Mills for a 5:30 pm tip and will return home on Tuesday to face Stuttgart at 5:30 pm.



ZAKAYLA SANDERS (left) led the Lady Billies in scoring against Watson Chapel. Sanders would finish the contest with six points connecting on two three-pointers. **CADENCE MCCRAY (right)** attempts a shot from the three-point arc against Watson Chapel. McCray would be the second highest scorer for the Lady Billies, scoring four points.



Jeff Young/Advance Monticellonian

LIVING

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Local NAACP chapter hosts MLK brunch

By **ASHLEY HOGG**
editor@monticellonews.net

The Drew County NAACP branch held a community brunch Saturday, January 14 at the local VFW building.

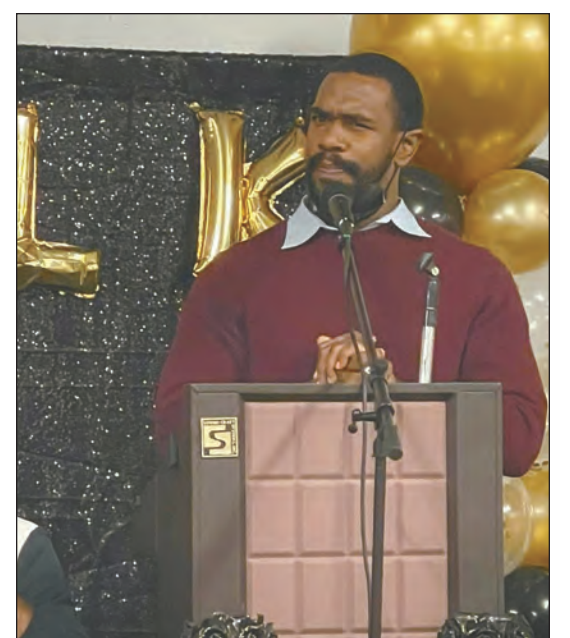
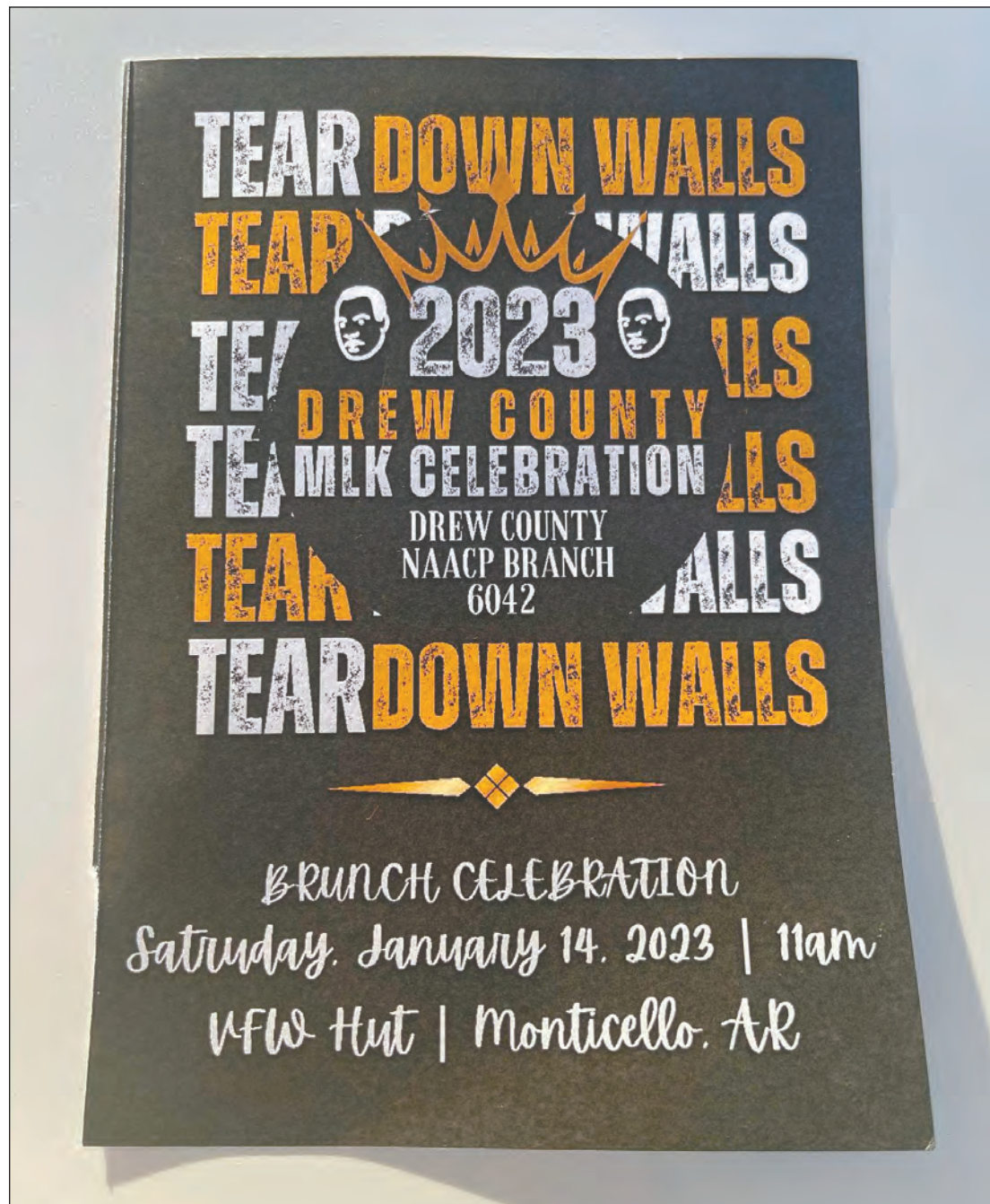
The keynote speaker was Jerome Pace and many local leaders spoke to the crowd.

The theme of this year's brunch was "Tear Down Walls".

In addition to Saturday's brunch, a celebration was held Monday night at New Life Assembly of God Church featuring Jaylon Smith, the country's youngest mayor, who was elected last year in Earle, Ark.

Local youth spoke and gave performances as well as the annual MLK Community Choir performance.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - 1963.





KIDS' CORNER

Here are some fun activities for our younger readers to enjoy!

Crossword Puzzle

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|----|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | | | 2 | | 3 | 4 |
| | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 6 | | 7 | | | 8 | |
| | | | | | | 9 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | 10 | | | | |

New Word

HOBBY
a regular activity that is done for enjoyment

PEOPLE FACT!

PHILATELY IS ANOTHER NAME FOR THIS POPULAR HOBBY.

ANSWER: STAMP COLLECTING

How they SAY that in...

ENGLISH: Art
SPANISH: Arte
ITALIAN: Arte
FRENCH: Art
GERMAN: Kunst

Did You Know?

READING, TRAVELING AND FISHING ARE SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR HOBBIES AROUND THE WORLD.

ACROSS

- Place to live
- Short for "hello"
- Pans
- Like to do
- Taylor Swift song
- Word used in comparisons
- Natural aptitude

DOWN

- Fun interests
- Exchange of goods
- Something enjoyed
- Stick out
- Male

Answers:
Across
1. House 3. Hi 5. Bakeaware 6. Enjoy 8. Me 9. As 10. Talent
Down
1. Hobbies 2. Sale 4. Interest 7. Out 8. Man



Girl Scouts expand options to purchase cookies

SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas is calling all cookie lovers to support their local girl entrepreneurs by ordering from the iconic cookie lineup, powering amazing experiences in outdoors, STEM and beyond.

Every box of cookies sold provides invaluable experiences for Girl Scouts such as service projects, troop travel, and summer camp for girls across the country.

How to purchase Girl Scout Cookies this season:

1. Order directly from a Girl Scout in person or have them send you their Digital Cookie® link to order online and have the cookies delivered to you!
2. Visit a local booth sale beginning February 17. Find one using the Cookie Finder!



3. Beginning February 27, cookie lovers will be able to purchase cookies to be shipped directly to their homes, by entering their zip code into the Girl Scout Cookie Finder. This link can also be used to find a local booth, to purchase cookies and/or to donate cookies for local community causes.
4. Complete this interest form <https://bit.ly/3useHR6> for help finding a Girl Scout in your area.

Every Girl Scout Cookie purchase fuels local Girl Scouts' adventures throughout the year: exploring what interests them,

discovering their passions, and taking action on issues they care about. Whether they're using their STEM skills to solve a problem, changing a law to help their community, having a courageous outdoor experience, or starting an innovative nonprofit, Girl Scouts build a better future for themselves and the world. And

through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, including by earning Cookie Business badges, girls get a taste of being entrepreneurs and learn important online and offline business skills that set them up for success in life.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the world's largest entrepreneurial program for girls. Financial Literacy badges offer entrepreneurial playbooks for every age level. From the Cookie Goal Setter badge earned as a Daisy to the Entrepreneur Accelerator for girls in high school, the Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches girls financial literacy, planning, budgeting, teamwork,

innovative thinking, and confident decision-making. New this year, the Raspberry Rally cookie is exclusively offered through digital channels for direct shipment only, enhancing girls' e-commerce sales and entrepreneurial skills. This latest approach will help to guide the evolution of the cookie program for the digital future.

To add to the anticipation of the 2023 Girl Scout Cookie

season, Girl Scouts is excited to welcome Planet Oat Oatmilk as a national sponsor of the Girl Scout Cookie Program.

Girl Scouts in grades K-12 can start their journey to fun, friendship, and new experiences by joining the world's largest entrepreneurial organization for girls at any point in the year. Girls can join and adults can become a volunteer at www.girlscoutsdiamonds.org/join.

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Department of Human Services Announces
USDA Household Commodity Programs

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) (LITTLE ROCK, Ark.) – The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCCE) within the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) operates the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) for Arkansas.

DHS operates these United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs through partnership with Regional Food Banks and Community Action Agencies throughout the State to provide nutritious food services to families in need.

The TEFAP program is available in all 75 Arkansas counties. A variety of nutritious, high-quality food is made available by USDA to the State for distribution to needy families. Eligibility requirements are based on residency, income, and household size. If the household is SNAP eligible, they are TEFAP eligible. Foster children are categorically eligible for the program.

The CSFP program is available in 40 Arkansas counties. Eligibility requirements are based on age (must be 60+ years of age), residency, income, and household size. New applicants may anticipate being placed on a waiting list. The CSFP food package contains a variety of nutritious food to eligible seniors. These services are provided in accordance with Federal Civil Rights Laws and USDA rights, regulations, and policies. USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions, participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, reprisal, or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program conducted or funded by USDA.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY).

Please call 501-371-1400 to receive program information or visit <https://dhs.arkansas.gov/dco/tefap/Default.aspx>.

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Melvin Rauls focuses on honesty, integrity

By: Kristie Nail
graphics3@monticellonews.net

Melvin Rauls, owner of Rauls Landscaping, Housepainting and Yardwork, has been around awhile. His business started out in 1996 in the Pine Bluff area, but he's since moved to the Monticello area (around 2000). The business has two employees, Melvin and Aaron Rauls.

Mr. Rauls' business philosophy is short but sweet: "A job done is a job well done."

He attributes his company's success to 'staying with it.' When life is sour or when life gives Mr. Rauls lemons he 'makes lemonade.'

Melvin says that the greatest obstacle he's had to overcome to make his business a success is not giving up and staying focused when money is low or business is slow.

Mr. Rauls hopes to see his business grow in the future. In the next year, five years or ten years, he wants to go from a small

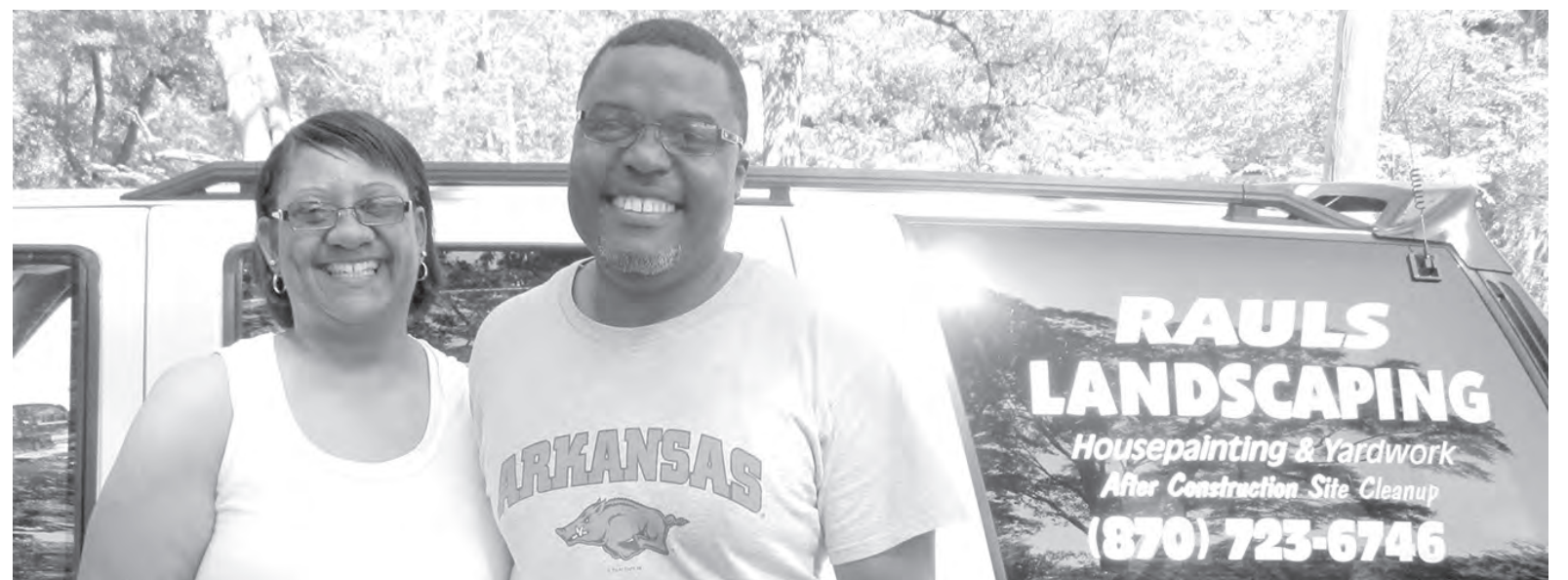


Photo by Annette Buzzell/Advance

HERE TO SERVE YOU Melvin Rauls and wife Tracy are pictured above.

business to a large business covering the whole state. Melvin has a bit of advice for someone interested in starting their own business. He says, "Don't give up. Keep the business dream alive."

We asked why customers should do business with Rauls

Landscaping, Housepainting and Yardwork, to which he said, "Honesty, integrity, compatible business rates and customer satisfaction."

Rauls Landscaping, Housepainting and Yardwork is located at 314 West Oakland in Monticello and is here to help you with all your lawn,

house/room and yard manicuring, flower beds, etc. Give them a call at 367-7709 today!

(Service Spotlight is a weekly advertisement highlighting local services. For information on how to advertise, call our advertising representatives at 367-5325.)

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JANA WRIGHT

There is no Barkada news this week. Jana Wright had other commitments. Her column will resume in next week's edition.

GREEN HILL
WANDA PACE

There is no Green Hill news this week. Wanda Pace had other commitments. Her column will resume in next week's edition.

JORDAN PARK
TRILISA MARSHALL

There is no Jordan Park news this week. Trilisa Marshall had other commitments. Her column will resume in next week's edition.

LACEY
IVANELL HANDLEY

There is no Lacey news this week. Ivanell Handley had other commitments. Her column will resume in next week's edition.

POSSUM VALLEY
KAY CRAIG SPURLOCK

Oh, my goodness! Rick and I are sitting here thinking it's time for bed and I just realized, I haven't written my column! I know that if I don't do it tonight I will forget it. So, here goes and lets hope for some coherent thoughts and interesting news. Since my retirement, Sunday is really the only day we have that has any real structure to it. I have folks ask

me if I've found a new routine yet. Other than getting up and making coffee and breakfast, I really don't have a firm schedule yet. And I'm not sure I'm in a big hurry to create one. This ol' place is always needing something done, but for now we're just enjoying staying home in the warm and dry. Most of my birding has occurred when looking out the kitchen window or walking up and down the road. No exciting birding trips yet, but they will come soon enough.

Addie spent the night with us last Friday night. Since we'd not seen her all week her visit was long over due and quite welcomed. We all ended up sleeping in the living room. Addie and I in the fort we erected on the foldout sofa bed and Rick on the recliner. She was ready to come back for another sleepover on Sunday night, but Mamaw and Mr. Rick weren't quite ready for another so soon.

Saturday morning our ladies study group met again for the first time since the holidays. We had a good time in the Lord learning how to be women after God's own heart.

Sunday morning Bethel enjoyed a wonderful message from Bro. Dillon Sowrheaver from Woodlawn. His message, "If A Donkey Can Do It, You Can Too" was taken from Luke 19:28-40. After church, Rick and I went to town for lunch then to Pauline Baptist for their annual old time hymn sing. Two hours of good old fashioned gospel music just like we grew up on. My Daddy would have loved it. Several Possum Valley folk were in attendance and it was great to see Bro. Kevin, who emceed the event, and Sis.

Do you have any community tidbits?

The Advance-Monticellonian is actively seeking other community reports to join the seven you read on a weekly basis. If you live in a community not represented on this page (and we know there are several around Monticello)—and you want to write about your particular area of the world, contact us at 870-367-5325, via email at editor@monticellonews.net, by U.S. mail at P.O. Box 486, Monticello 71657 or just drop by the office during business hours on either Thursdays or Fridays. Let's discuss your participation in our newspaper.

Cheryl and several other familiar faces.

We got back home just in time to change, eat a quick snack, pick up Addie and back to church again. Sunday is probably our busiest day and also our most uplifting.

Sunday morning before church I saw my first of season Hermit Thrush sitting in the oak tree out back. This sweet little bird was quite cooperative in posing quietly for photos. Unlike the Cardinals, Titmouse, Juncos, Chickadees, Finches and Nuthatches that feel like they have to flit in and out all willy-nilly with no thought for this photographer. No respect!

It's a bit late but last week Mrs. Leona and Eddie told me about their granddaughter, Jessica, winning a national 4-H award. Congratulations, Jessica!

This week's corny joke: What do dentists call their

x-rays? Tooth pics!

That's this week's news. Short and sweet. Until next time, please, stay safe, and always be thankful to God for His many blessings.

WILMAR
TERRY HOPSON

From the greatest city ever, I bring you greetings, peace and love. Thanking God for life, health, and strength.

Feeling a bit calmer now that all the funerals are over.

I did get to visit some of the bereaved families. They were well as can be expected.

Mayor TAP, Alderman M. Hopson, Sec. T. Webb and I were off to The Municipal League Winter conference at the Marriott in Little Rock. Not only was it informative, it's like a reunion. We had a nice time. Chris Riley's grandson, Xavier, was the

music entertainment, he always does a fantastic job.

I received a phone call from Jackie Woodard the 14th from Baptist Hospital after her time of being intubated and now able to talk. Praises to God. Her message she wants everyone to know is and I quote, "I love God and God loves me". Although she still has a ways to go she is thankful and so are we.

MLK celebrations hosted by the Drew County NAACP 6042 began Saturday January 14 with brunch at the VFW in Monticello. The Monticello vs Drew Central alumni Basketball game was at the Monticello High School gym.

Shout out to all the Sororities. My main attention was for the Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. because I was inboxed by my friend, Yolanda Smith of their Founders Day, January 13. Then our Wilmar citizen Yavonda Jones surfaced by

way of facebook.

But now that the Wilmar Community Center has had this beautiful presentation of all the sororities and this statement from Dermott school Superintendent Kristy Gathen who said, "I would not mind which sorority my children pledged, because they all do good things." I'll just want to congrats to all sororities and Happy Founders Day.

Oh, let me not forget, congratulations to Drew Central school second grader star Pirate of the week Phaedra Henry.

Birthday wishes to Tyshea Dickson on the 13th. Happy 14th anniversary to Mr. and Mrs. Dartan and Tina Riley Johnson on the 13th.

Now I will like close with a quote from NFL Damar Hamlin who said, "When you put real love out into the world it comes back 3x as much".

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DEVOTIONAL

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What you see isn't always what you get

We're living in a culture where not only is everything automated, convenient and instant but also public. Social media has normalized the public display of our lives. From the most mundane photos of our breakfast to the most intimate moments of our lives, we're documenting them for the world to see. It's a cultural shift. That which was once considered private is now available for the world to see. I'm not being critical or judgmental just observant. I've certainly participated in this phenomenon myself posting pictures to social media of my kids accomplishments, etc.

However, there is a benefit of keeping some things in our life private. In fact, scripture would tell us there will be a reward when we do. In Matthew chapter 6 Jesus is teaching His disciples and followers principles of giving, praying and fasting. In verses 4, 6 and 18 Jesus with each point repeats the statement, "...and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." There are aspects of our relationship with God that need not be put on display. They are for you and Him alone. The details and intimacy with God should not be social media content or a topic of conversation with just anybody.

Praying, giving and fasting are intimate activities that we participate in as believers not as accomplishments or spiritual boxes to check. They happen out of our

willingness and devotion. I pray because that's how I communicate with God, I give because it's a tangible expression of faithfulness. I fast to block out the distractions of the world around so that I can hear what God is saying. These things happen in what Jesus calls in this same chapter the "secret place". Battles are waged in the secret place. Doubts and fears are conquered here. Mysteries are revealed here.

Right before David was going to face Goliath, King Saul was trying to talk him out of it. For good reason, Goliath was a 9 feet tall professional soldier versus the teenage sheep herder. But in 1 Samuel 17:37 David reveals something very profound. 37 Moreover David said, "The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!"

No one was around to witness David killing the lion and the bear. He was alone protecting the sheep. Just He and God. No fanfare, no parades. God was with him, training him, guiding David for the real fight that was to come.

What David had been doing secretly was now going to be seen and rewarded openly. Of course you know the story. David killed Goliath and became King. Public victory comes from private sacrifice.

*By: Timothy Parke, Lead Pastor
New Life Assembly of God*

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CRYPTO FUN
Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to bath safety. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 3 = G)

A. 8 15 24 10
Clue: Slide

B. 3 9 11 2
Clue: Hold on

C. 15 24 3 4 5 24 25 3
Clue: Illumination

D. 23 11 5 14 9
Clue: H2O

Answers: A. slip B. grab C. lighting D. water

Puzzle answers

Page 6B Sudoku
ANSWER:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 9 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 3 |
| 5 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| 7 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 1 |
| 4 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 6 |
| 8 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 4 |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 9 |

Page 6B Word Search

I C O M M O D E A V E Z T T A Z R T M L
R S U U I S Y G Z R A D J J U S T A B L E
H E E Z L A I S U C I K B W R R E D F P
H O C I B N O T I K T I F E H K E V V T
Y H A N G S A N M C R T F L E I U W A T
T R D I A R L S K I C S M S P A G E E U
E I U E E T J I A T N E M E V O R P M I
F R U P S S S O P A M I P M P T A B G Y
A O M E B I N I R P Y A M G N I L L A F
S E J S M R A T S V E O S I G P K I U T
T H H O K H R C S S R Y Z Z B C M C I
M O D I F Y K S D D A K Y L I E N V W S
T Z M W U T G G W P S W V S C A L D K M
G K M P I L S N O N N O I T U A C E R P
G S E I H K V S L S M E E D P V G A P R
A P S N M I K N P H R V S H O W E R N G
E J E B S T E P I N C A S R E S I R U D
D I A N H D V I D I A P B P D I H L E I
O O T G R P E M O O R H T A B B E P U B
S E Y N D S A G B H T A S K S D J R J R

Page 6B Crossword

PUZZLE SOLUTION

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| U | N | B | I | D | A | H | A | B | S | W | B | S | | | |
| G | E | O | D | E | R | E | P | E | A | T | E | R | S | | |
| L | O | S | A | N | G | E | L | E | S | L | A | K | E | R | |
| I | N | K | | | I | T | O | S | P | I | L | A | W | | |
| | | | S | I | D | E | | S | E | B | E | | | | |
| | S | C | A | R | | | O | A | K | S | P | A | C | | |
| | U | L | N | A | | C | L | A | N | S | C | E | B | U | |
| | B | U | T | | V | A | I | R | | | R | E | A | D | |
| | | B | A | S | I | N | S | | | C | A | T | S | | |
| | | | P | A | N | T | | C | A | B | | | | | |
| | | B | L | I | N | I | | A | A | R | | P | E | S | |
| | G | O | U | N | D | E | R | T | H | E | K | N | I | F | E |
| | S | E | C | E | S | S | I | O | N | | I | N | T | I | S |
| | A | R | E | S | | T | O | N | | P | E | A | K | S | |

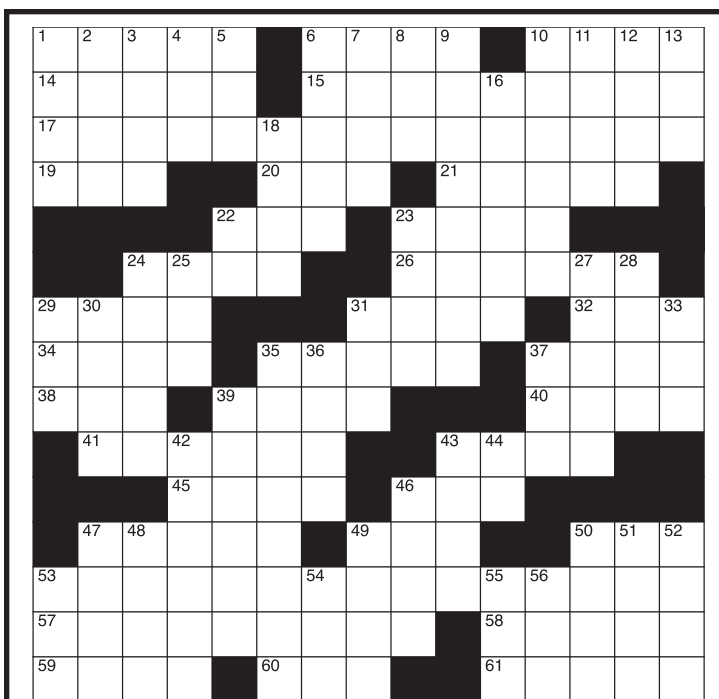
BATH SAFETY WORD SEARCH

I C O M M O D E A V E Z T T A Z R T M L
 R S U U I S Y G Z R A D J U S T A B L E
 H E E Z L A I S U C I K B W R R E D F P
 H O C I B N O T I K T I F E H K E V V T
 T R D I A R L S K I C S M S P A G E E U
 E I U E E T J I A T N E M E V O R P M I
 F R U P S S S O P A M I P M P T A B G Y
 A O M E B I N I R P Y A M G N I L L A F
 S E J S M R A T S V E O S I G P K I U T
 T H H O K H H R C S S R Y Z Z B C M C I
 M O D I F Y K S D D A K Y L I E N V W S
 T Z M W U T G G W P S W V S C A L D K M
 G K M P I L S N O N N O I T U A C E R P
 G S E I H K V S L S M E E D P V G A P R
 A P S N M I K N P H R V S H O W E R N G
 E J E B S T E P I N C A S R E S I R U D
 D I A N H D V I D I A P B P D I H L E I
 O O T G R P E M O O R H T A B B E P U B
 S E Y N D S A G B H T A S K S D J R J R

WORDS

- ADJUSTABLE
- AGING
- ASSISTANCE
- BARS
- BATHROOM
- COMMODE
- FALLING
- IMPROVEMENT
- MINIMIZE
- MODIFY
- NONSLIP
- PRECAUTION
- RAILS
- RAISED
- RISERS
- SAFETY
- SCALD
- SEAT
- SHOWER
- SLIPPERY
- STEP-IN
- TASKS
- TEMPERATURE
- TRANSFER

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.



CLUES ACROSS

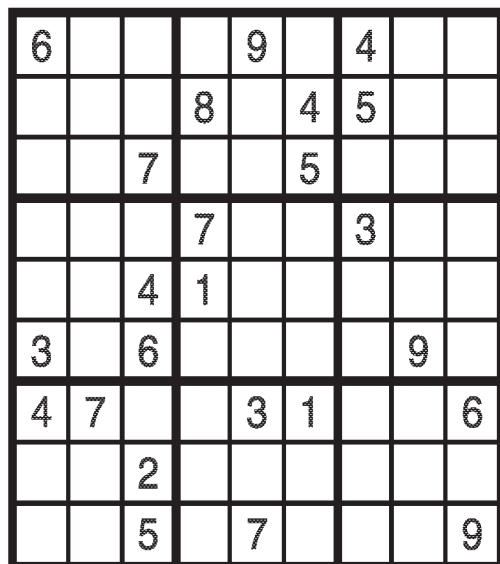
- 1. Not invited
- 6. Whale ship captain
- 10. One point south of southwest
- 14. Small cavity in a rock
- 15. Recidivists
- 17. City of Angels hoopster
- 19. A way to mark with one's signature
- 20. OJ trial judge
- 21. Rice cooked in broth
- 22. One point east of due south
- 23. One point east of southeast
- 24. Complements an entree
- 26. Grouped by twos
- 29. Disfigure
- 31. Woods
- 32. Political action committee
- 34. Longer of 2 bones in the forearm
- 35. Kin groups
- 37. Philippine Island
- 38. Contrary to
- 39. Bluish-gray fur
- 40. Comprehend the written word
- 41. Natural depressions
- 43. Felines
- 45. Breathe noisily
- 46. Taxi
- 47. Pancake made from buckwheat flour
- 49. Swiss river
- 50. Foot (Latin)
- 53. Have surgery
- 57. Formal withdrawal
- 58. Monetary units of Peru
- 59. Greek war god
- 60. 2,000 lbs.
- 61. High points

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Green and yellow citrus fruit
- 2. A bright color
- 3. Thicket
- 4. Journalist Tarbell
- 5. A place to work or relax
- 6. Sharp mountain ridge
- 7. Helicopter
- 8. Mimic
- 9. Suggests
- 10. More musty
- 11. Large, flightless rail
- 12. Make beer
- 13. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 16. People who account for you
- 18. Taunt
- 22. South Dakota
- 23. Cover the entirety of
- 24. Kids' favorite visitor
- 25. A way to save for retirement
- 27. Fencing swords
- 28. C. China mountain range
- 29. Type of sandwich
- 30. Team
- 31. Paddle
- 33. Partly digested food
- 35. Most cagey
- 36. Shoppers make one
- 37. Cathode-ray tube
- 39. Food supplies
- 42. Backbones
- 43. Concern
- 44. Blood group
- 46. Broadway songwriter Sammy
- 47. Dutch colonist
- 48. Full-grown pike fish
- 49. Deity of a monotheistic cult
- 50. Type of bread
- 51. S. Nigerian people
- 52. Scottish tax
- 53. Young women's association
- 54. Brazilian city
- 55. Hide of a young animal
- 56. Midway between north and northeast

Answers can be found on Page 5B

SUDOKU



Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



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Who couldn't use a little more free time in his or her day? Slow cookers can create that by enabling home chefs to set their ingredients to simmer early in the day and then head to work, school, recreational activities — pretty much whatever they need to get done — as the food cooks. Not being beholden to the kitchen is a benefit slow cookers offer.

Since slow cookers cook foods slowly at low temperatures, they are quite handy and



even can help people save money. Tougher cuts of meat or poultry tend to cost a little less, and they can be cooked to perfection in the slow cooker. The long, moist cooking environment tenderizes the ingredients during the cooking process. Stews and slow cookers often go hand-in-hand. Enjoy this recipe for "Chicken Stew with Herb Dumplings" from "Crock'Pot® 365 Year-Round Recipes" (Publications International, Ltd.) by the Crock'Pot Test Kitchen.

Chicken Stew with Herb Dumplings

Ingredients (Makes 4 servings)

- 2 cups sliced carrots
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 large green bell pepper, sliced
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 2 cans (about 14 ounces each) chicken broth, divided
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 large red potato, unpeeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 6 ounces mushrooms, halved
- 3/4 cup frozen peas
- 1 1/4 teaspoons dried basil, divided
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 3/8 teaspoon dried tarragon, divided
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 to 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup biscuit baking mix
- 1/3 cup reduced-fat (2%) milk

Directions:

1. Combine carrots, onion, bell pepper, celery and all but 1 cup chicken broth in the slow cooker. Cover; cook on low 2 hours.
2. Stir remaining 1 cup chicken broth into flour in small bowl until smooth. Stir into vegetable mixture. Add chicken, potato, mushrooms, peas, 1 teaspoon basil, 3/4 teaspoon rosemary and 1/4 teaspoon tarragon. Cover; cook on low 4 hours or until vegetables and chicken are tender. Stir in cream, salt and pepper.
3. Combine baking mix, remaining 1/4 teaspoon basil, 1/4 teaspoon rosemary and 1/8 teaspoon tarragon in small bowl. Stir in milk to form soft dough. Add dumpling mixture to top of stew in 4 large spoonfuls. Cook, uncovered, 30 minutes. Cover; cook 30 to 45 minutes or until dumplings are firm and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Serve in shallow bowls.



THANK YOU from ROBERT AKIN

To all the people of Drew County, I want to say a heartfelt thank you! It has truly been an honor to serve you over the past 10 years. This job has provided me so many opportunities to learn, grow as a leader, and meet amazing, hardworking Drew County citizens. My family and I have always believed this opportunity was God ordained, and because of this, it was always important to me that I strive to keep this county moving forward and hopefully make it better than it was before I started. Now that I no longer hold the position as

county judge, I hope most of you have appreciated the progress that so many others and I have worked so hard to achieve. I am very aware that there are those that will not, and that is okay. This job definitely has its challenges, and a county judge will never make everyone happy - it is part of the job description. Those who know me well know that I'm tough skinned with strong shoulders, so I could always take it. However, the people who did struggle with some of those challenges were my family members, but for me, they understood, let it go, and continued to support me.

I have learned through the years that a strong leader is strong not only because of his/her knowledge and abilities but because of the people working alongside him or her. Therefore, I would like to continue this letter by specifically thanking just a few of the many who helped and supported me over my 10-years of service.

To my wife, children, deceased parents and mother-in-law, sister, in-laws, aunts, uncles & cousins (sorry, I come from a large, close-knit family), I truly appreciate your love and support throughout the years. Sandra Crowell, my administrative assistant until she retired at the first of last year, kept me going where I needed to go, doing what I needed to do, signing what I needed to sign, etc. In other words, she kept me straight. Because of Sandra, I knew I could leave the office to ride the roads and personally experience their conditions, learn from the people actually doing their jobs, help when or where I was needed, go to conferences to learn from other county judges, and go to our state and U.S. Capitol to advocate for the citizens of Drew County. I could only do all of these things because of my trust in her to handle everything while I was out or to contact me when she couldn't. Thank you, Sandra, for all you did to "keep me straight". To Mike McManus, my road superintendent, thank you for your hard work and dedication to the building and upkeep of our county roads. Thank you for the extra hours spent working at night in bad weather, for helping put out the fire in Wilmar alongside Fred, Walter, me, and other members of the call-out crew, for taking the "hard phone calls", and for so much more. Thank you Fred Lewis for your hard work, dependability, extra hours, and willingness to take over the sanitation when I needed you. To Donna Ward, road coordinator, thank you for always going above and beyond what was required, for doing an exceptional job while "wearing many hats", and for being quite the "mother hen" to all the guys and me at the road department. To the three who kept me "coloring inside the lines", Cliff Gibson, County Attorney; Charlie Searcy, County Treasurer; and former County Clerk, Lyna Gullede, thank you for your patience with me as you taught me right from wrong (but you know I was right sometimes, or at least, thank you for letting me think I was). To the Drew County Quorum Court members, past and present, thank you for your dedication to making sure money is spent appropriately while also trying to make sure county employees are paid fair wages with fair benefits. We may have disagreed at times, but thank you for your willingness to listen and to always consider what is best for the people of Drew County. Although you have only been with me during my last term, to Pam Addington, sanitation clerk, and to Tammy Kelly, administrative assistant, thank you for your loyalty, your dependability, your work ethic while handling the duties of the office, and your ability to communicate with the "not-so-friendly" customers. To Tonya Loveless, County Collector, thank you for making my time in the courthouse interesting. Over the years, we proved that we were both passionate about our jobs and our opinions. We also proved that opposing sides can agree to disagree, respect each other, get the job done, and come out friends in the end. So, thank you, friend.

I will close by thanking all of the people that have worked alongside me at the courthouse and road/sanitation departments - thank you for all you do to serve the people of Drew County, because without people willing to serve, we have nothing. There are so many more I would like to mention by name but to include everyone who has impacted me throughout my 10 years as county judge would make for a very long list.

To ALL of the people mentioned above, thank you for listening to my many stories, laughing alongside me, and becoming some of the greatest friends, but mostly, thank you for making this a job that is hard to leave. I wish you all the best! And again, to all the people of Drew County, thank you for some of the best years of my life.

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