

Winter 2021-22

HSV *life*

M A G A Z I N E

A quarterly supplement to the Hot Springs Village Voice



Shannon Branstetter

*Welcomes you to Shannon's
Jewelery*

Thomas Benoit

Salutes the fallen in Iraq

Kaesen Shafer

His Make A Wish comes true



**Winter
2021-22**

HSV *life*

M A G A Z I N E

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For additional copies, visit our office. Please send any questions or comments to us following our "Readers Forum" guidelines.

Hot Springs *Village* **Voice**

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**A beautiful winter landscape.
(Jeff Meek photo)**

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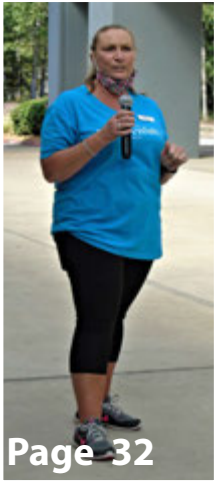
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ON THE COVER: Heavy snow falls during February's storm. Photo by Carolyn Bowers. Digitally enhanced by Stephanie Highfill using Lightroom



Introduction

food, fellowship and just plain fun. When that happens in the Meek household, the Thanksgiving meal is preceded by everyone taking a moment to share what they're thankful for, big or small, doesn't matter what it is. We have a seven year old grandson. A year ago he was asked the question on the last day of school before their Thanksgiving break began. His response? It wasn't about his Mom or Dad or grandparents. His thoughts were on food when he answered simply, "Rice."

The holidays are a wonderful time of year. People seem to be more giving, more understanding and kinder during the holidays as they donate to organizations, food pantries, churches, and mark their 2022 calendar with future plans. It also seems to me that it's a time when we look back, take stock in

Enjoy family this holiday season

By JEFF MEEK
Voice correspondent

With only two months remaining in 2021, the Hot Springs Village Voice takes this opportunity to once again connect with residents about the coming holidays, family, celebrations and resolutions.

With Thanksgiving less than a month away, thoughts for many turn to planning family get-togethers, seeing grandchildren and taking a moment to think about the big picture – our family, our health, our country and our welfare.

For many, Thanksgiving and Christmas are the only two times of the year when an entire family congregates for

what's happened over the past several months. What was exciting and memorable, what was accomplished, what we wish was accomplished, and for some folks, a few resolutions are made to do better, to do more, or to get involved in a good cause.

We at the Hot Springs Village Voice wish all of you a peaceful end of the year, a good time with family and the hope that you will create a new family tradition or special memory. After all, is there anything more important than family?



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POA Update

Hot Springs Village POA: A 2021 review



By **JEFF MEEK**
Voice correspondent

For this final 2021 issue of HSV Life we asked the Village Property Owners Association to provide a review, an overall look at what's been done thus far this year. The POA staff responded with a lengthy list of information, all of which will be in a later issue of the Voice newspaper. For now, here are some of the highlights provided.

* Gate Security: POA contracted with Securitas USA in February and have implemented multiple op-

erational changes at the gates to enhance member safety and experience.

* Food & Beverage: In 2020, this department subsidy totaled more than \$804,000. POA has worked to reduce that number by developing a plan to outsource multiple dining operations to third party vendors with a proven track record of success in the industry. The many changes in operations are projected to save over \$500,000 in 2021.

* Balboa Club & PDL Exterior Renovations: The POA has made several needed renovation projects including an exterior face lift at Ponce de Leon Center and bringing back to life the Balboa Club with minor improvements that has made an impact, resulting in the Golf Department and Discovery operations to the Club.

* Sanitation Trucks: Four new side-loading sanitation trucks are coming soon to replace current trucks that are past their useful life and experiencing mechanical issues. The new trucks are automated, requiring one operator as opposed to three. The trucks are due in January 2022.

* Golf: The department, as of August 31, has seen over 158,000 rounds played, an increase of over 13,000 compared to last year. Golf packages have increased by over 200 percent, totaling \$687,000.

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Accumulated golf reserves are at \$918,000.

* IT: POA has hired Will Rainwater as manager replacing Paul Moore. Moore will continue on staff as Technical Director. POA is in the process of updating their business phone system.

* Accounting: The department has streamlined their systems and implemented a paperless accounts payable system to reduce staff time and improve processing of vendor invoices.

* Real Estate & Development: Home sales are on the rise, up 22 percent over last year, however, there is to some extent a shortage of homes available for sale as many are under contract the same day as listed. New builders are being seen in HSV which is a positive and with the recent selloff of Cooper Reserved property, POA anticipates several new residential and commercial projects over the next several years.

* Lot Strategy: POA has recently purchased 2,118 lots back from the Commissioner of State Lands. These lots were not productively paying assessments or taxes. 70 POA lots have been sold YTD.

* Discovery Packages: POA has completed 121 Discovery packages YTD. Seventeen of these have resulted in a sale, representing a conversion rate of 14.8 percent. Close to 40 percent of packages are utilizing the RV Park.

* Marketing: POA has reached their 2021 goal of adding 1,500 Facebook followers, an increase of 25 percent. The Village Digest has experienced a 50 percent increase in click-on rate. Daily non-HSV visitors to the POA website have averaged more than 900 during the heavy advertising period.

* Road Repair: The Streets Department has identified 48 streets as high priority in need of repair. Staff is currently working on these projects with an estimated total cost of \$519,000. The Department also plans to restripe many of the major roadways this year at a total estimated cost of \$191,000.

* Pickleball: Court renovation is in progress. The cushioned surface has been removed. Australian Courtworks has been contracted to complete the work.

* Beach & Marinas: The seawall at Desoto Beach has had a 50 foot addition. Handrails and a stair entry into the water has been added. The swim area has been increased by approximately 50 percent. At Waypoint, POA has repurposed underutilized boat slips into a floating fishing pier.

* Low Cost Additions of Recreational Amenities: Archery has been added as a new amenity to the Parks & Recreation department. Croquet has also been added as an amenity.

* 2021 Events: Concerts at Woodlands Auditorium have opened back up and been near capacity levels. Star and Stripes Festival and the first annual Arkansas Heritage Festival, partnered with Lifelong Learning Institute, were also seen as very successful.

* CARE funds: Under the provision of the America CARES Plan, the Village qualifies to receive money if used for certain infrastructure improvements. POA has requested consideration for distribution of funds from the plan to support sewer infrastructure improvements and Broadband internet improvements. The request is for \$2 million to Saline and Garland counties (\$4 million total, \$1 million for sewer, and \$1 million for Broadband in each county).

* PPP Loan Forgiveness: POA's loan was forgiven in 2021. Those funds were provided by the Federal Government to ensure we were able to continue employing our HSVPOA staff during the pandemic. The funds paid for wages during the most high impact periods of 2020, when many businesses were forced to shut their doors.

* Assessment Vote: With the direction of the Board of Directors the POA will be submitting two budgets for 2022 for approval – one without the proposed assessment increase and one with the increase.



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A Village Veteran

1st Lt. Lawrence Salone, a 256 Brigade Combat Team signal officer coordinates with Sgt. Thomas Benoit, 256 BCT public affairs photographer about synchronizing the computer (geek) side with photographic (guru). They were set up to take any Soldier who wanted a picture with Santa to send back home. Both Soldiers are from Lafayette, La. (U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Taysha Deaton, 256th Public Affairs Officer)
BAGHDAD, IRAQ 12.25.2004.



Thomas Benoit salutes those fallen in Iraq

By SANDY JOHANSEN
Staff writer

As a member of the Army 256th Brigade Combat Team, Sgt. First Class Thomas Benoit, served as photojournalist for the Public Affairs Office. His two tours in Iraq inspired him not only to salute his fellow servicemen and servicewomen, but to create lasting tributes to those fallen and transition for those returning with PTSD.

It began with the Pelican Dispatch Tiger Tracks, magazines featuring his dialogues and photos of the war when he was the NCIC (Non Commissioned Officer in the Charge) of the 256th. He was part of a 4-man team who were responsible to communicate with national television and newspaper reporters. "They would come to our station and we'd be responsible to get them outside the wire to talk to the soldiers. That was my job to assist all these international reporters."

Benoit began filming tributes to over 50 who fell in Iraq. His first was published in the Louisiana National Guard's Pelican Dispatch. His work not only covered very special soldiers, but his art was featured on covers. One issue honored Louisiana National Guards-

man Spc. Shanesel Dawson, son of a preacher, who while on duty inspired and supported his troops with sweet words and sweet candy as they were dispatched.

He began Tiger Tracks while in country honoring the fallen. "When a soldier died, I'd spend all night working on the cover, the photos, the dialogue and most of the time it was printed the very next morning right there in Iraq by a local printer."

He was with Geraldo Rivera covering the first day of Iraq's free elections in 2005 when he wrote his noted commentary including extensive dialogue regarding children running to meet his convoy to smiling and shouting "Thank You" to them.

Benoit is now planning a television production he's named ASIC (American Sacrifices In Color). "With the video memorials I have shot, I've been working closely with the Gold Star Mothers along with Major General John P. Bascilica, Jr. and Colonel Geffery Slack. We are offering these videos to families who have never seen them before. "When I offered them a viewing following the death of their loved one, they did not want to see it, but now, after over 15 years, they have been reaching out to me to see what was created about their soldier."



Thomas Benoit holds a few of the many magazines his photojournalism has been featured in. (Sandy Johansen photo)

Episodes planned will begin visiting gravesites. He said everything was focused in Iraq, but now he wants to visit families to further honor their memory. "There's a mother who is very excited about going to her son's gravesite with our television crew. It will be the first time she will have seen Tiger Track about him and personal signing by the general and the colonel."

In addition, Toby Keith and other famous musicians have authorized him to use their music for backgrounds of these television tribute episodes. "I want to get Toby filmed singing his very patriotic music, and perhaps get him to visit a gravesite with all of us at least once. What an opportunity for him to meet the parents."

When asked what brought him to Hot Springs Village he said, "It was not only the number of military veterans living here, it was also about their unselfish contributions to society. I'm planning not only a television production, but also two transitional housing units; one in Hot Springs and one in Lafayette. He explained these homes would not only be for veterans to transition, but it would also offer varied activities for family members to assist. "Wouldn't it be great for PTSD victims and their families to enjoy an activity that brings happiness to their lives like fishing, paint ball shooting, and many other really fun things to do."

Benoit's 501(c3) nonprofit organization is called ASIC Foundation and Ministry. For more information regarding personal involvement feel free to call Thomas Benoit at 1-337-381-4121.



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HSV Family

Bill and Teresa Darby on their wedding day with all their children and grandchildren. (Submitted photos)



By SUZANNE
SWEETEN
Voice correspondent

Hot Springs Villager residents are taking time to be grateful and thankful this Thanksgiving. Blessings flowed this year despite COVID-19. HSV neighbors share their gratitude with others.

Bill Darby's year meant his dreams are coming true. "2021 has been a wonderful year for me. I'm most thankful because God blessed me with the most wonderful and thoughtful person I have ever known, my wife Teresa Crotts Darby. Our beach wedding was something I'll always cherish. We had a wonderful reception at the Coronado Center, with most of our friends in attendance, great food, music and beautiful decorations, a night of fun and dancing I'm thankful for our health and the health of our families. We are thankful for the wonderful home we purchased in the Village and the great hot tub I was given from our realtor and great friend Bob Sweeten. I am also thankful for learning to dance and the many wonderful new friends I've met in the dance community of Spa City Dance club."

"I'm thankful for finally getting my new 2021 C8 Corvette Stingray. It's the most exciting car I've ever owned. Without God's blessings none of this would have happened."

The past year has been a good one for Gail and Fred Harmeyer. The Harmeyers made it through Covid without contracting the virus. Gail's sister Maggie and her husband Keith decided to move to HSV

Thankful for **life** in Hot Springs Village

and purchased a home less than a mile from the Harmeyers. "We never in our wildest dreams thought we would have family close by," a joyous Gail Harmeyer reflects. "Truly something to be thankful for."

The Harmeyers finalized plans for a trip to Alaska on the sailboat "Bob" with cousins from Houston. We were thankful that our plans were not canceled because of the virus and that our health at age 76 and 83 was good enough to make the trip.

In August we experienced an additional surprise for our family. Kate, our niece was promoted by her company so she and her husband Shawn and their sons, Pierce and Palmer moved to Little Rock. My nephew Paul, his wife Susie and daughter Mary Margaret remain in Illinois but frequently come to visit. Life for us has always been good in the Village but we are so thankful for the addition of our family and are enjoying a busier life. Thankful in the Village where life is good."

Patti and Dan Lueck speak to their surroundings and the day-to-day of their life behind HSV gates. "In Hot Springs Village we have so much to be thankful for. The beauty and the diversity in the land from east to west is amazing. Dan, and I feel "lucky" we chose to live here.



Gail and Fred Harmeyer aboard the “Bob” on their way to Glacier Bay in Alaska. A bucket list trip, a true trip of a lifetime and a thing for which they are thankful.

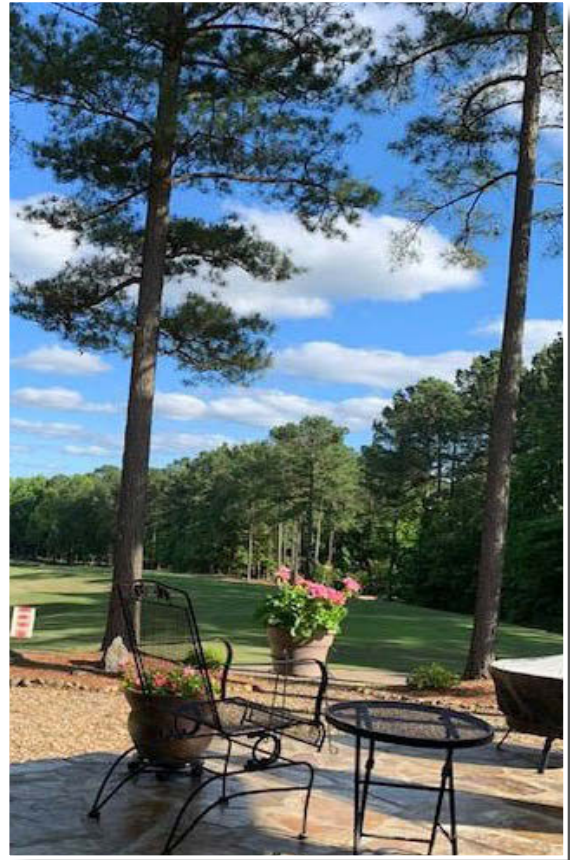


Kathy and Steve Wright are pictured at a Hot Springs Rotary event. Both are Paul Harris Fellows and both believe in “Service above self.” (Susan McCarty photo)

“We are blessed with our healthy family, full of active grandsons. We are also thankful for our friends from all over the United States who live here. Our people are welcoming, faithful, fun and interesting. For all of this and much more we are thankful.”

Kathy Wright speaks for her household, “The years 2020/2021 have been hard due to the pandemic. Despite the pandemic I’m thankful for many things. I am thankful for my family, I have an incredible husband who continues to amaze me every day. My children are healthy; they have kept their jobs, and received their vaccinations. We’ve had our children and granddaughter visit us several times and seeing my granddaughter so excited and ready to explore the fun places within the Village warms my heart.

I am thankful to live in Hot Springs Village. We live in the middle of a beautiful forest. When I go back to



Pattie and Dan Lueck are thankful for the view outside their back door. Everyday is a good day in Hot Springs Village.

my old home it hits me how lucky I am to have a house where I can sit out on the patio and look at the trees and wildlife. I’m happy for the amenities we enjoy, tennis and swimming at the beach. For over 25 years we’ve been coming down to visit my parents, we’ve enjoyed the amenities. We take frequent weekend trips throughout Arkansas to discover more about the Natural State. Life is good and I am thankful every day.”

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Bob Villegas (standing, right) and Bill Serritella (seated) are two of the many woodworkers who volunteer in the Fountain Lake after school program that introduces young craftsmen to woodworking. (submitted photos)

Making Sawdust

By LEWIS DELAVAN
Staff writer

Sharing a common passion for making things and “making sawdust,” members of the Hot Springs Village Woodworkers, a family organization, are at all levels of woodworking experience.

President Lee Smith is passionate about the club and its missions. “The men and women of the Hot Springs Village Woodworkers Club contribute hundreds of hours each year to help the Villagers and surrounding communities enjoy life to its fullest potential.”

Woodworker projects have ranged from building the Bonsai House and miniature train scenes and trestles at Garvin Gardens to “Little Libraries” scattered around the Village.

Community support includes the annual toy distribution, assisting the local Boys and Girls Club summer program, and building bookcases for schools to award to participants in their reading improvement programs.

Toy director Steve Angel oversees the annual toy project. “Hot Springs Village Woodworkers build approximately 400 toys individually and in teams to help make Christmas a little nicer for the area’s needy children. The joy many of these kids experience makes

it all worthwhile for our members.”

After moving here more than 12 years ago, Rob Tiltonson, joined the Woodworkers as his first club. “My time with the club and its members brings a great deal of satisfaction,” he says. “I’m sure anyone who joined us would feel the same if they volunteered with us and our projects.”

He oversees the club’s website, <https://villagewoodworkers.org/>.

Monthly club meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month from 7- 9 p.m. A meet-and-greet period for visitors, new and current members is 6:30-7 p.m. Meetings are held in the Ouachita Activities Building, Ponce De Leon Center.

Meetings are short on business and long on interesting woodworking topics. Family membership is \$25 per year. Visitors are welcome to attend meetings.

The first hour is used for the introduction of visitors and new members, brief discussions of pending and new matters. Show-and-tell presentations follow with members presenting their favorite projects. Construction and finishing techniques are described and any questions are answered.

After a break, the second hour is devoted to a special topic often conducted by a visiting expert. When a special topic requires an extended discussion or demonstration, the meetings are held in a member’s



These phone and tablet stands were made by new member Irene Sandhaus. In making these for the upcoming Christmas toy distribution she learned new woodworking techniques and incorporated another passion of hers, working with mosaic tiles.



“The joy of these kids experience makes it all worthwhile for our members.”
- Steve Angel



Mehlinae Douglas and JD Squires teamed up to build helicopters to be donated to area underprivileged children this year.

large shop or commercial shop.

Special project groups within the main club offer more frequent get-togethers of members who have common interests or those working on group projects.

Benefitting from the club's Christmas program are Garland and Saline County groups including Mountain Pine Head Start, Garland County foster children, Hot Springs Hillcrest Children's Home, and Benton Community Christian Outreach programs.

As well as building toys for younger children, the members also build gifts for older children, such as hardwood jewelry boxes and storage chests or boxes.

Also, visit the club's Facebook page.

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Day Trippin

Devil's Den is a delight

A deep crevice at
Devil's Den. (Jeff
Meek photos)



By **JEFF MEEK**
Voice Coorepondent

For several years I had heard that Devil's Den State Park is a wonderful place to visit so I checked it out a few years ago. I couldn't agree more. It's in the Boston Mountain division of the Ozark Plateau where four types of sedimentary rock are found – sandstone, shale, limestone and conglomerate.

The park, built by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers from 1933 to 1942, has a lot to see. This can be a day trip or consider spending a night in one of the on-site cabins, then explore even more the following day. Some of the furniture in the cabins are original pieces built by those CCC workers 80 years ago.

There is also a small lake for fishing, which has been created by damming up Lee Creek. Paddle boats and canoes are available for rent or one can fish from the shoreline.

There are a multitude of facilities here including bike and horse trails. The park even has a mountain bike festival and races. And of course several trails to hike. A few of the more popular ones are Lake Trail, Yellow Rock trail and Devil's Den Trail.

Lake Trail is one mile, one way and has an elevation change of 40 feet, so it is fairly flat. Yellow Rock Trail is the opposite, steep and strenuous, going

up 300 feet to a beautiful over-look of the valley below.

On my trip I walked the Devil's Den trail, which is the most diverse in terms of what you'll see along the way. It is a 1.5 mile loop and takes about 90 minutes to complete. The elevation change here is about 100 feet. The trail begins behind the visitor center, which by the way, has some interesting photos and informational brochures as well as snacks and other



A unique bowl-like rock formation.

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A Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) structure that still stands.

items for sale like shirts, hats, mugs and more.

On this trail, which is easy to follow, you'll see several rock formations, some of which I've not seen elsewhere. For example, this trail takes you along the edge of a 50 foot deep narrow crevice. A brochure says it is the largest crevice in the U.S. Also on the walk you'll see three examples of a bowl-like formation that, in my opinion, is quite unique.

As the trail loops around you'll go now near Lee Creek. Follow the trail to where you see a bench made of logs. Turn left there and head up the hill a short way and you will have completed the loop. To the right is the path back to the visitor center. Devil's Den Cave, Devil's Den Ice Box and Twin Falls are a

few of the highlights on this walk.

And there are caves as well, but no one can go in them because they are closed due to bats having white nose syndrome. This is an effort to help stop the spread of the disease by humans who may walk through or brush against the fungus, then spread it elsewhere.

The disease wakes up the bats early because of the scratching. They think its springtime and they go outside for food and its winter and there are no insects, so they actually starve.

The trip to the park and walk was a good time. To get there take I-40 west to I-49 toward Fayetteville. On I-49 you'll be going through the Boston Mountains and they are beautiful, especially when there is fall color to see. I got off at exit 53 for Hwy 170 west. Follow Hwy 170 for approximately 17 miles to the park. It took me a little over 3.5 hours to get there, which included a quick stop for gas and a bite to eat. It's approximately 180 miles from the Village to the park. Call 479-761-3325 to be sure the park is open.

Village True Value to hold Ladies Event

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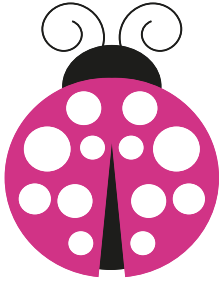
We hired our staff locally so they would also be our neighbors. Neighbors take care of each other and that's what we do at Village True Value Home Center every day. We take care of our neighbors. We love seeing you in our store. All the local contractors have known for years that Village True Value Home Center is THE place to shop if you desire to have personalized service from knowledgeable people. We are committed to giving you the same level of service

Starting this month, we are doubling down on our commitment to serve our community. In the near future, you will see our store grow in size to add many new features such as a large enclosed Garden and Outdoor Center. Each month, we will present seminars designed to help you get thru your project the correct way the first time using the right materials. Our staff members have been highly trained in their

respective department and are also knowledgeable of the entire store. Unlike the big box stores, there's always someone to help you!

We will be your main source of information on DIY projects. Watch for our new DIY blogs featuring projects you might want to or have to do to help make your house your home. Attend our monthly in-store events to learn how to do it from one of our skilled associates.

Saturday, Nov. 6, we are having our in-store Ladies Event! That's right ladies, we are closing to the public at 2pm, then re-opening from 3pm-5pm to welcome our Ladies Only Event. Come and enjoy a free wine and cheese party, door prizes plus special sale prices throughout the store. You'll enjoy our guest speakers featuring topics chosen just for you. Learn about re-purposing items in your home, decorating for the Holidays and picking the right wines and cheeses plus much more. It will be a great event with door prizes and some fun games. Please attend and bring your friends!



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Warm & Welcoming: Shannon's Jewelers



Welcome to Shannon's Jewelers of Hot Springs at 3620 Central Avenue - Ste. D (Sandy Johansen photos)

By **SANDY JOHANSEN**
Staff writer

Shannon Branstetter's face is easily recognized at Shannon's Jewelers of Hot Springs, as she has spent many years working in fine jewelry stores.

"I've spent nearly 30 years in the jewelry business, not only here in Hot Springs, but also in Little Rock and Atlanta, Georgia. It all started when my best friend's

daughter worked with a jeweler and they were very busy and needed some help. She called and asked me to try it out. I loved it from the very beginning and even more now owning my own location and seeing clients I've known for years," said Branstetter.

Not only does she stock fine jewelry, but she's also a custom designer for clients who want to incorporate something special. Shannon is a certified Diamontologist with the Diamond Council of America.



Shannon Branstetter, above.

Isn't she lovely, left.

She has a passion for custom jewelry and has transformed many family heirlooms into something new and beautiful. "I helped a young lady design her wedding ring. Her mother had passed and she wanted to use her mother's ring with her diamond for that very special day. It's just wonderful to create special memories."

Shannon's Jewelers offers a personal comfortable setting. Also located in the suites along with her fine jewelry is a popular nail salon, a clothing boutique and a pet grooming center. "What more can you ask for in our convenient location? There's one suite available and all of us would love to see a cupcake store fill it in," she joked.

Shannon's Jewelers of Hot Springs is dedicated to being compassionate to the needs of clients and maintain a code of ethics, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, integrity and quality.


Located at 3620 Central Avenue, Suite D, Hot Springs, Shannon and her staff are ready to help you with your holiday gifting needs. For more information go to the website at shannonsjewelersofhotsprings.com or feel free to call 501-359-3130.



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HSV Master Gardener

By SUZANNE SWEETEN
Voice correspondent

Mary Ann Jarvis is a Master Gardener, which means she's attended classes, earned a certificate and participates in community projects through the Garland County Master Gardener (GCMG). Jarvis has agreed to share her hints on how to prepare a lawn and plants for winter.

There are three primary practices homeowners need to perform, clean, weed and separate. "Performing these chores helps Villagers have a beautiful garden that will make it through a regular winter. Last year's arctic freeze with 15 inches of snow withstanding."

The frost date in HSV is Nov. 10, so there's plenty of time to enjoy and work in the gardens. Go through the garden, clean it up and weed and deep water (especially trees and bushes).

While cleaning and weeding, trim broken branches and suckers, cut seed pods from trees, bushes and flowers (keeping flower seeds if wanted for next year's garden). Separate

and transplant trees and bushes, remove leftover annuals and plant new bulbs for bloom in spring. Dig up tender bulbs/tubers like caladium and dahlias, making sure to cure and store properly for spring planting. Now is a great time to separate and transplant overgrown perennials.

Think about putting in new trees and bushes. Planting in the early fall allows the roots to set. Keep them watered well before any freeze.

Compost. The city compost center is located on Shady Grove Road. The staff can fill a truck or bins and buckets for free. Master Gardeners call compost "black gold." Spread it over the entire yard, lawn included; this protects and nourishes a garden. To aid in weed control, top off the compost layer with Preen, a pre-emergent. Give the newly composted garden and/or lawn a drink of water.

Blowing leaves off garden beds is not necessary unless the leaf matter is oak or magnolia. Both breakdown slowly and the acid from oak can stunt some plant's growth. If composting isn't an option, leaf matter or pine



Mary Ann Jarvis is a Master Gardener living in Hot Springs Village. She earned the title by attending classes and receiving a certificate. (Submitted photos)

Preparing the yard and planting beds for winter

straw are great options.

While storing garden tools for the winter organize your space. Put away fertilizers and sprays. Clean and sharpen tools, nothing is harder on your tools than rust. Spraying hand pruners with alcohol kills any disease or fungus. Purchase supplies now.

Jarvis says time and sweat equity are the biggest cost but compost and water can be an expense. She recommends purchasing (trees, bushes and plants) that are hardy for zone 7b. "The zone is always listed on the plant tags attached to the plant when purchased. If you don't remember, check the internet. Google "growing zone for Oleander."

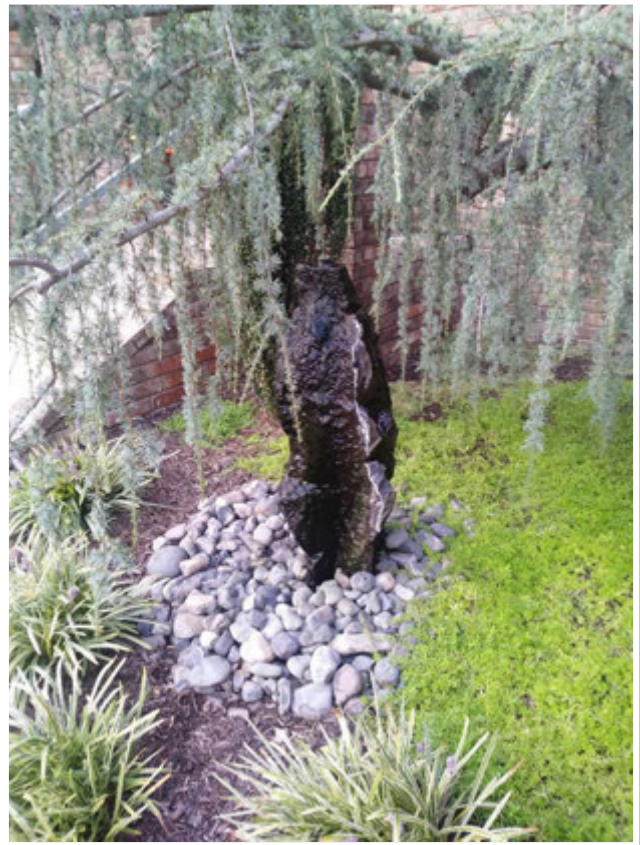
Some tender perennials can be overwintered in the garage. A quick watering once a month usually brings great results.

Jarvis laughs, "Bring house plants inside. So as not to bring in any hitchhikers. Dunk, yes dunk in a bucket of water until you see bubbles. This will chase out lizards and bugs. If you notice spider mites or disease, treat those issues now."

Villagers wishing to learn more about planting and maintaining a healthy lawn and flowers might learn from a Master Gardener like Jarvis. "I'm sure Master Gardeners would be happy to help, but knowing who and where they are located inside the Village is another story. I suggest contacting The Garland County Cooperative Extension at 501-922-4703. They are happy to help with any issues. An agent can come to the home to identify tree, bush and lawn issues. They can test the soil and note any deficiencies. The extension office is a wealth of gardening information. "



A stone fountain is nestled under a tree, above right. This berm garden is a great example of the plantings found in the Hot Springs Village area, left.





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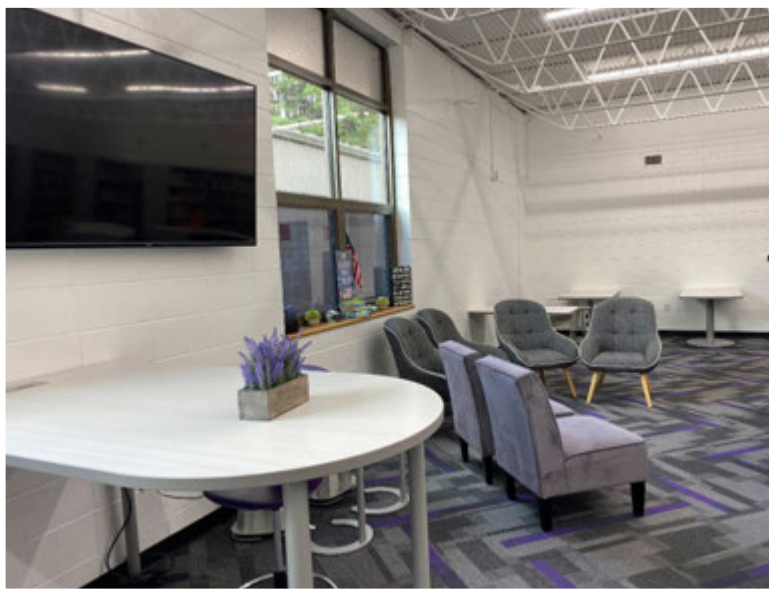


FLSD Library renovations underway

At Fountain Lake School District, each school is separated by buildings with all on the same campus. The district's Master Facilities plan is to complement and better facilitate future expansion to address student growth.

The mission of Fountain Lake School District is "Supporting Every Student Every Day for Success." The vision of the Fountain Lake School District is to partner with its community to inspire, motivate, and prepare every student to be a confident, productive, knowledgeable, goal-oriented citizen. The focus is to build quality relationships with all students in order to provide a level of support to assist them with achieving their goals academically, socially, and emotionally, as well as to prepare them for employment.

Growing the facilities in the Charter High School Library has been a major challenge, but is coming to a conclusion in October 2021 with more access to resources whether it be print, digital or video.



During renovation, removing ceiling tiles, drop lights and carpet tiles opened the space, top.

Books are being replaced on the shelves and is a work in progress. New shelving, tables/chairs, booths, couches and conference tables allow more seating options making it more welcoming to students and patrons, middle.

Comfortable seating area allows for quiet conversation and hand held digitals., bottom



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The Hot Springs Village Chorale. (Submitted photo)

Village Chorale presents annual Christmas program

By JEFF MEEK
Voice correspondent

On Dec. 7, beginning at 7 p.m., the Hot Springs Village Chorale will again be presenting a wonderful Christmas program. This year's program is titled, "Gloria," and takes place at Woodlands Auditorium.

The program will feature a variety of music styles from traditional carol arrangements to secular popular Christmas music. In addition to the piano, instrumental accompaniment includes a string quartet, percussion and string bass. The Chorale is under the musical direction of Dr. Tom Bolton.

"The Village Chorale is excited to be singing again and we look forward to presenting a Christmas program that, hopefully, will elevate your spirit as only live music can," said Bolton.

Tickets are \$12 and will be available online, at the Woodlands box office or from any Chorale member.



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Long-term efforts brighten Thanksgiving, Christmas

By LEWIS DELAVAN
Staff writer

Charitable efforts in the Thanksgiving and Christmas season help remind the needy that others care about them.

Toys for Tots, sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps Foundation, has established contacts in Garland and Saline counties to reach needy children. This year's collection sites include Habitat for Humanity ReStore and Village Dental Group.

To apply to be a drop off point this year, or help in other ways, visit <https://little-rock-ar.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/default.aspx?nPageID=100&nPreviewInd=200&nRedirectInd=3>.

Another in the Hot Springs Village area is the annual Toys for Area Tykes drive, sponsored by Triple D Realty. The drive stresses that all donations stay close to home.

A unique annual drive is held by HSV Woodworkers. Members create toys throughout the year and have relationships with a number of charitable groups in Garland and Saline counties.

Many of their creations spark the imaginations of young children, but the club also remembers older children, building custom chests and boxes.

Faith Fellowship Lutheran Church for many years has held an annual Christmas food drive to benefit needy children of the Mountain Pine School District. Members travel to the district to personally deliver food to enjoy during the Christmas break, when some recipients might otherwise go hungry.

Several area churches have taken part in Operation Christmas Child, sponsored by Samaritan's Purse. For more information, visit <https://www.samaritans-purse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>.

Organizations and churches hope for a return to normalcy this Christmas season. But the continuing possibility of effects from the COVID-19 pandemic cast an element of uncertainty on many events, so check with each sponsor for more information.

* Dec. 2 -- Jessieville School District, Christmas Choir Concert, 6 p.m. at Fine Arts Building

* Dec. 4 -- The Symphony Guild: Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, "Christmas in the Village" at Woodlands Auditorium.

* Dec. 24 -- A number of Village churches traditionally hold Christmas Eve services. Check with each church for the time.



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Cocoa, Cookies and Carols

By SUZANNE SWEETEN
Voice correspondent

COVID-19 is wreaking havoc on the music groups within Hot Springs Village. The restrictions have kept musicians and vocalists from rehearsing and the crowds they normally entertain are hesitant to come sit in an area without social distance. However, one group, the Crystal Chimes hope to keep the Christmas spirit alive with an upcoming concert.

The Crystal Chimes chorus is once again producing Cocoa, Cookies, and Carols as part of their 2021 Christmas season. Lynn Holbertson reports, "Due to COVID-19 restrictions the number of chorus members has dropped but we're pushing forward. The chorus is tiny but it's filled with fiercely loyal Sweet Adelines determined to sing Christmas music."

The chorus has been entertaining the Village, and surrounding areas, for years and 2021 is no exception. Crystal Chimes is a member of Sweet Adelines International, singing four part acapella and barbershop harmony

Cocoa, Cookies and Carols affords CC a chance to perform and heighten public awareness of their craft within the community. The holiday performance takes place within the Coronado Center, Wednesday, December 15 at 1 p.m., general admission tickets are \$12 and reserved seats (at tables of six or eight) are \$15. Tickets can be purchased from



Crystal Chimes members, left Margaret Kresse (Director), Lynne Nooner and Ginger Serpas (Ways and Means Co-chairs) are advertising the chorus' events on Bathhouse Row in Hot Springs, above. The Crystal Chimes chorus of Sweet Adelines performs during Cocoa, Cookies, and Carols in 2019, below and at far right. The 2020 fundraiser was canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions. (Submitted photos)



any Crystal Chimes member, by calling Lee King at 501-226-5188, or online at hsvticketsales.com.

CC is busy rehearsing but the singers are also recruiting new members. If a lady likes to sing, have fun and make new friends, she should consider attending a rehearsal and discover for herself the art of barbershop harmony. Crystal Chimes meets on Tuesdays, inside Christ of the Hills United Methodist Church (700 Balearic Road), within the choir room. For more info, contact Judy Pugh at 1-817-714-5716 or judy4591@gmail.com.



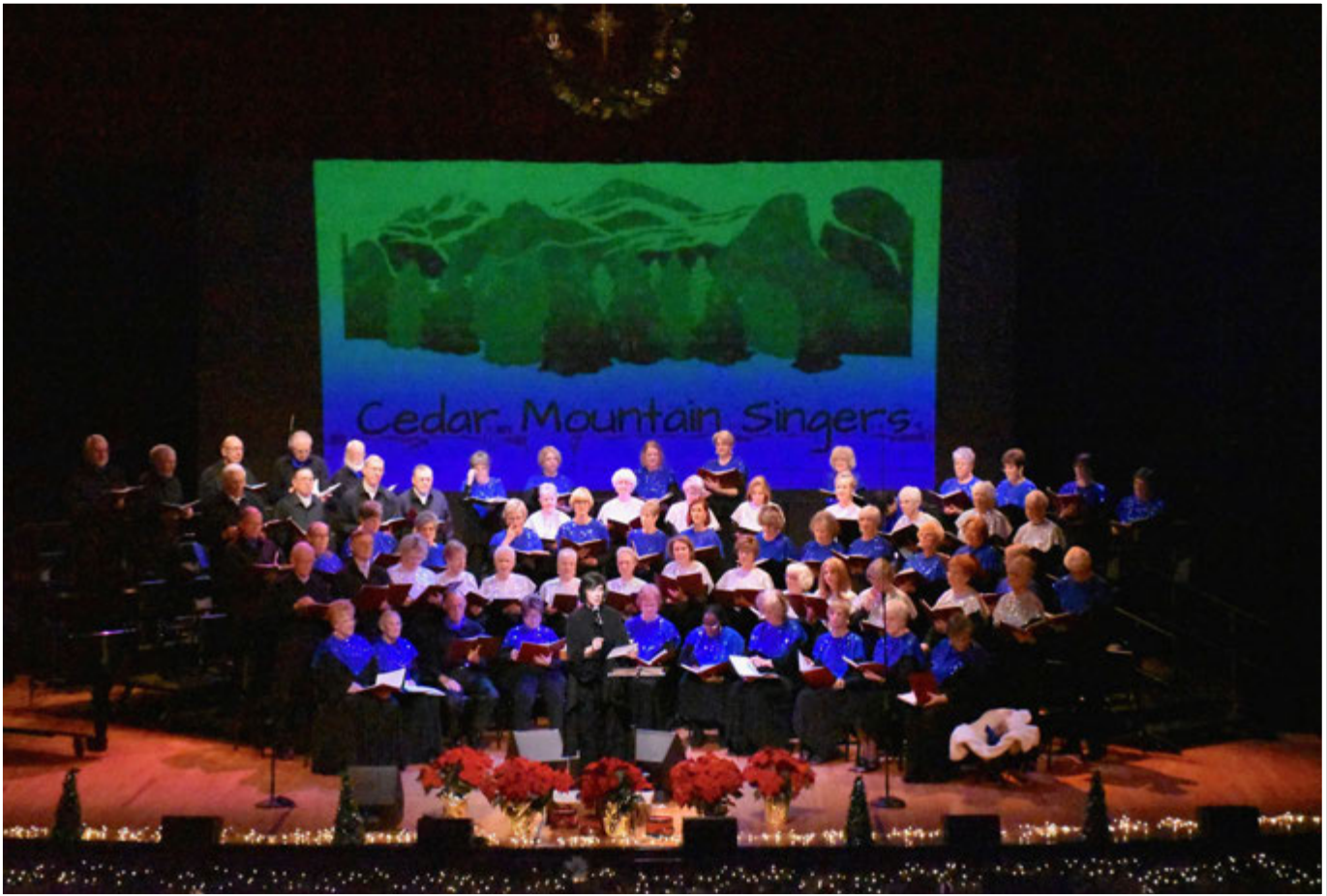
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Cedar Mountain Singers in concert, above and at right.

In the mood for Christmas - Cedar Mountain Singers

By **JEFF MEEK**
Voice correspondent

On Tuesday, Dec. 17, beginning at 7:30 p.m., the Cedar Mountain Singers (CMS) will be presenting a Christmas concert at Woodlands Auditorium. The concert is titled, "Finally, In the Mood for Christmas." Tickets will be available from any of the Cedar Mountain Singers or through the POA office. Tickets are just \$10.00.

Cedar Mountain Singers have been performing for many years, starting in 1993 by just two people who thought it would be a good idea to create a community singing group. This year CMS has a new director,

Marc Bremer, who is also the director of Voices Rising. "We feel lucky to have him. In addition, we have a new accompanist, Kathleen Kinney. She will do a marvelous job," Sandi and Steve Matthews told the Voice.

"What a privilege to be a part of such a long-standing Village musical tradition," said Bremer. "As always, you can expect a lot of toe-tapping, heartwarming and just plain fun music from Cedar Mountain Singers this year. Everyone is invited to enjoy our program this holiday season. As the title implies, there might be a jazzy tune or two along with carols and other holiday favorites. See you there."



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Village Walk for Cancer passes goals



Cancer Survivors gather to begin their 20th anniversary walk for cancer cure, above and below.



By **SANDY JOHANSEN**
Staff writer

The recent 20th anniversary Village Walk for Cancer not only exceeded participants but funds raised went over their \$50,000 goal. Funds are directed to the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Institute for Cancer Research.

Saturday, September 25, was bright and sunny with a cool breeze for walkers and all attendees at the Balboa Pavilion. This year's honorees included Melanie Pederson and the late David Whitlow.

Whitlow was active in many organizations including Mid-America Lions Club, HSV Homebuilders Assn., Deacon of First Christian Church and charter member of the HSV Rotary Club. He also created an endowment for the Hot Springs Village Community Foundation.

Pederson, also a cancer survivor, tells everyone "I'm a professional volunteer and want to help not only my family but others in need in my community." She at-

tended her first Village Walk in 2010 and has been active since then. "One day we will eradicate this dreadful disease. So let's make a difference by walking, biking, or kayaking away cancer."

The event began with thanks and recognitions followed by the VFW honor guard 21 gun salute. Voices Rising offered emotional vocals including "The Star Spangled Banner," and "Heal Our Land." The Spa City Tappers followed with rhythmic dancing wearing sparkling outfits and shoes.

Mountain Pine High School marching band lead the parade to the Balboa spillway to begin the anniversary walk.

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Hats off to the Spa City Tappers as they entertained before, during and after the walk.

Mountain Pine High School Band led the parade playing popular patriotic marches.



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HSV Make A Wish

Kaesen Shafer gets his wish

By SANDY JOHANSEN
Staff writer

It was a very extraordinary day for Kaesen Shafer, and a celebratory event for Hot Springs Village's Make A Wish (MAW) granters, Jerry Jamrich, Judy Sierocuk, Lois Oswald and Melanie Pederson. Kaesen's, a 7-year-old Jessieville student's wish was granted.

HSV Make A Wish Granter, Jerry Jamrich, was the first to discover Kaesen's wish on a list provided by MAW international. It was then he recruited other granters to help raise money for the wish. Initially, Shafer's wish was a Disney Cruise and volunteers were preparing and trying to schedule it for the family, but COVID pandemic cancelled all cruises then and even now. "We were so disappointed we couldn't grant Kaesen's wish, but I asked him if he had another wish and he told me he wanted a BMX bicycle and we were so happy to grant his small wish," said Jamrich.

Not only did Shafer get his secondary wish granted, but honoring his life and struggle with chronic pancreatitis was staged at Woodlands with family and friends cheering him on.

A parade of vehicles passed under the porte cochere



Kaesen's wish came true. He got his BMX bicycle.

including HSV Police and Fire Department vehicles, Hot Springs Bike Patrol, US Park Rangers, Village Bikers, Corvette Club, Convertible Club, and EMS rescue.

Joanie Corry, HSV POA BOD Chair, was in attendance and declared September 18, 2021, officially "Kaesen Shafer Day."

Chronic pancreatitis brings debilitating pain. Shafer's pancreas was damaging itself over and over as a result from a genetic mutation of the PRSS1 gene. The University of Minnesota was recommended to the family as it was making cutting decision on procedures for this problem.

TPIAT: Total Pancreatectomy and Islet Auto Transplantation by the University of Minnesota was the first to perform in the world in 1977. Kaesen was patient number 138 for under the age of 18. Dr. Chinakotia performed the surgery. The pancreas, gall

bladder and spleen were all removed and islets were harvested. Those islets make insulin and they were transplanted back into Shafer's body to surround the liver and re-establish in time and begin producing insulin again. "Removing the pancreas removed the pain he had been suffering. That was our priority," said his mother, Dawn.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in the United States that helps fulfill the wishes of children with a critical illness between the ages of 2½ and 18 years old. Make-A-Wish was founded and is headquartered in Phoenix. The organization operates through its 59 chapters located throughout the United States. Make-A-Wish also operates in nearly 50 other countries around the world through 39 international affiliates.



Kaesin is declared honorary member of the U.S. Park Rangers.



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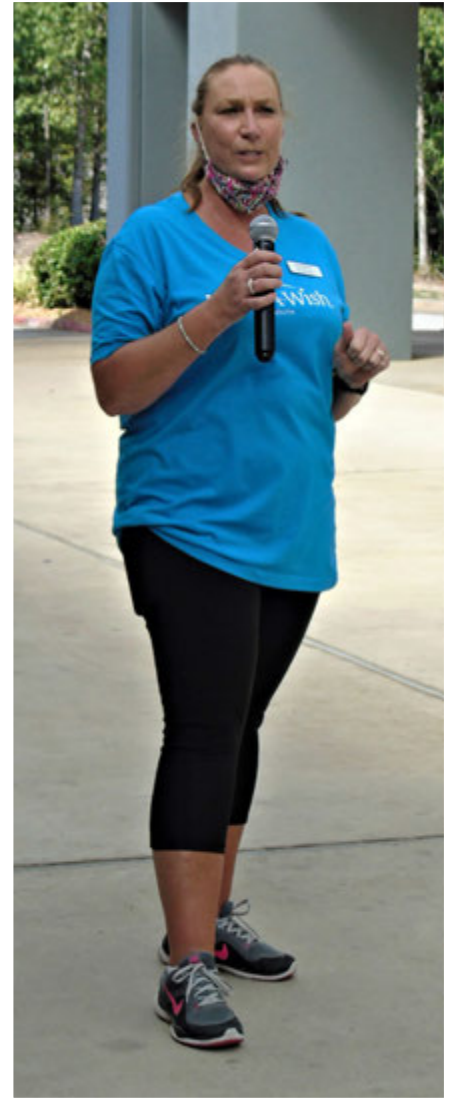
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Kaesen's first ride on his new BMX bicycle.



Leslie Humphrey, Arkansas Make A Wish Foundation, Little Rock, celebrates Kaesen Shafer's special day, above.

Kaesen Shafer, wearing his new club leather vest, is named honorary member of the Hot Springs Biker by Chad Knarpier, above left. (Sandy Johansen photos)



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