

A monthly publication of the Hot Springs Village Voice

HSV *life*

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JANUARY 2023

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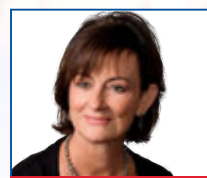
Villager Thomas Sinclair is an accomplished pianist at the ripe old age of 12



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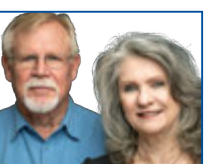
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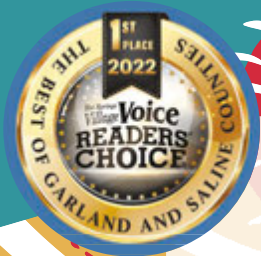
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Hot Springs Village Voice

A New Year brings New C



A small frozen twig is a reminder of winter in Arkansas. (Jeff M

Well, this week we will throw out our old 2022 calendars and replace them with 2023. What will the year bring for you, for your family, for our country. If your calendar is like mine, it already has some commitments on it. Places to go, people to meet, activities to look forward to. Of course, being January, much of that depends on the weather. A bit of ice or an inch or 2 of snow pretty much shuts down Hot Springs Village due to the terrain and the many snake-like roadways. Thankfully, as best they can, our public services department does a good job of clearing roads and dropping sand at intersections. Our police department, on occasion, has helped by giving rides to individuals that must get somewhere important to them, like a doctor or hospital, in a medical emergency.

With that change of calendar comes hope for a year of good times, taking that overdue vacation, seeing family members you haven't seen for a few years and, perhaps most important to many of us,



Jeff Meek photo)

good health. As we age that seems to be more and more of a factor in our lives. We look back on “the good old days” with an inward smile and a yearning for more opportunities to keep family traditions alive, create teachable moments and memories with grandchildren and scratch another item off our bucket list.

Along with you, we at the Hot Springs Village Voice look forward to another year together, sharing community news, personal interest stories, POA updates, concert information and more. Who knows what 2023 will bring, but whatever it is we hope it includes a positive memorable year for you and your family. Maybe you’ll finally get that hole-in-one or catch that fish of a lifetime or create that painting that’s been on your mind for some time.

Jeff Meek
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

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ON THE COVER: Villager Thomas Sinclair began to play the piano at age 1 and now at age 12 has won numerous piano and scholarship awards. (Submitted photo)

ALL AROUND ARKANSAS

STILL STANDING

Hinderliter Grog Shop is the oldest building in the Capital City

Darrell W. Brown

Driving through downtown Little Rock (Pulaski County), you may have noticed a white two-story building on the corner of Third and Cumberland streets that looks very out of place. That structure would be the Hinderliter Grog Shop, and it's considered by most local historians to be the oldest still-standing building in the capital city.

The Hinderliter Grog Shop was built around 1826 by Jesse Hinderliter, who came to Arkansas with his wife, Sophia, from St. Louis. On Lots 7, 8 and 9 of the city's Block 32, Hinderliter built the two-story, hand-hewn log building, which served as a tavern, a restaurant, an inn and the private residence for the Hinderlitters. The grog shop reflects architecture common in the state throughout the 1820s and 1830s.

Unfortunately, Jesse Hinderliter didn't live long in Little Rock. He died in 1834. The grog shop was then sold at auction to repay the debt Hinderliter owed to the original owner of the property, prominent Little Rock attorney Chester Ashley.

According to local legend, the last meeting of the Arkansas Territorial Legislature took place in the old grog shop in October 1835. Arkansas historian William



The Hinderliter Grog Shop is located at Third and Cumberland in downtown Little Rock.

Pope, wrote in his book, "The Early Days of Arkansas," that "the last Territorial Legislature met October 5, 1835 and held its sittings in the old Hinderliter house on the northwest corner of Cumberland and Mulberry Streets. There is a stone marker placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution (which has sunk into the ground and is barely visible now) on the corner of Third and Cumberland that attests to this story. But there is no concrete evidence that the old building ever housed the territorial legislature.

After Hinderliter's death and the sale of the building, it continued to serve as a public building. By the 1880s, the grog shop shifted into tenements with a restaurant inside. Part of the building was also used as a laundry business. As seen in photos taken of the building in the early 1930s, it served as a grocery store and a barber shop. Eventually the building fell into disrepair and was almost demolished by the city.

But thanks to the efforts of Little Rock socialite Louise Loughborough, the old Hinderliter Grog Shop and several other vintage structures on the block were purchased by the state and restored by the Works Progress Administration. On July 19, 1941, the Arkansas Territorial Capitol Restoration officially opened to the public. The old grog shop was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 31, 2019.



Another view of the Grog Shop. The building is part of the Historic Arkansas Museum.

Today the restored buildings are part of the Historic Arkansas Museum, which is operated by the heritage division of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism. Tours are available of the grog shop, just

don't expect any adult beverages when you visit. For that dear readers, you'll have to walk a couple of blocks over to the River Market.



A proud sixth-generation Arkansan, Darrell W. Brown is a lover of all things Arkansas. He lives in Saline County with his wife, Amy, and their beloved Boston Terrier, Dixie. Find him on Facebook and Instagram at AllAroundArkansas.

This historical marker claims that the last meeting of the Arkansas Territorial Legislature was held at the Grog Shop in October 1835.



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HSV FIRE DEPARTMENT

Protecting Property and Saving Lives

*Founded in 1972,
department has served the
Village for 50 years*

Mary Eliades
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

The Hot Springs Village Fire Department has grown by leaps and bounds since its formation in 1972.

Realizing that fire protection would be vital to a wooded community, the general manager of the Property Owners' Association in 1972, John Whelan, set out to find an experienced chief. His search led to John Lewis, a retired fire chief from Crossett, Arkansas, who took the helm and began the task of building the department.

The first fire truck was a 1951 Ford pumper from Grubbs, Arkansas. With a truck and a fire chief, it was time to recruit some firefighters. Chief Lewis discussed the problem with Weston Tucker, a project manager

for Cooper Communities, and Tucker convinced his sales force to become "volunteer" firefighters.

The fire truck was housed at the Shell station on Calella Road, until the new DeSoto station (on Calella) was completed, which also housed administrative offices, police department, etc. The police department



A firefighter at the end of a long day. (Submitted photos)

is still headquartered there, with the fire station next door.

Engine #1 was purchased in 1973. The department was originally rated an ISO Class 9 (on a scale of one to ten – one being the best), and Chief Lewis wanted to build the department to improve the rating and save money on insurance premiums. This entailed adding personnel and improving equipment and training.

In 1974 the firefighters began EMT training, but ambulance transportation was provided by the Garland County Ambulance Service – the ambulances had to come from and return to Hot Springs for each call.

A second truck was acquired in 1976.

In 1978 a new chief, Alvin Reed, promoted from within the department, realized that, with a growing community, the department also needed to grow. He focused on improving firefighting techniques and purchasing new communications equipment. A new ambulance company, Cedar Mountain Ambulance, was formed and staffed with HSV firefighters (who were also EMTs). This greatly improved response times.

A second ambulance was added in 1982, and a third fire engine in 1985.

Three additional full-time firefighters were added to the department in 1987, and Cortez Fire Station was built. In 1989, a new repeater system was purchased to improve communications.

Four more firefighters were added in 1990, allowing better coverage and lowering the ISO rating to Class 6.

The current chief, Jason Miller, said the department currently holds an ISO Class 4 rating, but the trend now is to use the “fire loss” system under the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The definition of fire loss: “Fire loss is an estimation of the total loss to the structure and contents in terms of



The main fire station on Cortez Road.

replacement in like kind and quantity. This estimation of fire loss includes contents damaged by fire, smoke, water and overhaul. It does not include indirect loss, such as business interruption.”

Many volunteers have swelled the ranks of firefighters

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over the years, providing additional manpower and timely response to emergencies.

Volunteers do not respond to every call – many are for medical emergencies, which are handled by LifeNet, with the fire department assisting as needed – but are mobilized for fires and deployed at the scene under the direction of an incident commander.

Training is a big part in preparing volunteers for all eventualities, and the Hot Springs Village fire department conducts training sessions twice a month at the main (Cortez) fire station with a combination of

classroom instruction and practical training.

There are four fire stations in the Village: the original on Calella, Cortez (main station), Balearic and Ponce de Leon. The fleet consists of three main pumpers and one back-up, as well as a ladder truck and a rescue truck.

The department also owns a boat for easy access to lake incidents and lake properties, and a UTV for emergencies on trails or other hard-to-access locations. The UTV also has a pump and tank for forest fires.

In addition to fires in the Village, firefighters also lend assistance to

neighboring communities, frequently responding along with Fountain Lake and Jessieville to area fires. They are often first on the scene to medical emergencies, where they perform initial assessments and treatments, and help lift and transport patients. Firefighters respond to traffic accidents, extricating drivers and passengers, assisting EMTs, and directing traffic.

Over the last 50 years, the fire department has grown along with the rest of the Village and now provides fire protection better than most large cities.

The Vial of Life

Project by Rotary Club of HSV provides vital info in an emergency

Lewis Delavan
STAFF WRITER

During an emergency response, first responders need to quickly learn the victim's name and any potential medical complications.

But the victim may be unconscious or unable to talk or unable to recall information because of stress.

The Vial of Life project of the Rotary Club of Hot Springs Village provides vital information for emergency responders.

"This program quietly serves the Village and performs a service the the people that, when needed, is truly significant. I've been in the club about 20 years and they were doing it at the time. It's part of a national program," Vial of Life chairman Spencer Jordan told the Village Voice. He's chaired the committee for a decade.

One key to Vial of Life's effectiveness is coordinating with local emergency response agencies.

"If they don't know about it, we're wasting our time," Jordan said.

Rotary's free kit includes a wallet card, sticker for outside door and information sheets kept in a plastic vial hanging from a refrigerator's top rack. Sheets should contain vital information about each household member.

The wallet card is very important.

"I keep mine clipped to my driver's license. They (responders) want to know who you are and they will look for your wallet to find out, and I want them to find my Vial of Life card."

Kits are available at East and West Health Marts, the HSV Police Department, HSV Fire Department's Cortez Station, the Village Loan Closet, the Ponce de



Spencer Jordan holds a Vial of Life.
(Lewis Delavan photo)

Leon Center and Coronado Community Center.

Rotary of HSV pays for kits through its charity budget. Jordan said that Rotarians are really grateful of how much recipients say they appreciate the kits.

Learn more about Rotary of HSV at <http://www.hsvrotary.org/>, or talk to any member.

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COVER STORY

Virtuoso

HSV's
Thomas
Sinclair is
good at a lot
of things,
but the piano
is his forte

Sandy Johansen
STAFF WRITER
WITH
Thomas Sinclair, Sr.



Thomas Sinclair's personal concert at HSV Woodlands Auditorium.

Thomas Sinclair, accomplished pianist and resident of Hot Springs Village, has a biography longer than many books. Many HSV residents and Jessieville locals recognize his name the second it is spoken. The *Hot Springs Village Voice* has covered many of Sinclair's events and now is pleased to present an updated version of his life and accomplishments from age 1 to age 12.

Born in 2009 in Quezon City, Philippines, and according to his mother, Peggy, he started playing a small electronic keyboard on the floor when he was just 1 year old and still in diapers. By age 2 while living in Japan he began singing, reading, spelling and writing in English, having the flags of the world memorized quickly. He was always exceptional at memorizing lots of information. In 2013 at 4 years of age could read, write and speak Japanese. He began his piano lessons

at age 5 in Japan. Moving back to the Philippines in 2015, he was enrolled in the local Montessori school where in 2016 he won the school's public speaking competition. All this time he continued his piano lessons with various teachers.

The Sinclair family moved to HSV in 2018 with 9-year-old Thomas enrolling at Jessieville (JV) Elementary while starting with his new piano teacher, Kristen LaMadrid. His accomplishments in 2018 alone included winning the JV student talent competition playing Beethoven's *Sonata in G Major Op 49 No 2*. That same year Thomas won two spelling bees; the JV School Spelling Bee and the Garland County Spelling Bee as a 4th grader.

Sinclair then went on to place 10th in the 2019

Arkansas State Spelling Bee as a 4th grader. Later the same year but now a 5th grader he won the JV School Spelling Bee and Garland County Bee again, plus winning The O. Samuel Driggers Piano Festival at UCA playing Beethoven's *Sonatina in F*. He also won the JV School Talent Show again, this time performing and singing Billy Joel's *New York State of Mind*.

In 2020 his spelling skills got him first place honors as the AR State Spelling Bee Champion as a 5th grader. He was interviewed live on KARK TV plus met the Governor Asa Hutchinson. He went on to win the JV School and Garland County Spelling Bees again as a 6th grader later that year. Again he was awarded top honors at The O. Samuel Driggers Piano Festival at UCA playing Chopin's *Minute Waltz* and Haydn's *Adagio Sonata*. Through it all, Thomas has worked with many teachers who have encouraged and honed his advanced piano skills.

In 2020 Thomas was enrolled in the IU Jacob School of Music and also in their Advanced Music Theory where he stayed in their virtual Young Pianist Program (YPP), for 2 years. In 2021 he took the runner up spot in the AR State Spelling Bee. Sinclair took home first place in the 2021 Arkansas State Music Teachers Association (ASMTA) competition for his performance of Debussy's *Dr. Gradus Ad Parnassum*. He also performed an encore duet of Mozart's *Magic Flute Overture* at the Steinway Piano Gallery in Mayflower, AR with his piano teacher. He again took top honors in the O. Samuel Driggers Piano Festival at UCA for the 3rd time in a row. He has since started playing the flute and the clarinet, teaching himself to play on his own.

As a 7th grader he won the 2022 JV School Spelling Bee and Garland County Bees for his 4th consecutive time in a row. He scored a 23 on his first ACT Test attempt. He also was presented winning accolades at the Stella Boyle Smith Young Artist Concerto Completion at UALR, playing Mozart's *Concerto No 23*. He placed first in the University of Memphis International Piano Festival performing a number of selections by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin and Prokofiev.

His latest piano honors were won at the Music Teachers of North America (MTNA) competition in Conway where he offered 4 solo pieces including Bach's *Partita No. 2*, Beethoven's *Sonata in B flat major*, Chopin's *Fantaisie Impromptu* and closing with



Just one of many spelling awards won by Thomas Sinclair.



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Thomas Sinclair won an award at Arkansas State Music Teachers State Competition.

Prokofiev's *Ten Pieces Op 12* No. 6 and No. 7.

Many local venues have requested Sinclair's performances including many in Hot Springs Village, The Muses Project, The HSV Chorale Singers, Hot Springs Music Club, Master Class performances at UALR and the University Memphis, and an upcoming scheduled solo performance at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church March 2023.

Late this 2022 school year, a committee was convened, all data and statistics reviewed, and



Thomas Sinclair is joined by Kristin LaMadrid at his concert.



Thomas Sinclair places first at the University of Memphis International Piano Festival.

Thomas was accelerated from 7th to 9th grade at JVHS. However, after careful consideration of all options available, it was decided he would enroll in an online college-prep high school curriculum and home school. Through it all, Thomas remains a pretty normal 13 year old enjoying piano, flute, clarinet, Science, Math, and loves his video games.

Many HSV residents were excited to attend his solo performance at the Woodlands Auditorium in

August 2022.

His musical talents have been nurtured and sharpened by various music teachers in Japan, the Philippines and now in the United States including Kristin LaMadrid, Musical Director of Westminster Presbyterian, along with Dr. Naoki Hakutani, Professor of Classical Piano at UALR. His organ studies have been with Dr. Joshua Brown, Professor of Chorale Studies at OBUB and Music Director at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church.



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A Promise to Haiti



Dr. Walter Smith delivers Aid,
Technology and Friendship

Dr. Walter “Bubba” Smith and colleagues at the Pignon, Haiti airport.
(Photos courtesy of Dr. Walter Smith)

Robin Raborn Burns
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

Native Arkansan Dr. Walter “Bubba” Smith has always been interested in religious missions. As a youth, he participated in trick-or-treating for UNICEF. When he accompanied a group of Methodist missionaries to Haiti, he met the kind and gratitude-filled people, saw the conditions they had to endure in their daily lives, and knew he had found his purpose.

Reverend Smith, a 30-year Air Force chaplain who also had a deployment to Iraq, has been the pastor at First United Methodist Church in Magnolia, Bismarck United Methodist Church, and before retirement, Christ of the Hills Church in Hot Springs Village. Since his retirement, Smith has had interim assignments – as a pastor in Smackover, Arkansas, and Mountainside Methodist Church. And, there are two to three annual

trips to Haiti. So much for traditional retirement.

Dr. Smith’s wife Diane, an Education and Curriculum Supervisor at Henderson University, states matter of factly, “Bubba kind of flunked retirement.”

As for the trips to Haiti, for the past 25 years, Dr. Walter “Bubba” Smith has been delivering hope to the rural village of Pignon, Haiti through his work with Promise for Haiti, a foundation founded forty years ago by Dr. Guy Theodore. Promise for Haiti began as a faith-based medical clinic, but that clinic has grown into a 64-bed hospital, Hospital Bienfaisance. that has six clinics, including an extensive public health program.

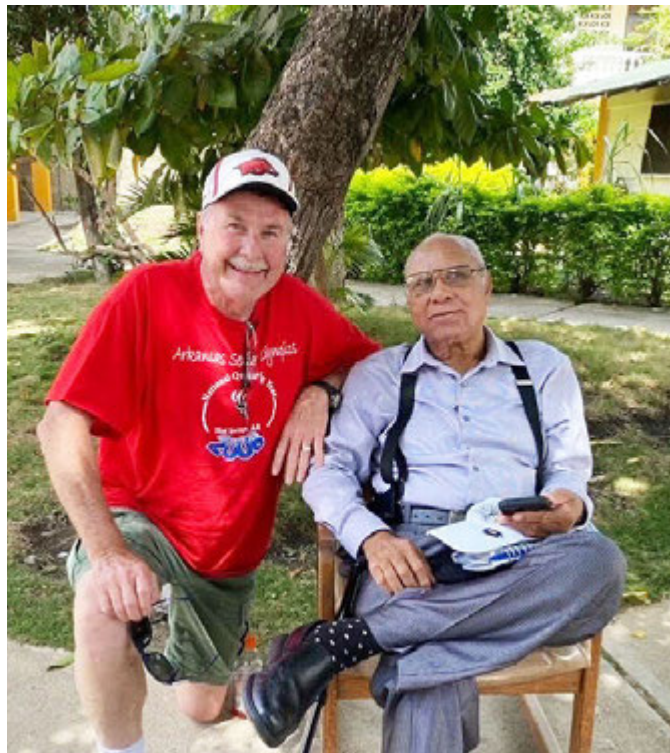
The hospital includes a neonatal unit and hundreds of life-saving surgeries are performed at Hospital

Bienfaisance annually. Promise for Haiti partners with and invests in local Haitian leaders to provide the best healthcare for the people of Haiti. Haitian surgeons and visiting surgical teams donate their time and talent to deliver quality medical care.

The vision of Promise for Haiti has expanded beyond healthcare to include the provision of clean water (building and maintaining hundreds of wells), education (building nine primary schools and establishing a scholarship program), and programs for agricultural and economic development.

When the Smiths and their entourage of mission-ready colleagues, which includes church members, members of other non-profits, like-minded friends, and on occasion, family members, make the flight to Haiti, they travel on a Douglas DC-3. The plane is a propeller-driven airliner manufactured by Douglas Aircraft Company. They fly via Missionary Flights International.

They land at Pignon Airport, a small grassy airport financed and built by Dr. Theodore. Missionary



Dr. Smith with Promise for Haiti founder, Dr. Guy Theodore.

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Flights International has informed Promise for Haiti that they can continue to fly into the airport as long as the runway remains mowed. A current goal is to purchase a mower to keep the airfield clear.

There is always a cheering crowd awaiting them when they land. Diane says that on one of her first flights to Haiti, the sight of young unclothed children, some mere toddlers, brought tears to her eyes. Dr. Smith quietly told her to focus on how happy they appeared, and that their state of undress was their way of life.

As for the contributions that Dr. Smith (and other organizations, groups, non-profits, and individuals who partner and collaborate with him) has made to Promise for Haiti, the list is extensive. Here are some highlights:

- More than 1400 pairs of used eyeglasses (courtesy of the Evening Lions) were provided to Haitian residents.
- Ladies from the Christ of the Hills Church knitted infant hats and blankets and prepared baby layettes for mothers of newborns.



A delivery of baby blankets and caps, knitted by ladies of the Christ of the Hills Methodist Church.

- Dr. Smith researched the construction of Solar Water Wells to ensure the promise of clean water. He and his volunteers provide education and consultation to the residents so they can become self-sufficient in the operation, maintenance, and repair of the water wells.

- Promise For Haiti has worked with the Village Unitarian C4K, a non-profit organization based in Hot Springs Village that refurbishes secondhand computers with current software. Computers went to Hospital Bienfaisance, among others.

- Diane noticed that the Haitian women did not own underwear. Diane spoke with rotary clubs that assisted in collecting over 1000 bras to distribute to Haitian women and girls. Diane joyfully tells the story of the bra delivery - how her son, who had accompanied her and Dr. Smith on a trip, opened one of the boxes and held up a pretty hot pink bra. One of the women was determined to be the recipient of the colorful bra and shouted "me, me." Diane recalled that the woman could not have been happier!

- When Diane's mother passed away, The



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Solar water well in Haiti.

Smith's packed up her jewelry collection and included it with their cargo to Haiti. Diane said the women squealed with delight as they selected pieces from the collection.

- Promise for Haiti remains the primary resource and funding source for Hospital Bienfaisance.

His generosity and dedication notwithstanding, perhaps Dr. Smith's greatest strength is his ability to assess a situation, roll up his sleeves, and get to work. He has done everything from repairing leaks in an operating room to holding a flashlight so surgeons could see to operate.

When Dr. Smith speaks of his work in Haiti, he does not speak as someone who expects recognition or praise. He recounts the story of the frail in body but strong in spirit elderly Haitian woman known as "Grandma" who had never owned a bed. When one was purchased for her, she said through the aid of an

interpreter, "Now I can die happy", then peacefully passed away two days later.

He praises the Doctors in the operating room who perform surgeries with the aid of refurbished computers that enable visiting surgical teams to watch the surgeries.

Dr. Smith admires the "resilience, grace, and strength of the people of Haiti. Diane and I feel that the gifts they have given us, and the lessons they have taught us, have changed our lives forever." The programs of Promise For Haiti support approximately 145,000 Haitian residents. Please visit <https://www.promiseforhaiti.org/> for more information on how you can help support this vital mission.

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Searching for the Truth



Jeff Meek during presentation at Saline County Herzfeld Library.

Lewis Delavan
STAFF WRITER

While watching Geraldo Riviera's "Good Night America" show on March 6, 1975, Jeff Meek became intrigued with what really happened in President John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination.

"I believed the Warren Report: Lee Harvey Oswald did it," Meek said during a recent presentation at Saline County Herzfeld Library. After a 10-month investigation, the Warren Commission decided that Oswald acted alone in killing Kennedy on Friday, and nightclub owner Jack Ruby acted alone in killing Oswald two days later at the Dallas Police Department.

But comedian Dick Gregory spoke of his belief that conspirators killed JFK, not a lone gunman, as the Warren Report concluded. Gregory and Robert Groden brought the Abraham Zapruder film of the Dallas, Texas, motorcade to the American public.

Zapruder spliced news footage of the motorcade in Dealey Plaza to show JFK as he was shot, first from behind, and then apparently from the front, throwing his head back sharply as his wife, Jackie, tried to assist him.

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"I read books about the assassination. I still wasn't really convinced. I wrote to Washington and learned that Jack Ruby did work for the FBI. I was hooked," he said.

In 1977, the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations began a two-year investigation of the murders of Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister and civil rights leader. The select committee examined evidence and concluded that a 95-plus percent chance existed of a shot coming from JFK's front. "That equals two gunmen: A conspiracy," he said.

During his quest to learn the truth about JFK's death, Meek has contacted government officials, studied official records, interviewed direct sources and spent years of research.

Meek was "bored to death" during the Covid-19 pandemic. "I contacted my publisher who did my first book. 20 pages turned into 200," he said while

discussing his second JFK book, "*Manipulation of Lee Harvey Oswald: And the Cover-up That Followed*" on Nov. 8 at the library.

The new book is dedicated to Mary Ferrell, a long-term JFK researcher that Meek interviewed. "Back in the '70s and '80s nobody thought about talking to her," he said.

"The book is very heavily footnoted. I didn't dream this up on the way over here," he said. "It's out there if you know where to look and you take the time to find it."

A former *Hot Springs Village Voice* managing editor, Meek remains a contributor and writes a frequent column for the newspaper. He also was a featured speaker at an October conference in Dallas

Earlier, Meek released "*A Lone Gunman?*" about his JFK research. He also has written, "*They Answered the Call: World War II Veterans Share Their Stories.*" The books are available on Amazon.



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Still Vibrant

*Downtown Benton
abuzz with activity*

Lewis Delavan
STAFF WRITER

Many downtowns across America have fallen onto hard times over the years, but Benton's downtown has remained resilient.

Some downtown businesses have been there for decades, while others are relatively new. These businesses enable the downtown to thrive and be a beacon for citizens.

Benton Mayor Tom Farmer credits the the tenacity of owners and support of customers for keeping historic downtown Benton as a beacon for both residents and visitors.

"The reason our downtown is thriving is because of the dedication and commitment of the individuals who own and operate businesses in our downtown, as well as the citizens supporting our downtown



Courthouse clock tower logo ties downtown landmark into colorful banners.

business. I love the fact that all of our businesses support each other. Everett's (Buick-GMC) produced a commercial that said 'Shop locally to promote our local businesses.'"

"Today people want to walk around an area to shop and dine while feeling safe during this experience which they have in Benton. We offer shopping for all while the opportunity to dine in 5 different restaurants that are locally owned.

"In my second month in office



**Large mural depicts Saline County history.
(Lewis Delavan photos)**



Historic Saline County Courthouse remains a hub of activity.

during our town hall meeting I made the statement that we must build our community from downtown out which I truly believe because downtown is the hub, where spokes lead into on the wheel of success.”

“Remember that Benton is home for all. Whether you live here or are just visiting, we want you to feel at home,” Mayor Farmer said.

Also helping anchor downtown Benton is the historic Saline County Courthouse. The tall clock tower was adopted as a logo for banners placed around the downtown district. The Farmers’ Market that began at the courthouse square now has a home in a pavilion two blocks away.

A prominent mural depicts area history, from Native Americans, the first immigrants, to Spanish conquistadors and immigrants who cleared forests to farm the land, build railroads and industries.

Festivals and live theater also bring people downtown. And the Downtown Benton Association has worked for decades to help keep Benton’s commercial heart vibrant.



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Second century:
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Theatre switched
from film to live
performances a
number of years
ago.

Food and shopping opportunities abound. The list of the association's members shows the breadth of shopping and eating possibilities. Or spend the afternoon shooting billiards or getting a new tattoo or two, or choose a new pet or find what your furry friend needs.

Member Downtown Benton restaurants include: Baja Grill, Main Street Station, Just Ice Cream, Three Best Bakery, Valhalla, Koffee with a Kause and Italy in Town.

Health and beauty businesses: Broox Beauty Bar, Roosters, Salt and Soap, Shear Grace, Shear Impressions, The Nutrition Loft, The Oil Shop, The Shop and Throwback Cuts.

Clothing and accessories: Rhea's Men's Clothing, Stated, SOCO, Tantrums, True Boutique, Urban Emage, Wild and Willow and Grace.

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Pavilion behind this sign houses vibrant Farmers' Market, left. Artists add a personal twist to Benton's downtown, below.

Sparks Fine Jewelry and White's Furniture.

An eclectic variety of others exist: Smith Benton Funeral Home, Twigs Flower Shop, Paradise Pets, R&J Pawn, MySaline, The Royal Theatre, 111 N Main, ACDI, CJZ Downtown Billiards, Relics Tattoo, Studio 17:20, Three Kings Tattoo, PTI and iReality.



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SPAGHETTI WITH SHRIMP, FETA AND DILL

Serves 4

- 12 ounces spaghetti (3/4 box)
- 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound peeled and deveined large shrimp
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 3 ounces feta, crumbled (3/4 cup)

- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh dill

Cook the pasta according to the package directions, drain and return it to the pot.

Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season the shrimp with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and cook, tossing occasionally, until opaque throughout, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice and zest.

Add the shrimp mixture to the pasta, along with the feta, dill, the remaining 1/4 cup of oil, and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Toss to combine.

PEPPERONI PIZZA DIP WITH BREADSTICK DIPPERS

Serves 8

- 1 jar or can (14 ounces) pizza sauce
- 3/4 cup chopped turkey pepperoni
- 4 green onions, chopped
- 1 can (2 1/4 ounces) sliced black olives, drained
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 package (3 ounces) cream cheese, softened

Dippers

- 1 package (8 ounces) refrigerated breadstick dough
- 2 teaspoons melted butter
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh Italian parsley

1. Combine pizza sauce, pepperoni, green onions, olives, and oregano in a 2-quart slow cooker. Cover; cook on low 2 hours or on high 1 to 1 1/2 hours or until mixture is hot.

2. Stir in mozzarella and cream cheese until melted and well blended. Serve with warm Breadstick Dippers.

3. For dippers, bake breadsticks according to package directions. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with parsley.



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