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HSV *life*

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Hot Springs Village Voice



May this month be a special one for you

A picturesque view across Lake Balboa and a sunny morning. (Jeff Meek photo)

Ahh the month of May. It's that time of year when the heat and humidity begin to settle in on Hot Springs Village. I can remember covering the VFW Post 10483 – hosted Memorial Day ceremonies several times and being drenched in sweat by the time I got back home.

Memorial Day leads the list of special May days for me. Remembering our fallen military veterans is something we should do more often than just the last week of May. This year Memorial Day is on May 27. That weekend when you fire up the grill with friends and family, take one minute to remember why that holiday exists.

Another big day in May is Mother's Day, this year on May 12. Do not, I say do not forget those moms. Flowers, chocolates, cards, and special luncheon buffets are part of that celebration each year.

Then there is also Cinco d Mayo on May 5. Many in the Village



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and elsewhere in the U.S. celebrate this day with tequila, tacos and more, but do you know why? I didn't until I looked for information online. Well, it's all about a Mexican victory over the French at the May 5, 1862 Battle of Puebla. Against overwhelming odds, the Mexican Army was victorious. An estimate 3,791 Mexican troops defeated 5,730 Frenchmen. Mexican president Juarez declared remembrance of the battle as a national holiday.

There are other lesser known things about the month of May, like it's name. I learned it is for the Greek Goddess Maia and comes from the Latin Maius. May is also known as Better Sleep Month (that sounds good), Women's Health Month, and National Walking Month (get out on those Village trails) to name a few.

Whatever you have on your plate for May we at the Voice hope it turns into something special. Something that makes HSV life memorable.

Jeff Meek
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

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ON THE COVER: Barkansas owner Lisa Clem and her BFF Alfred. (Photo courtesy of Lisa Clem)

ALL AROUND ARKANSAS



Busy, Bustling Jacksonport

*Once a popular
steamboat stop, now a
favorite state park*

The Historic Courthouse at Jacksonport State Park.

Darrell W. Brown

Three miles northwest of Newport at the confluence of the Black and White rivers lies the small town of Jacksonport. With its popular steamboat stop, it was once a bustling town.

Native Americans lived in the area now known as Jacksonport for thousands of years before white settlers arrived in the 19th century. The town was located along the Southwest Trail, which diagonally crossed Arkansas from the northeast to the southwest into Texas. The abundance of wild game and heavily forested lands attracted trappers and hunters.

In 1831, Thomas Tunstall explored the area when his steamboat, *Waverly*, which was bound for Batesville, was stalled for several days because of low water. Tunstall returned a year later and bought a sawmill at the mouth of Jacks Creek, which was located near the area that became Jacksonport.

Tunstall and his family took up residence in the nearby community of Newark and thus never lived

in Jacksonport. But Tunstall is considered to be Jacksonport's founding father, as he opened the town's first general store and drafted the first plat of the town in 1833. Jacksonport flourished and became a commercial success due to the stable year-round depth of the White River at its location.

Jacksonport was incorporated in 1852, and became the Jackson County seat the following year. During its heyday, Jacksonport was estimated to have about 1,200 residents.

Like other cities and towns in Arkansas, Jacksonport's economic and population growth came to an abrupt halt due to the start of the Civil War in April 1861. The war took a devastating toll on Jacksonport, as it was the scene of several battles and skirmishes between Confederate and Union forces looking to gain a stronghold on the important riverport town.

Several years after the war's end, the Iron Mountain, St. Louis and Southern Railroad built new tracks about three miles downriver at Newport, bypassing Jacksonport. As a result, many residents and businesses left Jacksonport for Newport and the boomtown went bust. Jacksonport's fortunes worsened in February 1882, when both a flood and a fire destroyed much

of the town within the span of a week. In 1891, the residents of Jackson County voted to make Newport the county seat.

By the early 1900s, Jacksonport's population had dwindled to 250. Besides a levee built in 1909, new infrastructure improvements at Jacksonport were rare until the former Jackson County courthouse (completed in 1872) was saved from demolition.

In 1962, the Jackson County Historical Society purchased the dilapidated structure and surrounding property. The statuesque red brick courthouse was restored and donated to the state to become the centerpiece of Jacksonport Courthouse State Park in June 1965. Now known as Jacksonport State Park, the recreational area is owned and operated by the state Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism. The courthouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places in January 1970.

A new visitors center for the park was completed in 2018. The visitors center features artifacts and exhibits related to Jacksonport's history, a gift shop and meeting rooms available for rent. Park interpreters still give guided tours of the old courthouse. Along with the courthouse and visitors center, Jacksonport State Park features a 20-site campground, swimming beach, pavilion, picnic sites and a playground for the park's young visitors. The half-mile Tunstall Riverwalk takes hikers along the White River from the park's boat launch to its campground. Wildlife and numerous species of birds can be seen regularly along the trail, making for a memorable hike.

If you're interested in learning about the early commercial history of our state or simply enjoy seeing



Cannon at Jacksonport State Park.

beautiful views of one of Arkansas' most important rivers, Jacksonport State Park and the old town it's named for is a must-see destination in the Natural State.

A proud sixth-generation Arkansan, Darrell 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.

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PET THERAPY

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Mary Eliades
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

People who own pets do so for a variety of reasons – security, companionship, fun – but not everyone who wants a dog or cat (or bird or hamster) is in a position to care for an animal.

Health concerns, housing constraints, and affordability can all present obstacles to pet ownership.

And that's where Hot Springs Pet Therapy (HSPT) comes in.

Hot Springs Pet Therapy is a nonprofit organization consisting of volunteers who take their pets to nursing homes, schools, day cares, and other facilities to bring joy and comfort to others. Pet therapy has been shown to decrease depression, loneliness, boredom, and anxiety, while improving mood and increasing social interaction.

HSPT had its beginnings in 1997, when Ted Ericson, an employee of Hot Springs Animal Services, organized a group of 13 volunteers to visit nursing homes with their pets. The original program was called “Hot Springs Pets for the Elderly.” The membership grew, and in 2006 the group obtained nonprofit status as Hot Springs Pet Therapy.

Covid 19 put a halt to pet visits, but the group is



Sylvester Washington took time out from his puzzling to chat with Fisher and play with Sprinkles. (Mary Eliades photos)

growing again, with a membership of about 20, and they are looking for volunteers, especially in outlying area, including Hot Springs Village.

Leslie Fisher became president of HSPT in January and brings her dog, Sprinkles, to The Springs of Red Oak, a residential care facility on Carpenter Dam Road in Hot Springs, every other Tuesday. The residents look forward to seeing Sprinkles (and Fisher) and some even follow along with walkers and wheelchairs as they make the rounds.

Sylvester Washington is one of Fisher's – and Sprinkles' – favorites, and when they walked into his room, his eyes lit up and he said, “I've been looking for you!” He chatted with Fisher while he played with Sprinkles, telling stories about his family and life – it

was plain to see how much the visit meant to him.

Becky Jones and Mike Sipe were having a nice chat when Fisher and Sprinkles appeared. “I look forward to you every week,” said Jones. “We enjoy this baby so much.” Sipe added, “Thank you for consistently bringing them by.”

Esther Jones is the activities director for the facility and said, “I love it – my residents love the animals,” adding, “It is a great asset for us. Many residents have pets that they couldn’t bring with them.”

On the way out of the facility, a staff member stopped to play with Sprinkles and mentioned she’d been having a bad day and a few dog kisses were exactly



Leslie Fisher, president of Hot Springs Pet Therapy, brings Sprinkles to The Springs of Red Oaks every other week to visit the residents. Fisher (right) is shown here with Dorothy Baggett

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what she needed. Fisher said the pets also visit staff at National Park Medical Center on a regular basis – “We’re here just as much for the staff.”

In describing the requirements, etc. for the animals, Fisher clarified, “These are not service dogs – they’re therapy dogs.”

No special training is required for pets to join the ranks of HSPT, but animals must be temperament tested. Susie Sexson, a former president of the group, owns a boarding facility and conducts the temperament tests. The dogs are exposed to people and other dogs, loud noises, wheelchairs, walkers, etc. to see how they’ll fare in a nursing home or day care facility.

Once the animals pass the test, they (and their owners) can join HSPT. Although most of the therapy animals are dogs, Fisher said there is even one parrot in the group. Dogs must be at least one year old, with proof of rabies vaccination, and have been with the current owner for at least six months.

Fisher said volunteers can work as much or as little as they want and can choose their hours and locations. She added that they would love to have some

volunteers in Hot Springs Village to visit local facilities such as Good Sam, Mt. Carmel, Village Springs, etc. A board member accompanies new volunteers on their first visit.

There is an annual membership fee of \$25, and meetings are held monthly on the third Saturday of the month. “Our next meeting is 2 p.m., May 18, in the Maurice Room at National Park Medical Center, 1910 Malvern Ave., Hot Springs,” said Fisher. “We do not bring our dogs to the meetings and people must attend two meetings before they can join.”

At the meetings, members discuss needs of the community, share reminders and tips, and prepare for scheduled programs.

One such program is the Paws to Read program at the Garland County Library, where young readers can practice reading aloud to nonjudgmental listeners (i.e., therapy dogs). Sessions will be held on Tuesdays in June, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., and the first and last Saturday of June, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. A reading session lasts 15 minutes and participants can sign up at the children’s desk 15 minutes before the start of the program.

“We are always looking for friendly people with friendly dogs to help serve the many facilities throughout Hot Springs and Hot Springs Village,” said Fisher. “And it really is a great way to serve the community. You can see people light up when they have the opportunity to visit with one of our therapy dogs, and the dogs love it too. What’s also great is that it is very flexible. Our members decide how frequently they want to make visits and can usually find a facility that’s close to them.”

For more information about Hot Springs Pet Therapy, visit the hotspringspettherapy.org, or call 501-844-5436.

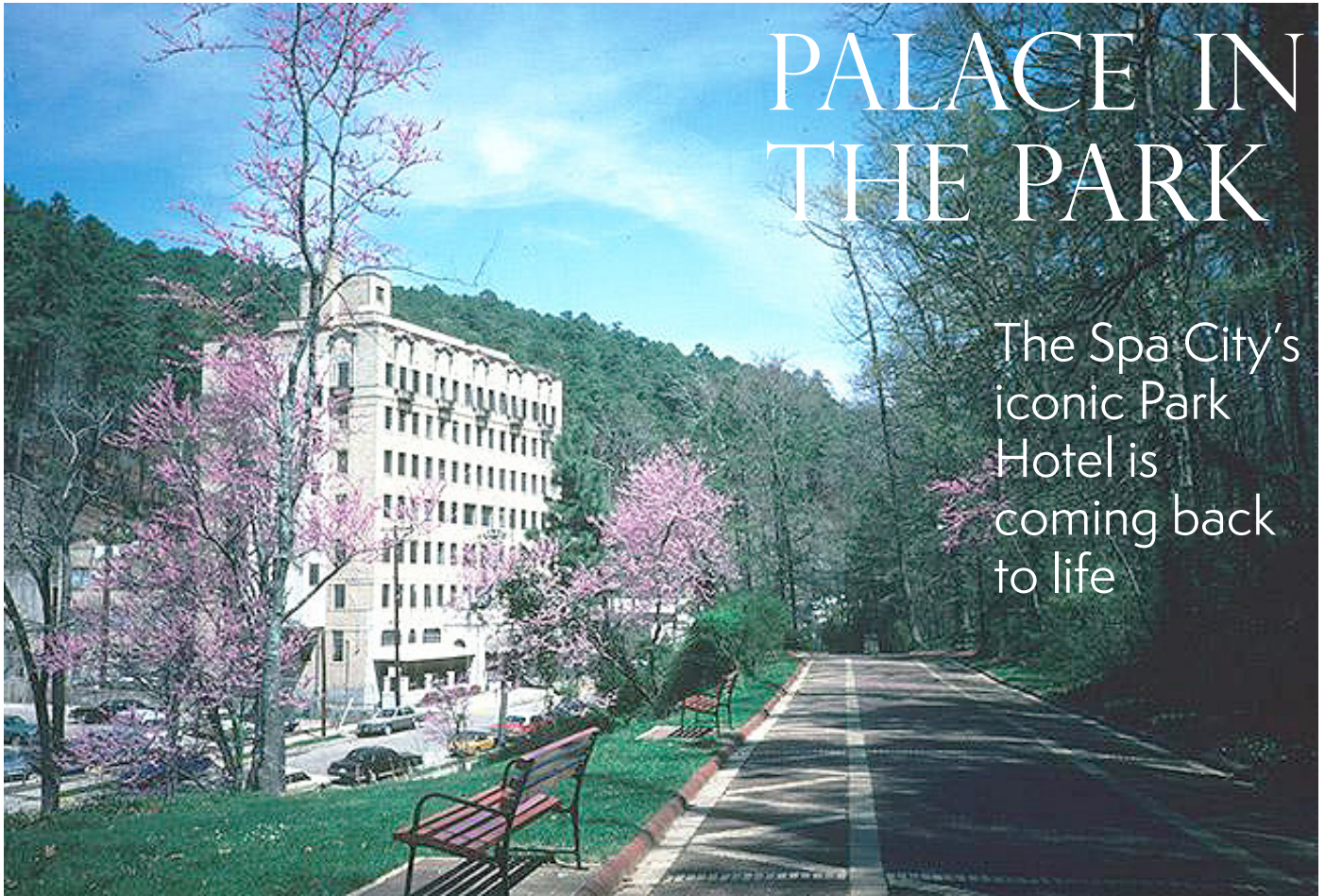


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The advertisement features a portrait of Joe Patrico, a man with glasses and a suit, on the left. To his right, the text is arranged in a clean, professional layout. The Chambers Bank logo and contact information are at the bottom.



PALACE IN THE PARK

The Spa City's iconic Park Hotel is coming back to life

The beautiful Park Hotel as seen from the Grand Promenade. (Photos courtesy of Garland County Historical Society)

Robin Raborn Burns
 VOICE CORRESPONDENT

“Is it not cruel to let our city die by degrees, stripped of all her proud monuments until there will be nothing left of all her history and beauty to inspire our children?”- Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

Among the myriad reasons Mrs. Onassis could be remembered as ‘First Lady of Historic Preservation.’ She played a key role in Washington D.C. preservation efforts during her term as First Lady of the United States. She was a significant player in saving the buildings surrounding Lafayette Square, as well as helping preserve the Old Executive Building and the Renwick Gallery. After her move to New York City in

1964, she became involved in preservation efforts there as well. Old buildings in any city are not just a part of landscapes- they can be revered as temples that reflect the cultural history of the city. They are foundations that give people a connection to the past. Historic buildings can represent something famous, inspirational, or hold

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significant relevance to residents, the community, and those who visit. Over the next few years, locals and visitors will notice some changes to downtown Hot Springs. Three buildings, (the Park Hotel, the Arlington Hotel, and The Medical Arts Building) all within short walking distance from each other, which are estimated to attract millions of visitors each year, are receiving structural renovations.

The Park Hotel was a seven-story hotel in downtown Hot Springs near Bathhouse Row. The hotel was built in the Spanish Revival style in 1930 by Thompson, Sanders, and Ginocchio. The Park Hotel was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

It was closed in 2020. In late 2023, renovations were underway. In addition to honoring and preserving an iconic building, the building's facelift will undoubtedly benefit the hospitality industry in the spa city. Steve Arrison, Visit Hot Springs CEO, states that "restoring the ambiance of Hot Springs is uplifting to the city."

He adds that it is "great to see the buildings given a second chance. They're bringing them back, bringing life back to them."



The original elevator in the lobby of the Park Hotel.

Park Hotel owner Josef France has shared that he's happy to update it, adding that he plans to make it kind of a condo hotel situation. "We're adding amenities - a resort-style pool, a state-of-the-art workout facility, and a conference room," France said. He also said that the hotel will have 86 rooms and the lobby and bar downstairs will be expanded, but he also plans to keep its historic charm. It's a Spanish revival building and we want to keep it with that kind of style and feel while adding new amenities. And, of course, making it a lot better in the process."

"It is very gratifying. It's a lot of work. But we're working with architects now to draw up the things that we are going to change," France explained. He hopes to have the updates to the Park Hotel finished by July 2025. Local History buffs will appreciate that according to the Encyclopedia of Arkansas, Harry Truman stayed at the hotel very often, and he loved to stay in his favorite room— 401. The tan brick building of the Park Hotel is located at the upper entrance to the Hot Springs National Park Grand Promenade, which is a brick pathway through the wooded hills behind Bathhouse Row.

The Park Hotel is one block northeast of the dining, entertainment, and shopping establishments of the Central Avenue Historic District. Inside the lobby, an original elevator with an elevator operator remains functional, though guests may also use a more modern automated elevator. Other original elements in the hotel include the grand staircase leading up from the lobby. Certainly Hot Springs residents look forward to the restoration of this precious gem – situated among other priceless jewels.



Library in the Park Hotel.

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WEDNESDAY NIGHT POETRY



Featured poet, Zachary Crow, began his interest in poetry when he attended many poetry nights. He's now a published poet. (Sandy Johansen photos)

1,730 Weeks...

And still going strong

Sandy Johansen
STAFF WRITER

Wednesday Night Poetry has not missed a session since its founding by Buddy Kenny in 1989. It has been hosted at Kollective Coffee + Tea since its beginning never missing any Wednesday even through the Covid scary pandemic.

Hot Springs native Kevin Rogers, joined by his wife, Agnes Galecka-Rogers and son, Konrad created a very popular coffee shop offering unparalleled coffee, pastries, sandwiches, candy and many other delightful products. Their Kollective Coffee + Tea is also an industry-leading in barista training. Kollective features local products and Arkansas' own Onyx

Coffee to Hot Springs Mountain Valley Spring Water.

The shop is a hub for the community especially Wednesday Night Poetry, hosted by Hot Springs own Poet Laureate Kai Coggin. Coggin is a widely published poet, teaching artists, and author of her recent work, *Incandescent*. She was awarded the 2021 Governor's Arts Award and named "Best Poet In Arkansas" by the Arkansas Times. Coggin's hosting of Wednesday Night Poetry (WNP) is the longest running consecutive weekly open mic series in the country.

A fearless and dedicated leader to many, Coggin

greet every member of the audience coming to hear the original poetry along with local performers. She begins every Wednesday night session stating “There won’t be any racism, no homophobia, and no arachnophobia. Spiders are our friends.” Old friends and newcomers are greeted with her dazzling smile and a hug.

Moving to Hot Springs nearly a decade ago, Kai is a poet, teacher and master naturalist. She has published four poetry collections and taught poetry to K-12 across the state. Recently she received the Don Munro Leadership in the Arts Award.

Coggin met Bud Kenny and they forged a fast friendship. Coggin calls them a father-daughter poetry family. “It’s not just a fluke, and it’s not because people in Hot Springs love poetry. It’s because there was a very special scene here that kind of spawned this thing and it was a part of the arts community from the beginning.”



Musicians are always welcome and Adam Jones not only plays and sings, but he also recites his own creations.

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Originally, WNP began as a conversation over dinner in 1988 between Bud Kenny and an artist named Benini.

This writer was grateful as the evening featured the works and presence of Zachary Crow reading his personal composition. Crow has a Bachelor of Electronic Media and Communication and is the author of the 2018 poetry collection, *Dancing in the Eddies*.”

Crow shared his background spending two years living alongside and learning from homeless, the incarcerated, and formerly incarcerated individuals in Atlanta, Georgia. This was a part of the Open Door Community, a residential community founded by Catholic workers seeking to dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and abolish the death penalty. Crow’s first feature-length documentary released in 2023 chronicles five Palestinian stories from the West Bank. His narratives for the evening included systems of punishment and oppression.” I write to express joy. I often write about movement work and resistance including prisons, police, capitalism, and other oppressive systems,” he said.

Wednesday Night Poetry is held every week at Collective Coffee + Tea at 110 Central Avenue in Hot Springs. It is free and begins at 6:30 p.m. If you would like to share your poetry, please register with Kai Coggin upon entering.



John Crawford, popular and noted published local poet, is in attendance nearly every Wednesday night and is welcomed regularly to the state.



Blake and Audrey Wilson, visiting from College Station, Texas, brought daughters Ellie and Addie to Kollektive Coffee not only to enjoy poetry, but have a little fun dancing to greet the poets.



Published and well known Hot Springs resident Kai Coggin opens Wednesday sessions. She is a fearless leader and respected by many.

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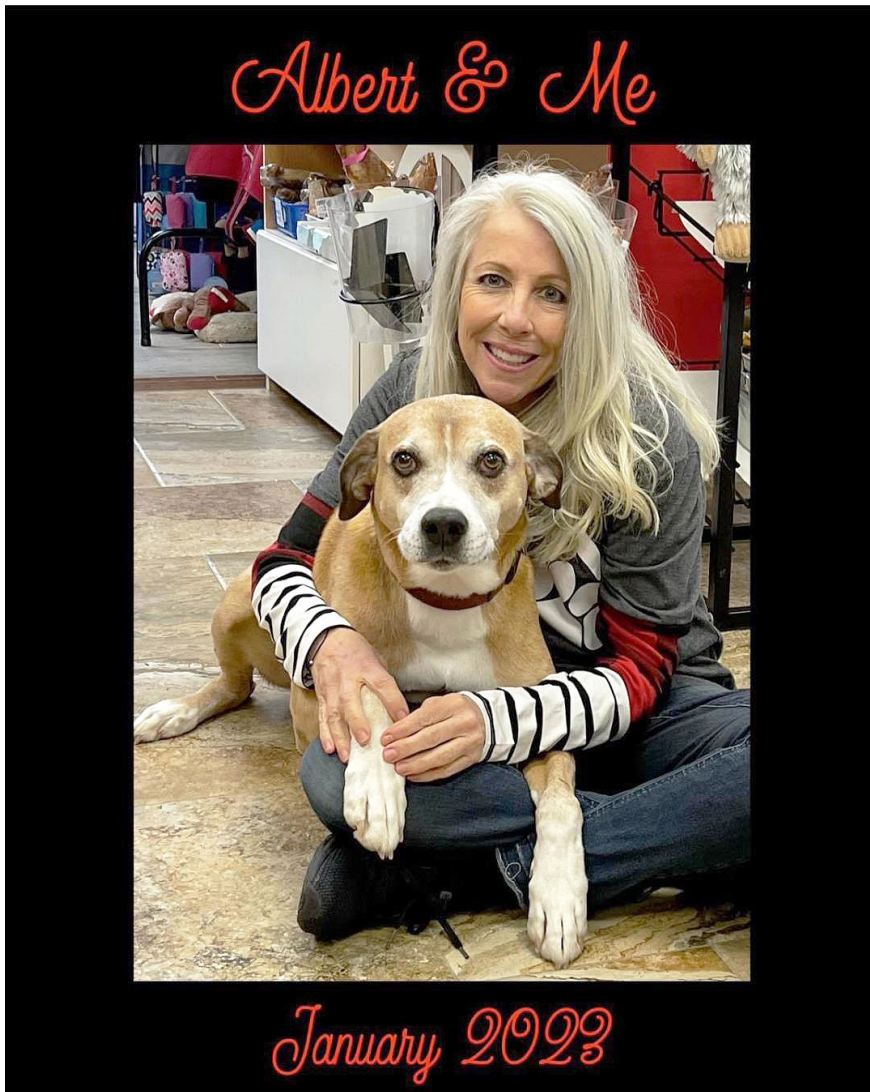


Robin Raborn Burns
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

Perhaps the best way to illustrate Barkansas owner Lisa Clem's dedication to the welfare of animals is this writer's visit to take photos of the popular pet supply store.

Staff informed me Lisa was at home caring for rescued newborn kittens that had been abandoned at one of the HSV beaches. She was feeding them with tiny bottles with even tinier nipples to give them the nourishment their young bodies needed to survive. Anyone who knows her knows that this is "classic Lisa."

Lisa's love of and advocacy for animals is well-known. Her commitment to helping animals live the highest quality of life possible is reflected in the selection of products at Barkansas, and the knowledgeable and friendly staff she hires. Shelley Shepherd, adoption coordinator at HSVAnimal



Barkansas owner Lisa Clem and her BFF Alfred.
(Photo courtesy of Lisa Clem)

Welfare League says of Barkansas,

"Shopping at Barkansas is an experience for all pet lovers. All the essentials are sold there, including quality foods and products for all your pets' needs, all carefully selected by Lisa. The knowledge and service provided by Lisa and her staff is second to none." Barkansas employee Hayley says working at Barkansas is "like being part of a little community that loves and protects animals, and promotes their well-being. We are all pet owners." Another employee, Tonya, says "I love the friendly atmosphere, love the customers, and especially love that I can bring my pet baby, Woody, to work with me."

Barkansas opened its doors in Hot Springs Village

in 2009 when Lisa made the decision to give up her teaching career and move to Arkansas to be closer to her dad. She also wanted to fulfill her dream of opening a pet supply store. Lisa had acquired ample knowledge from numerous years of doing animal rescue as well as her participation in pet store and animal shelter adoptions. Lisa wanted to put that knowledge to good use. She shares that she has “spent as much time learning about animal welfare than I did obtaining my Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Teaching Credential combined.”

She wanted to offer people healthier alternatives for their pets than the standard products that lined the shelves of most stores. Lisa has made that dream come true.

Barkansas is stocked with an inventory of healthy pet food brands and wellness products to ensure the best-tasting and quality diets for pets. Pet owners will find everything they need to keep their fur babies well-fed, well-groomed, and well-rewarded with tasty treats. There is a self-serve bathing room and a beautification technician. And, to keep life fun and pets engaged, Barkansas has a large selection of toys for cats and dogs, beds, collars and other accessories and gifts. When you visit Barkansas, you will not just be pointed toward merchandise, you will receive expert advice and thoughtful, pet-centered recommendations should you ask.

Barkansas also offers a loyalty program to reward customers for taking such great care of their pets. When customers check out Barkansas for their pet needs, fur babies typically receive a free belly rub or pat on the head. The store was created for those who want



Kimberly greets customers at Barkansas. (Robin Raborn Burns photo)

nothing but the best for their furry friends. Lisa adds “I knew there was some difference in pet products, but I had no idea until I began comprehensively researching. I love this industry and learning how to help my customers keep their pets health and happy.”

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Bob Wagstaff —

Teaching young and old at the Coronado Tennis Center

Mary Eliades
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

The Coronado Tennis Center in Hot Springs Village is the vibrant hub of the local tennis community, in no small part thanks to Bob Wagstaff's leadership during his 31 years here.

Wagstaff is from Canyon Lake, California, and moved around quite a bit before finding his home in Hot Springs Village.

He played on the tennis team at Riverside City College for two years before deciding to try his hand as an auto mechanic. His true love was tennis and he relocated to Lewis-Clark State College in Idaho, where he played on the tennis team, along with his brother, for his remaining two years of eligibility. He eventually became the coach of the women's team there.

Wagstaff moved to Hot Springs Village – for the first time – in 1985, where he served as assistant tennis pro for a year and a half under head pro Sonny Jones (whom he knew from Riverside City College and Lewis-Clark). He then did a stint with Tennis Corp. of America, before landing a position at Midtown Tennis Club in Rochester, New York.

He returned to the Village in 1989, but eventually left to take up the head tennis pro position at Pine Bluff Country Club in 1997. He came back once again in 2002 and has been head pro at the Coronado Tennis Center ever since.

In addition to his teaching gigs, Wagstaff organizes programs every year to interest would-be tennis



Bob Wagstaff is the head tennis pro at the Coronado Tennis Center and still loves to teach and run programs to interest others in the sport. (Mary Eliades photos)

players or hone the skills of more accomplished players. The Tennis Free for All has been offered every year – at least once a year – since 2003 and is an intense one-week program based on a similar program (Tennis in No Time) in New York. Wagstaff said the program accounts for 30 percent of the tennis population in the Village.

The most recent Tennis Free for All drew around 20 participants. “Everyone seems to be enjoying the tennis,” said Wagstaff, “and we are hoping to get many of these new players to play regularly.”

The Center is also home to several in-house leagues,

but “usually people form their own groups,” said Wagstaff. The advanced men’s league is the largest league and meets on Tuesday afternoons.

Several teams from the Village have won state, regional, and national championships. Three teams have won national championships: In 1995, a men’s 3.5 team; 2010 – men’s 3.0 team; and 2016, a women’s 3.0 team. The USTA 65 state championships have been held at the Center for the last 20 years, although the need for more courts may



The Coronado Tennis Center boasts a pro shop, kitchen, and lounge, along with 13 tennis courts.

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End of a doubles match at Coronado Tennis Center. (File photo)

move the event to another location in 2024.

Since 2003, the Ike Eisenhower State Farm Insurance Junior Championship has been held at the Center, with 60 to 80 participants coming in for the USTA event from all over Arkansas and outside the state.

The Center boasts 13 courts – 10 Har-Tru (“clay”) and three hard courts. Wagstaff said the clay courts are good for seniors, because they’re easier on the knees, although they are more expensive to maintain. They also slow the game down a bit, reducing the “lucky shot” factor.

The Center is open every day, and players can walk on without a reservation, although the online reservation system is easy to use and guarantees a court.

Wagstaff has worked with the local high schools and said both Fountain Lake and Jessierville were “tennis powerhouses” in the 90s. He has donated training sessions to students and has trained several players that went on to university tennis teams.

Wagstaff had an interesting anecdote about the Jessierville tennis program: At one point, the team needed to recruit some new blood, so they rounded up four football players who had never played tennis

before and ended up winning the district tennis championship.

Wagstaff has coached USTA teams for the state, including Junior Davis Cup and Junior Federation Cup, with a lot of “high level juniors.”

Wagstaff said, “In the 2000s, USTA leagues were huge here,” but the rules changed and affected league membership.

“The program is growing again,” said Wagstaff. “I see younger people moving in.”

Wagstaff’s wife, Cindy, is the former director of the Hot Springs Village Chamber of Commerce and currently heads the Garland County Habitat for Humanity as executive director. “We’re lucky,” said Wagstaff. “We both have jobs that we like a lot.”

The Wagstaffs have one son, who grew up in Hot Springs Village and currently works for the Navy as an engineer in Newport, Rhode Island.

When he’s not teaching or running programs or managing the Center, Wagstaff likes to water ski and cruise around on his Harley-Davidson. His main interest is tennis, though – “I’m a real tennis fanatic,” he said, “at any level.”

HSV JUNIOR GOLF

Hearts on the Line

Bill & Susan Veal have touched many lives

Sandy Johansen
STAFF WRITER

Bill and Susan Veal have touched many lives, both young and old across the country, but especially in Hot Springs Village, Arkansas. Both were born, raised and married in Texas.

Bill served in the US Navy as a Seabee 1952-1954. Graduating with his BBA from Texas Wesleyan, Bill was with the General Services Administration in Fort Worth for 30 years, retiring in 1982.

Susan holds her BBA in business from Texas Tech University. Retiring in 1982, she served as a loan officer and checking account department manager for the Fort Worth Federal Credit Union.

The Veals moved to Hot Springs Village in 1987. Bill was on the part-time golf staff until 1996.

As her Revolutionary War ancestors, Daniel Smith of Virginia, Fleming Smith of South Carolina, and Robert Page of Virginia, she has been active in many historical clubs, especially the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The couples' background of community service prior to moving to Hot Springs Village would certainly fill a book and bring tears to the many they have touched.

Mrs. Veal has been active in the Arkansas DAR and served in many offices including Chapter Regent, vice regent, treasurer and many committees. She's held many positions on the Arkansas State Society and currently is Honorary State Regent. At the



Bill and Susan Veal hold a photograph of the very first HSV Jr. Golf Tournament participants. (Sandy Johansen photos)

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Bill and Susan Veal, far right, celebrate with the flight winners following the 2023 tournament.



The tournament brings in many volunteers helping players, family and friends during the very busy days.

national level of DAR, Susan served a chairman of three committees, is a member of the Speakers Staff and has life memberships in several national clubs.

Not only has Bill Veal served his country in the Navy, but he served over 30 years in General Services Administration and was presented many honors. He played a critical part in the ASS overseeing fiscal, administrative, budget, human resources, payroll, revenue. Veal was also involved in budgeting and

forecasting. Upon moving to HSV he brought his wife, Susan, into one of his favorite activities, golf.

They founded the Hot Springs Junior Golf program in 1998. To date, over 7,000 junior golfers have participated and 100 scholarships have been presented since 2005. The program encourages and promotes junior golf activities for both sexes between the ages of 8 through 17.

Bill and Susan, along with their countless volunteers



The HSV Jr. Golf Tournament is officially named the Bill and Susan Veal HSV Jr. Golf Tournament. Hanging the new banner Jack Barry, tournament founder, and Gary Sikes, new tournament chair.

promote development of social, physical, emotion and mental skills in students and teach them life lessons influencing their character development and good sportsmanship. "We want to help develop lifelong golfers who continue to play long after the program is over for them," said Bill.

HSV Junior Golf is a 501 (c) (3) following strict by-laws. There are 12 members on the board and six named to the Executive Board. Donations have increased substantially through the years starting with a state charter non-profit corporation in September 1999.

Bill and Susan have set goals for the future including a permanent driving range home with storage, work shop and office space.

It was a fitting awards picnic for Junior Golfers at the Balboa Pavilion finishing the 2023 June/July season to name the tournament to honor Bill and Susan Veal.

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KEEP POSITIVE

Keith Keck spends 30 years in the Air Force before landing in HSV



Keith Keck serving in Southwest Asia. (Submitted photos)

Lewis Delavan
STAFF WRITER

After serving almost 30 years in the Air Force, Keith Keck landed in Hot Springs Village to enjoy golf and travel. Since landing here, he has enjoyed a variety of public service opportunities, from dealing with critical issues in the Village, Saline County and central Arkansas to responding to more than 100 house fires and multiple tornadoes/floods as an American Red Cross Disaster Action Team Leader.

A 1981 Air Force Academy graduate, he earned a bachelor of science in mathematics, Keck served as a radar navigator on a B-52 Stratofortress. Later serving as an offensive systems officer on a supersonic B-1 bomber, highlighted by picking up brand new B-1 from the aircraft plant with only four flight hours on it and to lead a flight of three B-1s to first ever operational deployment to Australia.

Early in his life, his father dealt with military personnel who came to Detroit, Michigan, to buy a vehicle. Buying at the factory saved the destination charge, which could be substantial in those days.

"That's how I got to know military people," he said. "Sometimes they even stayed with our family

in Garden City, Michigan."

And Keith Keck's father was a veteran. "He was a Coast Guard guy, but I didn't like to swim," Keith quipped.

Excelling in school, Keck was accepted by both the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, and the Air Force Academy. "One way or the other, I was going into the military."

Following his father's recommendation of the Air Force, and more importantly with his mother's blessing, their only child headed to Colorado Springs to start his career in the Air Force.

One relationship that did not initially seem promising led to his greatest life accomplishment: "Marrying a strong Christian woman and being together for 42 years," he said.

As a member of the Air Force Academy Class of 1982, his future wife Julie did not immediately like her fellow cadet. "She hated me because I was a mean upperclassman," Keck recalled.

"For over 30 years, I have kept the same small handwritten piece of paper on my desk focusing my



The Kecks enjoying Antarctica.



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priorities: God ... Family ... Country.”

The Air Force life took the Kecks all over the world. Assignments led to more than a dozen moves, including Colorado, California, Michigan, Washington, D.C., Kansas, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi and Illinois, as well as Germany and southwest Asia.

As a headquarters staff officer, Keith Keck served at the Pentagon, in Europe and at the Air Mobility Command. “Nothing was more challenging than serving on the Joint Chiefs Staff and trying to referee a room full of competing Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Officers.”

He capped his career with base command positions in Florida, Mississippi and Southwest Asia. “It was never good news when your phone rang in the middle of night.”

Upon retirement, Keck moved to Hot Springs Village in December 2009 to be near his wife’s family in Hot Springs. Subsequently, Keith’s Mom moved to HSV and lives with Julie and him today.

Expecting to play a lot of golf, travel extensively and to enjoy watching football, and NASCAR racing, Julie Keck set him on a new trajectory for a myriad of volunteer service..

After about a week of mornings enjoying coffee and reading the newspaper, she thrust a Village Voice in front of Keith, showing him an article about the HSV Property Owners’ Association starting a strategic planning effort. She said, “Wasn’t that your last job in the Air Force?”

“I called the number and on Jan. 2 (2010) I was discussing strategic planning with the POA Board president, POA GM and several Research & Special Project Committee

members.

His 2010 Strategic Planning Co-leadership with Wilbur Smither combined with motivation from retired Gen. Tom Arwood led to volunteer service as a POA board director, board president and service on the POA Governmental Affairs Committee.

His Board leadership led to the “tough decision” to implement a two-tier assessment, and dealing with a tragic fatal dog attack situation.

The current Saline County District 13 Justice of the Peace, he opted to not seek reelection to totally focus back on serving the Village. With expertise in strategic planning in both the government and private sectors, Keck looks forward to working again across County lines with the Garland and Saline county judges and other leaders.

In the community, Keck is president of the HSV Veterans Memorial Foundation and is a board member of the local Military Officers Association of America Chapter.

He is past congressional president of Faith Lutheran Church and currently serves on Faith Lutheran’s Board of Elders. He has served as volunteer marshal/starter at Isabella Golf Course since 2010. “What a great way to hear what Villagers and visitors say, especially when they do not know who I am.”

He represents HSV on Central Region Metroplan, the federally designated metropolitan-planning organization for central Arkansas, including Saline County. “What great interaction I get to have with mayors and county judges from four central Arkansas counties to tell the HSV Story.”

My retirement goals were to travel and golf. Julie and I have traveled to all seven continents over the last 15 years; however becoming a single-digit handicap golfer still eludes me.”

Advice to young and old people? Don’t give up when life hands you setbacks, Keith Keck says. Just maintain a positive attitude and keep trying. Keck said he faced challenges, but a positive attitude kept him moving forward. And the same applies to any person, young or old.

He remains excited for the future of Hot Springs Village and the opportunity to focus more directly on its issues.

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Keith Keck at HSV Veterans Day Ceremony with guest speaker Keith Monahan; retired KARK 4 meteorologist and Air Force Academy graduate.



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Vapors
Sunday, May 5

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Tator Fator on the Road at Oaklawn
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A Led Zeppelin Celebration
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HSV Entertainment Night
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May 20 at 7 p.m.

Hot Springs Children's Dance Theatre presents A
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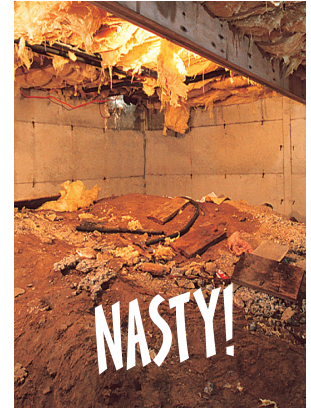
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