

A monthly publication of the Hot Springs Village Voice

# HSV *life*

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JULY 2024



## Hanging Up His Helmet

Scott Gross retires after 34 years with the HSVFD




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**The room in Independence Hall in Philadelphia where the United States was founded. (Jeff Meek photo)**

**W**ell, July is just days away and we will all once again celebrate our nation's founding. Two hundred and forty-eight years have passed since Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Roger Sherman and others signed the Declaration of Independence in the Pennsylvania Statehouse in Philadelphia. It changed its name over the years to Independence Hall and I'll bet some of you readers have been there. My wife and I have and it's a bit overwhelming for a history nut like me. Just standing there, trying to absorb what went on in that room is almost incomprehensible. The ideas, the arguing, the compromising, the results all came together to form a country like no other at that time.

The fragility of the country back then was real. Even years later, in September 1787 when the U.S. Constitution was decided, Franklin knew that keeping America together was a challenge. As he left the building, he was asked by a lady what they had decided on – a republic or a monarchy. Franklin is said to have responded, "A republic, if you can keep it." So far, we've been able to keep it, but who knows what our future holds with such a fractured national atmosphere.

We celebrate the birth of our nation on July 4, but it took until August 2 to officially finalize the document. Back in July 1776, John Adams unknowingly predicted the future saying we should celebrate the event like a great anniversary. We do that with cookouts, television programming, parades, speeches and more. Many people fly a flag on July 4. We all seem to, at least in some measure, come together, as we celebrate a nation with many flaws, but still the greatest on earth.



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Despite all the noise in recent years about how terrible the U.S. is, millions flock here every year.

I don't know about you, but I worry about our republic. Pride in America is at a very low point. We have it so easy we forget how good we have it here in America compared to most other nations.

On July 4, fly that flag, celebrate with fireworks and parties, but also give a few minutes of thought to what it took to gain our independence. Remember that we, with the help of the French, defeated the most powerful army and navy on the planet at that time. Men and women suffered greatly, losing their homes, their crops and cattle, their fortunes, all for an unknown future. Even General George Washington, at times, wondered how we would prevail. The number of soldiers in his army was dwindling, and had little food and clothing, but somehow our founders and their supporters came through.

Soldier Joseph Plumb Martin wrote about his experience's years later, noting how one could follow the footsteps of Washington's army. Martin wrote, "Almost everyone has heard of the soldiers of the Revolution being tracked by the blood of their feet on the frozen ground. This is literally true, and the thousandth part of their suffering has not, nor ever will be told."

Let's remember them as we enjoy HSV Life.

**Jeff Meek**  
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

**ON THE COVER:** Scott Gross has served his community as a Hot Springs Village firefighter for 34 years. (Mary Eliades photo)

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# ALL AROUND ARKANSAS

## *England, our England*

### Small Lonoke County town has storied history

Darrell W. Brown

If you're driving from Little Rock to the "Duck Hunting Capital of the World" of Stuttgart, you might find yourself traveling through England. No, not the country ruled by King Charles, but the small city in Lonoke County that — despite its size — has quite the storied history.

The area today known as England was originally a community of 19 families that sprung up during the Reconstruction era of the 1870s. The settlement was about 3 1/2 miles north of where the city was eventually laid out. Led by a man named Bob Hudgens, the residents in the small community lobbied for a post office in 1880. The U.S. Postal Service granted their request, and later that year, the Groveland post office was established.

The post office's designation didn't stay Groveland for long; the name was changed to England in 1888 — an event that almost didn't happen (more on that in just a moment). That same year a one-room building was constructed as a school, church and community meeting place.

By 1888, the area was known as England, named for land owner and lawyer John Calhoun England. England was legal counsel for the Cotton Belt Railroad, which had recently laid tracks in the area.



**The Bank of England was founded in August 1898.**

He bought the original tracts of land and had them surveyed into lots. Prominent town leaders decided to name the area after John England.

The U.S. Postal Service originally denied the request to change the post office's name from Groveland to England citing a rule that stated a post office could not contain the name of a foreign country. But it eventually granted the request, and both the town and post office officially became known as England. England was incorporated on March 1, 1897.

England's economy initially centered around agriculture — specifically cotton. In 1893, a cotton gin

Mural featuring the history of England, Arkansas.



was built in England and a second was built in 1898. In 1902, William Fulmer, a farmer from Louisiana, moved to England and began experimenting with rice farming. Within a few years, rice farming became a major cash crop in England, the rice well-suited to the flat, poorly drained land. But even with the huge success of rice farming, “King Cotton” continued to be the largest cash crop around England.

The drought of 1930-1931 devastated England, causing an event known as the England food riot. The American Red Cross had come to the area to help those in need but ran out of food and supplies by December 1930, and the organization was forced to turn residents away. With the angry crowd of those in desperate need of rations growing more impatient and frustrated, local merchants began distributing food with the promise the Red Cross would eventually pay them back.

As part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, Congress passed the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which allowed the federal government to intervene and make cuts to the production of cotton, which helped the agriculturally based economy of England and similar towns that had suffered during the Great Depression.

Over the years, England’s agricultural industry has declined but industrial growth has prospered. Thanks to Arkansas’ congressional delegation in the early 2000s, federal funds were used to build an industrial park and a water treatment plant and make other

improvements to England’s infrastructure.

And while you won’t find any royals in this England, you can find such interesting attractions as the Wagon Yard Museum. The museum is privately owned and features a collection of wagons, stagecoaches and farm equipment. The museum also contains a replica of the first Bank of England, a pioneer church and cells from the original city jail.

I’ve learned throughout my travels in the Arkansas Delta that our state is full of interesting and nostalgic small towns. For me, England is at the top of that list.

*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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## HSV PEOPLE



# Gertie & Louie

*Artist Judy Klein  
paints and sews  
with a sense of  
humor*

Judy Klein spends part of each day in her studio, either sewing or painting.  
(Mary Eliades photos)

### Mary Eliades VOICE CORRESPONDENT

Visitors to Coronado Golf Course often notice an odd couple – Gertie the Goose and Louie the Pelican – along the road to the clubhouse. The two dashing figures reside at the home of Judy and Jim Klein and are always colorfully – and appropriately – dressed for the season or special occasion.

Judy is the artist in the family and has had fun over the years creating backstories for Gertie and Louie and designing outfits that bring a smile to everyone who sees them. “They’re married,” she quipped, “and this is Gertie’s third marriage.” She made most of the outfits and accessories, which include tributes to the Packers, the Brewers, and the Badgers of the University of Wisconsin (the alma mater of the Kleins’ twin sons).

She changes the outfits often – they recently wore

their “eclipse viewing” togs, complete with glasses, etc. Louie is often seen in his fishing gear and Gertie likes to cook and play golf. They had special outfits for their wedding and the grand event was immortalized in a wedding album.

Louie originally belonged to Judy’s mother and was in bad shape when the Kleins took over his care. “The clothes hide the damage,” said Klein.

Klein spends a lot of time in her beautiful studio, which husband Jim built for her. Half of the sunny, airy space is devoted to her sewing activities and the other half holds paints and canvases for her other love – painting.

“I do a lot of charity sewing,” said Klein. She belongs to Women in God’s Service (WINGS) and



makes Easter dresses for girls and other items for various groups serving the homeless, mainly in Hot Springs. “So far this year, I’ve made 39 dresses,” she said.

Klein’s home is decorated with many of her artworks, including a beautiful collection of quilts. Some of the quilts are made from patterns, but are always embellished with her own whimsical touches. One of her favorites is a “chicken dinner” quilt, with each panel illustrating a different dish. Her favorite, “stewed chicken,” depicts a tipsy bird with a bottle of wine next to it.

When her sons were growing up, their favorite book was “A Cat Called Cindy.” Klein has memorialized this special book by creating a quilt made up of panels that are exact (and hand-drawn) copies of each page of the book. The text is rendered in her exquisite calligraphy, and the final panel is a net pocket with the lovingly-used little book enclosed.

Another beautiful and extremely original quilt is composed of images of important buildings from Klein’s life. Each of the 12 panels shows a house or school or workplace, done in “cartoon style,” with little personal touches in each. Klein has always loved birds and they figure in most of the panels; there are also cars, dogs, bicycles, a frog (from high school biology class), and balls in a creek (from a country club golf course). The Kleins’ current home is pictured, with the ubiquitous birds, including a favorite pileated woodpecker, golf gear, and even a snake, in a nod to the wooded environment. Each scene tells a story, and the viewer can linger and discover something new every second. Klein has also documented each panel on the back of the quilt so generations to come can enjoy learning more about the Klein family.

Klein likes to make quilts for her friends. “Sometimes my imagination runs wild,” she said. “The older I get, the more things are popping into my head.” All of her



Louie the Pelican and Gertie the Goose greet visitors enroute to Coronado Golf Course. They are always dressed for the occasion.

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proposed to me on horseback in the moonlight.”

Next time you visit Coronado Golf Course, look for those two lovely animals, Gertie and Louie, on the way and notice what they’re wearing – it will be guaranteed to make you smile.

The Kleins’ twin sons loved “A Cat Called Cindy,” and Judy made an exact replica of the book into a quilt, left.

One panel from a favorite quilt – “Chicken Dinner,” below.

works make viewers smile, and some are laugh-out-loud hilarious.

Klein spends most of her studio time on the sewing side, but she also paints in various media. Although she doesn’t enter her works in competitions, she has paintings hanging in various government buildings and restaurants.

The walls of the Klein home are filled with Judy’s paintings – watercolors and oils – as well as pen-and-ink drawings. She has even done beautiful paintings in the Norwegian rosemaling style of folk painting, usually floral designs on wood.

A large mixed media piece hangs above the dining room table and incorporates rice paper and tissue paper to give the piece texture.

Klein has an English budgie that accompanies her as she works in her studio. “I grew up with all kinds of animals,” she said, adding, “Jim



# GARLAND COUNTY LIBRARY

## More Than Just Books

Mary Eliades  
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

Libraries used to be places of musty books and whispered conversations, where patrons could browse the shelves or conduct research for school projects.

The musty books are still there, although the oldest tomes are usually kept behind glass doors, and the whispered conversations are still appreciated. The advent of e-books has diminished the joy of browsing and the internet has made “research” much easier.

Libraries today must adapt or go the way



James Nowlin is the outreach coordinator at the Garland County Library and brings the library's bookmobile to Hot Springs Village. (Mary Eliades photos)



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The Garland County Library will soon be expanded to accommodate even more meetings, programs and events.

(as long as it's legal).

The library partners with the Hot Springs Jazz Society, Master Gardeners, and the Garland County Historical Society to present concerts and talks that are open to the public.

of the dinosaurs.

The Garland County Library, at 1427 Malvern Ave. in Hot Springs, has not only adapted but is thriving – to the point where a 10,000-square-foot expansion is planned for the near future. The children's section will be enlarged, and space added for study/meeting rooms and community events. A teaching kitchen is planned, as well as a café and lounge.

The library calendar is chock-a-block with meetings, programs, and events, many of which are geared toward adults.

One of the most popular activities is “Bingo for Books” on the first Wednesday and third Monday of each month, from 1 to 2:30 p.m., with prizes that include gift cards and – of course – books. Even during the dark days of the pandemic, library staff kept “Bingo for Books” alive via Zoom.

On the first and third Thursdays of the month, the library hosts “Bluegrass Jam” from 4 to 6 p.m. Everyone participates, whether by playing an instrument or just mingling with fellow bluegrass enthusiasts.

“Mah Jongg for Beginners” is one of the newest programs at the library and is held on Friday mornings at 9:30 a.m. through August.

There are book clubs, a chess club, tech tutoring, tai chi, craft groups, etc. – something for everyone. The library also hosts a community garden, where patrons can reserve a raised bed to grow anything they choose

Summer reading programs are offered for all ages, with prizes galore.

Not everyone is able, however, to get in the car and drive to the library, and two services offered by the Garland County Library bring books, videos, and other materials to patrons in Hot Springs Village and other locations throughout Garland County.

James Nowlin, outreach coordinator, is responsible for remote library services – “everything outside the walls of the library” – and discussed two of the wonderful services offered to patrons: a bookmobile and a delivery service.

The bookmobile is a self-contained library on wheels, where patrons can browse the shelves for best-sellers (including large-print editions), games, DVDs, and Blu-ray Discs. Almost 1,000 items, selected by librarians, are available for checkout. The onboard computer allows staff to open new accounts, search the catalog, check out items, or conduct any other library functions.

A wheelchair lift makes access to the books even easier, and staff are available to help with the library app.

The bookmobile makes several stops in Hot Springs Village. On the first and third Wednesdays of the month, it stops at the McAuley Center from 10 a.m. to noon, then heads to Mt. Carmel until about 2:30 p.m.

On the second and fourth Thursdays from June

through September, it is parked at the Green Market at Grove Park from 9 to 11 a.m.

Patrons also have the option of selecting books online, requesting a hold, and specifying delivery to the bookmobile. The hold books are kept on one or more shelves for patrons to pick up at any of the stops. Books can also be returned to the bookmobile, whether checked out there or at the library.

One of the best perks of using the bookmobile is the opportunity to check out “Lucky Day” books – books that may be in great demand at the library but cannot be reserved and are available for bookmobile checkout. Instead of being on a long list for a popular book, patrons may find it right there on the shelf in the bookmobile.

There is also a Bookmobile Book Club that meets at the McAuley Center in June, August, October and January. The next session is June 28, 10 to 11 a.m., and the group will discuss “Brooklyn” by Colm Tóibín. Registration is required and can be done online or by calling the library.

“The bookmobile is such a great way to engage people, especially those who are new to the community,” said

Nowlin.

The other option available to Village library patrons is the delivery service. The service was started in 2020 as a pick-up/delivery service at the McAuley Center. Now the driver makes 40 stops a week in the Village (mostly homes, but some businesses), bringing books and other library materials to library patrons. Books can be placed on hold through the online catalog, but to “opt in” to the delivery service, patrons should contact the library at outreach@gclibrary.com.

The books are delivered every Tuesday, and books can be placed on hold up until 2 p.m. Mondays. Books can only be picked up if the driver is making a delivery to the same address.

For residents of the Village, there is no excuse for not reading a good book or watching a movie. The Garland County Library has made access to their materials so easy that even those who are housebound can enjoy library services.

For information about the library and its many activities, visit <https://gclibrary.com>. The calendar lists all events, including the bookmobile schedule, and gives descriptions and registration information.

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# Madam Superintendent

*Tami Jones excels in a male-dominated industry*

Robin Raborn Burns  
VOICE CORRESPONDENT



**Tami Jones, HSV Golf Maintenance Operations Manager.**  
(Photos courtesy of Tami Jones)

There are over 32,722 golf course superintendents currently employed in the United States. 4% of all golf course superintendents are women, while 96% are men.

Tami Jones, Golf Maintenance Operations Manager Director of Operations, in Hot Springs Village, is among that small percentage of women. Jones has also made history by being the only woman president of the Arkansas Chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA); she is currently serving her second term. She has been the only female golf course superintendent and is the only female golf maintenance operations manager in the state of Arkansas Jones has found a way to navigate the sometimes tumultuous waters of communicating in a male-dominated industry. She has her own style, her own flair...her way of getting things done. In addition to her effectiveness, she has earned the respect of the crews that work for her. Her colleagues praise her as an invaluable member of the POA golf team.

HSV POA General Manager, Kelly Hale says of Jones, "Her passion for golf courses and customer enjoyment is bar none. Tami has an incredible ability to find

value-added options for our golf community to keep it the best around."

"Tami does a great job of helping all of the superintendents with equipment needs, she takes the pressure off the superintendents during the early order program (EOP)" says Isabella Golf Course Golf Course Superintendent, Henry Falgout.

Director of Golf Tom Heffer praises Jones by saying "She is wonderful, I can't imagine anyone else in that role."

Head golf professional, Gary Porter says "Tami knows resort and private golf courses from her time in Florida, at the Disney courses. But, she is just as comfortable and professional in the public golf sector. We are lucky to have her."

Jones, who was born in Naples, Florida, says she developed a passion for golf and had a natural desire to learn everything about the industry. She began her

foray into golf as a teenager. “I didn’t know what I was doing at first,” Jones says about her first industry job. “I was just looking for a high school summer job. I wanted to get in early, get off early, and get to the beach with my friends. I was a typical teen, I needed gas for my car, and that’s how it all started.”

Jones believed that if she proved herself reliable, and demonstrated her willingness to pitch in with all projects, she would advance in the industry. That belief certainly proved true.

Jones studied Golf course operations at Edison Community College while performing the course maintenance tasks of mowing, irrigation, and then Spray Technician. Jones’s efforts eventually earned her Integrated Pest Management (IPM) credentials — an area of the industry she worked in for approximately 10 years.

She tells an amusing turning point in her career when she landed her first golf industry job.

“There were submersible pumps at the course I was working at,” Jones says. “There were two of us standing on a floating dock. The superintendent said, ‘Whoever dives in and puts a chain around the pump gets the job, the irrigation position.’ I dove right in, put the chain on, and told them to haul it out. The other guy didn’t even go in.”

That was followed by stints as assistant superintendent at Highland Wood G&CC, Bonita Springs, Fla., and her first superintendent position at Osprey Ridge Golf Course at Walt Disney World.

When Jones began working at Desoto, just as in the past, her superiors noticed her drive, determination, and competency. “It was a matter of putting my full effort into it,” she says. “I was determined to put myself out there, be seen, and spend time talking to people, showing them that I was there to do the work. I wanted people to see I was serious, and I think people saw that.”

Jones took over as superintendent at DeSoto Golf Club in 2018, making her the only woman in Arkansas history to hold that title at any course.

Jones shares that she loves leading a team, “I don’t really look at myself as being the Operations Manager. I look at myself as the lead team member.”

Jones offers advice to young women who have golf industry aspirations as she did.

Above all else, believe in yourself,” she says. “Get to know your local GCSAA chapter. Show people you want to put in the work. Find outreach programs. Go to meetings. Just stay involved and never stop.”



**Tami Jones at Farmlink Pursell Farms in Alabama. Left to right is Jan Bel Jan, Golf Course Architect of Bel Jan Golf Design, Jones, then Superintendent of Osprey Ridge at Walt Disney World and Laurie Bland, Superintendent at Trump National Doral in Miami.**

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## COVER STORY

After 34 years with the HSVFD, Scott Gross is:

# Hanging up his Helmet

Mary Eliades  
VOICE CORRESPONDENT



**Scott Gross has served his community as a Hot Springs Village firefighter for 34 years and is now looking forward to retirement. (Mary Eliades photo)**

Scott Gross has lived a life of service – first to his country, as a fireman in the U.S. Air Force, and then to his community as a firefighter for the Hot Springs Village Fire Department.

Gross is from Blanchard, Louisiana (near Shreveport), and joined the Air Force after high school. He was stationed at England Air Force Base in Alexandria, Louisiana, and served four years as a fireman, providing fire and rescue support for A-10 Warthog aircraft. His duties also included providing structural protection for the 23rd Tactical Fighting Tigers, before being honorably discharged as a sergeant.

Scott married his high school sweetheart, Kay, almost 38 years ago, and they have two children and three grandchildren. Kay has worked at Fusilier Dental Group for 17 years.

Son Allan is a firefighter in Hot Springs but started his career as a firefighter in Hot Springs Village, where he served for five years.

The Gross' daughter, Lauren Gross Ault, is an

occupational therapist at Lake Hamilton School and is married to a state trooper.

Scott's grandparents bought property in the Village in 1975, and the family vacationed here through the years. The grandparents moved to the Village in 1989.

That same year, Scott and Kay came for a weekend and, since Scott was about to finish his military service, he went by the Hot Springs Village fire station and picked up a job application. In March 1990 he came for an interview and the department grabbed him immediately. He started work on April 23, 1990, and the rest is history – 34 years of service to his community.

Coming here “was the best thing that ever happened to us,” said Scott.

When he joined the department, “I was the baby of the bunch,” said Gross. “The years went by pretty fast.”

Gross started at the DeSoto Fire Station and opened the Balboa Station in 1996, where he has remained on



B Shift ever since. There is only one firefighter at the smaller stations on most shifts (with the exception of Coronado Station – there are two on one of the shifts), and Gross has enjoyed the slightly slower pace.

In those early days, the firefighters were on call. “When the phone rings, you go from zero to 100 in 30 seconds,” said Scott, and he and Kay opted to live in Hot Springs Village to be closer to the station.

Kay remembers how different the Village looked in those days – there were only a couple of businesses outside the West Gate and even a quick grocery run meant a trip to Hot Springs.

Once the shifts changed to fixed days, Scott and Kay moved to a small farm off Brookhill Ranch Road. The Gross children participated in 4-H Club at Fountain Lake School and showed their animals at the Garland County Fair.

Scott and Kay joined Glazy Peau Missionary Baptist Church in 1990 and have been faithful members ever since. Scott currently serves as a deacon and is active in church activities.

The farm these days is also home to 30 cows and a horse. Kay said Scott’s favorite thing to do is “rake, cut, and bale hay.”


Gross had a health scare in 2004, when doctors found a tumor on Scott’s brain stem. After surgery, he was off from June until September but was warmly welcomed back into the same shift he’d left. Kay said, “The POA has been good to us.”

The department has undergone many changes during the last 34 years. “Since I was hired, we’ve added two fire stations and upgraded equipment, including an awesome ladder truck!” said Gross. “We’ve also added a rescue truck, pumper trucks, and a fire boat, as well as more great firemen to work with. All of these changes were needed to protect the Village.”

Asked about the highlights of his career, Gross



Long-time Village residents may recognize some of the firefighters and volunteers in this photo taken in the 1990s. (Submitted photo)



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# Airman finds home on fire dept.

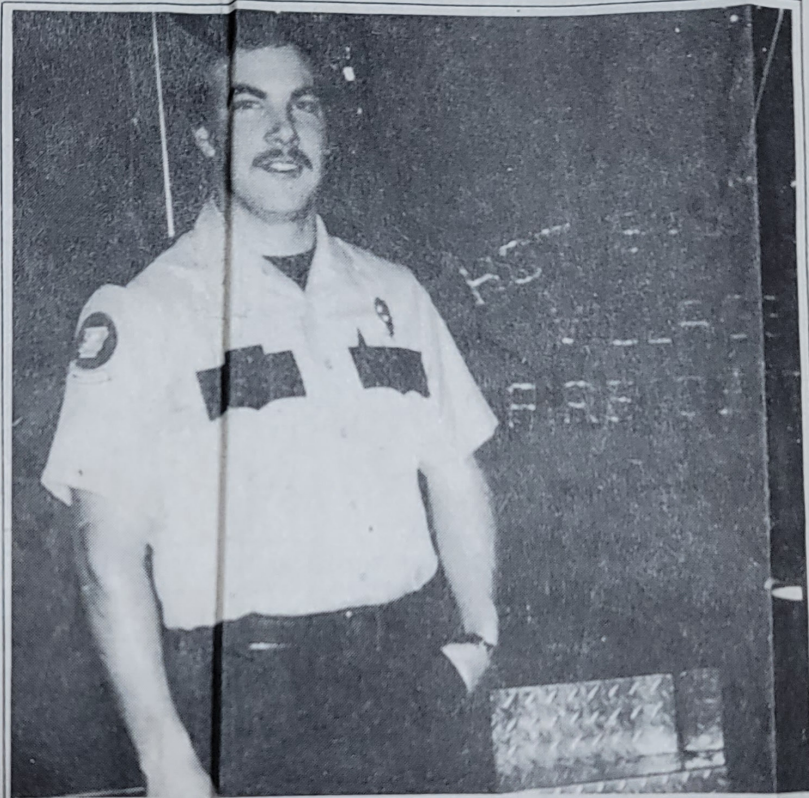
□ By Verlee Walter  
LaVilla News Writer

Fireman Scott Gross is one of the younger members of the Village Fire Department. He's the new breed the regulars are proud of—younger men taking up fire-fighting as their vocation, bringing new ideas and enthusiasm to the job.

Scott's roots are in Shreveport, LA, but he calls himself an Air Force brat, having been born at Travis Air Force Base. Born into the military, as it were, after high school he joined the Air Force and became a military fireman.

When Scott was a child his parents owned a Village lot, and he had vacationed here. Though they sold, his grandparents Bill and Mary Gross became residents and at Christmas of 1989 Scott brought his wife Kay to visit them.

Intending to leave the Air Force at the end of his hitch, Gross talked with Chief Reed. He filled out an application for the department, and just two weeks before he was to leave the military, he was invited to interview, and in April of '90 the job was his.



□ Scott Gross

Photo/Walter

Fishing is one hobby, and he prefers the Village lakes. He is a bow and arrow hunter, and bagged one deer last season.

Scott finds himself mentally recruiting volunteers and potential firemen. When on a fire scene he is always looking

for additional volunteers—whom he thinks of as the backbone of the department.

At the age of 25, Scott has many more years to follow his career, and he couldn't be happier about it.

An article in LaVilla News, a previous Hot Springs Village newspaper, shows Gross as the "baby of the bunch." (Submitted photo)

said, "The highs of my job have been the people in the community and serving through building inspections, [checking] smoke detectors and [conducting] welfare checks."

He has also enjoyed entertaining school kids and teaching them about fire safety, as well as representing

the fire department during public Village events.

The low points were seeing "the devastation a house fire or car wreck causes a family."

Scott's official retirement party was on June 8 at Cortez Pavilion, but his family organized an open house send-off for his last shift on April 27, with lots of food and memorabilia from his years as a firefighter.

Fire Chief Jason Miller had this to say about Gross: "I've known Scott since 1995 when I first got out of the service and lived just down the road from him. He

helped me get on the volunteer side of the department in 1996. Once the Balboa Station was built and manned, that became his second home for the rest of his career with HSVFD. It has been an honor serving with such a good man.”

“A huge congratulations to Scott on his well-deserved retirement!” Miller also addressed remarks to Gross: “Thirty-four years of service is an incredible accomplishment, and your dedication to keeping our community safe is truly inspiring. We will miss having you around the station, and we wish you the best in your next chapter.”

Asked about plans for the near future, Scott and Kay laughed wistfully. They were hit by the recent tornado, and Scott’s first days of retirement will be spent repairing the damage. The house was untouched, but the tornado hit the barn, shop, truck, and boat.

Scott also has a handyman service – replacing smoke detectors and lightbulbs, mowing and trimming, minor carpentry, roof cleaning, etc.

Kay: “He does not shut down – he’s always busy doing something.”

One of his next projects is to help his daughter build

a house on the family compound. The family has several acres, and Scott’s parents also live on the property.

Gross loves to hunt and fish, spend time with his grandchildren, and work on the farm (“baling hay, taking care of the cows, and raising freezer beef”).

“Now I’m looking forward to some quiet nights. More time with the grandkids. And enjoying the farm life.” And Kay added, “He deserves it.”

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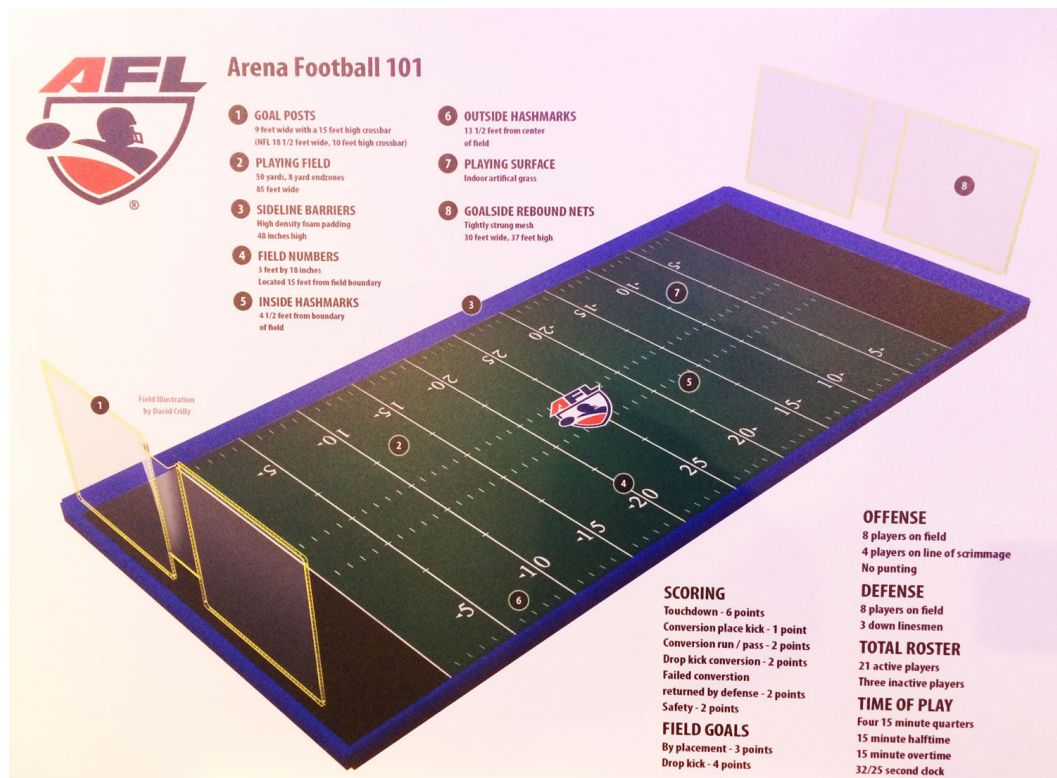
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# ARENA FOOTBALL

Arena Football League comes back in 2024 with 16 franchises.



Sandy Johansen  
STAFF WRITER

## Under the Dome

### Arena Football comes to Hot Springs

“Football at the Convention Center will be a remarkable experience from sight lines and close proximity to the action all the way through to the post-game autograph sessions,” said CEO at Visit Hot Springs and the Convention Center, Steve Arrison.

The Arena League recently announced that Hot

Springs, Arkansas, has been awarded the first of its two planned expansion teams for the 2025 season. As of presstime, the yet-to-be named team will play home games at the HS Convention Center downtown. League Commissioner, Hall-of-Famer and Heisman Trophy Winner, Tim Brown will be announcing the

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addition of other teams in the near future. “We are very proud to announce Hot Springs, Arkansas, as one of The Arena League’s newest teams.

The Arena League is designed to present the popular sport of arena football in a fresh manner and to better entertain fans on and off the field. The sport has a faster pace of play, fewer players crowding the small field and even fan rated systems for referees. It is not only exciting, it is unique.

According to releases from The Arena League, it will feature high-level players as well as plans to offer opportunities to former NFL players using the league to work their way back up the ladder of professional football, along with talented young players fresh out of college.

Tommy Benizio, TAL Advisor from Benizio sports, recently contacted the Hot Springs Village Voice to explain the procedures to start Hot Springs Arena League. At this time, there are Inaugural Teams in Duluth, Minnesota; Springfield, Missouri; Waterloo, Iowa; and Kansas City, Missouri.

Season 2025 are scheduled early June through mid-August with playoffs in August. Each team plays 8 regular season games plus an optional home pre-season game.

The home arena will be the Hot Springs Convention Center with Hot Springs Team Advisor, Landon Trusty. The temporary web address is: WWW.ARKANSASARENAFOOTBALL.COM. Team office location has not been announced as yet, but there is a temporary phone and email address at - 214-412-6889 and media@thearenaleague.football.

“The Arena League was clear that this is the communities’ team and they want input from us, on what it should be called, what the logo should represent, and how it should be positioned within our city. “It is very exciting to be associated with this new



element that will be so good for our town,” stated Hot Springs Mayor Pat McCabe.

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# 4TH OF JULY



## Stars & Stripes Return!

Fireworks return at 9:15 p.m. Thursday, July 4 at Balboa Beach. (Submitted POA Parks and Recreation Department photos)

Lewis Delavan  
STAFF WRITER

Celebrate our nation's 248th Independence Day with fireworks in Hot Springs Village starting Wednesday, July 3rd with the Hot Springs Village 2024 Stars & Stripes festivities.

July 3 at dusk – BYC Lighted Boat Parade, Balboa Lake

July 4 - Fireworks Spectacular kicks off at 9:15 pm at Balboa Beach. Shuttle parking will be available.

Balboa boat ramp will close at 3pm. The boat ramp will reopen after all pedestrians have left the area. There will be no boat trailer parking at Balboa Beach – no exceptions. If you are intending to dock your boat in the lake, plan on parking your trailer at an alternate site. PDL Center is available for this, 1101 DeSoto Blvd.

First come parking is available at the beach parking

lot until filled. Parking lot closes at 7pm. Vehicles parked in this lot will experience delayed departure due to pedestrian traffic and will not be allowed out until all shuttles have left the area unless directed by police. Please disengage car alarms. Food and beverage will be available for purchase. Restroom facilities will be available. Vehicles parked along the south side of Ponce de Leon Drive will be towed at the owner's expense.

Ponce de Leon Drive will be closed from Magellan Drive to Balearic Rd, including the Balboa Dam from 7 pm until 10:30 pm or until all shuttle have left the area. No vehicles will be allowed across the dam after 7 pm. No food or beverage will be available for purchase from the dam site. Restroom facilities will

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be available.

Fireworks shuttle parking locations:

Balboa Baptist Church: Shuttle will run continuously from 5 pm until 8:30 pm and will continue at the conclusion of the show. Riders will be dropped off at Balboa Pavilion.

Christ of the Hills United Methodist Church will run continuously from 7 pm until 8:30p and will be dropped off at the Balboa Dam. If you take this shuttle and want to view show from the beach, you will have to walk across.

Handicap parking and viewing are available at Magellan Clubhouse beginning at 7 pm. Bring your own chairs. There is no designated parking area at Balboa Beach.

July 5 – Freedom 5K Fun Run and Walk starts at 9 am, Balboa Spillway Trailhead. Check in for the 5K and 1K begin at 8:30 am at Balboa Pavilion. Age groups are 29-under, 30-49, and 50-plus. All participants must sign a waiver. A limited number of shirts will be available onsite for sale. Size and quantity cannot be guaranteed. Event parking at Balboa Beach.

Evening Lions Bingo at 7 pm, Coronado Community Center.

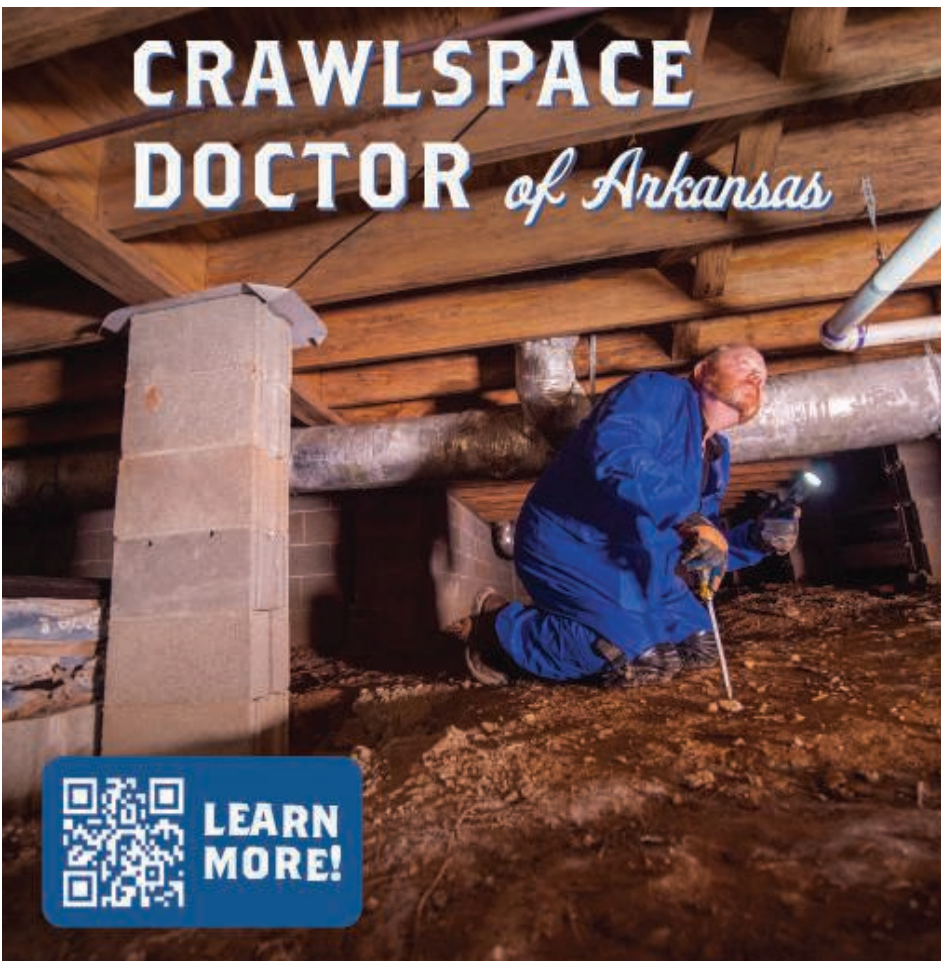
July 6 – Kids Fishing Derby at 8 am, Cortez Pavilion.

Colt & the Old 45's SOLD OUT concert, Coronado Community Center, 7 pm.

July 7 – Angler's Fishing Tourney at 6:30 am, Balboa Beach

For detailed information go to [hsvticketsales.com](http://hsvticketsales.com). Additional events may be added. Questions can be answered by calling 501-922-0322.

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# COMMUNITY LEADERS

# PAR EXCELLENCE

*Dedicated to her community  
- Martha Smither*

Sandy Johansen  
STAFF WRITER

To date, Martha Smither is a founding member of the HS/HSV Symphony Guild (Children's Concert Chair), Founder of Arkansas Learning Through the Arts, Member of Altrusa, DAR, PEO Chapter DE, and Hot Springs Village Community Foundation Board. As former financial executive for Frio-Lay, Inc. and V. P. - Controller for Greyhound, Inc. and CPA for Arthur Anderson & Co, she has a business background of significant leadership and in retirement, Martha has brought her talents and her dedication to not only Hot Springs Village, but also Hot Springs, surrounding communities and students all over the state of Arkansas.

In early 1987, Smither became the Board President of Big Thought. The Dallas based nonprofit provides creative learning programs helping children imagine possibilities to excel academically and contribute to their communities. "We were involved in art-education projects in schools and developing programs so children could have art experiences in school and in libraries and within their community," she said.

Arkansas Learning Through The Arts (ALTTA) was formed in 2012 as a 501(c)(3) in Garland County, Arkansas. It was founded by Martha Smither president, Tom Bryant Treasurer and Dorothy Morris Secretary. In 2015, ALTTA became an affiliate of Young Audiences Arts for



**Martha Smither, center, is joined (L) by Sarah Hutzel, Arvest Bank Senior Vice President Commercial Lands, and Stephanie Heffer, Arvest Business and Community Development Advisor. Smither was the main speaker at Hot Springs Women's Leadership Alliance's April luncheon. (Sandy Johansen photos)**

Learning which has 31 affiliates throughout the United States. This network of arts-education agencies is an invaluable resource upon which ALTTA draws both financially and organizationally.

The mission of ALTTA is to improve student achievement by igniting their interest in learning. ALTTA creates and provides high-quality arts programs (two to four hours in length) to Arkansas classrooms from Pre-K to grade 12. The ALTTA engages professional teaching artists to inspire young people to learn via their art form.

With the help of many in Hot Springs, Smither was able to bring the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra to Hot Springs Village raising money to play for students in both communities. Martha was made a member of the ASO Education Foundation. "Martha is a friend





about the lives and welfare of others and goes the extra mile to lift them up and Martha not only enjoys life in the resort community but also dedicates much of her time and energy to promote the quality of life and the young people of the area.”

As a long term member of the HSVCF Board, “We started giving only \$35,000, but we’ve now grown to over 2.5 million dollars,” Martha said. The HSVCF has 24 endowments helping Village Library, Animal Welfare, Veterans Memorial and veteran affairs along with emergency medical services, the arts and education as well as individually named endowment for specific use.

“Martha is smart and very dedicated to the causes she believes in. Mainly Arkansas Learning Through

**Smither is always very proud to introduce the ASO and conductor at each year’s special Children’s Concert sponsored by ALTTA.**

and mentor to so many. Many people wrap up their careers and move into the retirement stage to relax, but Martha was just getting started when she retired and moved to the Village. She has worked tirelessly to promote the arts, making the arts accessible, and using the arts to improve educational experiences for children. She is the perfect role model for giving back by using her time, talent and resources to make a difference in the lives of others,” said Mary Zunick, Cultural Affairs Manager Hot Springs National Park for Visit Hot Springs.

Principals and teachers select from more than 50 curriculum-based programs aligned with Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks, especially in Literacy and Fine Arts. Each classroom has an arts-enriched program once in the fall and another in the spring.

“Martha is fiercely dedicated to the success of ALTTA and determined to achieve excellence at the same time as providing access. Martha devotes more time and energy to the welfare of the community than any three other people in Hot Springs Village,” said Jane Browning, acting director of the Hot Springs Village Community Foundation. “She cares deeply



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Smither holds an auction item she donated earlier this year for HSVCF's Casino Night.

the Arts. Don't even try to tell her that something can't be done. The old joke about Martha was that if the phone rings and her name is on the caller ID, don't answer. If you do, you are almost guaranteed to have a job," joked Rob Bowers.

"Martha is at the heart of everything we do at the Hot Springs Village Community Foundation. She is a founding member of our organization and continues to serve our community in so many ways," said president Clara Nicolosi. "I love working with Martha because she is so reliable, she always comes through. She is incredibly generous, with her support but also with her time and effort. She is also very droll, she has a sly little sense of humor that sort of sneaks up on you."

"Martha's heartfelt passion for the Arts is leaving a lasting impression on the youth of Central Arkansas.



Her dedicated efforts reflect the best of volunteerism from the Hot Springs Village community," said Keith Keck, Saline Country Quorum Court Justice of the Peace.

Martha and her husband Wilbur moved to HSV in 2000 where both Martha and Wilbur committed themselves investing their time and energy to the community, especially youth education. Sadly, Wilbur has passed. He was the founding president of the Ouachita Speaker Series which presents many thought-provoking speakers in HSV.

Martha's favorite quote is: "No man is an island; we do not act in isolation." Thank you to Martha Smither for dedication to her family, her friends, Hot Springs Village, Hot Springs, and to the state of Arkansas.

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# Home of the Caddo

Lewis Delavan  
STAFF WRITER

Skilled in hunting, growing crops and in pottery, the native Caddo people found a prosperous life in the Hot Springs National Park region, including the Ouachita River bottomland that now comprises Lake Catherine State Park.

Recently the Arkansas Archaeological Survey staff and park interpreter Carrie Balkman held Archeology Day at the park. Starting with the Leave No Trace Archaeological Hike, participants learned how to best preserve the special history of Lake Catherine State Park while hiking along Slunger Creek Nature Trail on March 2.

The indigenous Caddo people's ancestral land included southwest Arkansas, northwest Louisiana, eastern Texas, and eastern Oklahoma.

"The ancestors of today's Caddo had a long history in southwest Arkansas that can be traced at least to the late first millennium A.D. They were skilled hunters, farmers, and salt makers. They were especially known for their pottery. The Caddo used different forms of pottery such as bottles, bowls, and jars. They also decorated their pottery using different designs. Members of today's Caddo community, such as Jeri Redcorn, continue the pottery making traditions of their ancestors," said spokesman Noah Delashaw.

A special program for children followed.

Arkansas Archaeological Survey is part of the University of Arkansas System.

Many Lake Catherine State Park activities are coming up this summer and may be viewed at [arkansasstateparks.com/events](http://arkansasstateparks.com/events).

"This summer I'll be offering stand-up paddleboarding for the first time about once a week. It will be a great activity," Balkman said.

Major events of note:

- Independence Day celebration,
- Moth Day on July 27
- Perseid Meteor Shower Weekend, Aug. 9 - 11.



Participants learn about Caddoan people during a walk on Slunger Creek Nature Trail. (Submitted photo)

Guided horseback rides are offered seasonally. Open daily at 10 a.m. from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. In the fall, rides are offered at 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday through Thanksgiving. Though not required, reservations are recommended by calling 501-262-0777. Horseback rides are \$50 per person including tax, payable at the stables. Group rates are available.

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# HSV AREA SCHOOLS

## King Cobra

Lewis Delavan  
STAFF WRITER

Future Fountain Lake Schools superintendent Darin Landry looks forward to joining the district on July 1.

Long-time Superintendent Dr. Michael Murphy announced his retirement last October, effective June 30. He and his wife, Ginger, who is also retiring, were recently honored with a retirement party.

Landry served as Lakeside School District's athletic director and district administrator.

The incoming superintendent praised the school

*Fountain Lake has a new superintendent*



**Incoming Superintendent Darin Landry.**

district and its community. "There are a lot of great people there, and I'm excited to be able to work with them," he says.

His educational philosophy centers on students and seeking what is best for them. He served as the Lakeside High School principal eight years, and six years as assistant principal.

Landry believes that professional learning communities are a key factor in ensuring student success, he says. In professional learning communities, teachers collaborate periodically to share innovative ideas.

A continuing district asset is the Cobra Health Clinic, serving students, staff and the community.



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Classes for 2024-25 kick off on Monday, Aug. 12.

Parent-teacher conferences will be 3:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 15 and Thursday, Oct. 17.

Classes will be out Monday, Oct. 21.

Thanksgiving break will be Monday, Nov. 25-Friday, Nov. 29. Christmas break will be Monday, Dec. 23-Friday, Jan. 3.



Dr. Michael Murphy, Ginger Murphy, Carmen Keys, Tandy Gray, Karen Adams, Tammy Foster, Pam Harshfield, Nancy Hull, and (not pictured) Mike Kolasch, Silvia Romero and Jayne Ann Rountree were honored for service to the Fountain Lake School District upon their retirements. (Fountain Lake School District photo)

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# Knowles Knows

*Tish Knowles takes the helm at Mountain Pine Schools*

Lewis Delavan  
STAFF WRITER

Academic growth and fiscal stability are among Tish Knowles' top priorities for Mountain Pine School District. "I am so excited about starting at Mountain Pine," she said prior to joining the district on May 15 as interim superintendent, after five years at Earle School District.

Knowles will become superintendent on July 1.

Years ago, Mountain Pine's new superintendent found she enjoyed teaching, then continued her education over the years.

Knowles started her career as a long-term substitute in a Department of Defense School in Baumholder, Germany, with two years of college. "When I got



Tish Knowles

An advertisement for Village Hearing Clinic. It features a man and a woman smiling. The man is wearing a blue and white striped shirt, and the woman is wearing a white top. The background is blue with white and orange text. The text includes "HEAR Better!", "VILLAGE HEARING CLINIC", "501-337-6222", "Hearing Aids", "Hearing Exams", and "Marilyn Phelan Certified Audiologist CCC-A/SLP".

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back to the states, we settled in Paragould, Arkansas, where I was a paraprofessional in the Paragould School District. I went back to college while working and taking care of a family. I began my teaching career in 1996 at Oak Grove Middle School in the Paragould School District,” she said.

Later she taught high school in Bay before becoming a principal. “I was a K-6 principal and federal coordinator for Bay School District (headquartered in Craighead County),” she said.

She holds an AA degree from Texarkana Community College (now Texas A&M); BSE from Arkansas State in Special Education & Elementary Education; Master of Science in Education from Arkansas State in Education Leadership; and an EdS degree from Arkansas State.

Where did Mountain Pine’s new superintendent grow up? “My parents homesteaded in Homer, Alaska, where I was born. They returned to Louisiana when I was 18 months old. I grew up in Oakdale, Louisiana.

When I graduated from high school, I left home to attend Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas,” she said.

The new superintendent has a grown daughter, who lives in Texas with her husband.

Open house for the 2024-25 school year will be Thursday, Aug. 8.

The first day of school will be Tuesday, Aug. 13.

Varsity football kicks off on the road with a benefit scrimmage at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 22 at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia. The Red Devils will face Baptist Preparatory School.

At 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 30, Mountain Pine will host Dierks.

Monday, Oct. 21 will be a teacher in-service day, with parent-teacher conferences 1-7 p.m. Oct. 21.

Thanksgiving break will be Tuesday, Nov. 26-Friday, Nov. 29.

Christmas break will be Tuesday, Dec. 24-Friday, Jan. 3.

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# Overcoming challenges

*Jessieville has repaired damages sustained in 2023 tornado*

A sparkling football stadium and track are among Jessieville School District's assets. (Lewis Delavan photo)



Lewis Delavan  
STAFF WRITER

With facilities in sparkling condition, Jessieville School District has overcome damage from a Jan. 2, 2023 tornado.

The Lions will enjoy their second season on a turf track starting in August. And the new track has seen extensive use this year.

Another change is summer school, which will be a full day for 10 days this month, July 8-19. Breakfast and lunch will be served each day.

Some students elect to attend summer school for

improvement; some are required to attend for credit recovery.

The 3A State Track Meet held at Jessieville High School on Tuesday, April 30 was the first major event on the new track.

The district had hosted smaller track meets earlier this year.

"The track is new. Prior to the tornado, the track had just been resurfaced and was about to have the striping applied. The tornado embedded so much debris in the new track surface that it was unsafe and had to be removed," Superintendent Melissa Speers said in an email.

"Once the surface was removed, there was damage to the asphalt base under the surface. The asphalt base had to be removed as well. Essentially, we have a brand new track," she wrote.

The Jessieville Health and Wellness Clinic on campus continues to be a community asset, serving all students, staff and community members. Services include a medical checkup, medicine service and quick appointment. The phone number is 501-984-4210.

The district faces challenges which are common to many school districts. "It is getting more difficult to fill

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some positions with licensed teachers. There are fewer people entering the teaching profession nationwide, Speers says.

And soaring insurance rates are another challenge. The annual property insurance premium for Jessieville School District in 2021-22 was \$70,673.61; rose to \$74,824.51 for 2022-23 and more than doubled for 2023-2024 to \$180,173.78. The State of Arkansas gave the district a one-time amount of \$30,650.06 to help with the increased cost of property insurance in August 2023, but the district expects to cover future expenses on its own.

These challenges are not unique to Jessieville, but are tough issues.

Opening in 1937, Jessieville School District serves a 203-square-mile radius, including part of Hot Springs Village. It has played a vital and significant role in the history of the area, and Jessieville pride runs deep in the hearts of the community.

“The Jessieville School District has a rich history of academic and extra-curricular success. Our focus is on developing the whole child to produce

successful and productive citizens. We continuously strive to create multiple avenues for children to be successful, and we enjoy celebrating each and every success. We encourage our students to be involved in as many activities as possible in order to create a positive, whole school experience,” Speers says.

Jessieville School District strives to provide programs and activities that help students reach their full potential and be prepared academically and socially to face college or career paths upon graduation.

On another note, the Back to School Bash is set for 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 3 at Saline County Boys and Girls Club’s Cedar Mountain facility on Highway 7.



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## HSV BUSINESSES

# Nguyen Win

*Bao Nguyen finds perfect fit in Hot Springs Village*

Lewis Delavan  
STAFF WRITER



Bao Nguyen and wife Than Huong work at Village Nails.

Nice clients make his work pleasurable, says Bao Nguyen.

“The clients here – they are all nice,” he said. “I like the older crowd.” That’s a perfect fit for Hot Springs Village, where many clients live.

Bao Nguyen (pronounced “Bo” “Win”) is a nail technician at Village Nails and Spa, 3648 N. Highway 7, in Mountain Valley.

One of six siblings in a family of Vietnamese refugees who came to the Philippines in 1982, the Nguyen family moved a couple of years later to California, where he grew up.

When Bao Nguyen was 18 his parents opened a nail salon in Shreveport, Louisiana, where he learned the

skills of a nail technician. “I learned mostly on the job – hands on,” he said.

Working in Dallas, he met his wife, Than Huong. They’ve been together ever since, and have two recent graduates.

Their 22-year-old daughter is a University of Central Arkansas graduate now in a pre-dental program at the University of Memphis.

Their son graduated from Lakeside High School and will attend Central Baptist College in Conway on a wrestling scholarship.

Nguyen, 42, enjoys fishing, barbecuing and gardening.

Why fishing? “It’s relaxing; it’s some me-time; just being out in the fresh air. I just like being out in the woods and water,” he said. “I just love living here. The people here are really nice. I enjoy working with my coworkers.”

Among plants he grows are tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, jalapeno pepper and mint.

Eventually the couple hopes to return to Dallas, where his wife’s family lives. His retired parents have returned to California.

Village Nails and Spa celebrated its 10th anniversary on July 2, 2023, and was honored by Hot Springs Village Voice readers as Best Nail Salon in both 2022 and 2023.



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My name is Elizabeth Phillips. I am the assistant General Manager and have worked at Village True Value for 4 years. I am always eager to help the community any way I can. Shop local to help support local.



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