

A monthly publication of the Hot Springs Village Voice

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MAY 2025



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Hot Springs Village Voice

Have a great May

Well, by the time you read this, spring will have sprung. The birds are chirping, lilacs and flowers blooming, grass growing and warmer days set in. By the end of the month there will probably be some hot sticky 90 degree days.

May is filled with interesting times like May Day, May 1, which is sort of an unofficial return to spring. The Kentucky Derby takes place on May 3. I don't watch a lot of horse racing, but I watch that one and get a real kick out of all the ladies fancy hats. Cinco de Mayo on May 5 celebrates the victory of the Mexican Army over the French Army in 1862 at the Battle of Puebla and Mexican heritage.

A biggie this month is Mother's Day on May 11. Guys do not forget this one or the doghouse may be where you're sleeping that night, after you fixed your own dinner. The next day, May 12 is a "flower moon" when the moon peaks in brilliance at 11:56 p.m.

Armed Forces Day, May 17, honors the men and women in uniform of all branches of the U.S. military. Then of course comes Memorial Day, this year celebrated on Monday, May 26. It's a somber day, a day of reflection, a day to remember those who made the supreme sacrifice of life in service to our country. A Memorial Day ceremony at Cedarvale Cemetery marks the occasion each year. Take the time to attend and show your respect for the hundreds of thousands of Americans who have perished in war,



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Memorial Day services at Cedarvale. (Jeff Meek photo)

who died in an effort to create peace among people and nations.
Okay, on to a lighter note with a few of my stupid May - related jokes. Ready?
If April showers bring May flowers, what do may flowers bring? Pilgrims.
Which state loves spring the most? May-ne.
One more. What does May put on its pancakes? May-ple syrup.
May, pun intended, you have a great spring. We at the Hot Springs Village Voice truly appreciate your support and what you do to make Hot Springs Village special, a paradise on earth. May-be this will be your best spring ever. Enjoy HSV Life.

Jeff Meek
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

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ON THE COVER: Some of Kallas’ work at the shelter with a puppy. (Jennifer Kallas photo)

ALL AROUND ARKANSAS



Sign outside Dryden Pottery.

The Potter's Wheel

Dryden Pottery is a Hot Springs mainstay

Darrell W. Brown

Hot Springs is known for its natural beauty, which extends to its arts scene. The historic downtown area has art galleries, studios, and public art installations that showcase the work of local artists. The proximity to Hot Springs National Park inspires many artists, drawing on the area's natural beauty and historical significance. One of the remarkable establishments preserving a centuries-old art form is Dryden Pottery, found on Whittington Avenue in the beautiful Spa City.

Dryden Pottery was established by James "Jim" Dryden in Kansas before relocating to Hot Springs in 1956. Over the years, it has garnered a reputation as a collectible brand and has been featured in Schroeder's Antique Guide.

Born the son of a successful hardware merchant in Ellsworth, Kansas, Dryden spent his formative years working alongside his father. After serving in

the South Pacific during World War II, he returned home searching for a job. Despite his passion for art, particularly cartooning, he realized it wasn't a viable path to support his family. A fortuitous encounter with the renowned ceramicist Norman Plumber sparked an innovative idea that merged his artistic inclinations with pottery production. This led him to the University of Kansas, where he studied ceramics under the guidance of Sheldon Carey. After navigating numerous challenges in a short time, Dryden Pottery was officially launched in Ellsworth, with its inaugural sales taking place in his father's Dryden Hardware store in 1946.

To grow his business, Dryden employed a range of inventive sales strategies. From creating personalized pottery for customers to organizing pottery contests for children, he understood the importance of engaging the community. He also made headlines with a series

of cartoon advertisements featuring local materials, distinctive labels on each piece, pottery tours, and even a rattlesnake attraction alongside complimentary ice water. His vibrant handmade pottery quickly found markets across the United States, but Dryden yearned for a busier location. After conducting an extensive survey of potential sites nationwide, he ultimately chose Hot Springs for its abundant raw materials and high number of hotel rooms per capita. In 1956, he moved his family and the kilns, startup materials, and plaster molds to this bustling community.

Dryden discovered clay in nearby Malvern perfect for brickmaking, and obtained permission to excavate there. Talc sourced from Bryant (Saline County) and quartz from the Ouachita Mountains became essential for his pottery glazes. His customer base primarily included tourists flocking to Hot Springs National Park, Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort, and other area attractions.

He found a warm welcome in the Hot Springs business scene, acquiring property at 341 Whittington Avenue, conveniently located near the national park. Dryden implemented his successful business strategies from Kansas, emphasizing long hours and innovative marketing tactics—like playful cartoon character imagery—to entice visitors to his factory. Guests were invited to observe skilled craftsmen at work before browsing in the showroom. He utilized a high-speed dental drill for personalizing pre-fired pottery before glazing and final firing, creating unique souvenirs that took time but offered great appeal. The spacious showroom attracted shoppers, with bus tours providing free factory walkthroughs, where employees explained the transformation from raw materials to finished pieces.

Over the years, Dryden Pottery evolved significantly. Additions to the buildings and the installation of high-capacity kilns marked a turning point. The focus gradually shifted from molded and poured clay to predominantly wheel-thrown pottery. Dryden's son, James K. ("Kimbo"), along with many employees, mastered the art of wheel-making. Thrown pottery pieces prominently featured the potter's initials, the production date, and a distinctive Dryden logo decal. Each potter developed a unique style, with artistry flourished through local decorators who enhanced some pieces with clay relief designs and painted glaze motifs. Dryden often collaborated with his son, adding his characteristic cartoon fish motif to some of the



Custom made Arkansas change holder by Zack Dryden.

thrown pots.

Dryden Pottery has proudly thrived through three generations of family craftsmanship. Today, Kimbo Dryden's sons, Zack and Cheyenne, contribute their artistic flair, expanding the collection with exquisite porcelain pieces, intricate glasswork, sparkling crystal glazing, and a selection of unique Raku pots.

Free demonstrations on the potter's wheel happen Monday through Friday at 10 AM and 11 AM, with sessions available throughout the day on Saturdays. For more details about Dryden Pottery or to shop their products online, check out www.DrydenPottery.com.

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POA EMPLOYEES



POA streets and sanitation superintendent Todd Noles. . (Submitted photos)

30 Years... and counting

Jeff Meek
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

**Todd Noles has served the
POA in many different roles**

Over the many years of writing for the Hot Springs Village Voice I've gotten to know many Property Owners Association employees, from superintendents, general managers and CEOs to the guys down in the trenches, fixing broken water mains and leaking manholes, painting water tanks, replacing grinder tanks and much more. They have always amazed me at their ability to be able to fix and/or diagnose almost anything. This article is about one of them, Todd Noles, currently the POA's streets and sanitation superintendent.

Noles grew up in Jessieville, Arkansas where he attended school grades K through 12. In high school he played point guard on the basketball team and linebacker on the football team.

As a junior in high school, his first job was working at the Hot Springs Village recreation center, taking money for the POA, working with Daphne Hobbs. After graduating high school in 1991, Noles began working for the Village's Townhouse Association. "I took care of all the townhouse areas like lawncare, sprinklers and mulching," Noles said during our

interview.

In 1994, his uncle, Randy Noles, told him about a possible opening in the POA. He applied and was hired in August 1995, placed with the construction division earning \$4.25 per hour.

Soon, he started laying underground water and sewer utilities in all the new subdivisions that were being built. Then in 1998 Noles received a promotion and a raise to \$5.75 an hour, installing underground power conduit. He stayed in that construction division until what some have called “the big layoff,” around 2010, when general manager Scott Randall was hired and expenses needed to be trimmed.

Many were let go, but not Noles, who was transferred to the streets division. “We worked on patching roads with asphalt, street sign installation, drainage problems, mowing right of ways and removing hazardous trees, while also assisting the water and sewer department fixing leaks,” Noles said.

In 2011 Noles obtained his associate degree in timber management to help with clean up after the April tornadoes that struck the Village. “I then got my license to be an asphalt inspector when the POA went to overlaying streets with a type of asphalt called super pave. It was supposed to be the greatest thing and some of it is still working today.”

In 2018 Noles briefly left the POA to help homeschool one of his sons. But just weeks later he received a call from Linda Mayhood asking if there was any way he could come back to work on a part-time basis. Noles said yes, came back part-time for a while then back to working full-time on culverts and other issues.

Then later, “I began working with numerous contractors that were doing work for the POA, and this is when I started working on hazardous trees



Todd and Stephanie Noles.

and common property issues while marking property lines. In 2019 I got promoted to common property and wildlife manager supervising 3 employees to handle right of way mowing,” Noles said. “I also took over the supervising of the urban deer hunt which I’ve been involved with now for years.”

Then in 2022 came another promotion, this time to common property, wildlife and lakes superintendent. “I took over the lakes department and the maintenance of all Village lakes along with common property and wildlife duties.”

In 2024 Noles was again promoted to his current position of streets and sanitation superintendent, supervising 18 employees that provide maintenance for Village streets, sanitation matters, and all special projects as assigned to him.

Asked about a most interesting assignment Noles talked about work involving blasting dynamite to be able to trench and lay utilities. “I had to have my



Todd Noles (sitting third from left on the foreground table) listens to a Public Services Committee report. (Lewis Delavan photo)

blasting license for that work from the Arkansas Department of Safety and a hazmat endorsement on my commercial driver's license because we had a dynamite box in the back of my truck. The powder magazines were below the water where we stored our caps and dynamite. We also shot dynamite to provide the stone around some of the ponds on Granada golf course and Isabella," said Noles. "I also found it to be interesting working with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission on their bear studies."

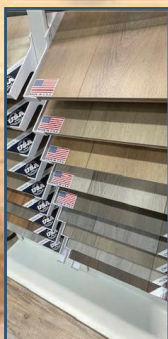
Noles is married to his high school sweetheart Stephanie. They've been married for 32 years and have 3 children, Victoria, Gregory and Cayden. Victoria works as an assistant to the Village director of parks and recreation and has a master's degree from Louisiana Tech University. Gregory teaches algebra and geometry at Bryant High School and Cayden works as a lights and sound tech at the Woodlands Auditorium. Wife Stephanie is the school-based health coordinator for Jessieville schools and has a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Arkansas – Little Rock. The family also includes 2 grandchildren, Avery and Rayleigh. "They are the light of my life," Noles said with pride.

Looking back at decades of time with the Hot Springs Village POA Noles said, "I've been through so many leadership positions that I feel blessed. The POA and the Village are so interesting, and I really enjoy working with them. The residents are great people, and I love working with them."

Noles: "My goal for the future is to just continue to work hard, be better every day, and continue to serve our great community with excellent customer service. To take pride in what we do and keep my faith in God to see what the future holds."

Noles fine work has been noticed by residents, exhibited when Lake Cortez residents got together and presented him with a plaque in appreciation for him getting Lake Cortez coves dredged that had not been previously dredged.

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KEEP HSV BEAUTIFUL

A Cleaner Village, a Stronger Community



Keep Hot Springs Village Beautiful co-chairs Cindi Erikson (l) and Mary Ann Kennedy.
(Robin Raborn Burns photo)

Robin Raborn Burns
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

Reflect for a moment on how gratifying it is to see the results of the efforts you put into a project or hobby. Maybe it's a flower bed with a perfect array of colorful blooms - the spectacular English garden you envisioned and ultimately created. Or, that sense of accomplishment after sinking that perfect putt after diligent practice at the putting green. The satisfaction

experienced from recognition for a well-crafted report or assignment is enviable.

For Cindi Erickson and Mary Ann Kennedy, co-chairs of Keep Hot Springs Village Beautiful, success is measured by what they don't see—litter on the roads of Hot Springs Village. The dedicated teams of volunteers work year-round to ensure the Village remains

pristine, reinforcing a deep sense of pride and responsibility within the community. For Erickson and Kennedy, their passion runs deeper than aesthetics. Kennedy shared “We see our collective efforts as a way to educate, advocate, and foster unity.” Clean-ups not only enhance neighborhoods but also protect the environment, prevent pollution, and create safer spaces for families and wildlife. As Erickson puts it, “Cleanliness is a point of pride,” and for the volunteers of Keep Hot Springs Village Beautiful, that pride is visible in every trash-free mile.

Keep Hot Springs Village Beautiful operates in partnership with Keep Arkansas Beautiful, with volunteers in bright yellow vests patrolling roadways eight times a year to collect trash. But this initiative has roots dating back decades. In 1989, members of the HSV Tennis Association, led by Shirley Overton Breedlove, launched an Adopt-a-Mile program to keep local roads cleaner year-round. Service clubs soon joined, adopting major thoroughfares like DeSoto, Barcelona, Minorca, and Balearic. By 1994, the POA began funding supplies and signage, officially branding the effort as Village Pride is Picking Up.

Over the years, the program evolved. In 1998, the Inter-Service Club Council streamlined cleanup efforts, renaming the initiative Village Pride Day and expanding participation. When the council disbanded in 2017, Friends of Hot Springs Village took the reins, with Mary Ann Kennedy stepping in as project coordinator. Aligning with Keep Arkansas Beautiful provided additional resources—saving property owners thousands by supplying free gloves, vests, bags, and t-shirts.



Photo used in Boomers Rock HSV Village cleanup campaign.

In 2019, the Keep It Clean (KIC) program was introduced to target heavily littered roads, and by 2023, Cindi Erickson stepped in as co-coordinator, later becoming project lead. Under their leadership, Keep Hot Springs Village Beautiful continues to grow, with an established cleanup schedule spanning January, April, June, August, and October.

Understanding that not everyone prefers organized events, they launched The Litter Grabber Program, empowering individuals to clean up at their own pace. Participants can request a free Cleanup Kit—including bags, gloves, and a t-shirt—to support solo or small-group efforts. Whether picking up litter on a morning walk or cleaning up a local park, every action contributes to a cleaner, safer community.

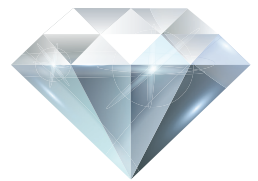
For more information, contact Cindi Erickson at ce56385@gmail.com or Mary Ann Kennedy at maktek90@gmail.com. Visit KeepHSVBeautiful.org for resources, clean-up schedules, and volunteer opportunities.

VILLAGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



The Arkansas Diamonds have been playing – and winning – since 1998. The current team consists of (from left) Carolyn Trowbridge, Ellen Varhalla, Sharon Thornton, Harriett Glenn, LaVerne Graves, Jodie Moon, coach Billy Graves. (Mary Eliades photo)

Shine Like Diamonds



Mary Eliades
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

March Madness was exciting, especially with the advance of the Arkansas Razorbacks through the bracket, but some local court action can be almost as thrilling.

A women's basketball group has been getting together since 2011 after Village Church of Christ moved to a new building and opened their gym to Village groups.

The current recreational group grew from remnants of the Arkansas Diamonds, a women's basketball team formed in 1998 in Hot Springs. The Diamonds have grown more and more competitive over the years, and two original members of the team, Sharon Thornton and Ellen Varhalla, are still in the lineup. Hot Springs Village resident LaVerne Graves is the team captain,

and her husband, Billy Graves, is the coach.

The Diamonds won the national championship in the Senior Games tournament in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, in 2022 in the 75-plus division, and took the silver in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2023. They will compete in Des Moines, Iowa, in July in the 80-plus division.

Players follow modified NCAA rules and play a half-court three-on-three game. A game consists of two 15-minute halves, with a 5-minute intermission. The three-point line serves as a “check line,” and the ball is returned to a point beyond this line after every change of possession. The official ball is one inch in diameter smaller than a men's regulation ball.

The recreational group was formed when Karen

Vinyard and Nona Mullen, original members of the Diamonds, decided to continue playing in a less competitive format and opened the sessions to women of all ages.

Every Wednesday morning, year-round, from 10 a.m. to noon, group members gather in the gym to drill and scrimmage and just have fun.

Denise Cairns is the leader of the group and keeps members informed of changes, etc. "Denise always has great ideas for drills and creative ways to still play when the numbers are down," said Vinyard.

Cairns said previous experience is "helpful, but not necessary" – participants range from high school and college players to those with little or no experience.

Cairns quipped that one of the differences between high school days and the present is that where players once discussed "good and bad teachers and cute boys," the conversation has now turned to "good and bad doctors."

Toni Clarkson, who played high school and college ball and coached a high school team, said, "I am amazed at what these women can do – they honestly have skills!"

The group has a lot of fun and sometimes socializes off the court, with lunches, etc.

Susan Cockrell said, "I haven't played in 50 years," but it wasn't obvious when watching her move the ball down the court.

Cairns emphasized that the gatherings are not "practice" – more like drop-in or pick-up games. "Skill and experience," said Cairns, "are not as important as love of the game," adding that she is a better player now than in high school.

"We may not be as quick or strong as when we were young," she said, "but good foundational skills are still there."

The members don't keep score during the scrimmage but have a "championship of the world" competition at the end of each session. Once a team scores, the other



Susan Cockrell looks for an opening during a scrimmage session as Mary Mills and Susan Duit play defense.

side gets possession; if they score, the ball goes back to the first team for another round, and so on until one team fails to score.

The group welcomes new members, at any level of play. "Basketball is a great way to exercise, maintain good health, and have fun," said Vinyard. "Come join us – you'll be glad you did!"

For information about the group, contact Denise Cairns at cairns321@gmail.com and include "women's basketball" in the subject line.



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COVER STORY



A colleague at the animal shelter took a photo of Jennifer Kallas at work, coaxing Ozzie, a new guest at the shelter, to smile for the camera. (Submitted photo)

Jennifer Kallas: Photographer & Animal Lover

Mary Eliades
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

The Animal Welfare League of Hot Springs Village has some very dedicated volunteers, who use their time and skills to care for and find homes for abandoned and/or neglected animals. These volunteers make sure their guests are clean and healthy, and include dog walkers and cat cuddlers, receptionists, and computer gurus.

One volunteer, Jennifer Kallas, moved to the Village in 2016 from a small farm in Illinois. She worked as a nurse in DeKalb, where she loved her job and her life

and raised three sons with her husband, David.

Once the nest was emptied, David and Jennifer decided the farmhouse was too big for the two of them and decided to put it on the market. They never expected it to sell, but one week later they were looking for a townhouse to rent.

David's parents had a home on Lake Pineda in the Village and the family traveled here every summer for a visit. David was retired and Jennifer still working when David's father passed away and the couple decided to buy the house and move to Hot Springs Village.

They did a lot of work on the house and Jennifer said she took golf lessons but mostly enjoyed taking photos of her friends golfing.

"I became interested in photography as a young teen, when I had a little 110 pocket camera that I took silly pictures of my dog and friends with," said Kallas. "When I was 16, I was in the alley behind my work in Chicago and a man came through selling his wares and

Some of her
work at the
shelter with
dogs and cats
(Jennifer Kallas
photos)



sold me a dented Canon F1 35mm camera. I used that camera for many years and took all of the pictures at our company parties just for fun.

“My boss paid for me to take a photography class at the Truman Community College. My first assignment was to do a series of photos in the style of my favorite photographer. I chose William Wegman, who was famous for photographing his Weimaraner dogs. I’ve always loved photographing living subjects, especially dogs, wildlife, and humans.”

Kallas added, “I’ve never been without animals,” and this love led her to the Animal Welfare League. She started volunteering at the shelter – cuddling cats and walking dogs – and eventually asked if she could photograph the potential adoptees.

The best light for photos was in the bathroom at the shelter and some of her earliest shots were taken there, employing



Kurtis Sutley took this photo of Kallas at a ranch in Oklahoma. She waited patiently for the horses to come closer and took some great photos from her position on the ground. (Kurtis Sutley photo)

clever camouflage techniques for the plumbing fixtures.

The AWL appreciated her work and soon she was given her own “studio,” which was later expanded, with lights and backdrops and props she collects at estate sales or donations. Some of her favorites are jewelry, hankies, neck scarves, and even a cute little red couch.

The small room also has one advantage – the animals “can’t get away from me,” Kallas said.

She goes to the shelter once or twice a week, and said the staff notifies her when an animal is ready to be photographed – after vetting.

Asked about her technique, Kallas said, “Sometimes it’s just communication with them.”

She likes to take her time with the animals and often uses treats or toys to get various reactions. Kallas said dogs are motivated by different things and she studies the animals to see how to get the photos she wants. Sometimes she plays a harmonica or makes weird noises to get the animal’s attention and then has to be ready to snap the photo at just the right time.

“I like to spend time with each animal – really make them pop,” she said. “The goal is to make people

linger over a photo, and the eyes, especially, have to be perfect.

Kallas said, “I might take 50 shots and get one or two good ones.”

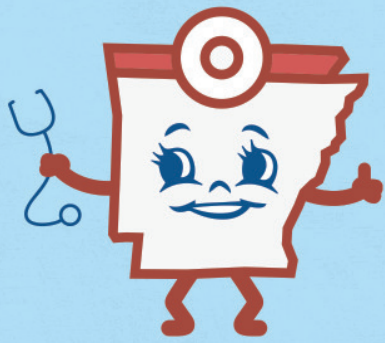
She calls herself an “extreme hobbyist” and said she’s gotten better and better at her craft, first by taking a photography class at National Park College and then by joining the HSV Camera Club. “That was a game changer,” she said. She went on to serve as president of the Camera Club for three years and is a member of the Photographic Society of America.

Many of her photos are of wildlife on and around her home on Lake Pineda – eagles, hawks, blue herons, other birds – and she always takes a camera when she steps into her kayak. “I rarely leave home without my camera,” she said. “Even vultures feeding on carrion can make an interesting photo.”

The Camera Club goes to Coalgate, Oklahoma, every year to film the wild mustangs on Mowdy Ranch. “I was having trouble getting close to the herd, so decided to sit down in the field and observe for a bit. Evidently, they became very curious and came to me,” Kallas said. She managed to shoot some incredible photos of the mustangs from the ground.

Kallas has a booth at Vintage Pearl, where she sells mostly greeting cards with photos of shelter animals or local wildlife.

Kallas also has a website: Jennifer-kallas.pixels.com, and she will take orders for prints of her photos.



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VILLAGE CONCERTS ASSOCIATION



VCA board members for the 2025-26 season pay for their tickets; some are sponsors and patrons of the VCA presentations. Left is Jack Wilson, George Langley, Kathi Wastel, Katherine Wheeler, Bill Johansson, Laura Alworth, VCA president Ray Barber, Gwen Davis, Beverly Fitzpatrick, Carol Welle, Don Brady, Dana Smith, Suzanne Sweeten, Susan Richert, and David Lee. (Submitted photos)

VCA...34 years of fostering the spirit of continuous improvement

Suzanne Sweeten
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

Remember how, in the classic films, Mickey Rooney would look at Judy Garland and exclaim, “Let’s put on a show”? Consider for a moment what’s involved in organizing a single concert, let alone a series of five. For nearly 34 years, the Hot Springs Village Concerts Association has been doing just that, delivering quality entertainment at an affordable price in a beautiful venue with the best possible audience: the residents of Hot Springs Village.

In the autumn of 1991, shortly after the Ponce de Leon Center (PDLC) opened, a group of 25 charter board members collaborated with the National Community Concerts headquarters to launch a subscription campaign, leading to the establishment of the HSV Concerts Association.

By 2001, the HSV VCA became independent from the National Community Concerts, saving the VCA money and expanding the variety of entertainment offered, improving the shows’ quality.

Carol Freeland served as VCA president from 2015

to 2018 and has witnessed firsthand how the VCA of her tenure has evolved into the VCA of today. “VCA is all grown up now. My six years were during the adolescent and pre-adult stages. We went through some struggles competing with the Property Owners Association to a point where we could appreciate harmony and support from the POA. Terry Wiley was a fantastic addition.

It was essential for season tickets to be affordable so our membership would grow and all residents could enjoy high-quality performances without having to travel outside the gates. I see that view has persisted. We believed the VCA could be a marketing tool for moving to the Village. I think it still is, even better.

We also worked to engage residents in suggesting performances to ensure a good balance and variety of acts. This effort has continued to grow, now including new artists and performers. Witnessing this growth and its positive impact on our residents is terrific.

We planted seeds that came to fruition, and now

we see new ideas like Ticket Swaps and Rock Porch Concerts, all of which enhance the HSVCA's value and make it an integral part of Village life."

The early formative years established a high standard that the VCA upholds. Although times change, the mission remains constant.

A year before performers take the Woodlands stage, the talent selection process begins, involving 30 to 40 talent agencies. The VCA board's performance review committee selects from various genres, including country, rock, soft rock, bluegrass, jazz, musical variety, orchestras, Big Bands, magicians, Broadway music, and plays. It's a tedious task.

The production involves numerous behind-the-scenes responsibilities and details. A marketing committee is vital to promoting the program to the public, while a membership management team assists Village residents with season tickets and general ticket sales. Artistic support is essential; it ensures the artists are satisfied with everything from lighting, sound, and setup to food and hair dryers. Event support enhances

the concert experience by welcoming guests at the door, managing the Will-Call table, collecting tickets, and ensuring convenient auditorium seating.

Ray Barber has been the face and voice of the VCA for the past four years. He's stepping down as president, explaining what it means to have the community's support and involvement in every concert season. "The support of the Arts and Music is critical to HSV's Community well-being. That's the goal of the VCA; we want HSV to be entertained. This would not be possible without the support of season ticketholders, patrons, advertisers, and our volunteer Board of Directors. We are grateful the community continues to support the VCA's quality entertainment."

Laura Alworth is the incoming president of the VCA and already has her eyes on the future. "My priority is to enhance our performances in any way we can. Moving forward, I hope to receive more feedback from our concertgoers, maybe in the form of a suggestion box. To keep on engaging our audience. We'll continue with the two free Rock Porch sessions. I think we've

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VCA board member Don Brady and his wife, Kim, get a preshow picture with Connie Sachs (Reba). Sachs appeared during the 30th anniversary season.

Outgoing VCA president Ray Barber has served the VCA for the past four years as president. Barber has been the presence and voice of the VCA with resounding success.



done a good job of improving the auditorium, which has much to do with Ray. We have such a great tech crew, and we want to continue working well with one another. I think everybody does a great job overall.”

The 2025-26 concert season showcases shows 163

through 167 on the Woodlands Stage. It will feature performances such as The British Invasion Years, Young Guns, a tribute to the Superstars of Country Music, Abbamania and Night Fever/The Bee Gees, The Doo Wop Project/A New Doo, and Shadows of



Laura Alworth will soon begin her tenure as VCA president. She provides various services to make a VCA season a success. (Suzanne Sweeten photo)



the 60s, a tribute to Motown's Supergroups.

Season 34 tickets go on sale April 21. Don't miss your chance to join friends and neighbors at a VCA concert and Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler, (Let the good times roll.)



The VCA sponsors two Rock Porch Sessions each year. Here, former VCA members Sue Smith and Becky Winham share a lighthearted moment with Ray Barber.



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An Audiologist with a Calling

Marilyn Phelan celebrates
Speech-Language-Hearing Month
every day

Suzanne Sweeten
VOICE CORRESPONDENT

Marilyn Phelan celebrates Speech-Language-Hearing Month every day as an audiologist. For Phelan, being an audiologist is more than just a job; it is a calling that feels predestined for her. Her calling came from a grandmother who was deaf, a grandmother with an indomitable spirit whom Marilyn loved wholeheartedly.

Every May, National Speech-Language-Hearing Month raises awareness about communication disorders. Phelan owns and operates the Village Hearing Clinic at the RE/Max Center. She earned a BA in Speech Pathology and has two Master's degrees, one each in Audiology and Speech Pathology.

Hearing loss can arise from problems in the outer, middle, or inner ear, and the type of hearing loss experienced depends on which part of the ear is affected. Hearing loss can occur at birth or at any time due to ear infections, exposure to loud noises, or certain medications.

There are three main types of hearing loss

1. Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD): This condition makes it challenging to understand sounds, including spoken language.

2. Tinnitus: This is characterized by perceiving sounds such as ringing, hissing, roaring, pulsing, whooshing, whistling, or clicking in one or both ears.

3. Unilateral Hearing Loss: Hearing loss in one ear, particularly in children, can result in speech and language delays and difficulty pinpointing the source



Marilyn and Neil Phelan are the owners and operators at Village Hearing Clinic at the RE/Max Center. (Submitted photos)

of sounds.

Understanding these types of hearing loss is important for addressing potential associated challenges.

As an audiologist, Phelan established her clinic to help individuals facing the challenges of hearing loss. Her philosophy is entirely focused on her patients.

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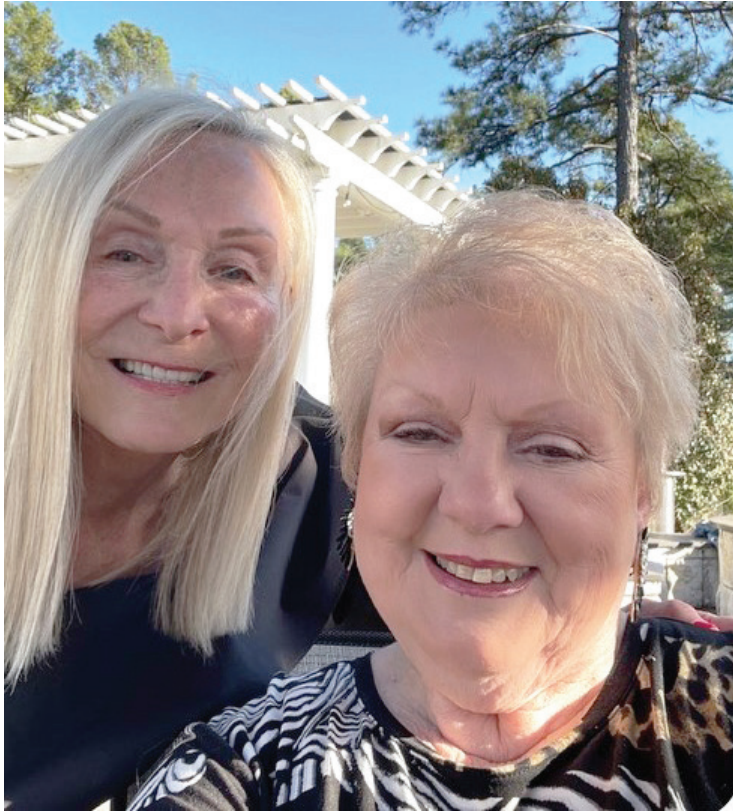
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Marilyn Phelan worked with Cherie Haynes so she might hear again so she could sing in church.

regulations, I was able to find her records. It was fascinating to see the notes they wrote about her during her admission interview. She was four years old when she lost her hearing to spinal meningitis, so she had some speech, so all her tests were outstanding.”

Phelan’s childhood provided a unique perspective on the challenges faced by individuals with hearing disabilities. Phelan strongly believes that hearing impairment is often misunderstood. “If people can’t see, they wear glasses; but if people can’t hear, others can become impatient. Patience is a valuable trait.”

Phelan smiles as she shares one last story about her beloved grandmother. “When I was little, my cousin lived far away from the family. She would write letters home, and the family read them to Granny. Sometimes, my sister didn’t want to read a letter, so I took it upon myself to share all the latest news from Granny’s other granddaughter. I would sign the letter, and Granny would get this animated look on her face—she would nod and smile at me. It wasn’t until I was in college that I realized she truly loved it when I signed her letters because I hadn’t yet learned how to read, and she knew my letters were filled with imagination and love.”

The Village Hearing Clinic is open Monday and Thursday by appointment from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and at the Malvern clinic on Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

“It’s not just about the appointment; I take pride in understanding what they want to achieve with a hearing aid. People have different expectations, and I strive to identify what they consider most important. For instance, I recently had a patient who could no longer hear her voice, which prevented her from singing in church. Her goal was to sing in church again. I aim to enhance their lives, and I believe I have a more compassionate approach than some hearing dispensaries.”

Phelan opened her HSV Hearing Clinic in 2021 as a new adventure for herself and her husband, Neil. The clinic started in the East Gate Shopping Center and relocated to a new location in 2024. What began as a part-time office for her (with her primary location in Malvern) has now transitioned into an almost full-time operation. She carries most brands of hearing aids and offers a free hearing examination during the first visit.

Phelan reflects on what interested her in audiology, “One of my first memories of Granny was her telling me stories with her hands. If I didn’t understand, my mother would teach me the word in sign language to better understand. I rarely remember a time when I couldn’t sign on some level. I loved it because I loved her.

Granny attended the School for the Deaf in the 1890s, and several years ago, before HIPAA



The Phillips family are long time clients of Marilyn Phelan, she's worked with all four to meet their hearing needs, Ida and Gelen Phillips and Marie and Gene Phillips.

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FOR THE LOVE OF BEES

Dwight Cox shares his nearly 50 years of experience



Beekeeper Dwight Cox pulls a honey super from a hive. (F.T. Eyre photos)

Lewis Delavan
STAFF WRITER

Keeping bees is hard work, but rewarding, says beekeeper Dwight Cox, who lives south of the Hot Springs Village West Gate.

Bees are very unique – the world’s only insect that makes food that people can eat. Plants need bees for pollination, but the complexity of honey fills many human needs.

“Honey contains all of the substances needed to sustain life, including enzymes, water, minerals and vitamins,” he says.

In their 20s Cox and his wife, Linda, worked with racehorses, following the racing circuit around the country, including Hot Springs.

His passion for keeping bees blossomed when he moved to Garland County in 1980 at age 32. Starting with two hives and working up to 26 hives “when I was much younger,” at one time he produced 25 gallons annually. Over the years they have raised goats and gardened.

“Bees are fascinating. I plan to keep doing it as long as I can,” he says. Successfully maintaining hives



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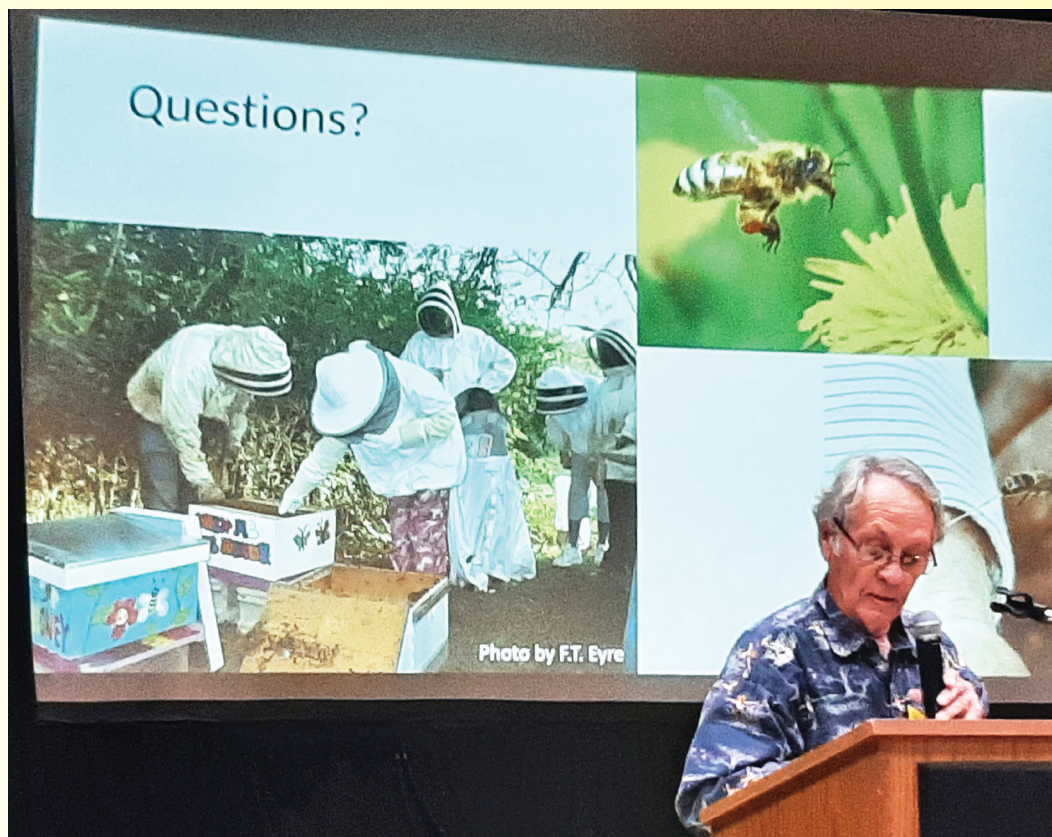
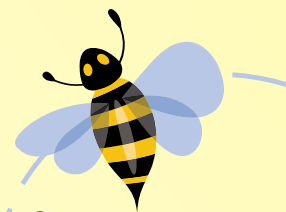
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Dwight Cox expressed fascinating details about bees at the Hot Springs Village Audubon meeting in October 2024. (Lewis Delavan photo)

and harvesting honey is hard work, but Cox finds it both enjoyable and rewarding. Bees produce less honey in upland forests, such as Garland County, while crop farming country provides bountiful nectar supplies from soybeans, cotton, even privet hedge and wildflowers.

The avid beekeeper shares his knowledge and love of bees by speaking to school classes and clubs, including an October 2024 presentation with Village Audubon.

Years ago Cox developed “25 Fascinating Facts about Bees” for talks with classes.

Stores often sell filtered honey, but raw honey has its advocates. “Hot Springs Village people want local, raw honey,” he said. “They think it helps allergies.”

Honeybees, or *apis melifera*, have 3 million hairs, the same as a squirrel. “All this hair is very beneficial to us,” Cox said. The hairs catch pollen that is passed on to other flowers.

A honeybee has five eyes – 3 simple eyes and 2 compound eyes, the latter with 10,000 lenses and 10,000 eyelashes.

Female worker bees place their proboscis into a flower for nectar, then fly back to the hive with a stomach full of nectar. “Their body produces enzymes

as documented in research by four staff members of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

The research was published in a medical journal and is available at the National Institutes of Health’s Public Health Library at <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4561606/>.

Honey collection and beekeeping are depicted in Stone Age cave paintings. They are not native to the United States, but came from Europe with the early settlers.

A single worker bee creates a tiny amount of honey, but a summer hive with 60,000 and 80,000 bees may produce more than 100 pounds. “It would take 1,000 bees to make 2 lbs. of honey and they would have to visit 4 million flowers,” he said.

Beekeepers always leave sufficient honey for the bees’ needs, but in a productive area may harvest 100 pounds.

During its six-week summer lifespan, a worker bee gathers enough nectar for ½-teaspoon of honey. “She may live 4-6 months in the winter,” Cox added.

Workers are all female, but drones are crucial to the hive.

A queen bee can live 3-5 years. “She mates only once

– with several drone bees – but remains fertile for life, laying up to 2,000 eggs per day. When a queen’s production slows after several years, worker bees feed much more royal jelly to one cell to create the hive’s next queen.

The extra nutrients transform the cell from an ordinary worker to a queen, who emerges 21 days after the older queen laid the egg.

Cox sees bees as a miraculous creation. Each tiny bee has 900 brain cells and two separate stomachs – one for food and another solely for nectar.

“Honeybees have an amazing sense of smell. They communicate and find their way home. Bees communicate by smells called ‘pheromones’ and by performing special ‘dances.’”

“Each hive has a specific odor, enabling them to return to their colony. Bees locate food using their 170 odorant receptors,” he says. “Worker bees, who are all female, are the only ones who will attack you, and only if they feel threatened,” he says. “It has been estimated that it would take 1,100 bee stings to produce enough venom to be fatal.”

Honey’s natural preservatives preserve it indefinitely when sealed. Egyptian tombs have yielded edible honey.

There are many types of honey. All taste different, depending on the flowers used to make it.

Beekeeping is not allowed in the Village, he says, but at least one Villager arranged with an area landowner to keep hives near a Highway 5 gate.

The Garland County Beekeepers Association meets on the last Thursday of each month – except for November and December – at Center Fork Baptist Church, 1101 S. Moore Road, off of Amity Road.



A state Department of Agriculture inspector, from left, watches Dwight Cox’s hive during a routine visit, along with a beekeeping friend.

“We’re a strange breed and usually have a lot of fun,” Cox said.

Dwight and Linda Cox have a daughter, Linda; granddaughter, Camren; and great-grandchild, Harley.

Arkansas Beekeepers Association has full details on raising bees and producing honey in a special document prepared by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture – Cooperative Extension Service. It is available at <https://arbeekeepers.org>.

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SPECIAL TO HSV LIFE

Chances are if you've lived in these parts very long you've heard of the Hot Springs Concert Band. And, many of you probably have attended at least one of the band's concerts at the Woodlands Auditorium in Hot Springs Village (HSV) or at Whittington Park in Hot Springs (HS). In the next several paragraphs, we will take a closer look at this band, this venerable institution, which this year celebrates its 50th year of making music.

The roots of the Hot Springs Concert Band go back to 1975 when Dr. Lamar "Doc" Smith formed the Hot Springs Community Service Organization (C.S.O.) "Senior Citizen" Band under the direction of Mr. John Melton (a retired Indiana band director). Upon Melton's retirement in 1986, Mr. Alva Appling took over the reins and renamed the group the Hot Springs Community Band and expanded its personnel to include area adult and college-age musicians. From here, the level of music the band played was upscaled to include more advanced concert marches and overtures and the band started playing for various local events. Upon Mr. Appling's untimely death in 1987,

Don Allen served as the interim director of the band until Jullian Herring became the next director in early 1988. Mr. Herring, the band director for Lake Hamilton High School at the time, directed the band for the next decade. Jerry Davidson became the director in January 1997 and Ray McClellan in January 1999. Craig Hamilton, Director of Bands at Ouachita Baptist University, became the director in July 1999. Under his leadership, the music repertoire was expanded as was the membership requirements and the role of the band in the musical life in the region. In 2005, the band's name was changed to "Hot Springs Concert Band" (HSCB) to reflect these.

While the band's name has included "Hot Springs" throughout its history, this has in no way diminished its identity and relationship with HSV and surrounding communities. The band has always enjoyed, appreciated, and depended upon the support and loyalty of everyone who has enjoyed its music. And, the band has consistently worked hard at giving back through performing at various events and venues. In the early years the band performed at many events, local and beyond. These included the grand opening celebrations for Magic Springs (1978) and Hot Springs Mall (1982) as well as promotional tours to Little Rock,

Job Corps, and the Christmas tree lighting ceremonies at the State Capitol. In 1991, the HSCB performed as a part of the Grand Opening Week for the Woodlands Auditorium in HSV. In 2002, the band performed in the Grand Opening Celebration for Garvan Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs.

In July of 2005, the HSCB was honored with an appearance at the Arkansas Bandmasters Association summer convention in Little Rock. Band conductor Dr. Craig Hamilton took this opportunity to showcase the merits of a community band as a venue for Arkansas students to continue performance experiences through their adult years. In July 2009, the band gave a repeat performance at the Arkansas Bandmasters Association summer convention in Little Rock. In 2010, the band presented its "Proclamations" Concert to help celebrate the 40th anniversary of Hot Springs Village. The HSCB also has been the subject of a program on Arkansas Public Radio that showcased the community band as a part of the state's artistic life.

In 2014, the HSCB achieved 2nd place nationally in community band division of The American Prize

competition. The band was selected from applications reviewed from all across the United States. The American Prize is a series of non-profit, competitions unique in scope and structure, designed to recognize and reward the best performing artists, ensembles and composers in the United States based on submitted recordings.

In faithfully serving our communities, the HSCB earned the coveted Hot Springs "Tourism Organization of the Year" award. The band has commissioned three pieces, performed at two U.S. Naturalization ceremonies, played for Hot Springs National Park's 175th anniversary, and hosted three national band conventions. It also sponsored a bi-annual national composition competition and sponsors an annual student scholarship program.

More recently, the band has been invited to perform at the Association of Concert Bands annual convention in Fort Smith this coming June. This year's theme is "Music on the Frontier." The band looks forward to proudly representing HSV, Hot Springs, and this area of the state.

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