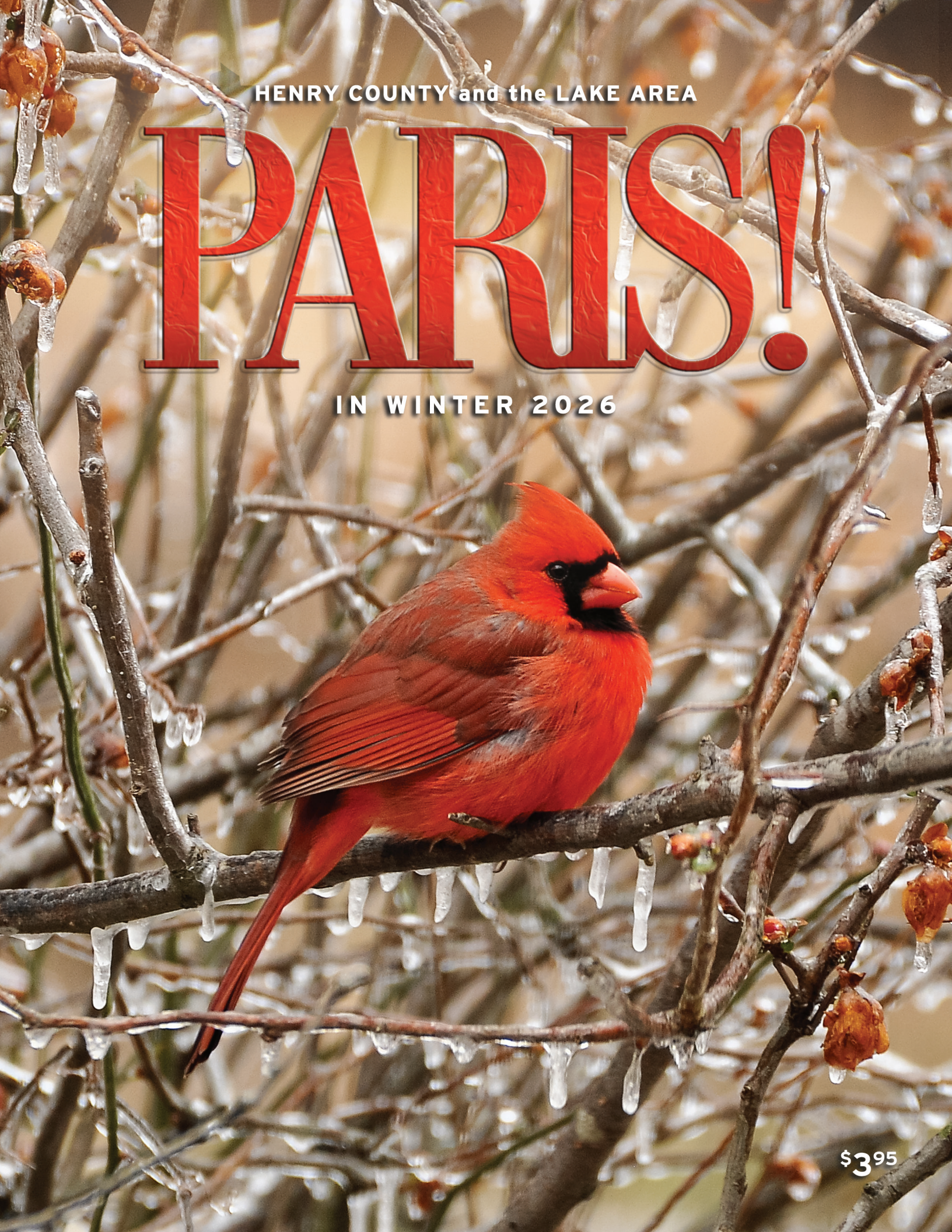

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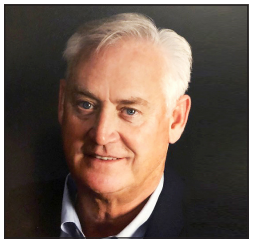


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It Might Be Cold Outside But It's Warm In PARIS!

Now that winter has settled in, it's the perfect time to slow down, cozy up, and savor everything the season has to offer. Whether you're braving the cold or enjoying it from indoors, there's plenty in this issue to keep you inspired.

Start with "Around Our Town," where The $1,000 Broom proves that winter in our community is anything but dull when it's Helping Hand time in Henry County. In "Paris Cuisine," you'll find Sweets for My Sweetie, a delicious way to warm hearts (and kitchens) with treats perfect for sharing this season.

If winter has you feeling nostalgic, "Remember When: BRRR! It's Cold Outside" and "Reminiscence: Remembering JFK" invite you to reflect on moments from the past that still resonate today. History and heart also shine in Jesse Parker's "Recollections." Meanwhile, Daniel Williams shares a heartfelt story about "Kitty Cat," reminding us just how much people in our community really do care for one another.

Looking to embrace the season outdoors? "Great Outdoors: Seasonal Changes — Nature's Yardstick for Measuring Time" offers a thoughtful look at how winter marks time in the natural world, while "In the Garden" explores the surprising benefits of gardening — even during colder months.

This issue also celebrates those who quietly make a difference. "Healthy Ideas" honors Paula Gant and the meaningful work that makes care possible, while "Helping Hand Calendar" highlights ways to lend support when it's needed most. For a little fun and creativity, "Arts & Entertainment" and "Just for Fun" add brightness to shorter days.

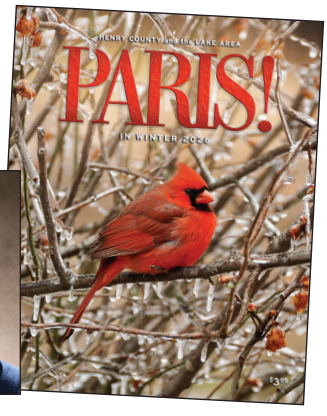
Finally, don't miss our feature stories — from heartfelt local roots to intriguing reflections that blend fact and fancy — each one perfect for reading by the fire or under a warm blanket.

However you choose to enjoy it, we hope this Winter issue of PARIS! magazine brings you comfort, connection, and a little extra warmth all season long.

Smantha

ON THE COVER





This puffed-up cardinal found a place to warm up outside Jean Owen's window. The icy bush made landing difficult, but he knows Jean always has her bird feeders full of seeds for her many feathered friends.

Henry County and the Lake Area

PARIS!

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This magazine accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photography or artwork. All submissions may be edited for length, clarity and style.

BRRR!

It's Cold Outside!

Background photo: A peaceful scene at frozen Williams Lake from January 1970.



In this 1937 photograph, a linesman on a very tall ladder is removing broken, ice-covered limbs off power lines on Dunlap Street.



Above: A public works employee scrapes snow off Washington Street by the shirt factory in 1966.

Below: West Wood Street turned into an ice rink on this particular snow day. The Volkswagen Bug is parked on a level surface with what appears to be chains on its tires.





In the falling snow, this tire shop worker has a Tennessee State Trooper vehicle jacked up and putting stud tires on it. No power drill here; that's a four-way lug wrench he's using.



In 1970, snow didn't stop this young man from bicycling on Dunlap Street.



The Courthouse Square was busy on this sunny but cold afternoon in Downtown Paris.

We thank PETE LACKEY for the use of his photo collection in this article. Through the years, he has accumulated photo negatives and boxes of old photos, saving them for sake of local history. If you recognize yourself or family member, let us know on our Facebook page. All photos require reproduction permission.

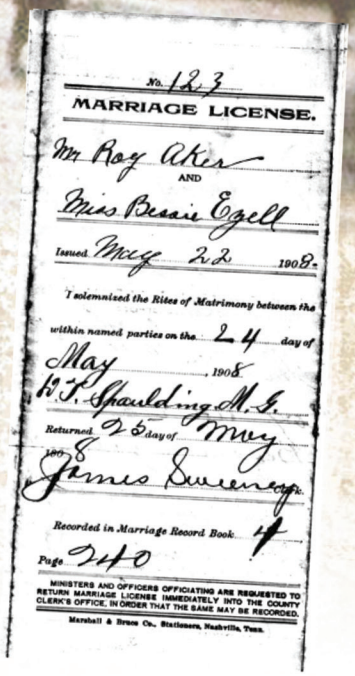




I Owe My Life To The Telephone Company

– The Facts And The Fancy –

by Rhonda Stanton



No. 123

MARRIAGE LICENSE.

Mr Roy Akers

AND

Miss Bessie Ezell

Issued May 22 1908.

I solemnized the Rites of Matrimony between the within named parties on the 24 day of May 1908

T F Spaulding M G

Returned 25 day of May 1908

James Sweeney

Recorded in Marriage Record Book 4

Page 240

MINISTERS AND OFFICERS OFFICIATING ARE REQUESTED TO RETURN MARRIAGE LICENSE IMMEDIATELY INTO THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE, IN ORDER THAT THE SAME MAY BE RECORDED.

Marshall & Bruce Co., Stationers, Nashville, Tenn.

The building at the corner of Market and Washington Streets in Paris is currently the home of White & Associates Insurance, Wimberley Dyer Agency. From the time I was a kid until after I married, I knew it as the J C Penney Store where I shopped with my mother and, later, my husband bought me a lovely purple outfit for our first Christmas together. I am not sure what other businesses or offices that corner building has housed; however, the most critical use of that building to my very existence happened in the early 1900s. It was the location of the telephone company.

It was there a young lady named Bessie Ezell worked upstairs as a telephone switchboard operator until her marriage in 1908. Bessie was born in 1888 in Graves County, Kentucky. When she was a very small child, her father, W.W. Ezell moved the family to the Mansfield area of Henry County, where he had a small general store. He was also a tobacco merchant. Bessie was my grandmother.

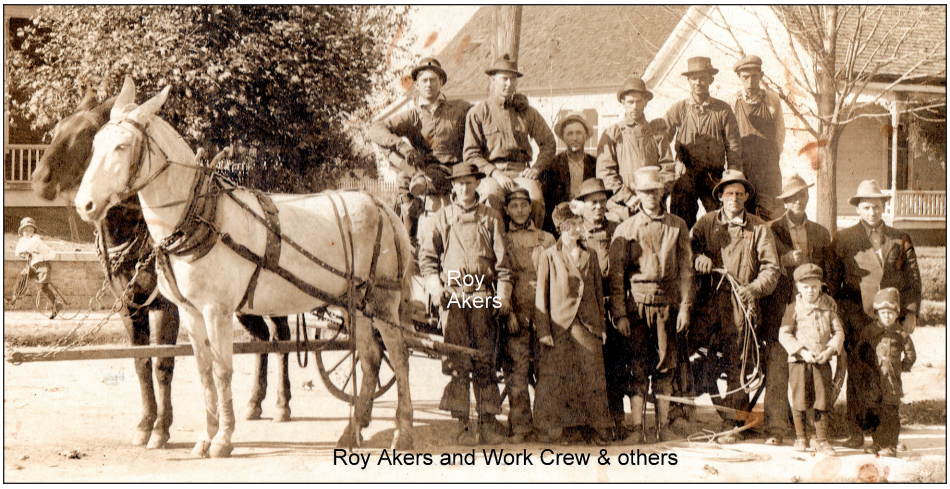
A young man was employed by the telephone company, as well. He started as a lineman and quickly became the foreman of his crew. His foreman status was, in part, due to his skills and literacy. More important to his job classification, however, was the fact that he had his own mules and wagon which could be used for his job. Because he used and maintained his own team, he was also paid for the use of that team.

I'm sure this was a win-win for both Roy and the telephone company. Roy was also born in 1888, having been raised at nearby Big Sandy in Benton County, where his father H.W. Akers also ran a general store and served for a time as the town mayor. Roy was my grandfather.

It was at the telephone company that Bessie met Roy. I am blessed to know many family stories about a wide variety of happenings throughout the years. I very much wish I knew more about the early days of Bessie and Roy's relationship, however. Every time I drive past that corner, my imagination takes off.

Having only pictures of my grandmother in her later years, I wonder what she looked like as a young lady. What drew them together? He was tall and sturdy. Did she think he was handsome? Did he find her small frame and curly hair always on his mind? Maybe those details are best left to fancy, but we do know that on May 24, 1908, their marriage was recorded on page 240 of the Henry County Marriage Book, Number 4.

Roy later moved his family to the northern part of Benton County, where he farmed White Oak Island (now underwater in Kentucky Lake) in partnership with the Porter Family from Paris. He and Bessie had 10



Roy Akers, center, is pictured with his co-workers and his mule team, Rhody and Pat. Others are possibly neighbors and family members.

children, losing a 2-year-old boy to the river as he tried to follow the work crew's ferry back to the island after lunch. All these children and subsequent generations, including me – the joys and the tragedies; the family stories and the things that were never said – they all go back to that building at the corner of Washington and Market Streets where, at the telephone company, a girl met a guy.

It seems a little strange that the building lives on, housing generation after generation of new meetings and partings, oblivious to the births, lives, and deaths that came to be or were changed due to its very existence.

For me, the best part is the knowledge of its role in my story. That's why every time I pass by the corner of Washington and Market streets, I smile...and wonder.







REMEMBERING JFK

by Shannon McFarlin

In honor of President's Day, we asked one of our writers, Shannon McFarlin, to relay the story of her meeting the late President John F. Kennedy when she was six years old. It was October 17, 1960, when JFK spoke before a huge gathering of hundreds of people at the Old Courthouse in Dayton, Ohio. Thus began her lifelong love of the former President.

Dad was an anchorman at WHIO-TV in Dayton and was chosen to emcee John F. Kennedy's appearance there. With hundreds and hundreds of people gathered, it's safe to say it was Dad's largest audience and he must have been nervous. But he didn't show it.

After years and years of searching, I finally found a photo that shows both Kennedy and my dad. It's the photo where you can see a WHIO banner across the stage area and signs in the crowd saying, "Let's Back Jack." Dad is the tall man standing behind Kennedy while another man sings the National Anthem at the microphone.

Dad kept the crowd entertained with jokes and commentary while everyone waited for Kennedy to arrive. I still have the notes Dad wrote to himself before the event, so he would remember key things to say.

Mom and I were standing off to the left side in the wings. As a six year old, I was under the impression that the crowd was there to see Dad.

There was a telephone hook-up from Johen Kennedy's limo and the podium, and every time Dad would announce where JFK was –"He's just leaving the airport!" – the crowd would clap and cheer. I said to Mom, "These people really do love my Daddy, don't they?"

After he spoke, Kennedy walked from the podium and came toward Mom and I. He crouched down on his knee and started talking to me. We had a pretty long conversation about a surprising amount of topics.

My name, Shannon, fascinated him. He asked me, "Do you know where that name comes from?" I said,

"Yes, it's from the River Shannon in Ireland." He loved that. He said, "I'm Irish, too, and I've been to Ireland and I've seen the River Shannon and it's just as beautiful as you."

He asked me about school and talked about my long hair. He told me he really loved my long hair and that he had a little girl named Caroline. He wished she could wear her hair in a ponytail like mine, but that his wife didn't like long hair on little girls. "But, I do," he said.

I fell in love with him that day. My parents bought me a miniature rocking chair, since Kennedy used to sit in a rocking chair to ease his chronic back pain from his wartime PT-109 injuries. Anytime Kennedy was on TV – whether for a press conference or whether he was speaking to the nation – I would push my 'JFK rocking chair' directly in front of the television and watch him. Dad would say, "Shan-Shan, your Mom and I would like to see him, too. Push your chair back."

As I got older, I realized how precious it was that of all the people in the backstage area that day, he picked the one who wasn't old enough to vote to talk to. To me, that says everything about the man.

When he was killed and Dad finally got home from work at the newsroom on that horrible day, Dad said "Let's go for a drive."

For Dad, it was a long and exhausting day. The car seemed to drive itself to the Old Courthouse and Dad parked in front of it. He said, "Let's just sit here and think about the day we met him." I can't remember how long we sat there in silence. I just know it was a long, long time.



Shannon McFarlin recalls "After years and years of searching, I finally found a photo that shows both Kennedy and my dad...Dad is the tall man standing behind Kennedy. "

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LAURA JARRETT

Her Roots Run Deep In Paris, Tennessee



by Shannon McFarlin

Have you noticed Laura Jarrett, the co-anchor for the Saturday edition of the "Today" Show? Or maybe you've noticed her as the Senior Legal Correspondent, and more recently, as a NBC "Nightly News" anchor? How many of you are aware of her deep roots in Paris?

She is a member of a storied Paris family of educators, journalists, and doctors. The name 'Jarrett' should be familiar to most Parisians. Laura is the granddaughter of Vernon Jarrett who was a syndicated Chicago columnist, and she is the great-grandchild of W.R. Jarrett and Annie Sybil Thomas Jarrett, both of whom were longtime educators at the Henry County Training School in Paris.

She also is the daughter of Valerie Jarrett, who was senior advisor to President Barack Obama and Dr. William Robert Jarrett, who was on the staff of Jackson Park Hospital in Chicago. Her uncle, Dr. Thomas Dunbar Jarrett, was President of Atlanta University in Chicago.

Laura came by her poise in the national spotlight naturally. She earned her bachelor degree from Amherst College and her Juris Doctor degree from Harvard. Her first national media job was at CNN, which she joined in 2016. In January 2020, she became co-anchor of "Early Start."

She left CNN for NBC News in November 2022 and it has been a steady rise for her since then. She became co-anchor of the Saturday "Today Show" just six months after she was hired. She succeeded veteran Pete Williams as Senior Legal Correspondent when he retired.

She became co-anchor of the Saturday "Today Show" in 2023, succeeding Kristen Welker when Welker became moderator of "Meet The Press."

In Paris, the Jarrett family lived at 726 Williams Street. Her great-grandfather, William Robert Jarrett, was principal at the former Henry County Training School for some 20 years and her great-grandmother, Annie Sybil Thomas Jarrett, taught there for 30 years. They were active in the Quinn Chapel AME on Church Street in Paris and are buried at Greenwood Cemetery in Paris.

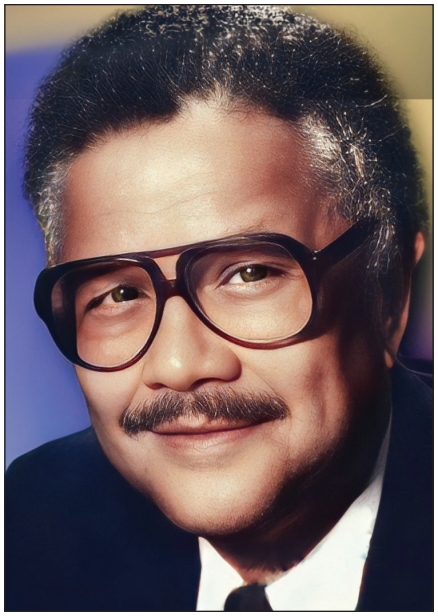
Her grandfather, Vernon Jarrett, was a journalist and political activist. He began his career writing for the *Chicago Defender* in 1946 and was a columnist for both the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun-Times*.

He was the first African-American to be a syndicated columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*, beginning in 1970. During his years at the *Tribune*, he also was a host on Chicago's ABC station WLS, where he produced nearly 2,000 TV broadcasts. He later became an op-ed columnist for the *Sun-Times*. The Rev. Jesse Jackson performed the eulogy at Vernon Jarrett's funeral.

Her father, Dr. William Robert Jarrett, was the newly appointed director of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Jackson Park Hospital when he died suddenly of cardiac arrest at 40 years old.

Laura married Canadian attorney Tony Balkissoon and they have two small children. She also is co-author of a children's book, "The Color of Love" with Poppy Harlow.

Laura realizes the unique position she is in and said in a *People* magazine interview, "I have a front seat to history. It's a privilege that I get to be part of this. So even though the days are long, and there isn't a lot of sleep happening right now, it's not always gonna be this way. When it stops, I think I'm gonna miss it."



Laura Jarrett's grandfather, journalist and political activist Vernon Jarrett.

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HONORING PAULA GANT

The Quiet Work That Makes Care Possible



By Amanda Smiles

Some of the most important work in healthcare happens quietly behind the scenes and is carried out by people most patients may never meet. But without them, care simply would not work the way it should.

For more than 14 years, Paula Gant has been one of those people. Paula serves as an IT Supervisor at West Tennessee Healthcare Henry County Hospital. Her role blends technical knowledge, problem solving, and a deep commitment to helping others. In 2025, she was recognized as the Non-Clinical Partner of the Year, an honor that reflects not only what she does, but how she does it.

Paula's path into information technology began long before healthcare. She discovered early on that she had a natural ability for troubleshooting and critical thinking.

"I love figuring things out," she shared. "Even when it's stressful, I want to fix the problem."

That mindset led her to earn both her associate and bachelor's degrees in IT through online learning, allowing her to balance life while building a strong technical foundation.

When Paula joined the hospital, she started as an application analyst. Over time, her knowledge, reliability, and willingness to help others led to expanded responsibilities and leadership roles. Today, her work touches nearly every corner of the organization.

From configuring systems that report critical quality data to CMS, to supporting patient registration workflows, to managing patient surveys and vendor reporting, Paula helps ensure the technology behind patient care runs smoothly. She also supports staff day in and day out, helping teammates navigate systems, solve issues, and keep moving forward.

As West Tennessee Healthcare continues its transition to Epic, a leading electronic health record software sysem, Paula has once again stepped up by completing extensive training and earning Epic certifications so she can support staff and patients through the change. It is detailed, demanding work that requires patience, focus, and a willingness to learn every single day.

What truly sets Paula apart is her heart. She recalls one call from a frustrated patient who was struggling to access an online system during a difficult season of life. What began as a technical issue turned into a human moment. Paula listened. She slowed down. She stayed on the phone far longer than required. By the end of the call, the patient was calmer, grateful, and no longer felt alone.

"That experience really stayed with me," Paula said. "You never know what someone is going through. Sometimes people just need someone to listen."

That perspective shapes how Paula approaches her work, her coworkers, and every request that comes her way. Those who work alongside her describe her as patient, generous with her knowledge, and always willing to take the time to help. She is also known for small acts of kindness, like making sure birthdays are celebrated and coworkers feel appreciated.





When not solving problems in the West Tennessee Healthcare Henry County's IT department, Paula Gant enjoys spending time with her dogs and brood of chickens.

Outside of work, Paula lives in the country with her husband, their two dogs, a horse, and more chickens than most people can imagine. It is a life that reflects who she is grounded, hardworking, and quietly joyful.

When Paula's name was announced as the 2025 Non-Clinical Partner of the Year, she was genuinely surprised. But for those who understand the impact of her work, the honor made perfect sense. Paula's story is a reminder that healthcare is a team effort. It takes clinicians, support staff, and non-clinical partners working together to deliver safe, compassionate care.

It also takes people like Paula, who show up every day ready to solve problems, support others, and make things better, even when no one is watching.







THE $1,000 BROOM

When Kevin Buie passed away this past November, the community lost an advocate and faithful servant of Henry County. He became a fixture at so many activities around the county, often working in the background to make sure everything was running smoothly. Whether it was greeting folks at Chamber coffees or running the sound board at First Baptist Church, Kevin's pitched in where he could.

The former business owner served as the past president of the Henry County Chamber of Commerce and was a former member of the Emergency Management Agency, the Henry County Rescue Squad, and the Downtown Paris Association. But two of his passions were the Paris Lions Club, serving as its past president and director of the Lions Mobile Sight Van, and as a member of the Helping Hand Board of Directors.

According Tim Williams, President of the Lions Club,"In my 20 plus years of Lions membership, I can undoubtedly say Kevin was the epitome of our motto 'We Serve' having been past president, and most recently, serving as director of our sight van, screening thousands of individuals."

As a hobby, Kevin liked to pick up his camera and take photographs. As a member of the Paris Photography Club, he exhibited some of his works in Photo Showcase, sponsored by the Paris-Henry County Arts Council, and won ribbons for his images. Upon his death, Photography Club members wished to honor Kevin in some way, but how? Following Kevin's fandom of all things Star Trek, the club members felt the "logical solution" would be to combine Kevin's favorite activities and have a good ol' bidding war at Helping Hand.

Photography Club members approached the Paris Lions about joining in on the special tribute to Kevin on the the kick-off day of this year's Helping Hand, which was also the traditional day that the Lions contribute items for the radio auction. The honorary item: a Lions Club broom.

It was known in the community that if you needed a good Lions Club broom, Kevin and his sister, Brenda Evans, had them for sale at their business, K and B Supplies for Success in Paris. "We knew Kevin would have enjoyed a big ticket item on the first day of Helping Hand, and this was the perfect way to honor him," said Karen Geary of the photo group.



Lions Club member Tommy Lemonds and Photography Club member Jean Ownes inspect the broom to be auctioned at Helping Hand's opening day.

On January 12, the first day of the auction, members from both clubs were scattered in the audience at the Paris Convention Center. The $20 opening bid was started by Jean Owens of the Photo Club, then quickly upped to $30 by Tim Williams. Bidding was steady until the bids hit $100. Then bidding got serious, increasing by $50 increments. At the $500 mark, the bids jumped – $600, $700, $800, $900 with Tim Williams entering the final bid of $1,000! Auctioneer Jamie Orr announced to the listening audience that the two clubs had pooled their money together for a "great Helping Hand bid."

Off to the side, in one corner of the stage, sat Kevin's wife, Ann Buie, running some of the equipment that provided real-time viewing of the auction via the internet. A little bit stunned at what had just happed, emotions were hard to mask and a big smile spread on her face. "I had no idea this was going to happen. I saw the broom on the slate table and wondered why someone would donate a broom to be auctioned. But this was a great honor in Kevin's name."

"Kevin was the type of person that didn't want anyone to make a fuss about him. He was a humble man. But he would have been deeply touched that people would contribute to Helping Hand in his name. It meant so much to him."

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Kitty Cat

LOST BUT FOUND

By Daniel Williams

In a world where the news seems to get more depressing by the day, my family got a reminder of the hope that lies within our community. That care warmed up us on a cold January weekend.

Every child has what's known as a transitional object – a blanket or a stuffed animal or something that provides comfort, security and a sense of home that a child can take with them.

Our 22-month-old Birdie is no different. Hers was personally selected by Birdie herself from a mountain of stuffed animals and blanket options from both sets of grandparents. It was a white, full-sized Beanie Baby which Birdie named "Kitty Cat."

Kitty Cat actually belonged to my wife and Birdie's mother, Jordan, when she was little. Jordan said it wasn't "the one" for her like it is for Birdie, but that made the tie even more precious.

Birdie and Kitty Cat are inseparable. She take Kitty Cat to bed, lugs her around the house, and she goes to her grandparents' houses, too. She went on trips to the beach, shopping, and to church. Kitty Cat was with us on a cold, chaotic night watching big brother, Sterling, play basketball at the Atkin-Porter gym.

We were trying to get to the van after the game while herding Sterling and carrying Birdie, who had decided she'd had quite enough activity and that it was time to eat. Stiff as a board and screaming, we got Birdie into the vehicle, but one family member didn't make it – Kitty Cat.

I got a call from Jordan with just a tinge of panic in her voice later that night, "Do you have Kitty Cat?" No, I didn't. And she wasn't in my truck, nor in the Steak-N-Shake parking lot, and she wasn't in the AP parking lot.

I consider myself a realist, and as much as Birdie was attached to Kitty Cat, I felt we would never see the cat again. But Jordan, ever the optimist, made a last-ditch effort with a Facebook post. Her "lost Kitty Cat" post struck a chord in the community.

Maybe it was the adorable picture Jordan posted of Birdie and Kitty Cat. Maybe it was people remembering their own children and their "lovies," not unlike my own mother who immediately remembered when I lost my own favorite stuffed animal in Paducah many years ago.

Nearly 100 people shared that post, many more commented, liked, etc., until one of our good friends texted that he couldn't load Facebook that next day without seeing a picture of Birdie and people asking if anyone had seen Kitty Cat.

Another one of our friends at Outlander CrossFit said, "What are y'all gonna DO," as soon as Jordan walked in Saturday because he knew Birdie went nowhere without Kitty Cat.

Birdie was okay sleeping without Kitty Cat the first night, probably because she was exhausted and it was past her bedtime. But at naptime the next day, she was walking around calling out, "Kitty Cat," and holding her palms up in confusion. Jordan told her Kitty Cat went bye-bye and the tone of Birdie's voice when she looked down and said, "Oh. Bye-bye Kitty Cat" would've brought tears to the hardest of hearts.

But a little less than 24 hours, Kitty Cat was found!

Taylor Kilpatrick answered Jordan's original post that she had Birdie's stuffie and posted a photo of her with Kitty Cat together. She had picked the cat up in the AP parking lot and knew it belonged to a child who was missing it dearly. We found out Taylor lived nearby, and within 15 minutes of the post, Kitty Cat was back home.

You've never seen a happier little girl when we handed Kitty Cat back to her, and I'm not sure she let her go until the next day. Her high-pitched squeal when she yelled "Kitty Cat" in an excited tone of voice will be with me forever.

In the grand scheme of things, the hunt for Kitty Cat isn't even a blip on the radar. But for a sweet, little girl and her family, it was everything. *And Birdie has never been happier.*



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FEBRUARY 1 *Auction Phone* **731-644-1695**	**FEBRUARY 2** **NEW HARMONY BAPTIST** LORI SNOW 731-593-5276 **P-HC HERITAGE CENTER** MEGAN HUERTA 731-642-1030 **HC HISTORICAL SOCIETY** DAVID WEBB 731-336-8920 **HCHS BAND BOOSTERS/COLOR GUARD** ALICIA JOHNSON 731-336-8526	**FEBRUARY 3** **JOE MAHAN FORD** JANA WILSON 731-642-4711 **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** CHELSEA BOLEN 731-642-2962 **NEW BOSTON COMMUNITY** KATHY STILES 731-782-3161 ANGIE LEACH 731-363-5231 **THE JOLLY WOMENS CLUB** MELINDA NESBITT 731-707-1762 **TRINITY UNITED METHODIST** EMILY WALKER 731-642-3427	**FEBRUARY 4** **MANSFIELD COMMUNITY** LINDA FAYE NEAL 731-336-9379 JUDY SUTTON 731-693-2858 **CHRIST LUTHERAN** ELAINE RENKEN 608-293-6344 **JOHNSON CHAPEL** RENAE PEALE 731-363-0944 **CARL PERKINS CENTER** CARLY WHEAT 731-642-8455	**FEBRUARY 5** **BUCHANAN COMMUNITY** BECKY WHITE 731-234-0116 **LAKEWOOD BETA CLUB** EMILY TOWNSEND 731-644-1600 **HCHS LADY PATRIIOTS SOCCER** KENDALL MCDANIEL 731-571-6297 **BIG BELLY DELI** SANDRA DILORENZO 731-407-4109 **ANTIOCH UMC** JANICE BARINGER 210-464-4734	**FEBRUARY 6** **CHAPEL HILL/GUTHRIE ROAD** MARY JUNE SINNEMA 731-642-1794 **HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH** LEILA KACKLEY 731-642-4681 **T.A.R.P. CTR. FOR IND. LIVING** AMBER HARRIS 731-644-0026	**FEBRUARY 7** **AUCTION BEGINS AT 12 NOON** **WEST TN HEALTHCARE HENRY COUNTY HOSPITAL** AMANDA SMILES 731-644-8266 **– RADIO NIGHT AUCTION – AUCTION BEGINS AT 6:30 PM**
FEBRUARY 8 *** 731-644-1695 *** Broadcast daily over **104.7 FM/AM 1000 WHNY "Big Henry"** livestream on **henrycountynow.com** Saturday Night Auctions **104.7FM** & livestream on **henrycountynow.com** *(check calendar time)*	**FEBRUARY 9** **FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH** MARY GAIL MULLER 731-336-0621 PAM/RICK CONGER 731-621-7424 **LITERACY COUNCIL** SUE QUINN 731-697-0773	**FEBRUARY 10** **VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS** **VFW POST 1889 & LADIES AUX.** RONNIE NORWOOD 731-225-2664 **AMVETS POST 45** KATHY DUNCAN 937-238-5016 **DARKHORSE LODGE** GRETCHEN CATHERWOOD 731-363-3616 **AMERICAN LEGION POST 89** CINDI COLGROVE **PARIS ELKS LODGE** CHRISTY ALEXANDER 731-571-3034	**FEBRUARY 11** **WAL-MART SUPERCENTER** CHRISTA TYLER 731-644-0290 **COVENANT RANCH** JON PAUL MOODY 731-336-4617 **NEW WAVE BUDDY BALL** JEAN HUNTER 731-333-4839 **TN VALLEY ASSOC OF REALTORS** RICK COBB 731-336-9371 **CUB SCOUT PACK 28** AMANDA PASCHALL 731-336-6531	**FEBRUARY 12** **FAIRVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH** BETTY CHRISMAN 731-642-3147 **HCHS SPEECH TEAM** DAVID WEATHERLY 731-642-5232 **HCHS SWIM TEAM** MIRANDA MILLER 731-336-4557	**FEBRUARY 13** **PLUS** TONI PHILLIPS 256-710-3454 **HC CEMETERY COMMITTEE** SUSAN STEWART 731-336-9764 **HC ARCHIVES** STEPHANIE TAYLOE 731-644-3489 **HC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY** JEAN PETERSON 731-642-3638 **HC CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY** MIKE HOLDEN 731-676-2772 **DYERSBURG STATE COM. COLLEGE** SHANNON MAYO 731-407-7300	**FEBRUARY 14** **AUCTION BEGINS AT 12 NOON** **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH** DAVE/ANNE CULLEN 731-333-2904 731-641-0097 **IN HOUSE NIGHT AUCTION BEGINS AT 6:00 PM**
FEBRUARY 15 *Auction Phone* **731-644-1695**	**FEBRUARY 16** **HENRY/BUNNS COMMUNITY** ALONNA TOSH 731-676-4551 **HENRY VOL. FIRE DEPARTMENT** KEITH QUALLS 731-697-1875 **SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER** MARTHA JACKSON 731-336-1566 **MARY'S KIDS** ALONNA TOSH 731-676-4551	**FEBRUARY 17** **SUNNYSIDE** EARLENE CAMASTA 815-338-3587 **COUNTRYWOOD ESTATES** RHONDA COMPTON 731-336-1047 **SCENIC HILLS/CASTLETON COVE** TOM/ROSE CUNNINGHAM 731-336-0220 **HCHS FISHING TEAM** AMY WHITAKER 731-336-1289 **TCAT** SHERRY WILSON 731-644-7365 **GRACE LIFE CHURCH** DEBI WIMBERLEY 731-336-4322 DEBBIE E. HANCOCK 731-707-0931	**FEBRUARY 18** **COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES** CONNIE BELL 731-697-6771 **NELSON/SHADY GROVE** TERESA BARNHILL 731-363-3014 **PARIS LANDING COMMUNITY** REGGIE COLES 731-444-1364/731-644-9360 **PARIS LANDING SENIOR CENTER** KATHY MADISON 317-627-6644 **HCHS CROSS COUNTRY & TRACK** STEPHANIE WINDERS 731-336-0792 **AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS** CARLY WHEAT 901-493-4065 **POINT PLEASANT BAP. CHURCH** 731-642-6947	**FEBRUARY 19** **ELKHORN COMMUNITY** DOTTIE/BAKER KENDALL 731-227-9187 JOSH/ERIN COLEMAN 731-336-3468 731-642-7007 **FRIENDS OF TN WILDLIFE REFUGE** HAL HASSALL 615-972-5119 **SULPHUR WELL COC** BART CROASMUN 731-363-5918 **CIVIL AIR PATROL** WENDY CRAWFORD 731-642-5610	**FEBRUARY 20** **EASTON'S ANGELS** BRITTNEY GREEN 731-363-2156 **THRIVING AT HOME SR. CARE** ZACH BELL 731-407-9051 **SALVATION ARMY** BOBBI JO FRENCH 731-642-4105 **HCHS BASEBALL** CARLA TODD 731-234-9138 **REAL HOPE YOUTH CENTER** CARL ANDERSON 731-227-4689	**FEBRUARY 21** **AUCTION BEGINS AT 12 NOON** **FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** JIM/JACKIE BUNDY 731-336-0455 **IN HOUSE NIGHT AUCTION BEGINS AT 6:00 PM**
FEBRUARY 22 **OFFICE PHONE** **731-644-1833** **OFFICE HOURS** 7 AM - 30 MINUTES AFTER AUCTION ENDS	**FEBRUARY 23** **FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA** LAURA MOSS 731-336-8304 **YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS** TREY JONES 731-363-4566 **4-H CLUBS OF HENRY COUNTY** STACI FOY 731-225-7474 **HC NO FLY ZONE** ASHLEY LAWRENCE 731-336-1035	**FEBRUARY 24** **PARIS CITY EMPLOYEES** JESSICA CROUCH 731-441-3835 **PARIS BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES** TERRY WIMBERLEY 731-642-1322 731-336-9326 **PROJECT HELP** DAN DZIEKONSKI 731-642-1860 **COMO COMMUNITY**	**FEBRUARY 25** **VAN DYKE/ROUTON COMMUNITIES** ASHLEIGH MILLER 731-694-8992 **SPRING HILL BAPTIST CHURCH** JOHNNY/KAY FOUST 731-336-4525	**FEBRUARY 26** **MAPLEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH** JIMMY BARRETT 731-642-5860 DEDE COOK 731-642-2022 **CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP** JESSICA MATHIS 731-363-7468 **PEPPERS AUTOMOTIVE** ANTHONY PEPPERS 731-336-5779 **GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH** TRACI SMITH 731-571-0052 **HCHS BASKETBALL BOOSTERS** CARRYE MOODY JACKSON 731-707-1590	**FEBRUARY 27** **SPRINGVILLE COMMUNITY** STEVEN GARNER 731-420-0179 **WORLD'S BIGGEST FISH FRY** MONTE STARKS 731-676-1303 **PATRIOT HEALTH & REHABILITATION** KATIE RICHARDS 731-642-2535	**FEBRUARY 28** **AUCTION BEGINS AT 12 NOON** **TENNESSEE VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH** JESSIE SMITH 314-575-8174
MARCH 1 *Only 3 Days Left!*	**MARCH 2** **INDIA COMMUNITY** LINDA MCCADAMS 731-642-0360 **HC GIRL SCOUTS** WENDY WRATTEN 731-363-7456 **HC SADDLE CLUB WRAP** LAURA WINSTON 731-343-5217 **HCHS BOYS SOCCER** CHRISTI CROSS 731-356-7874 **GLO - GOD'S LITTLE ONES** ANGEL SCHNEPPER 731-363-9394	**MARCH 3** **LAKEWAY VILLAGE** LASHONDA WILLIAMS 731-445-4078 **MINERAL WELLS ANIMAL CLINIC** MICHELLE HOPKINS 731-642-5699	**MARCH 4** **OPEN TO ANYONE DAY** CINDY SNYDER 731-336-5362 **PLEASE CALL TO BE ADDED TO THIS DAY**			

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During the Martin Luther King Jr. Day service at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Shannon McFarlin received the Community Service Award for her dedication and impact to the Paris-Henry County area.



LaDonna Marshall brought Nyla Davis to see her first movie at the Parisian Theatre and stopped to take their photo with Santa.





Above: Michael and Fayne Williams recently traveled with their daughter, Elena, his sister Olivia Williams and her boyfriend, Brady Cox, to Tokyo. They are pictured here in Hakone in front of Mt. Fuji along with Van Williams.

Left: Little Elena looks simply precious at her kimono photo shoot while they visited Tokyo.





Joe and Garrison Douglass are ready for the 100 Days Of School at Rhea Elementary.



Tara Stephens and Willie, the Norwegian Fjord horse, enjoyed some unseasonable warm weather for a walk at Able Farms in Springville.



On a recent cruise to Antarctica, Mary Lodge visited her seventh continent. Also on the journey was her son, Jonathan Lodge.

Quota members man the phones at Helping Hand. Taking bids are Jane Sinnema and Betty Paschall while Carissa Jones, Leisa Wimberley, and Johnna Wade answer the phones.





Daniel Williams and Jennifer Gallimore taste North American Caviar at a recent Leadership Henry County training session.

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To New Beginnings!



As the calendar turns the page, we wish you the very best in the year ahead.

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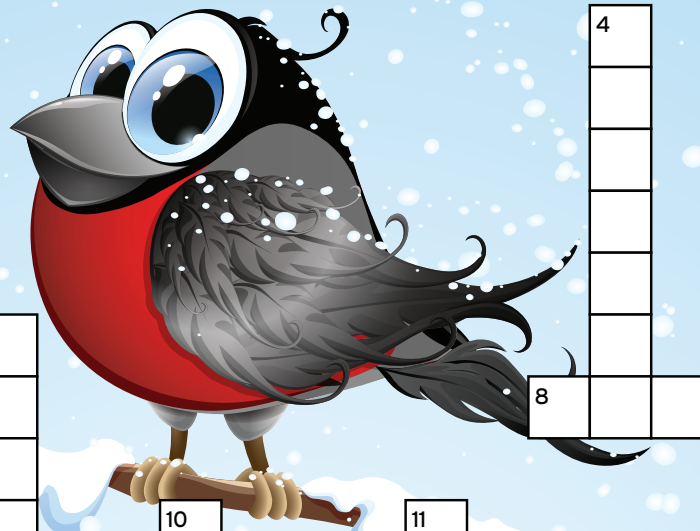
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PUZZLE SOLVE
ON PAGE 40

ACROSS

7. Shannon McFarlin met this President as a child
8. Winter proof your _____ before it's too late
12. Sold for $1,000
14. Type of butterfly
15. Occupation of Rhonda Stanton's grandfather
16. F-150: the _____ of rugged durability
18. Type of cheese mentioned in toast recipe
19. Trolinger's specializes in this
20. Barking bushy tail
21. She is an anchor for NBC News
22. Easy chocolate bite
23. Jack _____, *BRRR!*

DOWN

1. BPU recommends these to be changed often
2. Hungry birds look for these in backyards.
3. Paris _____ For The Arts
4. Young man seen riding this on snowy street
5. Instrument used to split logs
6. Helping Hand Radio _____
9. Paula Gant has more of these than people imagine
10. Redbird on PARIS! Magazine For Winter cover
11. *SHHH!*
13. A child might call a "cat" this
14. She is the principal broker at Prosper Realty Group
17. Pafford, Snowden, Stonebreaker
19. John Watkins claims gardening can provide these



DIFFERENT STROKES

By Meredith Vajda

Are you one of the estimated 30% of Americans who have made resolutions for the New Year? Statistics show that 80% of those resolutions are health-related, with improving mental health among the top goals.

A recent book, *Your Brain on Art*, makes the case that creative engagement – whether through music, visual art, dance, storytelling, or design– activates neural pathways that support learning and emotional health. The authors, Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross, explain how artistic experiences lower stress hormones, enhance cognitive flexibility, and strengthen social connections. They invite readers to rethink creativity as essential to a healthy, meaningful life.

If exploring creativity seems like a worthy goal this year, Paris Academy for the Arts could help you discover skills and talents you don't know you have. Painting may be a good first step, as the Academy has three instructors, each with his own focus on style, technique, and medium.

GENE SNOWDEN

Gene Snowden (above) found his start in art when health issues became the impetus to return to college for a degree in technical education. His choice for an elective was a course in drawing, which led to painting and setting aside the technical education degree. He graduated from Murray State University with a degree in art and began teaching locally at the Shirt Factory and the Murray Art Guild. He joined Paris Academy for the Art as one of the first two instructors when the school opened in the early 2000s.

At the same time, he joined a group of painters in Paducah that met weekly for two years. He credits them for their sharing and critique that put a sheen on his credentials and encouraged his continuing the learn.

Gene said, "I discovered I love teaching even more than I love doing art, and the technical education classes I took taught me how to teach. I teach the basics, which anyone can learn, and then they can paint anything."

He treats his classes like it's a one-room schoolhouse, with all skill levels together. His focus is oils, but he has taught other mediums like acrylics, watercolor and pastels. The come-and-go atmosphere of his classes has students staying for years. New students are welcome to join his Wednesday classes at anytime.

TIM PAFFORD

Tim Pafford is skilled in a wide variety of materials, such as watercolors, casein, ink, oils, graphite, colored pencils and pastels, and creates still-lifes, portraits, landscapes, florals, and wildlifes.

He studied art at Austin Peay State University and graduated from Bethel College with a BA in art and religion. He has taught at both of those schools, been an artist in residence at six Tennessee State Parks, created over 3,000 paintings, has taught since 1976, and been a part of the PAA faculty for the past six years.

Tim's students start with projects that evaluate knowledge and basics of art. They learn how to create light

and shadow, use color effectively, and create in mixed media eventually.

"I strive for students to create an accomplished landscape scene within a few months," said Tim. "My style of teaching is individual and encouraging; working through challenges to find solutions."



Tim Pafford

ERIK STONEBRAKER

Erik Stonebraker teaches acrylic painting at the Academy. He first picked up a paintbrush about nine years ago, starting his art journey with YouTube videos and later, classes. He found that having the instructor in the room gave him more guidance, with immediate answers and assistance that weren't available through videos.

Acrylics was his medium of choice because the paint has a lower price point than oils, and with no drying time, it was easier to make changes and additions as he worked. He confirmed his choice of acrylics with a plein-air (literally, fresh air) oils class, and discovered his first choice was the correct choice for him.

Erik believes anyone can learn to paint, that it's an acquired skill, like riding a bicycle or learning a musical instrument. He said, "Talent kicks in later, when you can paint the tree and it looks like a tree, with recognizable leaves and bark and shadows, but you realize the painting would be improved with the addition of a robin on the branch. In other words, when you can stay upright on the bicycle, you remove the training wheels and develop your own style of riding."



Erik Stonebraker

Tim, Gene and Erik have exhibited their works in the Gallery at the Academy, and Tim is included in a multi-artist show opening on March 1, 2026. The opening reception is free, open to the public and offers refreshments.

All classes at Paris Academy for the Arts are listed under "Upcoming Classes" at schoolforarts.org.

Prospective students and visitors are welcome at anytime.





Sweets For My Sweetie!

Valentine's Day is all about expressing love in the simplest, sweetest ways. While flowers and cards are timeless, nothing says "I care" quite like a homemade dessert.

You don't need to be a professional baker to create something meaningful—just a little love and a few easy ingredients can turn into a heartfelt surprise.

Sharing dessert is also about connection. Whether you're laughing in the kitchen, sneaking tastes while you cook, or enjoying a quiet moment together at the table, these small experiences become cherished memories. Homemade sweets have a way of slowing time and making moments feel more personal. They remind us that love doesn't have to be extravagant– it just needs to be sincere.

These recipes are perfect for anyone who wants to celebrate Valentine's Day without stress. They are simple, comforting, and made with everyday ingredients, yet they still feel romantic and intentional. Whether you're celebrating with a partner, a close friend, or someone you simply want to make smile, these sweet treats are a lovely way to say "you matter to me," on any day of the year.

Honey-Drizzled Ricotta Toast with Berries

INGREDIENTS:

4 slices brioche or thick white bread
½ cup ricotta cheese
2 tablespoons honey
½ cup fresh berries
(strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries)
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
Optional: lemon zest or chopped pistachios



INSTRUCTIONS:

Toast bread lightly until golden. Mix ricotta with vanilla. Spread ricotta over toast, drizzle with honey, and top with berries. Add lemon zest or pistachios if desired. Serve warm.

Easy Chocolate Truffle Bites



INGREDIENTS:

1 cup chocolate chips (milk or dark)

½ cup heavy cream

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Cocoa powder, powdered sugar, or sprinkles for coating

INSTRUCTIONS:

Heat cream until just warm, then pour over chocolate chips. Let sit for 2 minutes, then stir until smooth. Add vanilla and refrigerate until firm. Roll into small balls and coat with cocoa powder or sprinkles.



Cinnamon Sugar Puff Pastry Hearts

INGREDIENTS:

1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed

2 tablespoons melted butter

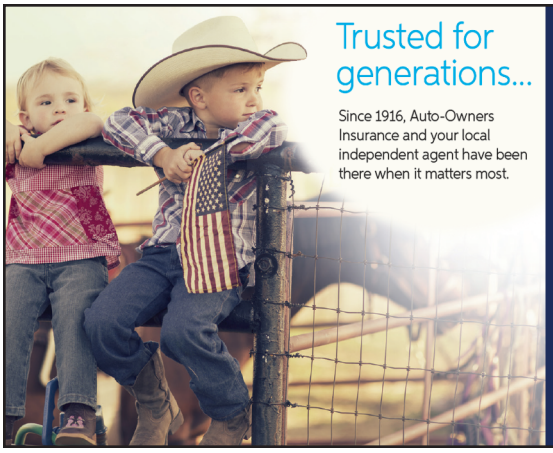
¼ cup granulated sugar

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Optional: powdered sugar or icing drizzle

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 400°F. Roll out puff pastry slightly and cut into heart shapes. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Bake for 12–15 minutes until golden and puffy. Dust with powdered sugar or drizzle icing before serving.



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WINTERTIME
At JD And Polly Parker's

In previous story installments, Jesse Parker has described his parents leaving California and returning to his father's family farm in Henry County. The family lived in a basement house, built by his father and other relatives, on acreage near the present day shopping area on Highway 79.

By Jesse Parker, Jr.

In the mid-1970s, our family lived without electricity in a basement home. Even after the house above it was finally completed, our only source of heat came from a double-barreled wood stove my dad, JD, built himself. Winter was hard whether we had power or not, especially when firewood was your lifeline. Still, despite the cold and the work, those winters were filled with laughter, lessons, and memories that have lasted a lifetime.

With five children in the house, gathering firewood was a full-family job. We didn't have a truck at first, so when it was time to haul wood, we made do with what we had. We'd spread out across the field in a long line, far enough apart so no one got hurt, and throw each piece of firewood as hard as we could toward the next pile. Then we'd move up and do it again until all the wood made its way out of the field. Later, Dad managed to get a rusty, dented old trailer that looked pitiful but could haul more wood at once, which felt like a luxury to us.

Once the wood got home, the real work began. We split it using an axe, a metal wedge, and a sledgehammer, then stacked it neatly so it would dry. Sometimes we did this even in the snow, our gloves soaked and our socks wet, all of us complainin' about the cold. That's when we learned a valuable lesson: it's a whole lot easier to get firewood when the weather is warm and dry – and before the snow hits.

Even with all the work, we still found ways to entertain ourselves. One winter after a deep snowfall, we decided to have a barefoot race around the basement house. We took off running, desperate to make it back to the only door and into the warmth. Everyone made it—except my little brother, William, who turned back halfway. Later, he laughed and said, "I was so dumb. I should've just kept going. I didn't turn around 'til I was already halfway around the house, so I ended up running the same amount as y'all anyway, and I lost the challenge!" That story still gets told every Christmas, especially for those who weren't even born when it happened.

Another favorite winter pastime was what we called "ice skating" with Granddaddy H.T. Bowden. We only owned one antique pair of ice skates, and they didn't fit anyone very well.

Nobody could stand up in them, so we mostly ran and slid around on the frozen pond in our boots and shoes—but we still proudly called it ice skating.

Granddaddy tied a long rope to a sled and pulled us across the pond, running hard to keep his footing on the ice. He was born in 1913, but in the 1970s and early 1980s he was still in remarkable shape. When he finally got tired, he tied the rope to the bumper of his pickup truck and pulled us across the pond that way. Luckily for us, Grandma R.E. Bowden couldn't see the pond from her kitchen window — or she would have stopped us all.

Of course, being kids, we kept yelling, "Go faster! Go faster!" Each time he sped up, we begged for more, until one sudden stop sent us sliding straight into the pond bank in a tangled heap. We weren't broken or cut, just bruised enough to put an end to the fast rides. Granddaddy never wanted to hurt us, and he knew he'd have to answer to Grandma who loved us deeply but was tough as nails.

Those winters were cold, demanding, and sometimes uncomfortable, but they shaped us. The work taught us responsibility, the fun taught us joy, and the people around us taught us love. Looking back now, those wood-heated winters still warm me more than any stove ever could.



Firewood stacked after we split it using an axe or a metal wedge and a sledgehammer. We never owned a wood splitter. The Parker children split what we could. Dad would help us if we had a real knotty one that we couldn't split open.





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SEASONAL CHANGES

Nature's Yardstick For Measuring Time



By Steve McCadams

About the best thing for whatever ails you is the arrival of Spring. There's no pill that can remedy the dilemma of dull gray days, wet and cold conditions or a dreary forecast of things to come quite like the approaching Spring.

One of the many attributes of living here in Tennessee is the change of seasons. I love it here. Granted it's not for everyone. But neither is sweet iced tea with a twist of lemon.

Once winter's dismal face slowly fades to sprouting rows of Bradford Pears advancing all over the countryside and the branches of dogwoods screaming spring with their white buds of rejuvenation it puts pep in the step of most anyone.

Hard to be down and out when massive mounds of daffodils help spread the word of a transition taking place. Their fragrance and beauty confirms great days lay ahead. Sweet smell of honeysuckle further confirms the mystery underway here in the Deep South.

Bees buzz in delight, spreading nectar and the word of a world putting hibernation in the rearview mirror. Tell me that's not a sight for sore eyes.

From sore hips and bad backs to the itches of day-to-day life, seems flipping a few pages on the calendar delivers the scratch. I can't imagine winter's dilemma staying around much longer. Spring is on the horizon whenever such things take place.

Just the anticipation of spring seems to jump start positive vibes, pushing away negativity. When the birds serenade us with their sweet songs of joy it's sort of contagious. Perhaps they're just some of God's messengers sent to tell us to get up and get going.

Whenever I hear the distinct mating whistle of a bobwhite quail inquiring about the possibilities or the bellow of a bullfrog from the pond banks of life, I get a peaceful, easy feeling. Creatures are telling us all is well if we just slow down and take the time to listen to nature's progress report. Updated daily, I might add.

In this go-fast world of ours, it seems we're too busy and in too big of a hurry to stop and smell the roses. They're blooming but in the race of life a lot of us fail to observe our surroundings, focusing only on what's in our path of tunnel vision. Seems every time the seasons change, we're caught wondering where the last one went. When did winter depart and when did spring slip in the door? We didn't realize it was here until it was already gone.

In Summer, before we know it a cool breeze fills the air, chasing away heat and humidity as it escorts autumn's silent arrival. The grass turns brown as marching Monarchs fly quietly by on their epic journey, searching for a milkweed pit stop. They're migrating to the Yucatan Peninsula, showing us what renewal and determination is all about despite the obstacles that may lay ahead.

Then up jumps Autumn, just like the Monarchs indicated. The butterflies are gone with the wind but delivered a pictorial transformation as fall drops its majestic spell over the hills and hollows where every color in the rainbow comes out if only for a brief hello.

Summers in the South are an important part of the mix too. Swimming holes and tugs of war with the catfish. Baseball on the backlots. Like the return of an old friend fall creeps in. No fanfare; just a silent arrival.

Once the oaks turn orange and the scaly bark hickories smile bright

yellow and drop their huge acorns it tells us there's something going on that's a bit bigger than we can understand.

Best to take it all in from a peaceful spot where the creek trickles by from deep in the woods. It's a clock informing us life is passing by before our very eyes as are the seasons. Not always easy to find is the stream's origin. Yet we know where it's going. All streams end sooner or later.

As they pass our way best to share it with a loyal friend who cherishes your every heartbeat, be a soulmate or canine companion. Pleasant paths deep in the shady canopy of the woods need to be shared.

Ever hide and watch your dog's face and posture when he's lost your whereabouts? For a moment the look of loss and abandonment collide. A dirty trick but a test of loyalty. Upon discovering you his wagging tail and whimper express forgiveness. A bond rekindled and forged forever, sealed with a lick on the hand.

When the bushy tails bark from high in the trees or the deer taking a drink stops to look you in the eye and twitches that whitetail, it's all better when there's someone there to share it with.

Before frost arrives on the pumpkin and Fall loses its grip, seems winter is sending signs of its impending arrival. Surely not! Where did the time go? Seems like yesterday, we were here at the bend of the creek,



"When the bushy tails bark from high in the trees...it's all better when there's someone there to share it with."

sharing youth with the ones we love long before life's wrinkles arrived.

No doubt there's a higher power at work here. One of the ways I measure time is with hunting dogs. I've been the beneficiary of some great ones. Not sure I was worthy of their love and affection, but Lord knows I tried.

About every 10 to 12 years, I've greeted a new one while crying gut wrenching tears when time took the old ones to a holding spot for me. I've convinced we'll meet again someday, and boy, what stories and wagging tails we'll share.

I won't wander away too far on you here but the changing seasons nowadays seem to be in express mode. Not sure how many more young pups these old bones can escort down the paths and through the meandering creeks.

Every winter I prepare for spring by working on the tackle box and rerigging the favorite crappie poles. Fishing pox is liable to take hold any day now. The only cure is a trip to the lake where hungry fish seem to call my name once spring has sprung.

Once the daffodils and dogwoods bloom, bobwhites whistle, turkeys gobble, sweet honey suckle fills the air...well, you know how it goes. Look for me out yonder. Way out yonder.

If I'm not there I've gone to see where the Monarchs went or where the creek really starts. A bunch of dogs are awaiting my arrival too. With unconditional love, they'll knock me over with "where you been" hugs.

You know the place...where the seasons come and go without saying goodbye.

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The Benefits of GARDENING



By John Watkins

Whoa! Hold up a second. How did it get to be 2026 already? It seems like it was just yesterday that we were worried about Y2K crashing all the computers. Now it seems all we are worried about is if that video of a dog driving a sports car is artificially generated or not!

Thank goodness we don't have to worry about AI taking over our gardens. (Although I think I would welcome any computer that was able to give me a weed-free flower bed!) While there are some very beneficial apps out there that can help with plant identification or what plants are going to do best in your area, the benefits of actually getting out in the garden are almost too many to name. But, as usual, I'm going to give it the old college try.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Let's start with the physical benefits of gardening. No matter what type of gardening you're into, there is always some form of moderate physical activity involved. Whether you're weeding, digging, mowing, or raking leaves, you end up exerting some energy that can enhance your strength and endurance. And with any physical exertion you help build up cardiovascular health.

As we get older, getting out in the garden and exposing ourselves to some good old-fashioned sunshine helps build up vitamin D and calcium which play important roles in bone health, immune functions, and overall well-being.

As far as mental health benefits are concerned, gardening has that in spades as well (see what I did there?). There's an awful lot of us out there that consider gardening to be an excellent form of therapy. Just getting out and engaging with nature can significantly lower stress levels and lead to feelings of peace and contentment.

Watching that favorite rose bush or bed of petunias that you struggled with come into fruition can really boost your self-esteem and give you a great sense of accomplishment.

Gardening can also improve attention span, concentration, and attention to detail. (Just try weeding a flower bed without paying attention and see how that turns out!).

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community gardening can offer a wide range of benefits both personally and for the environment. The act of getting out and engaging with others through gardening encourages teamwork, shared responsibility, and can bridge cultural divides all while contributing to neighborhood pride. There are also a lot of educational opportunities involved with gardening for those that want to learn skills in horticulture, pest management, stewardship, and sustainable living.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

This one really should be a no-brainer. Sure, we all want to have the prettiest landscape on the block, but gardening can mean so much more. Gardens support biodiversity, improve air quality, enhance soil health, and can even help manage stormwater from its destructive ways.

You don't even have to have access to acres of space to make an impact. A patio garden or small plot can produce a fair number of vegetables and when you throw in some flowers to boot, you are well on your way to not only sustaining but helping to beautify the planet!

So remember, gardening is so much more than just a hobby. It can enhance physical fitness, mental health, community involvement, and environmental stewardship. And to think that I used to just view gardening as a way for mom to get us out of the house on a Saturday!

John Watkins is grounds director at Discovery Park of America and resides in Henry County.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ONGOING EVENTS

Popcorn Anyone? – Enjoy a night out at the **Parisian Theatre** with nightly shows on six screens and matinees on Saturday and Sunday. For more information and movie schedules, call 731-642-7171.

No Ice, Just Wood – Enjoy skating at **Paris Wheels Skating** Center. Call 731-642-2245.

Get Artsy – Learn to play an instrument, sing, paint, create pottery and more at **Paris Academy for the Arts**. Visit www.schoolforthearts.com.

Play Inside – The **Paris Civic Center** has an indoor pool, track, weights and fitness machines. Pay by the visit or become a member. Call for more information: 731-644-2517.

Warm Up with a Good Book- W.G. Rhea Paris-Henry County Library always has something going on. Internet/phone classes, children's and teens' craft sessions and movies, and of course, BOOKS galore. Call for more information, 731-642-1702.

FEBRUARY

February – Been fishin' lately? Head out to one of the **Paris Landing State Park Marina Fishing Tournaments**. For more information, contact Rob Markum at 731-641-4475.

February 1 through 28 – Continue to support our **Helping Hand Radio Auction**! Schedule on page 19.

February 1– Head out to **KPAC** for a **Disney-Inspired Afternoon** with the **Madrigals** at 3 pm with a meet & greet to follow the show. Bring the whole family and dress up your little ones as their favorite Disney character. Tickets are $10 at the door, cash only please. For more information, call 731-644-2517.



February 2– **Happy Groundhog Day!** How many more weeks until Spring?

February 5 – Give the "Gift of Life" at the **Lifeline Blood Drive** located First United Methodist Church, Blythe Street, from noon to 6 pm.

February 7– **John Schneider**, American actor and singer, best known as "Bo" Duke from the tv series "The Dukes of Hazzard", shares his stories and live music at KPAC. Tickets are $29.95 advance general admission, $46.87 advance VIP seating, and $103.11 general admission with 6 pm meet & greet. For more information, call 731-644-2517.

February 13– KPAC presents the fun-filled **Disney's Dare To Dream JR** performed by KPAC Young Artists. Tickets at the door and online. For information, call 731-644-2517.



February 13- Get your best gal pals together for a special night at **The Lodge at Paris Landing**. They're hosting a **Galentine's Wine Soiree** from 6-8 pm. Tickets are $50 and include 8 different wine tastings paired with small bites, wine bingo, make your own wine charms, and plenty of Insta-worthy photos For more information, call 731-924-4300.

February 14 – Take your sweetheart out to KPAC for **Valentine's Day** and see **Trial By Fire Tribute to Journey**. For information, call 731-644-2517.

February 16 – **President's Day!** No school in the Paris Special School District or the Henry County School System.

February 24 – Yummy, yummy! The annual **Lion's Club Chili Day** at First Baptist Church Christian Life Center, 11 am-7 pm. For more information, call 731-642-5074.

February 28 – Head out to KPAC to hear award-winning **country music artist Bryan White** for an acoustic evening of music. Tickets are $21.98 and $37.58. For more information, call 731-644-2517.

MARCH

March – Head out fishin' at one of the Paris Landing Marina Fishing Tournaments. For more information, contact Rob Markum at 731-641-4475.

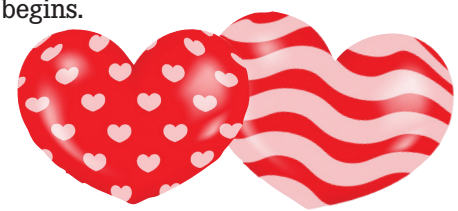
March 4 – **Last day to bid** high and bid often! Call 731-644-1695 to scoop up one last goody from the **Helping Hand Radio Auction**.

MARCH 5 – Help save a life at the **Lifeline Blood Drive**. Located at First United Methodist Church, Blythe Street, from noon to 6 pm.

MARCH 6 – Join **Matt Papa in concert for A Night of American Folk Songs & Hymns** at 7 pm sponsored by First Baptist Church. For more information, call 731-644-2517.

March 17 – May you have the luck o' the Irish today! **It's St. Patrick's Day.**

March 18 – Don't be late...Spring Forward! **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME** begins.







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Now that Old Man Winter is here,

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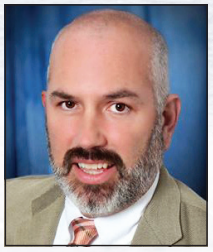
- Slow and steady wins the race, especially in winter. Don't get in a hurry.
- For increased balance, keep your hands free and out of your pockets.
- Keep rock salt and some sand or cat litter on hand. Salt helps melt ice and cat litter or sand can offer temporary traction.
- Plan your steps to the car, office and elsewhere to avoid snowy, icy walkways.
- Look at the bottom of your footwear. Make sure your shoes/boots have good tread.

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