



OZARK COUNTY Times

Share photos
now for *The
Real Ozarks*
magazine

The *Real Ozarks* magazine will be published March 21, and the *Times* staff is looking for photos of people enjoying all that Ozark County and nearby areas have to offer. We're especially interested in photos of residents and visitors enjoying fun activities on the North Fork of the White River and Bryant Creek, on Norfork and Bull Shoals lakes and on trails and in campgrounds throughout the area. Whatever you enjoy doing here – fishing, floating, swimming, hiking, camping, relaxing – we hope you'll share your photos of it.

The magazine is distributed throughout the state in official visitor centers and was redesigned last year to become a practical, appealing guide to all the wonderful activities available in this place we all love. The revised magazine includes trail maps, river floats and lake fun opportunities, scenic-drive routes, camping and lodging information, tips on locals' favorite spots to eat, and descriptions of popular attractions.

Amateur and professional photographers are invited to submit photos to be considered for the magazine. Everyone who submits a photo will have his or her name entered in a drawing for a \$100 cash prize.

Readers and residents are encouraged to review photos on their smartphones and in digital albums and send pictures taken during all seasons of the year. Email them to jessi@ozark-countytimes.com, and be sure to include your name, address and phone number as well as information about the photo's subject. All photos will be attributed to the photographer, but the *Times* asks that you please refrain from using watermarks or logos on the photos.

See **MAGAZINE**,
Page 14

Repairs to be discussed at Tuesday meeting in Gainesville

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT TECUMSEH PARK?



Repair plans for Tecumseh Park on Lake Norfork will be the focus of a public workshop from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at The Center in Gainesville hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mountain Home (Arkansas) project office. The Center is off Highway 5 north at the Gainesville city limits. The park on Highway 160 at Tecumseh is a popular access point for boaters and fishermen; it was heavily damaged in the April 29, 2017, flood of the North Fork of the White River, which flows into the lake at Tecumseh. **Left:** Campsites, restrooms and most of the paved roadway in the park's campground were destroyed by the 2017 flood, as was the boat ramp on the south side of the highway (**above**). At the workshop, displays and maps detailing the park repair plans will be shared, and representatives from the Corps' Mountain Home office will be available to answer questions. Public comments will be accepted in writing during the workshop or may be submitted by email at ceswl-mh@usace.army.mil through Feb. 20. For more information, call 870-425-2700.

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County Times
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Continuing his dream

Young, pregnant widow finds healing, comfort in keeping husband's dream business going



Working to continue what Greg started

Morgan Spoor, now six months pregnant with twins, uses a nail gun to secure boards to a wooden flag for a custom order she was working on last week. Morgan decided recently to reopen the business her husband, Greg, had started before his tragic and unexpected death in a car crash Nov. 29.

Editor's note: Search for "His Dream Creations" on Facebook and Instagram to view the wooden flags and other items made by Morgan Spoor that are available for order. In the future, orders can be placed through the Etsy shop at www.etsy.com/shop/HisDreamCreations; however, the shop is currently in "vacation mode" while Morgan is in the hospital with pregnancy-related complications. She urges customers to keep checking the site in the coming months. "I am determined to get started back up as soon as I can," she said Monday in a message to the Times.

by **Jessi Dreckman**
jessi@ozarkcountytimes.com

Former Gainesville resident Morgan Amyx Spoor has endured a lot of joy and a lot of heartache in her life, but the unexpected and tragic car crash death of her 30-year-old husband Greg three months ago has been the most devastating tragedy she's ever faced.

Now six months pregnant with twins and raising the couple's 5-year-old daughter, Avery, Morgan says she's still trying to find her new normal as she continues to mourn the death of Greg and think about what lies ahead for her future. Friday evening, even that tough situation worsened

See **CONTINUING HIS
DREAM**, Page 14



One of Ashley Pendergrass's black cows with an orange ear tag. On Nov. 29, 2017, Pendergrass reported that 23 head of cattle were missing from his farm near County Road 544 and V Highway in the Caulfield area.

Authorities continue investigation of suspected Pendergrass cattle theft

By Amelia LaMair, amelia@ozarkcountytimes.com

The Ozark County Sheriff's Office and the Missouri State Highway Patrol Rural Crimes Investigative Unit continue to investigate the suspected theft of 23 head of cattle from the Ashley Pendergrass farm between Caulfield and Bakersfield.

Pendergrass last saw his missing cattle on Oct. 18 of last year when he sorted out a load of culls to sell at Ozarks Regional Stockyards in West Plains. "I counted 60 head as they walked out," he said, referring to the cows that were left in the field after loading the others for sale. A couple of weeks later he started feeding hay and noticed that his herd "didn't count out right." He didn't think much of it at first, but his count continued to come up short at subsequent feeding times. That's when he decided to report the cattle as missing. "It's a real bad loss. It's pretty hard to take," said Pendergrass.

Pendergrass did recover four missing cows after a neighbor who spotted them, but 23 head still remain unaccounted for. Although some of his fencing had been damaged by flooding, Pendergrass pointed out that with the drought and winter weather, any escaped cattle would likely stay in nearby hayfields where they could easily graze. He also said his neighbors "are always good to call," and that it was unlikely his cattle would have made it far without being spotted by someone. None of his neighbors reported seeing any suspicious activities, and Pendergrass did not find any fencing that had obviously been cut or any other signs of trespassing.

The cattle are all black, weigh an average of 1,000 pounds and have a brand on their right hip. "People think it looks like a six," said Pendergrass, "but it's actually an upside-down L and an upside-down P." The cattle also have orange numbered ear tags, which were incorrectly reported as being yellow in a bulletin released recently by the Rural Crimes Investigative Unit.

Pendergrass reported the cattle missing on Nov. 29, 2017, but says they could have been taken anytime after Oct. 18.

Pendergrass said area sale barns he has worked with always record brands, ear tags and other identifying features when cattle are sold. "We have cooperation from the local stockyards and are in the process of reaching out to others outside the area," said Ozark County Sheriff Darrin Reed, who added that his office is looking into a couple of leads but has no specific suspect information. "The flyers were sent out all across the county," said Reed, referring to the MSHP Rural Crimes Investigative Unit's bulletin.

"It makes it pretty hard on the producer when they do all the work to properly identify their cattle, and then they come up missing. It's bad on everybody if somebody can just get away with taking them like that," said Pendergrass. While it remains to be seen whether these branded cattle



The missing cattle have this brand on their right hip; it resembles a 6 or a G but is actually an upside-down L and an upside-down P, says owner Ashley Pendergrass.

will be reunited with their owner, agriculture and law enforcement professionals stress the importance of branding livestock. According to the Missouri Department of Agriculture, which is responsible for registering livestock brands, "Branding is one of the oldest and best ways to permanently identify livestock. It serves as an excellent safeguard against livestock theft, loss or dispute." In addition to branding, the Missouri Cattlemen's Association also recommends that producers ask neighbors to help keep an eye on their farm and that they count livestock regularly, lock gates and keep equipment secure and out of view.

A \$1,000 reward is being offered for information leading to an arrest and conviction. Anyone with information should contact Reed at 679-4633 or Sgt. Casey Jadwin at MSHP, 417-469-3121.

Woman injured in collision with cow

Rhonda Marksohn, 52, of Mountain Home, Arkansas, was transported by ambulance to Baxter Regional Medical Center in Mountain Home with minor injuries Saturday after hitting a cow in the roadway on Highway 160 about a half mile east of J Highway.

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol online crash report filed by Trooper J. O. Prater, Marksohn was traveling westbound in a 2008 Kia when she struck the animal at about 11 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3. The vehicle was moderately damaged and was towed from the scene. Marksohn was wearing a seatbelt, but did not have insurance, according to the report.

Website says Ozark County has state's lowest tax burden

Ozark Countians have the lowest tax burden in the state, according to a study released recently by the website SmartAsset.com. In its fourth annual study on places with the lowest tax burdens, SmartAsset calculated the amount of money a person would pay in income, sales, property and fuel taxes in each county in the United States. In Missouri, Ozark County came out at the top of the tax-burden index, meaning taxpayers here are estimated to have the lowest tax burden in the state. Nationwide, Ozark County ranked 587th among all counties. The county with the lowest tax burden nationwide was Yokon Koyukuk, Alaska.

A detailed explanation of the group's means of calculating the findings, along with a nationwide map that shows county rankings, is available at smartasset.com. The Times could not independently verify the website's claim.

Chamber of Commerce events Mardi Gras social Feb. 13, monthly meeting Feb. 14

The Ozark County Chamber of Commerce will hold a Mardi Gras social from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at The Meeting Place on Third Street in downtown Gainesville. The event is free and open to everyone. Organizers say it's planned as a fun-filled evening featuring samples of traditional New Orleans foods, Mardi Gras trivia and a photo booth.

The Chamber will hold its regular monthly meeting at noon Wednesday, Feb. 14, in the training room at Century Bank of the Ozarks on the northeast corner of the Gainesville square.

Men's monthly prayer brunch Feb. 10

The monthly men's prayer brunch will be held at 9 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 10, at Theodosia United Methodist Church on Highway 160 in Theodosia. Area men of all denominations are welcome.

Enjoy a delicious meal with a view of the lake at

COOKIE'S

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Cookies will re-open Friday, February 9, and will be open daily from 7 am to 2 pm.

Thank you for your patience. We are sorry for the inconvenience.

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Do you know of an interesting local story idea on a person, activity or event in Ozark County?
We want to hear about it!

Share your news ideas!

Call 417-679-4641 or e-mail Times editor, Sue Ann Jones, at sueann@ozarkcountytimes.com

CONGRATULATIONS ON REACHING YOUR GOAL!

"Top Dog is awesome!"
-Michael Dodd

MICHAEL DODD

100 MILES

A Note from Debbie, Michael's mom:

"Michael is autistic, and working out at Top Dog has been so great for him. It gives him a sense of accomplishment and helps him stay healthy and active."

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Oak Grove Church

You're invited to

Wasola Community Bible Study

7 p.m. every Tuesday
Coffee and cookies served at 6:45 p.m.

Come and join the community Bible study held at the Oak Grove Church in Wasola

We are currently studying:

Galatians

Oak Grove Church, Wasola
Located 17 miles north of Gainesville on Highway 5
For more information, call
Pastor Mike Vlad at 702-205-0790

OPINION

LEGISLATIVE REPORT by Rep. Lyle Rowland



Greetings from your state Capitol. Last week the House passed to the Senate the following bills:

HB 1484 allows persons who have been, for at least six months, a bona fide member of an organization licensed to conduct bingo to participate in the operation of a bingo game. The Constitution currently requires at least two years of membership prior to participation. This bill removes the statutory restrictions on the advertisement of bingo. This bill will only become effective upon the passage of a constitutional amendment.

HB 1504 requires certain counties to adopt ordinances regulating land use around National Guard training centers.

HB 1617 specifies that the Department of Social Services shall reimburse providers for services provided through telehealth if the providers can ensure that services are rendered meeting the standard of care that would be expected if the services were rendered in person. Telehealth services are the delivery of health care using technology to communicate with a health care provider who is at a different location than the patient.

HB 1665 establishes a visiting scholar's certificate of license to teach.

HB 1769 requires that when a conveyance of real estate is executed by deed, the deed must contain the name of the person that prepared the property description for the deed or reference the recorded source document. This bill creates the offense of filing a false document.

Complete bill information can be found on the House website at www.house.mo.gov

As always, it is a privilege to represent you in state government.

LIFE IS SIMPLE by Jerry Crowover

Finally getting to watch *Gunsmoke*



tainment before bedtime.

My memories of all the above were revived this past week when my wife borrowed my truck to go into town and purchase our first new TV in several years. She had to rearrange the entire living room because the new television hangs on the wall and is bigger than some movie screens I've paid to visit. To quote our president, "It's huuuge."

The new TV set is testimony to our society's advancements in technology. Heck, it doesn't even have a vertical hold knob on it anywhere. The color is amazing, and it has a whole bunch of pixels (whatever those are). Since we still live out in the country, we don't have access to cable services, and since I refuse to pay the exorbitant prices charged by satellite TV, our new giant device relies on a simple antenna in the attic of our house. We now live about 30 miles from the same city that housed the only TV station of my childhood, but, through the wonder of the digital age, we can now get over a dozen different channels — and there's still hardly anything worth watching.

My wife, who is not as cheap as I am, does subscribe to an online streaming service that enables our new "smart TV" to connect to a channel that runs every episode of every TV show that's ever been recorded. So, here it is, almost 60 years after my first introduction to that new-fangled technology, and I find myself confined to one channel again as I spend most evenings watching the life-sized images of Marshal Dillon and Rowdy Yates that I missed when I was a kid.

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New members elected to Extension Council

Six new members were recently elected to the Ozark County Extension Council. The members elected in District 1 – west were Robert Edwards, R. J. Moyers and Marlin Wallace. The members elected in District 2 – east were Lindsay Collins, Stacy Hambelton and Noel Luna.

A news release from the Ozark County Extension office reported "excellent turnout" in the election, which was held Jan. 19-26 at 14 locations throughout the county. A total of 157 ballots were cast: 89 in the west district and 60 in the east district. Six ballots were said to be "spoiled."

Describing recently elected members who have previous experience with the Extension Council in various ways, the news release said Wallace, who serves as Extension Council treasurer, was re-elected to his second two-year term. Edwards, who has been serving the council as an alternate, will now serve his first two-year term, as will retired Extension county program director Hambelton. Along with Moyers, Collins and Luna, they have been elected to serve through February 2020. They join currently serving members Marty Morrison, Travis McConaughy, Justin Strong, Bill Cockrum, Joe Uchtman and Luke Brantingham

The Extension Council guides local educational programming and serves as the University of Missouri Extension's link to community residents.

COURT RECORDS

The following criminal cases, traffic/municipal tickets and infractions were filed in Ozark County court between Tuesday, Jan. 30, and Monday, Feb. 5.

Kokomo Lorane Harden, Gainesville, owner/operator of a motor vehicle without maintaining financial responsibility (vehicle required to be registered) and operating a motor vehicle in a careless and imprudent manner involving an accident. MSHP.

Roger D. Knight, West Plains, assault - third-degree. OCSD.

Rowdy D. Kight, Dora, assault - third-degree. OCSD.

Chance Dobbs, Ava, unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia and pursuing,

taking, killing, possessing or disposing of wildlife illegally. MDC.

Takoma Dobbs, Ava, pursuing, taking, killing, possessing or disposing of wildlife illegally. MDC.

Jennifer G. Winters, Caulfield, possession of any controlled substance other than 35 grams or less of marijuana, possession of marijuana and unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia. OCSD.

Justus S. Wilson, Ava, pursuing, taking, killing, possessing or disposing of wildlife illegally. MDC.

Amy Christina Prentice, Osage Beach, exceeded posted speed limit by 1 to 5 miles per hour. MSHP.

QUILTS

continued from page 2

Martha taught herself to quilt in the 1980s using Bonesteel's unique quilt-as-you-go technique. After retiring in 2001 from Amyx Manufacturing in West Plains, she joined the Dora Quilters; the group still meets weekly, and Martha can often be found on any given Tuesday, sitting around an old-fashioned quilting frame, hand-stitching a quilt top pieced by one of the club members.

Her love of quilting has been passed by Martha to her daughter, Anna Hambelton, who also makes quilts, and her granddaughter, Mandy, who has begun by making rag quilts. Martha's husband, Nova ("Shorty"), has contributed to the family quilting cause by making a quilt frame from PVC pipe, which Martha uses to quilt at home. Her home just happens to be on the farm where she was born; it was her grandparents' farm at that time. Martha still cuts all her pieces the old-fashioned way — with scissors, rather than rotary cutter and ruler — and enjoys the entire quilt process from cutting to binding, with each stitch taken by hand.

Donna's quilting journey was inspired by her love of traditional quilts, coupled with a desire to make them faster. She started by hand quilting and found she could do it — but soon realized she was not patient enough to stay with it. Donna had mastered the use of a sewing machine, having sewn clothing for her family for years. So, when long-arm quilting machines arrived on the scene, Martha encouraged her to give the new method a try.

Donna and her husband, Terry, had moved back to Ozark County after he retired from working at Kraft Foods in Springfield, to the farm where the sisters and their siblings grew up; their home is the one where Donna was born. One of the outbuildings was converted into a quilting studio, and the Lemons' business, Donna's Country Quilts, was born. But it turned out to be Terry who was best at running the long-arm machine!

For the last dozen years or so, the two have worked together; Donna puts the quilts into the quilting frame, and Terry machine quilts the tops. In their busiest year, the couple quilted more than 800 quilt tops for customers all around the Ozarks! In addition, they provide many quilts for benefits and charities to help others. Donna sometimes enjoys sewing unique, custom tops for friends and relatives. She is a member of the Historium Quilt Group and the Dora Country Club, a group led by Virginia McMurtrey.

A legacy of quilts created with old ways and new methods

Both Martha and Donna are active members of Ball Church of Christ, a place that looms large in their heritage, sitting as it does near the site of the old school. They enjoy the history of their family, their homes and their community, and they hope their quilts will be a legacy they leave someday, with Martha's quilts recalling the old ways and Donna's as reinterpretations using today's methods ... the best of both quilting worlds.

Come see dozens of beautiful examples of the sisters' quilts at the Ozark County Historium from now until March 15. The Historium is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday; the exhibit is free and open to everyone. For more information, call the Historium at 417-679-2400.

Teacher Placement Day set for Feb. 9 at MSU-WP

Area residents who are looking for a teaching position for fall 2018 are invited to attend the annual Teacher Placement Day to be held Friday, Feb. 9, in Gohn Hall, 603 W. Main St., on the Missouri State University-West Plains campus. The interviewing and application session is scheduled for 9 to 11:30 a.m., organizers said.

Hosted by the MSU Teacher Education Completion Program, the event offers students who are in their final semester of an education program and education program graduates the opportunity to meet with administrators from and apply for open positions in school districts in the MSU-WP seven-county primary service area (Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Shannon, Texas and Wright counties), as well as with administrators from north-central Arkansas districts.

This free event is open to MSU education program students and graduates, as well as students and graduates of education programs at other area institutions, organizers said. Officials from any area school district who would like to participate in the interview session should pre-register, organizers added.

For more information, call 417-255-7930.

BRIEFS

Retired teachers, school personnel to meet Feb. 13 at The Center

The regular gathering of the Douglas/Ozark County unit of Missouri Retired Teachers and Personnel will be held at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at The Center, on Highway 5 just north of the Gainesville city limits.

Those attending will purchase their own lunch, which on Tuesday will include Thai chicken, Asian rice, vegetable medley, egg roll and gooey butter cake. The price is \$6 for those younger than 60; a \$3.50 donation is requested for those over 60.

All retired teachers and school personnel in the area are invited to join the group for lunch, visiting and a good time. For more information call 679-3712 or 989-0998.

OC retirees, Gainesville classmates to meet Feb. 12 in Springfield

Ozark County retirees, along with a group that calls itself Gainesville Classmates and Friends, will meet for lunch at 1 p.m. Monday, Feb. 12, at Golden Corral on South Glenstone in Springfield. Everyone is invited to come and bring a Valentine for the Valentine's Day exchange.

For more information, call 417-719-4508.

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TIMES PAST

Compiled by Mary Ruth Luna Sparks



Passengers chat as they cross the North Fork of the White River at Tecumseh on the Hodo Ferry in this 1930s photo from the Ozark County Historium’s collection. The late Dorothy Gardner had written on the back of the photo that the passengers included the Gradie Sanders family. The “neighborhood of Hodo Ferry” is mentioned in a Jan. 7, 1913, item in this week’s Times Past as having been hit by smallpox.

Ozark County Times Jan. 7, 1913

County court was in session here Monday and Tuesday making settlement with the Collector and, with the county physician, acted as a County Board of Health. They formulated quarantine regulations against smallpox, and the sheriff is instructed to rigidly enforce these regulations. If the citizens will assist the officers in preventing the spread of the supposed smallpox, it can soon be wiped out. There have been five or six persons in the neighborhood of Hodo Ferry affected with the disease.

Feb. 8, 1918

J. H. Naugle, postmaster at Brixey, tells us that he intends buying war stamps with the money the office makes him. He thinks it would be a good plan for every postmaster to take some such part in the purchasing of War Saving Stamps.

Birda - Hattras Owens cut his foot pretty badly a few days ago while cutting wood.

J. P. Hall is now in France as well as some of the other boys.

Howards Ridge – The singing at M. C. Bushong’s was well attended Sunday night, and everybody

seemed to enjoy themselves. Joe Hicks has bought Will Thompson’s farm.

Lawndale – R. E. Exline and Nathan Lamb made a trip to Dora in their sleigh.

Lee Hamilton ran a gig into his hand, starting at his fingers and running an inch or two toward his wrist, pulling the barbs out through his hand. It is a bad wound.

Feb. 8, 1940

The Bank of Gainesville was broken into Monday night by robbers who used an acetylene torch with which they cut a hole in the vault door through which a man could crawl and then cut a plug out of the top of the safe large enough for a person to reach with his hand into the safe and extract \$2,575.26. ...

The burglars used a jimmy or some other instrument to force the front door of the bank, through which they entered. ... The robbery was staged between 12 and 3 o’clock.

Sam Gilliland, a bookkeeper in the bank, was the first to discover the robbery Tuesday morning when he went to the bank to begin his day.

Feb. 12, 1948

The blacktopping this summer of Hwy. 5 from Gainesville to the Arkansas State Line will bring more

visitors and tourists through this section of the Ozarks than any other single improvement, several persons have pointed out recently. ...

Already several persons are talking about constructing tourist cabins, small eating places and novelty shops along Hwy. 5. ...

The Gainesville Cheese Co., now starting its third year of operation, is the largest single industry in Ozark County from the standpoint of production and service to the county. ...

During 1947 alone, the Gainesville Cheese Co. purchased a total of 6,650,459 pounds of milk from farmers and dairymen through Ozark County. And for this milk, the cheese company paid a total of \$241,799. ...

Mr. A. E. Crewse is general manager of the cheese factory.

Udall – Everyone around here has been nursing the flu bug. The latest are Clarence Zebell, James Hulford, Douglas Sasseen and Judy Hall.

Charlie Hulford helped Paul Rust hang doors Friday.

Willhoit – This bitter cold has brought full-time employment to us country folk. We carry in a load of wood and almost meet ourselves going out with a load of ashes.

We were sorry to learn

Everett Whisnant fell and broke his hip.

Monday the “meter man” came by, and our dream of electric power has finally come true.

Feb. 8, 1968

Center Point – Mrs. Earlene Ledbetter and Mrs. June Hillhouse are attending college at night in West Plains

Pontiac – Dan Morgan left on Tuesday for Little Creek, Virginia, where he will begin a three-weeks survival training program, after which he will be sent to Saigon. Because of the fog at the Springfield airport, his flight was delayed for six hours.

Feb. 10, 1993

The American Red Cross blood mobile collected 45 units of blood during its Gainesville visit last Wednesday.

Two high school students were among the donors, Carrie Winslow of Gainesville High and Randall Beard of Dora High.

Jack Thorne received a four-gallon pin. Receiving three-gallon pins were Paralee Rea, Wendell Daugherty and Robert Copley. J.R. Anderson and Mary Finley received two-gallon pins.

TECUMSEH

by Linnie Ingram

Are you looking for an early spring? I am! I’m ready to be through with winter and have it pass on by and bring us some early spring weather.

Tulips and Easter lilies – or jonquils, as some call them – are indications that spring is coming. They come up through the cold soil and bring us a bouquet of sunshine. I’m looking forward to the tulips and jonquils blooming. I’ll have a yard full of bright yellow. I planted some special jonquils several years ago. And the best thing is, they live on year after year and spread out over the area where they’re planted.

Sympathy is expressed to the family of Delphia Carter. She was 95 and lived in Ozark but formerly lived in Bakersfield. Her funeral was Feb. 2 in West Plains. She and her husband Waco were acquaintances of mine. She belonged to our homemakers club, and her daughter Kathy McFarland helped her serve dinner to us in their home one time.

And sympathy also to the Jimmy Strong family. His wife Laveta was in our Lilly Ridge Friendly Neighbors Club also, and we visited in their home, something I always enjoyed.

How many folks contribute to the Arbor Day Foundation, as I do? I planted the trees I got from them when I joined, and one of them – I think it was a box elder – is growing in my yard now and makes a shade on the west side of my yard. Box elder is a soft wood, not the kind you burn in a wood stove.

My goodness! I woke up this morning to see the snow flying – big flakes. My yard was white with it. The birds were gathering into the feeders where my daughter Kris had put out extra feed. Two big red birds were trying to take over, but the little birds were coming in as they could to get a bite too.

Right now, there are two squirrels that get into the bird feeder. They will tip it over enough so it falls on the ground. Then, after they get what they want, the birds come along and try to get something – when the cats aren’t out there. The cats stay snuggled up on the porch when it’s too cold to raid the birds at the feeder.

I’ve not been able to go to church lately, unfortunately.

I correspond with friends, including Sylvia Carson in North Pekin, Illinois, and Ginger Peters and her son Allen Roebuck in New Jersey. Ginger writes about driving to meet with her friends there occasionally.

I’m very thankful for good memories. My daddy always said it’s a sign you’re growing older when you can remember what happened 50 years ago but can’t remember what happened yesterday. It would be so dull and boring without those good memories.

We thought about going to the dinner at The Center Sunday, but it was just too cold for my daughter Kris and me. I would have enjoyed it, I know, both the food and seeing and visiting with all the people there.

THE CENTER

Menus

Lunch is served daily from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and is open to everyone. The cost is \$6 for those younger than 60; a \$3.50 donation is requested for those over 60. Call 679-4746 to order take-out for 25 cents more.

Wednesday, Feb. 7: birthday lunch: shrimp, Tuscan blend veggies, fresh-baked roll, birthday cake and ice cream. Thursday, Feb. 8: meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, fresh-baked roll, cherry pie. Friday, Feb. 9: fried fish, brown beans, coleslaw, cornbread, cherry chip cake. Monday, Feb. 12: breakfast for lunch, cheese omelet, country sausage, biscuits and gravy, cinnamon roll bread pudding. Tuesday, Feb. 13: Thai chicken, Asian rice, vegetable medley, egg roll, gooey butter cake. Wednesday, Feb.14: bacon-wrapped pork loin, baked potato, Tuscan blend veggies, fresh-baked roll, red velvet cupcake. Thursday, Feb. 15: beef enchilada, corn and black bean fiesta, Scandanavian vegetables, peach cobbler.

Activities

Thursday, Feb. 8: crafters corner 10 a.m., bingo 1 p.m., music session 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9: arthritis exercise class 1 p.m. Monday, Feb. 12: arthritis exercise 1 p.m., bingo 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13: senior tax clinic (call 679-4746 for an appointment). Wednesday, Feb. 14: matter of balance class 10 a.m., board meeting 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15: crafters corner 10 a.m., bingo 1 p.m., music jam session 6 p.m.

OATS

OATS transportation is available to the entire county and is available to anyone regardless of age, income, disability, race, gender, religion or national origin. If you don’t see your area listed, call driver Angela Pleasant, 417-343-0573, for help arranging your ride. For rides from Bakersfield, Caulfield and Dora, call Jean Lawing, 284-7377; from Theodosia and Gainesville, call Mary Piepergerdes, 679-4142. To arrange rides to Springfield, call Lawing or Pleasant.

This is the OATS schedule for February: Each Thursday of the month Caulfield and Bakersfield go to West Plains. Monday, Feb. 12: Pontiac, Gainesville and Theodosia go to Springfield. Tuesday, Feb.13: Theodosia and Gainesville go to West Plains. Monday, Feb. 19: Presidents Day. The office is closed, and no bus operates. Tuesday, Feb. 20: Theodosia and Gainesville go to Mountain Home, Arkansas. Tuesday, Feb. 27: The whole county comes to Gainesville. The Ozark County Food Pantry is open at a special time for OATS riders only.

ZANONI

by Colene Rose

The weather can’t seem to make up its mind – cool a day or two and then it gets warmer. It’s now Sunday evening, and the snow is coming down big time.

One morning when Paul went out to do his feeding there was a big bunch of geese going north. We saw another bunch Saturday evening. We hope this is a sign of early spring.

We are still having people out of church due to being sick.

I talked to Tracy Morrison Russell, who now lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It was 68 degrees there.

Anita Eacret’s daughter Elaine and her friend from Kentucky were with Anita at church Sunday.

Doug Jordan, our eye doctor in Branson, came over, and he and Paul looked at a place to doze for a food plot. He is in the office where Tom Morrison has his practice.

Our sympathy and prayers are with the Freda Loftis and Jimmy Strong families.

Everyone have a good week. I don’t think it’s hardly time to begin thinking about gardening yet.

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GHCC

by Jami Bridges

To start off the week for Monday, we had sewing club. We’re currently working on embroidered blocks for a quilt. Monday afternoon, we celebrated three residents’ and one staff member’s birthday, enjoying red velvet cake and fruit punch at the party.

Tuesday, we had some special visitors: Ellen Collins, Laura Hannaford and Autumn Hannaford brought two baby goats for everyone to see. We were also joined by two therapy dogs. The therapy teacher, Brenda Stone, came with Brandi Dunnerman, who brought her dog Bubba, and Cheri Shultz who brought her dog Jeannie. After lunch Debbie Cobb joined us for Bible study.

We kicked off Wednesday by playing dominoes then had our monthly memorial service.

I did manicures for the ladies who wanted their nails done on Thursday. To wrap up the day, we played a fun game of bingo.

On Friday, Brandi Dunnerman was back with her therapy dog Bubba, Cheri Shultz came with Jeannie, and Brenda Stone stopped by to see us again, bringing along her dog Sno to join the other two therapy dogs. Everyone really enjoyed them being here. To wrap up Friday, we played dominoes and watched movies.

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MDC photo

MDC's feral hog strike team removed a total of 6,567 feral hogs in 2017. This photo was taken in Iron County in southeast Missouri.

MDC and partners eliminate more than 6,500 feral hogs in Missouri's in 2017

By the Missouri Department of Conservation

The Missouri Department of Conservation's feral hog strike team eliminated a total of 6,567 feral hogs from the state in 2017; the hogs were removed by MDC, in cooperation with its partner agencies and private landowners. In 2016, 5,358 feral hogs were removed.

Crews removed 2,858 feral hogs in southeast Missouri, which is where the highest density of feral hogs occurs. The Ozark region, which includes Ozark County, removed 2,576, and the Southwest region removed 932. One hundred or fewer feral hogs were moved from the state's other regions.

Mark McLain, MDC's feral hog elimination team leader, said the overall success in 2017 "can be attributed to our strategic approach to eliminating populations of feral hogs."

McLain said it's essential that the public understand why feral hogs must be eliminated.

"This is a destructive, invasive species that doesn't belong here; they're not a native species," McLain said. "They out-compete native wildlife for habitat and food. For example, places with a lot of feral hogs will see their wild turkey and deer populations diminish."

McLain said feral hogs also have the potential to carry diseases that can spread to humans, pets and livestock. He hopes the message that hunting is not an effective method for eliminating feral hog populations is starting to catch on.

"For over 20 years, the unregulated taking of

feral hogs was allowed in Missouri, during which time our feral hog population expanded from a few counties to over 30 counties," he said.

In 2017, MDC, the Corps of Engineers and the LAD Foundation established regulations against feral hog hunting on lands owned and managed by these three organizations.

"A persistent piece of this story is continued illegal releases of feral hogs, which establishes populations and further spreads the problem," McLain said. "This is illegal, and when caught, those who release feral hogs face hefty fines."

McLain said MDC and its many partners are committed to eliminating feral hogs from Missouri. More than 30 government, agricultural and wildlife groups have partnered with MDC to achieve that goal.

Other factors in the success of the feral hog elimination effort include MDC's "Report, don't shoot" message to encourage trapping, prohibiting the take of feral hogs on conservation areas and a strong public awareness campaign.

McLain said landowners are responding to the campaign, which is centered on the knowledge that hunting feral hogs is not an effective way to eliminate them. He said more landowners are starting to understand, and are seeing, that hunting feral hogs pushes them onto neighboring property, which causes problems for their neighbors. When neighboring landowners try to control feral hogs through hunting, the

hogs simply travel back and forth between the properties, escaping and causing more damage. MDC now says trapping with no hunting interference is the best method to eliminate them.

"They're [landowners] reporting feral hog signs and coming to us for help, which is exactly what we hoped would happen," McLain said. "We help by providing technical advice, on-site visits, loaning equipment and training of the trapping and removal process."

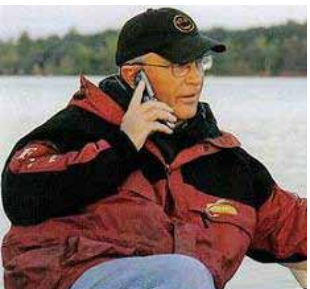
MDC officials say estimates of economic loss due to feral hogs from 10 years ago in the U.S. were at greater than \$1.5 billion in damage per year. Since there are more hogs today, this total is likely higher now. Feral hogs damage property, agriculture and natural resources by their aggressive rooting of soil in addition to their trampling and consumption of crops as part of their daily search for food.

Feral hogs have expanded their range in the U.S. from 17 to 38 states over the past 30 years. Their populations grow rapidly because feral hogs can breed any time of year and produce two litters of one to seven piglets every 12 to 15 months. Feral hogs are also known to carry diseases such as swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, trichinosis and leptospirosis, which are a threat to Missouri agriculture and human health.

To report feral hog sightings or damage, go online to mdc.mo.gov/feralhog.

NORFORK LAKE FISHING REPORT

By Tom Reynolds, STR Outfitters



Right now the Norfolk Lake water temperature is in the low 40s and will stay that way for the next several weeks. Once we start getting some consistent south winds we should see a quick warm-up.

We are experiencing the normal winter shad kill and seeing thousands of small 1-inch threadfin shad dying along the shoreline. Small threadfin shad cannot tolerate water temperatures in the low 40s very long. The good news is that the shad kill generates tremendous opportunity for catching trout on the White and North Fork rivers. Throw a small silver spoon, and you will have lots of action.

The stripers have gone into their February hiding routine that they seem to disappear to every February, so if you want to catch one, try going up a creek with a good water flow. This time of year on the lakes and rivers in Tennessee they catch stripers in 30 feet of water or less. Here I would look at Bennett's Bayou or north of the state line in Missouri.

Historically, the largest winter stripers are caught at the Highway 160 bridge at night throwing bucktail jigs. I plan on spending my February chasing walleye and crappie. Right now they are catching both off brush piles using small jigs and spoons. I will be fishing up near Udall using live bait for walleye and long-line trolling for crappie in the creeks off the main lake like Bennett's, Pigeon Creek and Big Creek. Lots of big crappie are caught trolling small jigs and minnows.

Small farm conference is set for March 8-9 at WP Civic Center

A "Bringing Back the American Small Farm 2018" conference will be held March 8-9 in the West Plains Civic Center, 110 St. Louis St. in West Plains. The Small Business and Technology Development Center hosted by Missouri State University-West Plains, the Ozark Farmers Agriculture Cooperative, the University of Missouri Extension and the city of West Plains are teaming up to present the third annual conference.

Activities and presentations are scheduled for 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, organizers said.

This year's conference will feature Joel Salatin and family from Polyface Farm in Swoope, Virginia. The Salatins have led the clean food, know-your-farmer, animal welfare and living farming movements since their inception.

Registration is now open for the exclusive presentation of "Polyface You" on the morning of March 8; call 417-255-7966 for details.

The conference also will feature 30 addi-

tional workshops featuring experts on such topics as beekeeping, no-till organic farming for improving soil and plant health, fall/winter farming extension, high and low tunnels/greenhouses for year-round production, low input cost farming, tapping trees for syrup, soap making, agri-tourism for additional income, blacksmithing, other ways to create income from small acreage, and how to contribute to the regional food supply using whatever land resources are available, organizers said.

Event sponsors include Community First National Bank, FCS Financial, Hirsch Feed and Farm Supply, Landmark Bank, Morgan County Seeds, Richards Brothers, Toyota of West Plains, Ozark Radio Network, West Plains Bank & Trust Company, West Plains Daily Quill and USA Prepares Radio.

For more information or to register for the conference, visit <http://AmericanSmallFarm.com> or contact event coordinator Patrice Jennings at 417-293-0590.

Hunter James Ratliff



Austin Ratliff and Kendra Johnson of Gainesville are the parents of a baby boy, Hunter James Ratliff, born Jan. 27, 2018, at Ozarks Medical Center in West Plains. He weighed 8 pounds, 2 1/2 ounces, and was 20 inches long. His grandparents are Charles and Sondra Clark, and James and Jennifer Ratliff, all of Gainesville.

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RECORDS

OBITUARIES

Delphia Carter, 95

Funeral services for Delphia Carolyn Carter, 95, of Ozark, formerly of Bakersfield, were held Feb. 2, 2018, at Robertson-Drago Funeral Home in West Plains. Mrs. Carter died Jan. 29 at Mercy Hospital in Springfield.

She was born Feb. 9, 1922, at Elijah, the daughter of Ben and Edna Grisham Hardin. After graduating from Bakersfield High School, she married her sweetheart, Waco Carter, on May 20, 1942, at Pottersville. She moved with her soldier husband to his military base in Tampa, Florida, where they resided until his deployment to the European front during World War II. While he was away, she lived with her parents in Elijah and her parents-in-law in Udall. After the war, the Carters made their home in Bakersfield, where Mrs. Carter was a full-time homemaker and mother of two children. Eventually, they moved to a farm on the North Fork of the White River near Dawt, where they farmed and resided until they retired and moved to Nixa.

Mrs. Carter loved gardening, raising flowers, cooking and hand crafts. She was a lifelong member of the Church of Christ. She will be sadly missed by her family, friends and all who knew her.

She is survived by two children, Waco Carter Jr. and wife Monika of Merritt Island, Florida, and Kathy McFarland and husband Jerry of Ozark; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and a host of beloved nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; two sisters, Luella McCoy and Joyce Fravel; and three brothers, Elvis, Eldon and Joe Hardin.

Burial was in the Bakersfield Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Bakersfield Cemetery and may be left at the funeral home. Online condolences may be expressed at robertsondrago.com.

Robertson-Drago Funeral Home, West Plains, directors.



Jimmy Strong, 86

Funeral services for Ozark County native Jimmy Strong, 86, of Gainesville were held Feb. 6, 2018, at the Gainesville Church of Christ with Halbert Smith officiating. Mr. Strong died Feb. 4 at the Good Samaritan Society home in Mountain Home, Arkansas.

He was born Jan. 27, 1932, near Luna, the son of Lisses and Ethel Pitcock Strong.

On April 16, 1953, in Kansas City, he married Laveta Evans, also of Ozark County. The couple made their home on a farm east of Gainesville with their three children.

On Jan. 27, Mr. Strong celebrated his 86th birthday surrounded by family and friends. When asked recently what one accomplishment in his life he was proudest of, he responded with “starting the Strong turkey farm.”

When his children were young, he was actively involved in the local 4-H clubs. He cherished his time with family and friends. For the last few years, one of his favorite activities was going for drives through the countryside; many family members have fond memories of sharing this time with him. His many other interests included traveling, gardening, working jigsaw puzzles, crafting and food.

He is survived by his three children and their spouses, Penny James and husband Jerry of Raymore, Tandy Strong and wife Theresa, and Sandy Strong and wife Cindy, all of Gainesville; six grandchildren, April Lynne and husband Matt, Justin Strong and wife Marsha, Nathaniel James, Sherrie Walker, Julie Strong and Leci Strong; eight great-grandchildren; one brother, Carl Strong of Republic; three sisters, Mary Lutz of Holden, Marcella Crawford and Louella Dutton and husband Jim, all of Mountain Home; brothers- and sisters-in-law Lyndell Strong, Geneva Froman, Velma Strong, Shearl Evans, Lavonne Stone, Ronnie Evans and wife Vicky and Delores James; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, four brothers, an infant sister and an infant grandson.

Burial was in the Sallee Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Sallee Cemetery or Gainesville Church of Christ. Arrangements by Clinkingbeard Funeral Home, Gainesville.



Junior Ralph Anderson, 91

Junior Ralph Anderson, 91, of the Howards Ridge community near Gainesville, died peacefully on Feb. 4, 2018, at the Gainesville Health Care Center in Gainesville. No local services are planned at this time.

Mr. Anderson was born March 3, 1926, in Mammoth, the son of Myrtle and Elmer Anderson. In 1944, he moved to St. Louis, where he met Dorothy Lee Stone from Bakersfield. They married in 1947. Mr. Anderson retired from McDonnell Douglas Aircraft as a machinist after 33 years’ employment. He and his wife moved to Howards Ridge in 1990.

He gave his life to Jesus Christ at the age of 32 and was a faithful and loyal servant of the Lord. He was known for his strong work ethic. He loved traveling to South Texas with his wife and spending the winter months in their RV. He will truly be missed by all.

He is survived by Dorothy, his wife of 70 years; two sons, Gary Anderson and wife Nancy of St. Peters, and Ricky Anderson of the home place in Howards Ridge; three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents and and brothers Travis, Hershel and Bill Anderson.

Arrangements by Clinkingbeard Funeral Home, Gainesville.



Imogene Belcher, 79

Funeral services for Imogene Belcher, 79, of West Plains, were held Jan. 31, 2018, at Crider Church of Christ in Caulfield. Mrs. Belcher died Jan. 27 at Ozarks Medical Center in West Plains.

She was born July 27, 1938, in Ozark County, the daughter of Tommy J. and Clara Edith May Collins. On Nov. 13, 1970, at Crider, she married Walter Belcher.

Mrs. Belcher loved her family, her grandchildren and her dog. She enjoyed gardening, flowers, cooking, sewing and working puzzles. She was a member of Crider Church of Christ.

She is survived by her husband, Walter; one daughter, Bonnie Bauer and husband Albert; two granddaughters, Tracy Mahan and husband Micheal and Cindy Boatright; five great-grandsons, Tyler, Logan and Mason Mahan and Daniel and Dustin Boatright.

She was preceded in death by her parents; one great-grandson, Jaxson Mahan; three sisters and one brother.

Burial was in the Ledbetter Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Ledbetter Cemetery and may be left at the funeral home. Online condolences may be expressed at robertsondrago.com.

Robertson-Drago Funeral Home, West Plains, directors.



Drusilla Jean ‘Dru’ Webster, 82

Graveside services for Drusilla Jean “Dru” Webster 82, of The Dalles, Oregon, were held Jan. 19, 2018, at IOOF Three-Mile Road Cemetery in The Dalles. Mrs. Webster died Jan. 11 in Oregon.

She was born Nov. 11, 1935, in Oakland, Arkansas, the daughter of Thomas Eugene and Brooxie Violet Taylor. She graduated from Gainesville High School in 1952.

On July 5, 1952, she married Waldo George “Bo” Webster, and they lived in Gainesville. They had four children, and Mrs. Webster often said that her biggest accomplishment was raising her family. She and her husband also acted as foster parents for many other children in need.

Mrs. Webster worked as a seamstress, and when her children were almost grown, she decided to further her education and enroll in nursing school; she earned her R.N. degree in 1982. She worked as a registered nurse at Mid-Columbia Medical Center, where she was well-regarded by fellow nurses, doctors and patients; she retired in 1993.

She was an avid reader and also enjoyed extensive traveling with her husband, especially in the U.S. She also enjoyed sewing, quilting, knitting, crocheting and cooking for her family and friends. She loved playing games of spite and malice or hand-and-foot. She will be missed by many.

She is survived by her children David, Larry and Kathy; her grandchildren Shawn, Kristina and Kara; and her great-grandchildren Tabitha and Ceara.



She was preceded in death by her son John and her husband.

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Freda Marie Friend Loftis, 82

Graveside funeral services for Freda Marie Friend Loftis, 82, of Gainesville, were held Feb. 5, 2018, in the Loftis Cemetery with Milan Chisam officiating. Mrs. Loftis died Feb. 1 at Gainesville Health Care Center.

She was born Oct. 7, 1935, the daughter of Harrison and Iva Lawson Friend. On Aug. 10, 1949, she married H. R. “Sonnie” Loftis. She worked for 30 years at Rawlings Sporting Goods in Ava, mostly sewing shoulder pads. She enjoyed gardening, canning and cooking. She loved her family and was a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother.

She is survived by her daughter, Nancy Steele and significant other Kenny Pickett of Gainesville; her daughter-in-law Katherine Loftis of Gainesville; grandsons Matt Woodward of Moberly, Brian Loftis and wife April of Hollister; granddaughter Heather Coyle and husband Steve of Cuba, New Mexico; seven great-grandsons and nine great-granddaughters; three great-great grandchildren; one brother, Edd Friend and wife Ina of Noble, sisters Fern Cantwell and Polly Ousley, both of Ava, Peggy Robbins and husband Bob of Gainesville and Maxine DeBord of Princeville, Illinois; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Sonnie Loftis; her son, Cecil Loftis; one grandson, Brad Loftis; six half-sisters; two half-brothers; four brothers and three sisters; and many nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Loftis Cemetery or to Fair Haven Children’s Home.

Arrangements by Clinkingbeard Funeral Home, Gainesville.



SHERIFF’S REPORT

To contact the Ozark County Sheriff’s Department or other emergency-responding agencies here, call 679-4633. In an emergency, dial 911.

Jan. 29

3:44 a.m. – Medical: 84-year-old female fell. Ozark County Ambulance responded. Patient transported to Ozarks Medical Center in West Plains.

9:33 a.m. – Suspicious vehicle: a car has been parked near Deb & Lou’s Café on the Gainesville square for two days with someone sleeping in it. Handled by OCSD officer. Vehicle’s battery is dead; it should be moved in a couple of hours.

9:45 a.m. – Trailer house on fire on County Road 346. Caulfield Volunteer Fire Department responded with mutual aid from Tecumseh and Bakersfield VFDs. Red Cross and Howell-Oregon

Electric also dispatched.

10:14 a.m. – Medical: well-being requested check on homeowner. OCA responded. Patient transported to OMC.

10:30 a.m. – Caller reported a stolen gun. OCSD took report.

3:41 p.m. – Unspecified medical. OCA responded. Patient was transported to Baxter Regional Medical Center in Mountain Home, Arkansas.

3:49 p.m. – Suspicious vehicle reported on County Road 578: teal-colored Alumina; driver is hiding. OCSD responded; unable to locate.

9:44 p.m. – Caller said a man dressed in camo came onto her front porch but left before she could find out what he wanted. OCSD responded; checked OK.

9:45 p.m. – Stop sign was reported to be lying in middle of roadway at Highway 5 north and

County Road 833; unsure if vehicle is nearby that hit it. OCSD rendered assistance; officer did not find a stop sign down in the area but did see a litter pick-up sign that is not in roadway.

10:44 p.m. – Medical: 43-year-old female is experiencing dizziness and is unable to speak. OCA and Lick Creek VFD responded. Patient was transported to BRMC.

Jan. 30

1:03 a.m. – Medical: 52-year-old female has infected leg wound. Patient was transported to BRMC.

12:10 p.m. – Tree was reported across power line south of W Highway. Fire at that site is out, but another fire at Highways W and 5 south has been sparked by power line. Timber Knob VFD responded with Pontiac and Gainesville VFDs in mutual aid.

12:45 p.m. – Prisoner

transport: Hanna Schaum, Stone County Jail.

1:04 p.m. – Suspicious person reported at Ozark Plaza Motel on Highway 160: 5’2” male, 100 pounds, asking owner if he knew anybody who sold drugs. Man was driving red car with “Mopar” on the side. No front plates on the vehicle. Subject arrested.

5:10 p.m. – Well-being / security check requested on County Road 850. OCSD responded. Unable to locate. Officer is going to check for subject’s vehicle at another residence on the same road.

6:20 p.m. – Verbal domestic reported; caller said father without custody took off with child.

7:13 p.m. – Runaway teen from Pulaski County, Kentucky, reported at Gainesville High School. OCSD rendered assistance.

See Sheriff, Page 12

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SCHOOL

2018 Gainesville Homecoming

Noah Britt and Aspyn Britt crowned king and queen



Photos/Karla Smith

2018 Gainesville Homecoming court

Members of Gainesville's 2018 Homecoming court are pictured following the coronation ceremony Friday, Feb. 9: Front, from left: crown bearer Jaxon Headrick and flower girl Jayda Powell. Seated: freshmen attendant Katelyn Burke, sophomore attendant Lori Ellison, junior attendant Audrey Lovan, 2018 Homecoming Queen Aspyn Britt, senior queen candidates Annie Noah, Sierra Heriford and Lisa Ray; (standing) Malakye Ray, Jalen Evans, Cody Donley, 2018 Homecoming King Noah Britt, and king candidates Cole Hershberger, Javy Rosas and Jack Harris. At right, 2018 Homecoming King Noah Britt and Queen Aspyn Britt. The two are cousins. Noah is the son of April Britt and Jim Britt, Aspyn is the daughter of Gene and Penny Britt.



Gainesville Bulldogs bring record to 14-8 after wins over Norwood and Sparta



Gainesville senior Brodie Chapman drives around a Norwood defender at Friday night's Homecoming game.

The Gainesville Bulldogs hosted Sparta and Norwood last week and added two wins to their record in front of packed crowds of spirited fans.

"We had a great week," said GHS head coach Matt Powell. "We played very well and found a way to win against Seymour at the end. Norwood was a fun game and an overall fun night with it being senior night and homecoming."

Tuesday, Jan. 30, the Seymour Tigers visited Gainesville and were beaten 33-32. Garrett Morgan and Brandon Poe led the scoring for the Bulldogs with 11 and 10 points, respectively. Other players scoring for Gainesville were Jaxon Britt 6, Wyatt Wilson 4 and Brodie Chapman 2. Wilson led in rebounds with 9 and had 2 blocks.

With a week of homecoming festivities behind them, the team was ready for Norwood Friday night and defeated the Pirates 68-56, led by seniors Brodie Chapman, Brandon Poe, Wyatt Wilson and Justin Wallace.

Chapman scored 24 points, had 6 assists, 4 rebounds and 1 steal. Poe added 15 points, pulled down 7 rebounds and had 1 block, 1 assist and 1 steal. Morgan scored 12 points and pulled down 6 rebounds. Wilson added 10 points, led in rebounds with 11 and had 2 assists and 1 block. Wallace scored 2 points and had 2 rebounds. Junior John Hossman scored 5 points and pulled down 1 rebound.

"I can't say enough good things about these seniors. I'm proud of the way they finished their career at home. We look forward to the next couple of weeks and districts," said Powell.

The Bulldogs traveled to Fordland Tuesday. Results of that game were unavailable at press time. The team heads to Mansfield Friday and to Hartville Tuesday.

Ozark Countians named to MSU-WP honor lists

Several Ozark Countians were included when Missouri State University-West Plains recently announced its chancellor's list and dean's list honorees for the fall 2017 semester. To qualify for the MSU-WP chancellor's list, students must have earned a 4.0 grade point average for 12 or more credit hours taken during the semester. Students who maintain a 3.5 to 3.99 grade point average for 12 or more hours are recognized on the dean's list.

Chancellor's list

Ozark County-area residents named to the MSU-WP chancellor's list were Mariah J. Lane, Alyssa N. Matherly, Baylea D. O'Dell, Dameon L. Shaw and Jeffrey D. Stuart, all of Caulfield; Kierstan M. Snider of Dora; Whitney N. Nash and Nicholas D. Woodward of Gainesville; and Alyssa J. Dillon of Tecumseh.

Dean's list

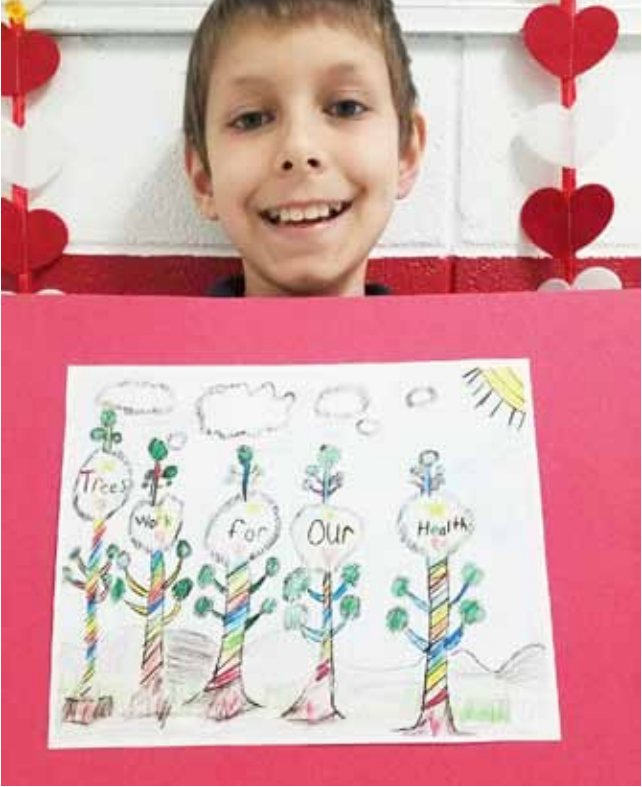
Ozark County-area residents named to the MSU-WP dean's list were Zoey E. Guffey and Haley C. Yeager of Bakersfield; Lana M. Church of Brixey; Shae N. Roberts, Makala D. Trail and Tressa M. Williams, all of Caulfield; Travis B. Hathcock of Gainesville; and Sarah E. Evans and Seth W. Evans of Tecumseh.



Photo submitted

Gainesville hosts first archery tournament Saturday

The Gainesville archery team, shown practicing recently y in the Gainesville Elementary School gym, will host its first-ever archery tournament from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10, at the elementary school. The public is invited to attend. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for students. Organizers expect 76 archers from five area schools to participate in the tournament. Half of Gainesville's archers will shoot at 9 a.m., and the rest at 2 p.m. The team is coached by Greg Lowder, pictured above right, and Melinda Peirce.



Arbor Day poster winner

Lutie student Tyler Conkey's poster was chosen recently as one of the top 12 in the state in the annual Missouri Arbor Day poster contest. This year's theme was "Trees Work for Your Health." The contest, sponsored each year in partnership with the Missouri Community Forestry Council, Missouri Department of Conservation and Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, is open to fifth graders around the state.

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ANTIQUES/CLASSICS 807

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2 -1946 Dodge Panels "Restore/ Rat Rods". Good project. I have removed all fenders, doors, grills, hoods and stowed them in the back for weather protection. Chrome for grills. No motors or transmissions. 1 clean Mo. title. \$2000 firm 417-284-9996. tf

ATV 809

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AUTOMOBILES 810

1996 Honda Passport v-6, auto, good condition \$1,700 679-4355. tf

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1992 Cadillac Eldorado. 117,000 miles, \$500 new tires with less than 100 miles. Paint & interior is worn but good, solid, heavy car. Body is excellent. Runs great but does have electrical issue. \$1800 417-284-9996. tf

2004 Pontiac Sunfire. \$1,500. Tecumseh area. 913-634-3624. tf

Chrysler Pacifica 2004 Silver with black leather interior, 3rd row seating, good tires, chrome wheels, tow package, roof rack, power memory seats, cd player, information display, auto stick, all wheel drive, new alternator, new transmission less than a year ago. \$3,100 417-712-1313. tf

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1999 Ford Taurus SE station wagon, automatic, good condition, new inspection, \$1,500 679-4355. tf

1996 Toyota Avalon. Good car. High mileage. 417-712-1249. tf

2012 Buick Regal, turbo 2, 4-door, crimson red with leather seats and sunroof. 40,000 miles \$14,000. Call Tim at 284-3739. tf

MOTORCYCLES 820

V.W. Trike. Fiberglass body. Very few miles, great tires and Chevy disc breaks. Was asking \$5,300 now \$4,800 or make offer. 417-679-3916. Gainesville. tf

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TRUCKS, 4X4S & SUVs 830

2004 Ford 4x4 1 ton Diesel 1,000 miles. Good shape. \$15,950 679-4429. tf

2002 Ford Explorer XLT 4x4, 115,300 miles, cloth interior, 5 seats, cd/tape, heat air, power windows and driver seat, very clean, almost new tires .. \$4500 or OBO. Call 417-251-0167. tf

2005 Chevrolet Avalanche LT Z71 4WD. This is a excellent running and driving vehicle. Lots of room for hauling cargo out of the elements. This unit has leather seats, power windows, power locks, adjustable foot pedals, heated seats, power seats, sunroof, memory seats, XM satellite radio, CD player, OnStar(available), nearly new set of Cooper Discovery A/T3 and so much more! \$9,950 Nash Auto Sales 679-4111. tf

1999 Chevrolet Tahoe LT 4 door 4wd suv. This vehicle is very clean! Nearly new tires. This unit is extremely clean on the inside as you can see in the pictures. The carpet looks new. This will be a great vehicle for a family or anyone that needs lots of room for passengers or cargo. The 4 Wheel Drive works great. It has Cd Player, cassette player, leather seats, power seat, power windows, power locks, cruise control and many more options. \$4,450 Nash Auto Sales 679-4111. tf

2005 Chevrolet Tahoe LT 4 Door 4 Wheel Drive SUV. This is a very good running and driving vehicle. It's also a great looking SUV. This body style of Tahoe is one of the absolute best riding Tahoe's Chevrolet ever built. They are very easy to park compared to other full size SUV's, as well. This one has third row seating for extra passengers. It has all kinds of options like dual front airbags, locking differential, power steering, power steering, power windows, Onstar(available),heated and power mirrors, keyless remote, 6 disc CD changer and lots more! \$8,950 Nash Auto Sales 679-4111. tf

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2007 Chevrolet Silverado Extended Cab LTZ 4 Door 4 Wheel Drive. This is a very good looking truck. It has a 5.3L V8 engine and an automatic transmission. It has a great set of tires. The pickup has plenty of room and everything functions as it should. It has all kinds of features and options and some of those include A/C, CD player, cruise control, daytime running lights, power locks, power windows, heated power seats, OnStar, XM Radio, speed sensitive volume control, subwoofer and so much more. \$11,950 Nash Auto Sales 679-4111. tf

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2002 Chevrolet Tracker 4 Door 4 Wheel Drive SUV. Runs and drives very well. It has a 4 cylinder engine and an automatic transmission. The 4 wheel drive works great. There is a lot of room in this vehicle for cargo or passengers. It has cloth interior, front bucket seats, dual front airbags, Cd Player, roof rack, cold air conditioning and more. \$3,950. Nash Auto Sales 679-4111. tf

1994 Ford Explorer XL 4WD 2 Door SUV. Runs very well. Good set of tires with plenty of tread remaining. 4.0L V6 engine. Automatic engine. Good vehicle for an everyday driver, get you to your favorite fishing hole or a great vehicle for this winter on slick snowy roads. \$1,450. Nash Auto Sales, 679-4111. tf

2007 Chevrolet Suburban LTZ 4WD. It has a 5.3L V8 engine and a 4 speed automatic transmission. The interior looks great and is really clean. The leather seats are in great condition and very comfortable. The middle row seats are bucket captain chairs just like the front seats. It has a very good set of tires.This Suburban has a ton of features and options and some of those are power sunroof, power win-

dows, power locks, keyless remote entry, remote start, XM Radio, OnStar is available, power lift gate, backup camera, heated and auto dimming power mirrors with integrated turn signals, 12 way power driver and passenger seats, cold A/C, rain sensing wipers, in dash 6 disc CD changer, heated seats, bose sound system, running boards, front and side curtain airbags, subwoofer, trailer hitch, polished aluminum wheels and a whole lot more! \$14,950 Nash Auto Sales, 679-4111. tf

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SCHOOL



Lutie students compete at FBLA Districts

Members of Lutie High School FBLA brought home 15 medals from the District 14 Conference in West Plains Friday, Feb. 2. Pictured, from left, Jimmi Donley, third place introduction to business communications; Chey Clinton, first place introduction to business presentation; Rose Scheider, fifth place help desk; Chris Kellett, fourth place agri business; Michala McCullough and Aliya Coons, third place public design and first place social media campaign; Elizabeth Pansano, second place impromptu speaking and third place introduction to business procedure; Alexis Amos and Cheyanne Kellett, second place digital video production; Morgan McFarlin and Tori Broyles, second place advertising, fourth place public service announcement and second place advertising; Madison Kennedy, fourth place introduction to public speaking. Not pictured: Abraxas Collins, fifth place advertising and fourth place introduction to business communication.



Head Start students visit Times office

Times reporter Jessi Dreckman, left, hands out reporter's notebooks to Gainesville Head Start students and teaching assistant Nancy Simpson, back, during their recent visit to the Times office. The students visited businesses in the area to learn about different occupations.

Gainesville Lady Bulldogs fall to Spokane, defeat Dora

Gainesville's Lady Bulldogs traveled to Spokane Monday, Jan. 29 and fell to the Lady Owls, 48-36.

"Spokane seemed to execute well and got the ball to their post player, which gave us trouble," said GHS coach Morris Jenkins. "We never seemed to be able to string together any good offensive possessions, you have to give credit to Spokane's defense. We needed to do a better job of being in attack mode on offense. Spokane got to the free throw line several times more than us, which I attribute to them getting us out of position defensively with the ball movement and play."

Players scoring for Gainesville were Cassie Carlo 9, Aspy Britt 8, Shayla Wages 7, Elizabeth Kinworthy 6 and Sleby Smith and Erin McKinzie with 3 each.

Wages led in rebounds with 5 and Britt led in assists with 6.

The Bulldogs traveled to Dora to take on the Lady Falcons and came home with a hard-fought 57-41 win. "This was a good win vs. a solid Dora team," said Jenkins. "We were able to create some good scoring opportunities with our defense, which is a big plus. We are still hoping to improve at the free throw line, but on a positive note, we did get to the line several times. The girls seemed to have good team energy which is vital to playing well."

Britt led the scoring with 30 points, followed by fellow senior Shelby Smith with 12. Shayla Wages was also in the double digits with 10 points. Other players scoring were Carlo 6, Natalie Kiger 4, Kinworthy 3 and McKinzie 2. Smith, Carlo and Britt pulled down 6 rebounds each. Britt and Smith led the assist column with 7 and 5, respectively. Smith led in steals with 3.

The Lady Bulldogs host Seymour Thursday, Feb. 8 and Norwood Monday, Feb. 12, which is their last home game.

SHERIFF'S REPORT continued from page 8

Jan. 31

5:53 a.m. – Reporting party said a male subject came to his house on Highway 181, beating on the door, yelling and screaming and threatening to burn down the house. OCSD officer spoke with reporting party in OCSD lobby. No report filed.

8:14 a.m. – Grass fire reported at Highways V and 160. Caulfield VFD responded.

9:23 a.m. – Stealing reported at Rockbridge. OCSD took report.

11:16 a.m. – Caller reported a man slumped over the wheel of a green tractor on Highway 95 by Brixey-Rockbridge VFD firehouse. Brixey Rockbridge VFD responded; man was fine with no problems.

12:45 p.m. – Well-being/security check requested on subject on Pioneer Lane.

Handled by OCSD officer; person is fine, no problems.

1:05 p.m. – Caller reported a deer with broken shoulder just north of Bryant Plastics. OCSD rendered assistance.

1:19 p.m. – Fire reported on Ronnie Wells Place. Tecumseh VFD responded, mutual aid with Bakersfield VFD.

1:56 p.m. – Medical: 76-year-old female needs to go to BRMC. Patient transported.

2:49 p.m. – 2003 Chevrolet Cavalier being towed from Westridge Apartments. OCSD rendered assistance.

2:55 p.m. – Medical: 75-year-old female is breathing but unresponsive. OCA and Theodosia Area VFD responded. Patient transported to BRMC.

8:01 p.m. – Medical: 12-year-old has severe

stomach pain. OCA responded. Patient transported to BRMC.

8:02 p.m. – 96-hour mental evaluation needed; OCSD rendered assistance. Patient transported to OMC.

8:47 p.m. – Juvenile needs to be removed from residence. OCSD responded; handled by officer.

8:47 p.m. – Reporting party would like officer present while items are retrieved from storage unit in Theodosia. Handled by OCSD officer.

10:41 p.m. – Medical: 66-year-old male has severe head pain; he will go out and unlock gate for responders. OCA and Bakersfield VFD responded. Patient transported to OMC.

Feb. 1

10:38 a.m. – Subject says someone is stealing his mail on El Camino Drive. OCSD tried to call subject on phone.

11:28 a.m. – Subject in Isabella reported an incident of fraud. OCSD took report.

2:21 p.m. – Min Pin dog went missing last night. Wanted it on record in case found.

2:43 p.m. – Several head of cows, different colors, found near Missouri-Arkansas border.

9:49 p.m. – Reporting party's neighbor is making loud noises on Hillside Drive. OCSD responded; citation issued. Officer reported to location at 11:02 p.m. Court date set for April 10.

Feb. 2

12:17 a.m. – Medical: 71-year-old female with congestive heart failure is

having trouble breathing. OCA and Air Evac responded. Patient was transported via air.

4:02 a.m. – White Chevy car is partway in highway on west side of Cloud 9 Ranch Drive. Two people, unknown injuries. OCSD, Caulfield VFD, MSHP and Duke's Towing dispatched.

7:09 a.m. – Medical: blood draw requested by MSHP.

7:17 a.m. – Lift assistance needed for female. Theodosia Area VFD responded.

7:57 a.m. – Person who has been evicted for several months is on caller's front porch, knocking on door. Handled by OCSD officer. Reporting party called back and said everything is OK.

11:44 a.m. – Medical: Person needs to transfer back to Gainesville Health Care Center. OCA responded.

2:03 p.m. – Caller hit deer with 2006 Jeep Liberty, causing damage to front bumper, grill, headlight and turn signal. Wanted it on record for insurance.

4:52 p.m. – Fire: Reporting party said her cabin burned to the ground at Tecumseh. OCSD faxed a statement to the person; she will fill it out and get photos and talk to OCSD officer.

5:04 p.m. – Mailbox reported as damaged/vandalized on Kara Lane. Civil advised.

7:26 p.m. – Deer has been hit and is lying in middle of highway west of Miller's Store. Handled by OCSD officer.

8:27 p.m. – Careless and imprudent driver reported on J Highway. OCSD

responded; unable to locate.

10:48 p.m. – Caller notified OCSD of fraudulent telephone scam involving sending money to Orlando, Florida. Handled by OCSD officer.

11:45 p.m. – Disturbance: 23-year-old female in Tecumseh is intoxicated, throwing objects and hitting people, may have possible alcohol poisoning. OCSD, OCA responded. Patient was transported to OMC.

Feb. 3

1:45 a.m. – Caller said a U-Haul is backed up near a vacation house on HH Highway and the driver of the vehicle, which has no tags, is acting suspicious. OCSD responded. Checked OK.

4:55 a.m. – Fire reported in woods near County Road 593. Bakersfield and Tecumseh VFDs responded. Controlled at 7:30 a.m.

9:00 a.m. – Person at a Theodosia business said a male subject came into the store after being banned several months ago. Subject is asking to be able to return. Manager of business says the subject is not to return; manager would like a deputy to explain that to the person. OCSD rendered assistance.

10:28 a.m. – Caller has lost a red-and-white-faced heifer in the area of Sudbury Lane. Referred to MSHP.

1:10 pm. – Caller said someone has left keys in their post office box and wanted to be sure they got back to their owner. Officer collected the keys; they will be held until someone claims them or owner is contacted. Message was left for keys' owner.

2:47 p.m. – Caller said someone has attempted to break into his house on County Road 605. Report taken.

5:14 p.m. – Caller said his neighbor broke into his house at Tecumseh and assaulted him. Handled by OCSD officer.

10:10 p.m. – Party involving underage subjects

reported at Tecumseh. OCSD responded; checked OK.

11:14 p.m. – Vehicle hit cow near Highways 160 and J. OCSD rendered assistance.

11:27 p.m. – 52-year-old female hit her head in a vehicle accident near Highways 160 and J. OCA and OCSD responded; patient was transported to BRMC.

Feb. 4

12:13 a.m. – Caller said a 40-ish male is at her door saying he needs to get inside. OCSD responded. A cable had broken on a trailer and tractor and jack-knifed on the county road.

11:40 a.m. – Medical: 62-year-old female has fallen, is semi-conscious and has unknown injuries. Theodosia Area VFD and OCA responded. Lift assistance needed only.

2:04 p.m. – Reporting party says someone has tied a dog to her telephone pole on Highway 181, and she does not know who it belongs to. OCSD rendered assistance.

3:58 p.m. – Subject on Highway 160 reportedly slapped a 9-year-old female across the face. OCSD rendered assistance.

4:45 pm. – Careless and imprudent driver reported at Highway 160 and County Road 603. Notified MSHP.

11:55 p.m. – Subject in Theodosia wanted it on record that Estevon Dockins was calling him and making threats. OCSD rendered assistance.

Feb. 5

1:11 a.m. – Reporting party got kicked out of her boyfriend's house and is walking down Ballpark Road. OCSD rendered assistance; provided courtesy ride to sheriff's office.

7:09 a.m. – Caller said windows had been broken out on El Camino but nothing was taken. Wanted it on record.

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Dora’s ‘Fab Four’ freshman lead the way to spotlight



Photo by Karla Gillespie Smith

The Dora Falcons varsity boys basketball team, which includes four freshman starters, won third place in the recent Mountain Grove tournament, which included a Dora loss to Hartville. But the Falcons avenged the loss Feb. 2 in a nail-biter, double-overtime victory against the Hartville Eagles in Hartville. Front row from left: freshmen Bryson Luna, Isaac Haney, Auston Luna and Mason Luna. Back: seniors Robert Vigdal, Brent McKemie, Austin White and Kaleb Harris.

By Mike Scott, OzarksSportsZone.com
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At first glance, the Dora boys are a “pretty good” 16-5 on the season. But at closer look, the Falcons’ losses are all to ranked teams, four of which are ranked in the latest coaches poll’s top 5.

Leading the way?

A quartet of freshmen. No other team (at least no state-ranked teams) can boast such a youthful roster. “They’re fun to coach, and they’re fun to watch,” said head coach Rick Luna. The veteran coach has an extra-special tie to this group. His triplet sons Bryson, Mason and Auston make up three of the Falcons’ four freshmen starters. The odds of having natural triplets today are about one in 8,000. For that group to go on to be standout athletes is even more rare. “The doctor told me I had a better chance of winning the lottery than having natural triplets,” said Luna. “My response was, ‘Gee thanks. I won’t play the lottery anymore.’” Throw in one of the top freshman scorers in state history,

Isaac Haney, and you have a pretty special situation in this small town. The rest of the roster is made up of four seniors. Luna credits those young men for welcoming their much-younger teammates with open arms. The name of the game in Dora is winning, and egos can be left at the door. “We like to get up and down the floor,” said Luna. “We like to play fast. We want to get up and down the floor.” The Falcons are averaging better than 70 points per game, a number you can expect to grow over the next three years. With third-ranked Eminence in their district, a team they’ve lost to twice this season, a deep playoff run isn’t expected. But don’t count out this team that honestly doesn’t know any different. “They remember those boys [on the 2009 state champ Dora baseball team] winning state, and they remember the big dogpile at third base,” said Luna. “For them, their goal is that, to get to the state championship game. They want to win it. They’d be disappointed in four years if they don’t get an opportunity.” The future looks bright in Dora. And the future starts right now.

Dora defeats Hartville in double overtime

The Dora Falcons, now ranked fourth in the state by Maxpreps.com in Class 1 boys basketball, improved their record to 18-5 with a nail-biting double-overtime victory against the Hartville Eagles Friday, Feb. 2. The team – with its four freshmen, including Isaac Haney and Dora head coach Rick Luna’s triplet sons Bryson, Mason and Auston – continues to garner southwest Missouri attention for its success in Class 1 basketball. The Falcons, avenging a previous loss to Hartville in the championship round of the Mountain Grove tournament, were led by Haney, who racked up a game-high 33 points against the Eagles. In the final minutes, Dora senior guard Kaleb Harris came off the bench and hit a shot from the corner to seal the win for the Falcons. “He scored the last five points for us,” Luna said. “It was a great win for our kids. Hartville is a good team – they don’t ever go away.” Bryson Luna scored 14 points, followed by Mason Luna with 11 and Auston Luna and Brent McKemie with 5 each. The Falcons traveled to Walnut Grove Tuesday; details of that game were not available at press time. They will host Lutie on Friday, Feb. 9, and will end their regular season with a road game at Bakersfield on Tuesday, Feb. 13, before heading into the Class 1 district tournament Feb. 27.



Photo by Karla Gillespie Smith

Triple threat

The Falcons’ Luna triplets – from left, Auston, Bryson and Mason – leave the floor at the end of a recent game. They are the sons of Dora head basketball coach Rick Luna and his wife, Alicia.

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Devoted outdoorsman

Greg Spoor was known as a “typical country boy,” his widow Morgan Spoor told the *Times*. Morgan said Greg loved to hunt, fish, shoot his bow, ride four-wheelers and just be outside, most of the time with Morgan and their 5-year-old daughter, Avery.



Handmade with heart

Morgan Spoor stands next to a completed flag she was ready to ship to a customer last week. The custom-built flags, one of the more popular items at their business, His Dream Creations, can be built with a hidden gun compartment. They can also be customized to feature traditional colors, a blue line in support of law enforcement, military logos or other modifications and emblems. After Morgan’s twins are born, the items will again be available for order at www.etsy.com/HisDreamCreations.



The Spoor family

This photo of Greg, Morgan and Avery Spoor, taken last year at a Thanksgiving lunch at Avery’s school, was one of the last photos taken of their family before Greg’s death.

CONTINUING HIS DREAM

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as she was hospitalized for pregnancy-related issues. Doctors say she’ll need to remain in the hospital for the rest of her pregnancy – as long as 12 more weeks or until the babies are born.

“Everyone always tells me how strong I am, but I don’t have a choice,” Morgan said Friday night, shortly before her condition changed and she headed to the hospital. “The healing process is going to be a long one, and I don’t think we will ever completely heal from this.”

Part of her healing process has recently included continuing Greg’s dream, a woodworking and craft business he began in 2016.

A true-life fairy tale

Morgan’s first meeting with her Prince Charming wasn’t your typical fairy tale beginning. It was at a nightclub in Mountain Home, Arkansas.

After chatting with some friends, Morgan decided to do what she’d come there to do, dance. While on the dance floor, a man came up and started showing off his moves – or lack of them.

“He had no rhythm. It made me laugh to watch him try so hard to dance,” Morgan said, smiling.

When the song was over, he kissed her – then turned and walked away. Stunned, Morgan stood there trying to process what had happened.

“I was just kissed by a guy I didn’t know. I didn’t even know his name!” she said.

Morgan left the club that night still unsure of who the man was, but the mystery was solved the next morning when she logged into her social media account and found that Greg Spoor had messaged her, identifying himself as the daring man who had kissed her. The two messaged and called each other for some time before Greg worked up the nerve to ask Morgan out on a date. And that was that.

“That’s how our fairy tale started,” she said.

Greg asked Morgan to marry him the next Christmas, and Morgan enthusiastically accepted. Committed to each other, they weren’t in a rush for the wedding and waited four years to officially tie the knot. Their wedding took place on a deck overlooking Greg’s parents’ pond in Peace Valley. Morgan wore a dress, and Greg wore his signature outfit: blue jeans, white T-shirt and boots. Morgan said, after that, the fairy tale only got better.

“God had blessed us in many ways. We bought our first house together in West Plains and had a sweet baby girl. We both worked, but Greg worked the hardest. He was always trying hard to provide for our family so we could have everything we wanted,” Morgan said.

When a good job opportunity presented itself in Florida, Greg decided to take it. Morgan said she and Avery were sad to see Greg leave to work so far from them, but she trusted that it was best for their family. After two weeks, the girls decided to pack up the car and head down to visit him.

“It was around Christmastime, and we just missed him so much,” she said.

Losing a house but finding a forever home

While Morgan was driving to meet Greg in Florida, a neighbor called and told her their house back in West Plains had burned to the ground. The family had lost everything.

“I was in complete shock,” she said.

But, always the rock, Greg was there to hold their family together through the stress. The Spoors spent the rest of the year in Florida as Greg finished out his contracted job as an

iron worker. When the job was over, they decided to move back to West Plains, buying their “forever home.” Greg worked hard to find a way to spend as much time as possible with his family and still have enough money to cover their bills, leading him through a range of entrepreneurial pursuits.

“Fencing, raising saltwater fish, back to fencing, welding ... he was always coming up with something,” Morgan said. “Then last year he came up with the idea of making and selling crafts. We started small with some shelves and other wooden projects. Then someone asked us to make them a wooden flag.”

That’s where Country Boy Craftin’ began – with that first wooden flag. Greg was excited at the prospects for the little venture, but, pregnant with another child, Morgan was a little nervous about relying on a business of handcrafted items to support the family. Despite her concern, it was soon apparent that there was no need for the worry. Orders were pouring in.

Losing Marley

“In March we had a doctor’s appointment to check in on our little jelly bean. I was 20 weeks along. We were both so excited to get to see our new blessing,” Morgan said. But about 45 seconds after the technician put the ultrasound probe to Morgan’s belly, she quietly excused herself from the room. A few minutes later, the doctor came in and delivered the heartbreaking news: the baby had no heartbeat.

“We both held each other and cried. In the many years we had been together, this was the first time I’d ever seen Greg cry. It broke my heart even more,” Morgan said.

She was admitted to the hospital the next day, and labor was induced. After six hours, at 6:43 p.m. March, 29, 2017, Morgan and Greg were able to hold their sweet baby, whom they’d named Marley. She was 9.5 ounces and 9 inches long.

“She was perfect,” Morgan said. “We were broken. We got to hold her for three hours before saying our final good-byes. We gave her a kiss, and they took her away. At that point in our lives, it was the hardest day we’d ever been through.”

A growing business – and belly

Morgan and Greg leaned on each other through the grief of losing their daughter. The business started picking up, and by the summer Country Boy Craftin’ was highly successful. Greg had transitioned to working full-time and even hired additional staff members to help keep up with the demand.

“This was exactly what Greg envisioned. His dream was coming true,” Morgan said.

Then one day last fall, out of the blue, Morgan felt the need to take a pregnancy test. It was positive! They went in for an ultrasound. With the pain of the loss of Marley still fresh, they were both nervous.

“I lay there and Greg sat next to me, holding my hand as the ultrasound tech started. After a few seconds, she looked at us and said, ‘You ready for the news?’” Morgan said. They nodded, unsure of what “the news” was going to be.

“Looks like you will be having two babies,” she said.

Morgan threw herself into Greg’s arms, and they both cried happy tears.

“We couldn’t believe we were going to have two miracles,” she said.

Losing Greg

Life continued, with Morgan and Greg excited about the twins and busy with the business. But fate took another hard turn one day last fall.

Nov. 29 started like any other day, Morgan said. She sat down with Greg to have coffee that morning. They discussed what needed to be done that day and then began a productive, full day of working. Morgan picked Avery up from school that afternoon, and when she returned, Greg told her they’d run out of shipping boxes, and he was headed to the store to pick up some more.

“He couldn’t find his wallet, like always, so I found it for him. Then I gave him a kiss goodbye. I told him to be careful and that I loved him. Then I watched as he walked out the door,” Morgan said. “Little did I know that was the last time I’d see, talk or touch him.”

After about an hour, there was a knock at the door. Morgan opened it to find a Missouri State Highway Patrolman solemnly staring back at her. He asked if this was Greg Spoor’s residence. Morgan nodded. The officer told her that Greg had been killed in a car accident about a quarter-mile from the family’s home.

“I fell to my knees and screamed. Avery came outside to see what was wrong, and we both just sat there crying,” Morgan said. “The only think I could think of was, ‘How am I going to raise our babies by myself?’ I needed him.”

Morgan went to bed that night hoping it was just a dream. But it wasn’t.

“Half of me died that day too,” she said. “He was my best friend and soulmate. Our lives together were just getting started. I wanted to give up and just stop living, but I can’t. I have my babies that need me.”

Babies and a business named after Greg

The day after Greg died, Morgan visited her doctor to ensure that the added stress hadn’t harmed the babies, and she found out that she was having a boy and a girl – the very pair Greg had been hoping for.

“We’d already picked out the names Amelia and Beckett, but I wanted their names to mean more,” she said. “So I gave them each a part of Greg’s name. The girl’s name is Amelia Lee – Lee being Greg’s middle name. The boy’s name is Gregory Beckett.”

After some time, Morgan began to think about Greg’s dream business and what would happen without him there to run it.

“I heard Greg’s voice in my head, saying, ‘Don’t give up. Keep it going. Trust me,’” Morgan said.

So she opened the shop back up and began taking orders, making the products they had spent the last year making together. She continues to make the flags, cabinets and other items that Country Boy Craftin’ was known for, but she’s made one change – the company’s new name is His Dream Creations in honor of Greg’s vision for their future.

Morgan says working on the projects has been an emotional but therapeutic process for her, bringing her a little closer to Greg every time she sands a board or stains a new piece.

“I have so many memories that flood my thoughts. Most days they make me smile and sometimes even laugh,” she said. “Then, on my bad days, the memories make me cry because I don’t get to make any more. But I have to keep going. I am still waiting to see what God’s plan is for me. Until then, I will just raise our babies and make Greg’s dreams come true.”

MAGAZINE

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