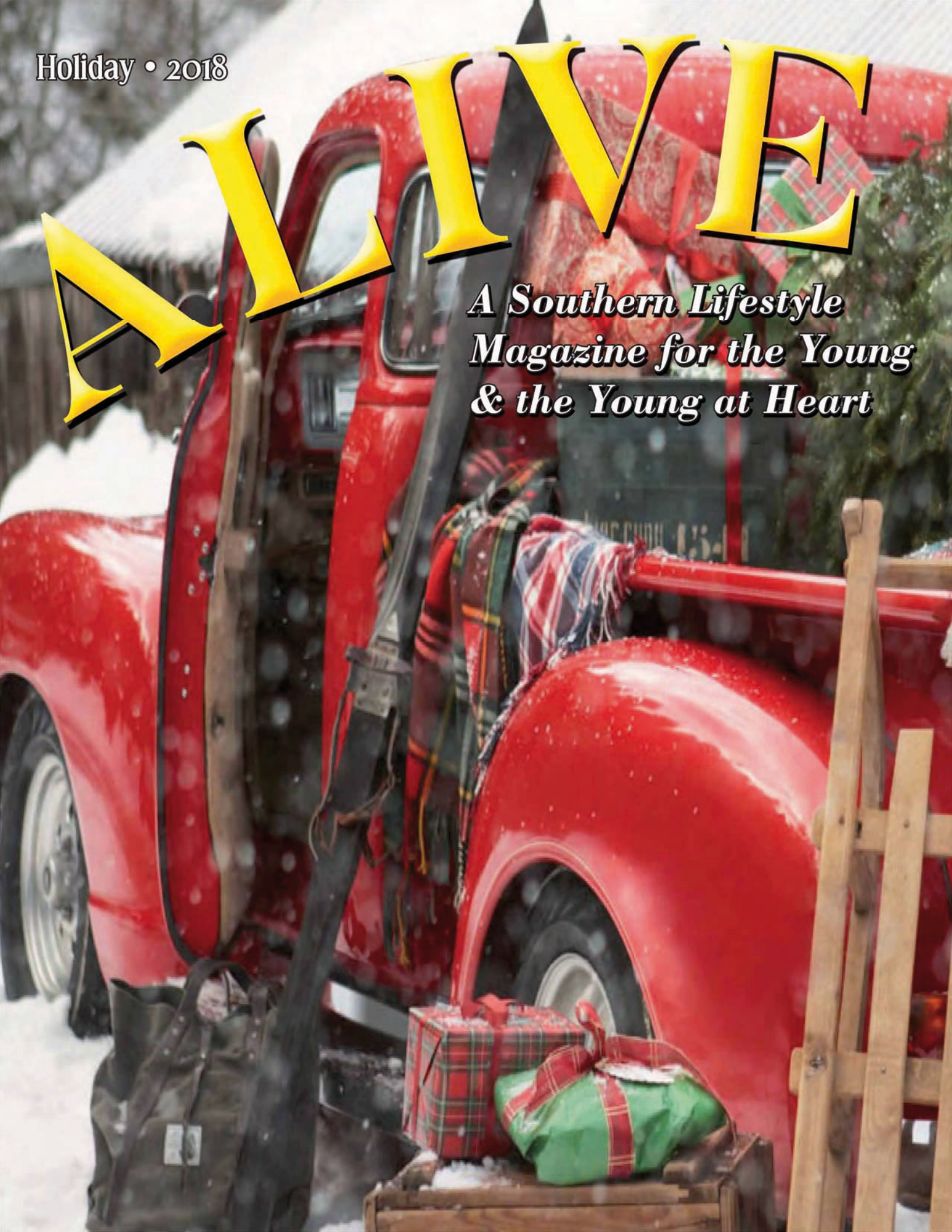


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Alive Magazine is just what it says it is. A southern lifestyle magazine for the young and the young at heart. Our area is rich in colorful characters, exciting community events, distant and not-so-distant history all wrapped up with some southern hospitality. We are proud of where we are from and want to celebrate those things that make us who we are. Hopefully you are holding in your hands the first of many Alive Magazines and we hope you enjoy the dirt road with us.

## IN THIS ISSUE

**1** Stewart Countians Unite: coordinate to bring Christmas love to kids

**18** Christmas trees take a walk down memory lane? You bet!

**7** Lighting of the Knob is a highlight of the season

**23** Down Home Cooking Recipes

**11** Pass the peas, please! New Year's Day Tradition or Superstition?

**26** Our Veterans: Simply the Best!

**15** Our Scrapbook

**28** Helping Hand broadens audience on WRQR

**Publisher**  
Gary Benton  
**Editor**  
John Wambles  
**Graphic Designer**  
Stephanie Priddy  
**Sales**  
Gary Benton  
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All advertising inquiries, remittance or reader inquiries should be made to the editor:

**Alive** - PAI  
512 North Market St.  
Paris, TN 38242  
(E) [alivemagazineparis@gmail.com](mailto:alivemagazineparis@gmail.com)  
(O) 731-644-9595

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# Stewart Countians Unite:

## Coordinate to bring Christmas love to kids

There are good people all over the world who care about children. And there are kind people across the globe who want children to experience the magic and abundance of Christmas.

And then there's the South, where children are viewed as a treasure. To just about anyone below the Mason-Dixon Line, anything less than an incredible Christmas for a child is a call to action.

Stewart County residents are firmly ensconced in that culture; indeed, they seem to take it to a whole new level. Currently, there are three major programs that coordinate to make every December 25th a Christmas to remember for close to 500 kids whose families may be unable to make that happen on their own. They have all been doing this for decades. Quitting is not an option for this generous community.

Cumberland City, Stewart County and Dover VFW Post 4730 work together to make sure kids are not listed on each other's programs in order to spread

the wealth, so to speak, so the maximum number of children may be served. Each program, however, handles it a little differently to accommodate their demographic and their volunteers. And in each, the process is fairly simple.

In the county's smallest town, Cumberland City City Recorder Cheryl Milliken said they reach out to area families in southeast Stewart County as well as nearby Houston County. In the past, around 50 children were served, but the numbers have slowly dwindled to about 25. She is not sure what this year will bring, however. In early November, they begin accepting applications from parents and guardians, ascertaining that they live in the area. Adults list the children's sizes and some "wish list" items. Then the community gets involved in a variety of ways, some by adopting individuals, some by donating money, and others by buying toys and clothes.

"We get donations from churches, organizations and individuals," Milliken said, adding that the

*written by: Bonnie Lill*  
*photographs courtesy of:*  
**Bonnie Lill**

folks in city hall go and do the remainder of the shopping. She said the generosity of the community can sometimes “bring me to tears.”

The gifts collected are wrapped and bagged, a bag per child, and their parents come at a designated time to pick them up so they can have them for Christmas.

Cumberland City is a warm and welcoming community, and it is only natural that their own Stewart County Fire & Rescue Station 6 would get in on the Christmas action as well. Station volunteers host a Christmas party in mid-December for “anyone who wants to come,” and come they do. Although technically this event is separate from the Children’s Christmas Program, many of those children come to the party as well, where they get to talk to the jolly old elf himself and receive a gift and goodies and have an all-around festive time.

“We simply don’t want to leave anyone out,” said Milliken. “It’s just a good program.” The thanks they receive from the participating families more



Kids gather excitedly around Santa and Mrs. Claus at Dover Post 4730's 2017 Children's Christmas party.

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than makes up for the hard work volunteers have done.

Dover VFW Post 4730 accepts applications between Oct. 1 and Nov. 1, ultimately serving about 40-60 kids per year.

After screening the applicants, organizer Cathy Dennis calls the parents or guardians to see what the kids want and need.

Throughout the year, Dennis said the VFW accepts raffle donations, holds an annual fish fry and conducts the Jack Kreckler Memorial Texas Hold 'Em Tournament to raise money for the kids' Christmas. Individuals and groups donate toys and money, and several merchants either donate or give a sizeable

discount, and two individuals each donate a brand-new bike.

As in Cumberland City, parents or guardians are given the wrapped and bagged gifts for at home, and on the Sunday between the 16th and 22nd of December, a Christmas Party is held at the post home. Santa hears many, many wishes that day, and he makes sure each child gets a bag of goodies and a stuffed animal. A drawing for other gifts is held as well, and each child goes home with a toy. Holiday refreshments cap off the festivities.

As in Cumberland City, Dennis said that working with the program is so gratifying that it offsets the fatigue and hard work that goes into it. She said her volunteers are amazing, with help coming in from Stewart, Houston, Henry and Montgomery counties.

"The appreciation of the families served is so rewarding," she said. "And I love seeing the kids at the party. Some of the little girls are in dresses, and some of the little boys are in suits. You know that they know it is special!"

By far and away the largest element of serving Stewart County kids is the county's Children's Christmas Program. Betsy VanVolkinburg has been working with the program for years; some 400 children are served each year.

At the beginning of November, applications are accepted and checked to assure that the children are local. Parents fill in wish lists and sizes. The county also receives names from teachers at school. "We go by poverty guidelines



Everyone is welcome to see Santa at the annual Cumberland City Station 6 Christmas party as is shown in this file photo.

and circumstances,” she said. “Most everybody qualifies.”

The county, however, has already been preparing. On September 1, they send out letters asking for donations from those who have donated in the past. Money goes through the county mayor’s office, and VanVolkinburg said, “It is all very transparent.”

The Dave Gibbs Memorial Toy Run in October, supported by Stewart County Concerned Bikers and Bikers Who Care, among others, brings in scads of toys and cash. Churches, schools, organizations and individuals get in on the action, and toys are collected at local retailers and banks.

In mid-November, volunteers go out with the lists, spending about \$50 per child at this point. Toys collected earlier fill in the gaps. On the second Wednesday of December, parents pick up the wrapped and bagged gifts while the children are at school so they can have them at home for Christmas.

The neediest receive gift baskets that day, courtesy of St. Francis of Assisi Church and Chris Mason, who donates 25 hams each year with fiancée Jennifer Milton, simply because “they like to give back.”

On the last abbreviated day of school, a party is held for the children. This year, there will be a Retro Arcade, the kids will hear “The Night Before Christmas,” and drawings will net them each a gift. Of course, Santa will be on hand, and McDonald’s will provide juice and cookies.

Dill’s Piggly Wiggly always donates fruit and bags to carry everything home in. Other volunteers participate as well.

“It takes a whole community,” said VanVolkinburg. “Stewart County is wonderful. If you ask, you shall receive. The churches are wonderful, and the businesses are amazing.”

She paused, and then she added, “We have the best community. I have lived around the world,



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This little girl poses for the camera as she rests in Santa's arms at Dover Post 4730's Children's Christmas party.

and I have never lived in a community like this, that just takes you in, and it gives and gives. It is such a loving community."

Yes, there may be people everywhere who want kids to have a

good Christmas, but Stewart Countians, regardless of their place of birth, really come together as a community at the holidays to wrap their arms around each child and make them feel the true spirit

of Christmas. It's more than about gifts; it's about caring, and that's what folks in the South, particularly Stewart County, do best.



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# Lighting of the Knob

is a highlight of the season

written by:  
**Angela R. Jones**  
photographs  
courtesy of:  
**Angela R. Jones**

## Lighting of the Knob

On Saturday evening, Nov. 24, friends and families enjoyed the annual "Lighting of the Knob" festivities at Pilot Knob, one of the highest points in West Tennessee and home of the Tennessee River Folklife Museum in Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park. Each year, the event features thousands of Christmas lights, decorated trees, craft tables, live seasonal music, refreshments, and visits with Santa.

For a spectacular start to the Christmas season, residents and visitors to West Tennessee can't beat the annual "Lighting of the Knob" and Christmas Open House hosted by the Tennessee River Folklife Museum at Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park (NBFSP) in Eva.

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving each year, Pilot Knob comes to life with a seasonal glow when park staff "flip the switch" on thousands of outdoor lights and multiple Christmas trees. With the summit of Pilot Knob being one of the highest points in West Tennessee, the lights can be seen for miles around.

The annual tradition began in 2004 when Tami Killey, a clerk at the museum, suggested that the park host a Christmas celebration for the community. Other park employees agreed, and with the invaluable assistance of the Friends of NBFSP group, the "Lighting of the Knob" got its start. Each year the event has grown, drawing visitors from all over Tennessee and surrounding states.



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<b>Kirk &amp; Sweeny Rum 23 Years Old</b> 750ML <b>\$51.99</b>	<b>TGI Fridays RTD</b> 1.75LT <b>\$15.99</b>
<b>Canadian Mist</b> 1.75LT <b>\$18.29</b>	<b>Bird Dog RTD</b> 1.75LT <b>\$18.99</b>
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With Museum Director Amber Wells, park employee Elaine Arnold, and members of the Friends group working hard to put the event together again this year, it was sure to be a success. The 2018 theme of “Whoville,” complete with the Grinch in his lair and denizens of Whoville milling about, was a delight to visitors of all ages, bringing joy to all in attendance.

While listening to live music, viewing the beautiful 17 Christmas trees, and visiting with Mrs. Claus and Santa, guests snacked on “Who Hash” and sipped green “Grinch Punch” provided by the Friends of NBFSP. General Nathan Bedford Forrest himself (aka volunteer Tucker Daniel) was even on hand to greet visitors to the park that bears his name.

In addition to a visit with Santa, children were treated to a crafts table, a coloring contest, and other fun activities while at the museum. It was especially fun to ascend the steep drive to the Knob in carts and wagons driven by park staff from the parking lots far below.



## Warm Welcome

The museum ramp welcomed visitors to holiday fun, just inside the doors. On Saturday evening, Nov. 24, staff and volunteers at the Tennessee River Folklife Museum in Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park greeted numerous guests, chatted with friends, and shared the holiday joys of the park.

Although not required, event guests were invited to contribute canned goods for the Benton County Ministerial Alliance Food Pantry or an unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots. Due to the generosity of so many, NBFSP was able to make substantial contributions to both

groups following another successful "Lighting of the Knob" Christmas celebration.

Not only at Christmas but all year long, NBFSP staff are eager to help guests plan a unique visit or enjoy one of the many activities and events the

park has to offer. For more information about happenings at the Tennessee River Folklife Museum or NBFSP, call 731-584-2128 or visit [www.tnstateparks.com/parks/nathan-bedford-forrest](http://www.tnstateparks.com/parks/nathan-bedford-forrest). The park is located at 1825 Pilot Knob Rd. in Eva, a small community on Kentucky Lake in Benton County.

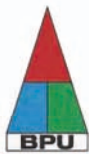


## Christmas Crafts

In addition to a visit with Santa, the event offered a craft table and coloring contest for young visitors.

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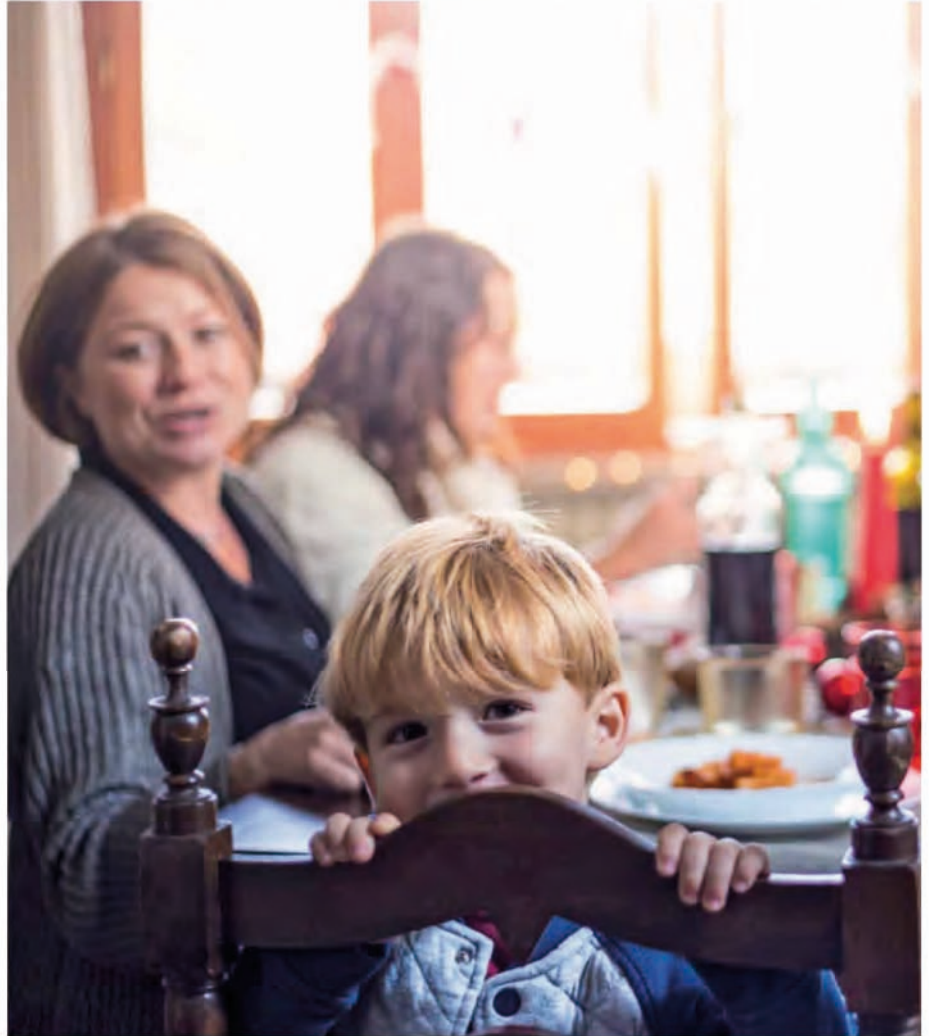
## NEW YEAR'S DAY TRADITION OR SUPERSTITION?

written by: Teresa Jones

As the new year approaches, not only do we make resolutions we try to keep, but we, as southerners, absolutely must have our traditional new year's day feast. This meal usually includes black eye peas, some sort of greens, pork and cornbread. The types of greens served, usually depends on family traditions or in what part of the south you might have been brought up. The traditional southern new year's meal centers around prosperity; money to be exact. Peas represent coins so you might have loose change laying around all year. The greens, traditionally seasoned with pork, stand for dollars and cornbread represents gold.

Pork, with it's reduced fat content, represents progress. By paring greens, peas and pork, you have tripled your good luck for the year.

Collard, mustard and turnip greens are all common southern foods and throughout the years, cabbage has also made it's way into southern new year's traditions. In the low country, peas, rice and sausage are combined to make hoppin' john. Because greens are flat, dark green and better represent money, they are favored by most southerners. Pork is considered a symbol of progress, so an entree of pork or a chunk of pork fat or hog jowl added to the peas as seasoning





raises luck to the next level. Some southern families also enjoy sauerkraut along with their new year's meal, as the long strands represent a long life.

There are several reasons why black eye peas represent good luck and includes one that dates back to the Civil War era. Black eye peas were known as field peas or cattle food. In the spring of 1863, Vicksburg, MS was cut off from all food supplies for nearly two months. Union soldiers had stolen all their food, except for livestock feed. People were starving and were forced to eat the crops reserved for their livestock. These "cow peas" are credited for saving many lives, thus are considered good luck.

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There are foods Southerners believe to be bad luck to eat on new year's day. These include lobster and chicken. Because lobster move backward, many believe it represents setbacks in the coming year. Chickens are considered bad

luck for the same reason, they scratch backwards for food, and because they have wings. Your luck might just fly away. Pigs on the other hand are considered good luck because they always root forward.

Whether you are superstitious or not, new year's rituals are fun and delicious. So here's to traditions! Wishing everyone a joyful, healthy and prosperous new year! Pass the peas, please!



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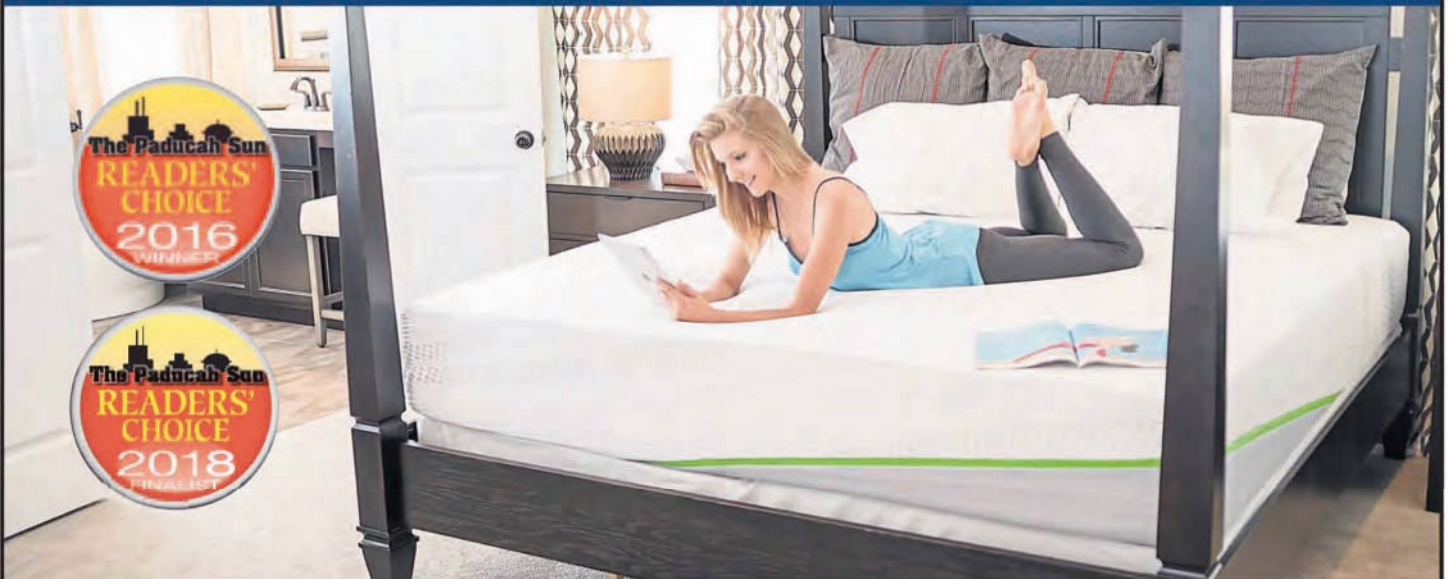
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The Historic Atkins Porter Neighborhood Association (HAPNA) hosted New Festival in the Atkins-Porter Neighborhood of Paris: HAPNA in the Park - A Fantastic Fall Festival. They welcomed autumn with a party on the grounds of the AP Rec Center and dog park. Hundreds of attendees enjoyed food and drinks, corn hole, old-fashioned cake walks, a K-9 demonstration, educational booths and more. Local guard artist, Donna Revelee brought a chihuahua in a festive sombrero to the party. Revelee and other artisans sold their creations during the neighborhood event.

Makenzie had fun with her new scarecrow friend.



Lauren Nash, from the First Presbyterian Church of Paris, helped the children "go fish" at Downtown Paris Association's Spooktacular.



The staff of the Benton County Senior Center took some of the ladies to lunch at Uncle Billie's in downtown Paris.

Nothing puts you in the Christmas spirit like snow on the Court Square in downtown Paris.



Want to see your memories in the next edition of Alive? Send your scrapbook photo, a description, and your contact information to [alivemagazineparis@gmail.com](mailto:alivemagazineparis@gmail.com) for a chance to have your photo featured on the next "Our Scrapbook" page.

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# Christmas trees take a walk down memory lane?

*You bet!*

written by: **Bonnie Lill**  
photographs courtesy of:  
**Bonnie Lill**

What image – or images – does the word “Christmas” conjure up in your mind?

To many, it starts with the tree. Whether it is a retro flocked, aluminum tree or a fresh-cut cedar, the Christmas tree and its decorations are often a centerpiece of the holidays.

The Stewart County Historical Society has always had its finger on the pulse of the county and its residents, and for 15 years, the group has been offering the community the opportunity to decorate and/or view the ultimate holiday icons, all handily ensconced in the W.D.

Sykes Museum located at 174 Church Street in Dover.

This year, beginning Parade Weekend (Saturday, December 1) and continuing on weekends throughout December, guests will take “A Walk Down Memory Lane – the Sequel” and experience close to 70 trees and displays with broad-ranging historical themes. Last year’s “A Walk Down Memory Lane” was so popular that it is back by popular demand.

Creativity and beauty abound, and entries range from the whimsical to the heart-wrenching. An informative printed

program explaining each tree assures that guests don’t miss the significance of the decorations.

Brenda Lewis has been with the event from the beginning, and during the December weekends from 1-5 p.m., she can often be found in the museum kitchen where the smell of simmering spicy cider embraces the various culinary-related displays and the big kitchen tree.

“Participants don’t have to be strictly with the theme,” said Lewis. “Last year, we had a lot of trees and displays about things

that were historically of interest to people, like landing on the moon, 9-11 and the development of the telephone.” Others just had a holiday or winter theme, she added. Last year’s telephone tree, a tree covered in bells, honored Alexander Graham Bell and accompanied the historical display. The 9-11

display “could make you cry,” she said, featuring a picture of the Statue of Liberty with the reflection of a plane going into one of the towers being reflected in Lady Liberty’s eye.

At various times throughout the years, centenarians in the

community, including Willouise Williams, Tom Martin and Willie Griffith have had trees decorated in their honor. Other times, local history is highlighted, such as the Christmas trees and displays dedicated to the county’s Native American heritage.



From left, part of the 2017 Christmas tree volunteers include Evalinda Hays, Carlos Lewis, the late Bob Falkner, and Marlys Falkner.

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The reason for the season is always evident as well, with the large tree having the Nativity as its focus, albeit in different forms over the years.

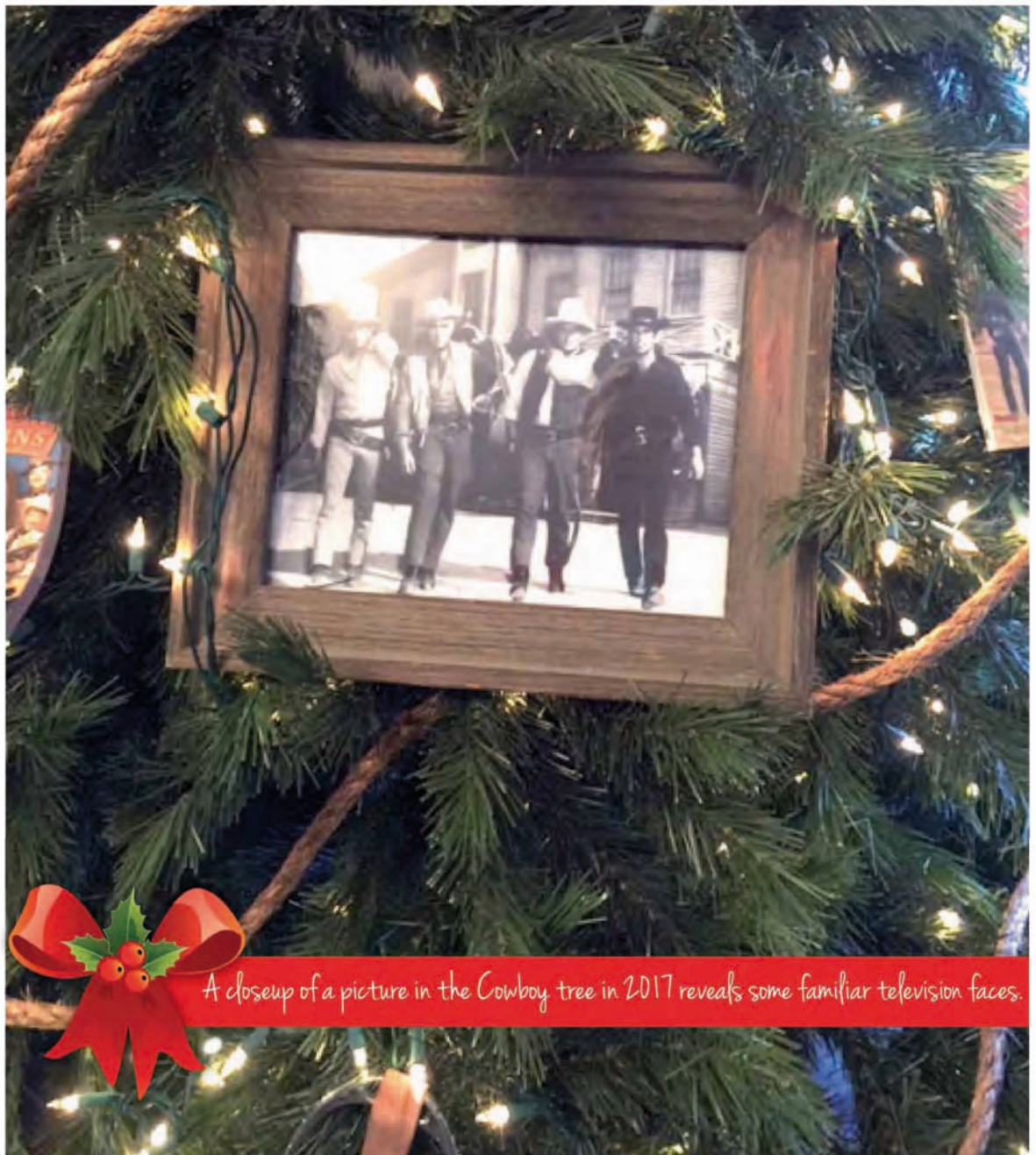
The trees clearly are one of the area's hidden gems of the season, and part of the success of the free event may just be the Historical Society itself.

Far from being an exclusive society for those born within the county lines, the group has always welcomed newcomers with open arms, figuring rightly that, as current residents, the newcomers are already part of the area's history. And those newcomers work seamlessly with established members, bringing enthusiasm and creativity with them to augment that which is already present. Regardless of their places of birth, Society members are all quintessentially Southern – welcoming and hospitable, with a mission to work together to make the community a better place.

The venue for the annual event is a piece of history itself, and the name of the Trees of Christmas, officially, is always "Another Brier Rose Christmas," in honor of Rebecca Sykes.

Around the turn of the century (the 21st), Sykes donated her family home to the Historical Society for use as a museum. Her family had owned and operated the Brier Rose Milling Company in Model, now a part of Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area. She also donated some antique furniture with it.

It took a few years to make some upgrades to the home in order to better accommodate the public, but by 2003, long-time Society member Betsy Tumelson suggested the Brier Rose Christmas idea. They figured that if people liked it, they could do it again. The response was enthusiastic; they probably could not call the event off if they wanted to.



*A closeup of a picture in the Cowboy tree in 2017 reveals some familiar television faces.*

It has increased in size since the completion of the addition at the back of the home, and there is never any shortage of folks who would like to do a tree.

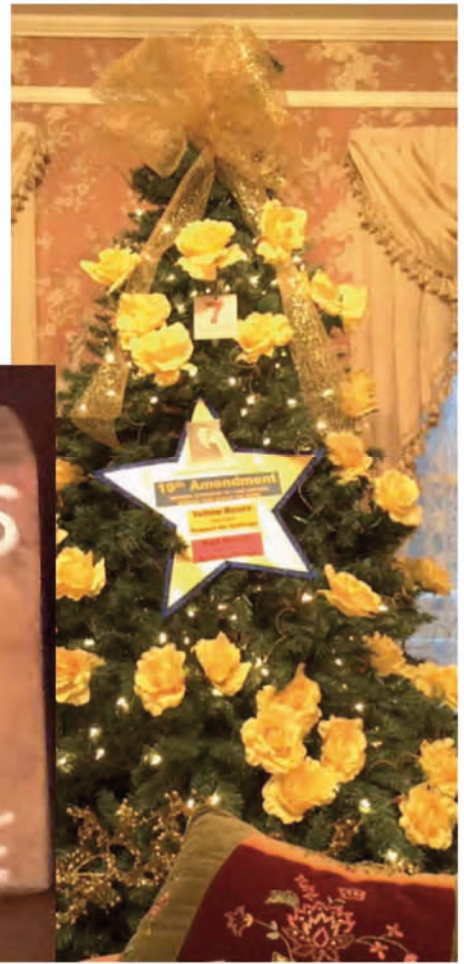
“We get a lot of compliments on it,” said the understated Lewis, who added that they supply the trees if needed. “You just tell us what size tree or space you need.”

The event is open to everyone, whether they would like to decorate or just enjoy the displays. “We are glad for any help,” she said.

Lewis stressed that the event is free and open to everyone, but there is a discreet donation box for those who would like to help the Stewart County Historical Society fund their endeavors.

For more information on the Brier Rose Christmas, call Lew-is at 615-268-5994 or EvaLinda Hays at 931-627-2314.

And don't forget to make Dover a destination for the holidays! It will make you glad you live in the South.



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# Down Home Cooking Recipes



## Honey Glazed Ham

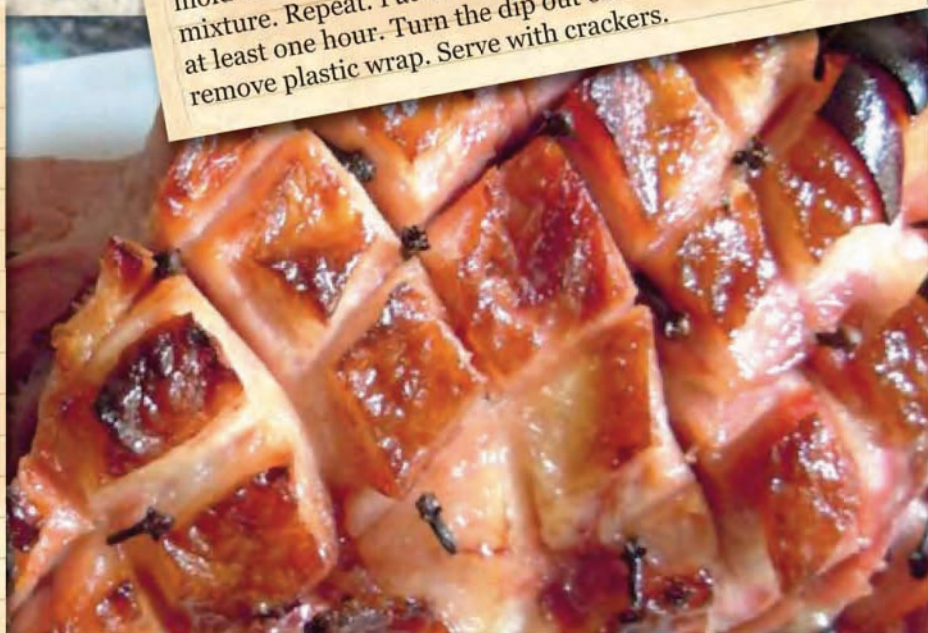
1 (5 lb.) ready-to-eat ham • 1/4 cup whole cloves • 1/4 cup dark corn syrup • 2/3 cup butter • 2 cups honey

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Score ham, and stud with the whole cloves. Place ham in foil lined pan. In the top half of a double boiler, heat the corn syrup, honey and butter. Keep glaze warm while baking ham. Brush glaze over ham, and bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes in the preheated oven. Baste ham every 10 to 15 minutes with the honey glaze. During the last 4 to 5 minutes of baking, turn on broiler to caramelize the glaze. Remove from oven, and let sit a few minutes before serving.

## Dip for the Stars

1 cup unsalted butter • 3/4 lb. feta cheese, crumbled • 1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese, softened • 2 cloves garlic, minced • 1 shallot, minced • 3 tablespoons dry vermouth • ground white pepper, to taste • 1/2 cup pine nuts, toasted • 1 cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes • 3/4 cup pesto sauce

In a food processor, combine the butter, feta cheese, cream cheese, garlic, shallot, vermouth, and white pepper. Process until smooth. Oil a medium bowl, or gelatin mold, and line with plastic wrap for easy removal. Layer the dip into the mold as follows: Sun-dried tomatoes, pine nuts, pesto, cheese mixture. Repeat. Pat down into the mold, and refrigerate for at least one hour. Turn the dip out onto a serving plate, and remove plastic wrap. Serve with crackers.





## Dinner Rolls

2 1/2 cups warm milk • 4 teaspoons active dry yeast • 1/2 cup sugar • 2 eggs • 1/2 cup butter, softened • 2 teaspoons salt • 7 cups all-purpose flour, or as needed • 1/2 cup butter, melted

Pour milk into a large mixing bowl, and sprinkle yeast over the surface. Allow to rest for 5 minutes. Beat in the sugar, eggs, 1/2 cup butter, and salt; blend thoroughly. Gradually stir in the flour to make a soft dough. Cover bowl, and set in a warm place until dough doubles in size, about 1 hour. Punch down the dough, cover the bowl, and allow to rise again. Repeat this step two more times. Break off 2 to 3 inch size pieces of dough, roll lightly into round shape, and place in prepared baking dish, edges touching. Repeat to make 36 dough balls. Cover and let rise until doubled in size. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish. Bake rolls in preheated oven until tops turn golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes. When rolls are finished baking, drizzle melted butter over the top, and serve warm.

## Broccoli Cheddar Soup

1/2 cup butter • 1 onion, chopped • 1 (16 oz.) package frozen chopped broccoli • 4 (14.5 ounce) cans chicken broth • 1 (1 lb.) loaf processed cheese food, cubed • 2 cups milk • 1 tablespoon garlic powder • 2/3 cup cornstarch

In a stockpot, melt butter over medium heat. Cook onion in butter until softened. Stir in broccoli, and cover with chicken broth. Simmer until broccoli is tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Reduce heat, and stir in cheese cubes until melted. Mix in milk and garlic powder. In a small bowl, stir cornstarch into water until dissolved. Stir into soup; cook, stirring frequently, until thick.



## Irish Cream

1 cup heavy cream • 1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk • 1 2/3 cups Irish whiskey • 1 teaspoon instant coffee granules • 2 tablespoons chocolate syrup • 1 teaspoon vanilla extract • 1 teaspoon almond extract

In a blender, combine heavy cream, sweetened condensed milk, Irish whiskey, instant coffee, chocolate syrup, vanilla extract, and almond extract. Blend on high for 20 to 30 seconds. Store in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator. Shake well before serving.



## Golden Rum Cake

1 cup chopped walnuts • 1 (18.25 oz.) package yellow cake mix • 1 (3.4 oz.) package instant vanilla pudding mix • 4 eggs • 1/2 cup water • 1/2 cup vegetable oil • 1/2 cup dark rum • 1/2 cup butter • 1/4 cup water • 1 cup white sugar

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease and flour a 10 inch Bundt pan. Sprinkle chopped nuts evenly over the bottom of the pan. In a large bowl, combine cake mix and pudding mix. Mix in the eggs, 1/2 cup water, oil and 1/2 cup rum. Blend well. Pour batter over chopped nuts in the pan. Bake in the preheated oven for 60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean. Let sit for 10 minutes in the pan, then turn out onto serving plate. Brush glaze over top and sides. Allow cake to absorb glaze and repeat until all glaze is used. To make the glaze: in a saucepan, combine butter, 1/4 cup water and 1 cup sugar. Bring to a boil over medium heat and continue to boil for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in 1/2 cup rum.





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*Lieutenant Colonel Jon Hart pins the Bronze Star Medal of Valor on his father's Lapel.*

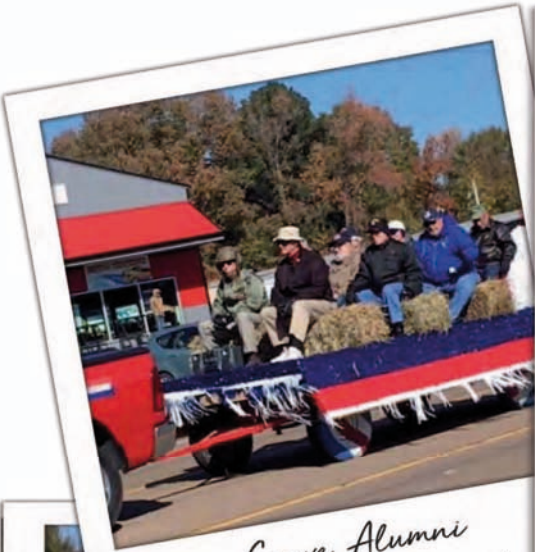


*Sergeant Barry Hart thanked the crowd and his fellow soldiers. He said he was "Humbled" by this honor.*



*Reading of the Commission from the Secretary of State before the presentation of the Bronze Star Medal of Valor to Sergeant Barry Hart.*





*Cottage Grove Alumni Veterans greet the crowd.*



*A float presents the flags of all branches of the military and Uncle Sam.*



*A little Betsy Ross passes out candy along the parade route with mom.*



*Heritage Girls Troop 3130 walked the parade paying tribute to veterans.*



*Patriotic Ladies showing pride as they dressed as the American flag.*

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# HELPING HAND RADIO AUCTION *broadens audience on* WRQR



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## **VOLUNTEERS MATTER –**

Helping Hand volunteers work together to ensure that everything goes smoothly each day during the 2-month annual auction. Helping Hand could not function without the essential work of each volunteer.

*written by:* **Angela R. Jones**

*photographs courtesy of:* **Angela R. Jones**

If you are moved by the spirit of the season and looking for a place to practice some Christmas charity, direct your efforts and gifts to Henry County Helping Hand. Since 1979, the group has provided financial support to multiple organizations serving county citizens, those neighbors and friends around us who sometimes need “a helping hand.”

The primary fundraiser for Helping Hand is its radio auction, held from January through February each year. Dozens of community groups donate, bake, and make items for the auction, which benefits a long list of local non-profits. In 2018, the auction benefited 87 organizations in Henry County with a total of \$296,900 in funds.

In an effort to reach more listeners, Helping Hand will be joining the Benton Weatherford Broadcasting Radio Stations in January for the next auction. After many years with WTPR AM radio, the 2019 Helping Hand Radio Auction will now be broadcast simultaneously on

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WRQR FM 97.5 and AM 1000 from January 7th thru February 27th.

“WTPR AM radio has been a great partner for many years, but the opportunity was presented to move to the locally based WRQR,” noted Helping Hand President Wendy Barnhart. “This move will reach a much larger audience by simultaneously broadcasting over both FM and AM frequencies.”

“We are excited to have Helping Hand air on WRQR FM and AM starting in January, and look forward to doing what we can to make this great organization better and stronger,” said Gary Benton, station manager for WRQR.

Helping Hand is well-guided by a leader who is truly invested in the group’s success. Growing up in Henry County, Barnhart has been working with the group since a young age. Starting as a 4-H volunteer in the late 1980’s and working her way up the ranks, Barnhart has done it all. Year after year, her entire family is involved.

“I have donated items, taken and recorded bids, and served as a board member. Almost every Saturday you will find my husband Micheal working at the desk, my daughter Kara writing up items as they come in, and my daughter Logan and son Noah helping to move and sort items for the day’s auction,” Barnhart related. “My parents Jimmy and Martha Stewart are there also, with

Mom working the check-out desk and Dad working with other men manning the refrigerators and freezer. Helping Hand is truly one of our most favorite charity organizations!” Naturally, the Barnharts are just one family among many who donate their time and skills. Helping Hand is run by a multitude of volunteers, a 15-member board of directors drawn from all over Henry

County, and an office staff that oversees the routine operations. Volunteers bond over the shared commitment, becoming a family and forming lasting friendships.

In the weeks before and especially once the auction gets into full swing, day-to-day operations include dozens of moving parts. There are auctioneers for each day, and volunteers to manage the items and tickets for checkout, set up each slate of items for



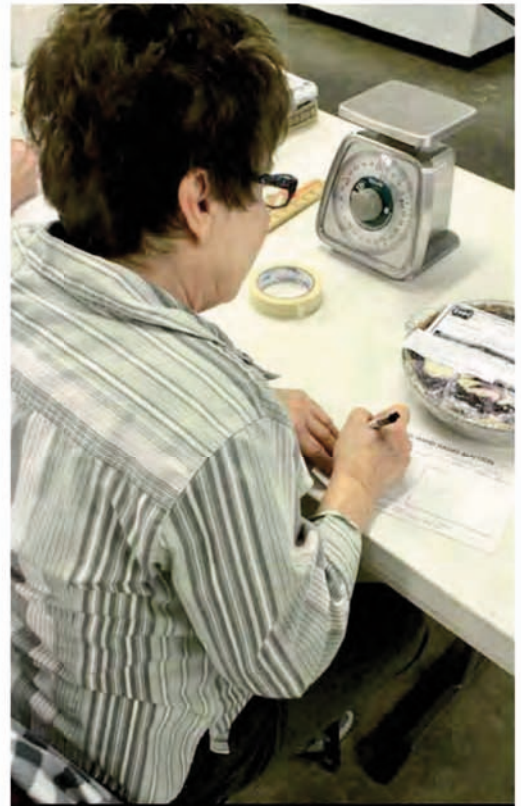
auction, organize seating for each group/community on the calendar, schedule the panel members, and perform countless other behind the scene tasks. As noted, this beautiful chaos of neighbors helping neighbors all goes to benefit Henry County citizens.

“Day after day, week after week, there are dozens of volunteers daily to take in, sort, display, check out, and clean up from the thousands of items donated during the auction,” Barnhart explained. “Hundreds of volunteers, hundreds of bidders, and dozens of organizations applying for funds all provide their own blessings and challenges to manage. It is truly an event that must be experienced, as words cannot

adequately describe the happenings. If you have never been a part of it, come out one day during the auction and take it all in.”

Helping Hand has yet to publish the list of organizations to benefit from funds raised in 2019, since the application period just ended on Nov. 16. According to the group’s bylaws, organizations desiring support must complete a new application each fall. If its application is not returned by the deadline, that organization is not eligible to receive funds. This is a longstanding rule that Helping Hand has stood by to ensure fairness each year.

The group also has yet to finalize the auctioneers for 2019.



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A volunteer completes the necessary paperwork to log in some sweet treats donated for the auction.

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Barnhart reported that some of the regulars include representatives from civic organizations, medical offices, retail businesses, churches, communities, youth organizations, city and county agencies, and many others.

With the 2019 auction set to start on Monday, January 7, Helping Hand is busy dealing with durable donations and planning volunteer schedules. Anyone who would like to make a donation or volunteer

may contact the group through the Facebook page "Henry County Helping Hand Inc.", email Barnhart at wendybarnhart3@gmail.com, or during the auction call the business line at 731-644-1833 to leave a message.

"There are always plenty of ways to help, so contact us and we will get you plugged in," Barnhart assured. "Of course, one of the best ways to help is

to listen to the auction on the radio and bid often!"

The auction will be held in a new location this year, the Paris Convention Center behind Quality Inn, and be broadcast live daily on WRQR FM 97.5 and AM 1000 from January 7 through February 27. Donate, volunteer, and be sure to tune in each day to support those friends and neighbors who need a helping hand.



**MOUTHWATERING MONEY MAKERS** – This refrigerator is full of goodies that have been auctioned to raise funds for Henry County Helping Hand. Each year, the group helps to support multiple charitable organizations in Henry County through its annual auction, next to be held from Jan. 7 through Feb. 27, 2019.


  
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