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Nov. 6

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Passport to Christmas

Nov. 5 - Dec. 11

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Festival of Trees

Nov. 26 - Dec. 18

Stroll through The Old Paris 5 & 10 Event Center and view dozens of uniquely decorated Christmas trees created by businesses and organizations in our community. Be sure to vote for your favorite!

Santa's House

Nov. 26 - Dec. 19

Both Santa and Mrs. Claus will be visiting with the youngsters every Saturday (10am - 2pm) and Sunday (2-4pm) throughout the holiday season at their house on the court square.

Light Up Paris Christmas Lights Tour

Beginning Nov. 26

Load up your family and take a tour of Paris and Henry County through Christmas lights! Use our easy online map to plan your route!

Christmas Festival

Dec. 11

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Happy
Every
Thing!



As I perused this fun, holiday issue with stories on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year plus our community's bicentennial, I decided to simply wish readers a *Happy Everything!*

I love Thanksgiving, as we gather with loved ones and count our blessings. This year, we continue to hold our medical community, first responders, educators and those affected by COVID close to our hearts.

Karen Geary offers an article on Thanksgiving this year filled with readers' Thanksgiving memories that are both funny and poignant. Elyse Bell shines the Spotlight on the Second Harvest Food Bank, while Garden Guru John Watkins writes of unsung garden heroes with an entertaining, spot-on story.

Barry Hart's article takes readers around the world with family stories of holidays in unlikely locales. Meanwhile, back in Henry County, Tommy and Mary Ann Claxton share tips on building a vast village, a Christmas village, that is! And the Painter family, perennial favorites in the Atkins-Porter Neighborhood's Gift of Light, reveals the touching stories behind their decorations.

From the Madrigals to Elvis, Krider Performing Arts Center Director

Rhonda Stanton invites us to impressive, upcoming Christmas performances. TVA/Kids.com offers "edutainment" for the youngsters during this long break. Finally, BPU Elf Barry Hart tells us about his funny, mischievous, holiday role.

Shannon McFarlin is our magazine's historian – in this issue she brings us a bicentennial story, as well as terrific photos from Christmases long-ago.

Thankfully, our community's future is as promising as its past. Check out the momentum in Around Our Town and in the latest Paris Podcast.

Ready to ring in 2022? A Couple Of Travelers suggest a First Day Hike at Paris Landing State Park, complete with a ranger for your guide.

Don't miss the Events Calendar, Faces and Places, and Paris Cuisine!

Happy everything,

Smantha



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ON THE COVER

BPU's Elf Barry has to wait to open his Christmas gift, but he can't resist a little shake to guess the contents. See his story on page 17.

PARIS! wishes to thank Laura Lee's Gift Shoppe and Crove Media for their help during the photo shoot.

Henry County and the Lake Area

PARIS!

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*This story is part of an ongoing series
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Henry County's Bicentennial.*

CLIFTY

Site Of First Henry County Court House

BY SHANNON MCFARLIN

Nestled in the tiny community of Clifty are the beginnings of the history of Henry County. Small as it was (and is), Clifty was the home of Henry County's first courthouse – a log cabin which conducted county business on one side and sold liquor and pies on the other.

Clifty also was the home of James Roper Randle, the first mayor of Paris. Randle was married to another notable citizen, Sallie Hogan Randle who was the first white woman to settle in the county.

If that's not enough, Randle's cousins are reportedly the ones who 'accidentally' dug the Sulphur Well which became the county's first tourist attraction and was said to have curative powers for a variety of ailments.

After a bit of digging into the family history, we determined that Randle is the third great-grandfather of Queen Noor of Jordan. In Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s book, *Faces of America*, he traces

Queen Noor's ancestry and relates that Noor's grandmother Laura was the daughter of John T. Wilkins, who was born in 1847 in Henry County.

And going back another generation, Wilkins' was descended from James Roper Randle, born in 1793 in North Carolina. Wilkins moved to Tennessee when it was still "wild, unsettled frontier" in the 1820's, Gates wrote.

The Randles and their family members are now at home for eternity in the Clifty Hicks Cemetery, which is one of the oldest cemeteries in Henry County. It is located along Clifty Road.

In November of 1821, the State Legislature appointed three men to select a county seat for each of the new counties – Henry, Carroll, Henderson, and Madison. They were supposed to pick locations as near to the center of each county as possible. Vying for the honor were Manleyville, Clifty, and Paris.

The first courts for the county had already been convened at Clifty in the home of Henry Wall. The Wall home

was a log structure, but big enough to house both the County and Circuit Courts.

The first courthouse was built in Clifty by Samuel McCorkle in 1823, a small two-room building of poplar logs. The courts used the north room. A member of what we now call the Chamber of Commerce sold pies and liquor in the south room.

It has been speculated that the courts often adjourned abruptly from the bar of justice to the other bar across the hall. The first jail also was constructed of logs the same year, consisting of two rooms.

Years later, Paris artist Pearl Routon would draw a rendering of the first courthouse. Her granddaughter Stephanie Routon Tayloe said Miss Pearl made the drawing around 1900 from an eyewitness who told her about the log cabin.

Paris eventually won the battle for designation as the county seat, and as more and more settlers arrived in

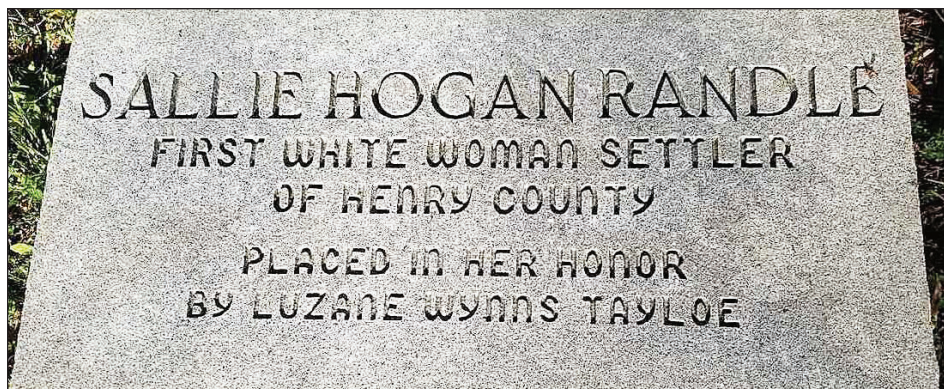
Henry County, the small courthouse became obsolete. Two years later, in 1825, a two-story brick building was constructed in its place. In all, Henry County has had four courthouses, with its current one built in 1896.

Paris was incorporated September 30, 1823, and was the first town incorporated in all of West Tennessee. The present site of Paris was selected by five commissioners appointed to choose a county seat in 1822.

Their choice was a 50-acre site, with some acres owned by Joseph Blythe and some by Peter Ruff. Both men donated land to the county to have the seat there; thus, we have both Blythe and Ruff Streets near the Court Square.

A public square, streets, alleys and 104 original lots were laid out and the lots were sold at auction over a two-day period in the spring of 1823.

Now, getting back to the Randles. The Randles emigrated to Tennessee's counties of Henry and Stewart before and during their organization, and Sallie Hogan Randle is known for being one of the first white wom-

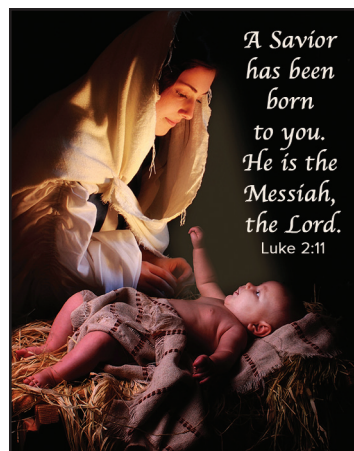


Grave marker for Sallie Hogan Randle in the Clifty Hicks Cemetery

en to settle in West Tennessee and a stone with that information inscribed is on her grave.

Her husband, James Roper Randle was the first Mayor of Paris. His obituary, published in *The Weekly Intelligencer* on February 8, 1877 says: "It is not easy to pre-estimate to obligations of our people to this class of brave men, who as the first settlers, braved the dangers, endured the hardships and privations and nobly worked out the results of organizing civilization and preparing this lovely land for the peaceful and happy abode of its many thousands of people dwelling in it..."

The county's humble beginning is recounted in the historical marker that was placed on the Henry County Courthouse lawn in 2012. Donated by the local chapter of the National Society of Colonial Dames, it reads: "Henry County Courthouse - Built in 1896 - West Tennessee's Oldest Working Courthouse - Court First held in Peter Walls Home in 1821. A log courthouse built in Clifty 1823. Two Story Brick courthouse erected on this land in 1825 and replaced in 1852...In War and Peace this courthouse is the center of the community."



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REMEMBER WHEN



Do you remember the Christmas tree that used to adorn the first floor at the former Lee School? The tradition was for the children to bring presents wrapped in white tissue paper to place under the tree. On the last day of school before Christmas vacation, all the pupils at the school would gather around the tree and sing Christmas carols. The event would be broadcast live on WTPR.



Santa was really ringing his bell in front of the former Paris Radio Co., at the corner of Wood and Poplar Streets. You can see some of the downtown Christmas decorations on the light pole in the background. "The South's Largest Gift & Music Store" is written on the side of the building, and it looks like it really was with two floors of merchandise. An ad in the Paris City Directory of 1945 advertises that the business sold radios, refrigerators, ranges and small appliances, washers, attic fans, vacuums, Hoover cleaners, silverware, fine glass, and china. If that wasn't enough, they offered complete radio repair service and small appliance sales and service.



These photos are part of an ongoing series by PARIS! Magazine for the Henry County's Bicentennial.



Meeting over the Christmas season in 1958, at the Henry County Training School was the Henry County Association of Elementary and Secondary Teachers. From left in back row: L.B. Olive, E.T. Travis, R.V. Teague, S.R. Haynes, P.T. Porter, Principal J.H. Harden, B.C. Hill, E.D. Harden, D.L. Hudson, Mary Gardner, V.C. Buckley, L.R. Hudson and O.T. Broach. Front are M.I. Hudson, J.L. O'Daniel, C.M. Martin and O.M. Crawford.



When you have the holiday season, you often have snow and that was especially true in the winter of 1950-1951 when a major snow fell. From left of photo are the following businesses: Bob Humphrey's Paris Baking Co., home of "Sonny Boy" bread; Jack Moore's Barber Shop and Pool Room, Wesley Enderson's Silver Grill, back door of S.A. Snow and Sons Sporting Goods.



Arnett's Grocery was on the west side of the court square and was also called City Grocery. It's decorated for Christmas in this 1925 photo. From left: John B. Arnett, Lowman Harris, Jesse Muse and a Mr. Hastings, a mail carrier.



Bar stools on one side, tables on the other and plenty of apples marked Stockdale Cafe, decorated for Christmas in 1925. The Cafe was located on the east side of the court square. From left are Elizabeth Frazier, Mamie Barnes, McCoy Stockdale, LaVerne Smith, Glema Snow and P.A. Stockdale. (Henry County Memories)

The late Paris attorney, Fisher Neal, attempts to navigate through the snow that had piled up around the courthouse in the infamous 1950-51 snowfall. Photographer Val Umbach took the photo.





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AROUND OUR TOWN

Creating Distinction:

7 Ways to Stand Out in Social Media

CHAMBER MOMENTUM

BY TRAVIS McLEESE

December 1st marks four years since I accepted the position of the Paris-Henry County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, and it has been a whirlwind since Day One.

I have had the privilege of hiring an incredible team who loves this community and our Chamber members. Our board and elected leadership are willing to support most of the crazy ideas we dream up and are willing to think outside the box to make the community a better place to “Shop, Eat, and Live.”

WHERE WE WERE. WHERE WE ARE.

In 2017, the Chamber had just shy of 300 members, and we needed energy. We also needed purpose. Most people were unsure what role the Chamber played in the community. As I write this article, we have 430 members, and we have momentum. In the chamber of commerce world, momentum is everything.

With momentum we can increase our staff and build our infrastructure in a way that allows us to create new events, develop membership programming, support other nonprofits and focus on the quality of life in Henry County. A few examples include:

- More than 40 membership development events/opportunities were held last year. Our most successful was Weekday Workshops, a partnership with Bethel University to provide professional development sessions for our members.
- The Tennessee River Jam was the idea of former County Mayor Brent Greer. In only two years it has grown into a four-day music festival with more than 10,000 attendees and 20-plus performers, far exceeding our expectations.
- The Cody Nance PBR in Paris wrapped up its first successful event, and is well on its way to building a long-term relationship with the community. This inaugural Professional

Bull Rider event brought over 6,000 people from multiple states to the Henry County Fairgrounds.

DOWNTOWN PARIS ASSOCIATION & CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

To most Henry Countians, the relationship between the DPA and the Chamber is confusing; here’s a little history. When long-time DPA Director Kathy Ray retired, we all knew her shoes could never be filled. Kathy worked twice as many hours as she was paid, and let’s be honest, that kind of community servant is hard to come by. It was time to change the structure.

To move things forward, the chamber and DPA’s Executive Board looked at collaborative opportunities to better serve the community. We were able to establish a formal relationship that would allow the DPA/Main Street organization to keep its 501c3 identity, have a separate board of directors and a separate mission statement but allows the Chamber of Commerce

staff to administer both of them. An administration allows the Chamber to build an increased and stronger staffing structure, which oversees both organizations. Again, the DPA and the Chamber kept their own identity, their own charters, and mission statements, yet work collaboratively to positively impact the community.

WHERE WE ARE GOING

I genuinely believe that if we can sustain our current momentum, we have the potential to do whatever this community needs. A 500-600 member chamber? Check. More festivals and concerts? Check. Quality of life events? Check. All of this and more can become reality.

At the Chamber we like to begin most staff meetings or brainstorming sessions with a blank sheet of paper. We like to remind ourselves to dream big and focus on what this community wants or needs, instead of focusing on the obstacles we are going to face.

Sessions like these have been fruitful and have produced incredible results over the past three years. But, in



Above: The Chamber Board of Directors meets monthly and is comprised of a variety of business and community leaders.

Previous page: In partnership with Bethel University, the Chamber has provided 40 professional development sessions, included the popular Weekday Workshop shown.

those sessions, we do hit roadblocks. Much of the time these are resource related, and believe it or not, that makes us dream even bigger. It makes us ask the big question, "What if?"

WHAT IF?

What if we had an organizational structure that helped us eliminate or at least reduce some of those obstacles? What if this structure allowed us to

take some of our dreams and ideas to the next level? Interested? Stay tuned!

STAY TUNED!

For more information on the Paris-Henry County Chamber of Commerce call 731-642-3431 or email us at pariscoc@paristnchamber.com.

Travis McLeese is the CEO of the Paris-Henry County Chamber of Commerce.



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FEATURE

O, LITTLE TOWN

BY KAREN GEARY

As the expression goes “it takes a village...,” but at the home of Tommy and Mary Ann Claxton of Buchanan, it certainly does take a village, and another village, and then another one to decorate for Christmas. What started as an after Christmas purchase has now turned into a fantasy undertaking with no sign of stopping.

“Some might call it an addiction; I call it a collection,” said Mary Ann. “After Christmas 2006, we came upon a real bargain at Big Lots – a complete Christmas Streets 2005 village set at an unbelievable sale price. The next Christmas, it fit on a card table in our two-story solarium. In 2007, the addition of another Christmas Streets village, some other series buildings, plus a battery-operated train added another card table to the structure. So, our village began from discontinued pieces at bargain prices, but much of our present village came from friends.”

One such friend was Sue Mathis, manager at the Long John Silver’s

restaurant in 2009. She didn’t have time or space anymore to set up her 14 small buildings, including a Heilig-Meyers collectible from the Paris store. So, she gave the collection to the Claxtons. That expanded their village to three card tables.

The next year called for a major change to the display. “The first construction was in 2010 – a frame of 2x4’s in the corner of the solarium with a wooden pallet laid on the frame. Cardboard on top made a smooth surface; small boxes and the grand-children’s toy building blocks under a white sheet made snowy hills,” said Mary Ann. “Perfect for our new Santa and sleigh animated scene.”

“By 2013, two train sets made a nearly 6-foot oval track which screamed for a tunnel. Tommy’s tunnel construction produced a bonus – a second level for buildings. The vertical concept was born!”

Another “friendly donation” from square dance friend, Cheryl Kelly, added 17 more buildings. “She told me

she hadn’t put them up in a couple of years and probably wouldn’t again,” said Mary Ann.

A year later, 23 additional buildings – two from their trip to Germany and some from Kandi Ellis’ yard sale – were added to the mix. One long board replaced the train tunnel, tripling the second level space, but crowding became an issue. In 2017, snap-together plastic shelving set on top of the long board solved some of the problems with more vertical space.

“Another friend, Jen Whitehead, was moving and ask if I would buy her village pieces,” said Mary Ann. “Sure, I said, naively – 33 structures plus accent pieces and people including several Dickens Village pieces like the Globe Theater and The Old Curiosity Shop. Obviously, some serious structural design work laid ahead.”

“Tommy took a 4x8 foot plywood sheet, shaped it to fit the solarium doorways and made a beautiful base piece resting on four sawhorses. The long board and three plastic shelf

units went on top of this base, solving the main village expansion. But the Dickens Village pieces – some of which were very large – needed the corner space requiring major reconstruction,” said Mary Ann.

A contoured plywood base replaced the old pallet. Tommy and grandson, Lucas, cut five graduated plywood circles with center holes. A metal pipe extended from a revolving Christmas tree stand on the floor through the base to the catwalk above. The circular shelves fit over the pole and rested on large pieces of PVC pipe allowing electrical connections to be run up the center of the shelves. The tree stand allowed viewing of all the buildings on each shelf.

In 2019, Tommy replaced the plastic shelves with two four-foot plywood shelves with aprons. The shelves were painted white, greenery attached to the edges and rope lights strung behind the greenery for extra light.

“We bought 60 new North Pole Series pieces from an estate sale in Trenton, Tennessee,” said Mary Ann. “We had maxed out going up on the display, but we hadn’t looked at down. The sawhorses holding the main village could hold two levels. Tommy cut aprons on the three bottom pieces – these extended between the four sawhorses. All were painted and decorated like the upper boards and were more than sufficient for the new units.”

Last year, 20 additional pieces came from an online auction, from the



Pictured are several pieces in the Claxton's amazing Christmas village collection.

Christmas Store here in Paris, and a 50th anniversary gift, bringing the total to 271 units.

“We’ve never counted the accessories (people, animals, trees, etc.) but they fill a four-square-foot area before packing for storage. Three resin water areas made by Jen Whitehead accommodate our seaside village, lighthouses, two schooners and the lake beside



Hogwarts Castle,” said Mary Ann.

It takes the Claxtons approximately three days to put the villages up and that much time to put away.

“Though Lucas has some ideas of expanding across the room, Tommy says if something comes in, something has to go out. Maybe we’ve hit the end.” said Mary Ann with a laugh. “We’ll see.”



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MERRY & BRIGHT

Christmas Love Lights

BY KAREN GEARY

In a scene from the modern Christmas movie classic, “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation,” Chevy Chase’s character, Clark Griswold, is gingerly escorting an elderly woman up the walk to his home. As they approach, she says, “Is your house on fire, Clark?” He replies with a sigh, “No, Aunt Bethany. Those are the Christmas lights.”

For those who live in the Historic Atkins-Porter neighborhood, the home of James and Heather Painter on Blakemore Street is a yearly stand-out for its elaborate holiday “exterior illumination.” For their efforts, their home has been awarded the coveted “Clark Griswold Award” as the best decorated home in the neighborhood’s lighting contest along with awards for Best Porch and Best Decorated Yard. “You can’t miss it,” said Heather. “You can see it from East Wood Street!”

Heather, a private caregiver, began her holiday decoration obsession by chance. While sitting with a client, she noticed a man preparing for a yard sale across the street. He had mounds of Christmas decorations for sale.

“His girlfriend had died and she loved Christmas, but he wasn’t into all the decorating since her death. When I asked about the decorations, he said I could buy all I wanted. I ended up getting everything he had,” she said.

The next year, she bought a carousel from an online swap page, and the collection continues to grow to this day. What does James think about all this holiday cheer? “He is so supportive,” said Heather with a chuckle. “He’s my electrician. He keeps the house from burning down.”

Heather finds most of her lights, Nativity sets, snowmen, Santas, and other holiday displays at bargain sales. “I bid \$50 online for \$500 worth of items once and won!” she said.

New this year is a full vanload of decorations that came from another home being cleaned out. Items like these are special to Heather because



The Painter's 2020 Clark Griswold Award



James and Heather Painter's home is a cheery destination to view Christmas lights.

the items "were special to someone once. It's like I'm keeping the love and memories alive for those people."

This year will be bittersweet for Heather because her dear uncle, James Bennett, passed away recently. Many will remember Bennett playing Santa at Set Free Ministries and the W.G. Rhea Library.

As soon as Halloween is over, Heather starts the painstaking task of decorating for Christmas. "Our sons are grown now and moved away, but we still have a young one at home. I really enjoy doing this; it's fun."

Heather not only decorates the outside of her home, but the inside, too. She has over 30 Christmas trees and will have a lighted tree in every window this year.

When asked how many Christmas items she has, Heather couldn't answer with a number. All she could say was "a lot!" Her real collection's measurement was by storage space. "We have a storage building that's full to the brim.

Plus, a neighbor is allowing us to use their garage to store things and it's completely full, too."

As for her favorite decoration, she had trouble coming up with one particular item. "I don't have a favorite; each decoration has its own story. I stand back and cry a little when I see how the old and new work together. Every year, I run into people outside the yard, and it makes me so happy."

Heather is a bit secretive about what's new for this year's yard display. "I'm still going through everything," she said. "You'll just have to come see them all."

Who knows? With James and Heather's ever-expanding collection of brightly-lit holiday cheer, they just might be – "drum roll, please" – champs of the "Clark Griswold Award" again. And that's better than the "Jelly of the Month Club" any day!

Visit www.HAPNA.org for more information about the Christmas Lighting Festival and its viewing dates.



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ELF BARRY

BY MEAGHAN HART

If you have a young child, it's likely that prior to Christmas 2020 you had already heard of Elf on the Shelf®. But for those of you without a little one in the house, you may not have heard of Elf on the Shelf®... well, until last Christmas that is.

In recent years, The Paris Board of Public Utilities has become well known for their Christmas campaigns. In 2019, they had "12 Days of BPU Christmas" featuring all departments and even "An Energy Advisor Named Barry." However, it was their 2020 campaign, that still has people talking.

"Elf on the Shelf Barry" made his debut November 27 of last year and immediately created a stir. From the Henry County Animal Shelter to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and everywhere in between, each day from November 27 through December 24, Elf Barry was creating mischief.

"When my wife, kids, and I would be out at dinner, people would stop me and say, 'hey it's Elf Barry,'" said Barry Flood, Paris BPU Manager-

Energy Solutions, aka Elf Barry.

"I even had people stopping me asking if they could take their picture with me and what I was going to be doing next."

So, what does a life-size elf have to do with Paris BPU? Aren't they just our local utility company? They are, but the key word in that statement was local.

You see, as a public utility, Paris BPU is deeply rooted in the community and used this campaign not only for laughs but also to help bring awareness to Paris BPU services as well as some of the community partnerships the utility has built over the last 83 years.

Some of the most liked and notable pictures from Elf Barry's tour include:

- Welcome to Paris! Home of the World's Biggest Fish Fry...and the World's Friendliest Elf!

- Which way to the Lazy River? Looks like Elf Barry got our Wastewater Treatment Plant confused with a water park.

- Elf Barry just rolling through another week in 2020.

- Caution! Elf at Work...Elf Barry snuck into our Water and Wastewater Building to dig into a little mischief.

- Elf Barry climbing the Eiffel Tower.

"I keep getting asked, 'what's next, and will Elf Barry be coming back, if not how are you going to top it,'" said Meaghan Hart, Paris BPU Manager-Brand Solutions & Strategic Communications. "I'm not quite ready to reveal our campaign yet, but I have something just as fun planned for this year, and don't worry, Elf Barry will be making some guest appearances," added Hart.

To follow along with this year's campaign and to keep up with other activities sponsored by the utility, follow Paris BPU on Facebook, Instagram and even TikTok.

Meaghan Hart is the manager of brand solutions and strategic communications at the Paris Board of Public Utilities.





CHRISTMAS AT THE KRIDER

Music & Entertainment For The Whole Family

BY RHONDA STANTON

K rider Performing Arts Center is hopping as the holiday season approaches and we prepare for several events. Check out our great opportunities and mark your calendars because we know you'll want to join us.

ULTIMATE ROCK & ROLL

November 13 brings "The Ultimate Oldies Rock and Roll Show" which features some of the biggest hits from the 50's and 60's. The 7 pm concert features the KPAC Young Artists Concert Choir joining the band on stage for a few numbers, and we're so excited to offer this opportunity to area youth.

Mom, dad, kids, and grandparents will all enjoy this joyous, high-energy musical romp through our early rock and roll history.

BEST OF MOTOWN

The "Best of Motown and More" brings us a Temptations Christmas Tribute with a mini James Brown Tribute as well on Saturday, December 4 at 7 pm.

Based in Branson, Missouri, "Best of Motown and More" features the awesome harmonies, iconic choreography, and smooth presentation of some of Motown's greatest performers. The group came to us in December 2019 and absolutely rocked the house, so we know that all lovers of R&B and Soul will not be disappointed.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

December 5th bring the 53rd annual Paris-Henry County Arts Council Christmas Concert at 3 pm. Featuring a variety of area performers including

HCHS Madrigals, KPAC Young Artists HarmoniX, and many more, the Arts Council Christmas Concert is the perfect Sunday afternoon event to set your Christmas spirit in motion.

Join us for this free community event. You will also have the opportunity to donate to the good work of the Arts Council.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE MADRIGALS

"Christmas with the Madrigals" is always a magical event featuring Henry County High School's elite group of singers under the direction of Deanna Brown on Saturday, December 11, at 7 pm. Featuring stunning acapella group arrangements plus solo and small ensemble numbers, "Christmas with the Madrigals" celebrates the season with our talented high school performers.

P-HC COMMUNITY BAND

The Paris-Henry County Community Band, under the direction of R. Michael Holden, will perform their Christmas Concert at KPAC on Sunday, December 12 at 3 pm. The concert will be dedicated to Mike's wife, Carol Holden, who passed away this year.

Let's support our community instrumentalists and remember Carol, a clarinet player in the band and secretary for the Chamber Music Society's Board of Directors. The event is free but offers the option to donate to the Chamber Music Society.

HARMONIX & UPSTREAM VOCALS

KPAC Young Artists HarmoniX and UpStream Vocals will perform their Christmas concert on Thursday, December 16 at 7 pm. HarmoniX is an a cappella singing group comprised of 11 young vocalists in 7th through 11th grade and is under the direction of Rhonda Stanton. Singing three and four part harmonies in arrangements designed especially for HarmoniX, the group's Christmas repertoire is gorgeous. Also performing is UpStream

Vocals, our vocal group for students in grades 3-5. The event is free but donations are accepted.

CHRISTMAS WITH ELVIS

Wrapping up our holiday events is "Christmas with the King" on December 18 at 7 pm. Travis LeDoyt, widely acclaimed as the "World's Best Young Elvis," brings a fabulous band and a spot-on stage show.

In "Christmas with the King," LeDoyt looks like Elvis, sounds like Elvis, and entertains like Elvis. He has a huge fan base, and from our perspective at KPAC, they're also wonderful folks to work with. Come hear loads of Elvis hits and favorite Christmas songs.

Find more information and ticket links for any of these events on the Upcoming Events tab at kridercenter.com. There you will also find dates for the school program events, KPAC young artist programming, and a few other December community happenings.

KPAC is managed by Rhonda Stanton for The City of Paris Parks and Recreation Department. We hope you'll join us soon!



"The World's Best Young Elvis," Travis LeDoyt, will entertain folks on December 18 in his "Christmas with the King" show.

Happy holidays, neighbors.

We wish all our neighbors a safe and happy holiday season and the very best in the New Year. It's a true joy to be part of such a wonderful community.

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Your NEW, Favorite HOLIDAY TRADITION

BY JOHN NICHOLS & SUSAN JONES

*Too often, travelers forget about extraordinary attractions that are just down the road.
We hope this series encourages readers to visit some nearby jewels.*

The holidays are like an enormous, colorful package. The contents include traditions like Thanksgiving at Grandma's, church and school Christmas programs, visiting Santa in his house on the square, downtown open houses, and coffee with old friends visiting from out of town.

A Couple Of Travelers would like to add one more tradition, a First Day Hike at Paris Landing State Park on New Year's Day 2022. Whether you're at home in Henry County or on the road, First Day Hikes are a New Year's Day staple in many of the nation's state parks. The idea began in Massachusetts in 1992, and the concept eventually spread across the country.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Paris Landing State Park has kicked off January 1 with a First Day Hike for the last several years, according to Zach Tinkle, park manager. "Part of the park's mission is to provide healthy, outdoor recreational activities. People like starting the year off right, so this is a great opportunity. Our First Day hike is guided by a ranger, so you're guar-

anteed to get some exercise and learn something new, as well. It's the perfect activity to exercise both the body and the mind."

The hikers are a great mix, according to Tinkle. "We have families, couples and individuals of all ages. The number of attendees varies from five to 30, but no matter how many come, we're excited that they're start-

ing their New Year with us on a trail at Paris Landing."

THE LURE

There are four characteristics that make this hike attractive. Let's start with the ranger – it's ranger led. These men and women are knowledgeable about the park, its history, and its place in the community.

They also are incredibly familiar with the wildlife, the forest, the shoreline and what to expect from season to season. So, if you're wondering about a specific tree or critter, ask a ranger. They take pride in answering questions and making this experience as educational as it is fun.

Other reasons folks enjoy the Paris Landing First Day Hike are that it doesn't begin at the crack of dawn and the trail is not difficult. It generally begins at mid-morning, allowing hikers to ease into the New Year. In the past, most of these events have been along Raptor Ridge. "This three-mile loop is an easy hike that traverses an oak-hickory forest which passes restored native grassland. It then moves up to the lakeshore," says Tinkle.



Hardy First Day hikers at Paris Landing State Park

Finally, because the leaves are all on the ground by this time, the visibility in wooded areas is greatly enhanced, revealing more birds. "Our area is in the Mississippi Flyway, so folks who enjoy bird watching will want to bring their binoculars to view migrating waterfowl, as well as the numerous resident birds," says Tinkle. "Peregrine falcons occasionally are seen here in winter, but the snowy egret, great blue heron, bald eagle, pileated woodpecker, a variety of ducks and the American white pelican are always a good bet."

WINTER WEATHER

Weather is a fickle friend, especially in Tennessee. New Year's Day can be

overcast and warm or sunny and 20 degrees with 10 mph winds, so read the forecast before dressing. When hiking in winter, it's always a good idea to dress in layers. Appropriate footwear is a must, as is a cap or warm hat and possibly sunglasses and a good walking stick. Water bottle? You bet!

FUN NUMBERS

Wondering what First Day Hikes look like nationwide? In 2020, nearly 85,000 people collectively hiked more than 176,366 miles throughout the country on guided hikes, according to the site, StateParks.org. Numerous others hiked state park trails throughout the day.

- Miles per person: 2
- Calories burned: Equal to 41,348 fast-food burgers
- Distance traveled: 7 trips around the equator
- Total Steps Taken: 415,693,531

The Two Travelers encourage folks to take advantage of the outdoor resources offered by Paris Landing and other state parks across the nation by finding a First Day Hike near you. Don't forget the nearby trails at Eiffel Tower Park, Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge, Land Between the Lakes and more.

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- 2 Instead of a traditional card, consider an e-card or a telephone call.
- 3 When holiday shopping, use reusable shopping bags. These reduce the amount of paper and plastic distributed by vendors.
- 4 For an eye-catching gift tag, use old holiday cards to make gift tags or decorate the gift box.
- 5 Save on gift wrap by reusing intact pieces from the previous year or opt for a more durable material that can be used again and again, such as a cloth bag.
- 6 Once it's time to pack up the decorations, set aside your Christmas tree for recycling. Many areas collect trees in the first few weeks after Christmas to be mulched and used for water conservation and weed control.

hauling takes on a new meaning... **Merry Christmas**

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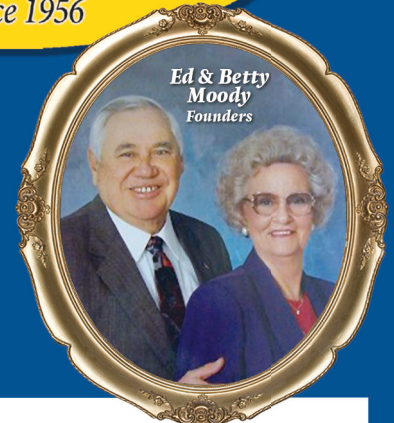
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4. Type of Christmas cookie
7. A type of hike in national parks
8. Site of Henry County's first court house
9. Hope Tusa's dog is named _____.
12. Pat & Rachel Terrell are host of an _____ Thanksgiving.
16. Learn more about BPU's _____ Financing Program
17. "THE" holiday plant, according to John Watkins
18. Paris Radio Company: "The South's Largest Gift & _____ Store"
20. Heather & James Painter were 2020's Clark _____ Award winners
21. Barry Hart saw Bob Hope's USO Christmas Show in this country.
22. Name of retirement community

Down

1. "World's Best Young Elvis"
3. _____ PARIS showcases holiday homes' locations.
4. _____ of the Month Club
5. See videos of Elf Barry on this.
6. Happy _____ !
8. Little "Big" Town owner
10. Take a _____ field trip on TVA/Kids.
11. HCHS' press box named for this man.
13. Martha Campbell had Thanksgiving dinner here.
14. _____ Harvest provides food in Middle TN
15. _____ Christmas Tribute coming to KPAC Dec. 4
19. Christ the _____ is Born



CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

BY BARRY HART

People travel during the holidays for various reasons, and tradition is one of them. I used to think that being home for Christmas was the norm, but over the years my family has been scattered around the world, and you know the old saying “when in Rome do what the Romans do!”

GUANTANAMO BAY

My first real Christmas away from home was spent in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Christmas Eve is called “Nochebuena,” which means “the good night,” and it’s when families have their main meal and celebration together. The traditional main dish is roast pork, usually the whole pig, and is accompanied by fried plantains, rice and vegetables. Dessert is often rice pudding or sweet potato pudding. Mass follows the evening meal.

In some towns, there is a big fiesta and parade on Christmas Eve called “Las Parrandas.” The back story is that in the 1820’s, a local priest thought that most folks would fall asleep after such a fine meal and not go to mass. He encouraged some children to make a lot of noise to keep the folks awake. This has morphed into a celebration and parade that pits

neighborhood against neighborhood in a contest to outdo one another with the noise, floats and music. Epiphany was celebrated before Christmas, and that’s when the children would receive presents.

Celebrating Christmas in Cuba was banned by Fidel Castro in 1969, but in Miami, Florida, Las Parrandas still takes place in heavily populated Cuban neighborhoods. One note here, Christmas was reinstated as a public celebration in 1998 following the Pope’s visit.

VIETNAM

My second Christmas away was spent in Vietnam where Christmas Eve was more important because Christmas Day is not considered an official public holiday.

In Ho Chi Minh City, which is the largest city in Vietnam and used to be called Saigon, young people like to go into the city center where there is a Catholic cathedral. The streets are crowded with people on Christmas Eve, and in the city center, cars are not allowed for the night. People celebrate by throwing confetti, taking pictures and enjoying the Christmas decorations and lights of big hotels and department stores. Lots of cafes

and restaurants are open for people to enjoy a snack.

Not many people in Vietnam are considered Christians, but some people like to go to Midnight Mass services to watch the Nativity plays and hear Christmas music.

Vietnam used to be part of the French Empire and there are still French influence in their Christmas traditions. All churches, and some Christian homes, will have a nativity crib scene or creche. Many Catholic churches have a big scene with nearly life size statues of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, the shepherds, and animals.

In some areas of Ho Chi Minh City, usually in Catholic parishes, people have big crib scenes in front of their houses and decorate the whole street, turning it into a Christmas area. These are popular for people to visit and look at the scenes.

Like in France, the special Christmas Eve meal is called “reveillon” and has a “bûche de Noël,” a chocolate cake in the shape of a log, for dessert. Vietnamese people like to give presents of food, and at Christmas, a bûche de Noël is a popular gift. Other Christmas presents aren’t very common, although some young people like to exchange Christmas cards.



Bob Hope's USO Show, Vietnam 1969

The USO presented a show in 1969 that included celebrities like Bob Hope, Ann Margret, the Gold Diggers and Connie Stevens, to name a few. The climax of the show was when Bob Hope came riding in on a tank that had been painted red and white.

GERMANY

Another trip out of the country at Christmas came in 2012 when one of my grandsons was born in Germany, well-known for its Christmas markets. The town centers are full of vendors selling all sorts of Christmas foods, such as regional sausage, honey, and jams. The classics are "Bratwurst" (fried sausage), "Gebrannte Mandeln" (roasted, sugared almonds) and "Glühwein" (mulled wine). Handmade products include tea candles, natural cosmetics, hand-blown glass and jewelry. The market in Frankfurt is the most popular, perhaps because of their marzipan pastry. Personally, I prefer the apple strudel.

ITALY

Our trip to Germany carried us to Rome, Italy, and Pompeii. The streets

of Rome were crowded, especially during Christmas week. In fact, it's a place where some major religious Christmas traditions originated.

We visited the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore and viewed the oldest permanent nativity scene. The first Christmas was held in Santa Maria Maggiore and pieces of the original manger are said to be housed below the altar.

I cannot forget having dinner with my wife and son, Nathan, at a sidewalk café that was followed by a very tasty serving of crème brûlée!

ENGLAND

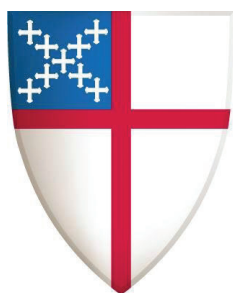
Alas, this article wouldn't be complete without mentioning a few traditions of my mum's homeland, England. Their traditions are very similar to ours here in the United States. At Christmas, families come together to hang mistletoe above the doorways, hang stockings from the mantle and put out cookies and milk by the tree for Santa. Most towns and villages are decorated with lights, nativity scenes and you can see and hear carolers winding their way through the streets singing "Noel."

My mum always had a healthy supply of Twinings and Earl Grey tea, home-made mince-meat pie, and Christmas pudding. What's Christmas without a hot cup of tea and a slice of mincemeat pie? Hey, "when in Rome, or in this case, Paris..."



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SECOND HARVEST

Providing Food To Our Neighbors



BY ELYSE BELL

Have you ever noticed the Second Harvest semi-trucks driving through our community and wondered what they were doing? Their purpose is to provide a central distribution center for companies, groups and individuals who wished to help provide food for the hungry people of Middle Tennessee.

Modeled after the first food bank established in Phoenix in the mid-1970's, Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee was designed to collect food that would otherwise go to waste. The regional organization set up a process to inspect, sort and distribute food to soup kitchens, pantries and shelters serving Tennesseans experiencing hunger. During the first year, Second Harvest distributed 160,000 pounds of food to 75 member agencies.

SECOND HARVEST STILL GROWING TODAY

Of the more than 200 food banks and food distribution centers across the country, Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee has become

one of the largest and most comprehensive after opening its doors in 1978. During fiscal year 2020, Second Harvest distributed more than 41 million meals to hungry children, families, and seniors throughout the 46-county service area, which includes Middle and part of West Tennessee.

The Ray Smith Family Distribution Center in Camden opened in November 2018 to better serve the communities of Benton, Carroll, Chester, Decatur, Gibson, Hardin, Henderson, Henry, Houston, Humphreys, Perry, Stewart, Wayne and Weakley Counties. This expansion provides even more opportunities to reach those in need.

"Every day we wake up with one thing on our mind – to provide food to our neighbors facing hunger," said Donna Vick, Donor Relationships Manager. "The Camden facility allows us to be closer to Henry County. We are here to help."

Hunger is a real problem in our county. Last year in the midst of COVID-19, Second Harvest gave out 483,383 meals in Henry County. So

far this year 547,189 meals have been distributed. Several food bank agencies help distribute food from Second Harvest in Henry County, including Paris First United Methodist, First Baptist Church, Lakeside Christian Fellowship, New Harmony Baptist Church, Paris First Church of the Nazarene and Sulphur Well Church of Christ.

"There's so much going on with the perishable food distribution and mobile food pantry," said Carol Doster, Food Pantry coordinator for Paris First United Methodist Church. "One of the most rewarding parts of this ministry is seeing the impact we have on so many people."

ADAPTING TO CONTINUE SERVING

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Second Harvest has felt the impact on their food distributions, but they've adapted. Many agencies had to close their doors or reduce hours because their volunteer base was the most vulnerable to the virus. To keep volunteers and clients safe, Second Harvest followed Center for Disease

Control (CDC) guidelines for food distributions, such as wearing masks and supplying hand sanitizers. Distributions became drive-thru events only which kept volunteers and clients socially distanced.

Last year, Second Harvest used pandemic funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to pilot a Produce Distribution Program, which was incredibly successful by providing healthy produce to individuals and families experiencing hunger.

The program distributed five semi-trailers of produce per week with zero food waste to partner agencies and mobile pantry distributions. Each produce box contains 15-20 pounds of healthy fruits and vegetables, enough to feed a family of four for an entire week.

Over 180 people from Henry County have volunteered at the Ray Smith Distribution Center from November 2018 to December 2020. Major groups include: Henry County Future Farmers of America, Paris First Methodist Church, Apostolic Chapel, Maplewood Baptist Church, Bethel College of Professional Studies (Paris Campus), as well as employees of the Dana Corporation.

"Second Harvest gives members of [our] church family a wonderful way to put God's love into action as we work together preparing boxes of fresh produce, meats and baked goods to distribute every third and fourth Tues-



Some local Second Harvest warehouse volunteers are Sheila Stigall, Danette La Bare, Ramay Winchester, and Elyse Bell.

day mornings," said Joy Weathersbee, pastor of Paris First UMC.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

As the Second Harvest website states "Asking for help can be hard but helping doesn't have to be." Here are ways you can get involved:

- Volunteer as an individual, family, group or company at the Ray Smith Distribution Center, 69 Benton Industrial Road in Camden, TN. "For those who are struggling this time of year, volunteering at the Second Harvest warehouse is one way to boost the holiday spirit. It is a great way to enjoy fellowship while serving others," said volunteer Ramay Winchester.

- Host a food drive. Second Harvest can provide boxes for food donations and food can absolutely be kept locally. A food donation box is already located at Kroger in Paris.

- Donations are always needed. One dollar equals 4 meals, so every bit matters. The Feeding Hope campaign kicks off November 1 – December 31 with various opportunities to give.

For more information on how you can help, please contact Donna Vick, donna.vick@secondharvestmidtn.org or visit the website at www.secondharvestmidtn.org

Elyse Bell is a retired Lay Resource Leader for the United Methodist Church.

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Santa's Favorite Cookies

A hhh...Christmas time. Lights strung up along windows and walls, Christmas dresses adorned with colorful ornaments, carols that start being played a little too early – each of these things is characteristic of that wonderful season. Every item on that

list carries with it a strong sense of nostalgia...at least for me.

Candy cane cookies definitely fall on that list at my house. Over at the Geary home, you'll find Karen making a batch of their favorite Jubilee cookies. And if you stopped by my Mom's house, she'd have you sit at the

kitchen table and decorate the softest, sweetest gingerbread cookies you've ever tasted.

I'm sure you have your own favorite Christmas cookies to make, but this year why not try one of these to add to your list. *Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy Baking!*

Jubilee Cookies

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1 cup brown sugar
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2¾ cups flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup nuts, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

- Cream butter or margarine, brown sugar, and sugar until fluffy.
- Add eggs, milk, and vanilla.
- Gradually add in dry ingredients.
- Stir in nuts.
- Drop rounded teaspoons of dough on greased cookie sheet.
- Bake at 375° F for 10-12 minutes or until edges are golden brown.
- When cooled, frost cookies.

FROSTING:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- ¼ cup milk

Cream until mixture is spreadable. Top with pecan halves or sprinkles.





Candy Cane Cookies

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup confectioner's sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1¼ teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1½ teaspoon red food coloring

INSTRUCTIONS

- In a mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Mix in egg, peppermint extract and vanilla. Add in the flour and salt and mix well.
- Divide the dough in half and stir the red food coloring in half the dough. Shape both doughs into a disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 4 hours.
- Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with silicone cookie mats or parchment paper.
- For each candy cane, pinch off a rounded teaspoon of each dough and roll into a rope, about 4 inches long.
- Place the red and the white ropes next to each other and pinch them together at the top.
- Twist the two doughs together then gently bend the top into a hook. Place directly on prepared cookie sheets.
- Bake in preheated oven 9-12 minutes or until cookies are set (do not brown or the cookies will be dry). When cookies are cool enough to handle, very carefully (they'll be super fragile) remove to a wire rack and cool completely.

Perfect Gingerbread Cookies

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup shortening
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup molasses
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 ½ cups flour



INSTRUCTIONS

- Beat butter and shortening until mixed. Add sugar, baking powder, ginger, baking soda, and cinnamon and continue to beat on medium until combined and fluffy. Add molasses, vanilla, egg, and vinegar and beat until well mixed.
- Add flour a little at a time until combined. Refrigerate at least 2 hours.
- Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a cookie sheet.
- Roll dough to ¼" thick on a lightly floured surface. Cut with cookie cutters into desired shapes.
- Bake for 7 to 9 minutes or until edges are lightly browned.
- Allow to cool 2 minutes on the pan. Transfer to a cooling rack and cool completely.
- Then, gather your friends and family to decorate.





WE GATHER TOGETHER

BY KAREN GEARY

Often advertising people portray Thanksgiving as a Norman Rockwell scene with a big baked turkey and all the fixings spread out on a huge table. People of all ages are talking politely among each other while waiting for the pumpkin pie. But true to life, not all Thanksgivings turn out so idyllic.

Most of the Geary Thanksgivings are spent with our long-time friends, Rick and Vicki Dye. Rick and my husband, Joe, are both ministers and traveling to be with our own relatives was difficult, especially when sermons needed to be preached on Sunday. Our good friends have truly been our family for decades. But not all our Thanksgivings have gone so smoothly.

One Thanksgiving took a sudden turn when Joe developed a stomach virus and requested no food to be cooked in the house. That was fine with me – no cooking! So, I loaded

the kids up in the van and headed to Cracker Barrel for their Thanksgiving dinner plate. Because it was a special occasion, I allowed my son, Joshua, to order root beer with his meal.

The restaurant was busy, his glass kept being refilled, and he consumed several soft drinks before his meal arrived. All was fine until Josh decided to ask me something. “Mom, can I — URRRPP!” It was the loudest burp I had ever heard come from his mouth. So loud, the restaurant literally fell silent for a split second. Josh quickly clasped his hands over his mouth and apologized for his preteen faux pas.

The waitress was quick to pick up on the silliness at our table. “Was that you burping? The cooks in the kitchen want to know,” she asked while winking at me. Josh was mortified; his sister, LeeAnn, was doubled over laughing. At that point, I knew I had lost all control of the situation. Much to his chagrin, adult Josh is still

reminded yearly of the “burp that silenced Cracker Barrel.”

A few of our readers also shared their Thanksgiving memories with PARIS!

Carolyn Folkes recalls Thanksgiving as, “always a noon dinner at my grandmother’s, then to the high school football game. One beautiful Thanksgiving Day, my mother made me carry a coat which was OK with me because I had a new coat. But it really wasn’t coat weather! Before the game was over, a big snowstorm came and I was glad for a new wool coat. I think if I remember correctly Grove always played Murray High on Thanksgiving afternoon. I think this was 1953, maybe ’54.”

From **Martha Campbell**: “I do not remember Thanksgiving as a child. I do remember that after my father died, Mother worked most Thanksgivings at the Piggott Hospital as a registered

nurse. In high school, I remember going to eat turkey, dressing, etc. at the hospital and then going to the rival football game between Pigott and Corning, Arkansas. After college and nursing school, I volunteered to work each Thanksgiving and Christmas so I could have New Year's off to watch football. So, a large part of my Thanksgivings have been hospital food."

Pat and Rachel Terrell enjoy providing a home for The Terrell's "Orphans Thanksgiving" each year. "Some years ago, Rachel observed that there were many friends of ours that either had no traditional place to go or no family left with which to spend Thanksgiving. In essence, "Thanksgiving Orphans," said Pat Terrell.

"So, we decided to make our Thanksgiving celebration a family and friends potluck dinner. There are requests for repeat dishes, but tasty surprises from new attendees are enjoyed by all. Five tables are packed from the front rooms of our house through the dining room all the way to our fireplace-warmed back patio with family and friends."

Thanksgivings at **Dan Jackson's** childhood home sometimes took on a competitive nature after the dishes were washed. "The holidays at our house have always been about food and family on my mother's side. All the aunts, all the uncles, as far down the line as possible, would be there. My



First-timers at Pat and Rachel Terrell's Orphans Thanksgiving Dinner get to wear a pilgrim hat. Lesley Webb received the honor at one dinner.

Great Aunt Edna lived in Memphis and would always make the trip to Paris for the holiday. She was a lady full of feist and attitude – a widow to several fellas, sadly or maybe not so sadly, and she had no children of her own. Many times, after dinner, friendly card games would break out. Sometimes, if my grandmother thought a certain uncle was cheating, it was so friendly they didn't talk until Easter!

One year, I was about 19, home from college and brought my own

voice into the fray. 'How about we play a game of Pass the Trash,' I asked. This resulted in curious looks from around the table. Quickly, I explained the rules, only to have my 75-year-old Aunt Edna exclaim, 'Oh that's called Screw Your Neighbor!' Suffice to say, I did not win at that game."

Whether your Thanksgiving Day is shared with a large family or a few friends, remember to count your blessings and give thanks this year.



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Thank You Notes From John

BY JOHN WATKINS

If you haven't heard Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas" a thousand times already, let me just say that despite what she says in the song, the definitive answer this year is not "You." (Sorry, Mariah) I'm thinking this year, "All I want for Christmas is a little rest and relaxation and a little less stress." (I know, not nearly as catchy and doesn't even rhyme, but seriously.)

Wow, what a year! What with the ongoing pandemic, prices of everything seeming to go through the roof, and a general shortage of things you could really use, you might just wonder, "What could I possibly be thankful for this year?" Well, have no fear as I have once again come up with a short list of some thank-you notes I really need to send.

To begin with, **Thank You, Topsoil.** What would we do without you? You

provide all of our plants with a place to live. You provide food, water, support, and who knows what else. Without you we'd have to rely on scaffolding to hold our trees up. We'd have to constantly water and feed our grass and flowers just to keep them alive.

And you really ask so little in return. Maybe a little water in the middle of a drought, a nice layer of mulch to keep you warm in the winter, and a nice helping of organic matter every now and then to keep you healthy.

I know we take you for granted, but I promise I will do my best from now on to make sure I don't dump any harmful chemicals on you and will even try to keep those pesky moles and voles from destroying your profile.

Thank You, Ornamental Grasses. You guys are the bomb. Finally, a grass that I only have to cut back once a year! You come in so many sizes, tex-

tures, and colors. From 6 inches to 20 feet, with flowers colors from pink to golden bronze, with upright growth to creeping habits – heck, you even come with zebra stripes! And talk about low maintenance, I can just plant you and let you do your thing. Now that's a grass I can really get behind.

Thank You, Poinsettias. I will be the first to admit that I'm not necessarily your biggest fan, but you have made quite the name for yourself as being "THE" holiday plant of choice.

I guess it could be the fact that there aren't really that many other choices out there for plants with your particular set of skills (namely, being able to bloom at Christmas time), but could you at least make yourself a little more hardy in areas besides your native Mexico so we could appreciate you a little longer? Regardless of that fact, you bring joy to millions

of households and income to those growers that get to sell you on an annual basis.

Thank You, County Extension Agents. You are often the unsung heroes of the horticultural world. When we have questions about weeds, insects, or even what plant should go where, you are just a phone call away. You provide programming, teach classes, run soil tests, and publish extremely helpful bulletins on almost any subject out there.

And let's not forget those Experiment Stations where you run trials on new plant varieties, fertilizers, and pesticides so we don't have to go all "mad scientist" in our own gardens.

Thank You, Garden Tillers. If you've ever had to try and work up a new garden plot, you'll know what I'm talking about here. Just a pull of the cord and you're ready to break up the ground or add organic matter into an existing flower bed. I've tried this with

a shovel and rake but you just can't get the same results as a good set of counter-rotating tines!

Finally, Thank You, Holidays! I love the way you spread yourself throughout the year giving us some short respites from all that hard work, especially this time of year when the weather gets cold and rainy and it starts getting dark at 5 pm.

You bring families and friends together, you promote good will, and you even have this magical power to make "pumpkin-spice" anything appealing. (I still don't get that one.) So keep spreading the joy and cheer whenever you get the chance.

Also, remember that little suggestion I had about year-round 3-day weekends? See if you can do something about that and you'll have a lifelong fan for sure!

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



Thank You, Poinsettias – "THE" holiday plant of choice

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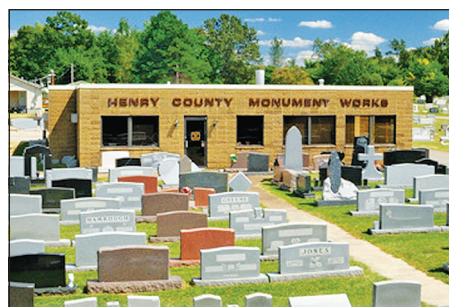
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BORED NO MORE!

...Thanks to TVA/Kids



TVA PHOTO

The arrival of the holidays brings plenty of excitement, but with school not in session, there are also long stretches of downtime for children, punctuated by the groan, “I’m bored!” Parents often look for fun activities to fill these voids, and TVA/KIDS (TVA.com/kids) can help.

COLORFUL, ENGAGING, INCLUSIVE

TVA/KIDS is a colorful, engaging, inclusive website which answers all sorts of questions that children love to ask. “How is electricity made?”, “How did that dam get there?” or even “How can I work at TVA?” These are explained in a manner that makes sense to kids – and grownups, too!

TVA/KIDS uses short, animated videos to describe how TVA manages the Tennessee River for flood control, navigation, water quality, water supply, recreation, and low cost, renew-

able energy. “Our History” features a history booklet that explains why TVA was created and how those dams came to be.

NEARBY SITES

“All About Dams” not only describes how these giant workhorses were built, but which type is best for different purposes. “Virtual Field Trips,” shot on location tell the history of four dams, including Kentucky. Located an easy, hour’s drive north of Paris, the Kentucky Dam video showcases TVA’s longest dam, the incredible equipment inside from generators to turbine shafts, it’s contribution to World War II, it’s Visitor Center and more. Other videos showcase Norris, Fontana and Guntersville Dams.

Moms and dads will be especially appreciative of the segment on saving energy and not wasting water. Aside from the financial aspect of saving, this

helps children understand the importance of being a good steward of our natural resources.

FORWARD THINKING

Middle and high school students will tune in to the types of jobs available with TVA. There are thousands of jobs in the seven state region that make up the Tennessee Valley. Special opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) are highlighted with colorful, stylized photos of real TVA employees. These employees are highlighted in individual videos that explain what they do, how they got there and why they feel their job is important.

More than 15 videos cover STEM careers including a nuclear reactor engineer, zoologist, hydro plant manager, radiological chemical laboratory assistant, botanist, archaeologist, investor relations professional and more.

TEACHERS, TOO

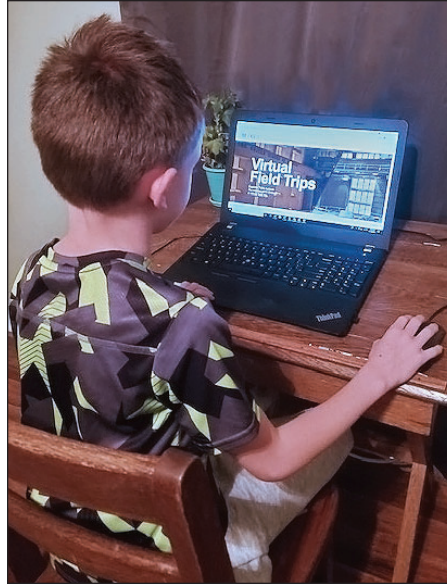
Not surprisingly, this site also is a valuable educational resource for teachers and homeschoolers. The "STEMready" page offers multiple lesson plans for various grade levels, and the Energy Monster page has creative downloads.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND

Finally, there are discussions that center around the environment, the river and things we sometimes take for granted. "Keeping Our Water Clean" offers stewardship ideas for the water in your community. There is a "Clean Air" section and information about TVA's aggressive clean air control program.

In a segment called "Running the River," children discover how TVA's mission benefits everyone in the valley. This includes land use, such as shoreline protection; recreation, such as boating and fishing; clean water for people, animals and aquatic life; low cost, pollution-free electricity courtesy of TVA dams; and navigation, thanks to TVA locks and dams.

Don't miss the chance to add a little fun and education to your child's life over Christmas break. In the short run, it will cure the "I'm Bored Blues." And in the long run, it just might make a difference that lasts decades after this holiday season has come and gone.



Calvin Martin takes a virtual field trip on the TVA/KIDS website. Not only is the site educational, but fun, too.



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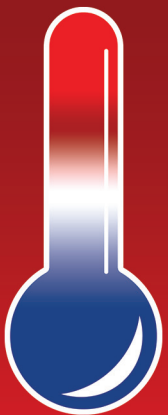
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IT'S CHRISTMAS YEAR-ROUND

With Travis McLeese



There's nothing more interesting than a "behind the scenes" look at how something is made. This edition of Paris Podcast looks at the Downtown Paris Association and the methods it's used to survive and thrive, especially as it relates to the holidays.

"Whether you've resided in Paris your entire life or just moved to town, this podcast offers history and context to today's downtown area," says interviewer Andrew Wheatley of Susan Jones PR.

"The CEO of the Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director of the Downtown Paris Association speaks from his heart about the work that turns holiday events on the court square into a sentimental journey worthy of a Christmas movie."

Although downtown events often have a spontaneous feel, they are anything but spontaneous. McLeese reveals the extraordinary lead time, the type of planning and vision needed to develop and coordinate events. This includes the three-day open house weekend, the Downtown Christmas Festival, the Holly Jolly Electric Christ-

mas Parade, and the Festival of Trees. He also discusses what it takes to have Santa onsite, visiting with children more days than any other town in West Tennessee.

Where do the Chamber's creative ideas, partners, and financing come from? It's not a short answer, rather it is a long, thorough one as McLeese lays out the importance of a creative, dedicated staff that isn't afraid to dream big, research, explore, and listen to the needs of merchants and the community. Spoiler alert, it doesn't hurt to have hundreds of excited volunteers and sponsors either.

"Light Up Paris," an online map that showcases festively lighted homes in our community was actually a project born out of the pandemic. Designed to get people out in a socially distanced fashion, it quickly became what local families and visitors from nearby towns needed to lift their spirits.

This year, McLeese predicts even more folks will use the site to find beautifully lit homes, then tack on a little holiday shopping or dining while they're in Paris. He shares more about

the process that turned this idea into a reality.

But what about Christmas 2021? The chamber staff has been working on the festivities for a year and a half. If you want to go big, you have to get on companies' and musicians' calendars and find the money.

Christmas never ends for McLeese, and it shows. "It's not uncommon for folks to come in our office in July when it's in the mid-90's and find us listening to Christmas music," he says in the interview.

Who are the Chamber's partners? The list is endless, but listeners will be especially moved by how the Chamber not only bonds with local businesses but with local students and teachers at Henry County High School, as well.

Finally, McLeese shares what a young Chamber staff – which is unique in the Chamber world – can bring to a community for the holidays, and the special moment that turned him into "a big cry baby last Christmas."

There's lots more in this fascinating podcast that runs about 30 minutes. To listen, scan the QR code on this page or go to susanjonespr.com/podcast.

FACES & PLACES



Pouring down rain? No matter. The Paris FFA still holds its annual Mum-A-Palooza and the crowds still come. Emma Thompson and Reagan Bostick show off some of the mums grown by the students this year.



The press box at HCHS Patriot Stadium was named for long-time announcer Jim Farmer at this year's Homecoming game. In photo, Director of Schools Dr. Leah Watkins presents a plaque to Farmer while Athletic Director Mike Poteete looks on. Photo: Kim Patterson



Pam Conger and Susan Jones put the finishing touches on the fall decorations at the court square. Thanks also to Ken and Marsha Banasiewicz and Pat and Rachel Terrell for helping decorate and Tyler Smith of Future Vision Farms for donating pumpkins.



Ira Greer unloads a case of water destined for Waverly, TN. The Henry Co Sheriff's Department delivered supplies to Hickman County following the devastating flooding in that area.



Amanda Mason and Dennis Melhouse talk things over at this year's Arts 'Round The Square in Downtown Paris. Amanda was displaying her wares from the Ginkgo Pottery Studio.



Tyler Cox showing off his ride in the Henry Pioneer Day parade.



Mrs. Lynn Whitfield was all smiles as she recently saw former student, Kristy McNutt, while she was on a shopping trip with Jan Holley.



Remi Patterson and her Papa, Larry Smith, shared a super sweet milkshake.



Kathy Visser and Henry County Juvenile Court Judge Vicki Snyder at their booth at the Pet Show at the Henry County Fair.



At the Blessing of the Pet at Paris First UMC, Hope Tusa brought her dog Molly to be blessed by Rev. Joy Weathersbee. Seth Bucy stands by with dog treats.



April Perry of Perry's BBQ and Jennifer Starks and Mallorie Hutson from Commercial Bank & Trust chat before the first Noon on the Square of the season started.



The Henry County High School Cheerleaders, led by Coach Velvet Arnold, held a cheer clinic for the largest group ever with 110 aspiring cheerleaders. Pictured is HCHS cheerleader Addy Kate Parker with two of the cuties right before their performance at the game.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

— ONGOING — HOLIDAY EVENTS

VISIT WITH SANTA – Stop by and let Santa entertain your wee little guests at his gingerbread house in downtown Paris on the square November 26-December 19 on Saturdays from 10am-2pm and Sundays from 2-4pm.

PLAY INSIDE – The Paris Civic Center has an indoor pool, track, weights, and fitness machines. Pay by the visit or become a member. Located on Volunteer Drive. For more information, call 731-644-2517.

LEARN ABOUT YOUR HEALTH – Henry County Medical Center offers monthly seminars including Chronic Disease Management Screenings, Childbirth Education, and many more. All are free but you must pre-register by calling 731-644-3463.

QUOTA CLUB ANNUAL PECAN SALE – Beginning the first weekend of November, these delicious pecans are up for grabs! \$12 for the 1 lb. bag and \$10 for the specialty pecans such as dark chocolate, milk chocolate, cinnamon and glazed. Stop by Commercial Bank, First Bank, Security Bank or Paris Family Chiropractic to purchase them. For more information, call Dr. Elizabeth Craig at 731-642-3761.

POPCORN ANYONE? – It's holiday movie time! Enjoy a night out at the Parisian Theatre with nightly shows on six screens and matinees on Saturday and Sunday. For more information and movie schedules, call 731-642-7171.

— NOVEMBER —

NOVEMBER 4 – Carl Perkins Center Pancake Day, the delicious yearly tradition, will be at First Baptist Church, 7:30am-6pm with all-you-can-eat yummy pancakes and sausage. Pre-Sale tickets are \$8 and \$10 at the door. Call 731-642-8455.

NOVEMBER 4 – Lifeline Blood Mobile is open from Noon-6pm at First United Methodist Church. Call 1-800-924-6572, extension 310, for more information.

NOVEMBER 5, 6 & 7–It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in festive Downtown Paris! **Candlelight Open Houses** are Friday-Saturday, 6-8pm, and Sunday from 1-5pm. Call 731-64234 or log onto www.VisitDowntownParis.com for more information.

NOVEMBER 7– First Baptist Church is hosting a **Family Fall Festival** from 3-5pm at Dunagan Farms. Everyone is welcome. Call 731-642-5074 for more details.

NOVEMBER 10 & 11– The Henry County FCE Club presents **Home-maker's Holiday** in the Enoch Building at the Fairgrounds from 3-6pm on the 10th and 10am-1pm the 11th. On Saturday, be sure to come hungry; they're serving soup and sandwiches. Lots of goodies to buy! For more information, contact Michele Atkins at 731-642-2941.

NOVEMBER 11 – Veterans Day. Thank a Veteran and remember those who fought for our freedom. Be sure to watch for local celebrations around town.

NOVEMBER 13 – The Ultimate Oldies Rock and Roll Show will be at the KPAC with a blast from the past performing all your favorites from the 50's and 60's. Starts at 7pm. For ticket information, call 731-644-2517.

NOVEMBER 13 & 14 – Stop by the **Christmas In Paris Shopping Extravaganza** at the Paris Convention Center and get a jump on holiday gifts! Saturday 9am-5 pm; Sunday 12-4pm. Admission is free! Please email christmasinparisn@yahoo.com or find them on Facebook for more information.

NOVEMBER 15-22 – Operation Christmas Child Collection Week at First Baptist Church. Kick off the holiday season by giving back. For more information contact Pam Moultrie at 731-642-7893 or call Scott at 731-642-5074.


NOVEMBER 24-26 – Thanksgiving break for city and county schools.

NOVEMBER 25 – Thanksgiving Day– Spend time with loved ones as you celebrate all that we have to be thankful for.

NOVEMBER 26-DECEMBER 18 – Festival of Trees will be on the square in Downtown Paris! Located at The Old 5 & 10 Event Center at 110 W. Washington Street, it will be open Monday-Friday, 11am-4pm; Saturdays, 10am-2pm; Sundays, 1-4pm. Call 731-642-3431 for more information.

NOVEMBER 26 – Head to downtown beautiful Paris for the **North Pole Family Fun Day** from 10am-2pm. Enjoy Santa, Rudolph and the Elves rolling in on a fire truck, craft booths and more. For information, log onto www.VisitDowntownParis.com or call 731-642-3431.

NOVEMBER 27 – Head out to the Paris Convention Center for the **Tinsel Town Shopping Expo** from 9am-5pm. There'll be shopping galore with music, door prizes, food trucks, and photos with Santa! call Keisha Norwood at 731-223-9761 for more information.



NOVEMBER 28 – Join the folks at Paris First United Methodist Church for the First Sunday of Advent and the traditional **“Hanging of the Greens”** at 8:30am and 11am. For more information, call 642-4764.

— **DECEMBER** —

DECEMBER 1 – Stop by and see the folks at W. G. Rhea Library and pick up your own **gingerbread house kit** starting today. For more information, call 731-642-1702.

DECEMBER 2 – Take time out of your busy schedule to give back. Visit the **Lifeline Blood Mobile** at First United Methodist Church, Noon-6pm.

DECEMBER 3-5 – **Live Nativity** at New Harmony Baptist Church from 6-8pm each night. Remember the reason for the season and start it off right with a beautiful drive through this community treasure. For more information, call 731-593-5276.

DECEMBER 4 – **Inman Middle School PAC** is hosting the **6th Annual Mistletoe Market** in the Inman gym with over 25 booths with local small businesses and crafters from 10am-4pm. This would be a great place to do some early Christmas shopping and find those one-of-a-kind gifts. For more information, call 731-642-8131.

DECEMBER 4 – The folks at County Line Roofing are hosting the first **Pictures with Santa** event. Located in their office at 60 Fairgrounds Road, Suite B, you can join them for free family photos with Santa. They're also giving out surprise bags for the kiddos, candy and cookies, hot chocolate and coffee. Event starts off at 10am. For more information, call 731-227-4527.

DECEMBER 4 – Give yourself a little soul for Christmas and head out to **KPAC** for **A Temptations Christmas** starting at 7pm. General admission tickets are \$27. For more information, call 731-644-2517.

DECEMBER 5 – Get out and enjoy the **53rd Annual Arts Council Christmas Concert** at the Krider Performing Arts Center at 3pm. Admission is free and will feature many local talents. Call 731-644-2517 for more information.

DECEMBER 11 – Get in the holiday spirit by listening to the elite group of singers from HCHS in **Christmas with the Madrigals**. Starts at 7pm at the KPAC. For more information, call 731-644-2517.

DECEMBER 11 – For fun galore, check out the **Downtown Christmas Festival**, 3-5pm, and the **Holly Jolly Electric Parade** at 5 pm. Awards include Clark Griswold, Golf Cart, Cutest Critter, and Best Decorated. Go to VisitDowntownParis.com for details and entry information or call 731-642-3431.

DECEMBER 12 – Paris First United Methodist Church **Chancel Choir and Bell Ringers** will perform their Christmas Cantata at the 11am service in the church sanctuary. All are welcome. Call 731-642-4764 for details.

DECEMBER 12 – The **Paris-Henry County Community Band**, under the direction of Mike Holden, will perform their **Christmas Concert** at 3pm at the Krider. For more information, call 731-644-2517.

DECEMBER 13 – **Parisian Theatre** is hosting an evening out with a **free** showing of a popular **Christmas movie**. Yes, it's free to get in! For more information, watch their Facebook page or call 731-642-1696.

DECEMBER 16 – Support the youth of Henry County as the **KPAC Young Artists HarmoniX** acapella group and the 3-5 grade group, **Upstream Vocals**, present their **Christmas Concert** at the KPAC at 7pm. Call 731-644-2517 for more info.

DECEMBER 18 – Don't have a blue Christmas! Get out to the KPAC for **“Christmas With The King”** with **Travis LeDoyt**, the world's best young Elvis impersonator, at 7pm. Tickets are \$27. For more information, call 731-644-2517.

DECEMBER 19 – First Baptist Church's **Candlelight Communion Service** in the sanctuary at 6 pm. Everyone is welcome. For more information, call 731-642-5074.

DECEMBER 20- January 4 – It's **Winter Break** for all schools. Joyeux Noel!

DECEMBER 21 – **Paris First United Methodist Church** is observing a **Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service** at 12pm. This is for anyone who has suffered the loss of a loved one, a job, relationship, security, health or other loss. For more information, call 731-642-4764.

DECEMBER 24 – **Christmas Eve Services** are held at many area churches. Programs include carols, special music, Christmas messages, and communion. Call churches for information.

DECEMBER 25 – Have a blessed **Merry Christmas!**

— **JANUARY** —

JANUARY 1 – **HAPPY NEW YEAR!** Time to make those resolutions for 2022 and a good place to start off right is at the Paris Landing State Park First Day Hike. *See article on page 20.*



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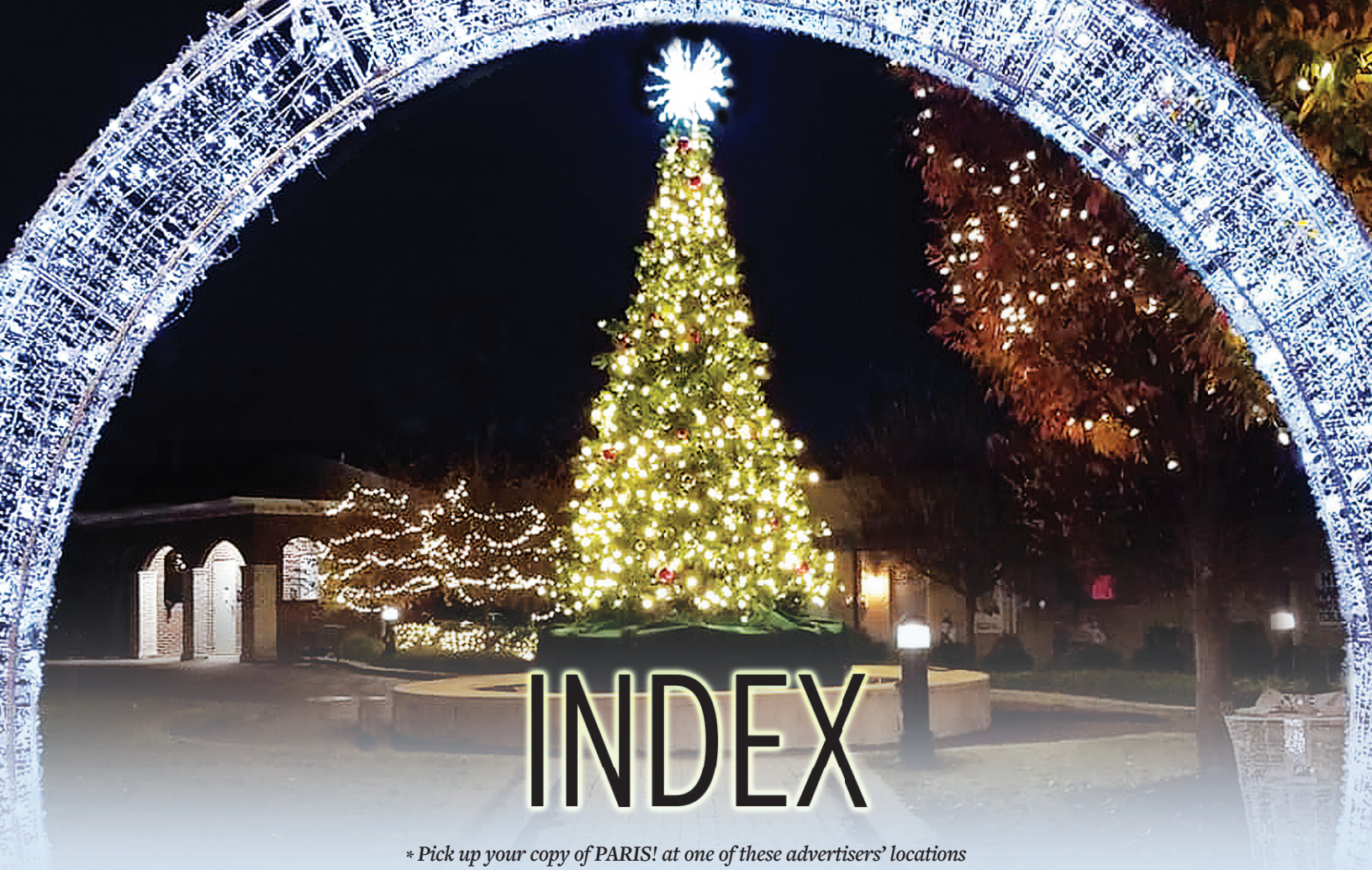
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