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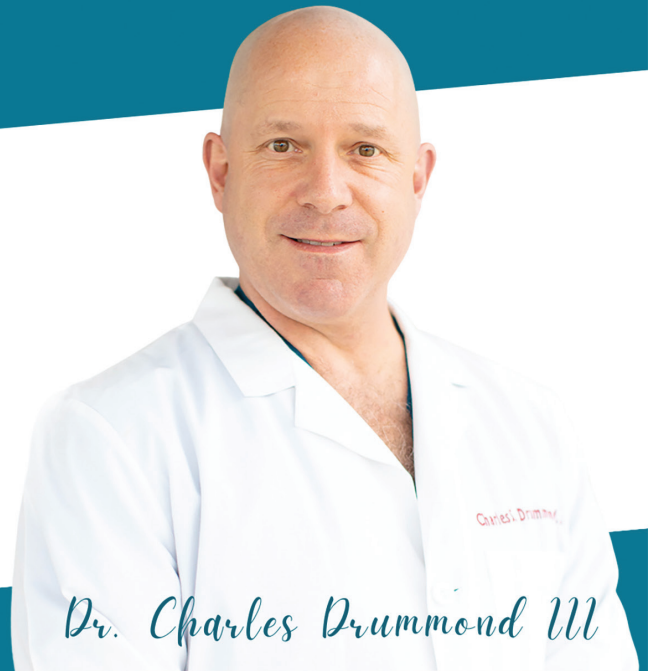
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Savoring the Summer Delights

Embracing the Tastes of Connection and Joy

AS THE sun casts its golden glow upon our world, we find ourselves awakening to the delights of summer – the vibrant colors, the warm breezes, and the echoes of laughter and togetherness. With the arrival of this cherished season, we unpack our picnic baskets, dust off our grills, and embark on a culinary journey that celebrates the tastes of connection and joy. Picture yourself lounging on a sun-kissed beach, surrounded by loved ones, as the tantalizing aroma of sizzling barbecues and refreshing fruit salads fills the air. Each bite becomes a portal to shared memories and the bonds that make our summers truly special.

Within this symphony of flavors, taste reigns supreme, captivating our senses and igniting our palates with delight. It possesses the enchanting ability to transport us to cherished moments in time, where the sweetness of ice cream cones, the tang of grilled seafood, and the juiciness of summer fruits evoke the essence of carefree days and long-lasting friendships. Just as the sun embraces us with its warmth, taste weaves

together the threads of connection, uniting generations and cultures through the art of shared culinary experiences.

Food, once a simple means of sustenance, has blossomed into a catalyst for a deeper sense of togetherness and celebration. It serves as the foundation upon which we build lasting memories, uniting families, friends, and communities. From the lively neighborhood block parties to the lively chatter of farmers’ markets, summer is the season when local food establishments take center stage, showcasing their delectable offerings and embodying the spirit of our vibrant communities.

So, as the sun casts its warm embrace upon us, let us seize the summer moments. Immerse yourself in the delight of every bite. Embrace the joy of shared meals with loved ones, knowing that within those sun-kissed flavors lies the essence of togetherness. In the pages of Good News, we invite you to savor the stories that unite us through food, forging connections that nourish not only our bodies but also our souls. **GN**


Wesley Bryant,
MANAGING EDITOR

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CHAPTER 1 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local positive news you may have missed.

- 14 Women impacting the community
- 18 AEDC Welcome Club holds farewell tea for past and current members
- 22 Tullahoma High School instructor shares the love of healthcare with students

Submit a positive story on our website:



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Photography by Brooke Snyder

◀ Tiffany Gordon, Beth Huber, Pam Wiedemer, and Suzanne Rutley



▲ Kelly Lapczynski, Emily Rath, Charle Coffey, Beverly Lee, and James Fuller

Women impacting the community

We see you, we recognize you, and we thank you

By Amanda E. West // Photos submitted by Hope Nunley and Amanda West

“WE CAN all do more than nothing,” said Dr. Monica Blake-Beasley. As the keynote speaker for the Women Impacting the Community event held on May 9, she recalled how she learned to “fail forward.”

In 2016, during the 15 years she served as a police officer for Nashville, Blake-Beasley’s life changed forever after a violent attack. Then, the father of her three children died from cancer in 2020, and her own father, Sgt. Thomas Blake, died four months later.

Feeling buried beneath the heavy weight of grief, a close friend told her, “You haven’t been buried. You’ve been planted.” Those words, along with her mother Joyce’s, “If you can look up, you can get up,” empowered her to emerge from victim to victor and challenged her to find healing among these tragedies. “Seeds aren’t in fear of either light or darkness because they need both to grow,” Blake-Beasley said. “When life threw blows, it also extended a helping hand to help me back up.”

Blake-Beasley is now a dedicated criminal justice educator for Tullahoma City Schools. She recently married Michael Beasley and continues to be a deeply devoted mother, daughter, niece, and friend. Her nonprofit, Sisterhood of Survival Inc., equips other female survivors with the tools needed to “bloom in power” by restoring their voices through her proposed No Voiceless Survivor Act. Recently earning a doctorate from Trevecca University, Blake-Beasley also holds degrees in special education and political

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► Sernobia McGee, Dr. Monica Blake-Beasley, and Bertha Smith



◀ Elizabeth Banks, Tisha Fritz, and Hope Nunley

science from Lipscomb University. Her mother, Joyce Blake, radiated with pride, saying, “She’s an incredible daughter who returned to Tullahoma to care for her GiGi and me after her father died and doctors diagnosed me with multiple sclerosis.”

Blake-Beasley ended her encouraging charge to the audience by reminding everyone to “go forth and bloom — but don’t just bloom — bloom in power.”

The chamber’s executive director, Hope Nunley, said, “This annual event highlights women in Tullahoma that are making an impact in four categories: business, community service, education, and lifetime achievement. This is our opportunity to tell the women in the community: We see you, we recognize you, and we thank you for all you’ve done. This annual event wouldn’t be possible without the dedication and hard work of Tisha Fritz, our assistant executive director, and Lily Smith, our marketing and communications coordinator.”

SmartBank sponsored this event, and with over 225 tickets purchased, attendees exceeded prior years by almost 100. Businesses sponsored individual tables, each overflowing with delightful spring bouquets that were eventually raffled off to lucky winners. Local woman-owned businesses, The Sundrop Shoppe and The Atlantic hosted and catered the event. Woodard’s Diamonds & Design sponsored the awards, and Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Harton Hospital sponsored tickets for the 12 finalists.

The chamber received 42 nominations for outstanding women, including a few duplicates, before narrowing the finalists down to three in each category. The recipients of the awards were:

- Business - Kelly Lapczynski
- Community Service - Emily Rath
- Education - Charle Coffey
- Lifetime Achievement - Beverly Lee

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▲ Past presidents of the AEDC Women's Club

Area women's club celebrates 70 years

AEDC Welcome Club holds farewell tea for past and current members

By Kali Bradford // Photography By Brooke Snyder

THE ROOM was filled with chatter and laughter while ladies reminisced over years of meetings and events where friendships were made, knowledge was gained, and the community was served. It was indeed a bittersweet moment for all in attendance as they said farewell to a club they had come to love so much.

After 70 years of serving the community, The AEDC Welcome Club held its final meeting at the Arnold Lakeside Complex at Arnold Air Force Base.

The club officially formed in 1953 as the AEDC Women's Club and later changed its name to the AEDC Welcome Club. The club hosted numerous events over its 70-year history, such as plays, fashion shows, scholarship drives, and Valentine's dances.

According to current member Ann Wonder, due to a number of factors, the decision was made to dissolve the club. For the meeting, Wonder said both past and present members were in attendance.

"We welcomed current and past members," she said. "Some of the past commander's wives still live in the area and could attend, and some came in from out of town. It was nice having some of the former ladies be able to attend.

Wonder, who joined the club shortly after moving back to Tullahoma, said the club allowed her to acclimate back into her hometown.

"I moved back here in 2005. As my husband was Navy, there were several Navy positions, so we were able to come back

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► Suzanne Short



◀ Rhessa Orr-Hanson

while he was still on active duty,” she explained. “He then retired and got a job with the base. My mother was also a member for a number of years. Becoming a member was a great way to meet fellow Air Force wives and make new friends. I enjoyed my time with the club and am thankful for all the friendships I’ve made and all of the opportunities to serve the community.”

During the club’s 70 years, it has been active in serving the community in a variety of ways. Along with awarding scholarships to area students, the club donated each month to charitable agencies, including The Good Samaritan, Fisher House Foundation Inc., Toys for Tots Campaign, The Blue Monarch, The United Way, the Coffee County Literacy Council, and more.

Over the years, the club welcomed countless guests who presented educational programs for the members each month.

“We welcomed people from in and around the community,” she said. “From the rangers with the area state parks to musicians, authors, and a number of people who helped us learn more about the community and all of the wonderful people and places in each city and community.”

While this meeting marks the last time the group of women will meet officially, Wonder said everyone agreed to keep in contact with each other.

“We all hope to stay in touch and do whatever we can to make that happen,” she said. “We have a Facebook page that we all share and are hoping to be able to post meet-up times where we can all get together. We also have an active book club, so that will enable us to come together as well.” **GN**



◀ Susan Harris and Kate Canady



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▲ Katie Alderman

Tullahoma High School instructor shares the love of healthcare with students.

Katie Alderman shows students all that healthcare has to offer

By Kali Bradford // Photography by Brooke Snyder

WHETHER IT'S the heart-pounding rush and anticipation of the emergency room (ER) or the quieter scene of the classroom where students are learning about all of the possibilities of the medical field, Katie Alderman thrives in both.

Hailing from a family where medicine and teaching were commonplace in her upbringing, with her father working as a doctor, her mother in the school system, and as a youth minister, she seemed almost destined to be involved with both.

After graduating with a degree in animal science from Auburn University, she had plans to attend veterinary school but took an alternative route working for a professional equestrian. She would continue to work in the horse industry, where she would also meet her husband, Stephen. The couple decided they wanted to pursue careers in the medical field, and both helped support each other through school. Stephen became a paramedic, and Katie, a nurse. She said she enjoyed working in the intensive care unit (ICU) and ER. While loving her profession, having a family changed her course somewhat. However, it would enable her to enjoy another profession close to her heart — teaching.

“All of my nursing work experience has been ICU or ER,” Katie said. “I loved the ER and worked down the road at Harton for many years and hope to get

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▲ Back row: McClain Bobo, Ezra Myers, Nolan Stroop, Malik Grizzard, Brayden Johnson, Keelie Delord, Karah Lawrence, and Jayla Hendon
Front row: Peyton Sells, Anna Le, Katie Alderman, Emeri Saunders, Pazlee Lowe, Aleah Yerby, and Sorani Ayana

back one day. But our schedules were just too hectic for raising children. So three years ago, I was lucky enough to be offered the position here, which has been a great opportunity for our family just with the schedule and being able to be home in the summer with the kids. It's been enjoyable to hang on to the health industry and remain plugged in there."

Now, as the Health Science teacher at Tullahoma High School, Katie said she loves showing her students all that the healthcare industry has to offer.

"They often just think you can be a nurse or doctor, and that's it," she explained. "We explore what else is out there and also available here in Tullahoma. It's great to see their eyes light up when they hear about everything available to them. They can rotate through different clinicals that allow them to explore other things. At the end of the semester, some kids decided that healthcare was not for them. I think it's just as valuable to know what you don't want to do as what you want to pursue. And we lay things out for them, such as hours, shifts, and time away from home. There are things that they aren't thinking about now but are important to consider."

She added she also enjoys her students and getting to engage with high school students.

"I love high schoolers," she said. "I love their quirky little spirit. I think that's in my DNA. My mom was a youth minister for a long time, so we always had high schoolers around as far back as I can remember. I love this age and being here with them every day."

Whether a nurse or a teacher, Katie said the perk is being able to serve her community.

"The other thing that I tell them is that I loved my experience in the ER, and a huge part of that was because it was my community," said Katie. "It would not have been nearly as fulfilling if I had worked at an ER in Winchester or Murfreesboro. While those are great hospitals, I felt called to work in this community. I grew up here. I have such a family legacy here. My parents have been here for so long. And I loved being a familiar face for people on a terrible day. So I try to put some of that out there for kids to know that it's not always just money. It's about what fulfills you and gives you purpose. I really love working in the Tullahoma community." **GN**

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GOOD NEWS

CHAPTER 2 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local people or businesses you need to know about.

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Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

◀ Brandi Dornon

Making Every Celebration Sweeter



Brandi Dornon brings joy through each slice of her **custom-made cakes.**

By Kali Bradford

Photography by Brooke Snyder

"CAKE BOSS," "Cake Wars," "The Great British Baking Show," and "Extreme Cake Makers" are just some television programs showcasing out-of-this-world cakes that are baked and constructed by talented bakers from across the country and the world.

Don't let the world of television fool you; it's no easy feat. Cake decorating is a unique art requiring patience, creativity, and attention to detail. Bakers work their culinary magic and turn an ordinary cake into a stunning masterpiece that looks too good to eat.

Local baker Brandi Dornon creates her own eye-popping and head-turning culinary works of art. Dornon owns Cake N' Bake, a small culinary business she runs from her home in Tullahoma. She prepares eye-catching cakes, intricate cookies, and cupcakes that almost look too good to eat. From the first scoop of flour to the final line of frosting, Dornon takes extreme care with each bake as if it were a masterpiece that one would see hanging in a museum.





Biscuits to birthday cakes

Dornon said she has a long love of baking. She has fond memories of cooking with her great-grandmother and helping her prepare a family favorite, buttermilk biscuits. However, she wouldn't dive fully into baking until she received a request from her daughter for a specially decorated birthday cake.

"I used to bake biscuits and other things with my great-grandmother, and I really liked them, but I never really got into it until about six years ago," she said. "My daughter wanted some cakes, and of course, custom cakes can be kind of expensive sometimes. So I wanted to see if I could do it myself. I started practicing with their birthday cakes. Once I was successful in making those, I thought this could be something I did on a business level."

From there, Dornon worked diligently to hone her skills and self-taught herself how to create her baked masterpieces. Added to her skill set, Dornon is also a talented artist who loves to paint and be creative, which helped her bring something extra to her business.

"I love to paint and have taught paint classes in the past. Incorporating that into baking cakes was a plus," she added.

To check out Dornon's amazing culinary creations, check out her Facebook page, Cake N' Bake.

Making it all work

A mother of three, Dornon keeps a busy schedule between kiddos and baking, but she makes it work. She said preparation and scheduling are crucial to running a successful business and household.

"Anytime I am scheduling a bake, I check my schedule," she explained. "I don't take a ton of orders because I have three kids. I take the ones that I can and go from there. A lot of times, I try to experiment to see how far I could push myself."

Dornon said she loves working on 3D cakes. She credits her husband and father for helping make the cakes a success by adding their talents.

"I like 3D cakes; those are my favorite," she said. "I've learned how to make some intricate structures. My husband helps me a lot in making structures. If it's going to be a heavy cake, it needs to be sturdy, so he helps me make the structure, and then I'll take over from there and make all the rest of the cake decorations and other decorating aspects. My dad also has a cabinet shop and helps by cutting boards that I use as the base for all my cakes."



All of my customers have been so great and supportive and allowed me to do something I truly enjoy.

- Brandi Dornon

Dornon added that some nerves are always involved when the delivery day rolls around.

“I want to make sure the cake is delivered safely and, of course, intact,” she said. “But I am a people pleaser, and I’m always nervous about what the customer will ultimately think of the final product. Even if it’s a beautiful cake, I’m not completely satisfied with my work until I know the customer loves it. I strive for perfection.”

At the end of the day, Dornon said she is grateful to the community and customers for their continued support.

“Facebook and TikTok have been my only ways of advertising to date,” she said. “All of my customers have been so great and supportive and allowed me to do something I truly enjoy. It’s fun to go into Walmart and different places and see people you know, and they tell you how much they love your work. It’s so uplifting and makes me thankful to live in this community.” GN



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Nanny Graham's Chicken Salad Plate - \$12.00

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KIDS

Pancake Plate - \$5.50

One large Buttermilk pancake served with choice of Applewood smoked bacon or Tennessee Pride sausage.

Egg Plate - \$5.50

One egg cooked to order with choice of Applewood smoked bacon or Tennessee Pride sausage.

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BEVERAGES

Bottomless Fountain Beverages - \$3.00

Sundrop, RC Cola, Sunkist, 7up, Sweet and Unsweet Tea, Orange Juice, Chocolate Milk

Fresh Brewed Coffee - \$2.00

Orange Juice - \$3.50

Chocolate Milk - \$3.00

SINGLE SERVE BEVERAGES

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Fountain Royal Crown Colas served over vanilla ice cream topped with fresh whipped cream and garnished with a mini chocolate Moon Pie.

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Stewart's Root Beer served over vanilla ice cream topped with fresh whipped cream.

Sunkist Orange Soda Float - \$5.50

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Loving through food

Sonja Brown finds joy in cooking for others.

By Kali Bradford // Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

FOOD IS a basic human need that affects physiological and emotional states, signifies comfort, and is an essential indicator of building increased intimacy, friendship, and love. Mental health experts have stated that the simple gesture of giving food to another person can be a form of appreciation, affection, and love, leaving a lasting impression on the recipient. It may seem simple, but sending someone food at the right time will make them feel appreciated and cared for.

Tulahoma native Sonja Brown knows all too well the benefits of bestowing something home-cooked

to a most deserving recipient. She understands that it benefits both the recipient and the one who prepared it. Throughout her life, Brown has had the opportunity to be both and is taking the culinary gifts passed down to her and sharing them through her cooking.

The craft begins

Brown's earliest memories are those of cooking alongside her mother.

"I loved the art of cooking before I could even reach the stove," she laughed. "I remember begging my mom to please just let me peel potatoes. I think she saw that



Sonja with her famous homemade meat loaf.

Sonja Brown



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SONJA BROWN

Sonja with her mother, Hazel O'Neal.

I had a love for wanting to help her. She eventually let me do more and more and taught me how to cook.”

She added that she has fond memories of her mother cooking.

“My earliest memories are of my mother cooking for me and my older brother and younger sister. She was amazing. She was a single mother and worked and made time to ensure we had three hot meals a day. You never caught us eating cereal. She took such great care of us.”

While Brown’s mother has passed, she said she is thankful for those memories of days in the kitchen, elbow-deep in flour, and making something that would brighten someone’s day.

“Cooking with my mom is where my love of cooking developed,” said Brown. “Just watching her and the joy that cooking for others brought her. It didn’t matter how little we had; she would somehow create these great spreads of food and share it with everyone — family, friends, and co-workers. She loved people through food.”

”

My earliest memories are of my mother cooking for me and my older brother and younger sister. She was amazing.

-Sonja Brown

It runs in the family.

Brown added that along with her mother, she also has learned a love of cooking from her grandmothers and stepmother, who she lovingly refers to as her “bonus mother.”

“My grandmother was another big inspiration for me,” she said. “My mother worked the second shift so that we would stay with her. She was a great cook who I learned a lot from. She was famous for her dumplings. And my daddy’s mama was also phenomenal in the kitchen, along with my bonus mom, who I gained when my dad remarried. Everyone was always cooking, and I was there front and center to learn as much as possible.”

Sharing the love

Brown said she is a through and through Southern cook thanks to her upbringing. Those Southern cooking roots have provided her with unique opportunities to share her culinary talents with others.



Brown is known amongst family and friends for cooking a large meal, making to-go plates, and showing up at their doors to deliver a warm meal to brighten their day. She also helps provide meals to those needing access to home-cooked food. Brown said she takes no credit for her act of kindness but is thankful to have an opportunity to show a little love to those in need.

She is also taking her love of cooking to the next level and is now cooking for the public at the newly opened Kountry Cafe in Tullahoma. Brown landed the job through word of mouth about her talent in the kitchen.

“My sister works at First Vision Bank, and I had taken lunch to her and her co-workers one day when I was off from work,” explained Brown. “The cafe owners had come into the bank to open a business account, and my friend, Kelly, who works at the bank, asked

them who they had hired to cook for them. She then mentioned my name, and the next thing I knew, I was hired and cooking for the cafe.”

Brown said she enjoys working for the cafe, meeting new people, and showing her love through cooking.

Throughout her life, Brown said she has always found herself helping someone through a home-cooked meal. From a shut-in individual who doesn't have access to hot meals, the family whose day is brightened by seeing Brown at their doorstep with a takeout box in hand, to her customers at the cafe who line up eager to see what she has ready for lunch, Brown's mission is to bring joy through what she prepares.

“I want food I cook to make people happy,” she said. “I want them to come away from their meal feeling better and with a smile on their face.” GN



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THE FOOD ISSUE

**Local
restaurants
play a vital role
in our economy
and community.**

*NOURISH OUR
CONNECTIONS WITH FOOD.*

IN THE heart of our community, tucked away at familiar corners, lie vibrant havens: local restaurants. These culinary gems play an indispensable role in creating a healthy and robust economy while simultaneously weaving an intricate tapestry of connections that make our home truly feel like home. Beyond their delectable dishes and inviting ambiance, these establishments hold the power to unite us, fuel our sense of belonging, and contribute to the very fabric of our community.

Local restaurants serve as economic engines, driving growth and prosperity within our neighborhoods. They generate employment opportunities, providing livelihoods for a range of individuals and supporting the livelihoods of countless families. As we step through their doors, we become participants in a



virtuous cycle where our patronage directly fuels local economic development. The dollars we spend at these establishments ripple through the community, fostering increased job stability, tax revenue, and overall financial well-being. By choosing to dine locally, we actively contribute to the vitality of our economy, ensuring that our hometown thrives.

Yet, the impact of local restaurants extends far beyond economic prosperity. They hold the power to cultivate a profound sense of connection and belonging within our community. These establishments become the backdrop for cherished memories and shared experiences. We gather around tables, savoring meals that reflect our region's unique flavors and traditions. The local chef who pours their heart and soul into each dish becomes a familiar

face, a beacon of culinary artistry and community spirit. From celebratory gatherings to intimate conversations, these establishments become the stage upon which our stories unfold, forging bonds that transcend the transactional nature of a meal.

Let us embrace and champion the local restaurants that enrich our lives. By patronizing these establishments, we contribute to a healthy and thriving economy while fostering a sense of connection that makes our community strong. As we gather around tables, sharing laughter and breaking bread, we affirm our commitment to the values of community. Each bite we savor is a testament to the power of local restaurants to nourish both our bodies and our souls, forging bonds that make our home a place of warmth, unity, and endless culinary delights. **GN**



Georges Martin

Indulge in a Gastronomic Adventure

*ENJOY A CULINARY EXPERIENCE
LIKE NO OTHER AT EMIL'S*

By Kali Bradford
Photography by Ashleigh Newnes
and submitted by Georges Martin

EATING FOOD is a sensory experience that engages all of our senses. From the moment we smell the aroma of a freshly cooked meal, our mouth starts to water in anticipation. Then there is the visual appeal, which is just as essential and has the power to enhance the overall dining experience.

The first bite is a revelation as the flavors and textures burst into our mouths, tantalizing our taste buds. We savor the dish's complexity with every subsequent bite, appreciating the interplay of flavors and ingredients. Eating is not just about satisfying our hunger but also indulging in pleasure and nourishing our bodies and souls. It is about celebrating the art of cooking and the creativity of the chef who prepared it. A delicious meal can transport us to another world, allowing us to forget our worries and savor the moment.

Housed in a remodeled 20th-century home is a beloved Tullahoma culinary destination, Emil's. For over 20 years, chef and owner Georges Martin has offered his patrons "big-city dining with a small-town vibe."

Born and raised in Lyon, France, cooking was "in the blood," according to Martin. Following in his father's footsteps, Martin embarked on a career in cooking after attending the L'Ecole Hoteliere de Thonon Les Bains on the border of Lake Geneva.

Upon completing his apprenticeship at L'Hotel Bellevue in the Normandie region of France, Martin set his sights on joining his father, who had settled in the U.S., landing his first position in an all-French kitchen at the Cherokee Town Club in Atlanta.

After elevating through numerous positions at top Atlanta restaurants, such as Buckhead Life Group's 103 West and Pano's and Paul, and having served as executive chef at Chef's Cafe in Buckhead, Martin was recruited by Tom and Ann Cousins to launch the newly remodeled and reestablished East Lake Golf Club. Since 2005, the club has been the permanent home of the Tour Championship, the culminating event of the PGA Tour Playoffs for the FedEx Cup.

After six years as the executive chef at East Lake, Martin and his family moved to Tennessee to be closer to his wife's parents and open his restaurant.

According to the restaurant's website, Martin and his wife, Tammy, opened Emil's in December 2001. Since the restaurant's opening, Georges, a native of France, has created dishes inspired by his roots and his culinary experiences that span all cultural and social boundaries.

Georges specializes in fresh food prepared honestly with finesse and consistency. This is evident in dishes such as his Southern boneless fried chicken breast with milk



It's about creating memories. I'm grateful for our relationships with our customers.

- GEORGES MARTIN



gravy, the French-inspired Chicken Daniel, and PEI mussels prepared in a delectable white wine and garlic broth. Georges and his Sous-chef, Mason Heath, prepare each dish with sophistication.

In 2012, the Martins took on a remodeling project, transforming their restaurant, which was first built as a home in 1905. The remodel included rebuilding the kitchen and adding a beautiful custom-built bar and lounge. Today, the restaurant has a popular lounge area, four quaint dining rooms, and an upstairs dining room that sets the scene for a romantic dinner or a night out with the family.

In Georges' 22 years as a chef and restaurant owner, he said the key to success has always been consistency.

"It's consistency," he said. "It's quality of the raw ingredient, consistency, and being honest with your food. You are not trying to hide anything, mask the food, or put so much on it that you don't taste the original product," he said.

For Georges, the dining experience is not just about the food but about creating a memorable experience that leaves a lasting impression.



"I tell my staff good is not good enough," he explained. "It has to be better than good because you can go get good anywhere you want."

He stated that his time as a chef and business owner taught him the importance of learning something new daily.

"That is the key; you learn every day," he smiled. "You learn every day and as you get older, and maybe you're wiser most of the time. You just try to keep on improving and being consistent."

Georges is also thankful for the support of the community. He said over the years, most customers have become close friends.

"It's about creating memories. I'm grateful for our relationships with our customers," he said. "They have become more than customers; they are friends." **GN**



Emil's is located at 210 E. Lincoln St. in Tullahoma. For the latest on the restaurant, follow them on Facebook and Instagram or visit their website at emils-bistroandlounge.com.





Nixon Santos

Cucina Deliziosa (delicious cuisine)!

*ENJOY THE HISTORY AND
DELICIOUS CUISINES OF LOCAL
ITALIAN EATERY RAGÚ II.*

By Kali Bradford
Photography by Brooke Snyder

THE HISTORY of Italian cuisine is rich and diverse, featuring a wide range of influences from around the world. From ancient Roman meals to modern-day dishes popularized in Italian-American culture, Italian cuisine is a melting pot of different traditions and ingredients.

One of the earliest and most influential cultures to shape Italian cuisine was the ancient Greeks. After establishing colonies in Southern Italy and Sicily in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., the Greeks introduced many ingredients and cooking methods that would become staples of Italian cuisine, including olives, grapevines, and peppers.

The Roman Empire also played a significant role in developing Italian food. The Romans introduced new ingredients to Italy, such as cheeses, sausages, and even exotic ingredients from across the Mediterranean, such as spices and verjus.

Other outside influences continued to shape Italian cuisine over the centuries. Arab traders brought new spices and flavorings to Italy, including sugar, saffron, and cinnamon. In the Middle Ages, trade routes brought fresh foods to Italy, including exotic fruits, such as apricots and melons, which the Arabs introduced.



During the Renaissance period, Italian cuisine began to take on new forms. Trade routes with the Orient brought fresh ingredients like rice and exotic spices, influencing the development of risottos and other rice-based dishes. The Medici family, particularly Catherine de Medici, was instrumental in bringing new French cooking methods to Italy, which led to the creation of classic Italian dishes like Osso Bucco and Chicken alla Marsala.

Italian cuisine continued to evolve throughout the 19th and 20th centuries as waves of immigrants from different regions of Italy brought their unique culinary traditions to the United States. Italian-American cuisine, typified by spaghetti and meatballs, became wildly popular, and many Italian dishes evolved into Italian-American fusion dishes.

From ancient times to the modern day, The food traditions of many different nations have influenced Italian cooking, each leaving its unique mark on the rich tapestry of Italian cuisine. Today, Italian food remains one of the world's most beloved and widely appreciated cuisines.

Thanks to Nixson Santos and his family, Italian cuisine and its rich history are alive and well in Tullahoma.

Last October, Santos and his brother-in-law, Ronnie, decided to open a second location of their family-owned restaurant in Tullahoma.

Alongside his cousin, Fredy, Ronnie is the co-owner of Ragú in Maryland. At their Maryland-based business, the partners offer Napoli and Florence Italian-style dishes with authentic ingredients such as their sauce and imported Grande mozzarella cheese. They aim to serve Italian-inspired fresh dishes, including seafood, pasta, subs, and paninis.

After several discussions with his brother-in-law, Ronnie decided it was





time to expand the business and bring Ragú somewhere he knew the restaurant would be welcome.

Santos wanted to bring Ragú to Tullahoma because he loved his small town and knew that Tullahoma was ready for something fresh and different.

Ragú II opened its doors in 2022 and has gained a faithful following. Patrons come in hungry and ready to try freshly prepared, made-to-order dishes that entice the senses. From the visual to the delicious smells and tastes, Santos and his staff

ensure each customer can get the Italian experience they have come in for.

“Our customers are great,” Santos said. “They have been very supportive, and I’m glad they love our food. That’s why we try to make everything fresh for them and do the best we can. I’m really happy that people really love it.”

Their menu consists of a selection of New York-style pizza, fresh salads, paninis, wraps, classic pasta, risotto, and homemade gnocchi “from the land” Italian dishes and “from the sea” seafood dishes. There are

also soups, grilled flatbread, chicken wings, sub sandwiches and burgers, and healthy and gluten-free options.

Santos said the key to their success is that fresh ingredients always come first. From one of their most popular dishes, traditional Ragú, made with imported Italian D.O.P. San Marzano tomatoes, to their New York-style pizza, they work tirelessly to ensure only the freshest ingredients are used.

“People really love our menu and food,” Santos said. “We try to serve everything as fresh as possible. We want people to enjoy the experience of eating our food. We try to have a lot to choose from.”

With almost a year under their belts as business owners, Santos invites everyone to come out and experience Italy’s historically rich and delicious food. **GN**

Ragú II is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. They also deliver within a 5-mile radius, and orders must be a minimum of \$25. Stop by and try them out at 111 W. Lauderdale St. in Tullahoma.



A Bite Full of Culture

TACOS DEL DRAGON SHARES A LOVE OF HISPANIC ROOTS THROUGH AUTHENTIC CUISINE.

By Kali Bradford
Photography by Ashleigh Newnes
and submitted by Jonathan Mondragon



WHEN A customer bites into one of Jonathan Mondragon's tacos, he hopes it's a sensory experience like none they've ever had. From the first bite, he wants them to be greeted with the satisfying crunch of a warm tortilla, followed by the tender and juicy meat filling, bursting with flavor and spices that dance across their tongue. They also catch the refreshing crunch and zing of fresh toppings, such as cilantro and onions. Adding salsa or guacamole brings a creamy, tangy, slightly spicy dimension that elevates the whole dish to new heights. Every bite is a symphony of flavors and textures that work together in perfect harmony, creating an explosion of taste that leaves them wanting more.

Mondragon is the owner of the Tacos Del Dragon food truck. Over the last year, Mondragon, along with the assistance and support of his

sister, Jacqueline, has been working tirelessly and diligently to show Tullahoma and surrounding areas that there is more to a taco than meets the eye.

A meal that tells a story

For Jonathan, authentic tacos are not just a meal but a representation of Mexico's vibrant and diverse culture where food is celebrated and enjoyed with passion and pride. With every bite, you can taste the history and tradition of making these delicious treats, making it more of a cultural experience instead of just a simple dish.

From day one, sharing his heritage and love of food with his community has been at the top of the list.

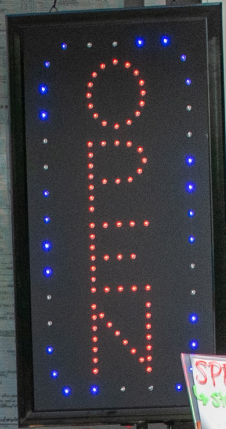
"I've always been a food fanatic," he said. "Three or four years ago, I wanted to own a business and decided my niche would be tacos. I've been able to travel to Mexico and bring back the tastes that



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BY MARCOS CHIN

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Tacos Del Dragon
est. 22

Jonathan and Jacqueline Mondragon





I really like. A lot of what is offered here is a Tex-Mex style, and we wanted a more authentic taste to Tullahoma.”

Preparing authentic Mexican tacos requires more than just a few ingredients and a recipe; it involves understanding the culture and history behind this beloved dish. Jonathan uses high-quality ingredients such as fresh corn tortillas, juicy cuts of meat, and flavorful spices. Along with the ingredients, the toppings are equally important for Jonathan and range from freshly chopped cilantro and onion to tangy salsa and creamy guacamole.

“The sauces and everything are homemade with our own taste and seasoning,” he explained. “We incorporate more onion and cilantro instead of lettuce and tomato. Our tortillas are also homemade, and we try to use as many organic ingredients as possible.”

Jonathan added that the key is to keep it simple and let the ingredients' natural flavors shine through. It's not about extravagance or complexity but rather about using fresh and bold ingredients that create a delicious meal.

Heritage and community

Jonathan and his sister's love of cooking has been handed down from generation to generation.

“My mother is always cooking for us,” he said, smiling. “And my grandfather is also always cooking. He has his version of cooking called barbacoa. That is where meat is cooked in a pit covered with maguey (agave) leaves. It's super organic and authentic. Our love of food and cooking has just been handed down from generation to generation. That is another reason we wanted to start the business; to bring our traditional way of cooking to the public. And that's why we brought it here, and it's been our motivation.”

He added that also handed down from his mother was showing love through food.

“Our mother definitely shows love for others through cooking,” said Jonathan. “So I think it has translated over, somewhat, to me. It's so satisfying and rewarding to see a customer's face light up when they try our food for the first time or when they come back and try something different. That's where it's exciting for us to see

them enjoying that authentic experience.

Jonathan added that the Tullahoma community has been supportive in helping their business succeed.

“It's uplifting for sure,” he said. “We have people who come by regularly and bring friends to try our food, which is great. We love making those friendships and having those relationships with our customers. We hope to continue to grow that and be able to give back to the community some of what they have given to us.”

To sink your teeth into one of Jonathan's amazing culinary creations, you can find the Tacos Del Dragon food truck at its mainstay location at 415 Wilson Ave. But the truck also rounds to other spots, including Harvest Local Foods in Manchester. To simplify things, Jonathan posts a schedule each week on the food truck's Facebook page and updates each day to ensure everyone can enjoy gourmet tacos the authentic way! **GN**

Fresh from the

Farmers Market

Experience the best the season has to offer.

By Tina Neeley



A S THE lazy days of summer drift into the warm embrace of August, our taste buds welcome the vibrant flavors offered by nature. The richness of the harvest season arrives as farmers markets brim with an array of colorful produce, and nature rewards us with sun-kissed fruits, hardy vegetables, and fragrant herbs that inspire us to create dishes that celebrate the very essence of summer.

From juicy heirloom tomatoes and succulent peaches to crisp cucumbers and fragrant basil, explore the endless possibilities of these seasonal treasures.

Whether you're seeking refreshing salads to beat the summer heat, indulgent grilled delicacies for backyard gatherings, or luscious desserts that capture the essence of the season, prepare to be captivated by the symphony of flavors that August brings. **GN**



Grilled Chicken & Vegetable Kabobs

Submitted by Hayley Cowan

4 c. assorted vegetable pieces
1/4 c. olive oil
2 T. white wine vinegar
2 t. Montreal chicken seasoning
1/2 t. Italian seasoning
1 lb. chicken breasts, boneless, skinless, and cubed

Combine vegetables, olive oil, vinegar, and seasonings in a large, self-closing plastic bag or glass bowl; add chicken. Marinate in refrigerator for 30 minutes or longer for extra flavor. Remove chicken and vegetables from marinade; discard marinade. Spear chicken and vegetables on metal skewers. Lightly sprinkle skewers with additional Montreal seasoning. Grill kabobs 10-15 minutes or until chicken is done, turning frequently.

Fresh Salsa

Submitted by Esther Dahnke

10 tomatoes
1 can tomato paste, 6 oz.
2 white onions
1 lg. green pepper
1 lg. red pepper
1 lg. yellow pepper
3 t. salt
2 T. garlic, minced
6 T. cider vinegar
fresh cilantro, to taste
corn chips
jalepeño peppers or hot sauce, optional

Cut tomatoes, onions & peppers into quarters & place in blender or food processor. Add tomato paste, salt, garlic & vinegar. Take leaves off stems of the cilantro & place in blender. Chop until fine. Place in bowl and serve with corn chips. Great to make in summer with fresh garden tomatoes and vegetables.

Summer Salad

Submitted by Cindy Raybern

1 pkg. zesty garlic salad dressing mix
1 T. red cooking wine
1 cucumber, sliced
1 tomato, sliced
1 red onion, sliced
1 green pepper, sliced

Combine salad dressing by directions on package, but substitute 1 tablespoon red cooking wine for the water. Pour over cucumber, tomato, onion, and green pepper. Toss lightly before serving.

Submit your recipes to be included in Good News Magazine and the Exchange Cookbook: www.southernaprons.com





Embracing your “different.”

Discovering your unique purpose through the lens of faith

By Jeriah Brumfield

AS A member of a group of people that only make up about 14% of the country’s population, and as a woman, I have faced unique challenges and experiences that have shaped my identity and journey of faith. I often find it difficult to embrace my “different.”

In the eyes of our Creator, each one of us is unique and created for a purpose. Embracing our “different” — those qualities that set us apart from others — is not only a journey of self-discovery but also an opportunity to deepen our relationship with God and fulfill the plans He has for our lives.

Our Heavenly Father has given us the opportunity to impact our environment and, ultimately, our world by embracing what makes us all inherently unique.

Throughout the Bible, we find numerous examples of individuals who embraced their “different” and, through faith, made a significant impact on the world. From Moses, who led the Israelites out of Egypt despite his speech impediment, to Esther, who used her position as queen to save her people, these inspiring figures teach us the importance of embracing our unique qualities and trusting God’s plan.

As an African American woman, I draw strength from these biblical stories and the countless women of color who have broken barriers and made a difference in the world. So, how can we learn to embrace our “different” through the lens of faith?

REFLECT ON YOUR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS AND TALENTS.

Take some time to consider the abilities and passions that God has instilled in you. These might include your resilience, creativity, leadership skills, empathy, or a strong sense of community. By recognizing these gifts, you’ll develop a deeper understanding of how God has uniquely equipped you to positively impact the world.

SEEK GUIDANCE THROUGH PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE.

As you embrace your “different,” turn to God for guidance and wisdom. Spend time in prayer, asking Him to reveal the purpose behind your unique qualities. Additionally, delve into scripture to discover stories of individuals who overcame challenges and embraced their differences to fulfill God’s plan.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH A SUPPORTIVE FAITH COMMUNITY

Finding a supportive network of fellow believers, particularly those who share your experiences, is crucial for your spiritual growth and journey toward embracing your “different.” A faith community will not only encourage you in your walk with God but also provide a safe space to explore and celebrate your unique qualities.

USE YOUR “DIFFERENT” TO SERVE OTHERS.

Jesus taught us the importance of serving others, and embracing your “different” provides an opportunity to do just that. Consider how you can use your unique gifts and talents to bless those around you — whether volunteering at your local church, mentoring a younger believer, or using your creative skills to uplift and inspire others, which so many people are already doing within our community.

TRUST THE JOURNEY

Embracing your “different” may sometimes be challenging, especially when faced with societal pressures, timelines, and expectations. Remember to submit to and trust your journey in these moments and draw strength from God’s love and promises. As Jeremiah 29:11 states, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Embracing our “different” is a vital aspect of our spiritual journey and an opportunity to discover and fulfill our unique purpose. By reflecting on our God-given gifts, seeking guidance through prayer and scripture, surrounding ourselves with a supportive faith community, using our differences to serve others, and trusting in God’s plan, we can learn to celebrate our individuality and make a lasting impact on the world, all while deepening our relationship with our Creator. **GN**





Good Times

CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

- 60** Rock for a cause, make a difference
- 62** Community Events
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Submit a positive story on our website:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Brooke Snyder

◀ Mary Beard, Carol Hathorn, Teri Steele, and Ivy Lowhorn

ROCK

for a cause,
make a

DIFFERENCE.

Live on the Lawn raises money for community organizations

By Kali Bradford // Photography by Brooke Snyder

S UMMERTIME IS the perfect time for many things, such as fireworks, going for a swim, barbecuing, and ice cream, just to name a few. It's also the perfect time for outdoor music. Grabbing a couple of chairs or a blanket and heading out to listen to music is a seasonal must. Nothing is better than relaxing while listening to a band play in the background amongst an orange and pink sunset. It's a perfect picture of summertime in the South.

Capturing this poetic summer scene while raising money for a worthy cause is the local chapter of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC). The club kicked off the summer season with its third annual "Live on the Lawn" event at South Jackson Civic Center.

Those in attendance enjoyed a concert on the lawn featuring the band "A Slice of American Pie," which performed on the center's outdoor patio stage. Dinner was catered by local eatery Crazy Daisy's. Admission included a souvenir picnic bag, box dinner, water, and drink ticket. All attendees needed to bring lawn chairs and be prepared for an evening of music under the stars.

Club president Tanya Sheeley said the event came about post-COVID when the club was working to move forward with resuming events.



Front: Sandy Lindeman, Mary Mealer, Tanya Sheeley, Martha Grantham, Becky Waggoner, and Ann Waggoner.



Madeline Owens-Tucker and Joe Tucker



Middle: Kathy Orr, Teresa Young, Sande Hayes, Raene Fairbanks, Renee' Keene, Madeline Owens-Tucker, Missy Shahan, and Anne Wonder.
Back: Coleen Saunders, Betty Lynch, Kathryn Hopkins, and Belinda Riddle



A Slice of American Pie with "JJ & Fitz" Jim Jolliffe and Bob Fitzgerald

"Before COVID, our big fundraising event was a wine tasting," she said. "Once things started opening back up, we began to think about how we could get together again. I suggested a picnic with a band. We formed a committee and mapped out the event details. We decided to call it 'Live on the Lawn.' We then thought it should include some great gourmet food, music, and community. It has worked out really well for us. We've held the event for three years, and it's raised many funds for the organizations we support."

Sheeley added that the public has been very supportive of coming out to attend.

"They have responded well," she said. "I think it's successful because it allows us to have an evening of relaxation while raising money for some very worthy causes. This year we raised funds for Blue Monarch and 5 Loaves 4 Kids. We're so glad to have this unique opportunity to do something good for the community."

The GFWC is an international women's organization dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service. GFWC Centennial Woman's Club of Tullahoma has supported over 30 groups and organizations in the Tullahoma area by providing donations, volunteer hours, and other projects to help the community. The club meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Tullahoma Woman's Club building at 709 Wilson Ave. from August through May. New and prospective members are welcome to attend. **GN**

For information, follow the club on Facebook or email at gfwc.centennial@gmail.com.



Theresa and Mike Kelley with Martha and Mark Grantham

Coffee County Lannom Library Butterfly Event - May 20, 2023



Photography by Brooke Snyder

Butterfly expert Gordon Revey spoke and answered questions about butterflies along with offering one-on-one interactions with the delicate creatures at the library.



1. Axle and friends 2. Phoenix, Colton, Stephanie Powers, Noelle, Anniah, Gordon Revey, Axle, Malloree, Memphis, Lacie, and Oakley
3. Gordon Revey 4. Gordon Revey 5. Anniah 6. Noelle and Anniah

Beginner Epoxy Resin Class - May 22-23, 2023



Photos submitted by Laurie Seymour

Instructor Laurie Seymour held a “Beginner Epoxy Resin Class” at the Tullahoma Fine Arts Center. Students were able to learn the basics of pouring and working with epoxy resin. Students were also able to pick from a variety of projects for the class.



1. Tami Scarpella 2. Kellee Watts
3. Cadence Kauffman with her grandmother, Eulonda Dreher 4. Kelly Kauffman

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GOOD TIMES

EVENTS CALENDAR

July 15

**9:30 am Blessing of the Bikes
Fundraising Ride**
American Legion Riders
Post 43
109 NW Atlantic St.
Tullahoma

July 18

**8:00 am Kids Movies for \$2
Regal Summer
Movie Express**
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Tullahoma

All summer, every
Tuesday and
Wednesday enjoy \$2
tickets for the first show
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more by joining Regal
Crown Club to get
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every Tuesday!

July 20

7:00 pm Ice Cream Social
South Jackson
Civic Center
404 S. Jackson St.
Tullahoma

Dance under the
stars with friends and
neighbors to the sounds
of the South Jackson
Street Band. Ice cream
is the cherry on top!
Tickets are \$10.

July 22

**10:00 am T-Town Beat Down
Robot Fights**
Hands-On
Science Center
101 Mitchell Blvd.

Free with general
admission of \$7.75.
To view the competition
live in the auditorium
purchase an additional
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Pre-purchase of tickets
is recommended at
www.hosc.org.



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5:00 pm Tiana's Bayou Ball

The View – UTSI
411 B H Goethert Pkwy.
Tullahoma

Sing songs from your favorite movies, dance until you drop, and remember that dreams always come true! Tickets are \$10-\$30.

July 28

12:01 am Tax-Free Holiday Begins

State of Tennessee

No taxes on clothing, school supplies, or computers July 28-30.

For more information visit tn.gov.

August 11

7:00 pm South Jackson Goes Country

South Jackson
Civic Center
404 S. Jackson St.
Tullahoma

A true country variety show that will entertain all ages with music, comedy, and some all around fun.

**For more events
and to submit
an event visit:**

www.GoodNewsMags.com/events
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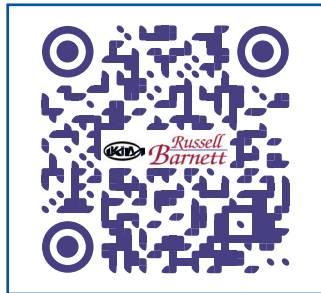


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~ Nanette Matthews



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