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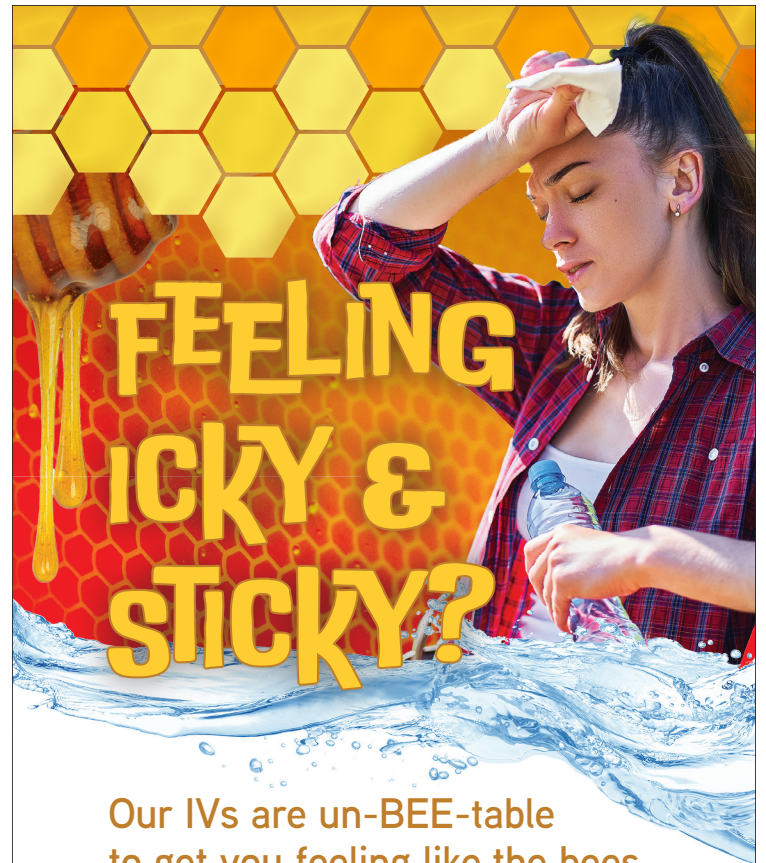
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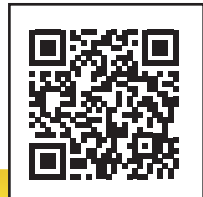
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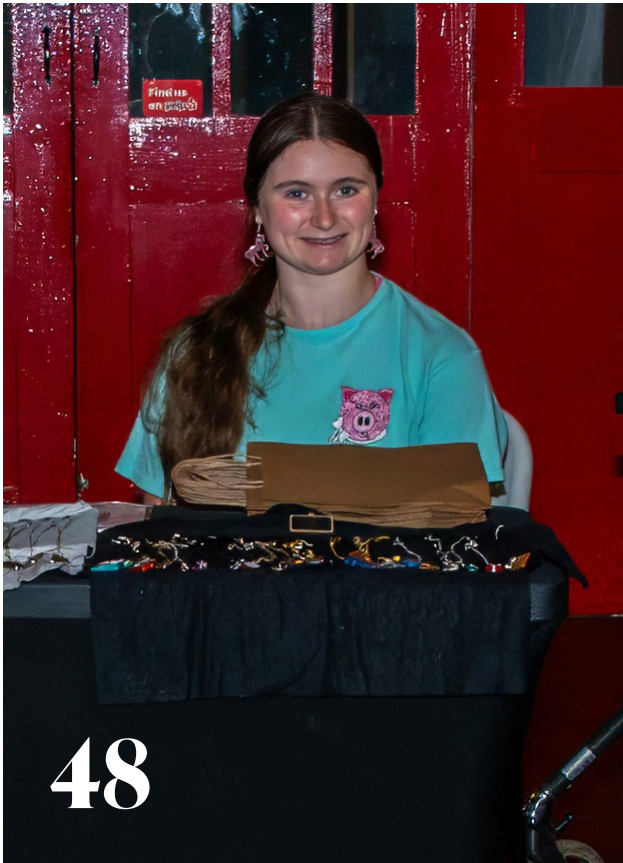
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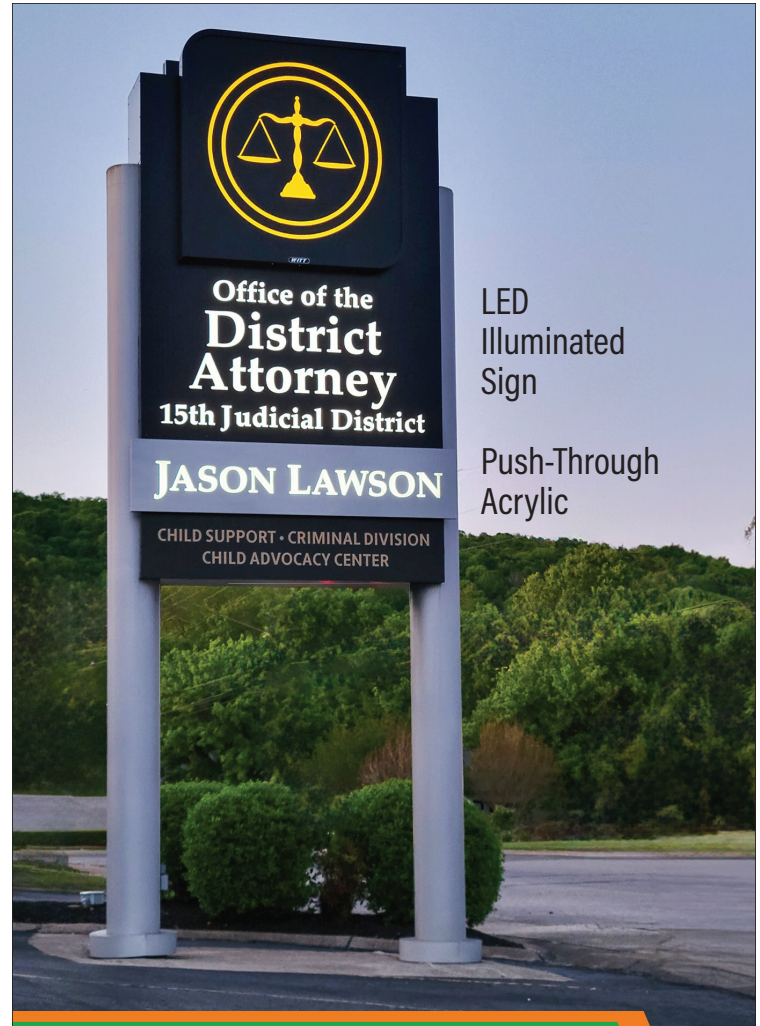


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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The colors between the oceans

Healing is building for a more perfect union.

IF YOU took a snapshot of any moment in our country's history, there is a hurt we were trying to heal. The same is true today. It's our independence that lets us correct our wrongs, to heal, and to build our country up for a more perfect union. We can all be made by the same Creator and still land somewhere red, white, or blue. We can be different. That is the beauty of independence. This land is your land; this land is my land.

We can be better because of the people in our communities. Those who allow us to be independent provide an open field. We can run for miles into the unknown, and while it's scary, we know we are capable of whatever waits on the other side. We can run with the wind to our backs, hitting the ground to the beat of drums and trumpets that empower us. The same trumpets that rang as we fought a Civil War to keep a

country together with human rights for those of every skin color. The same drums that banged as we flew to Europe to end the Second World War. The same trumpets that helped us stand tall in September 2001. We're a country with the strength to hold each other up in 2020, even if it was through latex gloves.

While perfection will always be impossible to attain, it's our duty to fight for it every day — to get closer to the threshold of freedom and equality for everyone. Independence is a blessing that paints a beautiful picture of blues and reds that, when you pull away, make a purple you can only find between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

This issue of Good News highlights those in our community who make us better. It's their independence — and the fight to obtain it — that makes us who we are. **GN**

Wesley Bryant,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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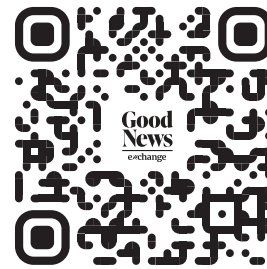
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PRESIDENT STUMB

Championing growth and community at Cumberland University

By Haley Potter // Photography by Robin Holcomb

AS THE president of Cumberland University for the last nine years, Dr. Paul Stumb has become an important figure both on campus and within the broader Lebanon community. President Stumb recently shared with us his insights, accomplishments, and vision for the future of Cumberland University.

Born and raised in Nashville, Stumb has close ties to Middle Tennessee.

“I came back here about 20 years ago,” he said, highlighting his extensive experiences in various states and countries. His return was not just a professional move but a personal one.

“I have parents in their 90s living in Nashville and a large extended family in the area,” he added, emphasizing the joy of reconnecting with his roots.

Cumberland University is an integral part of Lebanon, a town with a population of about 40,000.

“We are fully integrated into the fabric of not just Lebanon but Wilson County, and we see our reach even in the greater Middle Tennessee area,” Stumb explained. This connection is further evidenced by the university’s close relationship with local government officials, including Cumberland’s current mayor and former history professor.

Stumb’s approach to leadership focuses heavily on people. “I try to spend the majority of my time focusing on people and their wants and needs,” he noted.

This includes students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and community members. His emphasis on personal connections is a cornerstone of his presidency.

Under Stumb’s leadership, Cumberland University has seen remarkable growth. Since he took office in 2015, the university’s enrollment has doubled from 1,500 to 3,100 students.





DR. PAUL STUMB



“Our growth has really fueled our ability to advance as an institution. We’ve been able to hire more people and further our reach into the community,” he said. This growth is not just in numbers but also in the university’s financial health.

“We’ve dramatically increased our endowment, reduced our debt, and expanded our campus footprint,” he highlighted, crediting the efforts of many of his talented teams.

Cumberland University boasts a diverse student population, with students from 59 of Tennessee’s 95 counties, 38 U.S. states, and 49 countries. Stumb is particularly proud of this diversity.

“Our students get to interact with peers from all over the world,” he said, describing the university as a melting pot of different perspectives, backgrounds, and cultures.

Cumberland’s commitment to critical thinking, effective communication, and teamwork is what makes it so successful, according to Stumb.

“We believe that critical thinking is important, and we try to imbue elements of it throughout our curriculum,” Stumb explained. The university also emphasizes the importance of communication skills and the ability to work effectively in teams.

This holistic approach is evident from day one, with new students enrolled in Foundations of Scholarship and Learning classes.

“We put them in a class with students from very different backgrounds and encourage them to work together collaboratively,” he said, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the interconnected world they’ll experience while at Cumberland and beyond their time as a Phoenix.





“

Our students get to interact with peers from all over the world.

- Dr. Paul Stumb



Stumb compares Cumberland to an aircraft carrier, highlighting a unique ecosystem that includes housing, dining, and an opportunity to take care of the students' physical and mental health. This analogy underscores the university's role as a self-contained community that also engages deeply with the surrounding area.

"We have a large number of commuter students from the Middle Tennessee market," he noted, mentioning the university's efforts to reach out to local high schools through dual enrollment and early college programs.

Stumb remains optimistic about Cumberland University's future despite the looming challenges facing higher education.

"We know that there's an imminent enrollment cliff many are facing, but we believe that we're in a little bit of an insulated environment from that," he said. The popularity of Middle Tennessee as a destination for families and professionals alike provides a steady influx of potential students, faculty, and staff.

Cumberland's success is also reflected in its recognition within the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association.

"Last year, Cumberland was number one in terms of enrollment growth out of all 36 institutions," Stumb proudly shared.

"Everything in life is about the people," Stumb said, underscoring his dedication to fostering a supportive and vibrant community at Cumberland University.

As Stumb continues to lead Cumberland University, his commitment to growth, diversity, and community integration promises to sustain and enhance the institution's impact for years to come. His leadership enriches the lives of those on campus and strengthens the ties between the university and the broader Middle Tennessee community. **GN**

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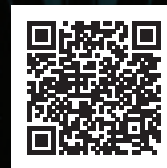
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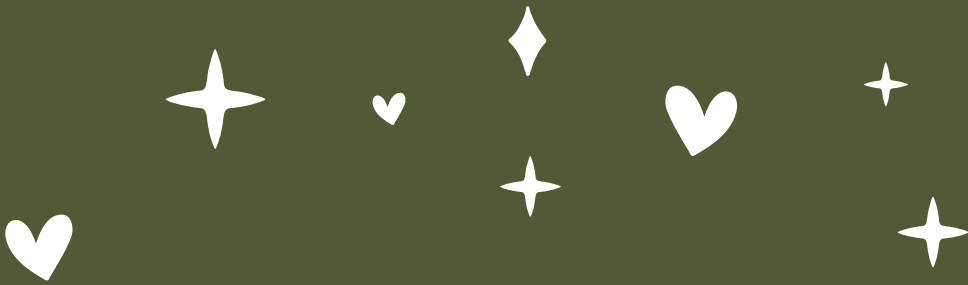
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DAILY DOSES

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One woman's mission
to motivate and encourage

By Amanda E. West // Photography by Robin Holcomb





Teresa Lackey



IN A world where endless worries can sometimes press in from every side, it's comforting to lean into the encouragement of a dear friend — or even a stranger on Facebook. To dozens of people across the nation, Teresa Lackey is the rock they can count on. Her daily doses of courage help place their feet back on solid ground when the cares of life have left them trembling.

Teresa is an overcomer — a poised fighter — a devoted wife who has stood by her husband, Ronnie, for the last 47 years. She's a grandmother and great-grandmother who is doing everything in her power to make the world a better place for those she holds closely. The roller coaster of trials in her own life has created this insatiable drive in Teresa. She understands the sleepless nights, the heartbreak, and the fear that comes with the unknowns. But she's emerged on the other side with a longing to help others face whatever comes their way, knowing they are never alone.

On a chilly February day in 1995, Teresa's life changed drastically when her husband, who is an Army veteran, suffered a brain aneurysm at the age of 43. Although he physically survived, the man she fell in love with when she was just a girl of 15 — the father of her two children — was forever changed. Since she was a little girl, Teresa had dreamed of staying home and being a full-time wife and mother, and up until this time, that dream had been fulfilled. With her husband now unable to work, Teresa decided she would earn her GED diploma and support their family. For the last 20 years, she has worked for STAR Physical Therapy as a patient care coordinator.

"I earned my GED in 1995, the same year our daughter graduated high school," said Teresa. "I was told it would take me at least six months of studying to be able to take the test because I had been out of school for so long. But in six short weeks, the instructor told me I was ready to take the test. It was another two weeks before the test was offered. I took it and passed. Then, I completed an Office Management class so I would be able to support our family."

Over the years, the Lackeys have also faced Ronnie's diagnosis of colon cancer and his ongoing fight with COPD, but Teresa made up her mind to stay positive and help others do the same.

"I met a lady on Facebook through my niece, and we became friends. The more I talked to her, the more I liked her. One morning, I decided I was going to send her a picture that said, 'Good Morning,' and that's how it all got started. I just wanted her to know I was thinking about her and that she was a dear friend of mine. Then I started sending it to another friend and another friend, and it just kept growing."

Teresa's daily snippets of encouragement have grown from that one friend to close to 50 men and women spanning eight different states. Sometimes, she forwards inspirational quotes, and sometimes, she sends GIFs, but either way, she's reaching out and letting others know they are valued, important, and cared for.

"If you stay positive and work hard, you can achieve your dreams," said Teresa. "Today I sent out: 'Stay positive even when it feels like everything is falling apart' and 'The day will be what you make of it. So rise, like the sun.' My friend replied to me, 'Oh my. I just love these. Thank you for sending them to me. They just brighten my day. Love you. Have a blessed and wonderful day, too.'"

Another friend replied to Teresa's positive message: "You give me things to lighten my day when I'm overwhelmed with everything I'm going through. Depression and anxiety are the worst, and you get me through it. I appreciate you so much, my friend!"

Teresa would like to inspire everyone reading this with these words: "In case no one has told you today — you're beautiful, you're loved, you're needed. You are alive for a reason. You're truly amazing! Never give up. When you are having a bad day, just ask God to let tomorrow be better. Take one minute, one day at a time, and you can get through some of the hardest times ever." **GN**

To join on Facebook: Teresa Lackey with a sunshine picture.



“

In case no one has told you today — you're beautiful, you're loved, you're needed. You are alive for a reason. You're truly amazing! Never give up. When you are having a bad day, just ask God to let tomorrow be better. Take one minute, one day at a time, and you can get through some of the hardest times ever.

-Teresa Lackey





Running Toward Hope

In September of 2004, many in the Lebanon community gathered together for an event called Sherry's Run 5K to honor the life of Sherry Whitaker — a 44-year-old wife and mother who passed away from colon cancer. Sherry's friends and family were so moved by the life she lived that they decided to gather together in her memory close to her birthday in September. What was intended to be a one-time gathering grew into a reoccurring event that blossomed into the nonprofit organization Sherry's Hope.

Sherry's Hope offers financial assistance and emotional support to families in Wilson County and surrounding communities who are actively receiving treatment or are in hospice care for a cancer diagnosis. When local families are facing days that seem to be full of darkness, Sherry's Hope strives to be a light and share the hope of Christ. Sherry's Hope assists with utility bills, housing payments, medical expenses/prescription assistance, grocery assistance, and more. In 2023, Sherry's Hope provided over \$300,000 of assistance to 135 local families in need.

Sherry's Run 5K is the organization's largest fundraiser each year. Lime green

bows are hung around town and many businesses sport "Proud Sponsor" signs in their yards during the weeks leading up to the event. **This year, the 21st annual Sherry's Run 5K will be on Sept. 14 at 8 a.m.** Thousands of friends, families, cancer survivors, caregivers, and more will rally at the event site, 623 W. Main St., in Lebanon. At the sound of the shotgun start, a huge wave of runners and walkers will journey down Main Street.

For many, the 5K is so much more than just a morning of exercise; it's a morning of meaning. Some walk as cancer survivors, some walk in honor of a friend who is currently battling cancer, some walk in memory of a loved one who battled cancer... but all walk in hope. Because of God's abundant blessings and the thousands of supporters through the years, what started as a love for one woman became an explosion of grace for the community. GN

Walk in honor, in memory and in hope - register today at www.sherrysrun.org and be part of an event that transforms lives.







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Photography by Larry McCormack



▲ Jody Aulds talks with Judge Brody Kane. Aulds has spent the last 42 years practicing law - most of that time specializing in adoptions. Friday, April 19, 2024, in Lebanon, TN.

THE FAMILY is one of the most important foundations of any community, especially when it comes to caring for the next generation. Not every child begins life with a family, but many people in Lebanon are working hard to ensure that those children find one. One example can be found in attorney and adoptive mother Jody Aulds, who has spent the last 42 years practicing law — most of that time specializing in adoptions.

While law became her lifelong career, Aulds never dreamed of working for a law firm or becoming a lawyer. The past four decades of work all began with a simple phone call. The legal secretary at a local law firm retired suddenly, and one of the partners, Jere McCulloch, asked Aulds to fill in for a few weeks while the firm searched for a replacement. Aulds had a degree in business education and didn't know anything about law, but she had many of the necessary skills like typing, shorthand, and phone etiquette. If she

needed to know something about law, she could be taught.

A few months later, McCulloch decided to move out on his own and asked Aulds to join him. They agreed to split whatever McCulloch earned because he couldn't be sure he could pay her.

"I said, 'Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained,' so I went with him," Aulds said. "We were together from then on."

Her work took her out of the office and to the courthouse, where she searched titles with other attorneys — the sort of thing a paralegal might do today. That continued until she adopted her first child and was legally required to take a year off.

"Jere just couldn't handle that," Aulds said. "He called me one night when I was playing bridge and said, 'Look, I just talked to the Dean at the Nashville School of Law... they started school six weeks ago, but I told him you would be such a great addition to their school that he should let you come in late.'"

Aulds had been out of school [and] for 10 years and never planned to go back to

“
WELL,
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FROM THEN
ON.

- Jody Aulds

school after getting her bachelor's. Still, she had been doing a lot of work that attorneys usually do, and McCulloch offered to pay her tuition, so she decided to give it a shot.

"I said, Well, I tell you what. I'll make you a deal. I'll go until December, and if it's something I don't like or don't want to do, then I'm out," Aulds said. "By the time December got there, I thought I had read and studied so much that it was too late to turn back."

She graduated four years later as one of the first two female lawyers in Wilson County. When she arrived to work the day after the bar results were out, the front window read "McCulloch and Aulds, Attorneys at Law."

"We were partners right then from the minute that [we] could be," Aulds said.

At first, she began with real estate law, the area she was most familiar with, but she soon began branching out into family law. A few years later, she adopted her second child, and Aulds has continued handling adoptions ever since. Her experience as an adoptive mother helped her connect with other parents, making the process go more smoothly.

"It's just so important to handle it correctly, and most attorneys do not practice adoption law — it's more specialized," Aulds said. "You need to get with somebody who knows what they're doing because you don't ever want that adoption to disrupt."

Four decades later, Aulds is still working with adoptions, and helping create those families is one of the parts of her job that she is most proud of.

"To see the smiles on their faces, the rewarding lives that they've had as a result of being a part of a family — that's been my joy," Aulds said. "That's the area of the law that's near and dear to my heart."

The McCulloch and Aulds law firm has grown tremendously since it first began with one lawyer, a secretary, and a two-

room office. Now, Rochelle, McCulloch, and Aulds employs 13 lawyers and is the largest law firm between Davidson County and Knox County.

Aulds did the majority of the hiring and training for many years and said she is also proud of her success as a teacher for those she hired. Some of the staff she trained are still a part of the firm decades later.

"I'm proud of our law firm," Aulds said. "We grew up together. It wasn't like your big firms in Nashville, where there is such a wide divide between the upper-echelon attorneys and the secretarial staff. We were more like family and have tried to keep it that way."

Since the first day that Aulds worked as a temporary secretary, she has adopted two children, married Dickie Brooks, and become a grandmother to six grandchildren. She has also helped many people in the Lebanon community grow their families and helped many children find their forever homes. All it took was confidence, perseverance, and someone to give her that initial push. What could you do if you just took the leap? After all, as Aulds said, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." **GN**



I'M PROUD OF
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BETWEEN THE
UPPER-ECHELON
ATTORNEYS AND
THE SECRETARIAL
STAFF.

- Jody Aulds



▲ Jody Aulds, seated right, adopted two children — a son, Ryan, and a daughter, Kristen. She now has a large family, which includes L to R: Cameron Aulds, Kristen Aulds, Griffin Aulds, Fenton Aulds, Jules Aulds, Melissa Aulds, Ryan Aulds, and Dalton Aulds. Front row: husband, Dickie Brooks, and Jody Aulds Brooks. Not pictured: Gabby Aulds. Sunday, April 21, 2024, in Lebanon, TN.



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Unexpected delight

Coach's Eastgate Grille shines beyond typical bar fare.

LET ME start by saying that I'm not a fan of bar food, so I wouldn't choose a sports bar for lunch. However, I recently met a business associate for lunch at Coach's Eastgate Grille off Highway 109 in Lebanon and was in for a treat. Instead of the typical bar food, it offered an excellent meat-and-three lunch menu. This unique feature elevates it from just another local bar to a delightful dining spot for a hearty midday meal. The lunch menu is available from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. on weekdays.

Upon entering, the atmosphere is immediately welcoming, combining the relaxed vibe of a bar with the cleanliness and order of a well-maintained restaurant. The staff enhances this atmosphere with their friendliness and efficiency, making the customers feel appreciated and well taken care of. Our server, Riley, needs a big shout-out for her prompt and thoughtful service, ensuring our smooth and enjoyable dining experience.

Riley suggested the blackened catfish for my meal, so I ordered that, along with fried squash and

broccoli. The catfish was perfectly seasoned, striking a delicious balance of flavorful yet not overpowering flavors. The sides, especially the fried squash, were a delightful complement; the breading had a great flavor, wasn't overcooked, and the pieces were a good size. My friend selected the half-open-faced roast beef, topped with a generous helping of creamy mashed potatoes and rich gravy. It was a comforting and satisfying choice that seemed to embody the essence of a fulfilling meat-and-three meal.

The sweet tea was refreshingly well-prepared. I'm a Southern girl, so I am a sweet tea snob. Despite the bar setting, the ambiance during our visit was quiet and relaxed, without the usual busyness, which allowed us to enjoy our meal in peace.

Overall, Coach's Eastgate Grill is an excellent choice for anyone searching for a quality meal in a friendly and inviting atmosphere. It offers a great combination of delicious food, attentive service, and a clean environment, making it a must-visit for locals and visitors alike. **GN**



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This month Krys Midgett visited Coach's Eastgate Grille.

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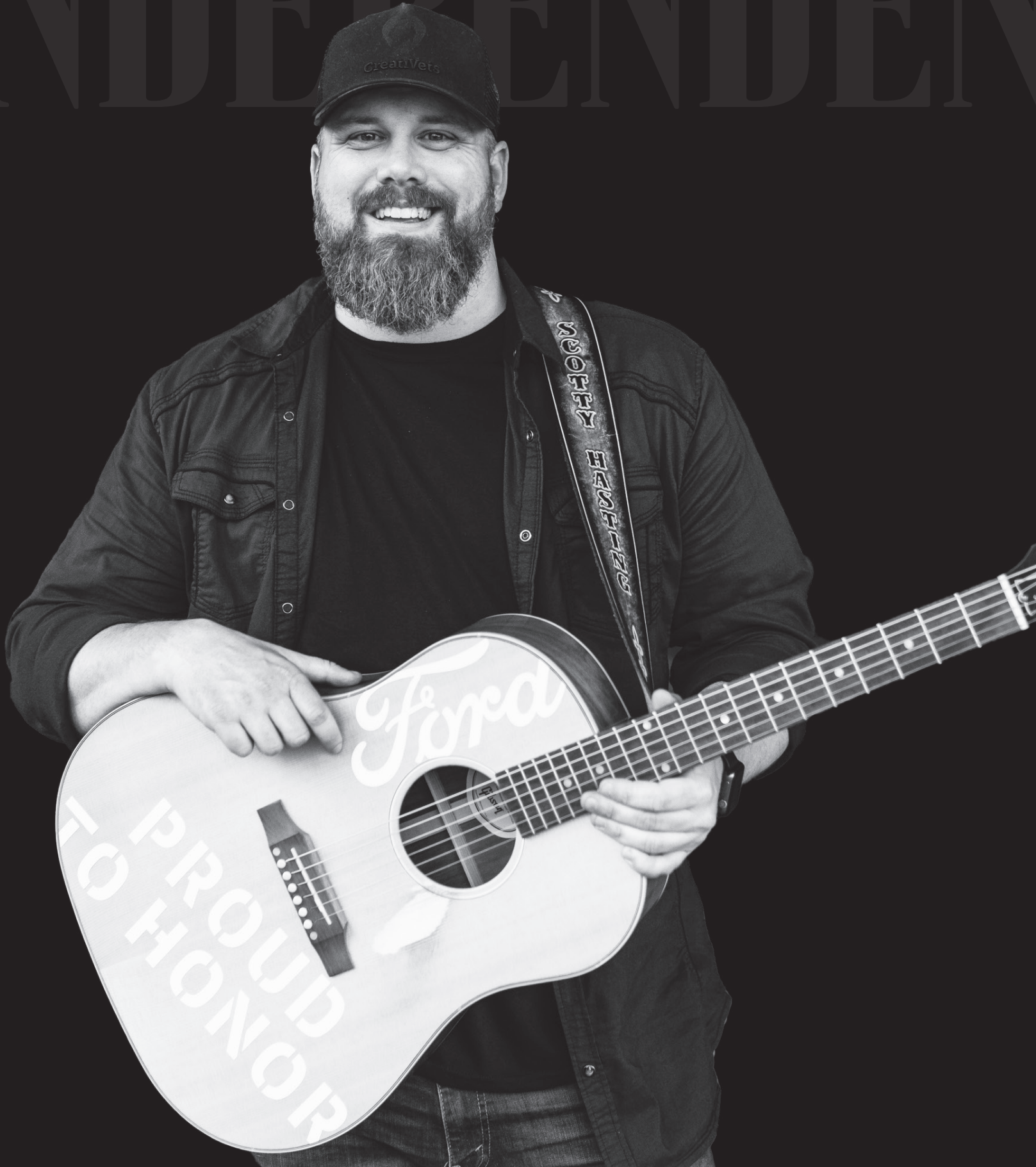
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INDEPENDENDEN



By Richard Klin
Photography by Robin Holcomb and
submitted by Scotty Hasting

SCOTTY HASTING



THE STORIES THAT HE TELLS

Scotty Hasting's
musical journey of recovery

SCOTTY HASTING was an Army infantryman who was eventually deployed to Afghanistan's Kandahar Province, where he was severely wounded and saw his best friend killed. The mental wounds, though, took much longer to heal. He has had to cope with PTSD and the psychological issues facing so many military men and women. Hasting has emerged as a formidable singer-songwriter. Through songs such as "How Do You Choose" and "The Stories That They Tell," he has tried to convey a sense of this complicated burden.

Like most country music artists, he grew up singing in church. Singing was always a hobby. According to Hasting's mother, she knew he was in a good place when he was singing. It wasn't until the pandemic that music assumed a central role in his life.

"For me, when COVID-19 pandemic hit [was] when I needed an escape," he related. "And music was that escape — learning how to play the guitar and learning how to write songs."

Music provided the escape, the sense of peace, and the purpose — a powerful therapy. Hasting embarked on a steady performance schedule, playing three or four hours a night, five or six nights a week.



“I would live for those moments when I could have that peace and that little bit of an escape. I needed to get out of my head for a little bit of time.”

Hasting’s music is imbued with a mission to reach out to other veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety.

“I know how much music has helped me — it’s saved my life as a form of therapy. I want to be able to help someone decide to put the gun down and try for tomorrow.”

And he is open and honest about his own personal struggles — the best method for breaking down the various stigmas still attached to mental health difficulties.

“If I’m going to try to help people, I think it’s important for them to understand that I still struggle.” And he struggles every day. “Being vulnerable is scary, and it’s hard. But it’s more important than me. What I’m doing is more important than me.”

To say that Hasting’s music has been well-received is an understatement. His musical career has blossomed with numerous tour dates, including an appearance with the legendary Dave Grohl (of Nirvana and the Foo Fighters) and a forthcoming extended play.

Scotty Hasting’s music occupies a very distinctive perch. Songs that deal with the plight of the veteran are few and far between, yet that distinctive perch comes with some complications.

“I don’t want my music to be the token veterans’ song,” Hasting said.

There is the danger of being pigeonholed, and Hasting does not want to do the predictable — his songs are not rousing, feel-good anthems.

“That’s not what I want to do. If I’m going to sing a song about heroes,



▲ Scotty Hasting while on active duty in Afghanistan in 2011

it’s going to be about my best friends who didn’t come home. It’s going to be about the things that I saw. If I’m going to put a song out there, I want people to understand. These are songs that matter.”

He also wants to be a bridge to the civilian world and try to convey the “veteran mindset.” “The Stories That They Tell” is a song about why veterans tell their stories. The searing “How Do You Choose” is anguished and emotional and asks some very fundamental questions. Hasting hopes that the veteran who finds it impossible to put his or her experiences into words can play these songs, and then the people around them can understand.



Scotty Hasting's story is emphatically triumphant, which is a crucial part of his narrative. He wants veterans to see that success and personal fulfillment are absolutely attainable.

"You can do things that you never thought possible, which is what I'm doing right now. And you can still struggle."

He is a living testament that people can and do overcome monumental struggles — astonished that he gets to make music for a living.

"I never in a million years thought that would happen!"

Hasting wants to talk about living every day to the fullest and about the struggles he and other veterans deal with daily. In a relatively short period of time, he has created an important, honest body of work, and there's much more to come. **GN**

"You can do things that you never thought possible, which is what I'm doing right now."

SCOTTY HASTING



By Richard Klin
Photography by Robin Holcomb

SAM PFISTER



RISE AND SHINE

Sam Pfister's
fitness odyssey

SAM PFISTER helms Rise Strength & Performance, a multi-faceted endeavor that serves as a gym, fitness center, coaching venue, and educational outlet.

Originally from Illinois, Pfister was no stranger to the fitness world, but he'd pursued an entirely different path, immersing himself in a political career. He went all in on the demanding, often draining political arena and turned his back on staying in mental and physical shape. And then came an eventual crash and burn, where Pfister

bottomed out completely. But after this crash and burn, he took stock.

Pfister had harbored the desire to follow an entirely different path. He had always loved fitness and entertained vague entrepreneurial ambitions that he tried hard to squelch.

"I was doing politics," he remembered, "and thought that having a gym wasn't a real job. I wasn't doing myself any favors, standing with one foot on the boat and one foot on the dock — choose where you are!"

DEPENDENCE



The catalyst for a new chapter in his life came from the chance viewing of a YouTube video of a guy coaching kids. He was just talking about getting better, being better, being physically fit, doing hard things, and doing something tangible with your life. The way he was talking, the way he was motivating people — that was what I needed to do.”

And so Pfister chose where he wanted to be — in a place far removed from the political arena. He boldly contacted a coach at George Washington University and received an unpaid internship. He assisted with coaching the university’s baseball team, women’s volleyball and basketball teams, and men’s rowing.

“I got to experience a whole lot of different athletes and a whole bunch of different types of training,” said Pfister

It was a grueling schedule. Pfister was also driving for Lyft to make ends meet and would coach from 6 a.m. to noon, drive from noon to 10 p.m., and then turn right around and do it all over again. However, he learned a lot, enhancing his newfound knowledge with podcasts and YouTube videos.

Pfister was not a total stranger to the business world. He had learned a lot from his father, who worked in real estate and appreciated his drive and hustle. His political background, as it turned out, was also valuable in terms of building a business.

“Politics is sales and networking and going out and talking to people,” Pfister said. “I have that ability built up.”

Pfister moved to Tennessee in 2020 and began coaching out of a garage in a



rented house, then rented space in a gym and did private and small group training. In a relatively short time, he became a business owner. Rise Strength & Performance opened in 2022.

Rise’s mission is to help busy and successful people fit fitness into their lives. Much of his clientele, for various reasons, have put their well-being aside for their families, jobs, and employees. They come on in, and Pfister pledges to take care of their health. Rise offers lots of guidance, including assistance with nutrition. No more than six people are in a class, and each person gets their own workout. Rise’s clientele is varied.

“I could have a 25-year-old entrepreneur who owns a business and doesn’t have any injuries; he’s just doing regular weightlifting. But next to him is a 60-year-old banker, who [has] all sorts of back problems and wants to deal with an old baseball injury in his shoulder, but still wants to sweat and feel good.”

The ever-busy Pfister also does strength training for homeschool basketball teams and adult, small-group personal training.





“I want people — even if they’re only with me for a few months — walking away and knowing how to work out on their own.”

SAM PFISTER

▲ Lillie and Leo White training with Pfister

Rise aims to send its clientele out into the world armed with the tools to maintain their progress.

“I want people — even if they’re only with me for a few months,” Pfister said, “walking away and knowing how to work out on their own. I don’t want to just have people depend on me.”

Pfister envisions more homeschool coaching and an even greater involvement with the community. All the various components of what Sam Pfister and Rise offer come down to wanting his clientele to be self-sustaining and healthy.

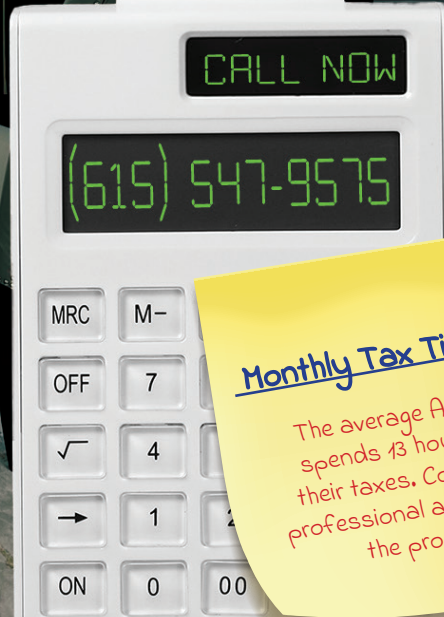
He concluded, “I want to help out as many people as possible.” GN

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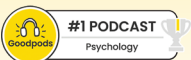
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INDEPENDENT



By Amanda E. West
Photography by Larry McCormack

JENNIFER STEVES



THE TOWN DOCTOR

Where modern medicine
meets old-fashioned hospitality

IMAGINE A place where a visit with your doctor costs nothing — a place where your care navigator guides you seamlessly through the complexities of your individualized health needs and where the focus is not just on treating your ailments but on nurturing your well-being as a whole. Within the walls of The Town Doctor, a revolution such as this is underway — one that grants equal control to both the patient and their physician through Direct Primary Care (DPC).

Jennifer Steves is a registered nurse, co-founder of The Town Doctor, and the wife of Dr. Robert Steves, who has been

a board-certified family physician for 25 years. The Steves have been married for nearly 30 years and have seven children.

“Our many years in the health care industry had caused Robert and [me] to become [disillusioned] with the state of our primary care system. [We were concerned with] how patients were treated, the stress of mounting medical debt for things that shouldn’t cost as much as they were being billed, and frustration with the lack of independence when making shared decisions with patients,” said Jennifer.

“We knew things needed to change. They couldn’t be fixed from the inside. We

knew we had to take a different direction. We had to boldly choose to step out and build something new — something better.”

As an increasing number of patients grappled with mounting medical debt and private practices became absorbed by larger health care corporations, the Steves’ desire for more genuine doctor-patient relationships grew significantly. In 2016, along with a core group of licensed professionals, they embarked on a mission to return to the old-fashioned principles that had inspired each of them to recite and uphold the Hippocratic oath. The Town Doctor ushers in a new era for health care, where simplicity intersects with compassion, and your well-being — rather than profit — takes center stage.

“In a time [when] health care costs are soaring, we are a place where appointments, support, and navigating the health care system get a whole lot easier. For about the cost of a daily coffee, The

“We knew we had to take a different direction. We had to boldly choose to step out and build something new — something better.”

JENNIFER STEVES

Town Doctor members receive quality care without the added costs and bureaucracy of insurance companies. Members have access to their doctor via phone, text, and email. They can save hundreds of dollars on medications, labs, and imaging. Our friendly, straightforward approach provides peace of mind as we take care of up to 80-90% of health care needs. Now you, your family, [and] your employees can have access to best-in-class primary and wellness care.”

For years, the traditional health care system has left many feeling lost in a maze of endless insurance paperwork, expensive copays, increasingly high deductibles, and rushed appointments. Along with the frustration of waiting hours, weeks, and months for an appointment with an in-network provider, this subscription method is unique.

“Instead of filling out paperwork, checking boxes, and filing claims, the doctor can spend time with you. It is freedom for patients, knowing there are no copays, their visits are \$0, and we dispense their medicine right here in the office for pennies on the dollar. Our DPC model restores the independence for our doctors, allowing them to spend the time they need with their patients without feeling rushed. We’re the rebels of health care. We’re challenging the status quo, and it’s revolutionizing the way we take care of people.”

Members also receive discounts with a local fitness trainer and on aesthetics and nutritional supplements. With The Town Doctor, health care is so much more than bi-annual checkups — it’s a lifestyle. Besides primary care, they also offer micro-needling, IV hydration, aesthetics that promote healthier glowing skin, weight loss and health coaching, energy-infusing B-12 injections, laser hair removal, and so much more.

Monthly membership fees for individuals are \$90 and \$30 for children (under 17) with an adult member. As a full-spectrum lifestyle health center, The Town Doctor offers routine labs, blood pressure screening, specialty labs, routine physicals, well-woman exams, pediatric evaluations, diabetes management, nutritional therapy, and sutures. With same-day appointments available, you’ll bid “goodbye” to overpriced medical bills and long wait times in the emergency room or stops at urgent care clinics.

“When you choose a primary health care solution rooted in real connections with your doctor, you cultivate the goodness of health through everyday choices, more courage to take care of your body, and the freedom to abundantly live. Smart local business owners are providing our DPC model to their employees for a high-value health benefit that’s saving their employees money and providing a fixed cost for their business without copays, surprises, inflated bills, or mounting claims,” said Robert. **GN**

For more information, go to www.towndocor.com.



ROBERT AND JENNIFER STEVES

Family Farm Expo - May 19



Photography by Hannah Woodcock

On Sunday, May 19, 2024, Roobeez hosted the Family Farm Expo at The Mill at Lebanon. The event paid tribute to the small family farms and rural life. The expo included vendors such as Be Happy and Handmade, Krafty Kids, Farmapeutic LLC, and Bearded Bee Works. It also featured adorable farm animals such as goats, chicken, bunnies, and even a turtle that were available to pet, and some were available to buy. Small farmers and sustainability experts led workshops and knowledge sharing sessions. There were giveaways and raffles with prizes donated by local businesses as well as local live music and food trucks.



1. Cadence Green 2. Shannon and Sandy Dorow
3. Cameron Chaparro 4. Josh and Amanda Hager 5. Lindsey and Steve Winter

Smoky Mountain Markets' Watermelon Festival - May 25



Photography by Hannah Woodcock

On Saturday, May 25, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Smoky Mountain Market hosted its Watermelon Festival at the Wilson County Fairgrounds in Lebanon. The festival raised money for the charity Give A Little Christmas, which helps families in need during the holidays. The event had free admission and parking and had local vendors such as BB's Gourmet Pretzels, Gigi's Pup Cakes, The Love of Fruit Tea, Norene Craft Company, and Elaine's Creatibles. There were also carnival games, inflatables, and food trucks as well as a watermelon eating contest with a \$100 prize. It was sponsored by Cardio Miracle and 98.9 FM.



1. Morgan Scott and Stephanie Galinelli 2. Elaine Odum
3. Sarah Johnson and Bethanie Swartzkrauthem 4. Dorothea Love, Alhinya Hall, Desiree Starks, and Harmoni Carter

Run for the Wall XXXIV - May 14-25



Photos submitted by Eric Fort

In May, Wilson County welcomed the Run for the Wall XXXIV riders to the Wilson County Veterans Museum. The event featured a lunch program attended by nearly 1,200 riders, who were escorted by local law enforcement. Susan Hunter, the guest speaker, discussed her book, “77 Letters: Operation Morale Booster: Vietnam,” recounting her mother, Joan Hunter’s, efforts to support deployed American G.I.s during the Vietnam War. Wilson County Mayor Randall Hutto expressed gratitude for the veterans and riders, emphasizing the importance of honoring and remembering the sacrifices of military personnel.



1. Taimi Reese and Dr. Salene Tinsley 2. Susan Hunter, the riders, and Lebanon friends
3. Lindsey Roberts, Phil Friedli, and Zebrina Seay 4. Phil Friedli and Officer Blackburn

Rock the Block - May 31



Photos submitted by Cindy Baldhoff

On May 31, 2024, the Wilson County Convention & Visitors Bureau hosted the lively Rock the Block event, featuring performances by Double Take and Sugar Lime Blue. The evening began at 5 p.m. with shopping and food trucks, followed by Double Take's energetic set at 6 p.m. Known for their eclectic covers, Double Take delighted the audience with their versatile repertoire. At 7:30 p.m., Sugar Lime Blue took the stage, mesmerizing the crowd with their unique blend of Americana soul, blues, country, rock, and jazz. The event, dubbed "Woodstock on the Block Night," was a hit, offering a memorable musical experience for all attendees.



1. Chris Crowell and Melanie Minter 2. Doug Davis, Paula Felps, and Joeleen Davis
3. Jadaius and Keasha Taylor, Ja'Rontae, SaAriya, and Sultan Goodman

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