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ISSUE 7 2025

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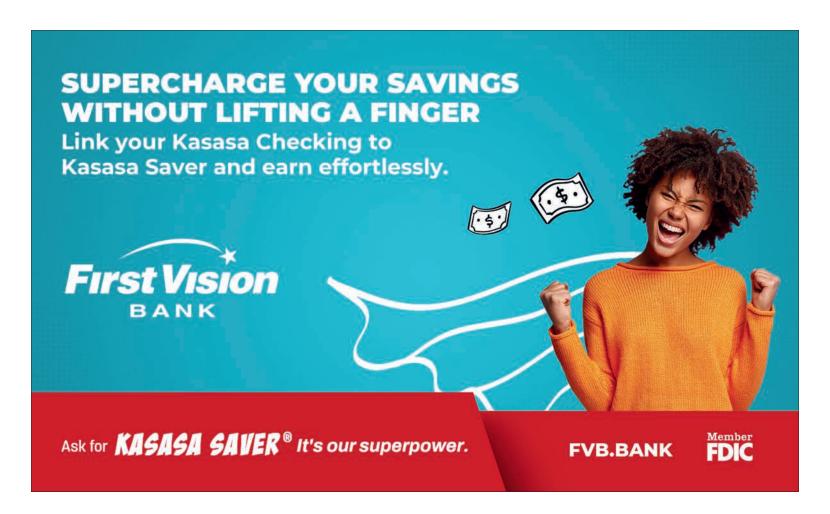


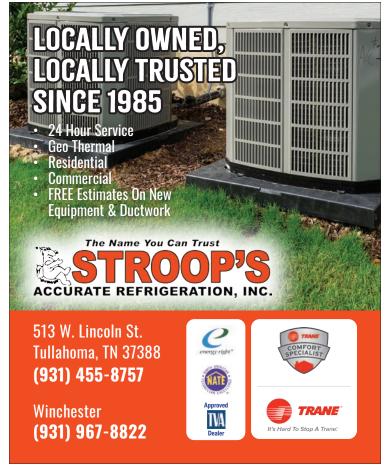
















2025 Bedford County Fair Schedule

Saturday, June 21

Bedford County Fairest of the Fair

| 11:00 а.м. | PRECIOUS MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | GIRLS 0-11 MONTHS |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 11:30 а.м. | BABY MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | GIRLS 12-23 MONTHS |
| 12:00 P.M. | TODDLER MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | GIRLS 2-3 YEARS |
| 12:30 р.м. | TINY MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | GIRLS 4-5 YEARS |
| 1:00 P.M. | PETITE MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | GIRLS 6-7 YEARS |
| 1:30 P.M. | LITTLE MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | GIRLS 8-10 YEARS |
| 2:00 P.M. | JUNIOR MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | GIRLS 11-12 YEARS |
| 2:30 P.M. | SUPREME Ms./Mrs. BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | Women 21-49 YEARS, SINGLE OR MARRIED |
| 3:00 P.M. | GOLDEN GIRL (IN MEMORY OF JOAN PIMENTEL) | Women 50 years+, single or married |
| 3:30 P.M. | JOYFUL MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIR | SPECIAL NEEDS GIRLS/WOMEN OF ALL AGES |
| 4:30 P.M. | Young Miss Bedford County Fair | GIRLS 13-15 YEARS |
| 5:00 P.M. | MISS BEDFORD COUNTY FAIREST OF THE FAIR | GIRLS 16-20 YEARS |
| | * All pageants held at Shelbyville Central Hi | ah School Auditorium * |

Sunday, July 13

| 1:00 p.m 5:00 p.m. | RECEIVING HOME EC/AG EXHIBITS |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1:00 P.M. | RECEIVING GREEN THUMB CHALLENGE ENTRIES |
| 2:00 P.M. | GREEN THUMB CHALLENGE JUDGING |

Monday, July 14

| 9:00 A.M 12:00 NOON | HOME EC/ AG EXHIBIT JUDGING |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5:00 P.M. | Open Dairy Heifer Show |
| 6:00 P.M. | OPENING CEREMONY |
| | DON'T MISS CRAIG CAMPBELL SINGING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM AT THE OPENING CEREMONY! |
| 6:00 P.M 9:00 P.M. | HOME EC/AG EXHIBITS (OPEN TO THE PUBLIC) |
| 6:00 P.M. | 4-H CHICK CHAIN |
| 7:00 P.M. | YOUTH COMPETITION NIGHT |
| 7:30 р.м. | Kids Pedal Pull |
| 7:30 р.м. | MARY & BILLY TARKINGTON AND JERRY WEBB - ENTERTAINMENT |

Tuesday, July 15

| 4:00 p.m 9:00 p.m. | Home Ec/Ag Exhibits (Open to the Public) |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 5:30 p.m. | Husband/Wife Calling Contest Registration (Building 2) |
| 5:45 p.m. | Farmer Olympics Registration (Horse Show Ring) |
| 6:00 p.m. | Farmer Olympics |
| 6:00 p.m. | Live Auction Registration (Horse Show Ring) |
| 6:00 p.m. | Husband/Wife Calling Contest |
| 6:00 p.m. | Open Beef Show |
| 6:30 p.m. | Boots, Beaus, & Bling Check-In/Registration |
| 7:00 p.m. | Boots, Beaus, and Bling Pageant (Building 2) |
| 7:00 p.m. | Preslee Campbell – Entertainment |
| 7:15 p.m. | Live Auction (Following Farmer Olympics) |

Wednesday, July 16

| | Troulloady, July 10 |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:00 a.m. | Senior Citizens Day |
| 10:00 a.m 6:00 p.m. | Receiving Poultry & Rabbit Entries |
| 10:00 a.m 6:00 p.m. | Receiving Open & Junior Egg Entries |
| 10:00 a.m 6:00 p.m. | Receiving Ugly Chicken Entries |
| 4:00 p.m 9:00 p.m. | Home Ec/Ag Exhibits (Open to the Public) |
| 5:30 p.m. | Cornhole Registration |
| 6:00 p.m. | Faith & Patriotic Night - Rob McKamey, Speaker |
| 6:30 p.m. | The Cavaliers - Entertainment |
| 6:30 p.m. | Cornhole Tournament |
| 7:00 p.m. | Special Military Service |
| 7:00 p.m. | Fun Dog Show Registration |
| 7:30 p.m. | Fun Dog Show |
| 7:30 p.m. | Freedom Sings - Entertainment |
| | Featuring Layla Tucker and Hunter Kirbow & The Dimes |

Thursday, July 17

* Schedule Subject to Change

| 10:00 a.m 2:00 p.m. | Special Needs Day |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 4:00 p.m 9:00 p.m. | Home Ec/Ag Exhibits (Open to the Public) |
| 5:00 p.m. | Turkey Calling Contest Registration |
| 5:30 p.m. | Turkey Calling Contest |
| 6:00 p.m. | Truck & Tractor Pull Registration |
| 7:00 p.m. | Truck & Tractor Pull |
| 7:00 p.m. | Mid State Cloggers - Entertainment |
| | |

Friday, July 18

| 4:00 p.m 9:00 p.m. | Home Ec/Ag Exhibits (Open to the Public) |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 6:00 p.m. | All Country Pleasure Horse, Draft Horse |
| | & Mule Show Registration |
| 6:00 p.m. | Mini Pull Registration |
| 6:00 p.m. | Open Sheep Show |
| 7:00 p.m. | Mini Pull |
| 7:00 p.m. | All Country Pleasure Horse, Draft Horse & Mule Show |
| 7.00 n m | Ind Hawalson Entartainment |

Saturday, July 19

| 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Cruise-In |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1:00 p.m 9:00 p.m. | Home Ec/Ag Exhibits (Open to the Public) |
| 2:00 p.m. | Central Region 4-H Meat Goat Show |
| 3:00 p.m. | Donkey (Any Size) & Mini Mule Show Registration |
| 4:00 p.m. | Donkey (Any Size) & Mini Mule Show |
| 5:00 p.m. | Antique Tractor Pull |
| 6:30 p.m. | Poultry & Rabbit Show Awards (Building 2) |
| 7:00 p.m. | Huffer Brothers - Entertainment |
| 7:00 p.m. | Backseat Driver Competition Registration (Horse Show Ring) |
| 7:30 p.m. | Backseat Driver Competition (Horse Show Ring) |
| 9:00 p.m 10:00 p.m. | Home Ec/Ag Exhibits Pickup |

Sunday, July 20

| 1:00 p.m 3:00 p.m. | Home Ec/Ag Exhibits Pickup |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1.00 p.III 5.00 p.III. | notite EC/AG EXHIBITS PICKUP |

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Defending Your Faith Conference



Alisa Childers, apologist and author of the books Another Gospel?, The Deconstruction of Christianity, and Live Your Truth and Other Lies, will be at FBCT on Aug 15-16 for a two-day apologetics conference. Make plans to attend and come hear Alisa tackle the tough questions as she helps us become better at articulating our faith!

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Land of the Brave

Celebrating veterans who watch over us from sea to shining sea.

F YOU'VE ever seen a fighter jet cut across the sky, you know what powerful looks like. You know what freedom sounds like. That roar overhead reminds us that we live in a country where people put their lives on the line so the rest of us can live without fear. They fly above land and sea, from coast to coast, from sea to shining sea, watching over the red, white, and blue.

This issue of Good News is dedicated to the brave — the ones who stepped forward when they didn't have to. Who negotiated peace with strength. Who shook hands with people they never met and still called them "brother." Who boarded boats and planes and tanks and flew into danger because protection is a calling of duty.

We salute our veterans not just for what they did but for what they made possible. Civility. Progress. A world where we can disagree and still shake hands at the end of the day. That handshake is not weakness. It's quite the opposite.

Independence isn't handed out. It's fought for. And the people who have worn the uniform, our veterans, carry that story everywhere they go. They are the reason the Stars and Stripes still wave. They are the reason we can gather around dinner tables, build businesses, fall in love, and sleep through the night without fear of bombs above or boots at the door.

Sometimes, honoring them means telling their stories. Sometimes it means listening. And sometimes it's as simple as standing still, hand on heart, letting the wind catch the flag on a clear day, and knowing you are lucky to live here.

This is the Land of the Brave. GN

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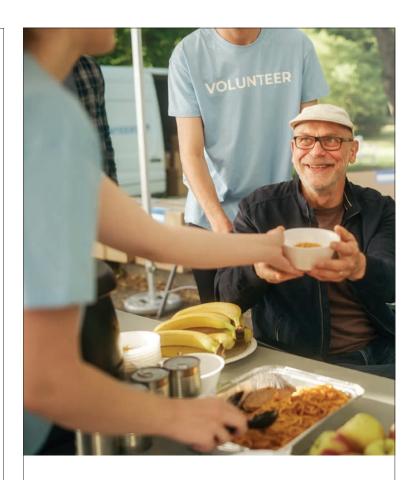
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Good News

CHANGING LIVE DAY BY DA

He is a mentor in the halls, a teacher in the classroom, a cheerleader at games, a friend at lunch, and a protector every day.

By Sara Hook // Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Tyler Walls

YLER WALLS is not just a school resource officer. At Robert E. Lee Elementary, he is a mentor when he talks to kids in the halls, a teacher when he goes to the classroom to talk about his job, a cheerleader when he encourages athletes during games, and a friend when he eats lunch with students in the cafeteria. Every day, he makes a difference in someone's life, and Tullahoma is better for it.

Walls began serving communities as a police officer in 2010, after graduating from Cleveland State Community College. For years, he worked as a patrol officer, enjoying the freedom of not being confined to one building or office space. Then, in 2023, he decided he wanted a change of scenery. He and his wife had just had a baby, and Walls applied to be a school resource officer (SRO) to open up his schedule.

"It was going to give me more time to spend at home," Walls said. "When I started doing the SRO work here, I fell in love with it, and it just kind of stuck."

He loved hanging out with the kids at Robert E. Lee, making their days, and giving them positive interactions with a police officer. Outside of his day-to-day job, Walls volunteers as a girls basketball coach for East Lincoln Elementary.

"The community will see me at football games, basketball games, anything that involves the school," Walls said.







▲ Tyler thoroughly enjoys spending time with the kids who he serves to protect at Robert E. Lee school.

While working within the school system, Walls also attends school himself. He earned his associate degree years ago, but this December, he will graduate with a bachelor's in criminal justice — and he plans to pursue his master's as well. Walls said college wasn't part of his plans for a long time, but his wife's journey influenced him. She went to school to be a teacher, but did not end her education there.

"She kept striving for more, and then she went back to school and obtained her master's degree and then an education specialist degree (EdS)," Walls said. "I never really thought college was in my plans, but then seeing her do it inspired me." After he earns his master's degree, Walls said he hopes to teach online classes.

Walls' community focus extends outside the school system as well. He has been a part of Bowling with Badges and Nashville Night Out, and helped retirement communities learn about online safety.

"It gives the community a different look at their officers," Walls said. "A lot of the time, communities don't see their officers out speaking with the community, [or] talking with or interacting with the community. They just kind of see them in a negative light." His community service has also been recognized outside of Tullahoma. This March, Walls was one of a few thousand people across the United States chosen to receive the Kentucky Colonel Award. It is the highest title of honor given by the Commonwealth of Kentucky for outstanding service to a community, state, or nation.

It is an amazing thing for a local police officer to be honored beside doctors, presidents, and popes, but the day-to-day community service of Tyler Walls has certainly earned him the title. **GN**





▲ Jillian, Henry, Gavin, Tyler Walls, Jack, Evan, and Kensleigh



▲ Declan, Kaila, Madison, Tyler, and Ashlyn Walls

Heart Service

Her journey from Marine to mentor proves that true service extends far beyond the uniform.

By Gabriel Grant Huff // Photography by Brooke Snyder

ATHERINE "CAT" Murray never quits. When days turn hard, evenings bring fatigue, and nights offer no rest, she keeps going — not for her own gain, but to serve the people around her. Her fight and drive come from her father. Her perseverance may have taken root in boot camp. But one thing is certain: her passion

shines clearly and was born from a heart full of love that embraces the entire city of Tullahoma.

The Texas native began her military career in 1982, proudly choosing the United States Marine Corps.

"Just to get through boot camp — I always tell people it doesn't matter where you served, but if you made it through Marine Corps boot camp, then you're pretty hot," she said,



laughing. "I didn't know where I was gonna go, but I was ready to do whatever it was I was expected to do."

After boot camp, she attended supply and logistics school. She became the second person in the Marine Corps' history to score 100% for the course. After completing the course, Murray found herself stationed in Hawaii, working in supply and logistics for four years. After her service, she stayed in Hawaii and taught preschool for two years. She later moved to California to finish college, where the most intriguing job came her way.

"I went to a community college in California to get a degree in electronics," Murray said.

"While there, I found out about an internship at NASA. They had a place right there where I was."

The one-year internship at NASA Ames Research Center became something more as employers recognized her talent and dedication. After seeing her complete a semester's worth of assignments in two weeks, they allowed her to work in different departments, leading to a fulltime job as the configuration management group director



▲ Cat in her NASA gear in 1995.

for three years. She managed the day-to-day operations, supervising 12 employees.

The veteran still sought a job that better aligned with her interests, though — one she still needed to identify. While working at NASA, she started McMurr's as a DJ service in 1997. In 2000, she settled in Estill Springs, putting her skills to work in video production, graphic design, and DJing for local events and parties.

However, Murray spent much of her time serving the community's kids for free. She led clubs and events at J. T. Farrar Elementary, including the yearbook club, dance club, Christmas parade, and DJ parties. For the community, Murray currently serves on the board of the Literacy Council and Tullahoma Educational Foundation. She has served on the Coffee County Anti-Drug Coalition committee, South Jackson Civic Center committee, Motlow Community College Early Childhood Education committee, Tullahoma Chamber of Commerce board of directors, and many others over the years.

In the end, the kids became the biggest joy in her life.

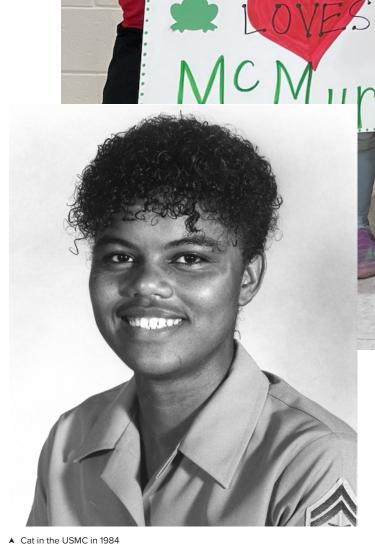
"They're just so happy — I don't know," Murray said. "You do stuff for them and with them, and they appreciate it. It just makes me happy to see them happy. That's really the main reason. It's something that I enjoy doing. It's just something that I'm good at."

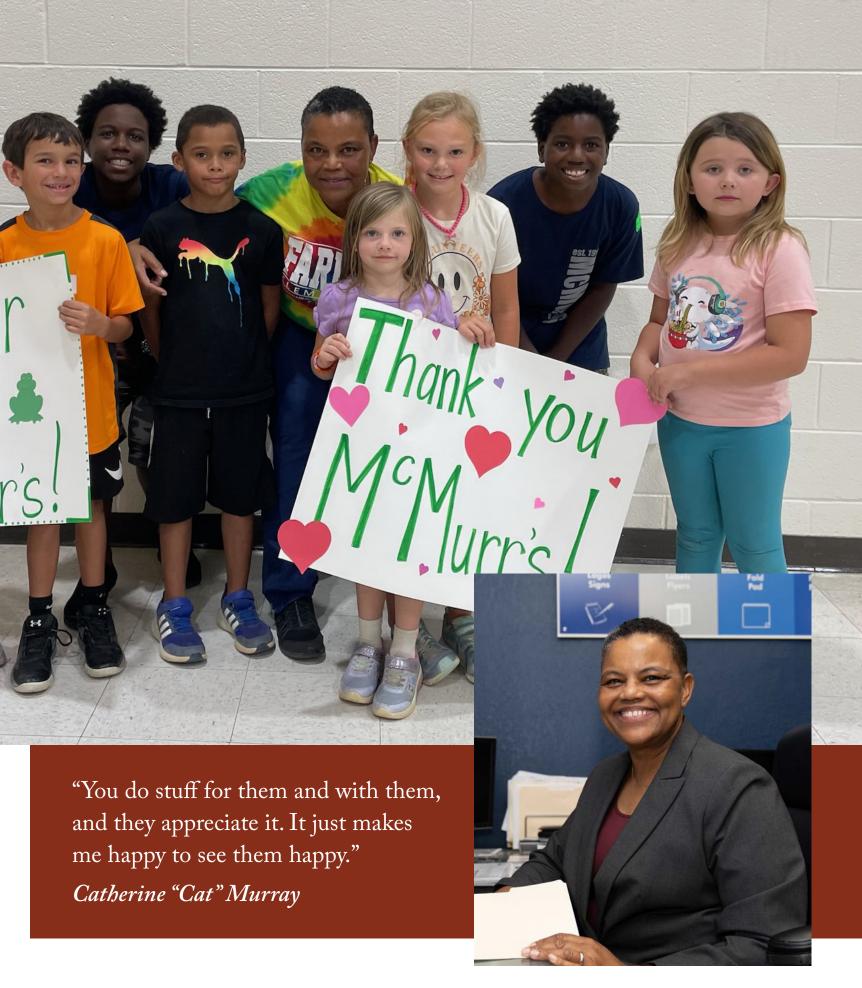
Murray's nearly 25 years of volunteering at the school allowed her to see her students' growth and even DJ at some of their most important events.

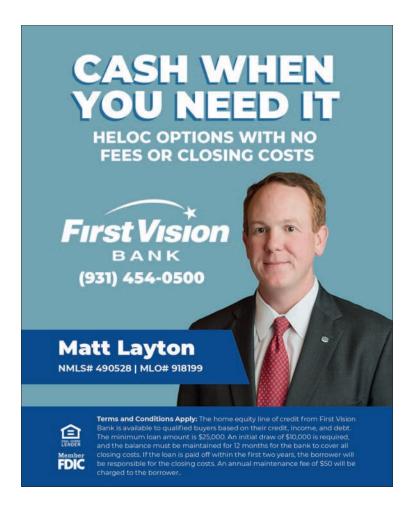
"I've done some kids' graduation announcements, their wedding announcements, their baby announcements — that's really cool, and I just kind of think, 'Wow, I'm kind of there for all phases of their lives."

Murray continues her work to this day, not afraid to look silly — whatever it takes to make them smile. As adults, they remember her kindness, fun spirit, and the time she invested in them. The influence testifies to the woman's heart of service — actions that never ceased after her years in the Marines.

After all, the key element of service is having the heart to care. GN





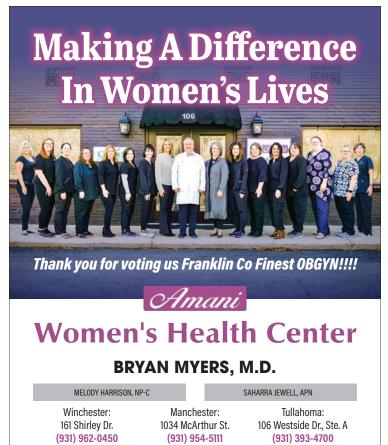




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'M A little skeptical by nature, especially when it comes to sushi from a food truck parked in a small Tennessee town. But, Kaki Japanese Cuisine in Tullahoma? They understood the assignment. This truck is serving up roll after roll of delicious flavors.

The setup is humble: a truck, a window, and a small crew that's somehow cranking out beautiful, flavorful Japanese dishes like it's nothing. But don't let the low-key look fool you — this is high-key excellent food.

Their sushi is shockingly fresh — like, "Am I really eating this in a parking lot?" fresh. The rolls are tight, and the flavor combinations are just what you crave. The Kaki Roll is loaded with tempura shrimp and crab salad and then topped with avocado, spicy tuna, and more, making it chaotic enough to be fun. The spicy tuna or California rolls offer classic and clean flavors everyone loves. Each house or specialty roll is a total show-off and worth every bite.

They've also got hibachi plates for when you want something warm and

savory to inhale in your car on a quick lunch break (no judgment here), or when you want to pick up an easy but satisfying dinner on the way home. Perfectly grilled protein, rice — best loaded with yum yum sauce, and veggies that still have a little bite — because soggy zucchini is a crime.

Service is fast and friendly. You place your order, grab a drink if you want, and boom, in just a few minutes, sushi and hibachi magic are in a styrofoam box. It's not fancy, but it is fabulous. If you're craving well-executed Japanese food from people who clearly care about quality, Kaki delivers — literally and consistently.

Prices are reasonable, portions are generous, and they don't skimp on presentation. Kaki isn't trying to reinvent the sushi wheel, and that's exactly why it works. It's consistent, it's craveable, and honestly, it's the kind of place you want to gatekeep a little because it's that good and convenient. So stop by on your next lunch break or order a quick, delicious meal the whole family will love! **GN**

GOOD NEWS IS COMING TO DINNER!

We will feature a local food critic's thoughts as they dine in Tullahoma. This month Tabitha Buckner visited Kaki Japanese Cuisine.

Kaki Japanese Cuisine

200B E. Carroll St. Tullahoma, TN 37388







Savor Summer's

Easy Living

Family and friends sweeten the season.

S SUMMER heats up, so do our grills and smokers, giving our kitchens a well-deserved break. Casual worknight dinners, weekend celebrations, and holiday parties bring together families for good food and, sometimes, fireworks.

Plates filled with barbecue, burgers, and dogs, joined by potato salad, coleslaw, chips, and dips, are balanced as we gather in lawn chairs or sit by the pool. Homemade ice cream and cookies sweeten the occasion. Summer living — and its foods — are easy! GN



1 can tomato soup 1t. Worcestershire sauce 1t. garlic powder 1/4 t. dried thyme leaves, crushed 2 t. packed brown sugar 2 t. lemon juice 2 t. vegetable oil 11/2 lbs. boneless beef sirloin steak, cut 3/4" thick

In a large bowl, mix soup, sugar, lemon juice, oil, Worcestershire, garlic and thyme. Brush mixture on both sides of steak. Place steak on hot grill and cook until golden brown and slightly charred. Turn steak over and continue to cook until desired level of doneness. Bring remaining soup mixture to a boil and serve with steak.

Roasted Corn on the Cob

Submitted by Betty Pirtle

8 ears fresh corn in husks 1/3 c. Italian dressing 21/2T. water 1T. chili powder 1/8 t. ground red pepper

Carefully peel back husks, exposing corn. Leave husks attached. Remove and discard silks. Combine Italian dressing. water, chili powder, and red pepper in a small mixing bowl. Stir well and brush over corn. Return husk to original position and tie the tips with wire twist-ties. Grill corn over medium hot coals for 30 minutes or until the corn is tender. Turn corn every 5 minutes.

New York Push Cart Hot Dog Onion Sauce

Submitted by Emma Hardin

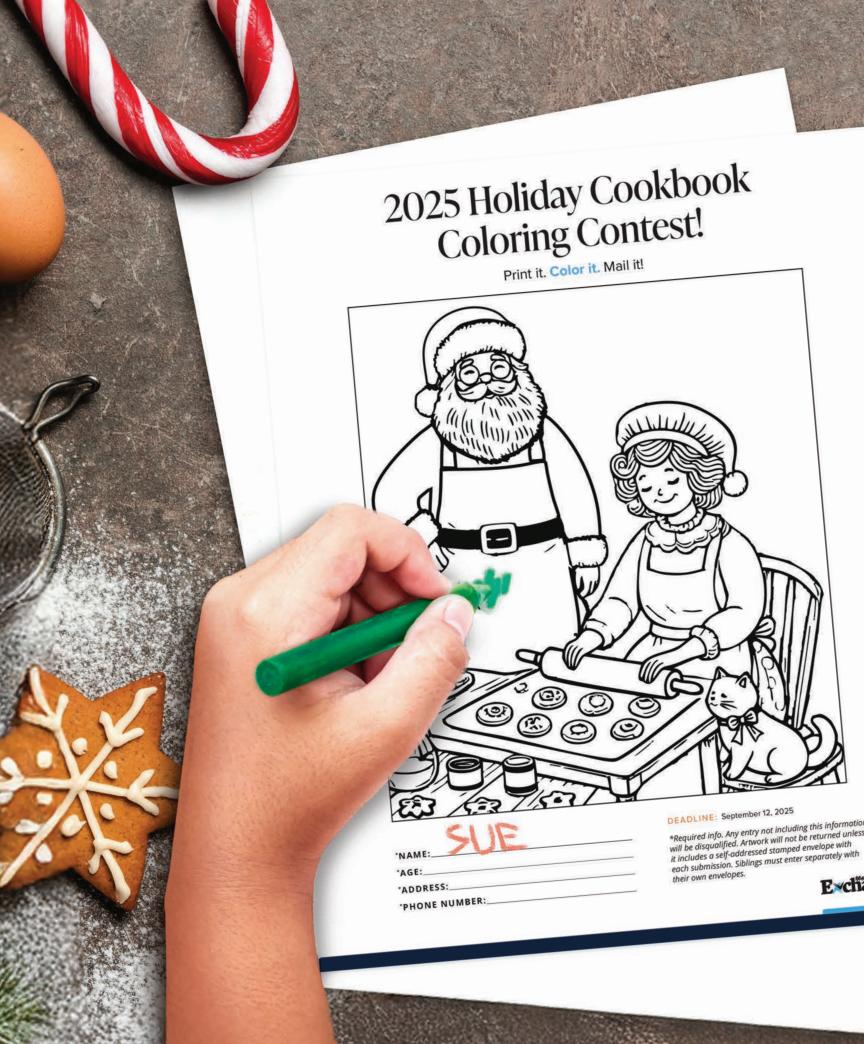
2 T. vegetable oil 2 md. onions, sliced ¼ inch slices 1/4 c. ketchup pinch of ground cinnamon 1/8 t. chili powder dash of hot pepper sauce dash of salt 1/2 c. water

In a medium skillet, heat vegetable oil over medium heat. Add onion slices and saute for 7 minutes or until golden brown. Add ketchup, cinnamon, chili powder, hot pepper sauce, and salt. Pour in water, stir, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for about 10 minutes Serve over hot dogs.

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







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COL. GRANT MIZELL ADVENTURING IN AVIATION

The commander of Arnold Air Force Base aims high.

By Becca Roberts // Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Grant Mizell







WHEN HE joined the Air Force, Col. Grant Mizell dreamed of reaching for the sky. He has always chased adventure.

"The thought that I could someday fly an airplane was the hook I needed," Mizell said. "The thought that I'd break the surly bonds of earth and go chase clouds was pretty neat."

It was a decision that took him from a curious high school graduate to the commander of the Arnold Air Force Base and Arnold Engineering Development Complex (AEDC). He has 30 years of service under his belt, and his command extends to AEDC locations across nine states.

Mizell started at the Air Force Academy in 1995 and then attended pilot train-

ing to fly C-130s — small but mighty tactical planes. His first operational assignment was in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he completed four combat tours in the Middle East and met his wife, Evelyn. They would later have two children, a son, Kelly, and a daughter, Lorelei.

As a young couple, Mizell and his wife were shipped to the 37th Airlift Squadron in Germany. They left behind their families, but were born into a new kind of family.

"When you join the military, you have instant friends — really, an instant family — who you are going to be with for a long time," Mizell said.

In Germany, C-130s were deployed to contingencies in Africa, Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Middle East, transporting UN



Change of Command, 412th Operations Group, July 2021

"WHEN YOU JOIN
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FOR A LONG TIME."

COL. GRANT MIZELL



Attending Test Pilot School Graduation for Class 23B, Edwards, AFB



A Colonel Mizell shares information about an aircraft model like those that are tested in the wind tunnels at Arnold Air Force Base. This model is of an F-14 Tomcat.

peacekeepers, medical aid, and military personnel. Mizell enjoyed seeing the world and making a difference.

Mizell then attended test pilot school. Always chasing the next adventure, Mizell moved from Germany to a remote base in the Mojave Desert in California, which was 20 miles from the nearest town. Mizell learned to fly over 30 different aircraft. Set in an area with beautiful weather year-round and a safe distance from civilians, Edwards Air Force Base is the perfect location to test aircraft. It's dangerous work, but groundbreaking.

"Almost every major 'first' in the history of aviation happened at Edwards Air Force Base, or within 50 miles of it," Mizell said.

A rare opportunity offered C-130 test pilots, including Mizell, the chance to work with the Royal Air Force for two years. Mizell moved to England, where he flew British planes and admired their patience, acceptance, and efficiency.

Today, Mizell commands Arnold Air Force Base, a technological hub of aerospace innovation and military testing. It is a critical component of our national security.

"Arnold is the epitome of long-term thinking. They built a wonder of the world," Mizell said.

The facility is incredible and is open to the public for tours. But Mizell said the heart of the base is the people.

"Arnold Air Force Base is the people of Tennessee. Whether you've done it in my uniform, or any service, or in a suit and tie, or coveralls, they are all American heroes. They come in every single day and make America a better place," Mizell said.

The base maintains the public Wattendorf Highway and opens huge portions of its property for hunting and fishing. It also conducts STEM outreach in schools. Mizell continually leads Arnold Air Force Base to new heights while nurturing the community here in Tullahoma. **GN**



▲ Squadron Command, 645th AESS



Source: arnold.af.mil, Andrew Miller

RIKKI TUCKER REBUILDING LIFE WITH PURPOSE

From uncertainty to empowerment, she finds her way forward.

By Rachael Smith // Photography by Brooke Snyder



VERY MORNING, before stepping into her day, Rikki Tucker stands in front of the mirror and reminds herself of something simple but powerful: "You got this. You can do this."

It's more than a mantra. It's the foundation of how she rebuilt a life once clouded by uncertainty, change, and identity loss. It's how she has transformed her life into service, leadership, and an example for her three kids.

Tucker, who grew up in Lynchburg, spent years following her now ex-husband's Army career across the country, from Colorado Springs to Georgia to Kentucky, while raising their three children, including twins born just after he deployed to Afghanistan.

"When I look back, I think, wait, what? I went from Tennessee to Colorado, to Georgia, to Fort Campbell. Then back home, a mom, a wife, and I had completely lost my identity," Tucker said. "It just kind of hit me after the divorce. I had to figure out who I was outside of all that."

A new chapter began here. No longer tethered to the expectations of being a military spouse or a stay-at-home mom, Tucker chose to rebuild on her own terms.



■ Rikki's children when they were 8 months old and 3 years old.

"THEY'RE WATCHING HOW THEIR MOM IS HANDLING LIFE. AND I WANT THEM TO SEE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO BE A PRODUCTIVE MEMBER OF SOCIETY"

RIKKI TUCKER





She began working at a local bank and then transitioned to another financial institution, where she was encouraged to get involved with the Tullahoma Chamber of Commerce.

"I knew, wow, I like this. I'm good at this," she said. "I'm going to represent my job well, but I'm also going to represent myself. So I started volunteering for everything."

She has volunteered for the Wobble Gobble, the Christmas parade, Women Impacting the Community, and more. She said she wasn't doing it just for herself or her employer, but for her children — Jackson, 15, and her 12-year-old twins, Emily and Lucy.

"They're watching how their mom is handling life. And I want them to see what it looks like to be a productive member of society," she said.

In 2024, she was named the Tullahoma Chamber's Ambassador of the Year. She also joined the Military Affairs Committee, where she raised an often overlooked issue: military wives.

"What about the wives?" she asked during one meeting. "They're staying home during deployments, raising kids, supporting their spouses, and sometimes they get lost in the weeds. That was me. I came out of that, and I didn't know who I was anymore."

Through her work in the community and her involvement in the Coffee County Leadership Program, where her class project focused on helping residents find local volunteer opportunities, Tucker is shaping systems she once struggled to navigate.

When a new opportunity opened up at the Tullahoma Utilities Authority in February, she saw it as no coincidence—it was the direct result of her commitment at the start of the year to become her best self.

"I prayed about it," she said. "And now, I'm in a leadership role at a company that supplies power and utilities for the town I call home."

She thinks back on the past four years, tearing up.

"If I had to go back four years and wonder where I'd be, that version of me would be proud, for sure," she said.

Divorce and identity loss are real, but she believes the story is ultimately about resilience and hope.

"That moment in time didn't define my future," she said. "Your past doesn't define your future. You decide what's next."

Now, with three kids watching her every move, Tucker keeps showing up for herself, her family, and her community.

"I just want to keep setting a good example for them, to continue growing, giving, and being present," she said. "Every year, I want to add a little more to everything I've already done." GN



▲ Lucy, Jackson, Rikki, and Emily Tucker

"YOUR PAST DOESN'T DEFINE YOUR FUTURE. YOU DECIDE WHAT'S NEXT."

RIKKI TUCKER

AMBASSADOR TO THE COMMUNITY

Honorary Commanders create connections for military and civilian residents.

By Becca Roberts // Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Winston Brooks







R OWS AND rows of trees separate Arnold Air Force Base from the public areas of Tullahoma for safety and national security reasons. Still, this essential barrier disconnects the base and the local community. Colonel Mizell, commander of Arnold Engineering Development Complex (AEDC), tackled this issue by reinstating the Honorary Commanders: civilian leaders who serve as local ambassadors for the base.

Tennessee native Winston Brooks, executive director of Tullahoma Area Economic Development Corporation (TAEDC) and an honorary commander, helps the base stay actively connected in Tullahoma. He and Chairman Beverly Lee collaborate to lead this effort.

Arnold Air Force Base is the largest economic driver in Tullahoma, with a \$1.06 billion economic impact on the region. It features 35 test capabilities, including wind tunnels, engine tests, and rocket tests. Brooks attends the Arnold Community Council, which reaches out to elected officials about current military needs. At the monthly meetings, military leaders and civilians attend to give updates and discuss how the council can support the base.

Brooks is the honorary commander for the 804th Test Support Squadron. He organizes job fairs to recruit the best and brightest candidates. He plans government contracting sessions, working closely with Mike Dent, AEDC's chief of technical



The City of Tullahoma had a great day at THS helping with mock interviews for College and Career Day.

"WE'VE GOT SOME INCREDIBLY SMART PEOPLE IN THIS COMMUNITY. WE NEED TO GIVE THEM A PLACE TO GO TO LEAD."

WINSTON BROOKS





Winston Brooks. Behind him hangs a photo of Henry "Hap" Arnold who was the first five-star general of the Air Force.



▲ The Franklin County chamber arranged a tour of the new TCAT facility at the Winchester airport where Winston was able to be a part.

"AND WHAT MAKES
THIS COMMUNITY
UNIQUE ARE
THE ROCKET
SCIENTISTS AND
ENGINEERS THAT
LIVE AMONGST US."

WINSTON BROOKS

management. Brooks collaborates with others who can further the base's community impact. He recently partnered with the University of Tennessee Space Institute and 13 local contractors to host a high-tech job fair, sending invitations to over 600 engineering students. These efforts ensure that the base continues to hire exceptional people.

Brooks focuses economic development around Tullahoma's strengths — aviation, aerospace, defense, and retail. He oversees which businesses are brought to the area, which is challenging because so many businesses are on the waitlist. The city is growing constantly, and Brooks says 1,500 new homes are in the works.

Brooks also advocates for military family issues, including spouse certification reciprocity and child care solutions. Brooks is working diligently to meet these needs. Under his leadership, Tullahoma was named a Great American Defense Community in 2022.

"We're a defense community. If it weren't for the base, we would just be another rural community. And what makes this community unique are the rocket scientists and engineers that live amongst us," Brooks said.

Arnold Air Force Base is the epitome of innovation, and Brooks said he wants to build a location where more of these creative ideas are tackled by people in many different fields on and off base.

"We need a place for academia, military leaders, and businesses to come together and collaborate and help solve a lot of these problems. We've got some incredibly smart people in this community. We need to give them a place to go to lead."

Brooks was appointed to the Air Force Materiel Command Civic Leader Program, which offers more travel opportunities. He recently attended the Secretary of the Air Force National Security Forum at the Air War College. This professional training brought together military leaders and civilian representatives.

Through these experiences, Brooks and the Honorary Commander program are creating a vital bridge between military and civilian residents. **GN**



Winston Brooks attended the IEDC Annual Conference in Denver. This conference highlighted the vital role of economic developers in shaping our communities.



▲ The Arnold Community Council visited the Pentagon and the U.S. Congress to communicate our community's support for the Arnold Engineering Development Complex and the importance of Test and Evaluation across the DoD mission.

LIVE on the LANN

The GFWC kicks off summer with music, food, and funding for local nonprofits.

By Becca Roberts // Photography by Brooke Snyder

HE END of May buzzes with anticipation as locals await upcoming vacations, festivals, and holidays. Live on the Lawn, hosted by the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) Centennial Woman's Club, is one of the earliest celebrations of the summer season. It was held on May 23 at the South Jackson Performing Arts Center's outdoor stage.

"It's casual, fun, and has been tremendously successful thanks to the generosity of the community," Tanya Sheeley, chair of Live on the Lawn, said. She and co-chair Martha Grantham organized the event.

Funds were raised through ticket sales and a live auction hosted by Joe Orr. Auction items included Woodard's jewelry, a weeklong vacation at a Mexican resort, gift baskets, handmade quilts, and more.

The band Slice of American Pie provided music. Attendees brought blankets and lawn chairs to enjoy the evening with friends. Each ticket holder received a souvenir picnic bag, a boxed dinner, and a drink ticket. Additional drinks

could be purchased separately.

Proceeds benefited two local causes: the South Jackson Performing Arts Center and Horse Play, a therapeutic riding center for children with disabilities or needs. The donations allowed South Jackson's executive director, Greg Gressel, to offer drama camp scholarships this summer, while Horse Play's president, Ken MacKay, will provide riding scholarships and horse care supplies. The woman's club chose groups that support Tullahoma's children.

"Everyone in our club takes on some sort of responsibility that night," Donna Rhoton, president of the GFWC, said. "We exceeded our goal! Whatever we don't donate to the selected charities will go to other local nonprofits throughout the year."

The event was supported by generous sponsors, including diamond-level sponsor Weichert Realty; gold-level supporters Dement Construction, Barrett Construction, and Jack Daniel's; and numerous silver-level community businesses. Ole Shed and Liquor Locker provided the beer and wine. Make sure to catch this incredible event next year. GN



Tara Cates and Mary Holt



▲ Jim Jollife and Bob Fitzgerald



▲ Ben and Amanda Jollife



▲ Ian Nevills, Alyssa Moore, JR Moore, and Therese Moore



▲ Bertha Smith and Donna Rhoton



 ${\bf A}\;\;{\bf All}\;{\bf of}\;{\bf the}\;{\bf women}\;{\bf in}\;{\bf the}\;{\bf GFWC}\;{\bf Centennial}\;{\bf Woman's}\;{\bf Club}\;{\bf of}\;{\bf Tullahoma}$





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