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West Tennessee

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ON THE COVER - Left to Right: Derrick Spearman, JJdaBoss, from Discovery Channels hit television series, Memphis Street Outlaws, and Tianna Spearman.

DISCOVER

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JJdaBoss lining up cars on the start line



Celebrates Grand Opening with JJdaBoss

*elizabeth*KEYLON
DWT Contributor

There's not much on the outskirts of Gleason city limits. There are fields, houses, a little bit of asphalt, a wide-open sky, and a rumble that you can feel in your chest. Engines so loud that they beat like a pulse in the veins. Memories and tire tracks burned into the soul on weekend nights watching everyday heroes flying on the track.

A hero in his own right, Chris Northup brought those nights back to Weakley County on the Gleason racetrack. With the help of his father Sam, Uncle Rick, and cousin Samantha, he has paved the way for countless people far and wide to come make their own memories.

It's easy to assume that this track is just another racing opportunity to the family; it is anything but. Although he is only 26, Chris Northup has been racing since he was a teenager. To hear him talk about it, his childhood happened behind the wheel or beside the track. Following that love, he raced in various places from his hometown in Boise, Idaho, to Memphis, Tennessee, where he met various well-known racers like JJ daBoss from Memphis Street Outlaws after achieving his own renown and appearing on the Discovery Channel's television show, *Getaway Drivers*, in episode 2. It is easy to see that he is a talented bracket racer that has made his mark in the racing world, but this particular racer has sought a new challenge in the form of this new

family business.

For a family that bonded at the race-tracks, this has clearly been a labor of love, from finding it to the finish line on opening night. It has come a long way from when they originally found it. Originally known as "Tater Town" the Gleason Raceway Park was a popular hangout spot since it opened around 1992.

Chris Northup happened upon the property one random day a few years ago, and it became a running joke for the family as natives of Idaho that they would move from one "tater town" to another. As time went on, the joke developed into a plan that was recently realized. On Saturday, August 7, 2021, drivers crossed the finish line for the first time in a long time at the racetrack.

It was a huge success with people coming from across the country to watch and race. The races themselves continued on late into the night, with several people having brought campers and trailers for the sole purpose of seeing the entire event.

JJ daBoss and his Memphis Street Outlaw family packed the stands grand opening night. Dubbed, “JJ’s Arm Drop,” the crew faced off throughout the night after spending time with fans in the afternoon heat, signing autographs and visiting with locals.

Precious brought, “Ole Heavy,” a 1949 pickup custom built by DaBoss himself. Throughout the night, fans got to hear the engines of vehicles such as Heavy and Heifer (a 1966 Chevy Nova). Both are stars on Discovery’s Street Outlaws: Memphis television series.

This was the first of many races to come and one of the first of many victories off the track for the Northup family as they have plans to engage with the whole community and share the best parts of racing with Weakley County. This is heartwarming although Chris Northup has expressed a desire to keep his racing victories and his business triumphs as separate as possible by keeping his own wheels off the track during official races.

With so many people coming to visit, Chris has brought new life to Weakley County as those spectators have often come early and ended up shopping, sightseeing, and eating in the surrounding area. They have also brought money to local hotels and grocery stores as those that wish to see the whole event often stay overnight.

There are plans to slowly improve the raceway park, including the plan to maintain the asphalt on the property by slowly redoing it section by section. Their concessions stand is already doing very well with fan-favorite snacks, beers, and general drinks. There has been further discussion about hosting a diesel race in appreciation of the quality work done by Luke’s Diesel Repair, located on Highway 22 just outside of Dresden. In addition, there is talk in the distant future of having some smaller racetracks for go-karts and things of that nature on the property.

As of now, they are focusing primarily



JJDaBoss’s fleet of race cars Left to right: “Ziptie”, “Ol Heavy”, & “Heifer”.



“Ol Heavy” pulls the front tires during a run.



Chris Northup

on bracket racing. They do have plans to begin hosting events for younger drivers. This would include a Team Race in which younger racing fans can co-pilot from the passenger seat as their parent races a regular vehicle. They also have plans for a race in which drivers from each of the local high schools come out and see once

and for all who is the fastest.

It’s an ironic yet hopeful twist that, in a world rushing toward the next new thing, Chris and his family have managed to save a landmark like this for the next generation to grow up and discover the joy of taking a break and smelling the burnt rubber.

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THE GRIND blends nostalgic atmosphere with incredible treats

christian**ASHLAR**
DWT Contributor

Many people have turned their hobbies and passions into successful businesses. Walt Disney turned his love of all things fanciful into an empire. While not quite on the same global echelon, Mark, Alan, and Lisa Laderman have managed to turn their passion for delicious food and whimsical presentation into a name almost everyone in Western Tennessee recognizes. Whether or not you live in Martin, the location of the restaurant in question, you are almost sure to have heard of The Grind. Word of the place has spread well beyond the borders of Weakley County, to the point people in Atlanta, Georgia and Louisville, Kentucky are calling to let the owners know, they're coming.

The first thing visitors to The Grind notice is the front of the building. Against

the brown brick, a white circular background proclaims the name. To the right of the double doors, a tall milkshake throne, complete with "flaming" birthday candle lets you know, you're in for an experience. No one enters the restaurant without a welcome from one of the staff. Depending on the time of your visit and the availability of the wait staff, you may get more than one greeting, just walking inside.

After being shown to your table, you are greeted again, always with a smile and a genuine, "Welcome!" This sort of hospitality is an important staple of The Grind, harkening back to the greetings at any of Mr. Disney's theme parks. The reason why is quite simple. All of the Ladermans are fans of Disney and the influence is quite clear.

Owner, Mark Laderman, cites his

co-owner, Alan Laderman, as the source for the idea of The Grind. "Alan had this idea for this amazing, over-the-top food," Mark says. "The idea just got bigger and bigger, and in our minds, better and better."

Credited with the inside decor, Alan Laderman explains its eclectic style. "It came from, you know, pop culture and things I grew up with as a kid." Looking around at Pac Man, references to "The Goonies" movie, even "Die Hard," the movie, it's no surprise to hear Alan say, "Nostalgia is an awesome thing." In the case of The Grind, nostalgia provides an excellent atmosphere in which to enjoy delicious food.

Near the front door, a rack of T-shirts and hats proclaiming different messages about The Grind stands. The designs of these items also stand out, as they are

reminiscent of the same '80s and '90s entertainment as the décor. "Some of the stuff (on the walls and shirts) have hidden meanings," Alan says with a knowing smile. "There's a picture of a pinball machine. That's just a little nod to Dad and I being huge pinball fans." With the same smile, Mark adds, "If we had the room, there would definitely be some pinball machines in here."

The same joy the Ladermans express about pinball machines is evident in how they talk about their joint business venture. For them, The Grind is more than just a place to eat for the people of Weakley County, it's the realization of their combined dreams.

The menu for the restaurant came about from collaborations with one another, as well. From the menu, a guest to the restaurant can choose from a variety of burgers, hot wings, macaroni and cheese, or a fun combination of all of these things. Since 2017, The Grind has been offering up some fantastic food with imaginative ingredients and generous portion sizes. Some of those items even

have names reminiscent of movies, television, cartoons, and music of the '80s and '90s. Once again, Alan cites nostalgia as a key influence. "It harbors great emotions for a lot of people," Alan says. "I wanted to have all of these things that reminded me of being a kid. I wanted us to stand out, in that sense."

Everyone who has seen one of the "Farmer's Daughter," which is a burger topped with an egg, or a "Luther," a beef patty sandwiched between two doughnuts, come to their table will remember the experience. The menu even includes nachos, tacos and stuffed jalapenos for those who want something a little different. In this way, the Ladermans have achieved their goal of standing out.

Another very noticeable item on the menu is their milkshake. They are worth the two-hour, and farther drive, for some. For instance, the Strawberry Shortshake comes in a tall glass with ice cream, whipped cream, swirls of strawberry syrup, a piece of shortcake, and all the bright, fun colors you can imagine. It's very much like having magic in a glass

delivered to your table.

If strawberry is not your favorite, you could try the Chocolate Freak, the Mint Chocolate Sip, or even the S'more The Merrier.

The Grind is a very unique dining experience for those looking for one. "We're constantly thinking outside the box and how can we be different," Alan says. "We know we're not perfect so we're always trying to better ourselves. How can we do more?" From the second one walks through the front door, their experience with The Grind begins.

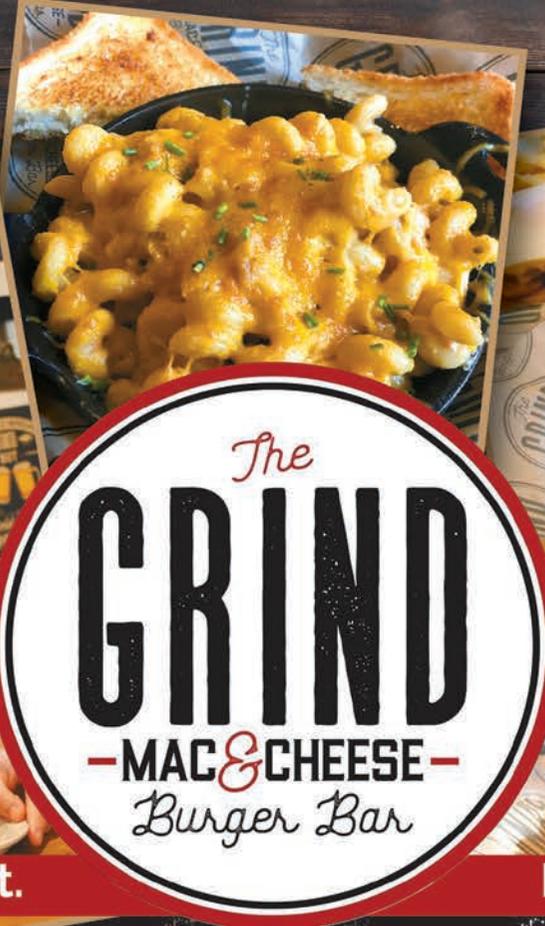
Mark Laderman says, of the hospitality, "We said, we're going to make the food the most amazing it can be. Let's do the same with the front of the house, let's make it as amazing as possible. I think the combination of the two shows people something they've never seen before."

If you would like to experience the combination of service, atmosphere, and amazing food at The Grind for yourself, go to 112 Lovelace St. in Martin, Tennessee.



One of the friendly servers at The Grind, with one of their delicious treats.





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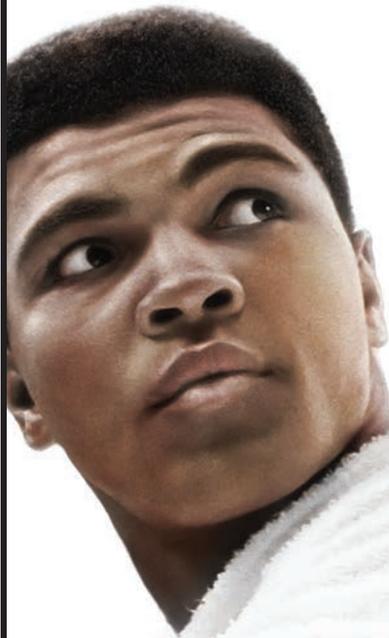
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Charity & Clint Riley; owners of Pecan Grove Bed & Breakfast

Bed and breakfast embodies family tradition, labor of love

IorcanMcCORMICK
DWT Contributor

Anniversaries, careers, homecomings, and new beginnings necessitate travel; yet what accompanies the mind when it thinks of travel is loneliness. We are often parked in hotels and motels, franchises virtually indistinguishable from each other have monopolized the market. A traveler is shepherded along with large volumes of people, strangers with blank faces, and boarded in unassuming but sterile rooms. They are typically offered a highly-processed meal of powdered eggs and sausages.

A woman lays down a plate of biscuits and gravy. The biscuits are from a recipe that has been passed down from generations within the family. She learns about the lodger; her warm manner and affable mien immediately sets an easy tone.

Charity Riley, like her mother-in-law before her, likes people and likes talking with them. To their west is a courtyard square with a regal charm; the boarding rooms are styled after New Orleans's French Quarter. To their east is the bucolic cabins, each individually stylized; a personal favorite was the cabin in the style of a train station.

A man walks in from where he's

working on a stone pathway criss-crossing the courtyard. He wears a straw hat laced with a feather and bares a sly grin. Clint Riley is a large figure, in both stature and personality. In one interaction he cooks a hearty breakfast, banter with his wife, speaks about his family history, and prowls with his salt gun for flies. Just as Charity's warmth is unforced, Clint's country charisma comes completely naturally, and the pair create a small atmosphere all its own by concomitant of it.

Pecan Grove Bed and Breakfast began as Our Backyard Town, the labor of love born from Mike and Cathy Barnett. The first of what became seven distinct cabins was the Davey Crockett Log Cabin, built in 1998 from logs whose age trace as old as 300 years. It is from the eclectic tastes of Mike that the cabins grew character, and it is from Cathy, Clint's mother, that the bed and breakfast developed a strong heart.

Mike is descended from the Pucketts, owners of Puckett Lumber. It was L.E. Puckett, who at one time owned land that starts at Pecan Grove and extends through to Hyndsver Road; the suburbs of Martin was once the private foliage of the Puckett family. Mike wed Cathy when Clint was 15; Clint self describes himself as Cinderella. Throughout high

school and into college, Clint worked for Mike, and his path to manhood was guided strongly by the work and familial love Mike offered.

Clint Riley is a potter by trade; a portrait by Jason Stout, a stylized rendering of Clint in a cubist reminiscent style, hangs in the Riley's home. He served as a lecturer at his alma mater of UT Martin for a time, and owned his own shop for several years. Behind his muscular country charm, there's an artistic gentleness that pervades. He drew the Martin homage mural just across from Brundige Insurance that Les MacDiarmid painted. MacDiarmid and he collaborated also for the Six Toes Studio mural. Six Toes, Clint's property, is named in honor of his son who was born with six toes.

Clint's artistic side also touched the playground at the Historic Downtown Martin end of the Brian Brown Memorial Greenway. The Soundscape at its center was designed by him. The project was only an idea in its beginning stages. Although designs were drafted and some money raised, the project was abandoned before Clint took on the project. With the help of the City of Martin, was endowed an art grant of \$100,000. In collaboration with Bill Zarecor, an iron works welder and owner of Vintage Iron Works of

Martin, who is also responsible for La Cabana's distinctive railing, the Soundscape was created. Now, visitors can enjoy art and make their own music with the creation of sculptured instruments that are tuned to hum during interaction.

For 12 years, Our Backyard Town offered comfort to travelers under the stewardship of Mike and Cathy. Two days after Thanksgiving of 2010, Mike Barnett passed away. Clint was confronted with a choice. It would take dedication and time; most other pursuits would take a backseat. Driven by love and sentimentality, the Rileys took over Our Backyard Town. Charity brought it into the modern world with an online presence that before had been absent. Clint worked on upkeep and expansion. Cathy remained as a friendly face and loving component to the atmosphere. Our Backyard Town evolved into Pecan Grove Bed and Breakfast, and the rest, as they so often say, is history.

Pecan Grove is not stale history however, but very much an alive place. It has served as lodging to many lovely and intriguing characters; people from around the world have stayed for events, such as the UTM equestrian meets and sundry college-related activities. Bouncers from the local bars have taken up for a time in the cabins. Meals are served through the day - authentic country food with fresh ingredients.

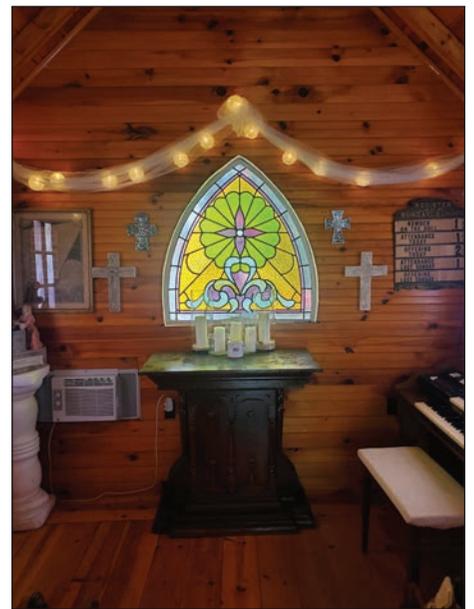
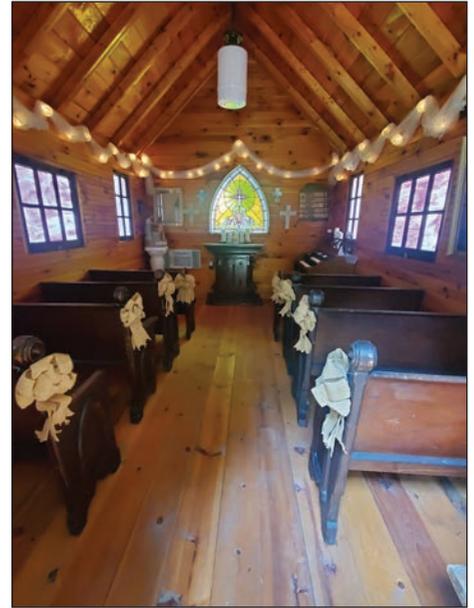
The community, the little unique ones that were birthed inside Pecan Grove and disbanded, and the greater one of Martin itself, both give to the Rileys. Many kept in touch and tried to help during

the events of 2020. Every year Charity's Chocolates, a little passion project of Charity's, sells and sells out; a testament to the community's relationship to them as well as the high quality of the chocolates. Charity herself says, if anything is to come across, "we are grateful for our customers and supporters."

The Rileys, in turn, give back to the community. An annual Heroes Dinner is served for local first responders: police, firemen, and EMS, typically as part of the annual Tennessee Soybean Festival event. The house, held in the west courtyard of Pecan Grove, is a charming little building with a '50s-styled facade and a shifty occupancy maximum of about a 100 people. The event's check is cut always by the same generous donor, and Clint himself caters for it.

I have been fortunate, or perhaps, if to be unnecessarily frank, unfortunate to travel a great deal in my life. You'd be surprised how bland LA's Griffith Observatory, or the cosplaying hilarity of Hollywood Boulevard, can feel. I remember every place I've been, but like many modern travelers, I have indistinct memories associated with them. For those traveling, be it from East Tennessee to West, or from the sands of South Carolina's beaches, or from the shores of New Zealand, I can safely assure you that you will find warm and distinct memories at Pecan Grove Bed and Breakfast.

Not to mention delightful eggs and biscuits.





Dresden's CBR Offers Farm-to-Table Options

christianASHLAR
DWT Contributor

If one happens to be driving through Dresden, Tennessee, with a craving for very good barbecue, keep your eyes open for the CBR restaurant. The Chopping Block Ranch (CBR) began as a deli, specializing in farm-to-table beef. Located on the court square in September of 2020, the CBR soon outgrew the location and moved to 219 Pikeview St. in Dresden in February of 2021. In doing so, they partnered with the Weakley County Schools Livestock Production Farm to continue their tradition of farm-to-table products.

For those unfamiliar with what farm-to-table consists of, it is a program in which the Dresden School Agriculture Department raises its own farm beef and hogs. They do this for the purposes of supplying local businesses with meat and, in some cases, vegetables. Even though the location is in Dresden, the school supplies for almost all of Weakley County.

Steve Pecktol, owner and operator of CBR says, of the enterprise, "I went out

there a few weeks ago and it's pretty impressive." Because of the school's program, CBR is able to offer a farm-fresh burger to its customers. "I looked at that as an opportunity to help the local kids (students at the school) out. I like to support the school. This way, we can work together and support each other."

Pecktol is very proud of the wide variety of food his restaurant offers. In addition to the above-mentioned items, you can also get chicken strips, a fresh salad from the salad bar, and a variety of sandwiches. They range from ribeye steak sandwiches to some of the best barbecue sandwiches in all of Weakley County.

CBR offers some of the best fish, burgers and barbecue. Friday and Saturday nights you can stop in and enjoy some of the most delicious steaks. "We marinate our own steaks," Pecktol says with no small amount of pride. The sauce is made in-house by Pecktol himself. Guarded about the ingredients, he did let a few of them slip but, in order to experience the full flavor, you will have to visit CBR for yourself. "It's different, but I think it's a good draw."

General manager of CBR, Alicia Swatzell, also has high praise for the restaurant and what it has to offer. Starting work in the deli location, Swatzell moved with the restaurant in February. "I actually started before the deli was open," she says, citing work with some areas of construction and organization. "I started as manager on the first of September."

Swatzell also serves as cook, preparing the majority of the restaurant's lunch specials. These include a wide selection of plate lunches, which can be found on CBR's Facebook page. In addition to Swatzell, CBR employs other cooks to provide their customers with the some of the best food in the county. For those in a hurry, CBR also has a drive-through window. "We don't plan on getting rid of that," Swatzell says with a laugh. "We want to keep that!"

When asked what makes CBR stand out from other restaurants in Weakley County, the staff cites the family-oriented atmosphere. Having the open salad bar is another draw. Fresh lettuce, shredded cheddar cheese, baby tomatoes, cucumber slices, and a choice of dressings are

among the items on the bar. CBR also has an open drink station, which provides unlimited refills for their customers. This makes for Meatloaf Monday, Poppy-Seed Chicken Tuesday, and Wing-It Wednesdays, where CBR features a different dish from its usual fare. It could include lasagna, spaghetti, or thin-sliced pork chop plates.

Another draw of CBR is the wait staff. "Almost everyone in Dresden will know them," Swatzell says of the staff. "So, a lot of times, they'll call you by your name." This kind of familiarity is what makes CBR feel more like you're sitting down in your own dining room than a restaurant.

Of course, whenever strangers come in, they're treated with the same hospitality. "We had a family come in yesterday from California," Swatzell recalls. "Within fifteen minutes of them sitting down, we got to know them. They were very excited that people talked to them. They're the second family from California, we've had in here."

From as far away as California and Michigan, customers always remark on the hospitality and, of course, the amazing food. Many say they'll be back the next time they find themselves in the area. Some of them even leave CBR with five or six pounds of their barbecue to share with family back home. This is a testament to the quality of the food available.

If you're still unsure about whether or not to stop into CBR, take a look at their pages on social media. There, you can get your questions answered about location, hours of operation, and even the day's special menu. To a limited degree, CBR offers delivery around the area. You can get more details on all of these things by sending a private message.

Also available at CBR is a delicious array of desserts to choose from. "I'm not there, yet," Pecktol says of his dessert selection. "But I'm looking at putting in a bakery." This will expand their choices from chocolate cake, apple pie and others, to an even wider selection.

If you find yourself in Dresden during the hours of 11-7 Monday through Thursday and 11-8 on Friday, and 3-8 on Saturday, do yourself a favor and stop by the Chopping Block Ranch (CBR) and have a fantastic meal. You won't regret it.



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Providing Food for the Body

*jasmine***WILLIAMS**
DWT Contributor

Bell Family Farms of Gleason, Tennessee, is a local produce farm that grows different crops which are shipped to stores and restaurants across West Tennessee. Family-owned and operated, Bell Farms has two locations totaling more than 65 acres, dedicated to Southern delicacies such as: summer squash, zucchini, watermelon, cabbage, cantaloupes, pumpkin, strawberries, bell peppers and okra.

Their produce is all grown in Weakley County, picked at the peak of freshness, washed and stored to ensure that all is of the highest quality. These products are then sold at local businesses and restaurants around Weakley County, but also at locations in Memphis, Dyersburg, Henderson and Jackson. They also are sold in almost every E.W. James grocery store in the area. The family is currently working on having their products sold at Walmart locations in the region in the

coming years.

The family consists of mom Beverly, father Floyd, and son Darrell Bell. Beverly and Floyd Bell began row cropping in 2000, planting on a couple of acres in Weakley County, but as the years went by, they began to increase the land they grew on.

It was then they grew grain crops such as wheat, corn, and soybeans, which would then be sold to grain elevators such as Spain Brothers in Gleason. But in 2015, son Darrell Bell became interested in growing produce that people in the surrounding area could buy and have locally-grown food. This led to the family combining forces to begin growing various fruits and vegetables.

They use drip-line irrigation to water their crops. Drip-line irrigation consists of numerous waterlines and hoses around the farm being placed under plastic bags where crops are planted. The plastic keeps the soil moist for the plants.

Recently in 2020, the farm became

an LLC company, meaning they have a limited liability company, and not a row-crop farm.

The family prides in washing all of their produce after it's picked so that customers can see the freshness of their products. Floyd Bell noted that cantaloupes are the only produce that is not washed due to the skin wanting to absorb the water and it can ruin the texture of the cantaloupe. They also have a large cooler to increase the life of their products.

For produce that is misshapen or too small, the family donates the food to local shelters, including the women's shelter in Dresden. They also donate produce such as watermelons, to their local farm workers so they have a refreshing snack while working. Some are also sold at a lower price for customers who come to the farm wanting a smaller supply of produce. Through a recent partnership, Bell Farms offers the county school system fresh produce for the students.

They also use honeybees they keep



and Soul

themselves.

“They play a big part in pollinating the plants,” Floyd Bell noted. They keep bees to ensure that their crops are fully pollinated and will grow as large as they can be. Ordinarily, bees have to pollinate a crop six or seven times before they are fully pollinated. If they are not pollinated, the crops are smaller or strangely-shaped.

They do not do honey production; they maintain the bees so they can pollinate their fields as needed.

The family works to ensure they have good equipment for them and their currently six workers to use while planting and harvesting.

They also welcome visitors to come to the farm to buy produce straight from the farmers themselves. Those interested in purchasing produce from Bell Family Farms can call or text the farm at 731-514-0851.





CARL JONES - A FOOD CARVER

lisaADKINS
DWT Contributor

Who is Carl Jones?

Carl got into the food business after college, when he came to Jackson to run his father's steak restaurants. He learned the business. "I fell in love with the food business, the restaurant, and a waitress." He and Angel have been married for 39 years. The Western Sizzlin was part of his life that he really enjoyed and was proud during those days because he prided himself on excellent food. He was overjoyed when people bragged on the food. "Then things changed with Jackson and the highway construction which hurt our business. After that, we had to close the store and I started reflecting on my life."

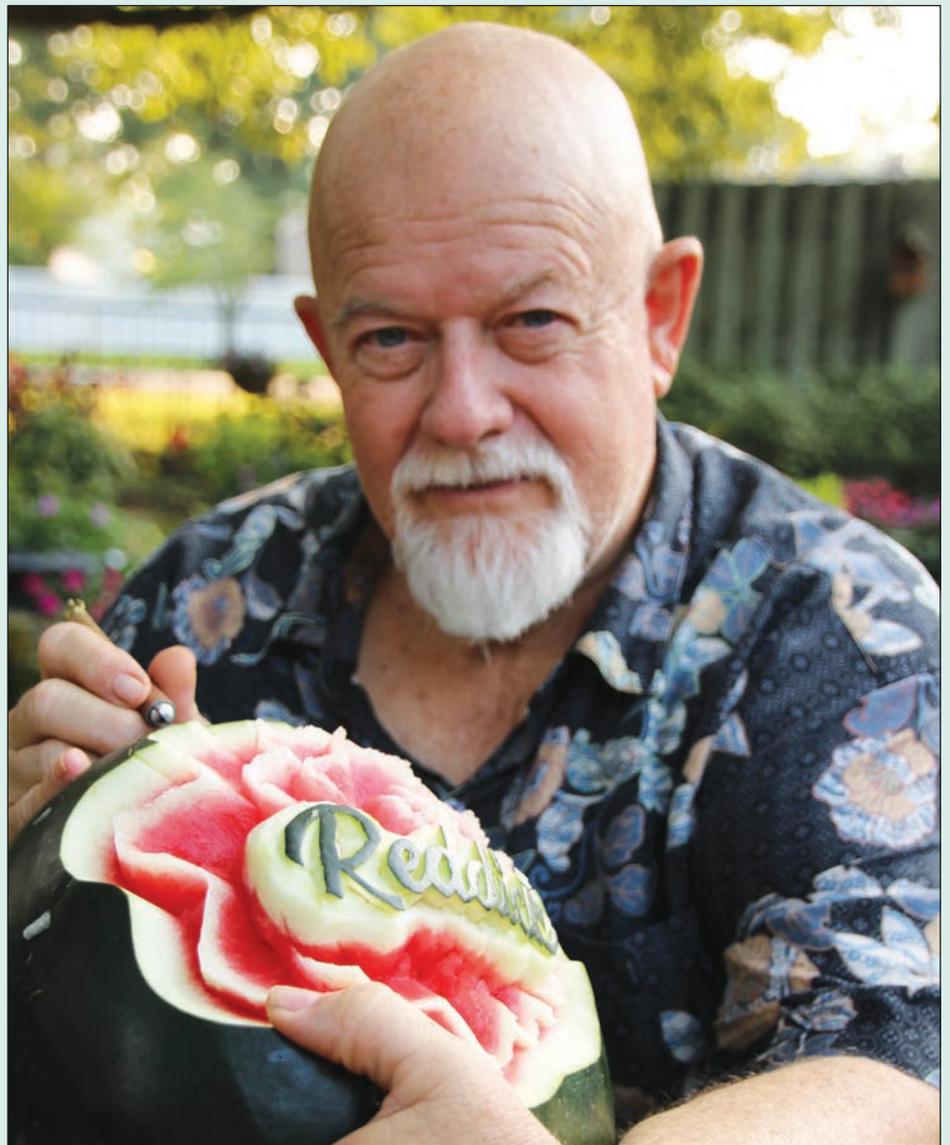
Carl's life takes a turn at this point and he realized he really enjoyed the catering business and events. That allowed him to do things he could not do with the family steak house business. "I always had a knack for creating recipes and unique flavors since I was a kid." His mother, being a good cook, helped him to be the chef and man he is today. "I love my mother's meat sauce. It was not your traditional sauce, it was a lot of meat and that was the first thing I ever cooked for my wife while we were dating. He is an avid herb and vegetable gardener and started when he was 13 years old. He grew and loves herbs. He went on to share "When you have all these herbs, what do you do with them? I wanted to find out. Back in the 70's there was limited resources with books, but I found gardening books to enable me to grow and use herbs. I also started experimenting with my mother's food. Today I can figure out what is in almost any recipe. It's a fun challenge. I'll be at someone's party, and someone will say, they have a secret ingredient in their dish. I'll say, hey give me a let have a try of that and love it when it hits my tongue and my taste buds start working.

Sometimes I figure it out in the first bite and someone's I figure it out at the end. I love this and I almost always get it correct."

Catering is very important to Carl and he does not care if a banquet full of people, he serves the meal to the guest just like it would at his home. "How do you prepare 1,500 chicken breast, grill them, prepare them, and make sure they are hot? That's the secret. They cannot be overcooked or uncooked. There is a

way to test to make sure it was the best it could be.

Transitioning to the fruit carving business was a big move for Carl. Carving strictly came from him facing health issues that were becoming rather serious. High blood pressure, anxiety, and stress hit him and it does to so many people. Especially when you have so many tragic things happen to you in a short period of time. Losing the restaurant he said was difficult but he felt he was making





lemonade out of that and turning it into Premier Place. It's a catering and event venue. "Shortly after that, my mother got cancer and it was devastating because it took the entire side of her left face. Her final three weeks were super traumatic and shortly after that my dad had a heart attack. The tornado that hit south Jackson hit my business, Premier Place, and my office building in downtown Jackson. At this point I had to close the south Western Sizzlin." He realized his blood pressure was spiking in the afternoons and he finally went to a doctor and the doctor suggested he get a hobby. In 2005 "I was at my office reflecting on what the doctor said, and I reached in my desk, and I found a card like thing. In the card was a fruit carving knife. I had gotten it at a catering convention. I went to the kitchen cooler and got a cantaloupe and tried to carve it into a flower. Honestly this is where I learned my first technique. I had to put my finger on the blade to gauge the depth, but then it fell apart because when you are carving, you are doing the opposite of drawing. I carve parts of the fruit to leave what I want to appear. I take away and carve out so I can actually make my images pop out."

Carl started going to Starbucks every afternoon Monday – Sunday. One of the things he shared when he does something, he does it to death. "I could not, not carve. I had to carve, and I had to do it every day. After a few years, I decided I got pretty good at it and I realized I was

getting better. I could use my pieces on buffets and at events.

He started teaching at catering conferences and I eventually did Ivanka Trump's wedding." It all started with catering conferences where I met a caterer from New Jersey. He was a kosher caterer and he had a deli and it was called Noah's. His name was Noham and we became friends.' Noham invited Carl to his catering business named Rave' Catering around July to prepare for a wedding in October. "He said it's for Ivanka Trump and I said Donald Trump's daughter? Do you want me to carve for her?" He said no, he needed me for the planning and execution of the event. I went in September to the early planning meetings. The day of the wedding, I was checking in people. There was about 120 staff members for 500 guests for the wedding. Preston Bailey, a well-known florist, sent someone to get me. Preston shared there was a big empty bowl at a fruit display at the top of the table and Preston did not have a piece for it. They told me maybe I could get some fruit from the kitchen and do something. I had three pre-carved pieces of fruit in my suitcase and I was grabbing grapes, papaya's and anything I could put my hands on. I had three hours to get it all done. I needed three days but I did it and it was fun.

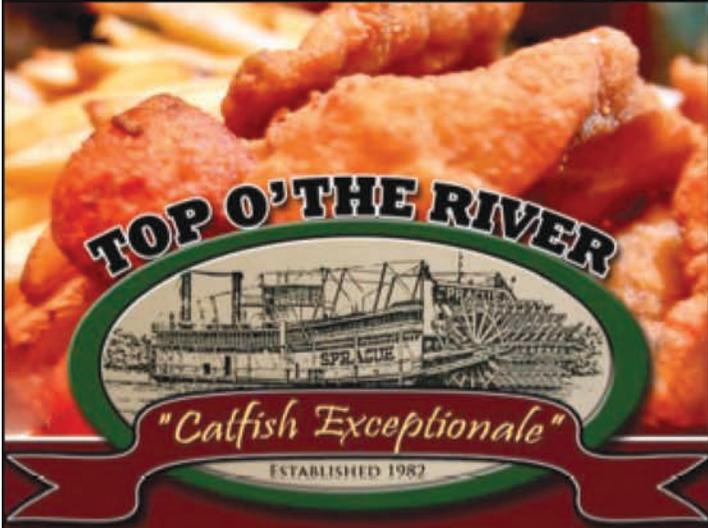
Catering and consulting became a big part of Carl's life. Denver, Miami, Las Vegas are a few places where his journey has led him in the catering business. "I

love teaching people and sharing what I know with other people." Currently he does a lot of one on one work with caterers and restaurant owners who need advice. He recently developed a sauce and vinegar cold slaw for a local restaurant. "I really enjoy when a restaurant owner or chef ask me to help them make something better." thefruitcarver.com is where you can find everything you need about Carl Jones and there is a link there to Premier Place for venues and event information. The Premier Place has ample parking and offers a safe atmosphere for you wedding or event. They are proud of the stage and dance floor there. He goes to festivals and conferences and carves live. So he goes with some fruit already carved at these festivals and conferences and then he carves live in front of people. He teaches them how to start. He has done workshop and classes and even a team building exercise for a company in New Jersey. He is also doing classes where he goes into hotels and teaches a few of their staff members how to garnish and carve. This help them to learn how to do displays for their facility.

"Wisdom...Just when you think you have got it, God finds a way to show you...you don't. Don't allow someone to call you wise. We have such a responsibility and so when I am mentoring others, I always try to remember that people have helped me. I still believe in using mentors."



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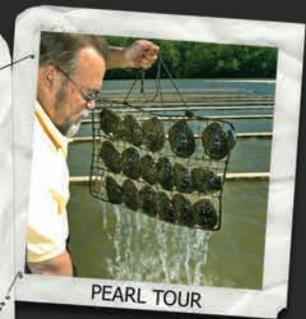
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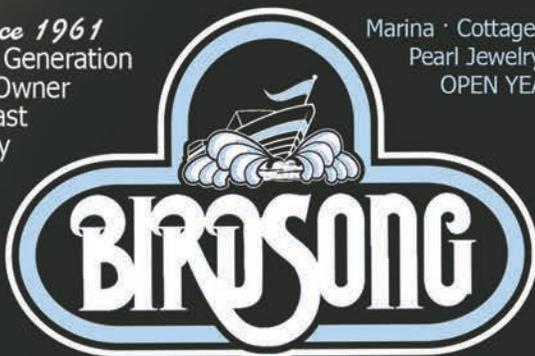


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Jacob Barker Music Festival 2021

2016 was the first Jacob Barker Music Festival and it was off the charts. Talk about something taking off on their first festival, this was it. Jackson, surrounding communities, bands, and artist have embraced this festival from day one.

Jacob Barker had retinoblastoma in his left eye. He was only 2 years old when he was diagnosed. Jacob was cured but his parents, Melissa and Ronnie Barker shared that Make a Wish touched their lives and hearts when Jacob was going through his cancer and they decided they wanted to do something to give back to families that go through what they did.

They came up with the idea they wanted to do the Jacob Barker Music Festival. They shared that families really struggle during cancer periods of time and they wanted to be able each year with monies raised from this event to help a child and their family with the Make a Wish group.

This is the 5th year and all bands and the team volunteer to this great cause. Friday, October 9th is the kick off and there is music, food, face painting, bouncy houses and fun both days. Saturday, October 9th, is Family Day.

They are also having a Silent Auction this year. Be sure and check out their Facebook page for all updates and information at Jacob Barker Music Festival.

They are thankful for their sponsors and all the volunteers who actually make this event happen. Get your blankets, outdoor chairs, and head to the Jackson AMP for two days packed with lots of great music and fun for your whole family. While you will be making the difference in the life of a family and child. Also they will be taking up donations that day, so feel free to bring some cash if you would like to make a donation. See you there!



Bottom right-clockwise: Jacob, his sister, Baylee, father, Ronnie and mother, Melissa.

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Getting to Know:
Jim Wilhelm

Winner of Chip's Ahoy National Talent Contest

lisaADKINS
DWT Contributor

How did you find out about the Chip's Ahoy Talent Contest?

"I had just left my employment feeling like God was gently nudging me out of that profession. I had spent a lot of time praying and seeking God's direction. So when you make a big decision to quit your job, the next thing people ask is what now? I spent a lot of hours at night scrolling like everyone does on social media. A post popped up that said "Show your talent for Chips Ahoy." So I thought this is interesting, and I wanted to know what it was about. It was a week before entries could stop being submitted. I thought to myself, why not enter? Within 24 hours, I submitted my video. A friend of mine would call that a God wink."

Tell us about the winning video you submitted.

"I have been experimenting with what my voice could do for years. I started out as an actor, performing in many plays during my time at Union University and then later working with a few theater companies in the mission field. I developed my natural talent for improvisation and vocal impression over the years, but found it difficult to find opportunities to use them when I moved back to West Tennessee; but I still kept honing my skills. One time, when I was sharing house space with a few others, a roommate knocked on my door and asked how many people I had back in the room with me. When I told him it was just me, he told me that he heard several distinct voices. I took that as confirmation that I was getting good."

I realized that if I listened to a voice long enough I will be able to mimic it and then master it. I am kind of like a southern Michael Winslow, and if he and I ever could get together for a show, I think that would sell. It took me nine hours total to prepare my video that I submitted. I feel it's important to have the funny stuff to go with the voices, so I wrote out a script and made sure it was funny

just by itself. Then I picked a voice for each character, and that was my foundation. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Elmo are my favorites from the video because of the abrupt change in high to low pitch."

How does the process work for the contest?

"It was multi-faceted. The sponsors are America's Got Talent, Walmart, and Chips Ahoy Cookies. First, there were 30 finalists chosen to be voted on by: friends, family, co-workers, etc. Votes could be cast up to five times a day every day from the voting start date to the voting end date. I asked friends, family, co-workers, and so many others I knew and/or used to work with to help me get as many votes as

possible. Then, after a bit more time, they announced the final winner."

Wow getting the message you won \$50,000 would have been incredible!

Tell us how you found out this winning news.

"That is a very interesting story because I had been at David Burke's house helping him shoot a video of him creating some art for his Facebook page and I said "Man it's hot and I am going to go home." So I told David I would come back tomorrow to finish the last part. I felt something inside telling me that, after a brief break, that I should go back today to finish up. So, I just "happened" to be at his house when the email popped up which said (paraphrased) "We



need you to send us this notarized affidavit release by this date before we can officially announce you as winner." David even wanted to look at the email, and he too thought it all was legit. Both of us were shaking a bit, but overjoyed as well.

That was another "God wink;" hearing the voice telling me to back to my friend's place to finish the video. It placed me right where I needed to be to have someone not only at my side, but also someone who knew where how to find a notary public to get the paperwork faxed within hours, by someone he knew at the university where we worked before retiring.

We were both shaking as I processed all this information. God definitely had His hand at work in the situation. It felt like He was clicking everything into place; and kind of like a dream because I have had my full share of close calls where I felt "this or that" was going to be my breakthrough at various times in the past, and it ended up not working out. I've been overweight most of my life, which makes it very difficult to find work or breakthrough in the entertainment field. What really cemented it home for me, and rekindled the hope in my heart, was when I looked on the contest web page and it said "JW winner Jackson, Tennessee." It reminded me of a quote from an old performer friend, "Don't quit five minutes before the miracle."

What is the next step?

"Along with the prize money, I was awarded a "front of the line," audition for "America's Got Talent." They will be contacting me in the near future with more specifics. What I love about "America's Got Talent," is that even if you're on it for just a short time, you still get tremendous exposure. Someone just might see you, from anywhere across the globe, like what they see, and offer you their own tremendous opportunity."

He will soon be making an artist page, which can be followed for updates. "I think people love back stories. People love to see where the people they like came from. I hope to give them a lot to laugh and get hope from in the near future."

I know there are many people who have mentored or impacted your life. Who would you like to share with the readers about?

"David Burke is one of my greatest mentors. When I got accepted into Union in 1990, I was not sure what I was going to do. I knew I had a love for creativity. I started off in music and then realized I have no patience for the science of music and it was boring. It was another God wink for me. I saw an audition for "Oedipus

the King", and I heard a voice in my head that said "Do that." The voice was so powerful that I looked around, because I thought there was physically someone behind me talking to me.

Working on that play was where I met David and got involved with the theater. David Burke shared, "I remember Jim's first role in the play "Oedipus," one of the great classic plays of all time. So, here he comes in, this short guy with a trench coat on. I thought any moment he is going to do something and not sure what. I liked his audition, but we really did not have a role for him. There is a blind prophet, Theses, that is in the play, and he has a very important role in a lot of Greek plays. I decided he needed someone to guide him around since he was blind. So we cast Jim as Theses' boy." [Jim] The reason I auditioned with a trench coat on, is that I loved radio dramas from the 1930's, especially The Shadow."

Jim's thoughts...

"If I had to say anything to anybody, it would be if you believe God has truly blessed you with talents and gifts... use them. If people feel God has given them a purpose and talents to do something, never give up on that. Remember Moses stuttered, and it took a while to bring him back because he ran from Egypt. He thought he would be punished for murder. We have Gideon, who was terrified because did not know if he was doing the right thing, and he doubted some of his decisions. Jonah ran from his purpose so don't give up on yourself. You

may not know where God is going to plug you in, but never give up on your purpose you feel God has for you."

Funny ending story from Jim

"Many years ago, on tour with the Christian theater company, "The Covenant Players," my team broke our car belt near a small Texas town named, "Vega,"...with less than 1,000 population. The town was almost 20 miles away and we had a show the next day. My team and I racked our brains trying to come up with a solution...none of us had cell phones. Then, I recalled an old episode of the 80's TV show, "The A-Team," in which, Murdock, borrowed a pair of pantyhose from the girl he was with to fashion into a make shift belt to get the car running. I thought, "Why not?," and asked to borrow a pair from a girl that was part of our team. With a concerned look for my sanity, she did. And it worked! However, we could only drive 10 miles per hour or less to prevent the van from overheating. Took us 3+ hours to arrive at Vega, in which we never passed another vehicle, where the "only" mechanic for miles found the story hilarious. While we were there, we were able to book a show for the future, and made some new

friends. We learned that God can bless even in the midst of suffering and setback. And shows like "The A-Team," and "MacGyver," are blessings themselves if "Triple A," is not an option."

Follow Jim on Facebook



8 Tips to Help You Snack Smarter



Amiee Stooksberry, NP

To help you avoid piling on the pounds in the last weeks of the summer and feeling less than your best, Amiee Stooksberry, primary care nurse practitioner with West Tennessee Medical Group, wants to share some tips for how to snack smarter. Read on to learn more.

Snacking can be good for you

While we often think of snacking as innately unhealthy, it doesn't have to be. In fact, for those who are trying to lose weight or achieve fitness goals, snacking is normally part of a healthy eating strategy.

But while a snack or two during the day can help you stay energized, it's important to be strategic about what you're eating. Try these tips:

Put down that drink While that jolt of afternoon caffeine may be appealing, a less-sugary beverage will do your body some good. Have your coffee, but without added sweeteners or creamy mix-ins, or choose water, unsweetened tea or low-fat milk instead.

Carefully read labels Granola bars are often considered a good snack, but they are often filled to the brim with sugar, fat and calories. To ensure that your "healthy" food item is actually healthy, do a careful review of the package label, looking both at the nutrition facts and at the ingredients.

Try something with a crunch How satisfying is it to sink your teeth into a food that gives off a crunching sound?! The good news is: In a lot of instances, those crunchy foods are also healthy. Snack smarter with an apple or pear, bell pepper slices, roasted chickpeas, plain popcorn, nuts or whole-grain crackers.

Prepare your snacks ahead of time When you feel like you're starving, you're going to reach for whatever's handy. That's why you need to think ahead and make healthy options more convenient, too! Keep fresh fruits and veggies cut up and ready to go, put together baggies of popcorn, or portion out servings of crackers or nuts.



Pack a punch with some nuts We mentioned nuts as a crunchy option, but they offer so much more than that! Nuts are packed with heart-healthy fats, and they're also known to help keep you fuller for longer.

Combine foods for extra energy Instead of eating just a carb or just a protein, snack smarter by pairing together a healthy carb (like whole-grain bread) with lean protein and a small amount of healthy fat (like peanut butter).

Snack before a big meal Put together a small, well-balanced snack (as outlined above) to keep you going until it's time to eat. Otherwise, you're much more likely to overindulge unnecessarily.

Don't deprive yourself While these tips can help you snack smarter, never eating things you love isn't likely and it really isn't advised. Allow yourself to splurge occasionally on foods you enjoy, especially holiday favorites. Choose small portions and savor them, then move on.

Already resolving to be healthier this fall? A checkup with your provider is a good first step. Visit WTMGmore.com to find a provider.



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32nd Year for the Sunset Symphony at historic Cherry Mansion in Savannah

After being cancelled last year due to the COVID-pandemic, the 32-year tradition continues this September 4 on the lawn of historic Cherry Mansion overlooking the Tennessee River in Savannah as the Savannah Arts Commission hosts the Germantown Symphony Orchestra.

The concert will begin at 5:30 p.m. with selections of classical and popular showtunes for this family friendly event.

Open to the public, this free performance is made possible through the efforts of Savannah Arts Commission, the City of Savannah and with the generous donations of local businesses and individuals supporting the arts.

Attendees should bring lawn chairs or blankets and gather on the lawn of the mansion near the platform stage. In case of inclement weather, the concert will move indoors at the HCHS auditorium on Pickwick Road.

Donations are still being accepted at SAC, PO Box 1465, Savannah, TN 38372. To learn about patron benefits, contact SAC at 925-8181.

The Germantown Symphony Orchestra (GSO), under the direction of Dr. Ronald Vernon, is committed to providing excellent concert experiences for its audiences and members, promoting young artists, and serving the community. The GSO is a volunteer, self-governing, and community-based orchestra. We value outstanding cultural opportunities for the citizens of Germantown and for those in surrounding communities.

The GSO is the only orchestra of its kind in the Mid-South and is one of the top community orchestras in the United States. The GSO now boasts a membership of over 80 musicians - a diverse group including students, teachers, professional musicians, professionals in other fields, and retirees - all who share their love of fine music and arts advocacy.

The Germantown Symphony Orchestra is funded in part by a generous grant from The Germantown Performing Arts Center (GPAC) Arts Education Fund.



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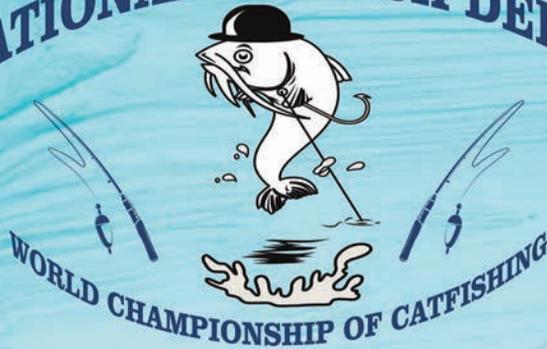


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Tennessee River BBQ Battle & Music Fest

TN River BBQ Battle & Music Fest returns to Savannah September 24-25

On September 24th & 25th, Southwest Tennessee Tourism will transform the sprawling lawn of Green Acres RV Resort located in Hardin County, Tennessee into the TN River BBQ Battle & Music Fest, a two-day celebration of great music, great food, and family fun. Beginning on Friday afternoon, visitors can enjoy live music by some of the best bands that have been rising in popularity at festivals across the area. Along with being a

KCBS sanctioned BBQ competition, the TN River BBQ Battle and Music Fest is also a state championship BBQ contest. Over \$12,000 is up for grabs in a battle for Grand Champion! The TN River BBQ Battle is also a Jack Daniels' World Championship and American Royal Invitational Qualifier as well! Come enjoy two days of great music and the heavenly smells of some of the best BBQ in the country.

Admission to the grounds is FREE! Proceeds from the TN River BBQ Battle and Music Fest will benefit several local non-profits.

For more information contact Southwest Tennessee Tourism at 731-616-7474 or Hardin County CVB at 731-925-8181. Find more info at www.tnriverbbqbattle.com or follow us on Facebook at [tnriverbbqbattle](https://www.facebook.com/tnriverbbqbattle).



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Dining in Obion County

For a small regional area, Obion County in fact has a diverse range of culinary tastes to suit even the most picky eater. Whether you are after the all American bar and grill for a mouth watering steak,

Italian fine dining, flavor overloaded Mexican dishes, or the freshly prepared selections of the orient, we have you covered. Perhaps you want a good home cooked style meal, just the way your mom made it. Not

a problem! In fact, you will find that Obion County takes pride in their southern style cooking and will discover locally owned restaurants boasting such menu choices.



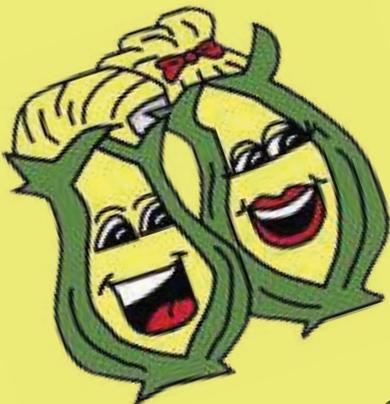


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West Tennessean Sandy Adams turns her passion into thriving business

lisaADKINS
DWT Contributor

Sandy Adams, a photographer and brand strategist, is excited to be back in her native West Tennessee after spending the last 16 years in Houston. Sandy credits her McKenzie upbringing and later living in Memphis, during college and

graduate school, as the foundations of the creative life she now enjoys. When asked what motivated the move back to Tennessee she said simply, “I missed the south, the culture and most importantly all my family and friends here.”

When asked to describe what she now does professionally, she explained, “I help people tell their stories, regardless if the

person is an individual or a small business. In the end, it is all about the stories and bringing those stories to life through photography or through social media strategies for their brands.” Sandy has worked in various industries and in all phases of business, and has learned what stories and brand strategies work the best.

It was her upbringing in McKenzie,

with a mom who loved to travel and always had a camera in her hand, that prompted Sandy to notice there are unlimited stories to tell if people would only take the time to look and listen. Her travels have taken her all over the United States, Mexico, The Philippine Islands, and even Europe (where she did her student teaching), but it's Tennessee that she calls home and her favorite place.

When asked what lead her into photography, she said it was traveling to historical places and thinking, "How could I teach others about history with one single photograph". Her photography started with an instant 35 mm camera, but it wasn't until her return from Europe in 1998, when her photography became more than a thought. She admitted, that in the beginning she shot a lot of photographs of old cemetery tombstones, then spent time at the Memphis Zoo where the gorillas were more than willing to sit silently while she photographed them. She laughed and explained, "People get really nervous and antsy when you have a camera on them, it was less stressful for me to learn how to photograph living things with a gorilla

or orangutan who didn't really care." She transitioned into people photography in 2000 and readily admits. "Vogue and Vanity Fair magazines... That is where I took my portrait style from, and I always look for ways to show someone how I see them through my camera lens."

Giving back to the community is a big part of who Sandy is. She has been a volunteer with the American Heart Association for 21 years now! It was her mom's 20 year battle with heart disease that led her to volunteer. Sadly, her mom passed away in Oct. 2016 and is still the reason she does so much with AHA. Sandy added, "I have seen firsthand how advances in medical technology truly gave my mom a good quality of life for 20 years". Sandy started volunteering in Memphis in 2000 for the annual Heart Walk as a company Leader with Memphis-based Intermodal Cartage Co. Then she spent 10 years in Houston as the official photographer for the Bay Area Houston Go Red For Women Luncheon, creating and shooting the annual Heart Throb campaign. Now, back in West Tennessee, she's now teamed up with the Memphis

Go Red For Women initiative. This past spring, Sandy shot their brand new Women of Impact campaign... 20 portraits in all shot in downtown Memphis showcasing the best views of Memphis along with these 20 amazing women.

Sandy has a diversified business now that encompasses photography, brand strategy, leadership development, speaking engagements and workshop training. And this summer she also launched a private online coaching membership group that focuses on building a person's professional skills, knowledge and self-confidence. Sandy has the ability to work with you both virtually and in person depending on the project and your needs. In her spare time, she also hosts and produces two podcasts, "The Sandy Adams Show" and "A Southern Girl's View" with Sandy Adams, both can be found on her website, Apple Podcasts or Spotify. If you are interested in learning more about Sandy and working with her, you can get all the information at www.sandy-adams.com

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Leaders Education Foundation to award \$20,000 to area educators with LEADS Educator Grants

Leaders Education Foundation, a non-profit 5019c3 will award \$20,000 to West Tennessee educators through the L.E.A.D.S. Educator Grant program. This program awards 20, \$1,000 grants to area educators whose initiatives empower students to Learn, Experience, Advocate, Dream, and Serve.

“The LEADS. Educator Grant embodies who we are as an organization. We are here to serve, advocate, and educate our members and allow them to dream of a new future,” said Leigh Anne Bentley, President of Leaders Education Foundation. “Especially after a pandemic year, we are proud to support educators as they navigate through the upcoming school year.”

LEADS Educator Grant submissions are now open. Any educator or school-based professional is eligible to apply, including Pre-K centers, public and private K-12 schools, technical schools, Universities, and Colleges in West Tennessee. West Tennessee educators must record a short video showcasing their idea, vision, or project, then complete an online application to submit their grant proposal. Submissions close Sept. 13, and social media voting takes place Sept. 20-24. Grant winners will be announced on Oct. 1, 2021.

“Each year, we are amazed by the creativity of the video submissions we receive,” Bentley said. “We want to continue to Give Forward by putting resources in the hands of those that make such a big

impact on our students.”

To learn more and apply today, visit leadersgives.org/leadsgrants.

About Leaders Education Foundation

Leaders Education Foundation is a non-profit 501c3 organization based in Jackson, Tenn. Established in 2019, the Foundation allows community-minded citizens, members, and organizations to

unite to makes lives better together. The Foundation invests in the local community through scholarships, grants, and financial literacy resources to provide educational opportunities promoting lifelong learning for students, teachers, and our community. For more information about Leaders Education Foundation, please visit their website.



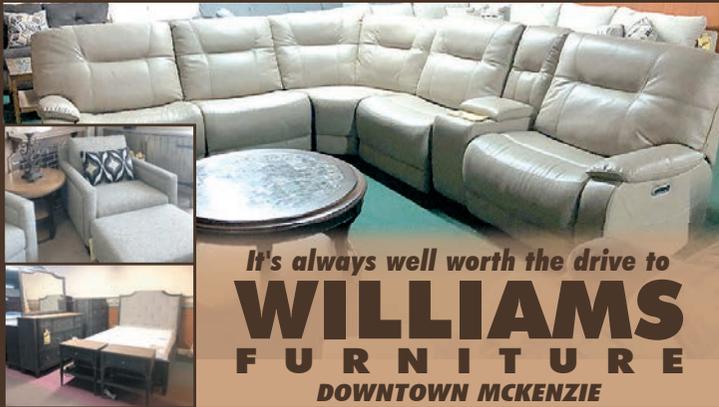
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