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# THE TRAVELER MAGAZINE



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 • APRIL 2011



## Taking Fayetteville by Storm

Mark Landon Smith Inspires Artistic Community

APRIL 2011

### Salutations Readers!

Thanks for picking up what I hope will be the first of many Traveler magazines.

When I approached Professor Bret Schulte about the idea of putting something together to showcase the long-form journalistic work of some of our writers and the photography skills of our photojournalism students, I didn't know how far the idea would go. Now, four months, hours and hours of work and 32 full-color pages later, we have it.

Although we at the Traveler have tried to expand our horizons throughout this year, adding multimedia and audio to our website as well as undergoing a complete redesign last summer, this magazine represents the first project we have truly built from the ground up.

When I spoke to the journalism faculty early this spring about my magazine idea, they warned that it was a concept that had been tried before but never succeeded. Instead of creating a separate entity, as has been done in the past, bringing this magazine under the banner of the Traveler we hope to create a publication that will not just be successful now but continues to flourish in future years as well.

In this first edition, we have a variety of content that is sure to interest readers of all backgrounds. From the everyday humor of Delcie Kincaid's account of the Hogeys Mall, found on page 28, to the dedication of one man to the Fayetteville arts scene in Taniah Tudor's cover story, found on page 18, we hope that you will enjoy all that this magazine has to offer.

I have high hopes that the Traveler magazine will continue to thrive well beyond my time as editor. I hope in years to come the magazine will continue to provide exciting opportunities for writers and photographers and interest and engage readers.

Here's to these hopes, all the hard work of our staff and the bright future of the Traveler magazine.

Cheers,



**Bailey McBride**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



# THE TRAVELER MAGAZINE

Issue 1 • April 2011

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# AIN'T NOBODY NORMAL

BY DELCIE KINCAID

PHOTOS BY LAUREL PELTON

Linda Ford says her veterinarian's office is almost fully computerized. Almost. She prefers her notes remain handwritten in each client's folder.

She holds up her hand and forms a circle with her index finger and thumb. "Like an asshole," she says. "The symbol for an asshole is a circle with a dot in the middle of it." She puts her other index finger in the center of the hole she has made. "There's no symbol on the computer for that."

Plus, she says, she likes to keep her own private comments, such as who is worthy of what she calls an "aggravation fee." She admits she has even fired clients for being overqualified for that fee.

"We run off about as many clients as we let in," she says.

Dr. Ford is with things that bite, kick and stink all day and sometimes all night long. She cuts testicles off of calves and horses in the rugged work conditions and cuddles her littlest patients, talking to them in a high-pitched baby voice. Her first duty when she arrives at her clinic isn't checking her e-mail. She comes in and immediately does the small pet spays and neuters. She is also in charge of telling clients the fate of their beloved little friend. One client, Mrs. Sidebottom, asks Dr. Ford what might happen if she waits two weeks to get treatment for her dog, Rebel, a 76-pound mutt. "He'll either be better or dead," Dr. Ford says in a monotone voice, and then she scurries out of the room. Ford is honest and outright. She's brash, but there is gentleness to her, too. She doesn't take any grief from anyone, but only because she doesn't give them the time to give it to her.

Linda Virginia Ford grew up in Shreveport, La. She was raised a Catholic and graduated from St. Vincent's all-girl Catholic school in 1968. She was the middle sibling of her sister, "Sooka," and brother, "Jimbo."

"I didn't like the all-girl part," she said, recalling St. Vincent's. "There's no 'governor,' you know, no boys to impress." There were two social cliques and Dr. Ford belonged to neither. Instead she roamed around with two of her friends, between the two groups, spreading gossip

about one group to the other.

Her childhood home sat on a peninsula with other homes on one-and-a-quarter acre lots on Lake Cross in Shreveport. She would walk up and down the length of it, catching turtles with a minnow net she had fashioned to the end of a fishing rod. "My parents didn't want us to have jobs, so we had to make up our own," she says. Dr. Ford made enough money collecting turtles and selling them to a dime store to buy a saddle. "You know how turtles sit on a log then tip off?" she asked, demonstrating with her hand how they do it. "If they tip the right way, I'd catch them in my net."

Dr. Ford says she is a vet first for the money. She started out in art school, to which she attributes her ability to draw horse markings on the horse exam sheet. She then went on to major in psychiatry but dropped that after deciding those people were nuts. In time, she says she has to come realize that "everybody's weird. Ain't nobody normal."

She does like animals, as vets should, and has several of her own. Dr. Ford has six cats, six horses and two dogs. Her favorite cat is Tootie. He is a Siamese she refers to as her "house-husband." He sleeps with her every night. Then there's Miss Kitty or "Tita," and Little Big Man. Miss Kitty gets to stay in mostly, said Dr. Ford. "And sometimes Little Big Man gets to come in, until he starts getting in trouble." Ford says he'll chase Miss Kitty around until she shits and pisses all over herself. Then he goes back out.

Dr. Ford says she doesn't like a bunch a cats in her house so only Tootie, Miss Kitty and Little Big Man get that privilege. Two other cats — Barncat and Little Wild Man — stay outside all time. Lyle Lovett, the sixth cat, usually lives at the clinic but got too fat and had to go out to the farm to lose some weight. He has recently returned to the clinic, where he wanders from room to room monitoring surgeries and teasing dogs who are locked in cages.

All of her horses are Arabians, with the exception of a paint quarter horse with three names: Coyote Ugly,

Goober and Red Cloud. "He was ugly when he was born, then the trainer called him Goober." Dr. Ford said she wanted to give him a respectable name so she added Red Cloud to the list, so Goober is what he goes by now.

Then there are the dogs — Two Socks who looks like the wolf in *Dances with Wolves*, "except he's pretty dumb" and the latest addition, a Great Pyreneese named Clarence. Dr. Ford hopes that he will protect her three nameless chickens that, at their best, have given her three eggs on one day.

She lives on 53 isolated acres and goes between the two houses on the property, depending on the weather. "The one house is older and not well insulated," she says. Although she used to rent out the newer one, too much "riff-raff" caused her to stop.

Jayme, Dr. Ford's oldest daughter, is the product of Dr. Ford's first marriage to a man she considered a narcissist. Ivy came along seven years later, in Dr. Ford's second marriage to another "narcissist and a philanderer to boot."

"If I'm one thing, I'm a good mother," she says, recounting her decision to divorce their fathers and "raise 'em right."

There is a room at the clinic with nine cages of various sizes just beyond the examination room which holds post-op patients and the ones who need routine vaccines or check-ups but their owners couldn't wait around.

In a cage next to a small, just-neutered tabby cat are a pair of sister calico cats. "All calico cats are females," the technician Heather says. The pair have just been sedated, cut open, their reproductive organs removed and what's left, tied in a knot, reinserted into the abdomen and sutured inside. They react to people and try to lift their heads, trying to make eye contact with their freshly-shaven bellies now sewn in a straight line from the top. One of them has a suture that splits into a perfect V in her belly fat; they seem to think they need to defend themselves but simply can't. They paw at each other, lightly and shakily, trying somehow to get reassurance.

“That one, she was pregnant,” Heather says, pointing to the one with the V.

Three cages over and one cage down there is a kitten, a mini-replica of her currently helpless calico mother. The kitten lays there, tiny and quiet in the nest of a heating pad and towel.

This is only the second time this has happened, Jessica, another technician, says, referring to Dr. Ford's find.

“Dr. Ford was pissed,” she says.

Dr. Ford is firm that the owners will take the kitten and the mother with them. Most have paid for these spays using government vouchers.

Dr. Ford says it is a matter of ethics for her that if a fetus is full term, she can't just “throw it in the trash.” Yet,

she quickly readjusts to show a side that reveals she has been faced with too many ethical dilemmas.

“If they want to kill it, that's on them,” she says, seemingly resigned to the fact that it could happen. “There's no law against that.”

Dr. Ford says she would take the kitten and care for it, even when it wakes up every two hours, but she doesn't have the time. And, she admits, her heart doesn't have any more love left in it. Jessica says it's not that her heart doesn't have any more love; she has just walled things off. “She's been hurt too many times.”

She checks for milk in the new mother cat. “You're a mom,” she says in a markedly higher tone, squeezing the mom's tit until the proof of lactation appears. The calico shuns Ford's touch and contorts a bit as her sister

rolls around behind her. It takes about four hours for the sedative from a spay to wear off, about 10 minutes for a male neuter patient. The exact same sedative, Xylazine, is used, but the female patient gets the shot in the muscle, the male in the vein in his front leg.

Dr. Ford seems taller than her actual height of 5' 5". Her skin is beginning to hang slightly on her small, thin frame. She'll make eye contact with you with her gray eyes, but just for a moment. She has short dark hair; today it is spritzed up, “foo-fooed” as a client would later tell her. It has been freshly highlighted. “I did it myself,” Dr. Ford says, somewhat proudly. “I just put the little cap on, got a mirror and made sure I had enough hair pulled through the little holes.” She did the highlights to save the hassle of dealing with the hairdresser and be-



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cause, well, she never gets mad at herself, she says.

Dr. Ford likes to sit on the 12-foot long bench in her reception area. It is made from a log that has been cut lengthwise and is heavily lacquered, leaving a flat smooth surface. She almost appears to be a spectator when her clients open the door. Her legs hang as if they can't touch the floor and she swings them back and forth, her butt pushed back and her arms pushing down beside her on the bench. She looks like a kid waiting for the principal.

She wears scrubs every day, usually navy blue pants with a busy and colorful shirt depicting cartoonish animal characters. An oversized Styrofoam cup she fills with home-brewed tea is never far away. She uses the cup until it is stained like a tobacco-chewer's spittoon and nearly falling apart. Only then does she go and buy another one, full of convenience store tea, which she says tastes awful but that is the price you pay to get that cup. Lunch on this day consists of Chili Cheese Fritos and her very own guacamole. And tea. She sits at a desk she placed in an area she has carved out amid an X-ray machine and other vet office oddities.

Sometimes she chews on a big glob of gum — a habit she took up when she decided to give up drinking and smoking nearly three years ago. "I psyched myself up and then just quit," she says. "Too many nights wasted sitting on the deck drinking and smoking."

"I can just see her out there," Jessica notes. "Sitting on her porch in a rocking chair with a rifle next to her, a cigarette in one hand and a glass of whiskey in the other."

Mr. Jarnagan arrives unexpectedly. He has two farm dogs in his truck and they need to be checked for worms. He says they both smell bad and he apologizes.

First comes Lucas, a 65-pound brindle mutt. Every pet gets weighed on arrival. Mr. Jarnagan dons heavy leather gloves to protect his hands from the smell of rank farm dog. He laughs at the homemade leash he has used to bring in Lucas — a yellow poly rope with a loose knot around Lucas' collar and a curl in the other end where a knot used to be.

Heather, the helper, takes a long black stick with a small hoop on the end and slowly glides it into Lucas' rectum. Lucas seem oblivious. As soon as she is finished, Mr. Jarnagan disappears with Lucas and reappears with Blackie, who is wearing the exact same rope, goes through the exact same procedure and is whisked away. Blackie weighs 67 pounds.

"Sally," Heather calls out to the back, "will you sweep and mop in here? They dropped ticks and we stepped all over them." The shiny floor is saturated with little red dots of various sizes.

In the examination room, Sally's shoes squeak on the wet floor as she mops up the tick blood.

Later, Sally, who has worked at the clinic for five months, is in a back room attempting to put a surgical pack together. She occasionally mutters — more to herself, what she is doing, reminding herself of the steps as Jessica stands behind her, watching.

Surgical packs consist of scissor-like devices that clamp onto blood vessels to control bleeding, gauze, a long metal instrument turned back on itself at one end called a spay hook, towels or "drapes," clamps for the drapes, scissors and needles.

Sally never rolled another surgical pack. She showed up one Friday "wild-eyed and scratching her skin," Dr. Ford said. "Tweaking." Jessica nods in agreement from behind the desk. "Meth," she says. Sally left that Friday and came back to pick up her last paycheck a week later. "After apologizing," Jessica remarks.

Dr. Ford uses every single one of the instruments in a surgical pack during a spay procedure. Every instrument is lying on or around the patient, who is completely covered in a cloth. All four legs are tethered to the table with only the surgical area exposed through a slit in the cloth. Today's spay patient Daisy, a 6-pound, 3-ounce cat, is unconscious. Her heart beats 252 times



a minute, which is mimicked by a beeping machine wired to her with clamps. Dr. Ford says she has done hundreds, thousands of these surgeries. "Enough that I can keep going if the lights go out." It doesn't take long until the surgical pack is empty of its contents and what's not lying on or around Daisy is in Dr. Ford's hands. Dr. Ford can tie the most magical of knots using just the tips of the instruments.

With a neuter patient, Dr. Ford just needs a sharp razor and a pair of hemostats to tie the remnants into a knot, no suture required. Sophia, whose owners thought was a girl at first, is a seven-pound Siamese cat. Jessica is holding him on his back on the smooth stainless steel work table. Soon, Sophia's thumb-sized testicles lay beside him on a blue towel; they are stark white with tiny red veins. His eyes and mouth are open and his tongue is flicking throughout the process, like the stories about people who wake up during surgery: "When Carol Weiher was having her right eye surgically removed in 1998,

she woke up hearing disco music. The next thing she heard was 'Cut deeper, pull harder.'" Perhaps Sophia heard Dr. Ford's random comment halfway through his surgery: "I think I'm going to get my cat a Facebook page."

Dr. Ford drives Fords. She has three of them — a modern aqua blue Ford Thunderbird with a vanity plate that says "FLY BYE" after a horse she used to own — "Her toy," Jessica says; a pewter beige Ford Expedition with a vanity plate that reads "XTINCTN" and has nothing to do with any sort of animal but rather the vehicle itself; and a beige Ford Explorer, which has regular plates and is the vehicle she prefers for farm visits.

She pulls up to Matthews Feed Store where Mr. Matthews himself is standing outside trying to get a forklift going. A pallet of grain rest on its forks.

"Can you loan me a rope, a lariat?" she asks him, swinging open the door of the Expedition, which she has mistakenly driven today. The Explorer is her usual

farm visit vehicle. It is equipped with everything Dr. Ford might need, including a rope.

Out at the Buchanan's farm, Mrs. Buchanan and her 7-week-old baby greet Dr. Ford. The baby dangles from a carrier attached to Mrs. Buchanan's chest.

Durango is on the list for gelding, or castration. "It's not as much so they don't reproduce," she says. "It's more for taming." Mrs. Buchanan follows Dr. Ford into the field with the baby and her assistant, who will sit on the horse's head when he is on the ground being castrated.

Dressed in her scrubs, Dr. Ford looks like a kid who has snuck out of a moonlit house in her pajamas and is sulking across the field on a curious mission of who-knows-what. She carries the stainless steel pail in her left hand, her right arm sticks out from her side as a counterbalance for the weight in the pail which holds all the surgical tools necessary to geld a horse. Dr. Ford settles by a tree, deciding to do the surgery in the shade. After drawing the magical dose of "before I completely knock him out" in her syringe, she tells Durango she is going to "cop a feel" and she runs her hand under his soft belly to find his testicle while her assistant holds him with a rope and halter. "I can't find the left one," Dr. Ford says. Durango dances around, his ears pointed back, tail swishing wildly at flies that land on him. Dr. Ford thinks she can coax the right one down then suddenly says, "Now they're both sucked up." There will be no castration today.

Dr. Ford has recently taken up Pug rescues, which is to say she does the preliminary check-ups and treatments for pugs in the area that have been fostered after being abandoned or abused. The pug rescue group eagerly pays their bills, making the rescue thing sort of a guarantee that Dr. Ford can do her best work and not be faced with the threat of non-payment.

Sushi arrives, with her foster parent, Mrs. Hardy. Sushi is dark colored and looks old, with gray highlights, a sure sign of old age. Mrs. Hardy tells the techs what she knows about Sushi, "she is blind and can't hear, they tell me," Mrs. Hardy says, "But I don't know that for sure. I'd like to know how old she is." Although Mrs. Hardy hasn't committed to adopting Sushi, she is just as concerned as any pet owner would be. Mrs. Hardy might want to give Sushi the best years, or the best year or the best months or the best month of her life.

Dr. Ford stares at Sushi, sizing her up. Sushi weighs 23 pounds. Her eyes are covered in a thick scabby membrane. Jessica runs a chip detector device — which looks like a small racquet san strings — down Sushi's back. Dr. Ford directs her to check Sushi's legs because sometimes chips migrate.

Dr. Ford takes a long, wooden stick with a cotton swab on one end (a one ended Q-tip, basically) and rubs it across one of Sushi's eyeballs. Sushi attempts to flinch and backs up into Jessica's grasp, toenails clicking on the stainless table. Sushi is about 12 years old, Dr. Ford has determined after looking at the wear on Sushi's teeth.

Dr. Ford says the reason Sushi is blind is because her eyelids don't close, that Mother Nature has put scar tissue over her eyes.

"Have you ever tried not blinking?" Dr. Ford asks everyone in the room.

Sushi might be able to see again if Mrs. Hardy keeps putting a special ointment on her eyes to soften up the membrane so it will come off. "She might be able to see again?" Mrs. Hardy asks in awesome disbelief, as if she has just witnessed a miracle.

Dr. Ford explains to her newest assistant on the visit to Mrs. Griffith's farm, "Your main job is to pay attention. You can get killed out here." Meanwhile, a herd of 12 cows, several calves and a humongous black bull clang around in the corral.

When cattle are about to be vaccinated they are first hustled into a corral and forced into a narrow maze made of fence panels. They are poked and prodded by Kirsty, who wields an electric shocker on a pole. At the end of the maze is a chute. The cow is running by the time it gets to the to that point.

Dr. Ford is waiting for them at the end of the chute. Once Brad, the farmer, has secured one, Dr. Ford double-barrels vaccinations in the neck, a syringe in each hand. She clenches the plunger end of a giant syringe full of milky vaccine in her teeth. After she has made the first two injections, she hands off the two syringes and jams the needle of the giant syringe into a different place in their neck. Brad cleans the ear tags and the cows are

sprayed with wormer and fly repellent then the head gate opens as quickly as it closed -- out goes the cow.

This happens over and over until eventually a male calf wanders in, and Brad and Dr. Ford discuss his fate. The sides of the chute lower, Brad holds the tail up and Dr. Ford leans way in, a scalpel in her bare hand. The calf lets out a long guttural moo until she stops. She takes a scalpel in her bare hands, has a paper towel nearby to grab the exposed testicle because, she says, "those things get slicky." She begins her work amid the dust of the ground and the rust of the chute and the fresh cow manure slung all over everything.

The sound a scalpel makes on the first cut through the fur and fat sounds like the quick tear of a thick cotton T-shirt when making rags out of it.

Perhaps the longest moo ever heard travels out of the chute, across the field and into the woods as Dr. Ford tosses one, then two, testicles out onto the ground. Her hands are covered in blood and she dips them into the soapy water used to clean the ear tags. Three more calves go through this procedure. By the time the whole ordeal is over, there will be eight testicles lying in odd juxtaposition around the dusty ground near the chute. "You need some farm dogs," she tells Brad. "They eat these things."

Buddy arrives on the other end of Mrs. Smith's leash. Buddy is a three-year-old, 25-pound mutt. He's there for his rabies vaccination. Mrs. Smith drops the leash after they arrive and the door is safely closed behind them. Buddy walks over to Dr. Ford sitting on the bench, legs swinging. He puts his head in her lap, she scoots up on the bench and takes his head in her hands and pets him eagerly. "What's that on your nose?" she says, slowing her petting pace. She looks at his nose for a second then speeds it up again and offers Buddy a piece of advice, "You don't know who your saddling up to, do you?"

*Editor's Note: The excerpt about the woman who woke up during surgery comes from a May 2010 story called "Awake During Surgery: I'm in Hell." on CNN.itor's Note: The excerpt about the woman who woke up during surgery comes from a May 2010 story called "Awake During Surgery: I'm in Hell." on CNN.*

**Dr. Ford says she has done hundreds, thousands of these surgeries. "Enough that I can keep going if the lights go out."**



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# THE TYSON FAITH INITIATIVE

BY SARAH GUINN

Bob Bethke stood in his office at the Tyson Foods plant on Berry Street as he prepared to enter the production lines. He threw on his khaki overcoat that in red, cursive letters read, “Chaplain Bob” and put on his white hard hat, which was adorned with the same.

Tyson Foods staff has spent the last decade developing a chaplaincy program to minister to its employees, regardless of their beliefs. To date, the company has hired more than one hundred chaplains, such as Bethke, who serve as an optional resource.

Bethke walked down the hall just outside of the production lines before he made a round through the chicken processing plant. He was stopped by an employee who wanted to follow up with him on an injury she sustained. Bethke rested his hand on her shoulder as he listened to her update on her recovery process. The two then smiled and waved as they parted.

Pools of water scattered about the doors leading to the production lines. The flimsy double-doors swung back and forth as employees came in and out. Bethke stopped to rinse his hands in the stretched-out, steel sinks before he joined the workers behind the flimsy doors.

As he walked into the plant, he was greeted by smiles, waves and several thumbs-up. Workers operated the lines that carried the already deceased chickens throughout the plant to be cut up and packaged.

“How are you?” he asked them as he weaved through the production lines where workers stood and cut pieces of chicken, stripping away the unneeded parts.

Some were able to stop and visit for a few minutes, while others looked up, waved and returned to their work.

Norma Delgado, who works on the production lines, said her divorce and problems with her family have made her life stressful, but also said the chaplaincy program has helped alleviate her stress.

“I like staying here and coming back for work,” she said.

“We encourage people with faith issues to live out their faith in the workplace,” Bethke said.

But day-to-day interactions such as this wouldn’t have been possible without the series of decisions that came from the top.

## AN INTERESTING SAGA OF TRANSITION

The chaplaincy program, which originated at Hudson Foods, has had its twists and turns.

The program that was started in the mid ‘90s was done away with in 1998 when Tyson Foods acquired the Rogers-based company.

Alan Tyson – no relation to the founding family – who directed the chaplaincy program at Hudson Foods during the acquisition discussed the program he helped start at Tyson Foods.

“It was an interesting saga of transition, you might say,” he said as he delved into the program’s history.

Tyson Foods kept the chaplaincy program for six months until upper-level management removed the program to help pay the acquisition costs.

“They let me go,” Tyson said.

But in 2000, upper-level management changed at Tyson Foods and the chaplaincy program got a second look.

When John Tyson succeeded Wayne Britt as the company’s chief executive officer, he decided to revive the

chaplaincy program.

The program came as Tyson Foods acquired Iowa Beef Processors, which catapulted the company to more than 120,000 employees and doubled its size, lifting the company to new heights. Tyson Foods no longer produced only poultry products, but beef and pork as well.

This led John Tyson to reevaluate the company’s culture, Alan Tyson said, and to construct a new set of core values.

## BRINGING FAITH TO THE WORKPLACE

In an interview at the corporate headquarters in Springdale, current chairman John Tyson, son of former long-time CEO, Don Tyson, explained his rationale behind the chaplaincy program.

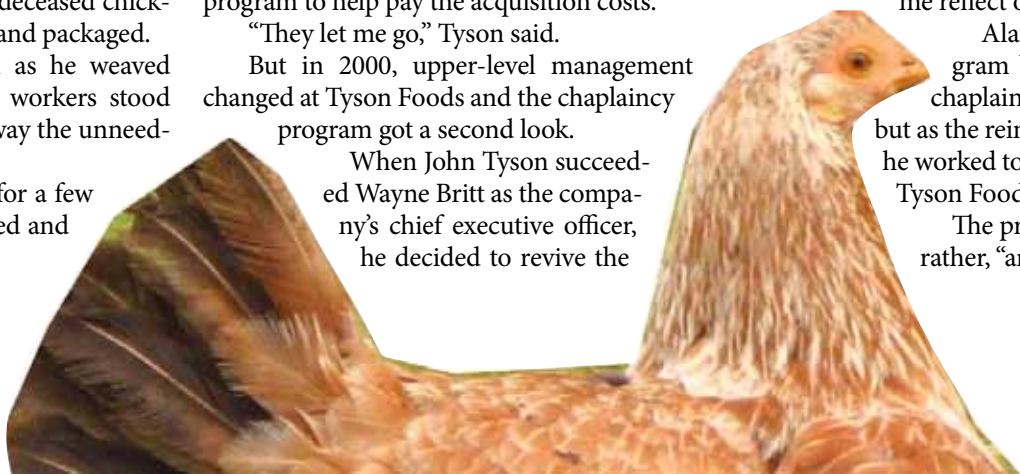
He thought back to the chaplaincy program that was removed in 1998 and picked up the phone. He wanted to ask Alan Tyson to help bring the chaplaincy program back to the company.

Sitting on his office couch, John Tyson recreated the scene: “Well, Alan, you’re not gonna believe who’s calling – it’s me, John Tyson – that chaplaincy program that they got rid of – would you like to come back and maybe start it again?”

And Alan in this thoughtful, quiet way, said, “Let me reflect on it and call back.”

Alan Tyson called back and the program began to return to the plants. Few chaplains remained from the Hudson days, but as the reinstated director of chaplain services, he worked to get chaplains back on the payroll at Tyson Foods.

The program didn’t stem from a need, but rather, “an opportunity to live whole lives and



live integrated lives,” John Tyson said. It came as a part of the company’s core values to “strive to be a faith-friendly company” and “to honor God.”

John Tyson’s decision didn’t result from his own beliefs, he said, but to “give permission for people to share their faith.”

Alan Tyson described the program as a, “proactive employee assistance program from a spiritual perspective,” emphasizing the word ‘proactive.’

It’s proactive in the sense that the chaplain isn’t sitting in an office somewhere, waiting for someone to come in, he said. The chaplains make themselves available to people.

“They’re not there to push faith on someone,” he assured. “They just invite us to be a part of the conversation.”

And the reinstated program “just started selling itself,” Alan Tyson said. Plant managers wanted to learn more about what was happening and spreading to other plants.

The plants aren’t required to have a chaplain as part of its atmosphere. It’s a program that you can’t mandate, John Tyson said at his office, referring to the core values, once again.

The company strives to be faith-friendly – it isn’t just faith friendly, he said.

“It [had] to find its own way and its own place.”

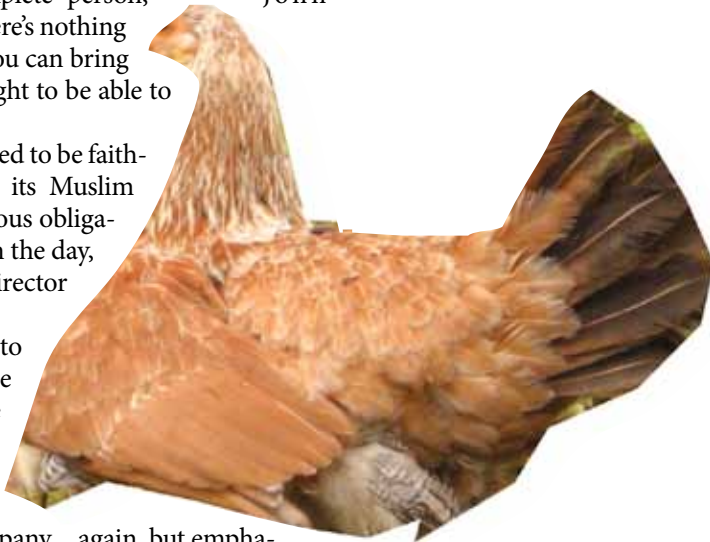
### BEING YOUR WHOLE SELF

“You think about it and read it...in articles about people who bring their dog and their bicycles to these exciting new companies...and they get to be a complete person,” John Tyson said. “You read those and there’s nothing about faith. My thoughts were, if you can bring your dog and your bicycle, you ought to be able to bring your faith to work.”

One way the company has strived to be faith-friendly is its accommodation to its Muslim team members whose have a religious obligation to pray during specific times in the day, said Rick McKinnie, the present director of chaplain services.

“The company has worked to schedule production around those prayer times and release people from the line,” he said.

John Tyson said he wasn’t that forward thinking when the program was a part of the company again, but emphasized the opportunity presented to team members to bring their whole self.



## EVOLUTION OF THE PROGRAM

Tyson Food’s faith-friendly reputation has grown and spilled over to the University of Arkansas campus. In 2009, a \$2 million gift was made to establish the Tyson Center for Faith and Spirituality in the Workplace in the Sam M. Walton College of Business by the Tyson Family Foundation and Tyson Foods. Judi Neal, the center’s executive director, said students come to her, grappling with their faith and also those who want to find work at a faith-based company. “They feel it is so central to who they are and how they want to live in the world,” she said. Brooklyn Brock, an international business major, said finding work at a faith-based company is important to her. “It is important for me that I work in a faith-friendly company because that is where I will best fit in and feel comfortable,” she said. Neal understands this. She said her faith is central to who she is and wouldn’t be whole if she had to leave her faith at home. “Religion is an important component of a balanced life,” Brock said. “Your religion is part of who you are and should not be discriminated against or suppressed.” “I think that...it’s okay to be a person of faith at the university and later in the workplace. You don’t have to be secretive and hide it. “The purpose of business is not about making money, the purpose of business is to make a difference,” Neal said, drawing on faith-based principles that she said make businesses better.

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### PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Tyson Foods didn’t provide any hard data to illustrate the worth of its chaplaincy program, but an e-mail from executive VP of corporate affairs, Archie Scaffer III affirmed, “We believe it is a factor in our efforts to enhance worker retention.

“We believe that when our people are supported by a trained chaplain, who can counsel them through their hurts and life burdens, they are happier at work and more productive on the job.”

Looking back on the program and decisions made 10 years ago, John Tyson said he is satisfied with the chaplains out there enhancing the Tyson Foods team members.

When asked if he always saw himself as integrating faith in the workplace, he answered, “It was just an evolution of my growth and understanding of who I was, and my faith walk has a lot of twists and turns.”

For Charles Purtle who was a part of the program from the Hudson days and has now served as a chaplain for 17 years, said he’s grateful that Tyson Foods made this a part of the company.

“I’m always curious to see what’s important in their lives and amazed at that people who work (there,)” the Hope plant chaplain said. “I try to be available to those who don’t have resources.”

“People like to know that they’re doing something worthwhile, even it’s just routine,” Bethke said.

Bethke puts himself in the team member’s shoes and will sometimes work alongside the team members to understand their job and to show them that he cares, he said.

“There’s more to life than just going to work and doing business,” Purtle said. “Some of these folks are trying to encourage that and it makes life richer, and I’m glad to be a part of that.” ■

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# FROM BEHIND THE WINDSHIELD

BY TANIAH TUDOR

PHOTOS BY JACKIE FROST

The shoulder straps of the seat belt rub against my neck and I press my heels as hard as I can against the foot brace, making my legs almost cramp. I lean into the turn, knowing that if this tiny car began to spin off or roll my efforts to stop it would be futile. The moment we burst out of the curve the driver, Randy Lamp, hammers on the accelerator. I had almost choked myself with the strap of my helmet when I put it on, yet it still feels as though it wants to rip off and go tumbling down the racetrack behind us, leaving my head and face vulnerable to the more than 100 mph rush of air. My head wobbles back and forth from the force. I feel as though my head may burst from the adrenaline. Lamp hits the brakes as we come up on the orange and white curb that marks the next corner. Right, then left, then around a portion of track labeled Everybody's Favorite Turn. I find it just as terrifying as the other turns. Another 30 seconds and my eyes are pinned to the exit ramp as we pass it for the second time.

Hallett Motor Racing Circuit, located almost 40 miles west of Tulsa, Okla., isn't an ordinary race track. There are fewer than 100 road race tracks in the United States, and only about four or five are located in the Midwest. Instead of the oval track used for dirt racing or by organizations such as the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, road race tracks emulate an actual road or highway with both left and right-hand turns and is the type of racing popular in Europe. Picturesque Hallett is draped over low rolling hills in a small woodland. The track is nearly two miles of winding, patched asphalt with narrow, sharp turns and elevation changes. There are a small pond, grandly named Veronica Lake, and two small tree groves, one located in the center of the paddock and one inside Everybody's Favorite Turn on the far side of the track. Instead of hard, unforgiving concrete, the track is surrounded by tens of thousands of used tires laid out two deep and three high in an inter-

locking herringbone design. On either side of the track, outside of the tires, is chain-link fencing. Visitors and drivers must cross through gates in the fencing, across the track, to get to the paddock where the stands, pit, garages, asphalt access roads and rows of white aluminum car ports are located.

Earlier in the day as Lamp, myself and Tim Webb, another race car driver, walk along the access road on our way to the newest and largest of the two garages at Hallett Motor Racing Circuit, Lamp tells me that after his first year of road racing, his doctor asked him during a physical if he had been running or walking to get in shape; heart rate increases and gravitational forces cause car racing to have an aerobic effect on the bodies of drivers. We are heading to the garage because Lamp's Ariel Atom, the car I am supposed to be riding in, is having problems. The garage is at the bottom of a small hill, and there are several pricey cars parked outside. I recognize a silver Porsche under one of the car ports, a yellow Corvette and a blue Shelby Mustang. Three motor homes are parked outside as well, two of which cost at least \$100,000. Inside the garage are the sharp, tangy smells of oil and radiator fluid, but it is clean and organized. At the other end is a black Viper, and another expensive-looking Porsche painted with orange and green racing colors. Webb tells me it is worth about \$175,000 and both cars belong to a racer from Finland, whose family used to own a very successful shoe company.

"He's the sledgehammer and the other guys around are the flyswatters," Lamp says.

Everyone in the garage is standing around the lifted car quietly discussing the problem and ways to solve it. There is an issue with the cooling system and one of the water pumps is broken. The Hallett crew members are working with Lamp to get the car fixed.

"The Stephens family owns the shop and is kind enough to sometimes let drivers use the shop when they ask. Most other shops don't do that," Webb

says. Webb, who lives in Fayetteville, Ark., is an investment banker for First Southwest Company, a large financial advisory firm with headquarters in Dallas. He has a quiet voice, easy manner and wire-rimmed glasses, and is one of the fastest drivers on the track.

Webb has been interested in racing since he can remember. He grew up in Europe where road racing is a major sport, and raced motorcycles since he was a kid, though his parents disapproved and were never involved in it.

"I ski fast, I...well, just speed is my thing, it always has been. As I have gotten older it's very much a cerebral sport, meaning that you have to be concentrating all the time, that you have to work – for every hour that you are on the track you've put in many, many hours behind that." Webb's face is intense and he waves his hand, adding, "For most of us who want to do this, this is all we think about. It's all I think about."

Webb usually drives a Formula Ford. Formula cars are racers with certain specifications that every car must meet, and most have an elongated cone-shaped body made of fiberglass with wheels that are uncovered, meaning the axles stick out away from the body. A little more than a year ago, Webb's car was wrecked during the 40th Anniversary of the Formula Ford class in Elkhart, Wis., when a kid in his early twenties made an aggressive move into the corner in an attempt to overtake him, he says. Instead, the kid smashed the left-rear wheel and gear box of Webb's car and the right-front wheel of his own. Webb has had to put his car up until he can pay to finish fixing the \$10,000 in damages. Webb says the kid, who is financially backed by his father, was back on the track in the next race.

The men decide the water pump is beyond repair, but there is another driver who said we could use his car. Lamp and I head back up the hill, this time in the Mule, a small utility vehicle used by the crew to get around the track.

As the Atom hurtles around the track for lap three, I begin to relax in tiny increments. The fear of flying off the asphalt is subsiding. Still, I harbor a small hope that this will be the last lap. If I were queasy there would be a reason to pull off the track, but no. Lamp's gloved hands grip the wheel and yank it to the left. As we pass Veronica's Lake, his right hand gives me a thumbs up. Because of our helmets and the force of air, we can not talk to each other, but this thumb is asking a question – do I want to stop and leave the track when we finish this lap, or am I okay to keep going? My muscles are still so tense I have to jerk my hand out from between my legs, where they have been clenched. Before I know what has happened Lamp has received a returned thumbs up. I wouldn't want anyone to think I have no stamina.

The track was originally built by racing enthusiast Anatoly Arutunoff in the 1970s. It was leased for 13 years then purchased in 2001 by the Stephens family. Connie Stephens is part owner of the raceway, and is one of the few women at the track. She is tall and slender with cropped salt-and-pepper hair, and is the go-to woman at the track. Her late husband Mike had been operating the track with his family's help for thirteen years before he and Connie, with their sons Shayne and Scott, bought the track in 2001. Stephens is a professor of English at the University of Tulsa, but after Mike passed away in 2007 she began devoting almost all of her time to the track.

The event going on this weekend in October is the Competition Motor Sports, in combination with High Speed Touring, called the COMMA Challenge. It is a series run eight times each year, March through November. While racers get points toward a trophy at the end of the series, the HST drivers do not. Stephens is vehement about the distinction between racing and HST; HST is for street cars that are not race prepped. On the track, the HST cars can not pass each other in corners or be overly aggressive, but the drivers can go as fast as they want.

"We call it a pre-paid speeding ticket, 'cause we're gonna let you go as fast as your car will go," she says. The interest in HST has created more business for Hallett, Stephens says. Today there are as many street cars as race cars participating, she says.

**T**he Ariel Atom is technically made to be a street car. With its steel tubes, leather seats and exposed mechanics, the Atom looks at first glance like the larger, but sleeker cousin of the go-kart. Imported from England, the Atom was designed to be the ultimate low-cost super car. The starting price is about \$50,000, but most race cars that can go as fast as the Atom cost three or four times that much. Weighing only 1,300 pounds, 2,000 less than a Porsche 911, the Atom has the same 350 horsepower as the Porsche and can go from zero to 60 miles per hour in 2.9 seconds. This rivals the launch from the Powder Keg roller coaster at Silver Dollar City. The driver – and passenger – can get serious whiplash, and the Atom was to be my first race car experience.

The owner of this Atom is retired drag racer Eddie Hill, a friend of Webb and Lamp. At 74, Hill, who now lives in Texas, has won hundreds of awards and championships for racing dragsters, drag boats and motorcycles, and is still the only person to carry record speeds for drag racing on both land and water. As we stand looking at the black interior and the few pieces of gleaming, red carbon fiber body, Hill joins us from the grandstands across the road. He is immediately recognizable by his signature shock of white hair, hawk nose and intense blue eyes. An injury he sustained while working on a drag boat a few days before has give him a temporary limp, but despite this he is youthful and vibrant. Later, when I comment on how young he looks, he says, "I'm the world's oldest teenager," and laughs.

Hill stands on the other side of the Atom in his race suit, the arms tied around his waist and his chest bare, listening to the compliments raining down on his car. Ariel Atoms are part of the reason Hill got into road racing at Hallett, he tells me. When he bought his first Atom, he came to an event here called the Atom Fest. People came from all over the world with their Atoms to attend.

"They shut the whole factory down in England, where the car started," Hill says. "The owner and all the hands flew over here for that," Hill says, waving his arm around. "It was a hootenanny. It was just fun, a lot of fun. A lot of smiles, a lot of yucks and no stress." Hill says it attracted him because it was so different from the drag racing he used to do. Road racing has more actual driving time, and drag racing had lost it's fun for him over the last several years.

"There was just a lot of corporate pressure to perform, and very money intensive. We spent \$2.2 million one year, \$2.3 million another year. In return for that money, the sponsors pretty well owned you and your time," he says.

Webb and Lamp make the arrangements with Hill about using the car. There will be the first ride at 25 mph for two laps so that I can have a look at the track, then later we will be in the High Speed Tour for five laps at racing speeds. Lamp and Webb stand around for a few minutes talking about doing 25s and 29s, short for lap times of one minute 25 seconds and one minute 29 seconds. Then it's time to get swaddled into the car for the first two laps.

Like most actual race cars, the Atom has no doors. Drivers and passengers have to step in over the side of the car. By being very careful I manage to prevent my foot from taking out the side mirror, and then slide down into the seat. Lamp leans over to strap me in, apologizing for having to handle the buckle located just above my crotch. The Atom is the pace car for this drive and is supposed to keep at 25 mph or less, so we won't be wearing helmets. Lamp, who has driven Atoms thousands of times, will be my driver for both rides. Lamp lives in Rogers, Ark., and runs a computer company. He is stocky with a jowly but pleasant face. Aside from his Atom, he also drives a race car, a Formula B, which Webb tells me is worth many times more than his own Formula Ford.

Most racers wear clothing usually made of fire-resistant Nomex. They have Nomex shoes, long-sleeved black T-shirts with a high collars made of Nomex, sometimes a hood to cover their face and then their fire retardant racing suits made of Nomex, Kevlar and Arimand. Each layer builds on the number of seconds before a flame will touch the skin. Lamp doesn't wear any of this clothing in the Atom except his suit, which can withstand five seconds of direct flame. The level of hazard is low on the Atom, which is easier and faster to get out of than other racing cars, such as his Formula B. I was only told to wear a long-sleeve shirt and long pants.

"Also, you get piled up with all that stuff and it's really uncomfortable," Lamp says.

The Atom is comfortable; it is roomy compared to other race cars and the seats have small sides to help you stay in place. Lamp makes his way down to the track entry just in time to lead the other cars out. Without the helmets, and with the open cockpit of the Atom, the air buffets us even at 25 mph. "The rule of racing is no coasting," Lamp says as the speedometer immediately starts creeping toward 30 mph. "You should always be as hard on the brakes or as hard on the accelerator as possible."

My first ride around the track feels like a Sunday drive; slow-paced, with easy conversation and pastoral views. Lamp decides to give some lessons about tire grip theory – the more the tires of the car are pressing down on the asphalt, the faster the car is going to go and the less likely the driver is to lose control.

"You get into a rhythm with the car. Each corner, you know by feel if it's right," Lamp says.

Webb agrees.

"That's how you know you're going fast; when everything starts slowing down and you feel like you're just out for a ride," Webb says.

Though cars hurtle around the track, engines roaring and brakes protest-

ing, the center of the raceway is peaceful. The noise of the cars is rhythmic, and when I sit for a moment at a picnic table, it becomes lulling. The air smells of dust, grass and hot brakes. Next to the car ports are open trailers that look like garages inside – some even have tiled floors. There are men of all ages standing around or sitting on lawn chairs inside the trailers. A couple of young guys are hovering over an orange Corvette. I walk a little closer to check out some of the cars, making sure not to touch any that I have not been given express permission to do so, then head down to the cafe.

The Finish Line Cafe is located on the first floor of the timing tower. The timing tower is a large, square brick building painted white with a wide red stripe around the top. Aside from the small kitchen and ordering counter, and the metal chairs pulled up to long folding tables, the cafe could be the office of a car repair shop. Mismatched desks are shaped into a rectangular space for Stephens and two other women to work at their computers and print schedules and racing forms; drivers also come here to rent transponders used for tracking lap times. Next to the door is a wall of box shelves with randomly stacked T-shirts in red, white and black. The floor is black and white checkered and the walls alternate red and white. It also smells of oil, just not the kind for cars. There are maybe forty people inside, mainly drivers but also crew and a few wives or girlfriends.

Drivers stand in line to order lunch, the arms of their racing suits tied around their waists and their faces red from sun, wind and the pressure of their helmets. Men eating fried shrimp or cheeseburgers at the tables occasionally stop chattering to watch a 32-inch flat screen, which has slideshow photos of the cars on the track. I sit down at a table seating seven or eight guys.

One thing about racing at Hallett is that it is safe. Because road races are less aggressive than other forms of racing, there are less incidents between cars. It is also more expensive to fix the cars since most of the drivers have to pay for it themselves. When accidents do happen, the grassy knolls and the tires that circle the track at Hallett are more forgiving than the concrete walls that enclose most other asphalt tracks.

Sean Smith can attest to that. He used to drive circle tracks: dirt for a year, then asphalt.

“I spent all kinds of money, fixed [my car] up ready for the new year, went out for practice...I



Tools and fast toys, belonging to Randy Lamp, are securely stored in his private shop.

was coming through a turn and I four-wheel drifted and it never hooked so I went straight into the wall. I was going about 90 mph to zero sideways. I couldn't open my right eye for about three days. I had bruises all over my body, everywhere the belts are – if it wasn't for that, you know, I'd be dead," Smith says. He didn't race again for about 10 years.

Now Smith and his friend Trent Dockstetter drive an inexpensive class of race cars called Legends. Legends look as though pint-size mobsters from the 1930s should be waving their tiny machine guns from the window as they flee a bank robbery. The half-size design mimics the original NASCAR Ford coupes. They have motorcycle engines and transmissions, and parts are cheaper to replace compared to most other race cars. New Legends cost \$12,000 to \$14,000, but often they can be found used and fixed up for less. Smith runs a dry cleaner in Lawton, Okla., where both he and Dockstetter are from.

“With circle track, you have all the cars so close together you are having to kind of bang into each other, trying to get around,” says Dockstetter. “Whereas here, you might pass somebody but you're not going to try to bump into each other.”

“This kind of racing is totally different than roundy-round,” Smith says. “It's way more technical; you know, you got a lot of turns, you don't just have two basic turns to work with.” But that's not the main reason he comes to Hallett.

“The people is the biggest difference. [Here] they're very nice, more family-oriented, given that circle track is more cut-throat, aggressive. Especially dirt, you don't hardly talk to nobody, nobody talks to you. There are little groups and those groups stay together. You get a lot of fighting,” Smith says. Dirt racers have small entry fees, about \$30, and can win enough in a race to cover that plus some. Entry fees for road racing at Hallett are \$220 for a weekend and winners get a medal, but no money. “Here, it's just for fun.”

Buying a car and maintaining it while racing, added to the cost of travel and entry fees, can become very expensive. While fees at Hallett may seem expensive, racers are actually attracted to Hallett's comparative affordability.

“There's an old saying in racing: ‘How do you make a small fortune in racing? Start with a big one,’” Webb says. “COMMA is a very low income threshold series, because you basically can show up with whatever you brought. As long as it's safe and meets certain safety rules, you can race it at that track.” More organized series' such as Sports Car Club of America have higher standards for car specifications, and can be far more expensive. Webb is a member of the SCCA.

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# Kitchen Kred

The proof is in the experience







Tim Webb proudly claims his Formula Ford at his Northwest Arkansas home on March 6.

“When I went to the run-offs in ‘08, including travel I may have spent \$6,000 or \$7,000 for the year to race. I know people who spent \$50,000 or \$60,000 to race that year. It’s just not going to happen for me,” Webb says. “Hallett’s cheap. Hallett’s the biggest bargain in the entire country.” For his regular SCCA events at other tracks, the cost is at least doubled for less than half of the track time than at COMMA events.

Forrest Tindall has been racing for 50 years. He is tall and lean, with white hair and a bristly white beard. He and his son Bruce built their Mazda in 1992.

“It’s not cheap, it’s an expensive hobby, but it’s rewarding,” Forrest says. “When I started out, entry fees were \$25; now they are \$250. Over the last ten years I’ve probably spent \$35,000.” He used to spend \$600 to \$800 a year, and now he spends \$3,500 a year, he says. This is a on the lower spectrum of what many racers spend during a season.

“I always say it’s kind of like cigarettes and liquor: it’s addictive once you start it,” Forrest says.

Bruce, tall, muscled and tan, is a security contractor in Iraq. He only started getting on the track about two years ago. Bruce has a wide range of interest in extreme sports and it took him a while, plus an infusion of time and money, to come around to racing, he says. After going in on a racing suit to fit both him and his dad, coupled with helping to build the car, Bruce finally decided it was time to start. I later see Bruce in the beat-up white Mazda – his massive arms and torso fill the cab and his short hair brushes against the roof, making me wonder if he will be able to get his helmet on.

It is lap four in the Atom and my muscles have started to twitch. We have been on the track less

than six minutes, but I am starting to recognize the turns by feel rather than sight. I have a nervous feeling that Lamp’s “speedlust” has revved up with the appearance in front of us of the back two cars. I sense a determination in the way he is pushing the car for more speed. We pass a silver Prius with such haste that I perceive the Prius to be slowing down. We go up a small incline and then down into a turn called The Bitch. For good reason. For the briefest of moments, the car wiggles on the pavement, more a of a tease to spin off rather than a threat. It only takes that brief moment for Lamp to correct it, just a small matter of tire grip, and we shoot off again after a blue Miata, leaving my stomach behind us.

Drivers need more eyes than their own in corners, especially ones like The Bitch where accidents happen often. Karen Fearing, in layered orange and white T-shirts, her strawberry-blonde hair crammed under a ball cap, is one of those pairs of eyes. She as been a corner worker for 13 years and can spend 10 to 12 hours working a corner, depending on the type of race, she says. Fearing is about as hard-core a racing spectator as can be found at Hallett.

“It’s five seconds of sheer terror mixed with hours and hours of sheer boredom,” Fearing says. “But it’s the second-best seat on the track.” Fearing got into corner working because her dad was a flagger and finally convinced her to come with him. After that she just kept doing it. For some events Fearing gets paid, but for others she volunteers. She calls herself an adrenaline junkie.

“You see a lot of great passing, too. It’s not always about the wrecks. I love to see some drivers close, side-by-side, a good battle, switching places. Really giving each other a hard time. I would rather

have that than wrecks,” Fearing says.

Fearing is working the first corner today, located directly after the longest straightaway on the course. The small canopy is set up mere yards from the track, with only the tire wall between them. The middle of the canopy is clear, with stuff lined on along the side, such as a folding chair that holds a novel titled “Cold Blood,” and a small table laden with curled up flags in the front. Over her walkie-talkie comes the fuzzy masculine announcement from the control tower “...four, three, green and ready.” A few minutes later cars come soaring past us: Porsche, Corvette, MINI Cooper, Charger, Porsche, Ariel Atom, Corvette, Charger, Miata, Civic. Some engines scream, others spit or sputter. A yellow Mustang accelerates as it comes out of the turn, its engine yelling “Whooo hooo!”

Working the corners is an exhilarating but dangerous job. She points out places where cars have rolled over or landed on the tire wall. Workers stations are generally located in spots where drivers can’t see the road ahead so workers can communicate to them if there is any problem they need to be aware of, but these are also areas where drivers more often lose control of their cars. Fearing has a safety routine she keeps when she is working the track.

“As you get to your turn and you set up your turn. You check your fire bottles [and] you check your flags. You find your escape route,” Fearing says. Flags are used for communication with the drivers and fire bottle is a term for a fire extinguisher. A fire bottle is an important piece of gear for corner workers since fires can be frequent.

“I got to one, it was an Aston Martin, or a Ferrari...you know, a beautiful car,” Fearing says. “There was no back end to it. It had been on fire for quite a while. And he gets out of the car, and he looks at me and says ‘Was I on fire for a long time?’ and I said ‘Yes, quite a bit’ and he says ‘Oh.’” Fearing admits she doesn’t know much about the kind of cars she watches on the track; she can’t tell you the make and model. But she can tell you about smells.

“I love the smell of burning rubber,” Fearing says. “Hot brakes...hot brakes are quite fun. You know what burning oil smells like, too. That’s very distinct.”

A silver Miata goes past, and then we hear the sounds of squealing tires. Our heads jerk around in time to see the car start to spin. Fearing grabs up the yellow flag and waves it to let other drivers know there is a problem on the track, then holds it still once he goes off into the grassy section on the right side. The car and driver seem fine, and as he starts to slowly move back on the the track, Fearing rocks the flag back and forth until he is gaining speed and out of sight. There are nine different flags that can be used for different meanings, though some are only used at the start/finish line. Black flags mean a driver must stop to discuss an infraction, while furled black flags are merely a warning for inappropriate behavior. Yellow flags are for slick surfaces, though Fearing has used it for turtles crossing the track, she says.

Her walkie-talkie pipes up again, this time a tinny female voice. “The...course is clear, we’re ready for the open-wheel 12 lap.” Minutes later formula cars are shooting by like the bullets their fiberglass bodies try to mimic.

As we finish the fifth lap in the Atom, I feel the car start to decelerate. We were on the track less than eight minutes. Lamp moves the car onto the exit ramp and back up Hill’s trailer on the paddock. Webb and a few other men gather around, interested in my reaction. I just sit in the car for a minute before fumbling to release the buckle on my seat



Reflecting his affection Lamp dusts off a tiny spec of dirt on his treasured Atom.

It is about 30 to 45 minutes later that I start to regret the fried shrimp I had for lunch. I am coming down off the adrenaline rush, so I decide to head to my motel to rest for a bit before returning to the track for the appreciation dinner the Stephens family is throwing for the drivers. It takes 30 minutes to get to the little motel and check in, and by this time I am starting to crash hard. The room is a bit shabby, but clean, and I never felt more thankful for a motel bed. I collapse on the bed, and I give up on returning for the dinner when I realize I am too exhausted to get back up. I feel as though I have spent hours working out. After laying there for a few hours, I change, eat and sleep, then find myself in the bathroom around 3 a.m., re-visiting my evening meal.

When I wake up the next morning, my neck and head are so sore it is difficult to


belt. As I stand up in the seat, my legs tremble. I have to focus to avoid the mirror as I step out, but I manage to not fall flat. Shock has painted a grin on my face, and comprehensible words have been exchanged for nervous laughter. I try to express my terror while still my mouth is still in rictus.

"Are you okay?" Webb asks. I answer yes, but I have to go sit down on something solid, like the

concrete grandstands. As I cross the road I realize the seat of my jeans and my back are damp with sweat. I touch my neck and feel burn marks from the shoulder straps of the seat belt. I am sick with adrenaline, but after a few minutes on the stands I return to the men to ask about our lap times. Our fastest time was one minute and 31.3 seconds, with a peak speed of 112 mph.

move them, but the fear I felt during the ride the day before seems a vague memory. I know that I was terrified during the ride, but I can't quite remember what I was feeling, like what happens to women after they give birth, when they forget the pain of labor after seeing their newborn child. I get up, stretch, and open my motel door. It is a bright, cool fall day; perfect for racing. ■



  
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# Taking Fayetteville by Storm

BY TANIAH TUDOR

PHOTOS BY MEG LITTLE

**M**ark Landon Smith is at home in his office. With the doors closed he leans back in the black office chair and props his bare feet on the blanket-covered futon sofa next to a purple stuffed bear and a blonde ventriloquist doll in a red pants suit. Outside the office a group of kids are rehearsing songs for the musical “Willy Wonka Junior.” Singing permeates the office.

*“Who can take a rainbow*

*Wrap it in a sigh*

*Soak it in the sun and make a strawberry lemon pie?*

*The candyman?*

*The candyman*

*The candyman can...”*

Centered on the back wall is a three-foot long and two-foot tall cream-colored plastic cruise ship with blue fake jewels called the Ocean Queen. Released in the early 1980s by Kenner Products as an accessory to the doll series Glamour Gals, this elaborately decorated vintage toy, bought on eBay, now reigns supreme in Smith’s office. The Queen outshines Lego castle sets, dolls and ornaments hanging from a net strung across the ceiling, and a plain, unadorned doll house being used as a shelving unit. Smith has collected more than 30 toys from his childhood and the Queen, obviously the star on this small stage, is his favorite. Many of the toys had been in storage after a home redecoration, so Smith decided to bring them to his office for the kids to enjoy. The toys help the children connect with him as not just another adult telling them what to do – in essence, Smith is one of them.

“We treat them with respect and we don’t talk

down to them, and we are very big on the kids being responsible and being accountable. We love ‘em, but we also have high expectations of them,” Smith says. He considers the children his friends and colleagues.

As executive director of Arts Live Theatre, a non-profit company in Fayetteville dedicated solely to kids under the age of 18, and co-creator and director of the comedy improvisation group Phunbags and the theater company Ceramic Cow Productions, Smith has a lot going on: He is producing all nine shows for Arts Live this year; he recently filmed a commercial for a local casino; he just finished the script for “Night of the Living Dead” and edited the script for “War of the Worlds” for Arts Live; he has been rehearsing with and directing Phunbags; he is rewriting and has rehearsals for “A Dupont Christmas” for Ceramic Cow; and he will also be a juror for the upcoming Offshoot Film Festival, to name a few.

Smith returned to Arkansas and settled in Fayetteville after spending fifteen years in New York City, Los Angeles and Boston as a professional actor and, for a short time, a model. His modeling stats from AAA Models and Talent in New York read: Height 5’9”, Suit 36 R, Shirt 14 ½ - 32, Waist 28, Inseam 32, Hat 7 1/2, Shoe 8, Hair Brown, Eyes Hazel. Outside of this one lone tribute to his modeling career, the walls of his office are covered with framed playbills and posters that Smith starred in or directed, articles on plays he has written, and photos from stages he has graced. Smith’s light-brown hair is now receding, but a youthful face belies his age; only the creases etched out by his smile suggest his 46 years. Having left the big cities and his serious acting career behind, he now devotes his time and energy to developing theater in Fayetteville and the surrounding area.

The art and theater community has been changing and growing in Northwest Arkansas since at least 2000. A good number of new programs have begun during that time, “too many to count” says Dianna Blaylock, the coordinator for Learning and Engagement at the Walton Arts Center. A few of the programs Blaylock names are Theater Squared, Arts Live Theater, The Arkansas Music Pavilion, First Thursday and Fayetteville Underground, Artosphere, Offshoot Film Festival, UARK Ballroom and the Fayetteville Arts Festival. Laura Goodwin, vice president of Learning and Engagement for the WAC, gives credit to the UA and large companies in Bentonville that attract professionals from around the world. “Who attend arts events? People who have education...these are people who want and expect arts in their life,” Goodwin says. In her opinion, Smith and others like him have made a huge contribution to the growth of arts. “He has tremendous energy for doing the work and really connecting with people. All the kids that Mark works with in Arts Live Theater are part of what makes the arts community so rich.”

In particular Goodwin has noticed people’s interest in Smith’s “Dupont, Mississippi” series; she calls them “Dupont groupies.” Goodwin adds, “It’s great when you see you have this group of folks that have this absurd passion for a group of characters.” The “Dupont” play was the first Smith worked on with Julie Gable, his ten-year co-director of Ceramic Cow Productions. Smith originally came to Fayetteville to get his graduate degree in theater from the UA. Because he is from Arkansas the tuition was more affordable, and Smith says he fell in love with the methodologies of Amy Herzberg, a professor of drama. “She got me back to the basics of the craft and



made me a better actor," Smith says.

After his graduation from the UA, student theater group Not-A-Penny Productions asked Smith to write a play for them, which turned out to be "Dupont, Mississippi." This is when Smith met Gable, who was directing the play. They hit it off right away and became close friends. It was Gable's connections that helped Smith get inundated into local theater, he says. "I got involved and then basically started forcing myself into the community." Less than two years later they started Ceramic Cow, named by Smith after a nick-knack in Gable's living room. As Goodwin pointed out, the "Dupont" series has become a local phenomenon and is now put on yearly by Ceramic Cow. The characters, what some would call "white trash," are inspired by people Smith has known or seen, Gable says. "He takes those things that have shaped him as a human and writes about that."

Some of Smith's inspiration for the Southern characters in his plays surely came from growing up in a small rural town. Smith is from Jonesboro in the northeastern part of Arkansas, a city with a population slightly more than 66,000, much of that rural. Smith's parents, who both suffer from illness, are now retired and still living in Jonesboro, their home of more than 50 years. As Smith tells it, he didn't have the usual Arkansas upbringing. When he was born in 1964, his mother was Miss Sharon, the host of the kids' show Romper Room. She only hosted for two years, until Smith was a little under a year old, and his earliest memories are of being in her studio. While his father had a head for business, Smith's mother was more artistic and she first noticed and encouraged his creative side, he says.

"[My parents] were never the kind to say 'you got to major in accounting' or 'you got to have some-



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**American Legacies: The Del McCoury Band & The Preservation Hall Jazz Band** is part of The Snickers American Masters Series with media support provided NWA Media. This performance was made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius.

thing to fall back on.' They were always like 'Go, do. Yes, we'll pay for it, just go and do.' I had free reign," Smith says. His parents were very supportive and encouraged him even as a child to follow an artistic path, he says. "They really saw that I had a lot of creativity and ability in the creative arts, and they really, really pushed me to go toward that....which is really unusual. Especially in Jonesboro, Arkansas, where you are running down the halls of Nettleton Junior High School telling people 'I'm going to be a playwright and an actor' and most of them are going to be, you know, something not like that." Smith bursts out laughing, loud and a bit manic, like a five-year-old who has been in grandma's candy bowl.

Smith's father was, as Smith describes him, a "self-made man" who was very wealthy – for about 11 years. He owned several Wendy's restaurants in Arkansas, New York and a few other states. He had two airplanes, which Smith remembers using to go to the Galleria in Dallas to buy school clothes. "My family loves to travel, so we were always jumping on a plane going somewhere all during high school. So I was exposed to Europe, and the Caribbean, and Mexico, and Canada and you know, to the world...how I was raised was a lot different than my fellow students, a lot different. When I started realizing other people weren't like that - it was obvious they weren't because it was rare in that situation that someone could do that - I turned into a snob, basically. A big snob. My whole family kinda did without realizing we were doing it." Smith laughs.

But the fantastic lifestyle didn't last. When he was a senior in college, his dad made some poor business choices and went bankrupt. "We lost everything, or he lost everything," Smith says, his tone is matter-of-fact. "I remember him coming over to see me and he was just bawling, saying, 'It's all gone, we don't have anything left, and I have nothing to give you.' And I said, 'That's not your responsibility. I'm an adult, I have an education, I'm about to graduate. I can take care of myself.' And I did, 'cause you know, you have to. You learn; you learn real quickly how to do it. But I will never forget him being so upset because there was no inheritance and he felt like he had failed as a father. That was a really good lesson for all of us because it made us humble very, very quickly, and very grateful. But, we always say we had a great ride."

Smith's cell phone rings, a ring tone made to imitate the sound of vintage home phones: Monstrosities that had twisty, mile-long cords, needed to be picked up with two hands and had a small table and chair all to themselves. He swivels around in the office chair and answers, "What's up, what's happening and why am I not a part of it?" and laughs.

It was more than a wealthy family that caused Smith to grow up outside the norm in his hometown. In junior high and high school, Smith was a loner. He had a very small circle of friends and most were from his Baptist church, not school. "People didn't know really what to do with my type of personality, because I wasn't thinking short range, I was thinking long range about my future, my career, what I was going to do and my path to get to that. I wasn't thinking 'I'm going to go to the prom next year.' I never went to the prom; I didn't give a rip about that sort of thing. I was just focused on doing my work." His passion for acting and film left him with little time to think or care for anything else.

Though the Nettleton school system had little in the way of drama programs, Smith says he did plenty of performances. "When I was in first grade I forced my entire first-grade class to do a play about pilgrims and I, of course, was the star pilgrim. During recess I would literally, because we had a gravel playground, I would take the heel of my shoe and make a triangle...and I would get Paula Rose and someone



"Whenever you are retired, you are going to do something with yourself", according to Lester Choates. Lester entertains himself with making kites and tiny origami cranes.

else, I don't remember her name, and I would make them get in a praying position on their knees and I would be the Baby Jesus; so we would play manger." Throughout school, Smith coerced friends to be in plays and had his parents watch puppet shows in the living room, he says. He also wrote plays and some prose, and when he was older his parent bought him a video camera and he started making movies, mainly short films. His first movie was called "Trees," which he made Christmas Day when he got his video camera. "It was me walking around the yard taking pictures of trees." Smith doubles over with laughter. "I was so proud. I thought that was going to be cutting-edge cinematography."

Paula Rose, now Paula Cooper, still lives in Jonesboro. Her and her husband Jeff, also from Jonesboro, had two children and are self-employed as house framers and owners of mini-storage units, and Cooper herself is also a medical technologist for a clinic. She remember Smith as "a nice, sweet boy with a good heart." Drama was not a big part, or even a small part of the Jonesboro community when she and Smith were growing up, Cooper says. She was into cheerleading and sports, the more popular activities for teenagers in Jonesboro. "I think Mark was kind of a forerunner, ahead of his time," she says. "I was doing everything inside the box; he was doing things outside the box. I'm sure whatever he is doing in Fayetteville he's doing 110 percent – very passionate and always a go-getter, that's what Mark is."

Going to college was a whole new world for Smith. "I was suddenly being praised and applauded for what I was being ridiculed for in Jonesboro. I was being put on a pedestal for it in college." Smith received his B.A. in theater from Rhodes College in

Memphis. The study was multidisciplinary, meaning that he was required to study not only acting but also administration, set and costume creation and how to work technical equipment, knowledge which Smith says kept him employed when he wasn't able to find work acting. Smith and a group of other students came together to create Narcissus Studio Productions and started making short comedy films, he says. They would parody music videos and B-films, creating movies with titles such as "Psycho Nurses" and "Amazon Women on Honeymoon." It was in Memphis that Smith took his first job at a children's theater and learned how much he loved working with kids.

Smith moved on to New York after college, to gain the experience of living in the city more than anything else, then went to L.A. to pursue acting full-time. "Everyone thinks they are going to take Broadway by storm - and that didn't happen." Smith had difficulty finding work in New York, and was only able to stay there because he was living in an apartment his parents had bought during their more prosperous years. Smith says he has an affectionate family and once when his mother came to visit him, they were walking in Times Square holding hands and he was mistaken for his mother's gigolo. "We both thought that was hilarious," he says, leaning over and gripping his knee. Other than that, Smith doesn't have any crazy New York stories. "I saw Sofia Loren at Gucci; they thought I was my mother's gigolo; I saw a dead man in the foyer of a porn store." In a deadpan voice Smith adds, "He got shot." He breaks into shouts of laughter at the idea that seeing a dead guy in New York is not considered a crazy story, then relaxes back into the office chair.

The kids outside start on something new:  
 "Oompa Loompa doompadee doo  
 I've got another puzzle for you  
 Oompa Loompa doompadah dee  
 If you are wise you'll listen to me..."

In L.A., Smith was able to find some work. "I actually got on a very bad cable television series called Simple Pleasures, which was simply awful." The show was picked up to do a first cycle of 13 episodes and was canceled after five and a half. Smith leans back with his hands folded across his stomach and says, "There was a time when I was just driven to be the Oscar and the Tony Award winner as opposed to just a working actor, just working in my field...[but] at that point I got tired of being in situations where my environment controlled me as opposed to me controlling my environment...and I just wasn't comfortable there." Smith went back home to Jonesboro for a short time to find a new direction for his talent.

"When he came back to Jonesboro I would remember seeing a poster about a play and it would have his name on it as director or an actor," Cooper says. Smith began writing again, and after having his first play published, "Faith County," his publisher John Welch invited him to house sit in Cape Cod. Smith lived there and worked in theater in Boston for a short time before finally returning to Arkansas and settling in Fayetteville. "I have these places where I moved to and I knew driving in, like 'Oh, no.' The energy or whatever it is, I would immediately feel oppressed just by being there. When I came here, I felt the exact opposite; I was immediately home."

Smith now seems rooted in Northwest Arkansas. Most of his closest friends are here in Fayetteville, almost all of them working in the theater community, he says. "I'm smart enough to surround myself with people who are much smarter than I am, which makes me look even better," he laughs. People just seem to gravitate to him. At least two of his co-workers, Julie Gable and Jules Taylor, an instructor at Arts Live, call Smith their best friend and talk about how much they laugh with him. Others, such as Christy

Hall, talk of how he has influenced their life.

"He is like a chocolate cake, a good glass of wine, the best pizza you ever had, glitter, a hug from your father – that's Mark. You meet him and you feel like nothing you say or do is going to be judged," Hall says. Hall, the newest member of the Phunbags, is wearing a purple T-shirt with the nickname "Slim" ironed in white patent letters on the back, leaning on one of the theater's bar tables with a beer in her hand at a recent performance in UARK Ballroom. Nearly 40 people have come to see the show, a big turnout for the improv group. Smith loaned her the shirt for shows until she could get one of her own, but a group of twenty-somethings are chanting "Slim! Slim! Slim!" due to an apparently well-played game of "Rap Star," one of the improvisation skits the group does during their performance.


Smith is the reason 23-year-old Hall is still in Fayetteville working and pursuing acting rather than being "dragged back home" to Little Rock, she says. Her parents felt that Hall wasn't doing "real work," but when they came to see one of her plays, Smith sought them out and assured them that Hall was a valuable asset to the theater community in Fayetteville. Hall says that most theater kids are generally awkward; Smith and Arts Live give them a place to be themselves. "I could have used Arts Live when I was between seven and 15, and I didn't have that."

While Hall was relaxing after the show, Smith was networking. He dashed around in a black button-up on the back of which he has stitched "Phunbags" in silver sequin letters, and occasionally bursts of his laughter can be heard across the room. He is constantly on the lookout for opportunities. After this particular show, Smith was approached by a man interested in having the Phunbags perform for a charity event at his church, but a charity had not yet been

chosen. Smith convinced the man to make Arts Live the charity, just as he convinced the City of Fayetteville to give Arts Live \$29,000 to produce the shows for this season, and just as he convinced the city to give them their present location, a small brick building on North Sang Avenue which was originally a senior citizen center, for \$1 a year rent. They also paid for a stage, a new roof, heating and air, and new carpeting.

The community support of the arts is one of the reasons Smith stays in Fayetteville. "You know, you can just do so much more here than you can in artistic centers like New York and Chicago, or Los Angeles," Smith says. "It's a great place to explore your artistic side. People realize they can create their own opportunities here, you don't have to wait for someone to do something for you. You can go out there and do it yourself." And he has.

Besides the work he has done for Arts Live, and creating Phunbags and Ceramic Cow, Smith has written 50-60 plays. He has submitted 12 for publication, and eight of those, "Faith County," "Faith County II," "Dupont, Mississippi," "Hindenberg! Das Explosive New Musical," "Radio, TBS," "The Pirate Show," "A Dickens' Christmas Carol: A Traveling Travesty



# WEEKLY RSO EVENTS

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## 4.6 - 4.13

**4.6.11**  
 Love146 presents "What is Love146?"  
 9:00-9:30am, Giffels Auditorium

**Entrepreneurs Alliance presents Small Business Smash-Up with Mr. Tomlin**  
 6:00-8:00pm, Big Momma's Coffee

**4.7.11**  
 Tau Beta Pi Highway Cleanup  
 12:30-2:30pm, Jim's Razorback Pizza

**National Association of Black Geologists and Geophysicists Presents "Not Just Rocks"**  
 1:30-3:30pm, Ozark 25A

**Amateur Radio Club hosts Electronics Construction Workshop**  
 3:00-5:00pm, Bell 3139

**National Association of Black Geologists and Geophysicists hosts "An Evening with Students and Alumni"**  
 3:30-5:30pm, Old Main Lawn

**Society of European Historians presents Sir David Cannadine, Princeton University**  
 4:00-6:00pm, Giffels Auditorium

**Latino/a & Latin American Graduate Student Association Hispanic Day Dinner & Kick off Celebration**  
 5:00-7:00pm, 25 E. Center St

**Eta Sigma Phi presents "A Musical Performance and Banquet"**  
 6:00-8:00pm, Greek Theater (JBHT 216 if raining)

**4.8.11**  
 Alpha Phi Omega hosts "Parents' Night Out"  
 2:00-4:00pm, Multicultural Center

**PRIDE (People Respecting Individual Differences and Equality) Pro**  
 4:00-6:00pm, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fayetteville

**Chi Alpha and Friends of India co-host FNL**  
 6:00-9:00pm, The Gardens

**4.9.11**  
 Friends of India and Chi Alpha co-host "Holi: Festival of Colors"  
 9:00am-1:30pm, Wilson Park

**Japanese Students Association presents "Sakura Festival"**  
 10:00am-2:00pm, Ozark Hall Lawn

**4.11.11**  
 Christian Legal Society presents "Faith in the Workplace"  
 8:00-9:30am, Law School

**Not-A-Penny Productions presents "Real Inspector Hound"**  
 2:00-4:00pm, B-Unlimited Theater 612

**Gamma Sigma Sigma Bracelets for Breast Cancer**  
 6:00-8:30pm, Walton College

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Image Awards**  
 6:00-8:00pm, Alumni House

**4.12.11**  
 Biology Club Seminar with Dr. Phelan, UAMS professor  
 4:00-6:00pm, SCEN 604

**Gamma Eta Sorority Women's Self Defense-Kickboxing Lesson**  
 5:30-7:30pm, HPER


**Clubbe Economique Speaker Event**  
 6:00-7:30pm, WCOB 203

## Multi-day Events

**American Society of Landscape Architects hosts Design Graphics Workshop**  
 Friday, April 8th - Saturday, April 9th, Giffels Auditorium


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Poet  
Danielle Cadena-Deulen

April 7<sup>th</sup> 7pm  
at Giffels Auditorium




Black Alumni Society 2011 Authors' Pavilion

April 15<sup>th</sup>  
4:00pm - 5:30pm  
at Holiday Inn  
in Springdale



Poet Robert Hass  
Select Readings

April 28<sup>th</sup> 7pm  
at Giffels Auditorium



His Holiness the  
Dalai Lama  
visits the University of Arkansas  
May 11<sup>th</sup>

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in *Two Tumultuous Acts*,” and *“The Really Hip Adventures of Go-Go Girl”* have been published with Samuel French/Baker’s Plays, Inc. Three of the plays have been published in Dutch and French. “Who knew they had white trash in the Netherlands?” Smith says. But Smith insists the plays are not meant to mock. “People relate to the characters. They are reminded of family members or neighbors.”

“The Southern culture is very unique and specific, and I think people just find it funny,” Smith says. “And I find that it’s very easy for me to write.” His inspiration for “Dupont” came from a wedding picture in the *Northwest Arkansas Times*. The corners of his lips turn up and his voice holds a hint of incredulity as he tells the story. “It had the bride, she was probably 4’2” and weighed 250 pounds, and she had a big smile on her face. Her husband was standing behind her and he was probably 6’4”, 300 pounds, had a mullet and a work shirt, that’s what he wore to the wedding. And the article was saying who was at the wedding and who officiated, and the last line was, and I kid you not, I still have the article, ‘Following a wedding trip to the monster truck rally in Springdale, the couple will reside in Rogers.’ That was their honeymoon. For me, I thought, what was the whole back story to this that got them to this point.”

For Smith, inspiration comes from everywhere: A small-town newspaper, Walmart customers or a waitress with a strange quirk of saying “Thank you very much” after every sentence. And he is inspired to create an environment that theater kids, such as himself, can have a place to be who they are. It is why Smith will continue to act, to write and to laugh, even local theater lost every bit of the community support it now enjoys. “I have such a passion for it, and it defines me,” Smith says. Because he isn’t just an actor or a playwright. He is theater. ■

### A lone child is singing:

**"Come with me and you'll be  
In a world of pure imagination  
Take a look and you'll see  
Into your imagination**

**We'll begin with a spin  
Traveling in the world of my creation  
What we'll see will defy explanation**

**If you want to view paradise  
Simply look around and view it  
Anything you want to, do it  
Want to change the world?  
There's nothing to it**

**There is no life I know  
To compare with pure imagination  
Living there you'll be free  
If you truly wish to be."**

## The Coaches and Staff of the University of Arkansas Athletic Department Salutes

### Razorback Student Athletes On National Student-Athlete Day

For the many accomplishments outside of athletics.

In addition to being members of championship teams, they also excel in the classroom, offer campus leadership, and contributed over 2,500 hours of service to more than 65 agencies in the Northwest Arkansas community. On this, April 6, 2011, National Student Athlete Day, we salute their many achievements outside of sports.

2010-2011 Brad Davis SEC Community Service Post-Graduate Scholarship- Chris Nott men’s tennis/ Britni Williams Women’s Soccer  
2010-2011 SEC H. Boyd McWhorter Post-Graduate Scholarship- Luke Laird- Men’s Track & Field/ Michelle Stout- Gymnastics

#### Baseball

Astin, Barrett  
Atkins, Kyle  
Bates, Sam  
Baxendale, Douglas  
Bigham, Bo  
Bosco, James  
Broyles, John  
Carver, Timothy  
Daniel, Trenton  
Williams, Ashlea  
Davenport, Geoffrey  
Fant, Randall  
Ficociello, Dominic  
Fisher, Eric  
Hall, Zack  
Harvill, Jeffrey  
Hays, Ben  
Kuhn, Collin  
Lynch, Cade  
McCann, James  
McKinney, Jarrod  
Moore, Brandon  
Morris, Jacob  
Pruitt, Houston  
Reynolds, Matthew  
Rice, Jacob  
Robinson, Kyle  
Sanburn, Nolan  
Stank, Ryne  
Suggs, Logan  
Trumper, Pierce  
Vinson, Robert  
Wehrle, Kendall  
Wilburn, Brett  
Wise, Jacob

#### Men’s Basketball

Britt, Marcus  
Bryant, Glenn  
Clarke, Rotnei  
Farmer, Jemal  
Haydar, Fuad  
Johnson, Delvon  
Mason, Nicholas  
Nobles, Julysse  
Peterson, John  
Powell, Marshawn  
Sanchez, Michael  
Scott, Rickey  
Wade, Mardracus  
Waite, Marvell

#### Women’s Basketball

Daniels, Ashley  
Delgado, Yashira  
Gatling, Erin  
Gillespie, Kristen  
Harris, Lyndsay  
Hatcher, Kelsey  
Inman, Julie

Peak, Keira  
Powell, Caroline  
Rees, Skye  
Richardson, Brittney  
Ricketts, Ceira  
Robinson, Dominique  
Townsend, Jamesha  
Walter, Christasia  
Watkins, Sarah  
Westbrook, Amanda  
Williams, Ashlea  
Williams, Quistelle

#### Men’s Track & Field

Abdi, Omar  
Ayi, Nii  
Bachelor, Tarik  
Billbrew, Christopher  
Bothwell, Tobias  
Bourke, Hunter  
Boyer, Lane  
Braddy, Neil  
Bradley, Tyler  
Bryant, Jordan  
Butler, Andrew  
Butler, La’ Shawn  
Butler, Phillip  
Cantero, Bryan  
Cattin Masson, Thomas  
Chinchar, Michael  
Cross, Caleb  
Eberhardt, Georg  
Efurd, Cameron  
Ellingsen, Brede  
Elliott, Rick  
Ewing, Samuel  
Fernandez, Eric  
Franks, Nathanael  
Gauntlett, Akheem  
Gillespie, Scott  
Golbek, Dwayne  
Golden, Michael  
Haile, Solomon  
Hamilton, Aaron  
Hamilton, Cobi  
Hanson, Caleb  
Heeger, Brandon  
Higgs, Raymond  
Holmes, Justin  
Kirbos, Matthew  
Kittelson, Noah  
Kocurek, Cory  
Laird, Luke  
Laube, Jorell  
Lazas, Kevin  
Momoh, Leoman  
Nii, Marek  
Nixon, Daniel  
Norman, William  
Pennington, Andrew

Phillips, Duncan  
Prentice, Terry  
Redwine, Robert  
Roberts, Dylan  
Russell, Patrick  
Skidmore, Benjamin  
Southard, Travis  
Sparks, Stuart  
Tuach, Dey  
Ulrey, Dorian  
Woods, Jeff

#### Women’s Track & Field

Alcide, Makeba  
Borge, Martine  
Brown, Stephanie  
Carpino, Rachel  
Cherry, Katelyn  
Coleman, Breeana  
Diebold, Tara  
Flowers, Gwendolyn  
George, Cali  
George, Regina  
Gillespie, Kristen  
Gorden, Rebecca  
Hesseltine, Kirsten  
Heymfield, Grace  
Hyter, Brittany  
Hyter, Brittany  
Isham, Ashley  
Jackson, Megan  
Johnson, Paige  
Johnson, Tiffanie  
Jones, Whitney  
Kegley, Lauren  
Keith, Kristen  
Kemp, Ivanique  
Learch, Samantha  
Luther, Natanya  
McCombs, Caroline  
Nowell, Danielle  
Orley, Leah  
Robison, Diane  
Rosen, Jillian  
Skage, Amalie  
Sutej, Tina  
Thompson, Shantel  
Walker, Miranda  
Weller, Megan  
Werner, Rachel  
Williams, Shelise  
Wood, Keri

#### Football

Adams, Joseph  
Allen, Jeffrey  
Allen, Kyle  
Ambrose, Damario  
Armbrust, Seth  
Ashley, James

Askew, LaVunce  
Bailey, Alvin  
Beauchum, Jatashun  
Bemberg, Jeff  
Bennett, Eric  
Bequette, Jake  
Berna, Colby  
Booth, Gareth  
Breeding, Dylan  
Brewer, Nick  
Bryan, Cameron  
Buehner, Brian  
Burton, Frederick  
Cacciarelli, Alex  
Cain, Dustin  
Calender, Ryan  
Camara, Eduardo  
Carr, Daunte  
Charpentier, Luke  
Childs, Greg  
Cleveland, Ben  
Coleman, Will  
Cook, Brey  
Cook, Grant  
Cox, Samuel  
Craine, Brett  
Crim, Rudell  
Crowell, Kareem  
Curtis, DeAnthony  
Davis, Alfred  
Davis, Niile  
Deacon, Tyler  
Dement, Charles  
Domiguez, Ray  
Evans, Caleb  
Farr, Ryan  
Feldt, Campbell  
Ford, Elton  
Franklin, Jerry  
Freeman, Randall  
Funderburk, Quinta  
Gatson, Greg  
Gervasi, Ray  
Gilbert, Tyler  
Gragg, Chris  
Green, Broderick  
Green, Jared  
Griffin, Telvin  
Gross, Jimmy  
Gunderson, Blake  
Hamilton, Cobi  
Harris, Bret  
Harris, Mark  
Hart, Jim  
Henson, Alfred  
Hendon, Javontee  
Hocker, Zachary  
Holmes, Price  
Horton, McKinley  
Humphrey, Maudrecus  
Hurd, David

#### Women’s Soccer

Jackson, Jeremiah  
Jarvis, Hunter  
Johnson, Dennis  
Jones, Austin  
Jones, DeQuinta  
Jones, Patrick  
Kelleybrew, Kaelon  
Lake, Jarrett  
Leon, Anthony  
Linton, Morgan  
Love, Jermaine  
Madison, Isaac  
Marshall, Alex  
McCray, Jr., Alan  
Miles-Nash, Colton  
Mitchell, Brandon  
Mitchell, Braylon  
Mitchell, Jerry  
Moss, Austin  
Nelson, Jerico  
Oden, Anthony  
Oxner, Seth  
Peacock, Jason  
Powers, Ryan  
Pyle, Brandon  
Rasner, Ross  
Ray, Lance  
Redmon, Eric  
Reimer, Brooks  
Richardson, Dennis  
Serrano, William  
Simek, Denton  
Smith, Christopher  
Smith, Darrell  
Stadther, Zach  
Stewart, Andru  
Stumon, Ivandricks  
Swanson, Travis  
Tate, Austin  
Tejada, Alex  
Thomas, Robert  
Thomas, Tramain  
Thomas, Zhamal  
Tuck, Crosby  
Turner, Alan  
Uekman, Garrett  
Villegas, Michael  
Wade, Marquel Denzel  
Walker, Jacoby  
Watkins, Ronald  
Whitlow, Darrell Allen  
Williams, Terrell  
Wilson, James  
Wingo, Ronnie  
Winston, Darius  
Wolford, Brandon  
Wortman, Justin  
Wright, Jarius  
Wright, Tenarius

#### Men’s Golf

Arvidsson, Christoffer  
Cappelen, Sebastian  
Cook, Austin  
Doramus, Joseph  
Eure, Joshua  
Marshall, James  
Meason, William  
Pearson, William  
Pettersson, Tobias  
Tracy, Ethan  
Vanden Huevel, Kevin

#### Women’s Golf

Carpenter, Rachel  
Lavy, Emma  
Podzielski, Emily  
Rees, Corinna  
Roberts, Meagan  
Shean, Kelli  
Tubert, Emily  
Vela, Victoria

#### Women’s Gymnastics

Bartlett, Stacy  
Bohonsky, Natalie  
Borsellino, Amy  
Grable, Katherine  
Howdeshell, Mariah  
Lewis, Kelci  
Lewis, Molly  
Pisani, Jaime  
Salmon, Shelby  
Salsberg, Jordan  
Salvatore, Genevieve  
Siebert, Andru  
Stout, Michelle  
Williams, Scarlett  
Zumwalde, Bailee

#### Women’s Soccer

Allison, Kelsey  
Anders, Kailey  
Atkins, Allison  
Authier, Callie  
Bolton, Samantha  
Carlson, Andrea  
Carlson, Rachel  
Chandler, Alexandria  
Davis, Margo  
DeJarlais, Yvonne  
Flores, Camille  
Foncham, Melanie  
Fryrear, Jennifer  
Givens, Jessie  
Green, Taylor  
Hallauer, Lauren  
Hudson, Brittany  
Jordan, Kendall

Labac, Bethany  
Locklear, Lauren  
McVean, Elizabeth  
Moskos, Erin  
O’Connor, Kelly  
O’Shea, Daniella  
Palmer, Evan  
Pastor, Laurel  
Singleton, Katherine  
Starrett, Alexandra  
Tidwell, Chelsea  
Williams, Britni  
Winston, Kendal

#### Softball

Breault, Courtney  
Brewer, Stephanie  
Bronkey, Sierra  
Burr, Macy  
Caldwell, Amanda  
Carden, Rebecca  
Clark, Morgan  
Cohen, Chelsea  
Gee, Jayme  
Geile, Amanda  
Griffiths, Brittany  
Jones, Kimberley  
Ketcher, Linnea  
Martindale, Ashley Elizabeth  
McGuirt, Elizabeth Layne  
McLemore, Hope  
Mort, Victoria  
Oprzedek, Clarisa  
Rambo, Jennifer  
Robison, Jessica  
Summerford, Amanda  
Wells, Lindsey

#### Women’s Swimming and Diving

Bargiachi, Gina  
Braun, Elizabeth  
Bugslag, Liana  
Fogel, Madeline  
Franklin, Chelsea  
Hertzler, Aubrey  
Howard, Sarah  
Hubbard, Courtney  
Keith, Kristen  
Korac, Gabriella  
Kucherich, Julia  
Largo, Ashley  
Lunkenheimer, Lisa  
Marks, Jamie  
Meinz, Alicia  
Menzel, Nicole  
Mercer, Carly  
Milborn, Molly  
Naylor, Keshia

Neumann, Erin  
O’Grady, Courtney  
Pena, Ameer  
Roman, Alexandra  
Schilling, Jilienne  
Smith, Haley  
Sutton, Alexandria  
Sverrisdottir, Sigurn  
Templin, Alison  
Tomlinson, Alyssa  
Totten, Erica  
Vance, Kelsea  
Whitbeck, Elizabeth  
Whitbeck, Katherine

#### Men’s Tennis

Fess, Halmon  
Harrison, Taj  
Hogan, Matthew  
Jeske, Manfred  
Lehmann, Gregoire  
Nott, Christopher  
Nott, Michael  
Spinazze, Nicholas  
Walters, Matthew  
Ward, Michael  
Zogaj, Nikolas

#### Women’s Tennis

Carbone, Emily Kate  
Frampton, Jade  
Lukomskaya, Katsiaryna  
Paulson, Claudine  
Roy, Stephanie  
Starkova, Valentina  
Sundaram, Kelsey  
Tigu, Anouk

#### Women’s Volleyball

Bautista, Phoebe  
Fairfield, Devan  
Anderson, Amanda  
Clarke, Cassandra  
Cleveland, Kendall  
Fournier, Brooke  
Heckelman, Kasey  
Johnson, Allison  
Koop, Hayley  
Norton, Jasmine  
Pavey, Clarissa  
Rhea, Mackenzie  
Santos Perez, Raymariely  
Stipanovich, Kelli  
Torres Lopez, Janellis  
Vazquez, Adriana  
Whitmore, Charmaine



# Sherry's World

BY JASON TORRENTE

PHOTOS BY EKATERINA ROMANOVA

The tallest building in downtown Fayetteville seems to be melting. White streaks drip down 150 feet of brick and mortar, the result of 30 years of oxidation, a visual effect like watered paint washing down a canvas.

Hillcrest Towers is a narrow building, twelve stories high, with wings reaching east and west. Each of its units has a balcony facing south over the Fayetteville Public Library, with a view of the sunsets in the south-west, over the Ozark Mountains. On balconies, bird feeders and window ornaments sway in the wind. On the eighth floor, a man paces from his balcony through the sliding glass door to his living room. He paces back out and pauses, looking down at something in his hands. He repeats this twice more. At the ground level patio another man sits at a picnic table, smoking alone. It's a sunny October day.

Hillcrest houses about 120 individuals, and it is called a "Senior Center," though this term is hard to

define. It is not a nursing home. Units are single-bedroom apartments furnished with standard appliances and furniture, not with hospital beds. Some of its residents receive assistance with their daily needs, but others are self-sufficient. To live at Hillcrest, an applicant should be 60 or older, or the spouse of someone 60 or older who attends the center. However, exceptions are sometimes made for younger persons with disabilities.

Four decades ago, before the additional ten floors were added, the Hillcrest was a two-story junior high school. Now those floors house the site manager's office, a resale shop, a community kitchen, the lobby / mail room and a community room with a big-screen television. An adjacent wing contains the offices of the Fayetteville Housing Authority.

Hillcrest's site manager is Sherri Brown, and Sherri has agreed to let me hang around the center for a few days, lend a hand here and there, and

learn about the place. She leads me to her office on the first floor and begins by showing me the monthly newsletter she publishes for the residents. The main column on Page 1 is called "Sherry's World." For November, she writes:

*"We are able to get Meals on Wheels, commodities and a host of many other things, so we do not go hungry. How thankful we should be. Hillcrest Towers offers a safe and affordable place to live. How thankful we should be... We have a van to take us to doctor appointments, grocery shopping and any other places we need to go. How thankful we should be..."*

Later pages contain the month's lunch menu and Hillcrest's mission as "an active center" for people of all ages. Information for where and how to vote on Election Day is also listed, along with a bulletin from a resident named Pat, offering rides to the polls.

I ask for a job and Sherri lets me staple the three-page newsletter. On the wall in front of me are note





cards with handwritten tenets in fluorescent pink, green, and yellow marker: Gossip kills the joy of life – Meet the needs of others – Run like you are in the race of your life – There is power in teamwork.

Sherri tells me she has tried to re-build Hillcrest's activities schedule, but it's been difficult, facing a sizeable cadre of reluctant tenants, limited time and all her other responsibilities. Her bookshelf holds Active Games and Contests – Creative Programming for Older Adults, the Senior Fitness Test Kit published by Human Kinetics, The Volunteer Recruitment Book, a few CPR guides and *Dr. Death*, a biography on Jack Kevorkian, by Jonathan Kellerman.

Sherri sends me to wander down the hall, have a look around. Across the building, at the service window of the Housing Authority office, a small child stands next to his mother as she applies for vouchers. She hands her pay stubs to the clerk. The little boy's red T-shirt shows a fish on a dinner plate and says, "I'm a Catch."

A paper sign catches my eye as I cross into the Hillcrest lobby:

MENS PANT SALE – WAS \$2.00 NOW \$.75 OR \$1.00.

Tenants have first choice of all items that show up in the resale store, and profits fund Tenant Association events. The store is down the hall, past Sherri's office. The women's section is twice the size of the men's, and shelves line the walls with glassware, vases, and picture frames. On the top shelf, a large tin sign with the Jagermeister logo reads "Live Life Loud."

A resident who looks to be in her 70s says hello and rounds the racks. She tells me her name is Lorraine. There's just enough space between the racks for her to maneuver her walker.

"I'm from Dumas, do you know where Dumas is?" She explains it's six hours away. Her voice is soft, her hair shoulder-length, white, unfrayed. "I'm looking at that," she says, pointing a few feet above her head. I hand her a softball-sized figurine of children by some dandelions. "My husband is buried there," she says, of Dumas. "My daughter's going to have to take me all the way back down there." She sounds amused at the thought. "I have 22 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren," she says. She grins, and soft creases form in their practiced places around her eyes. She says goodbye, hands the figurine back and leaves.

Lily and Myrtle are watching the shop today. They are both middle-aged, Lily with longer brown hair than Myrtle. Myrtle wears glasses.

Lily reads from a direct mail catalog. "One cat short of crazy: Cat Lady."

"Kathy," Myrtle says.

Lily agrees with her, and holds up a catalog page to show her a photo of a printed T-shirt. They have another exchange, Lily reading and Myrtle responding again, matching the name of a friend to the T-shirt print.

"You know," Myrtle says, "we could go get ourselves some T-shirts and make these on our own."

"Mm-hmm," Lily says. She looks at the catalog again. "'D-A-D-D: Dad's Against Daughters Dating.'"

Myrtle chuckles, but doesn't match a name with that one.

Lily reads, "I'm retired and you're not. Nah nah nah nah."

"It's 'nah na-na nah nah,'" Myrtle says, with the schoolyard sing-song inflection.

"Everything tastes better with ketchup," Lily says. "That'd be Jim."

Lily reads again, passing over an inappropriate word with silence, "I'm so old I can't remember where my — is."

Myrtle leans forward and whispers a name to her, and a blast of laughter comes from both of them. "Uh-huh, my goodness," Lily says. They catch their breath. Lily raises the catalog again, reading, "Remember, as far as anyone knows, we ARE a normal family."

If Hillcrest is a family then Sherri, the site director, is the family therapist. She was placed at Hillcrest through Experience Works, a program funded and directed by the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, which places retired or disabled persons in part-time jobs to give them a chance to keep working and be involved. She has worked there for a year and a half, which is about the average turnover for her position. While attending to the daily affairs of 120 less-than-independent tenants, she does the paperwork behind the scenes, filing reports on bus and van usage, and reorganizing and digitizing the file system.

Many changes around Hillcrest hinge on funding. The Area Agency on Aging helped them afford the new kitchen. The clean, stainless steel additions

shine in the light that falls in from the hallway: a new dishwasher, commercial-sized fridge and twin ovens. They will still be using Meals On Wheels, Sherri says, but they will switch from pre-packaged trays to cafeteria-style serving. As before, the new kitchen will be available for tenant use. Thanksgiving is around the corner, and more than a few residents will be sharing that dinner with their Hillcrest family.

Rent adjustments and financial help with the costs assisted living are not always enough to live by, so the community supports each other. For Meals on Wheels, Hillcrest's monthly lunch calendar reads, "A \$2.50 donation for your meal is greatly needed and appreciated!!!" Many residents on disability or Social Security cannot afford to donate each week, but others balance that by giving considerably more than they're asked. Others pitch-in by taking shifts in the resale shop or the kitchen.

There was nothing on the activities calendar when Sherri arrived. "We're trying to build it back up," she says. She often uses "we", sharing the credit with volunteers and tenants, but also confides that she needs more time, more support.

Sherri's not new to organizing. She worked for the Democratic National Committee years ago, and is still highly involved. "I know a lot of famous people, I've met presidents, political people. And I treat these people," she says, referring to Hillcrest, "the same way I treat everyone else. That's how it should be." She speaks with her hands, with high energy hiding behind a calm smile. "Most of our residents are just people who are in hard times," she says, "Some of them are disabled, and need assistance." She herself has lived with a disability since birth, a defect in her hands that left her missing some digits. Typing and other fine motor skills are a challenge, but she more than manages. She's long been an advocate for people with disabilities, and recently helped break open a scandal in a men's group home in Iowa, where home organizers were garnishing the wages of residents, most of whom had emotional and mental problems. "I called a reporter from the Des Moines Register on a Monday," Sherri says, "and on that Wednesday, police were raiding the place."

Keeping the peace in Hillcrest is another of Sherri's unofficial duties. Back in October, the front-page "Sherri's World" column read:

*"As always I want to remind everyone to be kind to one another. There is too much gossip and bad mouth-*



ing and it must stop... We are all adults here and I expect everyone to act as an adult."

The Halloween costume party is approaching this weekend, and there's an underlying tension about the activity: Sherri struggles to bring tenants together, and always runs the risk that irritable residents may clash.

Taped to the glass door of the community room, a printed page reads:

AS YOU ENTER THIS CENTER  
PLEASE CHECK  
ATTITUDE AT  
THE DOOR  
NO CURSING  
OR  
DISRESPECT TO OTHERS

Sherri keeps busy with the day-to-day needs of tenants, and sometimes those with harsher attitudes can be overwhelming. They tend to stroll straight into her office, she says. "But I treat them all the same. If I'm on the phone or in the middle of something, they just have to wait. And most of them can respect that." It's difficult to limit her hours to twenty, since she's the go-to person for everything. "If I'm ever not here, they go nuts. I pull into the parking lot in the morning, and they wait outside my car." She raises her hands in a gesture that says, "What can you do?"

She stays efficient and positive, but she admits this is not her favorite kind of work. She came for the benefits, because her husband is temporarily unemployed. Once he finds work, she says, she'll be cycling out.

It seems that by the time her activities schedule gains momentum, the job will be handed over to someone else, someone who will have to build a new rapport with residents and start again, at square one.

It's 1:00 p.m. on October 28, and the Halloween party has officially started. Sherri and I have set the cookies, the punch, the pumpkins and decorating supplies in the TV room. Three strands of intertwined orange and black ribbons cross the room overhead, and reflective letters taped over the old upright piano read Happy Halloween. There will be prizes for best pumpkin decoration and best costume. Folding chairs wait to be filled on the beige linoleum floor. Besides us, there are two people in the room.

It's hard to get people off the couch or out of bed, she says. I ask if we could go door-to-door, but she says, no, many of them wouldn't like that at all. One by one, people filter in. A few women sit at the table nearest the television. A couple in their thirties, deaf and signing to one another, sit by the brown accordion partition.

"Where's the music?" someone asks.

One of the ladies by the television says, "The boom box is busted." A CD player the size of an alarm clock sits in Sherri's office, out of commission for months.

One man is in costume, as is his dog, a yellow Labrador with a purple wig – something between Rasta and Raggedy Ann – covering her eyes and ears. The man introduces himself as Tim. He has a low, resonant voice and a warm handshake, from a hand that seems made for tearing phone books in half. His wavy hair drops nearly to his elbows, and two spiraling plastic demon's horns grow from his head.

Twenty minutes later, the room is half-full. Four pumpkins are entered in the decorating contest, two of which are Sherri's and a volunteer's.

A woman enters to light applause and compliments on her homemade bird outfit: rainbow ribbons, multicolored feathers, and beige cloth gloves for talons. She's introduced as Elizabeth. A shoe-in for best costume. A few minutes later another woman arrives, wearing a black T-shirt and faded pink shower cap, with black pants and a floral-printed skirt over them.

"Are you going for a bathe?" Elizabeth asks her.

"Where's the music?" a new voice asks.

Sherri reminds them that the boom box doesn't work. I'm beginning to see what she means about being overwhelmed. She crisscrosses the floor, offering activities and bringing people snacks. They call out to her in a distant, impersonal way.

Near the television a maxim is mounted on the wall in bronze-gilt letters. Over the years, many let-

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**VOTED BEST PIZZA BY THE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS TRAVELER**

ters have fallen off and been replaced a different font. Some are missing altogether. It reads:

ONLY BY HARMONY AND THE  
UNION OF MANY, CAN ANY  
GREAT GOOD \_\_\_ ME UNTO THE  
GENERATIONS \_\_\_F MEN.  
THE ESSENES

The Essenes were a Jewish religious group around 2,000 years ago, commonly believed to have written the Dead Sea Scrolls. They engaged in various practices of abstinence and self-denial, including voluntary poverty. People at Hillcrest say the words have been there, on the wall, since before they can remember.

The quotation calls to mind the community ethic often present in a specialized home like Hillcrest, but its mismatched and fallen letters call to mind, even more clearly, that such community is in decline.

Sherri says, "It's Halloween, let's hear some scary stories."

"I've got a scary story," Tim says. His voice commands the room. "I was married to a blonde for fifteen years."

Scattered laughter. A female voice shouts from the back of the room, "I was married!"

Sherri organizes a costume parade. Conversations carry on. "The judging is going on," Sherri says, with blatant desperation in her voice now.

After the prizes (Wal-Mart gift cards) are awarded, people start to shuffle from the room. Kyra and Frieda, Sherri's bosses from the Housing Authority who appeared briefly to judge the contest, abscond within moments.

The woman wearing the shower cap stands, removes it, and runs a hand over her permed brown hair, her eyes on something in the distance. Without a word to the others standing a few feet away, she gathers her things to go upstairs.

Sherri keeps moving, checking on the food, cleaning up the crafts supplies. A middle-aged woman enters wearing a black leather jacket over a black sweatshirt. She's younger than most of the others in the room.

Sherri says to her, "You missed the party, but you made it just in time to grab some cookies."

"I'm diabetic," she says. "You know I can't have none. What're you trying to do, kill me?" One of her hands rests on her hip, the other flutters in the air while she talks. She's sporting a pair of purple suede boots and a leather jacket, unzipped to show a black sweatshirt. The shirt shows a stick figure in white with a flustered expression, above the word "Whatever."

She tells me her name is Lyndia, and quickly adds, "Everybody calls me Boo." Boo's eyebrows arch. "Problem child," she says. The sharp scent of wine is on her breath, but she does not sway, does not seem unfocused. She tells Sherri with genuine enthusiasm that the room looks nice.

A nurse with violet lipstick and pink scrubs helps pack to-go bags of snacks for a few of the ladies standing near the snack table. Others pack bags of their own. The cookies are the crispy dry kind, the size of a half-dollar, with grinning pumpkins stamped into the top.

One woman in a hooded blue work jacket, who wasn't in attendance until a moment ago, gestures another woman's snack bag. "Look at her," she says with

attitude, pointing. "See how many she got?"

"Shut up," the accused woman says, not looking up. She scans the table but doesn't select any more cookies yet.

"It's okay," the nurse says.

"She can't have that many," the first woman says, visibly annoyed now. She nods repeatedly, at nothing in particular, as if building up steam. She raises her voice. "She can't." She grabs another handful of cookies for herself.

"Bullshit I can't," the second woman says. Her arms are tense at her sides, hands in fists.

"You can't eat all that."

The second woman's voice gets very loud and suddenly everyone in the room is looking. "You shut the fuck up," she shouts. She glares at the woman in the work jacket, but then puts her attention back to the cookies, watching her antagonist from the top of her eyes.

Sherri is striding over to sort things out. "What's wrong?" she says.

"I'm gonna slap that bitch," the second woman says, pointing again at her accuser.

Sherri's reaction is calm. The two lay out their cases over one another in escalating volume as Sherri listens. They verge again on brawling. Boo strolls over.

"Come on, don't worry about her," Boo says to one of the women. "Look at me," she says. "I can't even have none." Her hand finds her hip again. "And imagine what I go through, with slamming doors at two o'clock in the morning." Boo is referring to her diabetes and her loud neighbor upstairs. She elaborates on her theory, that the neighbor slams doors and cabinets, runs his A/C vent on high, and cooks foods with strong scents that make her want to wretch. He plans to do all this at strategic hours, just to spite her.

As Boo speaks, the attention effectively shifts from the action to her, diffusing the situation.

Sherri plays devil's advocate, and reminds Boo about the neighbor's hearing impairment.

"I know he's deaf," Boo says, "But he knows an on-off switch when he sees it."

Later, in her office, Sherri explains that tenants have to understand each others' particular challenges and quirks. And Boo, she explains with a wry smile, isn't always known for being the peacemaker.

Michael, wiry and balanced like a distance runner, is talking with Sherri in her office. He helped set-up and take-down the Halloween party. Michael, like Sherri, was placed at Hillcrest by the Experience Works program. He holds a college degree, and worked as a portrait photographer for twenty-five years. When the digital revolution came to the industry, he had to either upgrade his equipment or to make a career change, as he describes it. He opened a bed-and-breakfast in Costa Rica. That venture went fairly well, until the U.S. economy tanked and cut off most of his business. "We lost everything," he says. "Everything."

For his first two months straight, although it was not part of his specific job description, he gave Hillcrest a thorough cleaning—the first, he says, the place had received in many, many years. He scraped layers of gunk from commodes and sinks, and cleaned out dust bunnies so large, hiding in the dank corners of storage rooms, that they actually resembled real bunnies. He doesn't even want to talk about the bugs.

Glenda, who runs Hillcrest's van service, walks in with her weekly report. She, Sherri, and Michael go outside on Sherri's small cement balcony for a cigarette.

A gust of wind blows in the door as they rush to slide it shut behind them, and a few monthly newsletters flip from the stack. While Sherri tells Glenda about the shouting match that ended the Halloween



"Whenever you are retired, you are going to do something with yourself", according to Lester Choates. Lester entertains himself with making kites and tiny origami cranes.

party, Michael tells me about the building's exterior. He's proud of the windows. It took multiple solvents, applied over and over again, to get the waxy haze off. I ask about the white streaks, the oxidation of the brick and mortar, and he says it looks like a job for a pro. He's not sure when the administration will get to that.

Minutes later, back inside, Sherri takes a seat at her desk.

A short woman appears in the doorway. "We're about out of coffee," the woman says. Sherri makes a note and promises to get more.

A tall man enters, skinny, shy looking, in sneakers and a camouflage hat and glasses, with dusty gray-brown hair sticking out around his cap. Sherri waves him in. Spots of white paint dot his jeans, which are a bit too short for his long legs. She introduces him as David.

"Am I too early?" he says to Sherri. "There was a change of plan, I thought I was only going to get to work a few hours today but there was a major change of plan." His posture shows fatigue.

Sherri has prepared a form for him, an appeal for disability benefits. David has been denied once so far. She answers a few of his questions about the appeals process. He signs the form.

"Okay," Sherri says. "I'm going to put this in the mail, and then we're going to wait." She exhales. "Wait again."

"Wait again," David echoes. There's a tone of mild amusement in his voice. He's a man who has done his share of waiting.

Sherri hands David his copy of the form. He says a pleasant goodbye and exits, his thin knees bending a little more than expected, an extra dip to absorb each step.

Sherri puts the second carbon-copy in his file and folds the remaining two layers into an already addressed envelope. She will mail it for him, and she will make a special point to get coffee grounds and more stamps on her way home. Tomorrow after lunch, she will try again to convince a man, who is in his seventies, to apply for the Social Security checks which he, so far, has stubbornly refused to apply for, even though his finances are stretched to the limit. His reason? "He doesn't want the government to have his information," she says. "Something like that." She shrugs. Tomorrow she will bring in the new container of coffee grounds. She will be at Hillcrest for four hours, and the first tenant question will reach her as she breaches the lobby, or possibly out in the parking lot. She will set the stack of November newsletters in the lobby, in hopes that each resident will pick one up. ■



The new site manager, Larry Floyd, spends the morning in the community kitchen, handing out meals and talking with the tenants over a cup of coffee. "It's really interesting to learn their backgrounds and hear about the things they achieved in their life. Believe me, they all have done something," he said.

## DESIRE, SEX & POWER IN MUSIC VIDEO



### Dreamworlds 3 (Abridged Version)

Documentary Showing and Forum

(an update of Sut Jhally's classic documentary about desire, sex, and power in music video)

Thursday – April 14, 2011

6:30pm Old Main Giffels Auditorium

co-sponsored by ASG and RESPECT

a Sexual Assault Awareness Month Event

<http://respect.uark.edu>

(a program of STAR Central Office of the Pat Walker Health Center)



open mic & acoustic music with

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april 6th - 7:00 pm - Rz's Coffeehouse

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For more information contact: [upcoffee@uark.edu](mailto:upcoffee@uark.edu)

Anyone requiring special services related to disabilities is asked to call 575-5255 at least five working days in advance so that proper accommodations may be made.

## Upcoming Events



**4.6**  
Invisible Children  
Movie & Reception  
6 p.m. in Union Theater

**4.7**  
Student Comedy  
Applications Due by 5 p.m.

Comedians Ali Wong  
& Nick Thune  
8-9 p.m. in Union Theater

**4.8**  
FNL  
9 p.m. - 1 a.m. in Union

**4.14**  
Misster Arkansas -  
Drag Competition  
7-9 p.m. in Ballroom

**4.18-22**  
Student Film Festival  
6 p.m. in Video Theater

**4.18**  
Student Comedy Competition  
8 p.m. in Ballroom

**4.20**  
Jason Escape  
12:30 - 1:30 p.m. in Union Mall

Poet Andrea Gibson  
7-9 p.m. in RZ's

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# INFAMOUS

BY DELCIE KINCAID

PHOTOS BY EMILY POTTS

## FRIDAY

The Hogeve Mall, formally know as ZipTrip, is not a mall at all. It is a run-down convenience store situated at several crossroads. One road will lead you to Fayetteville, another West Fork, or Prairie Grove or, if you go the fourth way, anywhere you want. You can end up at the Devil's Den state park, or eventually the Walmart in Van Buren and, according to Janet, the cashier on duty, you can even take it back to Prairie Grove and then end up right back at the Hogeve Mall.

Located 13 miles from Fayetteville, five miles from West Fork, six miles from Prairie Grove, 52 miles from Van Buren, and 16 from Devil's Den, the Hogeve Mall sits in relative solitude as a place for the locals who live on sprawling farms to make human contact from time to time.

The Hogeve Mall is located where Hwy. 156 and Hwy. 265 cross each other. Hwy 265 is part of what is known as the historic Butterfield Overland Mail Trail, which ran through Hogeve in the 1850s. Janet says the reason the trail came through here is because of the valley between two rivers, the Illinois and the White.

Unfortunately, the Hogeve Mall wouldn't be around for a hundred or so years and the stagecoaches just kept going. The Illinois River is directly behind the Hogeve Mall. Penny, a part-time clerk from the state of Illinois, says she does get angry when people pronounce the "s" on the end.

Even though there are many escape routes —

many roads leading away — the Hogeve Mall is rarely a victim of crime. Janet said she recalls one robbery; although she wasn't on duty, she knows the story: "This lady comes in, leaves her mother and kids in the car, robs the place, then goes to use the restroom. The clerk ran over and stuck a chair under the door knob, and called the police," she says. And about a year ago, someone kept breaking the front doors. "We'd get it fixed then they'd do it again."

They caught the kid who did it because he and his mom were trying to sell cigarettes real cheap around Hogeve and someone snatched, Janet says.

Another time, someone punched a hole in the wall on the far end of the store to gain entry, she says. From the outside, the remnants of that break-in are still obvious with a patch job of two new gray blocks squeezed into the stark whiteness of the others.

The goal for Janet's till tonight is \$350. It's a personal goal, she says, it isn't required. Which is good because she never once tries to sell anything other than what the customer brings to the counter. A

stroke of the Z key on the register shows she is at \$112 so far. But it's still early. "I told Jim Bob [the manager] I was going to get to \$400 one night," Janet said. "But I only made it to \$365." Janet's goals don't show much beyond that. The parking lot is a mess — trash and leaves rolling around in front of the door and collecting along the front lawn and ditch. The inside is a mess with greasy, dusty electrical cords splayed across the ceiling, wrapped through each other and

woven through the conduit that link the fluorescent lights. The gas pumps outside are coming apart, the plastic faces floppy and falling off. One pump

handle is wrapped in a disintegrating plastic bag. It hasn't worked for two years, according to Penny, the Sunday morning clerk. Flattened cardboard boxes from the first shift are stacked in a translucent trash bag and sit on a table in the back of the store, well on the way to the dumpster. Every customer who wants a soda from the cooler in the back has to walk past that bag of cardboard.

Chester and Glen hang out in the store today.

**He says the recession has caused people to buy less merchandise.**

**"They just buy what they really need," he says. "Like gas and cigarettes."**

Like most of the customers who hang out, they are cattle farmers who don't do much farming anymore. They come and go throughout the day and quickly become familiar faces. They carry on a random conversation with each other. "I gotta go put my bumper back on," Chester says. He takes a sip of coffee from his stained Styrofoam cup.

Just then, a box falls out of the back of a work truck at the stop sign out front and Glen sees it happen. Glen swings the door open and tries to gesture to the driver, who is oblivious. A lady in a car behind the truck gets out and retrieves the box, which is apparently heavy, and barrels down the road after them. A moment later, Chester and Glen notice there is something else out there in the road.

"Is that a box?" Chester asks.

"I dunno," one of them says.

"Maybe it's a board," Janet says.

"I think it's a box. Well, no, I don't know."

This goes for about a minute until Glen takes it upon himself to go find out.

All eyes are on him as he makes his way out to the road and the box, maybe board. Chester and Janet continue to struggle to figure it out — Glen is still too far away to tell. But Glen knows, he has reached the object and has it in his hand. It seems to be killing them that he knows and they don't. The banter begins again.

"Looks like a box, well, no, maybe it's a board," one of them says.

"I think it is a board. Yeah. Or well..." Glen appears to be walking as slowly as possible while the anticipation sucks all the oxygen out of the Hogeve Mall.

Then, Glen tosses it into the back of his truck. *Kerdalunk*. It's a board.

In \$10 and \$20 increments, gas is sold. Mainly because the clients are poor, are filling gas cans or don't seem to want to fool with guessing what amount their tank might hold. It is all prepay, unless you're a regular. The pumps aren't fitted with a credit card swipe mechanism, which means every gas customer has to actually walk inside the store.

The words "No Problem!" are spray-painted on the dingy white block wall to the left of the double glass doors. The artist apparently didn't realize how much space the words would take up and had to turn the phrase sideways and upwards about halfway through, ending up with the shape of a fuzzy "J." A blue farm tractor sits at the diesel pump, its owner mingling inside with the others.

There are four rows of shelves in the store. They hold typical convenience store items: candy bars, potato chips, two-liter soda bottles. But because the store is the only thing for miles around, Jim Bob stocks them with emergency items such as peaches, wasp spray and fishing tackle. He banks on customer's emergency needs. A can of wasp spray that would sell in Fayetteville for \$3 sells for \$9.79 in Hogeve. A can of peaches is \$2 and a single hot and spicy dill pickle costs \$1.39. There are two types of sunglasses to choose from: safety glasses or the kind with a camouflage design. There is a single T-shirt for sale. It's black with a screen-print design that reads: *What happens at the cop convention stays at the cop convention* on the front and the back. The back, though, has a colorful print of big-boobed women dressed in sexy cop uniforms mingling with what appear to be real cops who are whooping it up, eating donuts and drinking beer. It costs \$19.99.

## SATURDAY

Chester is in the store the next morning. Jim Bob is manning the cash register and another regular, Randy, is keeping close guard of the door. Jim Bob is the manager of the Hogeve Mall. His family bought



Cashier Janet shares stores about local residents and highlights the time when there was only one phone in the entire town, in February 2011.

it in the '80s and he has worked there on and off ever since. He gets to make decisions based on the income of the store, such as if he'll lay everybody off, which he did two years ago. Or, if he'll start selling pizza again. He says the recession has caused people to buy less merchandise. "They just buy what they really need," he says. "Like gas and cigarettes."

Jim Bob asks Randy what he's doing today.

"I'm gonna help him cut pigs," Randy says, gesturing towards Chester.

Just then, Jack comes ambling in. He places himself between Randy and Chester and barks, "You cut them pigs yet?" He turns to Randy and tells him the pecking order for the event. "You sit on them, I'll cut them. That way I don't get any pig piss in my boots." Cutting pigs is a friendly way of saying 'castration.'

"How long is this gonna take?" Chester asks Jack.

Jack looks at both men, "An hour. If it takes more than six minutes a hog, there's something wrong." There were 12 pigs, Chester says the next day, and they only got to half of them.

Jim Bob says 9:30 a.m. is when things start percolating around here. "People start getting around and all." After 9:30 comes and goes, he says 10:30 is when things really start picking up.

There are five surveillance cameras strategically placed in upper corners throughout the store. There are attached by that series of visible wiring on the ceiling, which is made of smooth and sagging shower board. Each camera top is coated with a thick grey fuzz. Peeny says they work but they seemed to have been moved.



Store manager Jim Bob works on fixing the gas pump on a rainy Monday morning. While working on one of few pre-pay pumps outside, locals stop in mainly for conversation and coffee.

"They aren't angled where they're supposed to be," she says, explaining where each and every one should be pointing but aren't.

Three rows of bare two-tube fluorescent lights run from the back to the front. There are 10 lights completely burned out; 12 if you count the ones over the cash register that flicker as a signal they are well on their way. Jim Bob says he'll replace them when enough go out to use a whole box worth of new ones.

Jim Bob's dad and brother bought ZipTrip 25 years ago. They immediately doubled its size, making it about 1,800 square feet. Jim Bob proudly

points to a picture on the wall opposite the cashier area. It is a faded aerial shot depicting the building and a shop on the property when his family first purchased it. Now, the building is bigger and the shop that looked like it was hopping in the picture sits wrapped in long weeds, trees sprouting from its foundation.

A guy people call Ogden comes in for three coffee refills. He's a retired contractor.

An old tiny Mazda truck pulls up outside and a tall lean man unfolds himself from the drivers seat and comes in.

"Morning, Mark," Jim Bob said.

"Morning." Mark is a

farmer who has done pretty well for himself. But like everyone else who comes in, you can't tell who has what. "They're all eclectic," Jim Bob said later. "And frugal."

All three know each other. They start talking about this and that until the conversation moves into whether beer has more foam in higher elevations. They all suppose they'll have to go find out for themselves and laugh.

"Well, you know, below the equator, when you flush a toilet the water spins the other way," Mark said. They know.

"And," he said with a marked determination of making a point, "Right over

the equator it goes straight down the hole." Ogden, about to walk out the door, stops for a second, "That's bullshit." He turns to out.

Mark pipes up, points at him, "Yes it does, yes it does, you look it up."

Ogden starts to drive off then stops in front. Mark pushes the door open.

Ogden asks Mark if he's sure about that. "Yep," says Mark and pulls the door closed.

Jim Bob and Mark laugh. "That's gonna bother him all day," Mark says.

"I know we look like tourists," a lady says as she briskly pushes the door open. The

woman is wearing her much taller husband's Carhart jacket, and her husband is in Wranglers, a western shirt and a ball cap that says "Devil's Den."

They don't look like tourists at all, she just thinks they do.

They live 300 miles away near Texarkana. "Yeah, a pretty long way," the husband says. We had to come by and see the Hogeye Mall, he laughs. They purchase a refillable Hogeye Mall travel mug as proof of their being there. The woman, all excitement gone from her face, takes one more disappointed look around the store before they walk out. "Thanks/" ■

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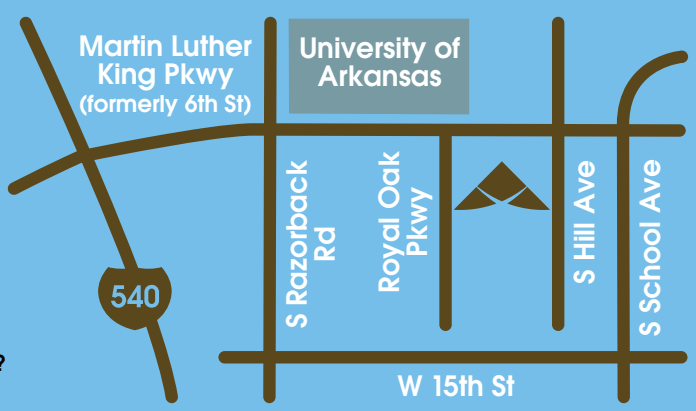
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