

# Pulse

BAXTER HEALTH

SPRING 2023  
VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 2

## FISHING & FATHERHOOD

Dr. Lucas Bradley balances a career and a growing family while making waves as a professional angler

*pg. 28*

## A HEARTFELT CONNECTION

The inspiring bond between a retiree and an EMT

*pg. 22*



*plus*

## BASEBALL STARDOM TO MEDICAL EXPERTISE:

Dr. Jason McConnell's remarkable journey to Mountain Home

*pg. 24*



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# CONTENTS

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28

## Neurosurgeon's Unexpected Passion

Neurosurgeon-turned-angler Dr. Lucas Bradley's competitive spirit fuels rapid rise in professional angling world.

## FEATURES

### 15 | Baxter Health's Yellow Army

A formidable force of compassion and service

### 19 | Legacy of Compassion

Shannon Nachtigal's journey to elevate nursing standards

### 22 | Heartfelt Connection

An unexpected friendship reminds us of the power of gratitude and human connection



19

### 24 | From Baseball Dreams to Healing Hands

Dr. Jason McConnell's inspiring journey from the diamond to medicine

### 28 | Fishing and Fatherhood

Dr. Bradley balances a career and a growing family while making waves as a professional angler

## IN EVERY ISSUE

- 06 Letter from the President & CEO
- 08 News & Briefs
- 10 Calendar
- 30 Wellness
- 34 Nutrition
- 40 Last Word



24

**On the cover:** Dr. Lucas Bradley fishing with his sons on Bull Shoals Lake.  
**PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE.**

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# PASSION, PURPOSE, AND HEALING

In this issue, we spotlight an array of remarkable stories that capture the essence of healthcare, the human spirit, and the passions that fuel us.

We delve into the extraordinary lives of two local doctors, Dr. Jason McConnell and Dr. Lucas Bradley, and their stories beyond their medical practices. Our feature story takes you on Dr. Bradley's journey as a neurosurgeon and his new venture as a professional angler, proving that personal growth doesn't end with a medical degree. Equally intriguing is Dr. McConnell's journey from former professional baseball player to orthopaedic surgeon. His story, proof of his dedication and adaptability, is sure to inspire.

We also pay tribute to Shannon Nachtigal, a nurse par excellence, who retired after an incredible career. From her humble beginnings to becoming Baxter Health's chief nursing officer, Shannon's journey is a testament to her unyielding spirit and unwavering commitment, leaving behind an impactful legacy.

We bring you a heartwarming narrative of an unexpected friendship formed amidst crisis. Rebecca Johnson, patient, and James Pinkston, a nurse and paramedic, formed a bond built on gratitude and mutual respect following Johnson's heart attack incident. Their story is a poignant reminder of the profound human connections that often form in moments of crisis.

Lastly, we explore the health benefits of hiking in the Ozarks, a refreshing reminder of the therapeutic power of nature and the sanctuary available to us in the outdoors.

These narratives capture the spirit of resilience, the power of human connection, and the importance of balancing work with our passions. We hope these stories inspire you, reaffirm your faith in the human spirit, and encourage you to embrace the healing power of nature.

With gratitude,



**RON PETERSON**  
President/Chief Executive Officer  
Baxter Health



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES MOORE

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MOVERS AND NEWCOMERS

+ INTRODUCING BAXTER HEALTH'S MEDICAL ASSISTANT RESIDENCY

Baxter Health proudly introduces its Medical Assistant Residency Program, offering aspiring medical assistants a comprehensive learning experience to launch their healthcare careers. The program requires no prior medical background or college degree, making it ideal for those pursuing careers in ambulatory/clinical settings.

This paid three-week program provides hands-on training, a \$1,000 bonus upon employment, and competitive benefits. Baxter Health CEO Ron Peterson emphasized the organization's commitment to developing tomorrow's healthcare workforce and invites passionate individuals to join this exciting opportunity to gain skills, knowledge and confidence as successful medical assistants.



**ALISON L. HUMPHREY, MD**  
**ALLERGIST/IMMUNOLOGIST AND PEDIATRICIAN**

Baxter Health is pleased to welcome Dr. Alison L. Humphrey, a board-certified allergist/immunologist and pediatrician, to our medical staff. Dr. Humphrey joined Mountain Home ENT & Allergy alongside her husband, Dr. Eric Rosenberger. She graduated summa cum laude from Texas Christian University and completed her medical training at the University of Texas Medical Branch and Children's Mercy Hospital. Dr. Humphrey brings her passion for medicine and active lifestyle to Baxter Health, having practiced in Illinois and Texas before moving to Mountain Home.



**ERIC S. ROSENBERGER, MD**  
**FACIAL PLASTIC SURGEON AND OTOLARYNGOLOGIST**

Baxter Health warmly welcomes Dr. Eric S. Rosenberger, a board-certified facial

plastic surgeon and otolaryngologist, to the medical staff. Joining his wife, Dr. Alison Humphrey, at Mountain Home ENT & Allergy, Dr. Rosenberger earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin and his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch. He completed an otolaryngology residency at the University of Kansas Medical Center and a facial plastic surgery fellowship at UI Health. Certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology and Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Dr. Rosenberger enjoys various outdoor activities in the Twin Lakes area.



**SCOTT FERGUSON, MD**  
**UROLOGIST**

Baxter Health welcomes urologist Dr. Scott F. Ferguson to our medical staff, announcing the opening of Baxter Health Urology Clinic in Harrison. Dr. Ferguson, who has served the Harrison community for over 25 years, began seeing patients at 715 West Sherman Avenue, Suite A, on February 1st. A graduate of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, he is married to Dr. Max Ann Ferguson and enjoys outdoor activities and training retrievers.

+ BAXTER HEALTH FILLS KEY LEADERSHIP ROLES WITH INTERNAL TALENT

Baxter Health recently announced the promotion of three internal executives to fill key leadership roles in the administration's Senior Leadership Team. These promotions solidify Baxter Health's commitment to remaining independent, strategically comprehensive and community-focused while preparing for the future. "The newly promoted senior leaders possess impressive professional backgrounds and have displayed a dedicated commitment to Baxter Health's mission to provide compassionate care beyond measure," said Ron Peterson, President/CEO. "We are confident their presence will not only be felt within Baxter Health but also throughout the communities we serve."



**RACHEL GILBERT, MSN, RN**  
**VICE PRESIDENT, CHIEF NURSING OFFICER**

Rachel Gilbert is the new Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer at Baxter Health. Starting as a nurse tech in 2004, her career progression includes multiple nursing roles, culminating in her recent position as Nurse Director of the Women & Newborn Care Center. An alumn of Arkansas Tech University in Russellville and Chamberlain College of Nursing, her academic achievements and professional experience make her a fitting leader for Baxter Health. Her strong nursing skills, combined with her dedication to patient care, will undoubtedly uphold Baxter Health's commitment to healthcare excellence.



**BRIAN BARNETT**  
**VICE PRESIDENT, PHYSICIAN ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Brian Barnett has accepted the position of Vice President of Physician Enterprise and Business Development. He began his career at Baxter Health in 2010 as a nurse tech and has held various positions in the local medical community throughout his career. This includes experience as Director of Business Development, Patient Experience Specialist, Charge Nurse and three years as the Director of the Mountain Home VA Clinic. Brian received his associate degree in nursing from Arkansas State University and his bachelor of science in business administration from the University of Arkansas.



**TOBIAS PUGSLEY**  
**VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Tobias Pugsley has accepted the position of Vice President of Marketing and Communications. He began his career at Baxter Health in 2017 as the Director of Marketing. Prior to joining Baxter Health, Tobias held a number of marketing positions including Chief Marketing Officer for VisionAmp Marketing in Mountain Home, account manager for The Richards Group in Dallas, Texas, and new business account executive for Ogilvy North America in New York. Tobias received his bachelor of science in communications from Evangel University and his MBA from Southern New Hampshire University.



+ TOP 100 IN RURAL HEALTH

Baxter Health is proud to be recognized as a 2023 Top 100 Rural Health and Community Hospital by the Chartis Center for Rural Health for excellence in providing quality, affordable care in rural communities. CEO Ron Peterson attributed the honor to the dedication of staff and providers, emphasizing their daily commitment to excellent care.

Baxter Health is one of only two hospitals in its region to receive this recognition, joining just 13% of rural hospitals nationwide. Peterson emphasized that the award reflects not only the hospital but the entire community's shared vision for excellent healthcare.



# CALENDAR

JUNE 2023–  
AUGUST 2023

16

of August

**LUNCH & LEARN:**  
Health Benefits of  
Massage & Mental  
Health with Eva  
Bailey, LMT

Peitz Cancer Support  
House, noon.

## JUNE

June 15

**DEMENTIA 101**

Mruk Family Center  
on Aging, 1 p.m.

June 20

**LUNCH &  
LEARN, Urinary  
Incontinence in  
Women: Symptoms  
and Causes with  
Amanda Thornton,  
APRN, Schliemann  
Center for Women's  
Health, noon.**

June 21

**MANAGING  
LONG TERM SIDE  
EFFECTS, Heather  
Hammonds MD,  
CAQSM, DipABLM,  
Peitz Cancer Support  
House, noon.**

June 22

**GIRLS' NIGHT OUT:  
SEXUAL HEALTH  
& AGING with Dr.  
Andrea Bounds,  
Regional Family  
Medicine, 6 p.m.**

June 27

**ORAL SIDE  
EFFECTS & CARE  
with Jill Meyer-  
Lippert, RDH, Peitz  
Cancer Support  
House, noon.**

## JULY

July 12

**LUNCH & LEARN,  
Demystifying  
your Lab Results**

with Heather  
Hammonds, MD,  
CAQSM, DipABLM  
Peitz Cancer Support  
House, noon.

July 20

**DEMENTIA 101  
WITH EMPATHY,  
Mruk Family Center  
on Aging, 1 p.m.**

## AUGUST

August 10

**POSITIVE  
APPROACH TO  
CARE IN DEMENTIA**  
Mruk Family Center  
on Aging, 1-3 p.m.

August 16

**FAVORITE SENIOR-  
FRIENDLY KITCHEN  
GADGETS, Mruk  
Family Center on  
Aging, 3 p.m.**

## RECURRING

**Mruk Family  
Center on Aging  
AARP Smart Driver  
Course** Monthly, 4th  
Wednesday,  
12 p.m. - 4 p.m.,  
\$20 AARP Members,  
\$25 Non-Members

**Better Breathers  
Support** Monthly, 2nd  
Friday, 2 p.m.

**Dementia Cargiver  
Support** Monthly, 4th  
Thursday, 1 p.m.

**Fit & Fab  
for Women**

Strengthening and  
balance, Tuesday and  
Thursday, 9:15 a.m. or  
10:15 a.m.

**Fitness for Men**

Strengthening and  
Balance Monday,  
Wednesday and  
Friday, 9:15 a.m.

**Healthy Aging  
Through Healthy  
Lifestyle**

Nutrition  
and Activity, Monthly,  
2nd Monday, 2 p.m.

**Rock Steady**

Boxing for individuals  
diagnosed with  
Parkinson's Disease,  
Monday, Wednesday  
and Friday, 8 a.m.,  
10 a.m., 1 p.m.  
Registration and  
assessment required.

**Seated Exercise  
for Seniors with  
Reduced Mobility**

Tuesday and  
Thursday, 10 a.m.



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606 Broadmoor Dr.  
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CALENDAR

**Peitz Cancer Support House**  
**Chair Yoga**, Mondays and Fridays, 10 a.m.

**Intermediate Yoga**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m.

**Joyful Art & Craft Classes** Monthly, 3rd Friday, 1 p.m.

**Knock Out Cancer Boxing**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30 p.m.

**Men's Cancer Discussions** Monthly, 2nd Thursday, 9 a.m.

**Nicotine Cessation**, by appointment only

**Ostomy Information and Support**, Monthly, 1st Friday, 11 a.m.

**Recently Diagnosed Information and Support**, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 1 p.m.

**Survivorship Lunch & Learns**, Monthly, 2nd Wednesdays, noon

**Threads of Hope: Creating Gifts for**

**Cancer Patients**, Mondays, 1 p.m.

**Walk Off Cancer**, Mondays, 2 p.m.

**Reppell Diabetes Clinic**  
**Diabetes Self-Management Classes**, Thursdays. Requires a physician's referral. Call (870) 508-1765 for times and registration.

**Schliemann Center for Women's Health**

**Childbirth**, Monthly, 2nd Saturday, 9 a.m.

**Crafting Class**, Fridays, 10 a.m.

**Breastfeeding**, Monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 5:30pm

**Heart Healthy Women**, Monthly, 2nd Thursday, 1 p.m.

**Infant Loss & Support**, Facilitated

by Deanna Howarth-Reynolds, LMFT, Lighthouse Counseling of the Ozarks, Monthly, 1st Thursday, 5:30 p.m.

**Ladies Exercise**, Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

**Novel Women's Book Club**, Monthly, 3rd Wednesday, 1 p.m.

**Safe Sitter Babysitting Classes**, Wednesday and Thursday class, with refresher courses on Thursdays, 9 a.m. Call (870) 508-2345 for exact dates.

**Baxter Health Wellness Education Center**

**Beginner Cardio, Low Impact**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30 p.m.

**Dance!**, Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:15 p.m.

**Line Dancing**, Beginners, Tuesdays, 11:15 a.m.; Advanced, Tuesdays, 12:15 p.m.

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## THE YELLOW STANDARD

*A COMMUNITY OF HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS  
GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND*

BY DWAIN HEBDA

Spend any time around Baxter Health, just a minute or two actually, and you will understand what the Yellow Army is all about. So named for their yellow uniform shirts, the Army is the hospital's decorated corps of volunteers, and they're everywhere you look. Need a shuttle from the parking lot? A cheerful volunteer is happy to oblige. Need directions to your appointment? A smiling member of the Army leads the way.

Individually, these interactions make a great impression on patients and their families. Collectively, however, the Army is just that, a formidable group of personnel motivated to make the hospital run better. And they take no small measure of pride in doing so.

"The volunteers make such an impression on the community, especially when they come to the hospital," said Carolyn Rice, who's been a volunteer here for the past five years. "They know that you're a volunteer at the hospital because you're wearing yellow. In fact, even when we go to conventions, they say, 'We know you're from Baxter Health because you have the yellow shirts on.'"

"I know the administration recognizes how vital we are because there's not enough staff to do what the volunteers help with," said Jennifer Baker, who's worn the yellow for six years. "Baxter Health really relies on those volunteers to help people. There's not enough money to pay enough staff to do all the things that we volunteers do."

As well-known as the Yellow Army is among locals, many don't know how far the group's reputation reaches or the lofty place it holds among other hospital auxiliaries statewide. Baxter Health's auxiliary ranks second among peer organizations in Arkansas as far as donations generated and the largest in terms of headcount, despite the hospital and Mountain Home community being several multiples smaller than other healthcare facilities in other cities.

"We were talking at a Bible study recently, and people asked me, 'Judy, I remember when the hospital was small. It has done so much for this community, and that's wonderful. But how can you do this?'" said Judy Shaffer, who's volunteered for 17 years and counting.



From left: Jennifer Baker, Judy Shaffer, and Carolyn Rice

"I just told them our volunteers are amazing. We just give and give, and we enjoy doing it. The hospital is so important to this community and to us, especially."

That kind of marrow-deep commitment is the only thing to explain the continuing success of the Yellow Army — and why volunteers like Baker and Shaffer are given the rock star treatment at meetings of the Arkansas Hospital Auxiliary Association Board. The AHAA is a statewide organization made up of hospital auxiliaries, all of whom are looking to replicate the Baxter group's success.

"My main goal is to mentor volunteers and bring in new volunteers who will serve in leadership roles," said Shaffer who sits on the Yellow Army's Ways and Means Committee and is currently president of AHAA. "It's very hard to get people to take leadership roles on the local level, the state level and the district level. My goal is to develop a good mentoring program that we can use however we want for our hospital, but also as a basis for all hospitals to use."

When asked by peers, Baker also notes the importance of excellent staff leadership in maintaining a robust volunteer program.

"One of the reasons I'm very committed to Baxter is I think the world of (Director of Volunteer Services) Becky Rose," said Baker who sits on the local group's board of directors and is currently secretary of AHAA. "I don't think our volunteer organization would be what it is today if we didn't have Becky's leadership and



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support. She's so humble that it's hard for her to accept any kind of compliment, but really, your organization is only as good as the top echelon."

Between the mentoring, the staff leadership and the tradition of service honed through many years, the Yellow Army routinely pulls off remarkable things. In 2022 alone, 464 volunteers worked nearly 65,000 hours, most of it done just two or three hours a week. What's more, the auxiliary donated more than \$550,000 for hospital needs from money raised through its Bargain Box Thrift Shops, Pink-A-Dilly Gift Shop and other fundraisers.

It's the kind of success story most hospital auxiliaries can only dream about, especially in the lingering aftermath of COVID.

"At this point in time, many of the hospitals are struggling because of COVID, and they haven't got their full strength of volunteers back," Shaffer said. "Baxter Health was among the first, actually, to reopen our gift shop and bring back volunteers in 2020. We closed in mid-March and opened back up in the latter part of June. We were limited on how many people could come in, but we were open.

"That's proven to be a very fortunate thing because many of the other hospitals are still not having their volunteers work in the hospital. Their organization is still going on, but they haven't let them come in and do their volunteer jobs."

As participant numbers continue to grow and donations continue to roll in, there's a lot for the Yellow Army to look upon with pride. But as any one of them will tell you, the true payoff volunteers receive is the satisfaction in knowing they're helping people on what is often the most stressful day of their life or in the life of their family.

"When you help people, you meet amazing people," said Rice, who's treasurer of the local group. "You see situations, and you are able to help. You help the staff whenever they need it. And it doesn't make any difference who you are or what you are, there's someplace at the hospital where you can help those around you. We have volunteers who are in wheelchairs or use canes, and we find a place for them to work where they are comfortable.

"And in return, we get so much respect from the administration and the foundation, the nurses and the doctors and in the community, too. I went to the doctor's office for an appointment, and it just happened to be the day that I was in my yellow. People said, 'Oh, you volunteer for the hospital. Thank you so much.' That made me feel like a very special person." ■

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# A CHAMPION IN SCRUBS

NURSE EXTRAORDINAIRE  
SHANNON NACHTIGAL RETIRES

WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA



**The 1893 Florence Nightingale Pledge, a Hippocratic Oath for nurses, reads in part: *“I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession ... With loyalty will I endeavor to aid the physician in his work and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.”***

It's an apt description of one of the most honorable professions in healthcare and the very essence of what Shannon Nachtigal, former chief nursing officer for Baxter Health, has aspired to be her entire career.

“I have an absolute love for the nurses and the profession of nursing,” she said. “I feel like for any chief nursing officer, the key to success is to love the people you lead and make sure they know it.”

Nachtigal grew up in the tiny town of Peel, Arkansas, and graduated from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Nursing in 1989. Her first assignment was a world away from the smaller confines of Baxter Health, both in size and in spirit.

“Before I came to Baxter, going to nursing school in Little Rock and doing clinicals in all the different hospitals, I was petrified of nurses,” she said. “They were horrible to students. It was all a horrible experience, and I remember thinking then that I would never treat a student or a trainee the way I was treated.

“When I came to what was going to be a ‘little rural hospital’ in the Ozarks, I was absolutely amazed at the quality of the patient care here and the nurses. I wanted to learn everything I could from them because they were so smart and they were so wonderful. I thought, ‘Little Rock doesn’t have anything on this hospital.’”

Welcoming environment aside, Nachtigal understood that at age 20 and with virtually no experience providing care to adults, there was a lot she had to do to prove herself. She resolved to soak up every ounce of expertise she could from the veteran nurses. And while her formal education would eventually land her bachelor’s and master’s degrees, she considers those opening months of her Baxter Health career as the most formative.

“One of the first things I was taught when I followed my first nurse around here who trained me was not to just look at

the patient as far as what problem brought them to the hospital, but to look at the entire head-to-toe assessment and their whole story,” she said.

“She taught me to approach patients from a holistic point of view, meaning, the patient might be there specifically for pneumonia, but what does their whole body system look like? How does their heart sound? How does their belly sound? Doing that, versus just going in, listening to their lungs, passing out medications and walking back out, is what it meant to take care of them completely.”

Nachtigal’s first assignment was on the night shift at 2 West, now 3 West. The hospital was much smaller than today, but the life-and-death responsibilities of her profession loomed just as large.

“At that time, we did not have a south tower,” she said. “We had two medical surgical units, 3 West and 2 West, and then we had an ICU. Our ER was in a completely different spot. We only had four emergency rooms; now we have 21. We were under 100 beds then, and now we’re licensed for 268.”

Her work ethic, coachability and obvious love for what she did was a magnet for promotions. Within three months, the nurse leader moved her from night shift to days to train for a relief charge position. From there, she’d serve as charge nurse, house nursing supervisor and nurse manager, all within the span of her first couple of years.

Five years later, then-Chief Nursing Officer Margaret Fielding made her an assistant vice president to help keep up with the burgeoning growth of the hospital. Briefly moving to California, Nachtigal would return to Baxter in a role created specifically for her to manage the patient experience.

“I came in, and I worked hard to elevate our patient experience scores. We shot to the top after a lot of education and a lot of work with the directors and staff,” she said.

After that, Nachtigal was put in charge of

the float pool, which under her leadership increased from eight to 80 people, before taking a leave of absence to care for her daughter. She’d return as a nurse educator, but it wouldn’t last as President and CEO Ron Peterson would soon approach her in 2014 with the opportunity to become interim chief nursing officer. It was a major decision and a role not everyone in her life voted for.

“My friends were like, ‘Don’t do it, we’ll never see you again,’” she said. “But I felt like the hospital was not in a good place at that time, especially with nursing, and I felt like I could make a difference. I still had such a passion for nursing, so I said I would do it. I think within six months, he transitioned me into the role full time. I thought I would do it for three to five years and ended up in my ninth year. Thank goodness I have had such great family support.”

One of the things that drove Nachtigal hardest in her capacity as chief nursing officer was her ironclad belief that nursing was best carried out according to a demanding code of personal and professional conduct in service to patients and one another. She resolved to coach up or root out those who couldn’t or wouldn’t aspire to meet those standards.

“When I started my career in 1989, there was at least one nurse in every unit of every hospital who was known as the Cruella de Vil, if you will,” she said. “My goal was to remove that bully-type nurse from our culture and create a culture of not only love for the patients but love for one another.”

It’s sometimes difficult over a long career to pick out one pinnacle accomplishment, but for Nachtigal, the ultimate achievement is fairly easy to identify. In June 2021, after years of paperwork, staff training and process improvement, she led the nurses of Baxter Health to achieve Magnet® status, an international designation that represents the highest honor any hospital’s nursing program can attain.

A nearly unheard-of achievement in small hospitals — and in Baxter’s case, done entirely in-house, without paid consultants — Magnet® status was a global accomplishment of such mammoth proportions and scope that the full effect of it still hasn’t sunk in.

“I had such a strong nursing leadership team who every time we met a barrier and were told the journey stops here, we just never accepted that to be true,” she said. “We would dig and investigate and figure



**“I was absolutely amazed at the quality of the patient care here and the nurses. I wanted to learn everything I could from them because they were so smart and they were so wonderful. I thought, ‘Little Rock doesn’t have anything on this hospital.’”**

– Shannon Nachtigal

out a way around. Then we would truck along until we hit the next brick wall.

“I think all the things we had to go through, go around, go over, really made us strong as a partnership, as a team. It just comes back to the culture. It comes back to the heart of the nurses and their fortitude and perseverance to put our name on the map. I don’t know that my elation over that accomplishment will ever go away.”

As Nachtigal stepped into retirement this year, she did so with a clear sense of leaving things finished and positioned for the next generation to take over and carry forward. Life in nursing wasn’t always easy — no one’s journey this side of the hereafter ever is — but she leaves knowing her contribution to the profession and her charges elevated Baxter’s nursing care to the highest degree possible in a place she loves dearly.

“I have always felt supported by this hospital, from the day I walked in the door to the day I walked out,” she said. “This hospital allowed me to support my family; it fed and clothed my kids. When I had some hard times, like the death of a husband and a child who got gravely ill, I never felt like they weren’t right there for me. They were bringing meals to my house. They all got together and wrote notes in a journal for me. They would just show up. I get tearful thinking about it.

“So, when I got the opportunity to lead them and build something special, I wanted to do it. I never really aspired to do this job, but I felt it was my way to give back to the people who had given me so much.” ■



# ANGELS AMONG US

## UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP BLOSSOMS AMIDST A CRISIS

BY DWAIN HEBDA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE

Rebecca Johnson had had better days. It was December 2017, and the spunky retiree didn't feel right. An emergency call was made, and the ambulance personnel arrived to find her in bed. An EMT introduced himself as James Pinkston; he sat down next to her on the bed and asked her questions about her condition in soft, soothing tones.

"I kept lifting my arms," Johnson remembers. "James said, 'Why are you lifting your arms?' I said, 'I don't know. They feel funny.' He said, 'Let's go out and get you in the truck, and let's see.'"

"Got into the truck and he did some testing, and he said, 'Miss Rebecca, you have had a heart attack and are currently having one at this moment.' I just looked at him, and I said, 'So, what the hell are we doing sitting in the parking lot, James? Let's get to the hospital.'"

It was a short ride to Baxter Health; Johnson lives across the street, and were she in an apartment on the other side of her building she could look out her window and see the hospital. But in the time it took to drive the few yards to the ER, a remarkable friendship was born.

"It was the first time I had ever had any problems and the first time

I had ever called 911," Johnson said. "Dr. Michael Camp came in, and I had stents put in. Then I went back in a couple of weeks and had more stents put in."

Three months later, while on her way to the grocery store, Johnson saw an ambulance in the parking lot. Feeling moved to thank them for their service to the community, she approached and was startled to see Pinkston sitting behind the wheel.

"Without me saying anything, he looked at me and jumped out of the truck and said, 'Miss Rebecca, I didn't think I was ever going to see you again,' and hugged me through my window," she said.

### ALIFE OF AMBITION, ADAPTABILITY, AND SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

At 82, Rebecca Johnson has lived a colorful life that has generated many friends and acquaintances. Conversation is an easy art form for her and a trait she comes by honestly as the daughter of a politician, her mother, who was elected to the city council of Inglewood, California.

"That was back in the early '50s when women were just sealing envelopes and putting the stamps on them," she said. "Then she ran

for city clerk and was elected, and that's where she retired from."

Imbued with a similarly ambitious nature, Johnson was on her way to law school when she detoured into a career. Over time she'd be a commodities trader for Conagra through the Chicago Board of Trade and a highly successful agent and sales manager for Prudential Insurance. In her 40s, during a period living in Omaha, Nebraska, she also went back to night school. Balancing her career and the demands of raising her son on her own, she attended the University of Nebraska Omaha where she regularly had a spot on the Dean's List.

Johnson landed permanently in Arkansas in 2003 when she and her then-husband were on an RV tour of points of interest around the United States.

"We ran across Mountain Home, Arkansas, after reading about it being one of the top places to retire in the country," she said. "We were on our way to Branson, took a hard right and came to Mountain Home. We looked at each other and said maybe this is the place for us."

Once landing here full time, Johnson started looking around for things to do. Life in the RV hadn't given her much opportunity to give back to a community, and she was eager to enroll in volunteering.

"(Volunteering) was a big part of my life growing up, giving service to people," she said. "I had volunteered for Mountain Home Food Basket; I was treasurer there for about three

**"We're always told to make sure you thank the servicemen for their service, but there are lots of other people that need a thank you — EMT drivers, teachers, a myriad of people. James is just someone so very special to me." — Rebecca Johnson**



James Pinkston, RN/NREMT-P, Director of Ambulance Services and Rebecca Johnson outside her apartment.

years. I also helped with Serenity, which is an organization that takes care of abused women and their children, and I have volunteered at the hospital. I did that for about a year, working in the gift shop. I just like to do my part."

After her heart episode, Johnson's health issues would flare up now and again as they tend to do in someone now 82 years old. Each time she'd arrive for treatment, she'd always work in the same question, 'Do you happen to know James Pinkston?' Invariably the answer was yes, and she'd learn a little more about him.

Last December, five years to the month of her heart attack, she had trouble breathing and faced another short ambulance ride to Baxter Health.

"They loaded me on the gurney and took me to the truck. I'm lying there and I said, as I always do, 'Do you happen to know James Pinkston?'" she said. "This guy turned around and he said, 'That's me.' I didn't recognize him.

"I said to him, 'James, I have followed your career; I know that you left the EMT business and went to nursing school and you became a nurse, and then you went back to the EMT part of the hospital, and you are working back there again.' He said, 'I can't believe that you have followed me all this time.' I said, 'Yes I have because I consider the fact that you saved my life a few years ago.'"

Johnson, who'd be diagnosed with pneumonia and COVID, had one more surprise in store that day. Pinkston visited her room where the two chatted for a spell. When he finally got up to leave, he left behind a care package with a fluffy blanket and a card that read, in part, "Knowing that the little things that we do for the community, including beautiful people like you, is what keeps us going. It is so rare that we hear the words 'Thank you.' I will never forget your kindness."

"We all neglect to thank the people that we rely on," Johnson said. "We're always told to make sure you thank the servicemen for their service, but there are lots of other people that need a thank you — EMT drivers, teachers, a myriad of people. James is just someone so very special to me." ■



# SAFE AT HOME

ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON STARTED  
CAREER ON THE DIAMOND

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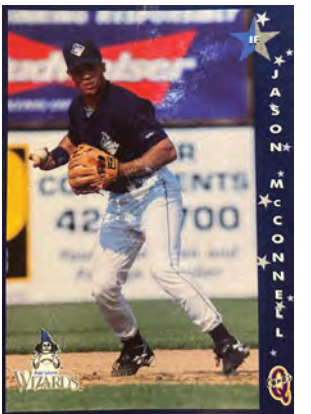
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WRITTEN BY DWAIN HEBDA







**“It took a bit of time to get the hang of [switch-hitting], but once I did, I actually think I was a better hitter left-handed when it was all said and done. I had a little more power and probably better mechanics.”** – Dr. Jason McConnell



Physicians typically follow a winding path to their final practice or hospital destination. Undergrad, medical school, internships and residency often take aspiring doctors on a tour of schools and medical facilities that cover hundreds if not thousands of miles before finally settling down.

For Dr. Jason McConnell, however, the medical education portion of his professional journey was short and sweet — undergrad at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, medical school and residency in Little Rock and his first real gig in Benton before moving to Mountain Home nearly 10 years ago.

It was his first career in baseball that put the miles on him. A talented shortstop, McConnell played for the Arkansas Razorbacks before being drafted into the Minnesota Twins organization where he played in the club’s farm system. And it was there, with the long bus rides, unfavorable climate and less-than-desirable ballpark accommodations, that he learned what grinding really meant.

“I played in Fort Wayne, Indiana, my first year, and then the next year the Twins team was in Quad City, Iowa,” he said. “I started there and was there for like, a month, just long enough for it to be super, super cold in March. It was pretty brutal.

“There would be some games where we’d be in the visiting locker room, and our coach would be out there and they would yell down when it was your turn to run out there and hit. You’d take

like five swings and run around the bases as fast as you could and come back in. It was pretty miserable the first couple weeks.”

No athlete can predict where his or her career will lead, but if ever there was a candidate for pro ball, it was McConnell. Growing up in Magnolia, he started in the game from the time he was old enough to throw. By his early teens his father, Cecil, had built him a batting cage in the backyard to feed his growing love of America’s pastime, doubling as McConnell’s first coach.

“I started switch-hitting when I was 12 which took a lot of work. I can remember in All-Stars we were playing this practice game against a team, and they weren’t very good and my dad made me turn around and hit left-handed. All my buddies were strokin’ it, and I’m up there striking out.

“It took a bit of time to get the hang of it, but once I did, I actually think I was a better hitter left-handed when it was all said and done. I had a little more power and probably better mechanics.”

College would beckon during high school and while Arkansas had a great baseball tradition, thanks to longtime coach Norm De-Briyn, McConnell’s future as a Hog wasn’t a slam-dunk.

“All my family is from Louisiana; I was one of those kids that rooted for LSU until I got to high school. We watched the Razorbacks, but we were not a big, diehard Razorback family growing up,” he said.

“I looked at Arkansas State. I got some letters from LSU, but I

didn’t ever go on a visit down there. I looked at a couple of junior colleges, but I didn’t really want to do that. I actually had my mind made up I was going to Oklahoma but Laney, my wife now, was going to Arkansas and so at some point, I don’t entirely remember what changed, but something changed my mind.”

McConnell started three years for the Hogs during which time Baum Stadium was christened. He holds the distinction of getting the first hit in the new ballpark and also graduated holding the record for the number of triples hit during a game and for the most hits during a single game.

An impressive summer in the Cape Cod League after junior year led the Twins to draft the shortstop, and he left school to hit the road. The minors had their moments — he still grins over being put in to pitch an inning once, where he struck out a batter with a knuckleball no one knew he had. Three years later, however, he’d hit a crossroads and turned to his former coach, Cecil McConnell, for advice.

“Deciding to leave got really easy for me one day,” he said. “I talked to my dad, and I said, ‘You know, if I made it to the big leagues tomorrow, it’s 162 games, half of them on the road. Spring training’s six weeks, eight weeks, and when you’re at home you go to work at noon, and you get home at midnight. That’s not the life that I want to have.’

“Once I realized that, it became really easy for me to walk away from it. I mean, at first it wasn’t. You’ve planned and worked your whole life toward this, you have buddies doing it and moving up. But once I came to that realization it was kind of a no-brainer. A lot of guys playing ball just want to play ball, you know? I had other things I wanted to do.”

From the diamond, McConnell returned to the University of Arkansas to complete a degree in microbiology, followed by medical school and residency at UAMS. He immediately found some of the things that helped him on the diamond were equally useful in medicine.

“Getting through med school and residency was pretty intense, and my career as an athlete really helped there,” he said. “I was always a worker; I had always been pretty motivated and focused. That helped a lot there.”

Today, McConnell serves patients of all descriptions, including a fair number of sports injuries, and at age 47, he still connects to such cases athlete-to-athlete. In his spare time, he follows baseball only sparingly, preferring instead to spend time with his wife Laney and the couple’s two daughters Merritt, a junior in high school, and Mary Charles, an eighth grader. And before you ask...

“Charley plays tennis and Merritt runs track and does dance,” he said. “No, they don’t play softball. I get asked that all the time.” ■



# HE'S GOING TO NEED A BIGGER BOAT

DR. LUCAS BRADLEY'S LOVE FOR  
FISHING AND FATHERHOOD

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BY DWAIN HEBDA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES MOORE







**“Competitive fishing is 10 percent physical, 90 percent mental. When you’re improving, you’re always improving the mental side of the game.” – Dr. Lucas Bradley**

It may feel like an easy cliché to describe Dr. Lucas Bradley’s ascension to the rank of professional angler as a fish taking to water, but in this case, it’s entirely true. Bradley’s only been fishing for about seven years, but once he got his first taste of competition, the neurosurgeon was, well, hooked.

“It just took hold of me really fast,” he said. “My dad fished; he was a commercial fisherman when I was growing up and he came from an outdoors family. My cousins and my uncles all fished and they all hunted but we never really did much of it. I think my dad was kind of concerned that if he got us too interested in hunting and fishing at a young age we’d never pay attention to anything else.”

Whatever Norman Bradley’s hesitancy may have been during his son’s formative years, it obviously had worn off by the time he took Lucas and one of his grandsons out for the fateful excursion a few years back. Yet no one on that trip could have envisioned how all-consuming fishing would become for the good doctor, who went from his first cast to competitive tournaments in record time, least of all Bradley himself.

“The question I’ve asked myself plenty of times is why on earth am I so into this?” he said. “I think most people crave some degree of competition, and I’m definitely one of them. I grew up playing competitive sports and stuff, and you get to a certain age where your body doesn’t allow you to do a lot of those competitive things anymore. But fishing does.”

“I think that’s why it’s taken me like it has. I love bringing the fish home, I love catching the fish, but the part that’s taken me from a personal activity to being borderline obsessed is the competition.”

There are a lot of locales where Bradley could have birthed his new pastime and fed his competitive urge, and the greater Mountain Home region ranks with the best of them. Bradley, who was born in Maine and raised in southern Missouri, first experienced The Natural State’s many waterways in earnest while attending medical school at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) in Little Rock after earning his undergrad at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

“I would consider Bull Shoals to be my home lake; other local places that I prefer include Table Rock Lake, Lake of the Ozarks and Grand Lake over in Oklahoma,” he said. “I also really enjoy fishing on the Arkansas River; when I first started bass fishing, that’s where I spent a lot of my time.”

As for the competitive aspect, Bradley favors Bass Master tournaments, where he’s far more agnostic about location. The 20 or so tournaments he’ll compete in every year have taken him from Arkansas to Texas, South Carolina and other locations, with Florida being a particular favorite.

“South Central Florida, Okeechobee, Kissimmee, are just very unique,” he said. “It’s a little bit different down there. It’s always







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warm, the fish are always active. If I had to pick a favorite location, it's probably Florida."

Fishing tournaments, at their most elemental, pit anglers against each other with the winner determined by the total weight of a specified number of fish caught during the competition window. Bradley mainly fishes draw tournaments which means another angler is "drawn" the night before to be in the boat. The new duo doesn't combine their catch's weight, rather, the two competitors — one called a boater and one called a co-angler — compete directly against their counterparts in each twosome.

But unlike other forms of competition, the anglers are also competing against the venue itself and must "read" the lake or river in order to be successful. The ability to decipher shoreline, depth, water conditions and time of day all come only with practice and are what separate the professional angler from the weekend warrior. But as his five-and-a-half years with Baxter Health have proven, neurosurgery has a way of really cutting into a fella's casting time.

"Competitive fishing is 10 percent physical, 90 percent mental," he said. "When you're improving, you're always improving the mental side of the game. Me personally, I'd say it's all about preparing and utilizing practice time to my advantage."

"Unfortunately, I don't get on the water as much as I'd like. On an average week, I'll probably fish for six hours if I can get out one afternoon on the weekend. That's not much. For larger tournaments, I try to use a vacation week so I can practice during the week and then fish the tournament on the weekend. But a lot of times, I just have to go out there blind because I have to work all week."

One might also infer that more time on the water would provide a welcomed respite from the demands of fatherhood, which in his case are considerable — he and his wife recently welcomed their ninth child into the fold. Bradley, 42, said to the contrary, he's looking forward to the day he can bring more of the brood with him to pass along his love of fishing.

"They all want to go and I'd take 'em all if I could," he said. "I haven't gone on the lake by myself with the kids because they were so young. But the boys have now learned how to drive the boat and turn it on and turn it off and have enough knowledge of the lake that I've started taking them by myself. I think they're old enough to take care of themselves if something happened to me." ■

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# TAKE A HIKE!

## HEAD OUTDOORS TO DISCOVER MOTHER NATURE’S WELLNESS THERAPY

BY JAREN BEAVERS AND JONNY HARVEY

A crisp fresh breeze blows gently through the trees as the warm sun shines through their dappled shade. Hues of green, brown, yellow and blue surround, highlighted with bright colors of spring or deep jewel tones of fall, depending on the season. A familiar yet inspiring concerto of birdsong resonates throughout Mother Nature’s concert hall as your boots tread to the centering rhythm of earth and sky. Every breath is a healing crescendo, exhaling a world of worries into the wild.

Whether you are young or old, beginner or expert, hiking in the Ozarks provides many positive benefits for mental, physical and spiritual health. Studies have shown time and again that hiking helps decrease blood pressure, stress levels and depression while enhancing immune system functioning and overall wellness. Living in our neck of the woods, we have many opportunities to experience this natural therapy without having to travel far. The following is a list of some local favorite trails to enjoy for both their beauty and health benefits.



### Top Hiking Resources

Numerous hiking trail resources exist, but Tim Ernst’s *Arkansas Hiking Trails* book and AllTrails (alltrails.com or app) stand out. For local expertise, consult Jake Anderson of Norfolk Adventure Supply.

#### DIFFICULTY: EASY

##### CLYSTA WILLETT NATURE TRAIL

###### Mountain Home

This trail trades the breathtaking views afforded at most other trails on my list for convenience and ease, but this hike is still great for woodland scenery, birding and privacy without the need to travel long distances. At just 1.2 miles in length and an elevation gain of 72 feet, you can do this hike!

#### DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

##### BIG BLUFF TRAIL Bull Shoals, White River State Park

Not to be confused with the

Centerpoint to Big Bluff Goat Trail in Ponca, this 1.75-mile hike is on the easy side of moderate and very close to Mountain Home in the White River State Park in Bull Shoals. The bluff views of the White River are the highlights of this hike.

##### ROBINSON POINT TRAIL

###### Mountain Home

This trail is a piece of David’s Trail, a wonderful and expanding trail system in North Central Arkansas. At 3.2 miles and 255 feet of elevation change, this hike is accessible to most people and provides wonderful lake views. Check out the David’s Trail website at davidstrail.org for more information.

##### INDIAN ROCK HOUSE TRAIL

###### Yellville

The Indian Rock House is the first of several destination hikes on my list, although this trail does have several other points of interest along the way. This, combined with a true moderate difficulty, make it extremely popular year-round. Viewing the Indian Rockhouse Cave, a prehistoric shelter for bluff-dwelling Native Americans, is well worth your effort.

##### WHITAKER POINT TRAIL TO HAWKSBILL CRAG

###### Kingston

The Hawksbill Crag is justifiably iconic, and with an out-and-back trail length

of only 2.9 miles with 413 feet of elevation change, it is accessible to most everyone. This is a must-see for anyone into Arkansas hiking.

##### LAKE NORFORK TRAIL

###### Norfolk

There are multiple sections of this trail, with the most popular being Norfolk Dam to Briarcliff out-and-back hike. Starting at the Norfolk Dam Quarry Park, this trail is a longer distance (5.2 miles) without extremely steep terrain (377 feet of elevation change) while offering incredible views of Lake Norfolk during much of the hike. This trail is recommended because of its ease of access and immediate lake views.




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## WELLNESS / HIKES

### GLORY HOLE

#### Ozone

*This is another one of several magnificent out-and-back destination hikes around the Buffalo National River. The destination here is the Glory Hole, a literal hole in the bluff carved out by the creek over time. It is quite a sight to see and very popular to photograph. Plus, at only 1.9 miles with 410 feet of elevation change, it is on the shorter side and can serve as a great segue to the more challenging hikes in the area.*

### CENTERPOINT TO BIG BLUFF GOAT TRAIL

#### Ponca/Compton

*Outside of Glacier National Park in Montana this is my absolute favorite hike. The destination here is Big Bluff, which overlooks the Buffalo River and affords incomparable views. At 5.9 miles out-and-back and over 1,000 feet of elevation change, I would rate this hike on the hard side of moderate. The hike is completely downhill out and totally uphill back with very little significant interest along the way, which tells you how magnificent the destination truly is. Worth it!*

**DIFFICULTY: HARD**

### HEMMED IN HOLLOW

#### Ponca

*At 5.7 miles in length with an elevation gain of 1,414 feet, this hike is steep and may not be for everyone. The popularity of this hike is worth it, though, for the destination: Hollow Falls. Hollow Falls, Hawksbill Crag and Big Bluff Goat Trail are three of the most photographed sceneries on Arkansas trails.*

**For hikers interested in longer distances and remote scenery, check out the Ozark Highlands Trail and Sylamore Creek Trail. ■**

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## Lemon Butter Scallops With Spring Risotto

Author: *Quin Liburd*

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 50 minutes

Servings: 4-6

### DESCRIPTION

The perfect dinner has arrived in this lemon butter scallops with spring risotto meal! Flavorful, buttery and tender scallops paired with a delicious risotto with peas and asparagus, so incredible!

### INGREDIENTS

#### For the Scallops

- » 1 lb fresh sea scallops
- » Kosher salt
- » Freshly ground black pepper
- » 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- » 2 teaspoons minced garlic or garlic paste
- » 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 1 lemon)
- » Freshly chopped parsley, for garnish (optional)

#### For the Spring Risotto

- » 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- » 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- » ½ cup fresh or frozen peas
- » 8 asparagus spears, chopped into 1-inch pieces, ends trimmed
- » 1 large shallot, cut into half moons and sliced thinly
- » 4 garlic cloves, finely minced
- » 1 ½ cups arborio rice
- » 1/3 cup dry white wine, such as pinot grigio or sauvignon blanc
- » 6 cups chicken stock or broth
- » ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- » Kosher salt, to taste
- » Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS

To do ahead of time: Take the sea scallops out of the refrigerator and place them onto a cleaned plate to come up to room temperature on your counter before cooking the scallops.

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(Seated left to right) Rachel Collie and Jackie Conner (Standing, left to right) Phillip Collie, Conner Collie, Carson Collie and John Conner

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## NUTRITION

### For The Risotto

**1** In a large deep saucepan or Dutch oven, melt one tablespoon of butter and 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat. Once the butter/oil sizzles, toss in the peas and asparagus. Stir together and lightly sauté for about 4-5 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the veggies to a bowl and set aside while you make the risotto.

**2** Add the remaining two tablespoons of butter and one tablespoon of olive oil into the same pot. Once sizzling, add in the shallots and stir together until they soften and become translucent, about 2-3 minutes. Add in the minced garlic and continue cooking while stirring throughout to avoid burning the garlic, about 1 minute.

**3** Pour in the rice, stirring together for 1-2 minutes, rice will begin lightly toasting. Deglaze the pan by pouring in the wine and then stir the mixture together to fully incorporate.

**4** Stir in 1 cup of stock. Continuously stir the rice together until you see that the liquid is fully absorbed. Once absorbed, add in another 1 cup of stock, continuing to cook and stirring throughout until all liquid is absorbed. Repeat this same process until you reach the last full cup of stock and the risotto is plump. This process of adding the stock cup by cup and stirring may seem tedious but it ensures that the risotto cooks evenly and does not burn.

**5** Once the last cup of stock has absorbed, turn off the heat and add in the reserved peas/asparagus, and sprinkle in the Parmesan cheese. Taste the risotto and season with salt and pepper, as desired.

### For The Scallops

**1** Season the scallops with salt and pepper on both sides.

**2** Using a large non-stick skillet, add 2 tablespoons of the butter in the the skillet over medium-high heat. Once the butter is sizzling and hot add the scallops into the skillet in a single layer (the first scallop you place into the skillet should sizzle immediately- if not, your pan isn't hot enough. Wait until it's hot before adding in more scallops). Be careful not to overcrowd the pan; cook the scallops in batches if you need to.

**3** Let the scallops fry and do not flip them until about 2-3 minutes (look for them to be lightly browned and crisply seared on the outside with an opaque center) flip and cook on the other side for another 1-2 minutes. Remove them from the skillet and set aside on a plate.

**4** Reduce the heat to the lowest setting and add in the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter along with the garlic and lemon juice. Stir together thoroughly to combine and let the mixture cook for about 1 minute. Take off the heat and add the scallops back into the skillet. Use a spoon to baste the scallops with the butter/lemon sauce.



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# Baked Salmon with Rhubarb

*Author: Sylvia Fountaine*  
 Prep Time: 10  
 Cook Time: 20  
 Total Time: 30 minutes  
 Servings: 2

**DESCRIPTION**  
 Baked salmon and rhubarb are roasted together, then paired with wilted, garlicky chard. A fast and flavorful dinner! Gluten-free!

- INGREDIENTS**
- » 2 shallots ( or sub 1/2 a red onion)
  - » 2 12-inch stalks rhubarb
  - » 2 tablespoons olive oil
  - » 2 salmon filets ( 4–6 ounces each) skinless, thicker cuts are best here
  - » 2 tablespoons maple syrup
  - » 2 tablespoons sherry cooking wine (or sub 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar)
  - » Salt and pepper to taste
  - » 8 sprigs thyme

- For the wilted chard*
- » 1 bunch chard- leaves chopped, stems chopped thinly and separated
  - » 1 tablespoon olive oil
  - » 4 fat garlic cloves- rough chopped
  - » Salt and pepper to taste
  - » 1 teaspoon lemon zest
  - » Squeeze lemon

**INSTRUCTIONS**  
**1:** Preheat oven to 325F

**2:** Slice shallots into thin wedges, lengthwise. Cut rhubarb in half lengthwise and cut into 4-inch pieces.

**3:** In a large ovenproof skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Saute shallot for 3-4 minutes until just tender and fragrant. Add rhubarb, sautéing for one minute.

**4:** Push shallots and rhubarb to the outer edges of the pan and place salmon in the center.  
**5:** Season salmon and rhubarb with salt and pepper. Drizzle maple syrup just over rhubarb (do not skimp here- see notes). Drizzle sherry wine (or balsamic) over the rhubarb. Sprinkle with ½ of the thyme leaves (saving ½ for garnish at the end). Place in the oven and roast for 15 minutes. Thinner salmon cuts may take less time to cook, so check it after ten minutes, and pull it if necessary, letting the rhubarb cook for the full 15 minutes or when it is fork tender.

**6:** In another skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté until golden about 2 minutes. Add chard stems, sauté for 1-2 two minutes then add remaining chard and season with salt, pepper, lemon zest and a little squeeze of lemon. Set aside.

**7:** Plate the salmon and divide rhubarb shallot mixture between the two plates. Add the wilted chard.

**8:** Spoon the liquid from the salmon pan over the salmon itself. Garnish with remaining sprigs of thyme.

## NUTRITION

### Shrimp Tacos with Mango Salsa

*Author: Sara Welch*  
 Prep Time: 15 minutes  
 Cook Time: 10 minutes  
 Total Time: 25 minutes  
 Servings: 4

**DESCRIPTION**  
 These shrimp tacos with mango salsa are a quick and easy dinner option that features tender shrimp, sweet and tangy mango salsa, and creamy cilantro lime sauce, all inside warm corn tortillas.

- INGREDIENTS**
- For the shrimp*
- » 2 teaspoons olive oil
  - » 1 ¼ pounds shrimp peeled, deveined and tails removed
  - » chili powder and salt to taste

- For the mango salsa*
- » 1 cup mango finely diced
  - » ½ cup red bell pepper finely diced
  - » ½ jalapeno pepper minced (remove seeds and ribs to make it milder)
  - » juice of 1 lime
  - » ½ cup cilantro leaves finely chopped

- For the creamy cilantro lime sauce*
- » 1 cup sour cream (can use light)

- » ½ cup cilantro leaves roughly chopped
- » 2 teaspoons lime juice
- » 1 ½ teaspoons honey
- » ¼ cup prepared green salsa
- » salt and pepper to taste

- For assembly*
- » 1 cup shredded purple cabbage
  - » 8 corn or flour tortillas

**INSTRUCTIONS**  
**For the shrimp:** Heat the olive oil over high heat in a large pan. Season both sides of the shrimp with chili powder and salt to taste. Place the shrimp in a single layer in the pan and sear for 2-3 minutes per side, until shrimp are pink and cooked through.

**For the mango salsa:** Combine all the ingredients in a bowl, add salt to taste. Cover the bowl and place it in the refrigerator for at least 15 minutes, up to 4 hours.

**For the creamy cilantro sauce:** Place all ingredients in the food processor; process until sauce is smooth and creamy. Add salt and pepper to taste.

**To serve:** Warm the tortillas. Add a spoonful of sauce, a handful of cabbage and place the shrimp on top of the cabbage. Top with mango salsa and serve immediately.



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In Mountain Home, Debby's bright light shined for the organizations she cared about. Whether it was Arkansas State University-Mountain Home, Baxter Health, Twin Lakes Playhouse, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas, Baxter County Library Foundation or Serenity House, she told our stories with passion and with dignity.

When she spoke, her deep, warm voice filled the room. On stage or in the choir loft, that voice was soulful and euphonious. Whether it was in the Chancel Choir at First United Methodist Church or on the stage with Sweet Adelines or the Melodeers, Debby was someone you couldn't take your eyes off of. She felt the music deeply in her soul and it showed.

Those of us in marketing knew Debby best as a fair reporter who loved a good, long conversation. It's what made her such a

wonderful host of "Talk of the Town" on KTLO. She had a hunger for learning. She cared. She wanted to help. Always, she wanted to tell our stories and make a difference for our community.

While Debby spent her early life and career in Illinois, you would never know that she hadn't been here in the Twin Lakes Area forever. She loved this place we call "our Mountain Home" and poured her heart into our local nonprofits. She was best known for her work on the board of the Food Bank of North Central Arkansas, but she also registered people to vote and helped raise money for victims of domestic violence through Serenity, Inc. With every cause or issue she cared about, she worked hard for it. If a dog needed a home, she found it one. If a friend was going through a tough time, she prayed for them. If someone went into the hospital, she made a beautiful prayer shawl for them.

Debby's impact on our community will be felt for a long time. She made a difference in the lives of those she knew and in the lives of those she didn't know but felt compassion for. She taught us about giving back, about celebrating the joy of life and about having empathy for those whose lives aren't joyful.

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