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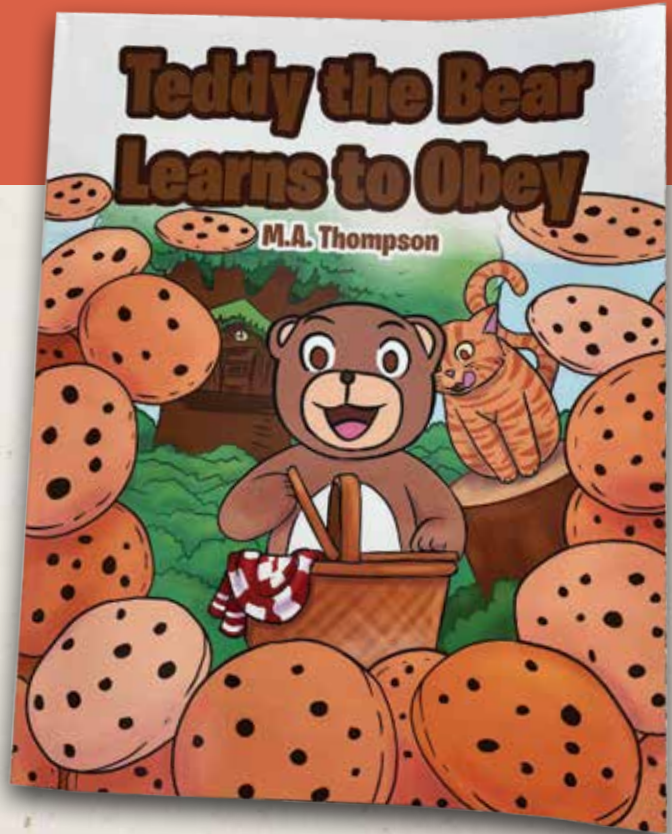
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Inside {local} September '25



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FALL FUN

So many events planned for the fall, check out our list and make your plans



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EXTREME GAMES IN SPRING HILL

David Miller's latest venture brings another fun, family entertainment option to the area



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STILL TIME TO GRILL

This recipe is easy and delicious, now is the time to try it



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ON THE COVER: *Fall in Maury County provides so many entertainment opportunities for everyone, check out our list on pages 8-9. Photography provided.*

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Fall pumpkins will soon cover the landscape of Maury County. Photo provided

IT'S FALL, Y'ALL

COMPILED BY JEFF BRYANT

Welcome to the fall season in Middle Tennessee. As the air turns crisp and the vibrant leaves transform into a tapestry of reds, oranges, and yellows, excitement fills the atmosphere. This is the time when thrilling football games light up the weekends, and the cooler temperatures invite cozy gatherings with friends and family.

Every year, a remarkable army of passionate volunteers dedicates their time and energy to craft unforgettable events and festivals, ensuring that there's something delightful for everyone to enjoy.

From lively music festivals that get your toes tapping to mouth-watering food fairs that tantalize your taste buds, to engaging activities and adventures for children, Williamson and Maury counties offer a rich array of experiences this fall. Prepare to be captivated by the many exciting events on the horizon! Here's a sampling of what's to come:

COLUMBIA FIRST FRIDAYS: "ART ON THE STREET"

September 5th from 5pm-8pm

Downtown Columbia

September's First Fridays is infused with all things Arts Related. Many artisans will be selling artwork from all variations of media (photography, music, book illustrations, paintings and more. Ad-

ditionally, Columbia Parks and Recreation will be hosting a chalk station for kids to color the square with their artwork to add for the thrill of the event.

AMUSE'UM FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL

September 20, 6-9pm

Corner of E 7th & Woodland St, Columbia

amuseumcolumbia.com/food-truck-festival

A fun night in downtown Columbia with a variety of local food trucks and live music. All proceeds go to AMus'em Kid's Museum.

COLUMBIA CARS & COFFEE

September 20 at 8am

East 7th and Woodland Street, Columbia

Hang out the third Saturday of the month, April through October, for Columbia Cars and Coffee! Browse through a variety of vintage, antique, muscle, and exotic cars, enjoy sipping local coffee, and hear some tunes. You can find the fun at the corner of East 7th and Woodland Street, in the heart of Columbia Motor Alley.

MID-SOUTH LIVE STEAMERS

September 25-27, 10am-3pm

Maury County Park

midsouthlivesteamers.com

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Downtown Columbia will be the host of many events this fall. Photo provided

nity with free family fun! The Mid-South Live Steamers showcase the excitement of live steam trains by providing free rides around the park on model trains.

DARK HORSE DINNER AT THE POLK HOME

Saturday, September 27, 4pm-7 pm

Columbia

James K. Polk launched his run for Governor with a Murfreesboro bash, including “40 fat sheep, 40 fine shoats, 300 pounds fine ham, bread & vegetables without limit, the generous juice of the grape, whisky, and old cognac.” In that spirit of feasting and merriment, the Dark Horse Dinner is a casual night of celebration for all to connect with the Polk Home and its mission for the first or hundredth time. The 2025 Dark Horse dinner will feature BBQ and all the sides, lawn games, homemade ice cream and more! This event is weather permitting.

FALL FEST

Saturday, October 11, 3pm-8 pm

Downtown Columbia

Columbia Main Street invites the community to attend the annual fall celebration happening on October 11th from 3-8 pm in Downtown Columbia. Attendees can experience fall-inspired activities and entertainment such as pumpkin painting station, live music, taste test over a dozen different chilis from the Kiwanis Chili Cook-off, shop festive vendors and enjoy the all-ages fun zone. This event is free to attend so make sure you mark your calendars this fall celebration.

WHOLE HOG FESTIVAL

October 11, 10am-5pm

Oaklawn Mansion

thewelloutreach.org/whole-hog-festival/

The Whole Hog Festival is the largest one-day event in Spring Hill, TN. The event will include live music, food trucks, a craft fair, kid’s zone, and more! All proceeds go The Well Outreach.

BIG BLEU PICKIN’ PARTY

October 18, 8am-4pm

Corner of E 7th & Woodland St, Columbia

Search Big Bleu Pickin’ Party on Facebook for more details.

Ready for flea market fun? Join us at the Big Bleu Pickin’ Party for endless flea market vendors, food trucks, and live music!

HAUNTING IN THE DISTRICT

October 30, 6pm-8pm

Columbia Square

Grab the kiddos for a fun and safe night of trick-or-treating around the Columbia Square. The streets will be filled with candy, games, a petting zoo, and more.



COLUMBIA MAIN STREET PRESENTS

FALL FEST



OCT

11th

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Downtown

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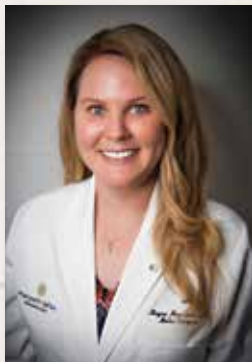
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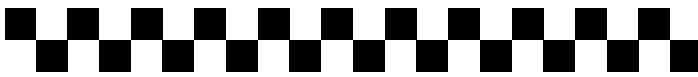
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David Miller, owner of Extreme Escape Games. Photography by Michael Tedesco

EXTREME FAMILY FUN

JASON ZASKY

For the past few decades, entrepreneur David Miller has owned and operated a variety of entertainment businesses in Maury and Williamson counties, including Miller's Thrillers Haunted Woods and Extreme Escape Games Cool Springs. However, his latest fun and exhilarating creation is located in the heart of his hometown, Spring Hill.

"I'm one of the few who was born and raised here, and I decided that Spring Hill needs some good clean family fun—a place that could host birthday parties, church groups, family outings, and corporate team building events," begins Miller, talking about Escape Games Spring Hill, which is housed in an old Victorian

that was built in 1890.

"You can see the house from Route 31," and considering that it's now home to escape rooms, it provides "some real unique character," as Miller puts it. In fact, the first theme is a Willy Wonka-ish Candy Factory Challenge, complete with trap doors, secret passageways and hidden compartments.

"You feel like you're Indiana Jones or Tom Cruise in Mission Impossible," adds Miller. "In our rooms, you're not actually locked in a room—you are mission-based. You have 60 minutes to try to complete the task, work on puzzles, open locked items, and every room has a different theme and mission. We give you your briefing and your objective video, and then it's a race against the clock—a

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Photography by Michael Tedesco

< FROM PAGE 16

super entertaining adventure.”

Indeed, escape rooms are one of the few entertainment options suitable for all ages—something that kids, adults, and grandparents can enjoy together. They are also great for group outings and corporate team building.

“We have a really fun de-brief where we recap the game,” notes Miller. “We talk about communication and encouragement and troubleshooting and the kind of things that unite teams together,” he says, before noting that he plans to add two more themes at Escape Games Spring Hill this winter.

“It does take some time to build the games, because we put a lot into them. It’s a lot of creativity, and a big production to design all the aspects of the games,” he says.

Of course, fans of Miller’s Thrillers Haunted Woods already know how much work Miller puts into his businesses, which include Port Royal Fireworks, a seasonal fireworks stand on Derryberry Lane in Spring Hill.

“We’re always reinvesting in the businesses to make more cool things,” says Miller, before noting that his current focus is

on re-opening Miller’s Thrillers, which will feature more than its share of “really neat new things” come October, not to mention an overhaul of the zombie paintball course.

“People come from two hours away for our Haunted Woods and its Zombie Paintball Hayride,” notes Miller. “We drive people through the barns, woods, and swamps in five-ton army trucks with paintball guns mounted on the side. You get to shoot live zombies that don’t shoot back,” he says.

That said, Miller is enjoying the work he does as much as ever, even if being a serial entrepreneur requires very long hours.

“It seems like I work 80 hours a week, so I don’t have to work 40 hours a week for somebody else,” he offers.

And then there are the sleepless nights.

“There’s a lot of nights I can’t fall asleep because of all the dreams,” he quips. “Creativity is super fun, and I’m always trying to be creative. I’m always lying in bed dreaming up what we can build next. I really like ‘Wow!’ factor moments that make our customers say, ‘I’ve never seen that before.’ Or ‘that was super creative. How did they make that? How did they build that?’”

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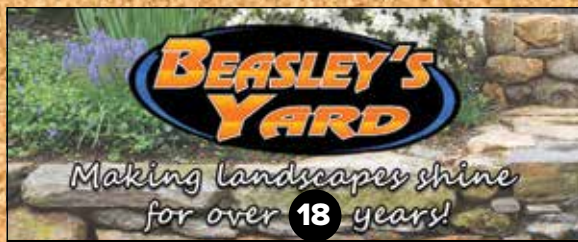
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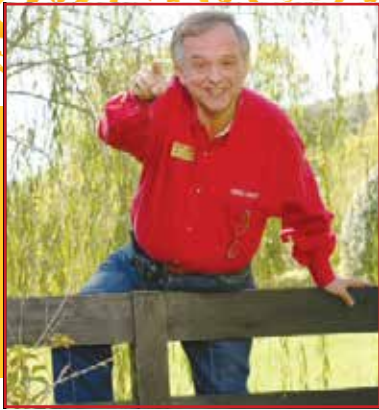


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Grilled Smoked Pork Steaks

INGREDIENTS:

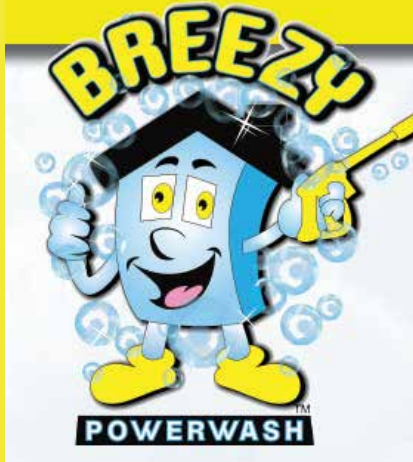
2-4 PORK STEAKS
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HICKORY CHIPS OR CHUNKS
BUTTER
APPLE JUICE

DIRECTIONS:

- Coat pork steaks with olive oil and season well
- Light one full chimney of charcoal
- Set up grill with charcoal on one side (indirect cooking)
- Add hickory to charcoal
- Place steaks on other side of grill
- Cook (with lid on) 1 hour turning after 30 minutes (275-300 degrees)
- Wrap in aluminum foil and add a splash of apple juice and a few pats of butter
- Place wrapped steaks back on grill and cook another hour
- Remove from grill and let rest for 20 minutes
- Serve



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COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS



CITY OF COLUMBIA CELEBRATES GRAND REOPENING OF FIRE STATION NO. 1

The City of Columbia proudly celebrated the grand reopening of Fire Station No. 1 today, unveiling a newly renovated and expanded facility that marks the most significant upgrade to the station since it was originally built in 1978. The total investment in the project was approximately \$5.17 million.

“This renovation isn’t just about improving a building, it’s about investing in the safety and readiness of our firefighters and ensuring the public is served from a facility that’s as strong as the community it protects,” said Fire Chief Chris Cummins.

“This project represents a meaningful investment in our city’s public safety infrastructure and the people who work every day to keep our community safe,” said Mayor Chaz Molder. “It’s more than a new look; it’s a renewed commitment to public safety, preparedness, and service. It exemplifies our commitment to the men and women who have dedicated their lives to saving the lives of others. And, it is a significant upgrade for our flagship fire station, which is a flagship fire department in the State of Tennessee.”



NEW ALL-INCLUSIVE BALL FIELD

The Miracle League of Columbia at Maury County Park is excited to announce its partnership with the Maury County Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Columbia to develop a \$2.6 million all-inclusive baseball field in Maury County Park. The new field will be built on the former site of the Babe Ruth Field, a long-time fixture of youth baseball in the community for over 40 years. “We are thrilled to finally break ground on a project that has been years in the making,” said Robin Estep, Founding Member of The Miracle League of Columbia. “This partnership with the County provides a sustainable path to support our mission for years to come and will serve so many in our community. We are incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support we have received from County Mayor Sheila Butt, the County Commission, the City of Columbia and the Parks and Recreation Department. It is truly a group effort that has brought us to this point.”

STATE CHAMPION

Josh McGee recently achieved the title of Overall Champion at the NPC Tennessee State Championship as “Mr. Tennessee” in Men’s Physique for 2025. Having secured the title in 2024, this win gives him impressive back-to-back victories. Josh is a local Maury County resident from Santa Fe.

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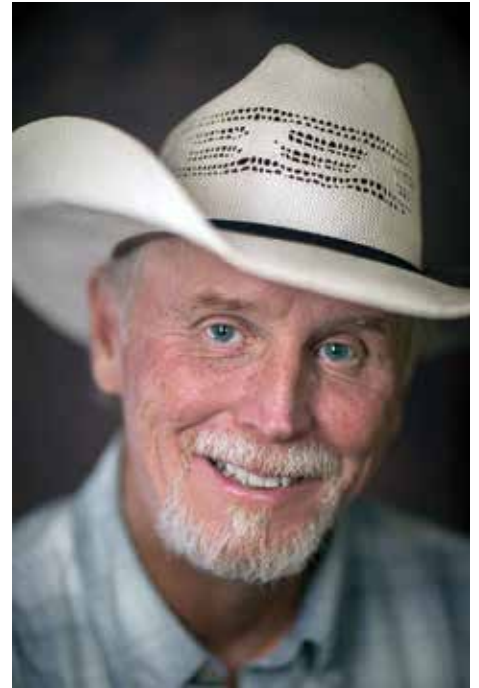
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