

# FARMVILLE

*the Magazine*

November 2023

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## What a wonderful world

As we head into fall, and the Thanksgiving season I am reminded of just how blessed we are to live here and the many, many reasons we have to be thankful. Within each edition of *Farmville the Magazine* we are able to highlight civic organizations, businesses, non-profits, government agencies and people that are making a difference. Month after month, year after year, there are endless stories of why it's a wonderful world in Farmville and we are grateful to be able to share them here.

A smile of joy lights up the face of second grade student Sariya Robert, on this month's cover, as she paints a hot pink balloon which ultimately soared proudly at the Longwood Center for Visual Arts. Turn to Page 6 as Rachel Austin talks with area art teacher Emily Overstreet about the project, how it came about and the connection to the Virginia Children's Book Festival — multiple organizations and people that are making a difference.

What's in a cupcake? Mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce and green beans? Hmm, that certainly never crossed my mind before and I'm guessing you are probably thinking the same thing.



**Betty Ramsey,**  
Publisher

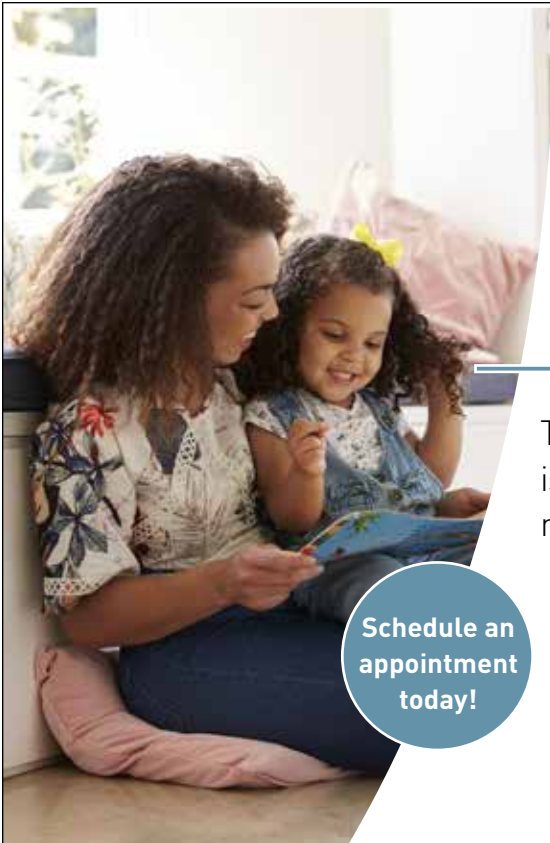
However, Alexa Massey takes us out of our comfort zone and into a new era with her Thanksgiving cupcake recipes on Page 18. In Massey's own words, "These savory little morsels are a new twist on two old favorites; dressing and mashed potatoes. They're fun, they're quirky, they're delicious, and they'll be the talk of your dinner table this holiday." Massey's recipes never disappoint and I can't wait to try these for an upcoming Thanksgiving brunch. Happy baking!

*Farmville the Magazine* strives to tell the story of our community. We are blessed and grateful to be a part of this community and are thankful that there are so many great stories to share.

Within these pages you will find more stories and we hope you will enjoy reading them as much as we enjoy bringing them to you. This is a magazine about and for you, we welcome your ideas and invite you to share with us what you would like to hear more about by sending us a note at P.O. Box 307, Farmville, VA, 23901, giving us a call at (434) 392-4151 or sending me an email at [Betty.Ramsey@FarmvilletheMag.com](mailto:Betty.Ramsey@FarmvilletheMag.com).

We publish *Farmville the Magazine* in March, April, May, summer, September, October, November and December. We invite you to pick up a copy of the latest issue as there is sure to be someone you know inside — a neighbor, a family member, a friend or perhaps even you!

*Betty Ramsey is Publisher of Farmville the Magazine.  
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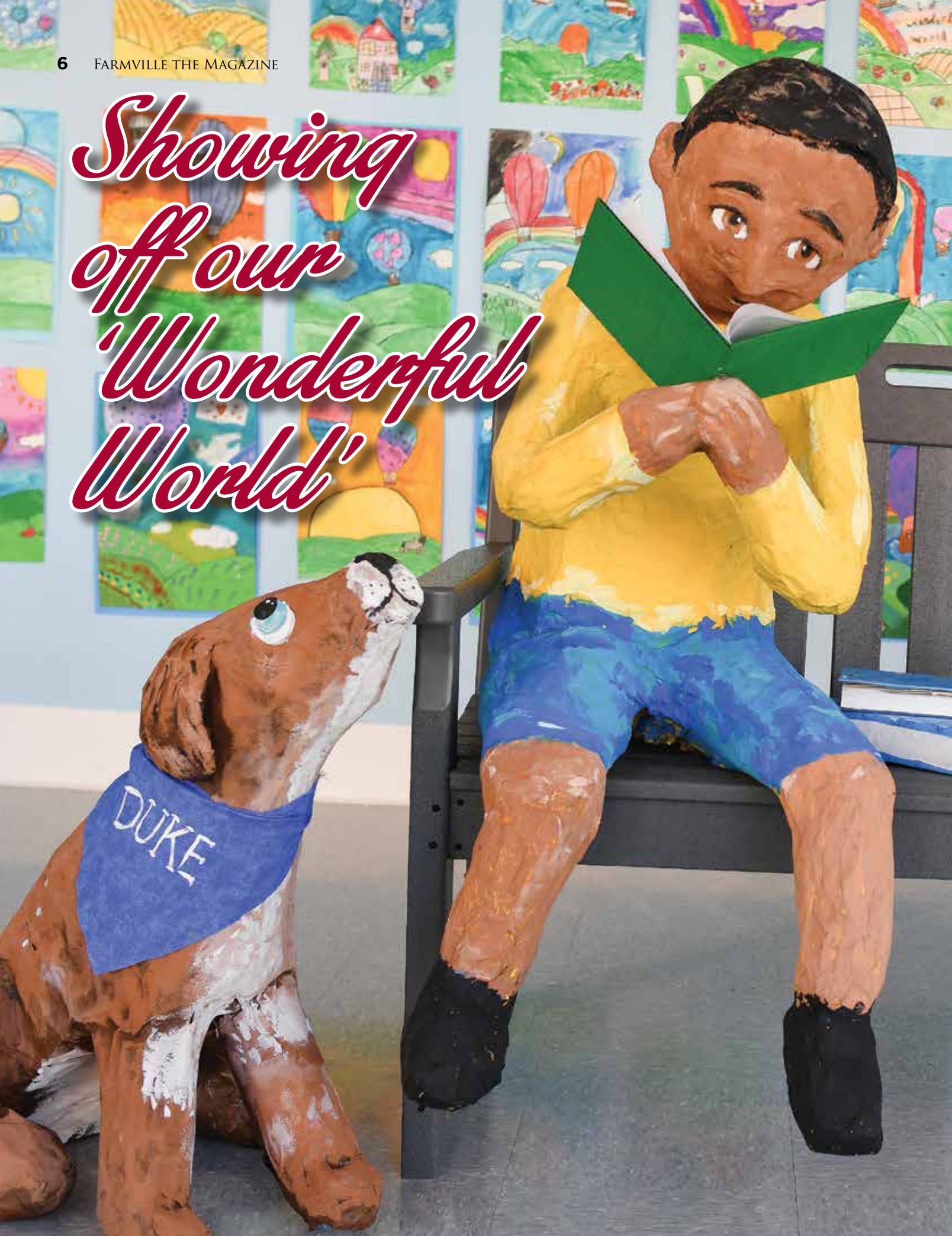
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*Showing  
off our  
'Wonderful  
World'*





Story by Rachel Austin  
Photos by Emily Overstreet

In October, Cumberland County Elementary School students let their “Imagination Take Flight” to decorate the entryway of the Longwood Center for Visual Arts (LCVA). Now they hope to inspire others to do the same.

With the Virginia Children’s Book Festival taking place during the second week of October, the LCVA needed a new display for their entryway. The group contacted Emily Overstreet, Cumberland County Elementary School’s art teacher, in August to see if she could work with her students to create something to encompass the theme of this year’s festival. The annual event at Longwood University is designed to promote literacy and give away books to children.

Overstreet, who is a Longwood University graduate, worked with her students to create their display of “Let Your Imagination Take Flight.”

“We were all excited to show our little artists off,” said Overstreet. “We have many talented artists here.”

For the project, the students combined art, music and literature as they were inspired by the lyrics of Louis Armstrong’s “What a Wonderful World.” The students listened to the song as they painted and made the paper mache decorations. And it was an involved process, as students worked from the first day of school until Friday, Oct. 6, when Overstreet put up the display at the LCVA.

Overstreet said she did her best to make sure as many of the 500 students at the school could participate as possible. That includes even some preschoolers, who have their handprints decorating some of the hanging hot air balloons. Other preschool students even helped with some of the painting, including work on Duke the dog. We’ll share more about him in a minute.

#### A LOOK INSIDE

When you walk into the LCVA, the finished project is on a sky-blue wall, one painted with clouds. Making up the scenery are paper mache students, a dog,

flowers, birds and hot air balloons. There are also paintings by students covering the wall, showing scenes of the “wonderful world”, with hot air balloons hanging from the ceiling. We referenced Duke the Dog earlier. He and his paper mache student sit in front of the paintings on a bench. Duke, named for the Cumberland Elementary “Dukes” mascot, sits while his student reads a book next to him.

“We put up balloons and added decorations because they have to be creative,” said Sariya Robert, who is in second grade at Cumberland Elementary.

Sariya enjoyed decorating her hot air balloon as she covered it in hearts. She wanted it to be inspiring and show how wonderful things are and how everyone is family.

Third grader Emma Bowles also enjoyed covering her “Dream Big” balloon in stars. She liked being creative and using everyday items to bring this project to life. One of the examples she gave was using a laundry basket as the basket for a paper mache girl to ride in.

“We wanted to represent how we have a ‘wonderful world’ and all the things that are great,” Emma said.

Along with getting out of class, both girls expressed that their favorite part was decorating the people. They enjoyed thinking creatively when coming up with how to display their work and what they wanted it to say.

“I hope the showcase inspires young artists and nurtures their creativity,” said Overstreet. “So much is done on computers these days so I’m grateful for the opportunity to showcase all these student’s hard work at the Longwood Center for Visual Arts.”

#### HOW LONG DOES THIS RUN?

The hot air balloons and imagination aren’t going anywhere soon as the exhibit will be on display through November. The LCVA is located at 129 N. Main Street in Farmville and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., then Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m.





Above, student Josiah Merritt is shown painting a hot air balloon basket. Right, student Emma Bowles is shown here with her “Dream Big” hot air balloon.







Three students from Mrs. Overstreet's class show their work. Anna Fleenor holds up her hot air balloon, while Jacarri Bailey painted a red and white hot air balloon. And Aaliyah White is shown here covering a balloon with paper mache.



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Left, art teacher Emily Overstreet is seen here holding hot air balloons designed by her students. Below, from left, students Lewis Hicks and Nathaniel Miles show off their work.







From left, students Lyla Newton, Nylah Sampson and McKenzie Nash work together to paint a dog.

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# LUMINARY CELEBRATES LIFE — AT A PLACE YOU WOULDN'T EXPECT

Story by Michael Hinman

Fancy cars, boats, maybe even a zoo. There are countless things someone approaching retirement could be interested in buying. But for William Barrett, there was just one thing he wanted: a cemetery.

But not just any old cemetery. He specifically wanted Trinity Memorial Gardens off Prince Edward Highway. And for good reason.

“Go to any cemetery, and you’ll see row after row after row of stone,” Barrett said. “But with memorial parks, they’re designed with statuary and landscaping.”

And amongst all that, one might find rows of bronze plaques, sharing a little detail of whomever is buried underneath. No one plaque stands out from another, and that’s completely by design.

“If we were not necessarily equal in life,” Barrett said, “we are definitely equal in death.”

Yet, surprisingly perhaps, cemeteries aren’t about the dead, but instead about those who are left behind. Memorial parks like Trinity aren’t intended to be visited only by those in mourning, but instead to be a quiet place for anyone to stop by, reflect and remember those who have passed on.

“If you come out here, on every one of those bronze memorials, there is a story,” Barrett said. “Each story that is tied to every cemetery reflects on the history of the community it’s located in.”

And from that, Trinity’s Christmas Luminary was born. Set to





take place just after 4 p.m., on Saturday, Dec. 9, Barrett and members of Boy Scout Troop 6516 will set out more than 4,000 candles next to each of the markers. Then, loved ones will come out to light candles just before the sun sets — creating a moment that will give visitors a chance to remember those who were lost while celebrating life at the same time.

“You shouldn’t just have to come out on a sad day,” Barrett said. “The luminary is a time to remember, reflect and celebrate. There is an old African proverb that there are several stages of death, and the last one is that you actually die when there is nobody left to remember you.”

Barrett says he’s grateful for the efforts the Boy Scouts put into setting up the event each year, and is also amazed at their speed and precision — they can set up all the candles in less than an hour.

“One of the 16-year-olds who come out says he really likes coming out here,” Barrett said. “Can you imagine that? Kids wanting to come to a cemetery.”

Trinity first opened in 1960 as part of a memorial park movement that was started by Hubert Eaton some decades before in Glendale, California. Eaton had purchased Forest Lawn Memorial Park in 1917, and decided he was just not going to be like every other cemetery owner at the time.

“He had worked at an upright monument cemetery in California, and found them to be everything he didn’t want them to be,” Barrett said. “He referred to them as depressing stone orchards that did not celebrate the beauty of life.”

So, he did away with headstones, and went with memorial plaques instead. He then landscaped the area to make it look more like a park, and less like a massive burial ground. The



movement took some years to take hold — even as Eaton expanded the concept throughout California — but by the 1950s, it was spreading across the country.

Including right here in Rice. The land had previously been a tobacco farm, and many of the buildings on the property are still up, including the main house, which was built in 1840.

Barrett bought the cemetery in 2020 just as the coronavirus pandemic took hold, but he had made two other attempts to buy the property, beginning in 1996.

“I’ve always been charmed by Trinity,” Barrett

said. “Some people, they don’t do very well on focusing on their own mortality, and you will get some people who will drop somebody off (to be interred), and never come back again. And then you get people who you can set your watch by.”

“But there is not a right or wrong way. It’s all about the living. And when you have events like the luminary, it’s a chance to bring everyone else. And you can’t enjoy your life until you’re ready to celebrate being alive.”

For more on this year’s luminary event — which is free and open to the public — visit [TrinityMGVa.com](http://TrinityMGVa.com).

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# MODEL TRAIN WORLD ON-TRACK FOR ANOTHER HOLIDAY SEASON

Story by Michael Hinman

There was a time when Christmas wasn't complete until you made a pilgrimage to Bevell's Hardware in Blackstone to see what felt like miles and miles of model railroad tracks and scenery.

For more than four decades, the store would welcome thousands of visitors throughout the holiday season — some traveling a good distance — just to get a look at as many as 12 trains running at once through intricately detailed model towns and forests.

It was a sight to behold, Jim Kimbrough says. So, when Bevell's sadly brought its annual tradition to an end just ahead of the coronavirus pandemic, Jim knew he had to step in.

While not quite as elaborate as its predecessor — yet — Jim has spent hundreds upon hundreds of hours constructing his own three-train world in a renovated building just behind his 900 Fourth Ave., home. And come Nov. 26, the whole community will have a chance to see what the Kimbrough family has enjoyed over the last few years.

"We were always going to set something up just for the family and the grandkids and stuff," Jim said. "But when that happened at Blackstone, they asked if I would be interested, and if I could be inspired enough to take it on and do something for the public. So, I said, 'Sure, you know what? We'll do something on that. We'll

open it up."

And with that, Farmville earned a new holiday attraction. While the opportunity to see Jim's work is not as robust as Bevell's, it's still worth the trip, expected to attract significant crowds not just the Sunday after Thanksgiving from 2 to 4 p.m., but again on Sunday, Dec. 17.

"It's kind of grown every year," Jim said. "I just enjoy doing it. I get a lot of joy out of doing it — especially with the kids and stuff. They get a big kick out of it."

Jim is, of course, married to Prince Edward County School Board Member Susan Kimbrough, and the two have made a significant mark on the community. It's hard to fathom that





they're still quite new to the area, retiring from Greensboro, North Carolina, where Jim spent 30 years running manufacturing plants before spending the last decade of his working career teaching computer software applications to high school students.

Their daughter and son-in-law were already up here with two granddaughters. Then the family welcomed their first grandson less than a couple years ago.

"We didn't have anything holding us to Greensboro, and the family was all up here, so we decided to pick up and move here," Jim said.

They started renovating their Fourth Avenue house in 2017 before finally making the move to

Farmville a year later. And it didn't take either of them long to find their niches in a new community.

"My wife is really a big advocate of education, so a lot of people asked her to run for school board," Jim said. "She said, 'You know, I guess I will,' because she has two granddaughters coming up through the school system. So, she has a vested interest in it."

And Jim, well, his interest is primarily in his three grandchildren, but also the model trains. And he's quite dedicated to it, spending as much as eight to nine hours every day at work on it.

Anyone who visited the setup last year already knows about the Christmas- and Disney-themed

engines. For 2023, Jim has added a third engine — another train with a Christmas theme — that will take its place on the tracks.

Kimbrook — the model town filled with homes and businesses that bear the names of different family members — is still there. But Jim has added a second town for this go-around — a community he's calling Cripple Creek.

"It basically runs along a river in the middle of the layout," Jim said. "I'm just finishing up the Christmas decorations there, and it should be all ready in time for Thanksgiving."

And it's not just the businesses that have familiar connections. Look closely enough at some of the bridges, and you'll find initials with special

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meaning to the Kimbroughs, like those belonging to their grandchildren.

One of the most important ingredients to any model train display is time — and a lot of it. While Jim has spent countless hours on the project already, he expects it will take years to get something even close to what was set up at Bevell's. And that display was decades in the making.

Still, the Kimbrough display is still nothing to sneeze at.

"It's a rather large layout," Jim said. "It's pretty much almost 1,000 square feet. I basically filled up the whole building with the layout. So, when people first walk in and see the size, that's the first thing that takes them aback. And then, all the little details like the rivers, boats and cars."

Christmas may come just once a year, but the world that includes Kimbrook and Cripple Creek are a permanent fixture in the Kimbrough household. And Jim is just happy that he has a chance to share it with as many people as possible — all completely free of charge.

"Most people start falling in love with that kind of stuff when they're children," Jim said. "Then, as I grew older and got into middle school and things like that, I started doing sports and got interested in other things. Then you go to college, you graduate and then life gets in the way."

"It's always something in the back of your mind, and you're always so busy, and never really have time to do it. Or the space. And so, it always stayed with me."

The Kimbrough model train display is open to the public Sunday, Nov. 26 and Sunday, Dec. 17 from 2 to 4 p.m. You can find it at their home, 900 Fourth Ave. in Farmville.









# Serving It Up



# THANKSGIVING CUPCAKES

A fun and savory new favorite

Recipe, story and photos by Alexa Massey

Thanksgiving is finally upon us! This holiday is simultaneously every home cook's dream and nightmare. So many different and delicious dishes to prepare, and while the classics are classic for a reason, it can get a bit boring to always cook the same things every year.

In the last few years I've taken to spicing up this holiday by finding a few new and different recipes to use. Today I'll be showing you how to prepare one of my new creations — Thanksgiving cupcakes! These savory little morsels are a new twist on two old favorites; dressing and mashed potatoes. They're absolutely mouthwatering, are a hit with adults and kids alike and can be dressed up and customized with different toppings to make for an unforgettable little side

dish. They're fun, they're quirky, they're delicious, and they'll be the talk of your dinner table this holiday.

I've included a very simple recipe below which is made with primarily prepackaged ingredients like stove top stuffing mixes and microwavable mash, but feel free to make this recipe with your choice of dressing or mashed taters, be it fresh or fresh from the box!

P.S. — I'll be using the words "stuffing" and "dressing" interchangeably in this recipe, but we all know stuffing is supposed to be dressing that's been stuffed into and baked inside the bird. There are no birds involved in this recipe, and between you and me, putting dressing inside of a turkey while it bakes is a great way to get food

poisoning as the juices from the bird may not cook all the way when absorbed into that breadly stuffing!

Anyway, here's the recipe:

**Prep time: 10 minutes**  
**Cook time: 35 minutes**  
**Total time: 45 minutes**  
**Yields: A dozen 'cupcakes'**

**Cupcake ingredients:**  
**1 stick butter**  
**12 oz. favorite stove top stuffing/dressing mix prepared according to the packaging or**  
**12 oz. homemade dressing**  
**8 oz. mashed potatoes of your choice**  
**(sweet potato or regular mash)**





**Optional toppings:**  
**brown gravy**  
**cranberry sauce**  
**green beans**  
**french fried onions**  
**brown sugar**  
**rosemary for garnish**

To make this recipe you will need a medium-sized muffin tin that can hold about a dozen muffins. Begin by preheating your oven to 350 degrees fahrenheit. Use some butter or nonstick cooking spray to grease your muffin tin. You may add cupcake liners if you wish, but I recommend making this recipe without liners so dinner guests can see the stuffing base of the cupcake in all its glory.

I'm a big believer that you can't mess with perfection. This is why even a home cook like myself uses Stove Top Stuffing mix each holiday season. If you'll be using a similar premade stuffing for this recipe, prepare it according to its package directions. Alternatively, you can use your own homemade stuffing. Just make sure it's plenty moist before going into the muffin tin to bake.

After preparing your stuffing/dressing mixture, carefully spoon the dressing into the muffin tins. Since our stuffing isn't going to rise very much like an actual cupcake, go ahead and fill the muffin tins right to the top with the dressing, flattening out the top for a smooth look.

Bake your dressing-cupcake bottoms on the middle rack of the oven for approximately 30 minutes or until they are a bit crisp on top and do not feel very jiggly or moist to the touch. Our goal is to get a very slightly crisp outside while retaining moisture on the inside, so your typical toothpick method of checking that a cupcake is done won't work here. The important part is that, once cooled, the stuffing will retain its cupcake shape.

While your stuffing is baking, prepare your mashed potatoes however your family likes them, be it homemade or made at home from a bag. I would highly recommend making one batch each of regular mashed potatoes and sweet mashed potatoes. The orange color of the sweet mashed potatoes really makes this dish a thing of beauty, and their slightly sweeter taste pairs very well with the savory dressing.

Once out of the oven, allow your dressing to cool slightly before popping the little cupcake bottoms out of the tin. Using either a piping bag or ice cream scoop (or a good ol' spoon, y'all)



gently place a nice scoop of mashed potatoes right on the stuffing base, creating the "icing" part of your cupcake.

Can you believe we're already almost done? Once you've topped your dressing with mashed potatoes, customize your Thanksgiving cupcakes as you see fit. I liked using a mix of toppings for mine such as gravy, green beans and french fried onions, or even cranberry sauce, rosemary or turkey for a festive look! I highly recommend sprinkling some brown sugar atop any sweet po-

tato mash you dressed your cupcakes with, and every cupcake should get a small pat of butter to finish the look!

And there you have it! This dish is a great treat to make with the help of a grandchild. It will definitely be a favorite amongst the kids table, but the adults will get a kick out of it too. Best of all, they taste divine! My family particularly liked the sweet potato "cupcakes" topped with butter and brown sugar. Talk about deliciousness!



# From the Ground Up

A mixed border of panicle hydrangeas and various types of sedum make a bright fall study in shades of red.

## PANICLE HYDRANGEAS: *Versatile Shrubs for the Home Garden*

**Story and photos by Dr. Cynthia Wood**

November is a quiet time for gardeners, but it's the perfect time to plant shrubs. The temperatures are cooler and there is usually more rain, so newly planted shrubs are less stressed, and more energy can be directed to the growth of new roots. As long as the ground isn't frozen, planting in November is just fine.

While there are many shrubs that work well in home gardens, panicle hydrangeas (*Hydrangea paniculata*) are some of the showiest and easiest to grow. They are generally pest free and perform well in a wide range of climate conditions. In fact, they are grown in gardens from Manitoba (zone 3) to Mobile (zone 8).

Panicle hydrangeas are deciduous, flowering shrubs with an upright growth habit and dark green foliage. They bloom in late summer to early fall when they produce large, cone-shaped panicles (loose branching cluster

of flowers) of creamy white flowers that become pinkish to dark red as the days get shorter and the nights get cooler. The flowers eventually turn brown and remain on the plants all winter, thus adding textural interest to the garden.

Panicle hydrangeas are available in a range of sizes, making them useful as large accent plants as well as smaller additions to borders. The dwarf varieties can be grown in containers. They are the most sun-tolerant of all hydrangeas and grow well in both partial shade and full sun where they tend to bloom better and have stronger stems. As long as there is good drainage, panicle hydrangeas can tolerate a variety of soil types. Soil pH isn't particularly important and amending the soil when planting them isn't recommended. Until the plants have become established, panicle hydrangeas benefit from extra water during hot,



humid summers. They also benefit from a 2 to 3-inch layer of mulch. Regular applications of fertilizer aren't necessary and can lead to the development of weak stems.

Although pruning isn't strictly necessary, it encourages more blooms and stronger stems. Because panicle hydrangeas bloom on new wood, meaning that they don't produce bloom buds until spring, they should be pruned in late winter while the plants are dormant. Remove no more than one third of the plants' total height and any side stems that are spindly or weak. For a panicle hydrangea that has been shaped into a tree form, more pruning is required to maintain a proper shape and sense of proportion. Remove any errant shoots at the base of the tree and along the trunk. Cut the canopy stems back by approximately half their length.

There is a panicle hydrangea available for just about every gardening need. Some of the most popular include Bobo, a dwarf variety that only grows 3 feet tall and is a prolific bloomer; Limelight, the tall, classic variety that is the most heat tolerant; Little Lime, the dwarf sibling of Limelight, that is perfect for small gardens; and Pinky Winky, a medium size, very tough variety that has two-toned blooms.

November is not too late to add a new shrub to the garden, and the panicle hydrangea is an easy to grow, interesting choice.



**Above, like their larger siblings, Little Lime panicle hydrangeas have clusters of delicate pale green blooms tinged with pink in fall. Left, panicle hydrangea blooms can be as large as a football.**





**Above, although they are dwarf varieties, Bobo panicle hydrangeas are covered in huge clusters of white flowers. Right, Berry White panicle hydrangeas planted with dogwoods, small conifers, and cattails provide a colorful background around a lake.**





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women deserve  
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