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Good Friends, Good Cooks, Good Chili

NOVEMBER 04TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Good Friends, Good Cooks, Good Chili

Dexter is blessed with good churches and good church folks - and an incredible number of good church folks who are good cooks!

So where would you go for a good bowl of warm chili and homemade desserts on a chilly Friday evening? The First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Chili Supper!!

The *men* of the church have been working hard and are ready to serve delicious chili Friday evening until 7 p.m.

But the *women* of the of the congregation of also been busy, and have prepared some amazing desserts to cap off your chili meal. Just ask Sydney Booker (photo above). She just loved her chocolate icing in a piece of cake sooo much that she just had to show it off!

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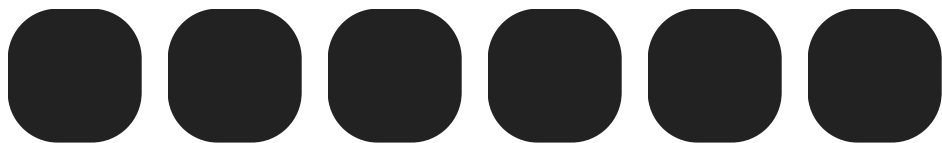
These guys know how to cook chili! Some of the men responsible for the chili at today's Chili Feed at Dexter's First Christian Church pause for a moment in the kitchen. Pictured are (from left) Tommy Horton, Jim Russell, Wayne Owens, Eric Basham, Gary Williams, Bob Mayer, Larry Thompson, Jim Hall, Darryl Orr, Charles Pippins and Jim Putnam. (SMT photos by Annabeth Miller)

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There Is No Place Like Home

NOVEMBER 01ST 2011 BY UNKNOWN

There Is No Place Like Home

By Kim Lacy, SMT Contributing Writer

When you walk into Central Gardens, you are met by happy, smiling faces. It just feels like home - comforting and inviting. Alvin, the cocker spaniel and a valued member of the Central Gardens family, will usually be the first to greet you.

Administrator Stacy Blocker
is typically right behind her

</images/Blog Images/Features/Central Gardens/Alvin.jpg>

trustworthy dog, and she is one of the reasons for the welcoming, home-like atmosphere at Central Gardens. Despite her administrative position, this is not 'just a job' to Blocker - it is her passion. After a brief conversation with her, you know what these residents mean to her and how 'near and dear' she keeps each and every one of them.

Blocker is a busy working mother, but she tirelessly gives of herself, time and energy. She refers to the residents of Central Gardens as her 'second family'. You can talk to the residents and staff and they will be quick to tell you that they feel the same way about Stacy. She goes above and beyond her 'job description' on a daily basis.

Central Gardens has much to offer in the way of services for its residents. Therapy sessions and the 24-hour-a-day nursing staff provide peace of mind for both residents and family members. They also offer transportation around town and fine dining.

The sense of independence Central Gardens provides its residents is very important to the well-being of a resident. The day I was able to visit, Stacy and a few residents were headed out for ice cream on a beautiful fall day.

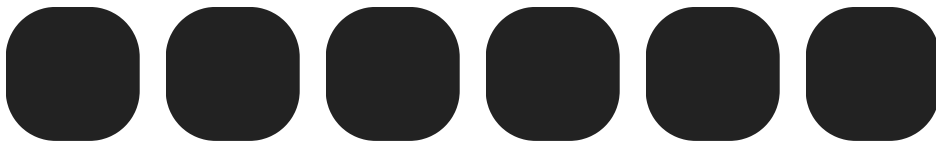
The staff also provides fun, engaging daily activities for residents. One of the activities that kept things humming lately was the making of a float for the Stoddard County fair parade. This year, Central Gardens' float was built around the theme of the Wizard of Oz. Many hours went into this huge endeavor, and the float was a big hit at the parade. The residents so enjoy these big projects, and everyone gets involved.

Dorothy was right when she said "There is no place like home.", and Central Gardens is home in more ways than one.

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Vampires & Pirates & Witches: Oh My!

NOVEMBER 01ST 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Vampires & Pirates & Witches: Oh My!

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

It was a grand night for Little Red Riding Hood, bumble bees and beekeepers, vampires, Buzz Lightyear, and pirates.

The Student Council at Dexter High School sponsored its 10th annual Trunk-or-Treat event Monday night, with hundreds of youngsters filing through the community event.

Student groups decorated car trunks or truck beds and created a fun and safe place for youngsters to trick-or-treat and enjoy Halloween. Trunks were decorated and featured everything from the Cat In The Hat to a pair of beekeepers and their hive of bees. There was Captain Jack Sparrow and his “wenches” and the Wolf with Little Red Riding Hood and Grandma. Buzz Lightyear was around sharing his energy, and Mickey and Minnie attended the event complete with a miniature version of Cinderella’s castle.

Every stop along the way had oodles of candy for the kids, and there was a fun time for everyone. The line of trick-or-treaters and parents stretched for a time for the DHS parking lot up the hill to the Bearcat Event Center. Kids were dressed as Cardinal baseball players, vampires, Tinker Bell, and even Captain America made an appearance!

Student Council Advisor Jennifer Miller said the event Monday evening was the tenth annual event in what has become a community tradition. Miller reported 28 groups

decorated trunks for this year's event.

The winners of the “trunk decorating” were the crew at Da Hive, and a trio of pirates and their cove.

Photo Above: The beekeepers had a pesky job Monday night of keeping the bees near the hive, but they all did their duty in helping youngsters have a great time at the annual Trunk-or-Treat at Dexter High School. (SMT Photo by Annabeth Miller)

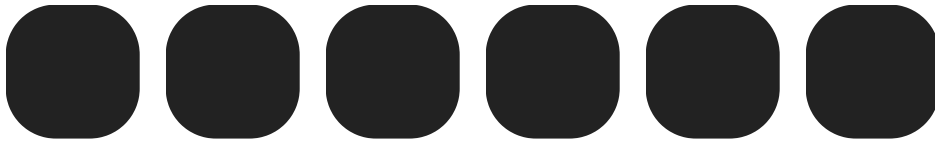
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Trunk-or-Treat at DHS, October 31, 2011

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Home Cookin' - The Hickory Log Tradition

OCTOBER 31ST 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Home Cookin' - The Hickory Log Tradition

Many times, a gift becomes an expectation. This is an absolute truth when it comes to the kindness and support John and LeVeda Banken have provided to the referees, announcers, chain gangs and other volunteers throughout every home Dexter Bearcat football game. But this is a gift of passion for the Bankens.

The great tradition of Friday Night Lights is only accented by the halftime snack provided by John. Typically, around the end of the first quarter, you will find John pulling up to the press box area, with a truck bed full of freshly smoked sides of ribs, Texas toast, and drinks for all the officials, media members, and chain gang crew to enjoy while taking a break during halftime.

Knowing that radio and TV broadcasters won't have time to come downstairs, John is often found serving them throughout the press box.

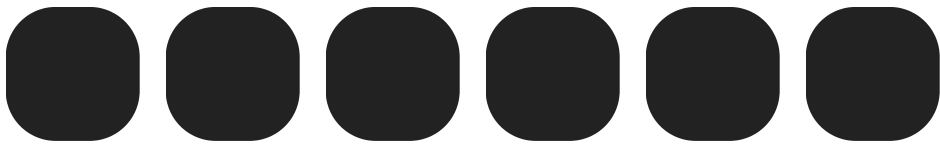
This gift of passion is nothing new for the Banken family. For decades, John and LeVeda have given of themselves as a partner to the Dexter community, in countless areas of giving from service organizations to their local church. Their business, Hickory Log Restaurant, continues to be a community icon, drawing folks from far away for 'The Log's' legendary BBQ ribs.

The Bankens are a family that have established a tradition in Dexter, allowing their success in business to be used as a tool for doing good things in our community. So *"Thank You to John & LeVeda Banken"* because the chances are we as a community don't say that often enough for all you do.

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Autumn's Beauty Along The River

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Autumn's Beauty Along The River

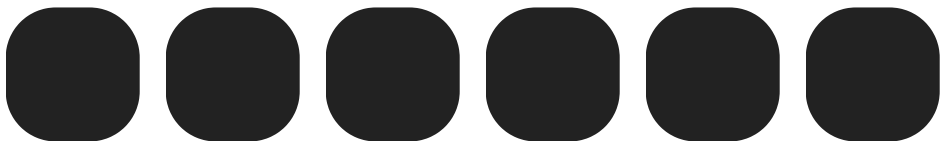
Fall's Beauty

It's been a beautiful autumn weekend as October slowly ebbs into November. The trees seem to defy the predictions and are still full of color and glory. This scene was just north of Trail of Tears near Cape Girardeau, taken on a hike right alongside the Mississippi River on Saturday afternoon. It reminds us that "autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower." (Photo by SMT Reader Joe Miller)

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