

My Georgia Magazine **Hometown**

Atkinson ✕ Berrien ✕ Ben Hill ✕ Cook ✕ Irwin ✕ Lanier ✕ Lowndes ✕ Tift ✕ Turner



Winter 2018

Worthy of the Win

- **Ms Veteran America**
- **Danny Dawson**
- **Butch Houston**
- **Jessica Logan**

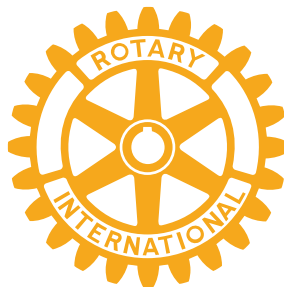
History:

Turpentine Industry

snowball fight!

Rotary

Nashville-Berrien Rotary Club
Founded 1963; Re-established 1987
Hayden Hancock, President



100%
Paul Harris
Fellow



ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE



The Thunderbirds at the Fall
Moody Appreciation Dinner



*"I'm happy to continue on the
legacy that so many before me
started. It means a great deal to me
to continue on the tradition."*

**Hayden Hancock,
President 2017-2018**



Rotary proudly supports:

- CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) / CASA Playhouse fundraiser
- STAR Student and STAR Teacher program
- Teacher of the Year banquet
- Carrie Dorsey Perry Memorial Library Summer Reading Program
- Berrien County Rec. Depart./"Rotary Bowl"
- Moody AFB /"Moody Appreciation Dinner"

The Nashville-Berrien Rotary Club has been a foundation of this community since it was re-established. Many of the things the club does go unknown to the community, such as supporting local programs that actively protect, educate, or provide physical fitness and recreation for children. They proudly pledge allegiance to the flag, demonstrate loyalty to our military forces, and invoke the blessings of God upon all that the club sets its hand to. *All is done and measured by Rotary's Four-Way Test: "Is it the Truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build good will and better friendships?"*

Being a Rotary member is more than can be imagined. So, on behalf of the Nashville Club, be encouraged to visit a meeting and enjoy the fellowship of community leaders and a multitude of dynamic guest speakers hosted each week.

Robin Postell, Nashville-Berrien Rotary Club Secretary
nashvilleberrienrotaryclub@gmail.com

Rotary acknowledges community leadership:

- Local Manufacturers supporting Berrien High School students' skills
- Federal Legislative Luncheon / Hosted the 2017 event

*"Our sponsorship of
community youth is one of
our most passionate efforts."*
-Hayden Hancock

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Above: The teams from Cross Critters and the Berrien County Humane Society brought out the shelter babies and joined the fun at Nashville's Winter Wonderland, December 2, 2017. Shelter babies are adoptable.

Cover: Madelyn Johnson enjoys the snow at the Winter Wonderland. Parents: Amber and Johnny Johnson

Chamber Changes



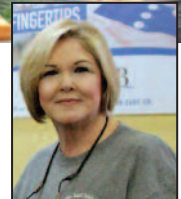
In 2017, we saw some major changes happen with our Chambers of Commerce. Chamber Executive Directors Crissy Staley (Berrien/Nashville) and Jerry Connell (Cook/Adel) said goodbye to many well-wishers and friends who dropped by for their farewell receptions. Please join the chambers in welcoming new executives Andi Dickerson (Berrien/Nashville), Heather Greene (Cook/Adel), and Cathy Stott (Irwin/Ocilla).



Andi Dickerson
Berrien/Nashville



Heather Greene
Cook/Adel



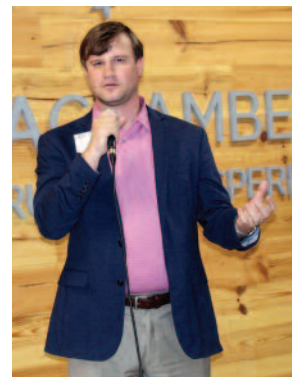
Cathy Stott
Irwin/Ocilla



Georgia Chamber

Right: Matt Reed of Georgia CEO, joined the Tifton office of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. He introduced the online magazine and network to the business community. Georgia CEO provides a venue for local business owners to share their stories, ideas and news.

Left: Brian Kempt, Secretary of State, dropped by and chatted with members of the Georgia Power team and the Georgia Chamber.



FMB, Nashville Shows Community Spirit

The Farmers & Merchants Bank of Nashville is proud of its community, and it shows. From serving Thanksgiving meals to First Responders to hosting a Christmas with Santa, FMB staff extends a warm welcome to all.

FMB hosts several projects in the community, including the quilt and art displays for the Fall Festival, Relay for Life, bake sales, a cancer fund for local patients, and sponsoring kids for Christmas. One of their larger projects is the Junior Board, which provides the top five high school seniors and juniors with an understanding of employment concepts. The Board also works on various scholarship fundraising projects. ✿



top and above, right: Giving thanks to our 1st Responders. above, left: Patsy Back, caterer; Becky Sain and Traci Stainaker; left: FMB's Junior Board.



Raising the Bar at Berrien Academy

In October, the Berrien Academy Performance Learning Center became one of Georgia's Star Academies. Officials from Governor Deal's office and local representatives were on hand to kick off a new era for the Learning Center.

Chairman Stephen Mathis, of the Governance Board for the Performance Learning Center and for Families, Connections, Communities, and Schools, stated that the Star Academy will prove invaluable, not only to the school but to

the families and community.

"These children want to be here," he said. "Traditional Education has not fulfilled its obligation to them. This is a way for us to provide a meaningful education for them."

Student Sidney Jones said, "It [Academy] has given me an opportunity to make education fun again. It's a good alternative to kids who want to learn but do not have the resources or exciting materials."

Star Academies help reduce the dropout rate by helping at-risk students to succeed. Smaller classroom sizes allow focused attention from instructors and teachers to students who find it difficult to perform in the general high school population. Not only do students who are falling behind see improvement, but advanced students also excel through more challenging studies. ✂

far left: BCHS FCCLA members prepared and served the luncheon; *right:* Rep. Penny Houston and student ambassadors.



It's Big and Green!

Passers-by at the Fiesta Del Pueblo did a double-take at the brilliantly-painted 1988 Winnebago SuperChief. Its moniker, The Big Green Reading Machine, prompted thoughts of the days when bookmobiles traversed the countryside with loads of books.

According to Victoria Horst, Branch Manager of Tifton/Tift County Library, bookmobiles went out of favor years ago because of the expense.

"Libraries could not afford them. They were pulled from their mission of serving the rural areas," she said.

"They are becoming more popular again," Horst said, noting that people have realized the need.

The Big Green Reading Machine will function as an extension of the library, reaching the rural areas to provide multiple services, such as books, a computer lab with WiFi, library cards, and a classroom. Horst hopes that English as a Second Language classes might be added later.

Horst's passion for literacy is easy to see. She said, "The most important thing that you can give to your child, other than food to eat, is to read to your child."

"Children who are read to when they are young do better in school because their vocabularies are better. They tend to earn



more money, get better jobs, go farther in life, and live longer," she pointed out. "The ability to read helps children make better choices in life."

Although it isn't a regional service, Horst said, "This is reproducible anywhere."

The Winnebago was a cheap find. Once Horst let her vision be known, the conversion began. Teams of students from the high school and South Regional Technical College gutted and rebuilt it to become a traveling library.

To use the BGRM services, patrons must have a valid Tifton/Tift County library card or Pines [Georgia] library card.

For more information about the Big Green Reading Machine, contact the library at 229-386-5254 or email vhorst@cprl.org. ✂

Creek Indian Demonstrate True Native Lifestyle

Traditional culture and dances of the Creek Indians were performed the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village.

The Eastern Mvskoke Demonstrators,



a Native American tour company, travels across the Southeastern United States, conducting reenactments and providing demonstrations. The educational program included stomp dancing demonstrations and discovering the Muscogee language.

Some visitors participated.

Included in the exhibit were a 1750s' fishing encampment, bow making demonstrations, basket weaving, twining, blowgun making, candle dipping, and pottery making. ✨

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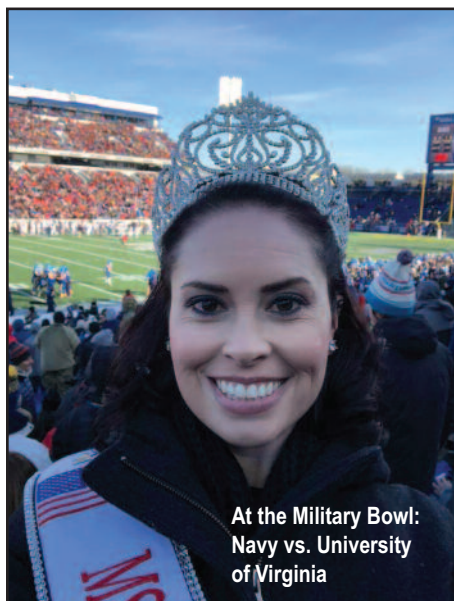
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Catching up with Lindsay Gutierrez, Ms Veteran America

Homeless, Women, and Veteran are three words that we, the general public, seldom associate with a single individual. But there is a group of people who fit all three categories. These women are not only veterans, but mothers and wives. Now, they are homeless, forgotten by the



At the Military Bowl:
Navy vs. University
of Virginia

country they served and rejected by their own families. They struggle, like many of their male counterparts, to transition back into civilian life and civilian jobs. Yet, these women remain unnoticed and wanting. They are the ones that Lindsay Gutierrez has pledged to stand and fight



At the Threatte Center in Lakeland

for as she serves as Ms Veteran America 2017.



Honoring the fallen at Alexandria
National Cemetery

GETTING BUSY

Since she won the crown last October, Gutierrez has been busy traveling around the country, promoting MVA and Final Salute Inc. and putting a new face on the American veteran. So far, she has participated with various Veteran's Day events and parades, placed wreaths in military



Valwood Middle School for
Veteran's Day program

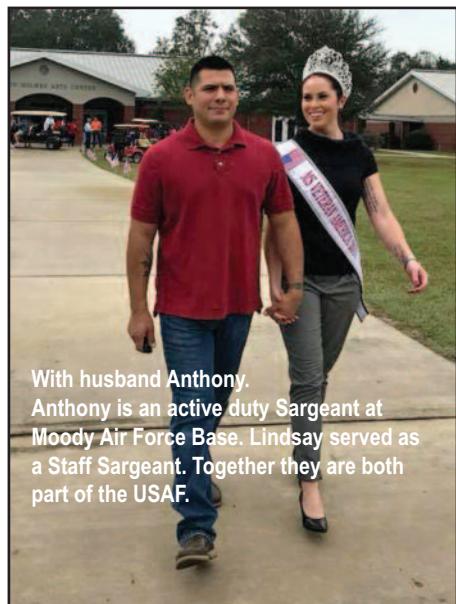
cemeteries, made several television appearances, and starred in a country music video. She even made an official appearance at the Military Bowl for the Navy vs. University of Virginia game. And, she's just getting started.



Everywhere she goes, she is raising awareness and raising funds for homeless women veterans. Even while campaigning for the title of Ms Veteran America, she was positioned to meet legislators and business leaders who listened and responded to her quest.

In November, Gutierrez was honored with a reception in her hometown of Lakeland, Georgia. Among those present to welcome her home were Representative Jason Shaw and American Legion Auxiliary officer Sue Hall. Each presented Gutierrez with Certificates of Commendation from Governor Deals' office and the American Legion Auxiliary. Shaw also invited her to join him at the Georgia Legislature to share the vision of Final Salute Inc. and to encourage the House and Senate to press toward relief programs for Georgia's female veterans.

Continued on page 10



With husband Anthony.
Anthony is an active duty Sargeant at
Moody Air Force Base. Lindsay served as
a Staff Sargeant. Together they are both
part of the USAF.



Remembering Otranto's Fallen

By Jayden Futch

In October, my Chamber Quire and I got to sing patriotic songs at the old Berrien County Courthouse during a ceremony remembering the Otranto, the command troop ship which sunk at the end of WWI in 1918. Many of our soldiers were on that ship when it went down off the Isle of Islay between Scotland and Ireland.

At the memorial, some famous citizens and veterans gave speeches about the Otranto and what its purpose was. The day was important to my family because we have four different generations of veterans who served in a branch of military, but most were in the Army.

My grandfather, Jeff Futch, served in the Army, so I interviewed him about the Otranto .

Here is his perspective on the tragedy: "A lot of the soldiers died during the sinking. I am glad that the people of Scotland helped the survivors on the ship."

During the speeches, I really thought about who veterans are and my mind came to a conclusion that veterans are the very soul of why we are a free country and why we are not under German or British rule.

There was also a group present known as Quilts of Valor. They gave veterans handmade quilts as a way of showing respect for them. Even though they take quite a while to make, the women that sew them are true fans of all veterans and want to give something in return.

Overall, the whole event was greatly appreciated by the veterans, the audience, and the Chamber Quire. ✨



Berrien 4th Grade and Middle School Salutes the Veterans

By Jayden Futch

In November Berrien Elementary and Middle Schools saluted the veterans. I was chosen to help greet the guests and veterans at the 4th grade program. All programs that day reached out to veterans in the county. It was also a way to let people know veterans are important. This event was proof that just because a place can be very small, like Berrien County, there can be lots of

special citizens such as veterans.

The program allowed children to experience who veterans are, what they do, why they do it. Many people have questions about our brave men and women, and how they have the courage to risk their lives to help save our dear country. During the program, the children expressed their feelings and love for veterans and citizens all over our county. The fun part was getting to dress up in military cos-

tumes and patriotic clothing to represent a branch of military they liked, or that their family is or was in.

This year, our Veterans Day event was conducted by Mrs. Joliff, our music teacher, who coaches the students to love the veterans through music, acting, and singing. I hope that Mrs. Joliff keeps up the good work with the program so I get to write about it again next year when I move up to Berrien Middle School. ✂



Vietnam Veterans Honored in Lakeland

On Saturday, December 2nd, American Legion (Milltown) Post 336 gathered at the Threattle Center to honor their Vietnam veterans, POWs, and MIAs by officially welcoming them home and presenting each with a Certificate of Honor denoting their status and a lapel pin.

The Commemoration of the Vietnam veterans was launched in 2012 and is part of the 50-year anniversary recognition of the Vietnam war. Those honored: Edward H Batchelor, Charles Daniel Bennett, Jimmie Lee Buskirk, Carlton S Corbitt, Willie F Dailey, William H Davis, William (Bill) Farr, Alexander Hadley, Nathaniel Hadley, Clifford E Hall Jr, Edgar Cameron Hickman, Wesley Curtis Holbrook, Chester Holmberg, Lewis T Jones, LC Jones, William A Prather Jr, David W Rouse, Monroe Sapp, Henry Jerry Smith, Paul Scott Stewart, Clarence Taylor, Schapiro Wilder, Ezekiel Williams. ✂



GUTIERREZ Continued from page 7

A REASON TO SERVE

As she addressed the crowd gathered at the Threatte Center, Gutierrez highlighted the reason behind her passion to help her female comrades. She recounted her reaction to moving back home after serving overseas. She was an experienced, well-educated, veteran who struggled to find a place for herself after being honorably discharged from the military. Like many others,



Parade before
the Military Bowl

she experienced extreme feelings of displacement; the not fitting in anywhere—even with family—was overwhelming. She no longer had friends who shared the military experience.

“I felt invisible and fell into a deep depression,” she said.

Adding to her discouragement was the male veteran stereotype. Often, people would say “thank you for your service” to her husband but not to her.

“I had served my country but was not acknowledged for my service—and that hurt,” she said.

Women veterans frequently go unrecognized because they don’t fit the image of a veteran. One of her goals as Ms Veteran America is to change that.

The low that she was experiencing was the prelude to the blessings in store. Her restlessness turned into an awakening to stand up and fight for her fellow female veterans. With the support of her husband Anthony, Gutierrez gears up in her crown and sash and marches forward onto a different type of battlefield. Her backpack has been traded for a crown carry-case, her boots for a pair of dressy marching heels. Her poise is perfect; her speech is polished and informed. She’s become high-profile and moved to the frontlines to take a stand. ❀



For more information about these organizations:

Final Salute Inc. • www.finalsaluteinc.org/

S.A.V.E. the Homefront XXII

(Selfless Service, Advocacy, Veteran, Emergency)

www.facebook.com/savexxii.org/

“Leave the Light On” music video

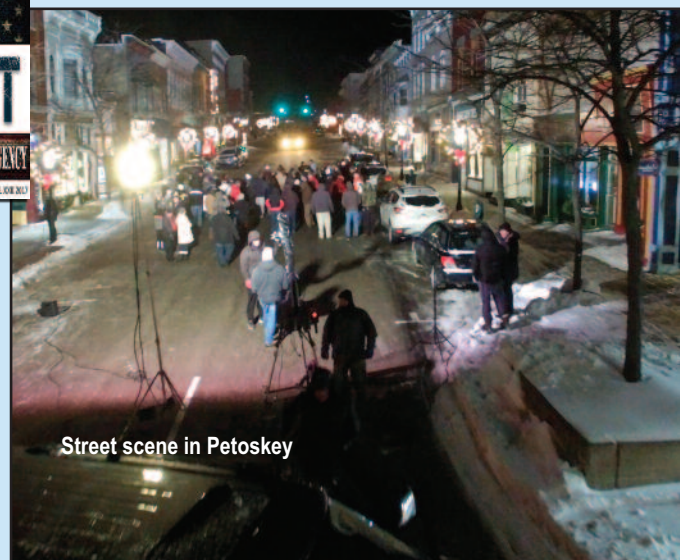
Lindsay starred in Cowboy Jax Young’s video about what veteran’s face when coming home. Young, an Army veteran and Nashville recording star, founded S.A.V.E. the Homefront, a program similar to Final Salute Inc. Both agencies reach out to veterans, providing services to reduce homelessness and help vets transition into their communities and find suitable housing.



Many of Petoskey’s citizens carried photos of their veterans when they participated in the video



Homecoming march down the streets of Petoskey, Michigan where the “Leave the Light on” video was filmed



Street scene in Petoskey



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Classic Wonder

Lowndes Artist Wins Nation-Wide Warner Bros. Competition

By Jessica Shock



Jessica Lynn Logan, born and raised in Lowndes County, has splattered and dripped her way into comic book greatness. Her classic rendering of DC Comic's Wonder Woman won her the honor of attending the world premiere of the movie and a chance to meet the star-studded cast.

When Logan graduated from Valdosta State University with her Bachelor of Fine Arts, she never guessed that she'd have the opportunity to win a nation-wide art contest, or that her prize would include a round trip flight from Valdosta to Los Angeles.

"It was a very quick trip," she recalled, an easy smile on her face. "We flew out early Wednesday morning and arrived in L.A. around 10 o'clock. As soon as we got to the hotel, we ate lunch, and hit the road to see Hollywood."

The three-day trip to see the world premiere of 'Wonder Woman' was just one of four grand prizes Logan received for her winning artwork, "Classic Wonder" in the 2016 Wonder Woman Warner Bros. Nation-Wide Fan Art Competition. The other three included a cash prize, the display of "Classic Wonder" in the traveling Art of Wonder Woman exhibition, and good ol' bragging rights.

"I can't remember exactly when I submitted the artwork," Logan said. "We went to a movie and the 'Wonder Woman' preview was playing. I was like, 'Oh, that's going to be awesome!' So, I went to Facebook and found the 'Wonder Woman' page, and saw that they were hosting a Wonder

Woman Contest – an art contest."

Logan, known as JLLogan Art across social media, has plenty of art prints boasting colorful superheroes and heroines alike online. Still, "Classic Wonder" was her first.

"Before Wonder Woman, I would draw animals. And, honestly, I didn't do a lot of painting before her," Logan admitted. "It's funny, because sculpture and ceramics were my two favorite classes in college. I loved them because they were so hands-on."

The satisfaction gained from getting messy during the creation of art is something that has stayed with Logan, but it took one of the founding members of the Justice League to help her realize just how to have fun with something as unsubstantial as paint.

"The splatter gives it a texture and just a fun pop, and the drips are more of me leaning toward the graffiti style – which I like," Logan explained, reminding that two of her favorite artists are Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol for their pop art and

"Mine stood out, because I did the original comic character." Logan said.

graffiti style. "It's hard to do loose-style paintings because I want every line to be perfect, but I have a mix between those perfect lines and the splatter. So, it's a little bit organized with a little bit of chaos, all in one painting."

Those who have seen Logan's "Classic Wonder" can easily recognize the artist's signature paint drip, bursts of background color, and strong lines that she incorporates into all of her paintings.

"Based on the style I like," Logan said, "Which is more of a graphic image than a realistic image, I lean toward the comic field. Just because, personally, I don't do a lot of realistic drawings." It's a big reason why Logan featured an iconic cartoon





Wonder Woman as the subject of “Classic Wonder,” rather than a depiction of the lead actress of ‘Wonder Woman,’ Gal Gadot.

“Looking at a bunch of other artists who submitted, they did pictures of the actual actress and scenes from the movie,” Logan said. “Mine stood out, because I did the original comic character.”

Ironically, it was Logan who did not depict Gal Gadot in her artwork that got to (accidentally) rub shoulders with the actress at the world premiere.

“Thursday was the day of the premiere,” Logan said. “We saw the red carpet; you could see the stars signing autographs. We got our tickets and went into the Pantages Theater where they were hosting it, and we actually had balcony seats. Afterwards – because everyone exits the same doors – we were constantly standing next to celebrities who were in the movie, or who were from CW television shows supporting the cast.

Everyone was just chatting.”

Logan loved the film. In fact, since returning from her whirlwind vacation, she has seen the movie five times at the GTC Valdosta Stadium 16.

“The splatter gives it a texture and just a fun pop, and the drips are more of me leaning toward the graffiti style – which I like,” Logan explained.

“Who would have thought I’d ever get flown out to L.A. to see a movie premiere with a bunch of stars by entering a simple Facebook contest?” Logan said. “It’s like I said, don’t be scared to try things because you never know what could happen. For me, it has built my confidence up, because if Warner Bros. liked my painting enough to send me out to L.A.? Then maybe a bunch of other people may like it, too.” ✂



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DARTH VADER

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Ben Baker

Everyone who has a hunting dog claims to have the world's greatest. Truth be told, a man is allotted one truly great hunting dog in his life, just as he is allowed one truly great firearm.

My great was Darth Vader.

The actual ownership of Darth Vader is questionable. My brother insists Darth Vader was his dog. Dad is no longer around, but he'd also lay claim if he could. Ownership aside, what follows is a true story.

I saw a guy in the Bibb Graves quad with his dog and it reminded me of one of my dogs, Darth Vader.

Darth Vader was half mutt, half Weimaraner, and a complete gentleman. He got his name because when he was a puppy, he looked like Darth Vader. He used to scare his siblings by walking up behind them and breathing across their back. He

tried to imitate the way the real Darth Vader breathed. It worked too. A dog with emphysema will scare a grown man. Add in Vader's looks and he could scare King Kong off a banana plantation.

Vader was a deer hound first and foremost. When the weather got cool, he was always off in the woods behind the house

chasing deer. He was nice about it though. If it was a doe with a fawn, he'd leave them alone unless the fawn could run. He never ran the deer far. He was interested in running, not catching. He never chased rabbits. He would chase a raccoon at night. He'd hunt birds until he jumped a deer and then off he went. He'd run a deer about a half a mile and stop and go back to whatever he was doing before. If he was bird hunting, he'd run back and find me, and we'd resume our trek.

Vader was a deer hound first and foremost.

I lost Vader one hunting season in middle Georgia. He took off after a deer and didn't come back. It made me mad because it was the beginning of the deer season and Vader was my best hound. I was really worried about Vader's safety. He could have gotten shot or run over. Deer hounds are always getting killed in deer season.

A few days after the end of the season, I received a telephone call from somebody in middle Georgia. He had Darth Vader. He had gotten my phone number off Vader's

He used to scare his siblings by walking up behind them and breathing across their back.

collar. I figure he had used Vader all during the season to run deer and when the season expired, he figured he better call me. This happens to a lot of deer hounds.

I left right after the guy called. It took me about an hour and a half to make a two-and-a-half-hour drive. Vader was glad to see me. He almost passed out from lack of oxygen he barked so hard.

I couldn't get him to ride in the back of the truck. He insisted on riding up front with me. I let him. He rode the whole way with his head resting on my leg. When I moved my leg to brake or shift gears, he'd look up at me like he was going to bite me in two if I tried to put him in the back.

Vader died before I came to college. He was doing what he enjoyed most, running. It wasn't a deer. It was a truck. Vader swerved to miss a bush sticking out into the road, and the truck didn't try to dodge.

Ben Baker is a dad, writer, author and evangelist in Southwest Georgia. He collects bills, tax notices and advertising circulars in Ashburn. He has 12 books in print and several more in the works. If you have nothing better to do, find him on Facebook at Ben R Baker and Twitter @redneckgenius.

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Joseph Shiver

Not Just an Ordinary Jeweler

By Jada Dukes

It was a busy Monday morning at the jewelry store. This one came in for an engraving. That one needed a special watch battery. A couple browsed the ring case. Another couple came with a request to turn something old into something new.

Sculpting unique pieces of fine jewelry is what Joseph Shiver does, and does it well. Looking at his work, one has to marvel at the talent and patience that went into crafting each piece—marvel and wonder at what prompts a person to engage in a craft that few others attempt.

Like most teenagers, Shiver wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his life. He knew he wasn't interested in going to college, so he had to make other plans for his future. Then he heard an interesting piece of news.

"A friend of the family had just opened a jewelry store and said he wanted a jeweler on the premises," Shiver said.

Interested, Shiver decided to attend a trade school that summer to learn the basics of jewelry making so he could take on the jeweler position; thus, marking the beginning of a 32-year-long career.

For years, Shiver moved between stores all over South Georgia, taking on apprenticeships as he developed his talents. Finally, he ventured out on his own and opened "Joseph's Jewelers" in Adel.

"I worked for a jewelry store here [Adel] for about four years, and things didn't work out there. So, I went out on my own; and I've been on my own since 2000," he said.

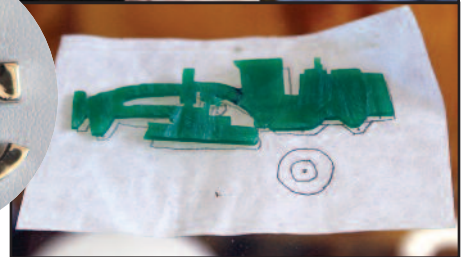
Shiver's been crafting one of kind pieces inside of his shop for 17 ½ years. His unique capabilities set him apart from other jewelry stores in the area.

"Not every jewelry store has a jeweler," Shiver said. "When you bring something in that's broken, I can fix it."

His method of creating jewelry is rather interesting. In the back of his shop, Shiver has a CNC milling machine that he uses to create wax molds of his pieces as opposed to carving the molds by hand. While machining the mold is becoming



Clockwise from top left: Shiver and Frannie replace a watch battery. Shiver poses in front of images of jewelry he's designed over the years. Engraving a ring. After sketching out his idea, Shiver creates a wax mold. Handmade Cook County Hornet charms. Helping customers create something new from old rings.



more and more common, Shiver is the only jeweler in Adel using this machine.

According to Shiver, the process starts off simple. The customer comes in with an idea and of what they want, and he does

the rest. Even if the customer doesn't know what they want, Shiver still manages to get the job done.

"I usually pick their mind to make sure that they get what they want because what

Continued on page 29



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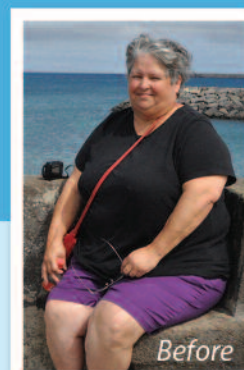


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Losing for Life

Damien Serrata's
Journey to a New Body

By Ben Baker

Losing weight is pretty easy. Shed a pound or two, no problem. Keeping it off is harder.

But losing a serious amount of weight and keeping that off for years is something entirely different.

Damien Serrata, a South Georgia law enforcement officer, had shed 177 pounds by the end of 2012. More importantly, he's kept it off for going on five years.

These days he hits the scales around 220 pounds, a far cry from the more than 400 pounds he used to weigh. He went from a size 44 waist to a 36 waist in pants. Yes, he had to buy new clothes, but only a few times. Once he saw this was going to work, he started wearing sweat pants and sweatshirts until he reached his goal and could buy a new wardrobe.

"It took me a year and a half," he said.

He did it without surgery or drugs. "I started walking; I learned. I picked up Men's Health magazine and started learning how to diet, exercise tips. It started coming off."

It worked so well that Officer Serrata is a feature in an upcoming edition of Men's Health.

A CHANGED MAN

When he launched his effort to lose weight, he pretty much kept to himself and

saw few people outside of work. Once he hit his goal weight, he reopened his social life.

"I'd always been big," he said, "After—a lot of people didn't recognize me. I came out 177 pounds lighter."

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Referring to diet, Serrata actually meant a permanent change to the way he was eating. He's using the word diet in the broader sense to mean what he eats regularly.

"I was eating sweets and snacks. I substituted fruits and vegetables," he said. "Two proteins at every meal. Breakfast (for example) is sausage and eggs and a banana.

Lunch and supper, I throw in a vegetable or fruit. I don't count calories. I don't weigh food. I eat a basically healthy diet.

This may sound like the Keto - No Carb diet, and it shares a lot of similarities. However, Officer Serrata does eat carbohydrates.

"You've got to have carbs to have energy," he points out.

It really is a lifestyle change, a long-term commitment he says.

"You have to work at it until you see

"Come Hell or high water, I was going to lose that weight."



change. Then, just stick to it," he said.

"The hard thing is not exercising. I can tell someone to do something, and they will do it. The hard thing is doing it every day. That is the challenge."

WORK IT

Exercise is also part of that change. He works out every day except Sunday, usually at Southern Bodies in Tifton. He rotates among the equipment as he doesn't have a favorite. What is important is getting a whole-body workout, which means more than one machine.

He says he does favor the Spartacus Workout* as found in Men's Health. "It is high-intensity interval training," he said.

He started out walking. That moved into running, and the gym was added in there somewhere.

Since he has to be at work at 6 a.m., his

"I'd rather sweat out in the gym than bleed out in the streets."





gym workout comes at 3:30 a.m. Yes, really. That's how important this lifestyle change is to him.

Like many others in weight-loss programs, he also hit a plateau. His arrived at 260 pounds. He stopped losing weight.

"I was running 1-2 miles. I had to push it to 3-4 miles. I couldn't budge it [the weight] anymore, so I had to change up my

exercise again," he said. "When you plateau, your body becomes accustomed to what you do. It is the new normal. You've got to change to make your body react. Your body can become accustomed to anything."

What happens is, as the body gets used to the new exercise and food intake, it makes internal, automatic adjustments. In one sense, the body becomes more efficient, taking more nutrition from the food than it used to do in order to maintain existing weight.

"The body says 'I have to reserve this food.' It will retain the food, and you won't lose weight," he said.

LIVING HEALTHY

Before embarking on his decision to lose weight, Officer Serrata was healthy. No blood pressure issues. No problems with blood sugar. He was just fat.

"I decided one morning to make a change. My life had to change," he said. "I was over 400 pounds. I couldn't bend over and tie my shoes much less chase anyone. I was not an asset to anyone, especially a (law enforcement) department,"

"Come Hell or high water, I was going to lose that weight."

Since shedding what amounts to an entire person, his health indicators have remained steady. Better than that, he feels better, has more stamina and is now that "asset" to law enforcement.

"And I can tie my shoes without holding my breath," he said with a laugh. ✂

Baker's Thoughts

Figuring Officer Serrata at an even 6 feet tall and a flat 400 pounds, he turned in a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 54.3.

Now at 220 pounds he has a BMI of 29.8.

We used the Google BMI calculator to figure the numbers. Type Body Mass Index into the Google search bar and it will give you the calculator.

Here's another BMI calculator:

nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm

For more information on the Spartacus Workout:
menshealth.com/fitness/Spartacus



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Houston Honored with Hall of Fame Induction

By Vickie Harsey

The evening was the highlight of the November Field Dog Trial competition at Shadow Oak

Plantation as friends

and family gathered to honor Field Dog Trial patron, Butch Houston. It was an honor 40 years in the making.

Houston was inducted into the Field Dog Trial Hall of Fame and received the Legacy Award from the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Danny Sparks, Regional Director of the NWTF, noted that the timing for their award was appropriate with all of Houston's peers gathered around him. Over the years, he has made significant contributions to conservation efforts and the NWTF.

"He is a true conservationist," Sparks said. "He helped get a NWTF chapter started in Berrien County 22 years ago. Because of Houston's contributions, the chapter also manages more quail habitats than turkey."

The framed Certificate of Induction into the Hall of Fame was presented by Robin Gates, Houston's friend and long-time dog handler. He also presented Houston with the 2017 Winner's Award for the Saskatchewan Open Chicken Championship won by the setter Shadow Oak Bo

Legacy Lamp Award from NWTF



(co-owned by Houston and Dr. John Dorminy of Fitzgerald). A formal presentation of the Hall of Fame Scroll will be done at the Bird Dog Museum in Grand Junction, Tennessee where, as Gates pointed out, there will be three exhibits side-by-side—Houston's Hall of Fame induction; Joe Shadow, Hall of Fame champion field dog; and setter Shadow Oak Bo for his historic consecutive wins of the Grand Junction Title and National Championship.

Houston, humbled by the honors bestowed upon him, said, "I think it's wonderful. I don't know that I deserve it. But, I'm very pleased."

"To be elected to the Field Dog Hall of Fame is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a field trial patron," guest and field dog handler Darien Hendley explained. "You have to excel in every aspect of the sport—from field trials, hosting trials, breeding dogs, and supporting the sport in every manner you can."

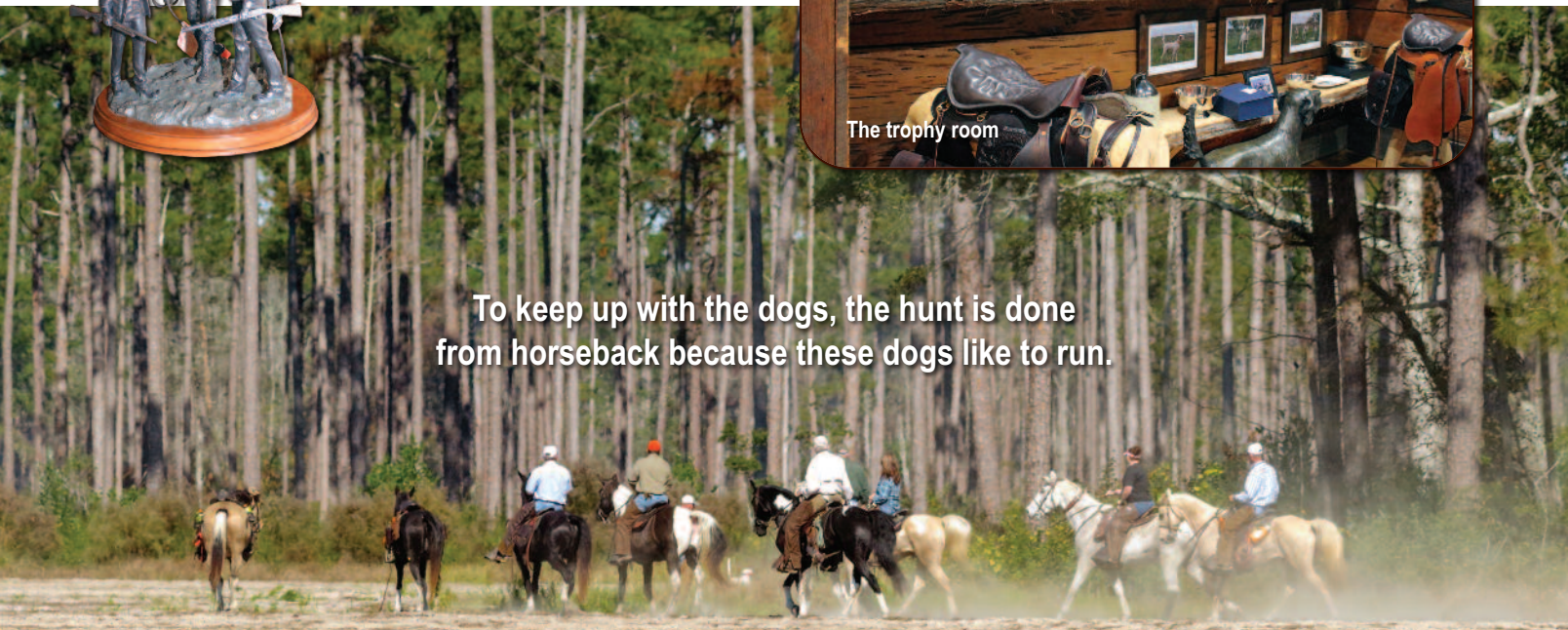
When Houston was asked why he has been a patron of the trials, he said that it's for the love of the game and the people, and to promote good dogs.

Robin Gates responded with "That's exactly why he needs to be in the Hall of Fame."



The trophy room

To keep up with the dogs, the hunt is done from horseback because these dogs like to run.



For more information about Shadow Oak Plantation and the Field Dog Trials go to www.shadowoakplantation.com

All dogs must have a good nose and the ability to find the bird, point, hold point until bird is flushed, and hold point when the gun is fired.



“Butch has owned many a great dog over the years and has been a strong supporter of the sport and the handlers,” Gates said, pointing out the many national wins Houston’s dogs had earned him.

Most of the field dog owners, like Houston, grew up hunting. Now, the older they get, they want great dogs and want to watch great dogs perform.

“It’s like going to a major-league game just to see the top athletes,” Gates added. “That’s what these trial dogs are—the best of the best.”

Seeing the dog perform, knowing that’s his dog, then winning the bragging rights is what brings these sportsmen like Butch Houston much pride.

Shooting Dog Stake Categories

- Derby – judged on All-Age Characteristics
- All-Age – a big-running dog that takes a lot of edge country, staying ahead of the group
- Shooting Dog – stays close, doesn’t range-out away from handler, frequently checks-in

And pride in the sport shines at Shadow Oak, from the trophy room, filled with awards, photos, framed news clippings, and saddles denoting two national championships, to the sights and sounds of the hunt.

The Field Dog Trial Competition is held every year at Shadow Oak Plantation. Dogs earn Purina Points based on their performance with the top dogs qualifying for the Purina Open Top Shooting Dog Award and handlers qualifying for Purina Handler’s Award Point Trial. Other competitions include the Purina Amateur Shooting Dog Award Points Trial and the Amateur Shooting Dog Invitational Trial. ✨



ROOTED IN COUNTRY

Born out of Gospel and Blues

Danny Dawson Takes Traditional Artist of the Year at the Georgia Country Awards

By Jada Dukes

Who would have thought a country boy from Manor, Georgia would make it this far? Danny Dawson has really come a long way. He fondly recalls performing for fun at small bars and pubs with his first band, The Georgia Heartbeats.

"The first time we actually made some money we made six bucks apiece and we thought we were rich," Dawson said.

Nowadays, The Danny Dawson Band is playing packed-out arenas all over and has played alongside music legends such as Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson and Travis Tritt.

This past November, Danny officially entered legendary status himself when he was awarded the 2017 Traditional Artist of the Year at the Georgia Country Awards held at the Crazy Bull in Macon.

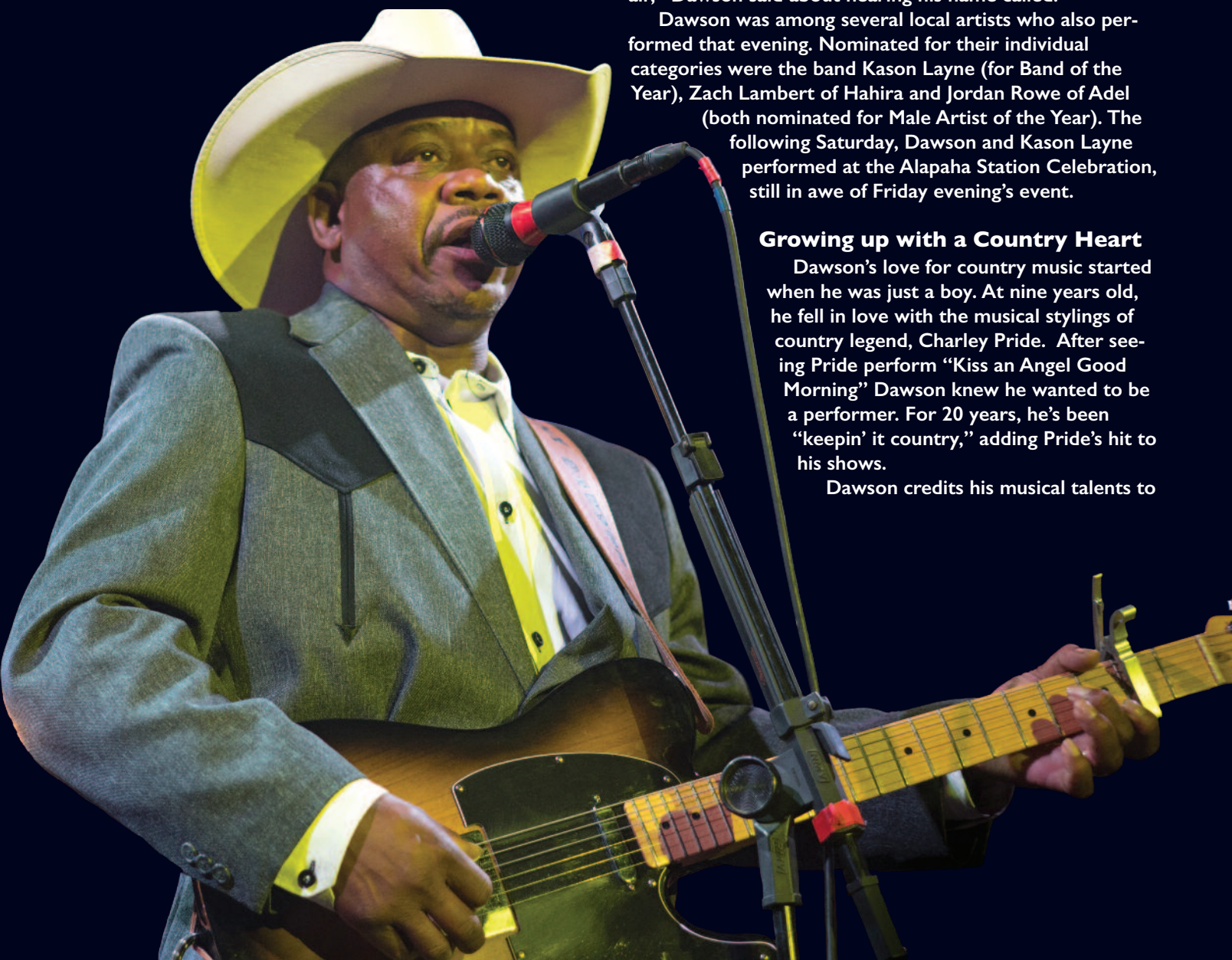
Standing backstage with his fingers crossed, Dawson had no idea what to expect, "I must've jumped three feet in the air," Dawson said about hearing his name called.

Dawson was among several local artists who also performed that evening. Nominated for their individual categories were the band Kason Layne (for Band of the Year), Zach Lambert of Hahira and Jordan Rowe of Adel (both nominated for Male Artist of the Year). The following Saturday, Dawson and Kason Layne performed at the Alapaha Station Celebration, still in awe of Friday evening's event.

Growing up with a Country Heart

Dawson's love for country music started when he was just a boy. At nine years old, he fell in love with the musical stylings of country legend, Charley Pride. After seeing Pride perform "Kiss an Angel Good Morning" Dawson knew he wanted to be a performer. For 20 years, he's been "keepin' it country," adding Pride's hit to his shows.

Dawson credits his musical talents to



his parents. His mother, Bertha Mae, was a gospel singer and his father, Dewitt, played the blues.

"I took the playing from my dad, and I guess the singing came from listening to my mom and sister singing in church," he said. Dawson pays homage to those church days by putting a Gospel song on every album.

Encouraging his son, Dewitt built Dawson's first guitar out of wood paneling and the neck of an acoustic guitar. "I played that thing to death," he said.

"There are a lot of good black artists out there that just never get any recognition," Dawson said

Another influence was neighbor Peewee Word, a great steel guitar player who performed with country greats such as Charley Pride.

"I used to go over to his house all the time and listen to him play," Dawson said. Word taught him to never give up on his dreams and to always stay true to who he is.

People are often intrigued when they see Dawson perform live simply because he's not who they expect to see. He is repeatedly compared to Charley Pride because of his amazing voice and stage presence and because they are both African-American. Dawson is proud to be compared to such a remarkable musician and hopes to inspire others in the same way Pride inspired him.

"There are a lot of good black artists out there that just never get any recognition," Dawson said. He encourages all black artists who are hesi-



Judging by the Georgia Country Music Traditional Artist of the Year award – and his huge smile – Dawson knows his hard work has paid off



tant to step out of their comfort zones and sing country to just get out there and do it.

The thing that stands out about Dawson's performances is that he tells a story when he sings. Many of Dawson's songs are originals, springing from his own life story. He's an avid reader, so his love for stories, poems, and nature inspires his music.

"Just good stories," he said. "Listening to my mom and dad tell stories about the old times really inspired me to want to write songs."

Photographer and friend, Wenda Gaile Bailey really enjoys photographing Dawson because of how animated he is on stage. She also enjoys his music and prefers it over other artists who, as she says, "can't sing their way out of a paper bag."

Country star Julie Roberts noticed Dawson's writing skills when Shooter Jennings, son of Waylon Jennings played for her Dawson's single "Why Can't I Have You" from his first album. Roberts flew to Los Angeles to record the song. Soon after, Netflix put it on its original series "The Ranch," starring Ashton Kutcher and Sam Elliot.

Dawson's hard work and remarkable talents have not only made him popular but has gained him a loyal fan base



At the awards show held at The Crazy Bull

"Everywhere you go somebody knows you..."

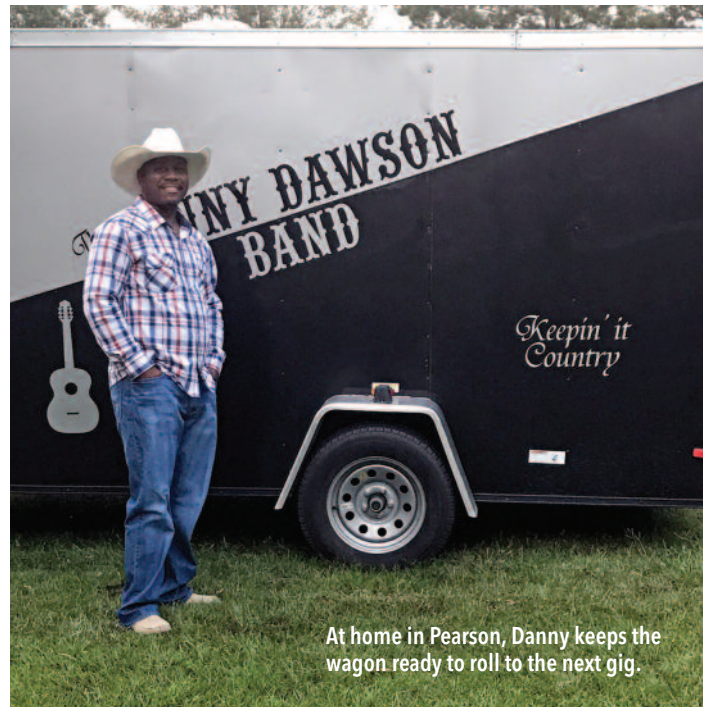
in South Georgia—although, the new attention can be a little bit startling sometimes.

"Everywhere you go somebody knows you," he said. "I could be walking through Walmart and somebody will recognize me" He describes it as kind of a scary good feeling but he loves his fans.

"If I had to sign a million [autographs] I would stand in one spot and sign a million for my fans. That's how much I appreciate them," he added.

Offstage, Dawson is just a regular guy who enjoys hunting, fishing, sightseeing, metal detecting and songwriting. He's a family man who loves his children, grandchildren and step children. He's no stranger to a large family having grown up on a farm with 18 siblings. Two of Dawson's children are serving active military duty. Standing beside this legend-in-the-making is his new bride, Martha, who manages not only the family, but also Dawson.

Dawson says it has been a long hard road to get to where he is but he remains grateful for his accomplishments. He's given up a number of times but always came back fighting.



At home in Pearson, Danny keeps the wagon ready to roll to the next gig.

"Stick to your roots and it pays off in the long run," He said.

The next move for the Dawson's is a much-needed break; but before that, Dawson is going back into the studio to prepare for the release of his newest album, "There's No Turning Back." ✕

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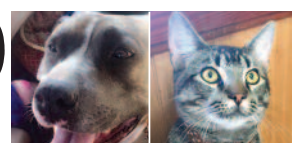
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Living It Up with Kason Layne

By Jada Dukes

For a band who picked their name from a street sign, these guys have done well. The hometown band recently had the honor of performing at the 2017 Georgia Country Awards and even nabbed a nomination for Band of The Year and Artist of The Year. Although they didn't win this go around, they are more than grateful to be nominated.

"I do this for the pure love of doing it, and that's the only reason," lead singer Kyle Stone said.

He said the band has been focused on increasing its fan base, so the nomination is a sign they are doing the right thing.

Each member of the band calls central South Georgia home. For Stone, that means Alapaha where the band took the stage on Saturday following Friday night's appearance at the GCA in Macon. Tired, but in good spirits, they opened for country music star, Mo Pitney. During the break, they sat down to talk with MGH about how far the band has come since its beginnings.

Jad Deal (guitar) founded the band back in 2004, along with Kyle White (guitar) and Jake Boykin (Bass). Later, guitarist Aaron Williams, drummer Josh Foster, and Stone joined the band to complete what Dean refers to as "THE lineup." The band released its first album, "Living It Up" in 2010.

"It went Alabama chrome, which is certified Duck Tape," White said with a grin.

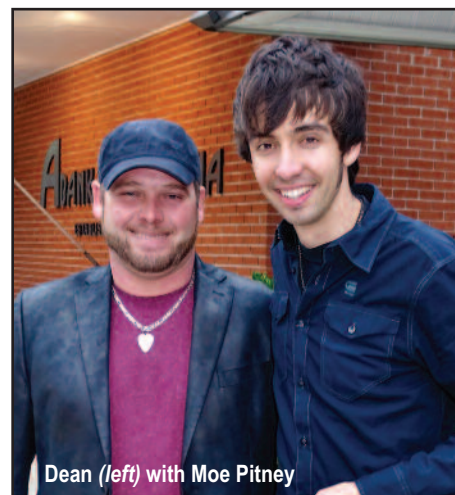
Deal is not only the founder, but the head lyricists as well.

Deal has written over 300 original songs specifically for the band. While Deal may be too modest to boast about his songwriting talents, his bandmates make no hesitation.

"He's a phenomenal lyricist; just don't tell him I told you he is," White laughed.

The bond between these men is undeniable, which may be the cause for their fun-loving stage presence and light-hearted music. They cherish the days they drove to gigs crammed inside of a four-door pick-up truck and are even more thankful for their accomplishments. The band is planning on releasing a new album at the beginning of 2018, and they hope to do even better than they did the year before. They've already started with their newest single "Text With You."

These boys are definitely making their hometowns proud. ✂



Dean (left) with Moe Pitney

Red Carpet Treatment



Congrats to the winners and the nominees for The Georgia Country Awards held at The Crazy Bull in Macon. From left: Danny and Martha Dawson (Traditional Male Vocalist, winner), The Kason Layne Band (Band, nominee), Jordan Rowe (Male Artist, nominee). Photos courtesy of Dwight Philpott Jr.

Dwight Yoakam

Urban Cowboy brings Bakersfield to Tifton

By Dalton Spangler

Grammy-winning and multi-platinum artist Dwight Yoakam performed live at the UGA Conference Center on November 2. He follows a long line of famous country artists who've performed there in recent years, like Willie Nelson and Vince Gill.

Yoakam took the stage dressed in a Canadian tuxedo. From his worn Levi's 517 jeans, which were tight enough to rival any emo rocker's, to his faded Sherpa Trucker jacket modified with a strip of bright rhinestones on the back-tail, and his low-riding felt Stetson cowboy hat — Yoakam was ready to perform. His band dazzled the audience not only with impressive musicianship but with the sparkling embroidery on their black and white western wear. They looked like the rhinestone cowboy version of the Beatles, all the way down to the lettering on the drum set.

Fans from all corners of Georgia came to see the performance, from as far north as Rome to as far west as Columbus.

Jim Morgan of Valdosta, who used to perform in a cover band himself, said "I've been a fan of Dwight since the 80s. Anybody who could write songs like that had to get noticed. Everything he's done has been class."

When asked what he hoped to hear Dwight play he responded, "I obviously want to hear the hits, but I like everything he does, acting and all. He has a traditional style, but true to the 50s and 60s performers in the way he carries himself onstage like with his attire, mannerisms, and writing. He writes a really good story."

Morgan concluded by saying "This'll probably be the last opportunity for me to see him live; so for those fans of country music like me, there's that nostalgic attraction."

Dr. Justin Ng, an agronomy professor at ABAC, was there to see the performance and because he admires classic country artists partly due to his time playing bass in a Texas country band.

"I have an iPod with thousands of songs on it and when I heard 'A Thousand Miles from Nowhere' picked out on it, I just fell in love with it immediately," he said.

When Yoakam and his band took the stage, the whole crowd lit up with people jumping out of their seats in excitement. Dwight's band glittered on the stage lights as they powered out a honky-tonk version of Chuck Berry's "Little Queenie."

Next, the band played a couple originals. First, "Please, Please Baby" followed by "Wild Ride" featuring Yoakam's stellar boot-scooting.



Later that night, Yoakam performed a series of Merle Haggard covers in tribute to his friend. He talked about the significance of Merle's work and the role he played in giving a voice to the rural peoples and veterans of the Vietnam War who felt like they had been ignored during the counter-culture's revolution.

He introduced the song with a story about him and Willie Nelson talking in the bus after a show one night in Florida.

"Through the smoke and the haze there, I could see what I think was Willie and I said 'Willie? Is that you Willie?'"

Yoakam continued saying, "I reached out through that cloud and grabbed his beard and said 'Is that you?' He said 'Yea,' and I said 'Lemme ask you something, did you do this one?' Through that cloud of smoke, he kinda peeked down with a twinkle in his eyes and said 'Oh yea I did!'"

Yoakam then began singing the opening verse to "Okie from Muskogee."

They looked like the rhinestone cowboy version of the Beatles all the way down to the lettering of the drum set.

"We don't smoke marijuana in Muskogee/We don't take no trips on LSD."

The crowd loved it.

He then performed three more Merle cover's "Silver Wings," "Swinging Doors," and "Mama Tried." The best was saved for last as the last six tracks were all of Yoakam's greatest hits like "A Thousand Miles from Nowhere" and "Guitars, Cadillacs."

At this point people of all ages had gotten up to dance, some were square dancing while others were just tapping their boots to the rhythm of the beat.

The night closed out with "Fast As You." You could hear Yoakam's voice starting to be a little feeble, but he was still going strong, showing he's still got it well into his 50s. After the

song was through, Yoakam thanked everyone and complimented the crowd's hospitality. As the band exited the stage, the bassist threw his pick out to the crowd which created a scramble to find the memento.

As many great bands know, you always leave the audience wanting more and the audience definitely did. The hardcore fans started chanting and whistling for the band's return.

The energy paid off as Yoakam and crew returned for an encore, a cover of "Suspicious Minds" by Mark James, which was made popular by Elvis Presley. This finale satiated the audience's appetite. They quickly rushed to the merchandise booth afterward before the goods were sold out.

And the urban cowboy rode away...✂



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The Man Behind the Sign

By Becky Hitchcock

In the coming and going of everyday life, I pass a sign at the corner of Madison Hwy and Prison Farm Road in Valdosta, Georgia.

The sign reflects a resolution executed by the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners on August 12, 2015. The Lowndes County Law Enforcement Complex was re-named for the late G. Robert Carter, Jr., a man of many wonders.

G. Robert held many titles and roles in his lifetime. The WWII veteran was a farmer, a Mason, and a Shriner. He was a devout United Methodist, with deep Primitive Baptist roots. He was also a Gideon and a Kiwanis Club member. He graduated Naylor High School, Georgia Military College, and the FBI National Academy. He also served on the state board of the Department of Corrections under Governors Joe Frank Harris and Zell Miller.

He was a son, brother, cousin, husband, father, grandfather, great-grand father, and friend. He was my uncle and neighbor for 50 years and responded to many names. Yet, more often than not, people simply called him Sheriff.

In 1941, a young G. Robert and his younger brother, John Rufus, drove a team of mules from Naylor to Old Clyattville to the family's 114-acre farm where they made their homestead.

After marrying his high school sweetheart, Katie Ruth Sego in 1944, G. Robert answered a draft summons and went to the Philippine Islands and Yokohama, Japan. After the war, he returned to Katie Ruth.

One year a very poor tobacco crop made for a necessary trip into town. He

asked Chief Wilbur Perkerson of the Valdosta Police Department if they were "looking for any hands."

They were. Especially if the hands had military police experience.

G. Robert Carter served with the Valdosta Police Department from 1952 to 1975, rising to the rank of Assistant Chief.

I learned much of this when he was elected Sheriff in 1975. As a wide-eyed eighth grader, it amazed me that my uncle actually wanted to run for public office.

In my tender years, I rarely heard him talk except when calling the cows. Yet he always acknowledged my presence. With a gentle sweep of his hand to my face, he'd mumble, "Hey there, Junior. Got your nose," and I always wondered if he thought I was a boy.

My aunt used to say that, when she first married my uncle, he was so shy of crowds that she had to fix his plate at any gathering with dinner on the ground.

Somehow, G. Robert found a penchant for public speaking, crowds, and politics. We found him at the front of most any dinner line where he often asked the blessing. He fixed his own plate and brought scraps home for the cats and dog.

His bid for sheriff made for a new family experience. As a unit, we passed out campaign cards and listened to radio forums. Once the polls closed on Election Day, we joined the masses to count votes at Mathis Auditorium.

G. Robert had a keen memory that served him well all the days of his life. During his seventeen years as Sheriff of Lowndes County, he drove an unmarked

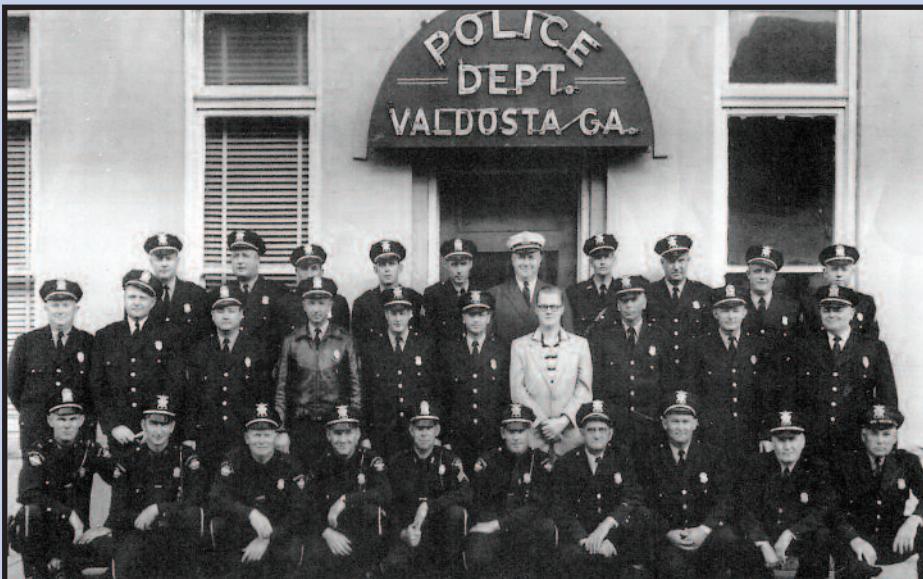


car. The sounds of his department's dispatchers on one radio and WJEM on the other didn't distract him. He waved at whomever he passed on the highway. He repeated their names and offered a tidbit of the family's history to whomever was riding with him. This trait was so unique. I wondered if he did this even when driving by himself.

Because he seldom missed a funeral, many held the long-standing joke that the funeral homes had G. Robert on their payroll. Those closest to him, however, knew that his attention to funerals meant much more than good politics.

In the early 1980's, I worked in the Sheriff's Office in the old Courthouse. I never saw him display open anger until the department failed to show up for a proper funeral escort. He told us the deceased's family had been let down. He had no chance to fix it.

He understood the depth of grief's gaping hole and hoped to fill it with a sense of dignity. While he was the oldest, he survived his parents and siblings by many years. He had survived the conflicts of WWII, but his baby brother died as a result of the Korean Conflict. His sister and remaining brother succumbed to the conflict called cancer.





G. Robert sought re-election in 1976, 1980, 1984 and 1988. Each race was opposed, but he won. In 1992, however, he lost the re-election bid for sheriff to Ashley Paulk.

He emptied his office in the old Courthouse and returned home. Yet, he did not stay away from public service.

At the turn of the century, G. Robert Carter made the bid and won the District 3 seat of the Lowndes County Board of Commission. He served from 2001 through 2010. In 2009 he lost his Katie Ruth yet held tightly to his faith.

At a family supper on New Year's Day 2011, he sat at my table. With laughter and reflection, we spoke about the blessings of the past. We took turns around the table sharing what we hoped for in the brand-new year. Uncle Robert told us the New Year would bring a new experience because, for the first time in his adult life, he didn't have some kind of job to report to and at his age, he wasn't going to hope or plan too far in advance.

Way back in 1941, my uncle and my daddy drove a team of mules from Naylor to a new home in Old Clyattville. My uncle died at that same home on February 12, 2011. His devoted daughters and sons-in-law were all present. He taught them well.

Sometime before he passed away, he decided the old smoke house on the homestead should be torn down. Yet, he remarked that the antique made him think of many things.

I understand what he meant. The sign unveiled on August 12, 2015, makes me think of many things, too. I think of all the wonders of the man behind the sign. And, it makes me smile. ✂

SHIVER/DUKES Continued from page 16

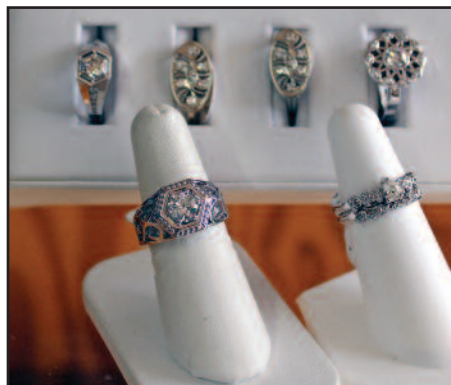
I like, they may not like, and vice versa," He said.

Shiver works with each customer to ensure he creates something that is both financially achievable and aesthetically pleasing.

Once a design is chosen, Shiver takes it to the machine. While this process saves time, Shiver said learning the software was quite challenging.

"You can go in and design it in a computer which is set up for Computer Aided Design to help you [craft] a model," Shiver said.

The mill machine allows for more precise designs and ultimately widened Shiver's design abilities. This process



A sampling of the rings Shiver has designed.

takes up to 3-4 weeks depending on the complexity of the piece.

Shiver always gives his customers three options when it comes to the quality of his pieces, which is good, fast, or cheap.

"If people want it fast and cheap it ain't gone be good" Shiver said. He often has to



Joseph's Jewelers carries the Arthur Court line.

explain this philosophy to his more impatient customers.

It was longtime friend and employee, Franna Taylor who encouraged Shiver to create his first unique piece. She had noticed Shiver's drawing abilities and asked him to design a piece for her. Though he was reluctant at first, the result was phenomenal. It is a one-of-a-kind masterpiece that Taylor still wears today.

Shiver noted that his friend is a loyal asset to him and to the store.

"She's lived here all her life," he said. "It helps to have someone who knows everybody."

As for his success, Shiver attributes most of it to Christ. Shiver believes wholeheartedly that every step of his journey was designed to lead him to where he is.

"If I didn't have it (faith) I wouldn't be here," Shiver said.

At 17 years old, Shiver dreamed of owning a jewelry store; 13 years later, he did just that. If you ask Shiver, that's no coincidence. ✂

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Pine Resin, Sap, and Stills

Remembering the Heyday of the Turpentine Industry and Naval Stores

By Ben Baker

Mention "catface" to one of the connected generation and they think of funny cat videos online.

Say "catface" to someone over the age of 50 who grew up in South Georgia on a farm, and they think of something else entirely. They think of a scarred tree trunk with notches that look like a wide V and a piece of tin at the bottom of the V.

They think turpentine.

A catface is the cuts and scars left on a pine tree trunk after turpentine harvesters "tapped" a pine tree for the "gum" or sap. The cuts look enough like whiskers to earn the catface nickname. Using a specialized knife, kind of a tube with a handle, they cut through the bark on the tree to expose the inner layer where sap runs through a tree. The cut was at an angle to allow the gum to flow along the channel into a piece of tin that poured into a catch tray.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Exactly when turpentine became a commercial crop in the South is hard to pinpoint. Likely, the first settlers here started harvesting the resin, having learned it from the Native Americans.

In the middle of the 19th century, demand picked up. Those settling this

region of Georgia came in and tapped the trees and then harvested the trees for the lumber. Pretty much anyone with land holding pines had turpentine operations. Many historians say the turpentine industry moved here because the supply of mature timber in the Carolinas was used up.

The same problem, a lack of mature pines, contributed to the decline in Southwest Georgia. Turpentine demand also dropped dramatically.

According to the Folklife Collection at Valdosta State, commercial turpentine production continued in Georgia through the turn of the century. "The last bucket of gum for commercial turpentine was dipped by Major Phillips on August 9, 2001, outside Soperton in Treutlen County," the report says.

Longleaf and slash pine were the desired species. The "black pines" typically found in wetter areas did not produce resin like their cousins. Often these were cut down or ringed (all the bark all the way around the tree was cut away) leaving the tree to die.



A GIANT OF INDUSTRY

In South Georgia and most of North Florida, Langdale was the place to sell the "gum", as the harvesters called it. These days, Langdale (located outside of Valdosta) no longer buys turpentine; its focus is on lumber.

The company started in 1894. It began land acquisition, due in part to the desire to process gum. In 1938, Langdale began a pulpwood mill, something that probably hastened the decline of turpentine harvest. Pulpwood is harvested from trees that are not quite big enough for tapping to mature trees which can also be used for lumber.

This expansion into other programs continued even as the turpentine refinery expanded and improved.

TAPPING THE TREES

Bubba Greene, now living in Madison, Florida, grew up on a turpentine farm that sold the "gum" to Langdale. His dad started the farm, quit for a while, and came back to it.

While the method of cutting the tree changed little over the years, one advance made a big difference. Muriatic acid, still sold in many hardware stores today as an industrial solvent, was squirted into the cut. Mr. Greene said this made that sap run for nearly twice as long as before.

Harvested resin was dumped into



left: The Herty cup was first used in the 1900's. middle: The Bird cup came out shortly afterward. right: A galvanized metal tar cup.





buckets and then into barrels before being shipped to a processor like Langdale or the McCranie brothers operation in Willacoochee. George McCranie is a lawyer these days, but still recalls with much pride the turpentine industry his father George and uncles Baker and Shasta created.

The wood-fired distiller sits in Willacoochee on the original foundation. McCranie said it probably runs. Probably. The still is on the National Historic Register, is wood-fired and, well, “I would not want to burn that place down on my watch,” he said.

Another piece of the operation, a Model M Farmall, will be back in operation. McCranie is restoring the old “tricycle tractor” (so named because the front two wheels are set so very close together). He recalled his uncles, dad, and two older brothers liked using the Farmall because it could turn so tightly in the turpentine woods.

DOUBLE DUTY

A lot of turpentine producers did double duty with their refining stills. As McCranie said, “A turpentine still is just a big liquor still. You can make liquor on that still. During prohibition, folks had stills in the country. They’d run two charges of gum that day, a charge of potash to clean it out, and a charge of liquor at night.” He added,

“We never did. It was right there in town, and we couldn’t do that if we wanted to.”

TO MARKET

The biggest market for turpentine was the “naval store,” a place where ship-building products were sold and the boats worked on. Langdale had one. Jacksonville was a major buying point for the distilled gum, which took three to four hours to reduce to the wanted product.

Once boiled down, it had to get shipped.

“We had a trucker,” McCranie said, “He would haul 20 barrels of resin or turpentine to Jacksonville. He was responsible for the haul. The only paved roads then were in the City of Waycross,”

“He was responsible for his gas, repairs and eating,” McCranie added, “He was paid \$12.50 a load.”

The trucker had to unload his haul in Jacksonville. It was loaded in Willacoochee. McCranie said the driver was smart. “He tried to pick up hitchhikers on the other side of Folkston going to Jacksonville. He let them ride up front and in return they’d help him unload the barrels. If he let them ride on the back, they’d jump off.”

Another challenge of the day was going to Bridgetown between Willacoochee and Ambrose. Stories have it the name comes from the bridges on that road; it was a headache for the turpentine crews.

“They had a deuce and a half,” McCranie said. This is a military

Continued on page 32

Rebirth of the Industry in South Georgia

Turpentine and rosin is still used today. Unfortunately, the multi-purpose, fragrant liquid has been produced in China. However, Georgia has recently seen a revival of the turpentine industry. The Griner family, of Pierce County and Diamond G Forest Products, saw a way to bring back a piece of historical industry. The five-generation foresters found an economic niche that makes use of a forgotten product and has grown it into a profitable business.

To read the 2016 Atlanta Journal Constitution article “Family puts Georgia back into the turpentine business,” go to www.myajc.com/news/state--regional/family-puts-georgia-back-into-the-turpentine-business/

below and top left: The McCranie turpentine still and furnace.

Some shotgun houses still stand on the grounds of the McCranie turpentine works. They, like every structure around them, still exude the strong odor of turpentine spirits, decades after the still stopped running. It was a smell that the workers couldn’t escape. It saturated their clothes, hair, and skin.

Photos courtesy of Brenda Rose, Roger Johnson & The Berrien Historical Foundation



TURPENTINE/BAKER, continued

vehicle capable of hauling quite heavy loads. Twenty 500-pound+ barrels loaded the truck. That's 10,000 pounds. The M35A2 (the truck's military name)

weighed 13,520 pounds empty. With a load, the 24,000 pounds was more than the old bridges could take.

"It was not any problem going out. They'd load up 20 barrels to come back, and they could not cross the bridge.



An 1800's box ax chopped out a cup in 100 year old pine stump with box face to catch the pine tar.

They'd stop, unload 10, cross, unload 10 and back up and load the 10. They had to do that at every bridge. It was a hell of a lot of work," he said.

The old turpentine operations may be gone, but deer hunters can point you to catfaces standing in the woods and sometimes a broken down still that probably ran turpentine and shine. ✕

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She's Got that *Dazzle* About Her

Hope Emmanuel: Young Entrepreneur

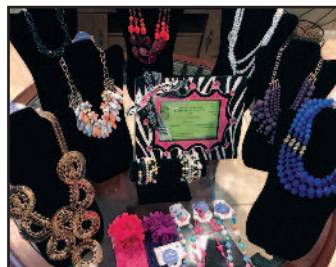
By Jada Dukes

*H*ope Emmanuel's got it all, Perseverance, ingenuity, and intelligence all wrapped up in a 12-year old girl.

Hope's motto is "Why wish for it when you can work for it," which she epitomizes to the fullest.

Her mother, Victoria says that Hope has always been a serious-minded child who always wanted to do things on her own.

"From feeding herself at 2-years old to not wanting you to do anything for her," Victoria said of her daughter. "That's been her personality, very independent [and] always wanted to do her own thing."



Hope's independence, along with her passion-for-fashion, is what led her to start her own business. Hope says she was first inspired after hearing business owner Anna Battles talk about turning an interest or hobby into a craft and making it work.

"She inspired me because she had beautiful jewelry, and I'm a girly girl. I love jewelry," Hope said.

Hope took this advice and ran with it. She started selling bracelets made out of rubber bands to her friends at school. Once she realized she had a real knack for jewelry making, she decided to start a real business. When she got the green light from mom and dad, Hope and her god-sister Katrice Barnes became business partners and co-owners of Hope's Dazzling Accessories.

Hope noted another inspirational piece of Battles' advice on how important it is for young black women to defy stereotypes. Hope said Battles talked about the negative labels placed upon young women and she encouraged them ignore those labels and persevere.

Hope's own hard work and dedication landed her the opportunity to be a part of the "Kidpreneur" program for Entrepreneurs of Valdosta Inc. The organization's leader, Erica Hill contacted Hope and invited her to a workshop and meet and greet.

"The organization kind of fell in love with her and started to push her to the next level of the business," Hope's mother said.

Hope learned a lot about running a business and dealing with demanding customers while working with Entrepreneurs of Valdosta Inc.

"It's all about the attitude you have to have with the customers," she said.

Hope was taught the importance of remaining calm whenever she's faced with adversity. "I learned that I have to just be the bigger person," she said.

Outside of her business, Hope is very active in church and school. Hope's ministry "Vision of Hope" is devoted to helping the youth of Valdosta. With the help of her church, Union Cathedral, Hope was able to raise \$1,200 to donate to Valdosta and Lowndes County schools.

Victoria pointed out, "My husband and I said to her when God gives you a vision it's not for you just to hold onto it's for you to actually do something with it."

In school, Hope is the president of the Future Business Leaders of America club (FBLA), and she plays the clarinet in the school band. Hope also is a caring friend. In the past, Hope dealt with being bullied about her weight which led her to help out a friend struggling with the same issue.

"I do know how it feels to be bullied and I would want somebody to stand up for me," she said.

With the help and support of her family, this caring, dedicated, self-motivated young lady is definitely bound for greatness. ✨

Clockwise from top left: Hope's dazzling smile is a great asset when she's selling her jewelry. Hope with her biggest fan: her mother; with her family at the Hahira Honeybee Festival; "Vision of Hope"; a sampling of jewelry.



CHLOE PAULK

Southern Grace...A Fleeting Quality

By Traci Harper

Driving up a long two-path dirt drive in Holt, Georgia, I start to wonder exactly when a successful person starts to differ from the pack. After spending a little time with 13-year-old Chloe Paulk, I believe I have a little insight to how they begin to pull ahead.

Chloe bakes fresh cakes, cupcakes, and cookies for the public at reasonable prices. That is her service; her products speak for themselves. She has also built quite the reputation for doing an awesome job, and she can quote the numbers on profit and loss. She fed over 225 people desserts for Legislative Day in Irwin county and impressed senators, state representatives, and other dignitaries, including the lieutenant governor.

This is her mission, her service, but not who she is.

Being a self-driven perfectionist is hard on a person of any age. A strong mind and heart are needed to keep up the fight. Chloe possess this. When asked what she enjoyed most about baking she pondered for a moment and simply said, "I believe it's the self-accomplishment."

Chloe takes pride in her product, only baking with farm fresh eggs she collects herself, homemade vanilla that takes months to extract, and fondant that takes days to create perfectly. Her recipes are cherished because they come from the best bakers around. The care she places on each step shows a dedication to food that can be nothing but completely southern.

According to teachers who have known her all of her life, Chloe has Ivy league grades and a twist of extracurricular that would challenge the most seasoned among us. She is president of Irwin County Middle School's FFA chapter and competes in floral design,

horticulture, and parliamentary procedures. All this with the time for her family and friends.

This young lady is a beautiful soul with the face of an angel and posture of a southern lady. Our quiet interview was met with clear and decisive answers which show her security with who she is and wants she wants in her life. When asked about role models I expected to hear something totally different from what I got. She said her mother Hope was the person she turned to for character guidance. She also said there's spirituality and inspiration. In this answer, I believe is where her story begins—Grounded in Grace.

Chloe's says she doesn't care for the big cities. She likes the pace and closeness of Ocilla. Surrounded by people who support and love her. She is part of the land and belongs on this soil. She plans to return to Ocilla after college and teach the children and grandchildren the way so many have taught her, with a loving spirit that had been handed down by parents and community.

Her advice to entrepreneurs both young and old is, "don't give up because you fail at something. Be thorough and go above and beyond" qualities she attributes to her father Wesley.

When questioned about obstacles she has encountered, with a slight grin, she honestly said, "mainly keeping my family out of what I bake."

She added that her parents taught her that, in the grand scheme of this, the small setbacks don't matter.

I will always think of this particular young lady fondly. Not only for the crust on her pound cake, but for the fleeting quality of Southern Grace. ✨



From Harvest to Table

Recipe Spotlight

Granny's Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

INGREDIENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 Cups sugar | 2 medium eggs |
| 1 1/2 Cups Crisco | 1 tsp vanilla |
| 2 Cups flour (more as needed) | Chopped pecans (optional) |

Heat oven to 350°. Cream sugar and Crisco together. Stir in eggs, vanilla and pecans (if using). Add flour gradually; start with 1 1/2 cups, keep adding flour until dough is stiff enough to roll out. You will have to use your hands to knead the dough, just like making biscuits. Roll out on a lightly floured surface; cut with cookie cutters. Bake for 12-15 minutes.

This is a basic recipe. You can also add flavoring, such as butternut. This dough makes great thumbprint cookies, too. Roll into small balls, make a depression into the center, add a dab of strawberry preserves to the hollow and bake. You can also roll the dough into balls, place on baking sheet and flatten with the bottom of a glass.

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Now What?

By Amanda Williams



I call the days between Christmas and the New Year the "Now What?" week.

I don't know about you, but I catch myself in limbo, hanging out in the in-between. We're enjoying the gifts, reveling in the special moments, but gradually cleaning up after the big day while preparing for the unknown of another year.

As a child, December 26 was a letdown day. The contents of wrapped packages and stuffed stockings that inspired such anticipation and imagination had been revealed. The family had gathered around multiple tables, had reminisced, had laughed, and had often returned home.

I would sit on the dock behind my grandparents' home on Hwy. 32 and stare at the man-made pond, chin in hand, dreaming of how this year would be "better" or "different." My legs would swing back and forth over the edge as I stared at the fat catfish who would often meet their untimely demise on the end of a cane pole.

I contemplate my grown-up emotions stirring in my heart and come to grips with the fact that yes, there is a packing up process of the warm and fuzzy symbols of the joyous season of Christmas. 2017 whispered a reminder in my ear as January 1, 2018 approached. Opportunities, while plentiful with every breath you take, are unique.

I look at my journal and ask, "Will I complete you this year?"

I look at my manuscript and think, "Will I meet my deadline?"

I look at the calendar with circled speaking engagements and pray, "Lord, help me."

I look at the void left by the family who gather in eternity and wonder, "How will those places around the table ever be filled again?"

I look at our children and my husband, and am overwhelmed with gratitude.

As I travel the road of 2018, I pray the Lord opens my eyes to the moment-by-moment.

My children receive a package from Jeromy and me each year. A stack of 4X6 prints of memories beginning January 1-December 24. One of their favorite things to do on Christmas morning is sift through those memories. Mine too.

It's because I remember the gifts given to me on those days. Gifts that flit away with the ticking of the clock and the busy of the day.

Now what?

As I contemplate the answer to this question, quiet whispers invade my heart. Gratitude. Savor. Be intentional. Remember your purpose.

Yes—Now this. ✂

A New Tradition for Alapaha

What started as a simple idea to expand a small town's Christmas display to include a couple of large greeting cards quickly became an evening of town participation and fellowship.

Cathy Harrell, display director, had no idea how large and how quickly the card idea would catch on with the town's merchants and churches. The result was a beautifully lighted display of more than 29



To see more of the card display, go to Facebook, Christmas Cards in Town Square.

giant hand-painted cards circling the park in downtown Alapaha.

Brenda Hickey, head artist of the project, set the criteria for the display. She, Harrell, Mayor Wayman Smith and artist Hanna Hauser presented the display to the town during the tree lighting. Other contributing artists on the project were Dianne Gandy, Jill Whitley, Cindy Mills, and Libby Dean.

A large crowd gathered for the lighting of the Christmas tree and to stroll through the luminary-lined streets to see the cards. The ceremony events were headed by Rebecca Davis. She and several other townsfolk added horse-drawn carriage rides, several nostalgic photo stages, and 1500 luminaries. There were also carolers to entertain the crowd and a live nativity scene. Santa made an appearance at the historic Bank of Alapaha where visitors lined up for hot cocoa or coffee and a snapshot with the jolly elf.

It was a busy, bustling time as neighbors and old friends united for the old-fashioned event. ❁



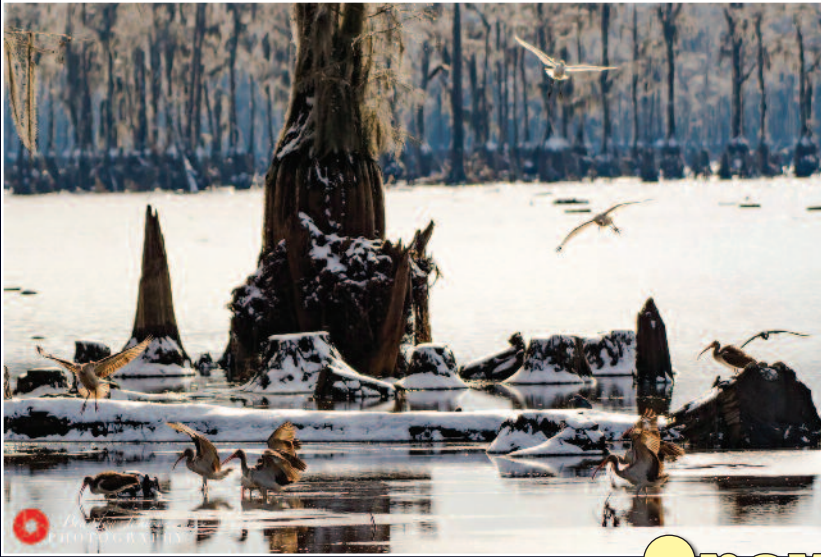
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Snow Day 2018

South Georgia saw the longest lasting snowfall in the last 50+ years. *Clockwise from top left:* Banks Lake; Alapaha home; Berrien Courthouse; Kacee, Irwin Co.; Fysher B, Cook Co.; Snowball fight, Lakeland



Photos by Brandon Johnson, Wenda G. Bailey, DeeDee McMillan and Amber Brown



Festivals & Events Upcoming ➡



ADEL
Daylily Festival | May

ALAPAHA
Day in the Woods | April

ASHBURN
Fire Ant Festival
March 23 - 24

FITZGERALD
Wild Chicken Festival
March 16 - 17

VALDOSTA @Turner
Center for The Arts
Ellis Island Mural Exhibit
Jan 8-Feb 21, 2018
Spring Into Art Exhibit
April 9 - June 6

TIFTON
"For the Love of Mud:
The Pottery of Walter
Hobbs" | GMA Gallery
Opens Jan. 27

Rhythm & Ribs BBQ
Festival | March 2 - 3

In Concert at UGA
Tifton Campus
Conference Center
Big Daddy Weave
Feb. 17

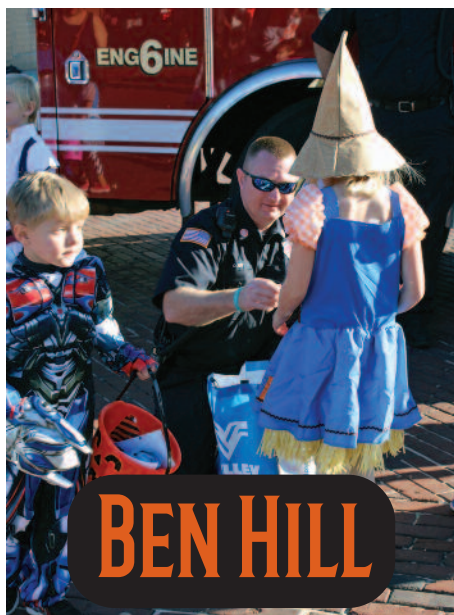
Home Free TIMELESS
World Tour | March 16

Lee Ann Womack
March 28

Halloween Events



Berrien



BEN HILL



Irwin



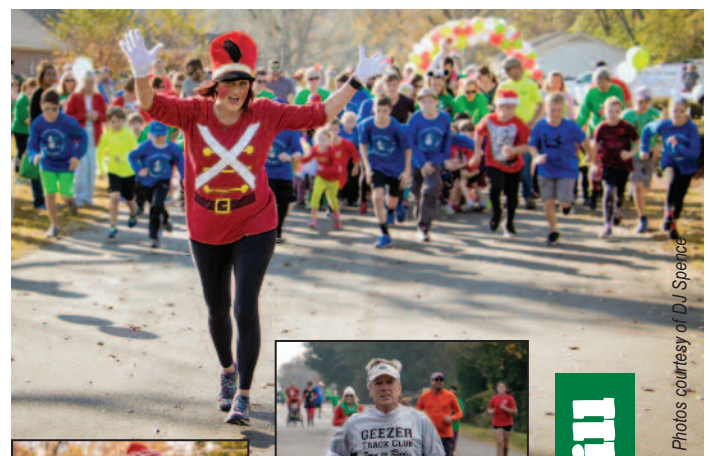


Cook



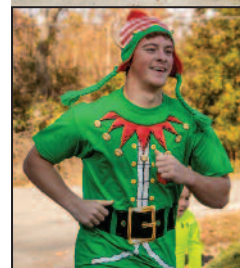
Congratulations to the Carolyn Ellis School of Dance, Tifton for their performance in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. The girls were chosen to perform with the Spirit of America Dance Stars. Dancers (random order) Lydia Suggs, Emily Eason, Samantha Walker, Annabelle Branch, Caroline Clark, Isabelle Stallings, Becca Jones, Caroline Sullivan, Haley Roberson, Meredith Morgan, Mallory Maves, Audrey Snow, Grace Hall, Carlee Snow, Mallory Ward and Raylin Ward.

Group photos courtesy of Carolyn Ellis School of Dance. Aerial photo courtesy of Macy's.



Photos courtesy of Du Spence

Down at the Georgia Sheriffs' Boys Ranch: Santa and many of the area sheriffs made a special stop to deliver gifts to the boys and girls who call the ranch home. There were piano and voice solos, the children's choir, and a reading by Rancher of the Year, Trevor Clayton. Among those present were GSBRA alumni Chris Nichols (81-84), James Lunsford (80-85), Mark Key (80-84), and Newton Key, (80-89), and Craig Valiket (82-89).



Ben Hill

Jingle Bell Run

4TH ANNUAL
GOAT
Festival
PEARSON, GA





Berrien Harvest Festival & Lip Sync



Honeybee Festival



Get Set, Ready, & Push! Adel Bed Race Benefits Boys and Girls Club

By Jayden Futch

In December, I had fun at the Adel bed race that raised funds for The Boys and Girls Club of Cook County (BGCCC). All of the racing beds were beautiful. After wishing all the teams best of luck, I had the pleasure of interviewing the generous people behind the event.

Sharon Harnage came up with the idea and started to raise money and awareness for the BGCCC. In their second year, they raised about \$7,000!

Dr. Michael McCartney, director and board member of the BGCCC, said the event was a fun way to get the community involved. The club has been a positive and influential asset to Cook County and its teens for 10 years. Graduation rates have increased, over 250 children have been served, and teen crime and pregnancies have decreased since the doors have opened. Kids get daily meals and participate in physical activities.

Winning the trophy will definitely boost the BGCCC. As a bonus, they also received the People's Choice Award!

If you would like to donate to the BGCCC: www.cookbgc.com. For bed race updates, see Facebook: Adel-Cook Bed Race.



**RED BARN
MARKET
FALL
FESTIVAL**



Blarney Cup Chili Cookoff

This year's Toys For Tots in Cook County fundraiser was the highest yet. Thanks from the Blarney Cup in Adel!



Ocilla's Sweet Potato Festival





John Fitton and Sandy Sanders with Exile



Celebrating 40th anniversary of their hit "Kiss You All Over," the band Exile took the stage at the Threatte Center in Lakeland. The band, who started 55 years ago, did a range of their hits, including some they wrote for other artists.

During the meet and greet, the band joked with some dedicated groupies, William and Cathy Epperson, who

have attended every Exile concert all over the USA. Gary Willis, who is a fan who attended Lexington High School with the band members, praised the originality of the band, noting that they don't use any "canned" back up tracks—it's all them. "When you hear them live, it sounds like their records; they play their own music."



Gary Willis

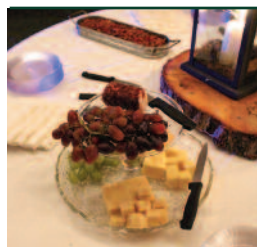


William and Cathy Epperson

Doug Stone and Megan Fowler



Country and comedy ruled the stage at Fitzgerald's Grande Theatre when Doug Stone presented a melody of his hits acoustically. His career boasts 8 Number One singles and 15 Top Ten Hits. Opening for Stone was Georgia Country award winner Megan Fowler. During the meet and greet, both Stone and Fowler autographed a fan's guitar.



Harmony Jubilee
November 10-11 at Paulk Park
Fitzgerald, Georgia





HARPER HILL

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Photos by brittnidealweddings.com

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